Introduction

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Abstract and Keywords

The introduction reads figures of transpacific alliance in the Orientalist verse of Walt Whitman and Ernest Fenollosa. Their grand visions of a union between East and West installed a poetics of transpacific accord and fueled modernist innovation. Against this backdrop, the introduction considers the rise of Asian America and sketches a genealogy of theorizing Asian American literature which grapples with a legacy of resistance to an Orientalist past.

Keywords: Walt Whitman, Ernest Fenollosa, Gilded Age, Asian American movement
In Myung Mi Kim's 1991 poetry collection *Under Flag*, she describes a voyage from Korea to the United States: “Mostly, we cross bridges we did not see being built” (15). Kim is describing moving bodies, but this line invokes a long history of bridge-building: over a century of transpacific economic and military alliances. Kim's poetry is remarkable for its allusive richness, and among the bridges she calls to mind is a literary one, constructed out of an imagined aesthetic accord between East and West. This aesthetic crossing, underwritten by material ties, spans my study: *Apparitions of Asia* traces a literary intimacy between the United States and East Asia, by turns welcomed and shunned, that runs the length of the twentieth century. A new appreciation of East Asia marked American literary modernism; the Orient became an emblem of artistic solace in the first half of the twentieth century, renewing American letters at the same time that the United States increasingly turned to the Pacific. Decades later, Kim's verse echoes the literary structures enshrined by modernism's Orient in order to reveal in formal terms a long-standing transpacific relationship. It is the aim of this study to make literary bridges visible: by uncovering a fragile yet persistent consonance, my readings seek to create a modern history of transpacific literary alliances.

This book closes with Myung Mi Kim: her work stands at the endpoint of a trajectory from modernist internationalism to the transnational flows of the late twentieth century. Between these two ends lies a significant breach which divides American Orientalism from Asian American literature: while modernist Orientalism rendered the Asiatic sign as a silent figure, artists of the Asian American movement in the late 1960s forged an ethnic coalition to sound a new voice in American literature and culture. My inquiry attempts to bridge these long-segregated discourses, and the task of the following pages is to illuminate the formal significance of modernism's Orient in a century of United States expansion in the Pacific and the repercussions of this construction for Asian American artists. By considering the afterimage of American Orientalism in Asian American literature, *Apparitions of Asia* queries the costs of an Asiatic form cast as a peculiar figure of modernity. It is my (p.4) contention that the American Orient of high modernism has significantly influenced Asian American poetry, both as an onerous burden and as an opportunity for literary experiment—whether through or against its forms.
Passage to Asia

In “A Broadway Pageant,” Walt Whitman celebrated the 1860 arrival of Japanese delegates to New York, the final stop in a mission to ratify the United States-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce. Their march down Manhattan's main thoroughfare was a riposte to Commodore Perry's famous appearance on Japan's shores in 1853 with his “black ships.” With banners unfurled, the Japanese delegates were, like their American counterparts, heralding a rapid modernization. Whitman's poem imagines American ships steaming across the Pacific, and these two budding empires crossed the ocean with dreams of commerce. Whitman proclaims, “The ring is circled” (245) when “at last the Orient comes” (243), and he imagines a reawakening:

Commerce opening, the sleep of ages having
done its work, races reborn, refresh'd,
Lives, works resumed—the object I know not—but
the old, the Asiatic renew'd as it must be,
Commencing from this day surrounded by the
world. (245)

Asia is born again through the touch of American commerce, and this far corner of the world can now be part of a “gliding present” (244), seen as a “kaleidoscope divine” (243) before the pulsing crowd. “A Broadway Pageant” was first published as “The Errand-Bearers” in The New York Times on June 27, 1860, but despite its topicality, the poem very quickly leaves the procession: Whitman writes, “The Originatress comes,” specifically, “The race of Brahma comes” (243).¹ The “nobles of Niphon” (242) give way to the “intense soul and glittering eyes” (243) of Whitman's true Orient, India. For Whitman, “The nest of languages, the bequeather of poems, the race of eld” (243) was always aligned with India; all of the Asiatic moments of Leaves of Grass gesture toward a reverie of India as a rich, linguistic and racial origin for the West.² Whitman's India takes its cue from Emerson's Orientalism, which took the form of adventurous forays into comparative philosophy and religion but settled on India: The Dial's 1842 series of “Ethical Scriptures” introduced a variety of different religious texts to American readers, but Emerson’s “sympathies lay with the Hindus.”³ Sharing Emerson's sympathies, Whitman recasts the Japanese delegation as a Transcendental ideal.⁴
Whitman's most famous meditation on India, “Passage to India,” marks the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal, an event he reads as a necessary sequel to the discovery of America: a section which opens with an apostrophe to the “Year at whose wide-flung door I sing!” (416) only names the year 1492. From the contemporary “vast terraqueous globe given and giving all” (416), Whitman calls out to Columbus himself: “And who art thou sad shade?” (417). Whitman imagines this lonely figure on a stage, tracing his life “from Palos leading his little fleet” to “dejection, poverty, death” (417). The opening of the Suez Canal is figured as Columbus's late, hard-won victory:

(Oh Genoese thy dream! thy dream!
Centuries after thou art laid in thy grave,
The shore thou foundest verifies thy dream.)
(414)

By crossing the Suez Canal, we may finally reach the Indians that Columbus was really looking for. “Passage to India” is rife with primitivist celebrations, the old fantasy of the Oriental womb, but Whitman's poem connects the Orient to the discovery of America—indeed, he insists that a passage to Asia is a necessary continuation of American history.

Though Whitman cites 1492, the year of the Suez Canal is crucial because 1869 marks two monumental passages: as Whitman wrote in his notebook, “Passage to India. Completion Pacific R. R. 1869?”5 On May 10, 1869, the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads joined, marked by a golden spike that celebrated the junction. The surprise of “Passage to India” is that even as Whitman heralds an eastern route, he embarks on a railway journey due west. Upon envisioning traversing the Suez Canal (“I mark from on deck the strange landscape” [413]), in the same breath Whitman imagines traveling across America, and this convergence is made possible because it is “yet thine, all thine, O soul, the same” (413): “I see over my own continent the Pacific railroad surmounting every barrier” (413). He imagines the Pacific locomotive “rushing and roaring” across the Great Plains and into California:

I see the clear waters of Lake Tahoe, I see forests of majestic pines,
Or crossing the great desert, the alkaline plains, I behold the enchanting mirages of waters and meadows,
Marking through these and after all, in duplicate slender lines,
Bridging the three or four thousand miles of land travel,
Tying the Eastern to the Western sea,
The road between Europe and Asia. (413–414)

Whitman inserts domestic travel into the heart of the poem, thus overlaying the “road between Europe and Asia” with the American landscape. (p.6) This sleight of hand via “duplicate slender lines” represents both the railroad tracks and the double path to the Orient in his poem. In lauding the canal’s opening, Whitman claims that “Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas” (418), clearly imagining the Pacific railroad marching beyond its tracks, onward to the East.

Whitman’s presentation of the Orient bears both the past legacy of Transcendentalism and a proleptic vision of continued American expansion into the Pacific, notably along industrial lines of advance. In “A Broadway Pageant,” Whitman cries, “I chant the world on my Western sea” (244), a line which bears all the hallmarks of his ringing voice and capacious self, although this particular appropriation of the sea signals a contemporary campaign to make the Pacific American. Akira Iriye describes an American “belief in the uniqueness of American–East Asian relations” (16) in the second half of the nineteenth century: in pointed contrast to what United States policymakers deemed the “ulterior ambitions” of the European powers (15), they celebrated America’s peaceful promotion of commerce as the basis of “an image of America’s future as a Pacific nation” (17). American ambitions were met by the Japanese: though Whitman imbues the “nobles of Niphon” with a familiar Oriental hoariness, they make the news because they are emblems of industrialization. The Meiji government’s rigorous westernization catapulted Japan into the international arena; Japan’s advances across the Pacific made them the darlings of the United States and subjects of narratives of emergence, in which America awakened Japan from its ancient slumber. The electric contact between Japan and the United States presented in “A Broadway Pageant” thus illustrates the modern template for America’s relation to the Orient: the West ignites the East with an enlightening spark of commerce.
In Whitman’s poems we may register both the contours of Orientalism, a discourse that spans the West and reaches into ancient times, and a historically bound economic exigency specific to United States relations with East Asia. Edward Said’s monumental *Orientalism* revealed that the Orient was a creation of the Western observer, and Said’s core concept of “othering” follows from a psychoanalytic model in which the self discovers its own constitution by discerning the “not-I.”  

Scholars have criticized Said for the totalizing force of his argument, but the significance of *Orientalism* lies in this single figuration which can be detected in case after case. In considering American Orientalism, however, instances of othering tend to unveil a complex array of alliances. United States foreign policy perpetually aligns others against an assembly of selves—and the so-called “American Century” has featured extraordinary efforts to solidify both enmities and friendships across the Pacific. In her study *America’s Asia*, Colleen Lye argues that American Orientalism shifts the emphasis in Said’s model because United States neocolonialism “installed the East as a Western proxy rather than antipode” (10). The expansion of United States power in the Pacific necessitated an international policy which, as Christina Klein points out, “work[ed] through a logic of affiliation as well as through one of difference” (16). Said’s other readily accounts for the repudiation of enemies in United States dealings in the Pacific, but the modern history of transpacific alliances in the region requires us to consider a side of the self/other structure which has tended to seem less remarkable—but which opens out to a set of strategies at least as varied and deep-seated as the setting apart of difference that Said’s study meticulously uncovered.
The alliances that structure American Orientalism have been fueled by the dream of commerce that inspired Whitman's ecstatic meditations on the Asiatic. United States appeals to the Pacific have sought to secure a market; as David Palumbo-Liu states: “The particular role that the United States imagined Asia Pacific to play was (and, as we will see...still continues to be) to be a market for the overaccumulation of goods and capital” (19). This economic image made a lasting impression: Lye notes that Asiatic figures have been consistently marked by a “putatively unusual capacity for economic modernity” (3) in the American imagination. The broad strokes of American Orientalism were set by economic images of Japan and China, both of whom began to occupy American interests in the same era. These “emergent” Asian nations were subject to shifting and competing figurations: Japan and China alternated positions as friend and foe, and as the century wore on, smaller nations in the region were assigned these roles.10 Under American stewardship, Japan became, as Bruce Cumings puts it, “an American-defined ‘economic animal’ ” (31) through which the United States could lay claim to Japan's regional dominance. American support increased exponentially in mid-century,11 and by the late twentieth century, decades of American investment in the Pacific reached its apotheosis in what Rob Wilson calls a “utopic dream of a ‘free market’ ” (32) in Reimagining the American Pacific: a fantasy in which “the traumas of colonial occupation, regional fracturing, and world war will be washed away in the dirty, magical waters of the Pacific” (38). The end of the twentieth century witnessed a multiplication of “economic animals” in the Pacific. Whitman's dreams came true a century later.

Pacific Inventions
Whitman looked across the Pacific and saw an American destiny, but it was Ernest Fenollosa who built the bridge across the vast expanse. Fenollosa arrived in Yokohama in 1878, when Japan was rapidly transforming its feudal society into a modern, westernized culture. He was part of a wave of American intellectuals characterized by Christopher Benfey as “Gilded Age misfits” who found a place for themselves in Japan as cultural ambassadors. This handful of “upper-class New England (p.8) men,” as Mari Yoshihara describes them, “became pioneer ‘Japanologists’ and played crucial roles in introducing Japanese culture and history to Americans” (9). By reinventing themselves as counsel to Japan’s transformation, these American adventurers achieved positions of authority far from home. Fenollosa, a learned dilettante at loose ends, secured his passage to the Far East through the good graces of his professors at Harvard. He went to Japan ostensibly to teach philosophy—his Harvard education included “Emersonian pantheism, Spencerian mechanism, Hegelian metaphysics”—but he quickly found himself seduced by the art of “Old Japan.” In the tumult of Japan’s new era, Fenollosa saw an opportunity to cultivate an appreciation for traditional artistry threatened by the juggernaut of progress. Fenollosa created an extraordinary niche for himself as a connoisseur of Oriental art, and his Japanese career ultimately cast him as a prime instigator for an American aesthetic revolution.

In Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art (1913), an encyclopedic account of Oriental art posthumously published by his widow, Fenollosa posited a Sino-Japanese flowering which rivaled the Greco-Roman one. Trained in idealized philosophical terms, Fenollosa sought “a universal scheme or logic of art” (xxiv): Hegelian Universal Spirit mandated a “splendid single sweep” (xxvi) of human aesthetic behavior and a teleology in which “separate shining planes of movement of the human spirit” (xxvi) combined to produce a new synthesis. Fenollosa saw a Pacific antithesis to the Mediterranean basin, and he presented this vision in the first chapter of Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art:
Taking a Mercator projection map of the world, with its centre in the Eastern part of the Eastern hemisphere, bounded on the west by Europe and Africa and (as Asiatic appendages) extended on the east over Australasia and the Pacific Isles until the very western shores of America are included, we can get a bird's-eye view over about all the geographical formations of human art....Looking down now into the fertile regions of man's work...we are enabled to make a large but sufficiently accurate identification of the most active centres of art-dispersion within this large field, which indeed we are ordinarily accustomed to conceive as one. Making a very broad generalization, it may be said that these centres have been two:—one belonging to the somewhat contracted regions about the east end of the Mediterranean....The other belongs to some point... enclosed by the large islands of the western half of the Pacific Ocean. (3)

This exercise in reorientation reveals two fields of force, East and West. Considering the “vast basin of the Pacific,” Fenollosa concludes that “there exists what we may fairly call a ‘Pacific School of Art,’ ” and the photographs in this first section compare Maori totems to ancient Chinese artifacts. (p.9) In casting the Pacific basin as a counterpart to the Mediterranean, Fenollosa took a decisive step toward modernity. In contrast to Whitman's railway passage across the Pacific, Fenollosa stopped well short of India; instead, Fenollosa's mythical site of origin was China, viewed through its preservation in Japan. Fenollosa diverged from his Transcendental masters by focusing on the Pacific basin, and in putting East Asia on the map, he not only mirrored American interests of the era, he became a force for American modernism. For Whitman, India was “The Past! the Past! the Past!” (411), but Fenollosa's Asiatic vision anticipated the future. His map is striking because it sketches the sphere of American influence in the Pacific: as his text alights from Tokyo to the Philippines, we discover a prediction of future American excursions in the region. A century later, a rich and contradictory vision of the American Pacific—in Rob Wilson's words, “both dream and slime, an ocean with ancient contents and cyborgian futures all cast into one strange regional poetic” (Reimagining 48)—seems to follow from Fenollosa's artistic map of the world.
Fenollosa’s passionate advocacy of East Asian art made him a celebrity in Japan. Yone Noguchi, a Japanese poet famously published by Harriet Monroe in *Poetry*, dubbed Fenollosa “the very discoverer of Japanese art for Japan.”

Fenollosa’s most often cited address, delivered in 1882, urges his Japanese audience to “return to their nature and its old racial traditions”:

> Japanese art is really far superior to modern cheap western art that describes any object at hand mechanically, forgetting the most important point, expression of Idea. Despite such superiority the Japanese despise their classical paintings, and with adoration for western civilization admire its artistically worthless modern paintings and imitate them for nothing. What a sad sight it is!

Fenollosa is credited with reinstituting the brush over the Western pencil in Japanese elementary schools, and in 1886, when he became the Imperial Commissioner of Fine Arts in the Ministry of Culture, he launched a massive cataloging effort to create an official record of Japan’s art and architecture. Considering Fenollosa’s curatorial labors, Kojin Karatani echoes and intensifies Noguchi’s claim: “it was Fenollosa who invented Japanese art” (158). Karatani reads Fenollosa’s ideals for Japanese art in the context of an Orientalist tendency toward “an aesthetic worship of the very inferior other” (147). Fenollosa’s zeal “rescued” Oriental art from a society he diagnosed as ill-equipped to understand its significance. As Lawrence W. Chisolm puts it, “So long as art works were considered simply as temple furniture or private luxuries, lists were unheard of; the very idea that art works might be national assets was Western, as was the study of archaeology” (53). Fenollosa thus “invented Japanese art” because he applied Western values to Eastern objects.
Warren I. Cohen reveals the far-ranging effects of Fenollosa’s connoisseurship: “By the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, Chinese and Japanese masterpieces could be found in Chicago, Cleveland, Kansas City, and St. Louis, as well as in Boston, New York, and Freer’s collection, soon to be exhibited in Washington” (72). The great American museums only opened in the 1870s; it is astonishing to consider how quickly superb East Asian art penetrated museums in the heart of America.¹⁷ In discussing the repercussions of Fenollosa’s labors, Cohen provides a revealing contrast in the George Walter Vincent Smith Museum in Springfield, Massachusetts: Smith was a wealthy collector who was “partial to metal work and cloisonné” (72). Like Fenollosa, Smith “paid high prices for his treasures” (73), but his investments were never realized in the manner of Fenollosa’s collection because his tastes did not match the defining mode set by Fenollosa and he did not justify the market value of his own purchases. Indeed, Smith’s selections reflect an appreciation of Japanese art that predates Fenollosa’s interventions: Japanese delegates had proven their adeptness at profiting from Western tastes in Western expositions, as in the exhibitions in Paris (1867) and Philadelphia (1876), in which Japanese handiwork of exquisite craftsmanship were the objects of faddish desire. Beyond such handiwork, East Asian art remained forbiddingly alien to a Western audience: it was largely through Fenollosa’s labors that Sino-Japanese painting, previously inaccessible because of its nonrealism, traveled in new circles. Fenollosa did not merely appeal to Western tastes; he transformed them.¹⁸
Fenollosa's interest in the hard fact of commerce is perhaps his greatest departure from American Transcendentalism and its older mode of Orientalism. John R. Eperjesi claims that Emerson had “two Asias,” “a religious-philosophical Asia and an economic Asia” (36), but Fenollosa combined the two. In yoking the “religious-philosophical Asia” to the “economic Asia,” Fenollosa became an agent of modernization, not only in Japan, a nation rushing to compete with the West, but in Western appreciation of the Far East. Fenollosa understood that aesthetic preferences could be altered in his favor if a market could be created to sustain these values—and in making Eastern art appreciable, he made Eastern art. In his discussion of aesthetic value, Karatani argues that the sublime, which relies on a “purification of all domains, was inseparable from the capitalist economy that nullifies differences of all domains” (150); Fenollosa's aestheticism was ultimately an economic pitch, in which entry into a system of circulation purified the object as a work of art at the same time that it assigned a cash value. Ultimately, the values he created were in the service of a shared aesthetic spirit which seemed to cross the Pacific for the first time. Linking East and West was crucial to creating an artistic sympathy that seemed to transcend the commerce to which it was bound.

(p.11) Fenollosa returned to the United States as an authority on Oriental art and an advocate for friendly United States-East Asian relations. He made his case in public lectures and published articles for strengthening ties with Japan, and this alliance was the subject of his 1893 poem *East and West*, delivered to the Phi Beta Kappa society at Harvard, in which he presented “The Future Union of East and West” as a dialectical vision.¹⁹ In a preface crafted for the poem's publication, Fenollosa laid out his “synthesis of two continental civilizations” (v): an Eastern bride is to be wed to a Western bridegroom. Fenollosa adds another layer of thesis and antithesis, however: he imagines a “twofold marriage” (53), a double union of East and West. The poem separates the two ceremonies by millennia; we witness these alliances at the far ends of *East and West*'s five sections, first with a portrait of Alexander's blazing path to the East and a final union in which the East emerges as the ideal counterpart to the West. With this second betrothal, the poem's final line imagines a future “Where there is no more West and no more East” (55).
Between the instances of synthesis, however, the poem threatens to undermine its vision of perfect unity. In the wake of Alexander’s advance, the poem presents East and West in turn, but “The Separated East” does not produce a bride, and the Western man who emerges in “The Separated West” is a masked and compromised figure. Indeed, the only truly noble soul in East and West is “the final Asian man / Rising in far Japan” (17). This figure perplexed his Phi Beta Kappa audience—not least for the oddity of rendering the Asiatic masculine—because Fenollosa put a specific, living “Asian man” in the throne, “Dear Hogai, my master” (15). Descended from a long and distinguished line of Japanese artists, Kano Hogai was Fenollosa’s tutor in Japan. Fenollosa “was adopted ‘artistically’ into the Kano family” and took the name Kano Yeitan Masanobu, and as he wrote of this name to his mentor Edward Morse, “This I write in Chinese characters and have special seals.” The seals made official Fenollosa’s ability to certify works of Japanese art: as he writes in the letter, “It is quite a thing to have the three greatest critics of Japan admitting me to equality in certifying.”

Fenollosa’s “adoption” into the Kano family led to regulatory powers, and the effusive portrait of Kano Hogai in the poem reveals Fenollosa’s alliance.
Though *East and West* sets a paradigmatic marriage as its frame, Fenollosa's own experience in Japan disrupts the poem's vision of wedlock. Indeed, Fenollosa's poem presents a significant departure from a familiar pattern of Oriental courtship, as in the tales of his French contemporary Pierre Loti, who effortlessly stepped into the role of the bridegroom in every Oriental port he chanced to explore. In contrast to Loti's 1887 *Madame Chrysanthème*, in which Loti illustrated the conventional union of East and West in Japan, Fenollosa found himself a family lineage without the trappings of marriage. Loti sought out exotic girls but shunned their families; by contrast, Fenollosa's adoption by the Kano family led to power in the national arena—Fenollosa's East is less a subject of romantic alliances than of political and economic ones. Iriye singles out Fenollosa's poem as an example of a new kind of transpacific thinking at the turn of the twentieth century: against prevailing United States suspicions of Japanese hostility, Fenollosa's poem insisted that East and West “were complementary and would coexist together to enhance the general level of human civilization” (64). *East and West* is sketched out in the grand style of the political epic, written in the service of presenting a new civilizational ideal.
The novelty and grandeur of Fenollosa's vision exceeded his poem's conventional frame, and the length and difficulty of the poem required not only an explanatory preface but also appended notes upon publication. Fenollosa's note on Kano Hogai explains that he is “the greatest Japanese painter of recent times” (207), and the poem presents the painter's voice as he fantastically traverses Asia, all the way “To the snow-capped castles of Ind” (16). This figure presents a radical departure from traditional Oriental roles—this Asiatic is instead a bridegroom who finds his own Oriental bride in India. Fenollosa's portrait of the “final Asian man” casts the Japanese artist as a contemporary heir to Alexander: he is a Japanese epic hero who ventures into the hinterlands of empire. Fenollosa insisted that the “child Japanese” could “freshen the Asian ideal” (21); he advocated Japan's stewardship of Asia and considered Japan's 1895 victory over China a demonstration of “Japan's role as guardian of the East and preserver of ‘the deepest and finest Oriental principles.’”

Fenollosa renders his Japanese hero as an agent of history, thus inscribing into his Hegelian understanding of history a figure from a region which had long been seen as a dim origin. Japan's imperial successes had a whitening effect in the West, and Fenollosa built upon Japan's imperial aspirations to pitch the Far Eastern nation in a position of identity with the United States. The East makes its entry into history in Fenollosa's poem, but the image of the West suffers. In “The Separated West,” Fenollosa excoriates the West for its vulgar commercial aims:

The West provokes the East. The iron arm
Slips off the narrow edges of this world.
Flaxen-haired vandals hunt for zest of blood
The black striped tigers of the Bengalee,
Scaling the slippery crests of Himavats,
Holding the poisoned cup to Mongol lips. (35)

This last line merits a note, in which Fenollosa explains, “I refer to the opium trade with China. After all, it is the selfish expansiveness of commerce, rather than warfare or science, which discharges the decreed function of bearing the West back into the bosom of the East. It is the [p.13] last service of the explosive life of competition” (213). The poem reaches a fever pitch as it contemplates the crimes of the West, as in a following section in which he cries out,
O you West in the East like the slime of a beast,  
Why must you devour that exquisite flower?  
Why poison the peace of the far Japanese? (39)

The poem’s far-reaching indictment of Western encroachment extends to a proto-Orientalist critique of the “occult boom” Fenollosa despised: “Here’s a sweet little charmer who dotes upon karma!” (43). He lambasts Western exploitation and its attendant fantasies of the Orient in order to reveal a true portrait of the Far East in which the Japanese man emerges as an ideal not only to be preserved in the East but emulated by the West. Indeed, Fenollosa’s tactic of undermining Western hegemony ultimately leaves his poem without a Western bridegroom; *East and West* is surprising for its contemporary portrait of Japan, but the poem makes no mention of the United States, and no new American hero rises to greet the “final Asian man.”

The strangeness and difficulty of *East and West* lies in its insistence upon a new appreciation of the Far East free from damaging East-West relations of the past. Fenollosa’s East has been upgraded to belong to the modern world, but as an official in Japan he rejected the very forces of modernity that cast Japan on a par with the United States. The stark contradiction of Fenollosa’s own commercial transactions indicates the impossibility of excising commerce from East-West relations. Fenollosa’s elevation of an Oriental ideal, one which can correct Western failings, harks back to eighteenth-century European valorizations of China, but its particular reliance on United States commercial interests makes it a foundational text for American Orientalism. In celebrating the quietly radiant East through Kano Hogai, Fenollosa installed an aesthetic ideal that seemed to transcend crass commerce even as its sublimity was created by a system of circulation which assigned hard values to cultural objects. *East and West* denounced commerce in order to promote a higher order, and Fenollosa’s turn to the East set the template for American Orientalists who would discover a purifying light in the East in the hopes of disciplining Western commercial appetites at the same time that such ideals fed new dreams of transpacific commerce.
The unwieldiness of Fenollosa's poem reveals the difficulty of imagining an alliance between East and West without recourse to existing models. The rushed nuptials at the very end of *East and West* make evident in formal terms the difficulty of Fenollosa's task, and his poem is ultimately a kind of aborted epic. Just as an Orientalist trope of marriage created a prisonhouse for his modern East-West alliance, Fenollosa's verse, shackled to its rhymes and meters, found no formal escape from (p.14) an earlier pattern—and perhaps the greatest failure of the poem lies in Fenollosa's inability to present an American voice. Indeed, the shortcomings of Fenollosa's verse present a mirror image of Whitman's Orientalism: the revolutionary form of "Passage to India" accommodates American expansion, but at its heart the poem goes backward in time, to dusky lands and sultry bodies; in contrast, Fenollosa's conventional forms cannot express the new alliance between East and West he imagined. In fact, we can measure their different estimations of American heroes if we consider Whitman's Columbus against a second long poem by Fenollosa, *The Discovery of America*. In this later poem, Fenollosa imagines Columbus's first spying of land and goes on to imagine a further journey "Across blue oceans of Nothing" (164), all the way to Japan as the endpoint of Columbus's voyage (166). In Fenollosa's poem, Columbus is led breathlessly onward in centered lines, but his fate is bleak: the poem ends in darkness for this "first and last begotten hero of the sea," finally closing with a "perfect silence" that "turns the numbered pages of a dying theme" (205). Whitman brought Columbus back to life, but Fenollosa sounds the death knell for an American hero who has no place in a new world. Whitman's "I" strode forth, into the ancient Orient; but Fenollosa's modern Asian man rises at the cost of American valor.

Bardic Dreams
Together, Whitman and Fenollosa set the terms for a literary American Orientalism constructed out of commercial ties and calibrated to modern desires: they are American prophets of a poetic revolution and an Asiatic turn. In imagining together these contrasting figures, my study seeks to examine a well-known creation of American modernism in order to understand its formal properties. I am particularly fascinated by the resilient structure of American Orientalism: in the face of repeated challenges, an essential identity between the United States and East Asia has remained a significant strand in the American imagination. Indeed, periodic challenges have sustained this structure of alliance: a splitting of self from other among different Orients reinforces delicate alliances, a process which can be traced to the rise of Japan and its seeming separation from a retrograde Orient. Japan's rapprochement with the West relied on casting a modern silhouette against a faceless and timeless Asiatic other, and the specter of old-fashioned Orientalism necessarily haunts a modern figuration of alliance because it is in setting itself apart from such atavistic portraits that an American formulation can claim its freshness.
The legacies of Whitman and Fenollosa feature prominently in the work of Ezra Pound, who cast himself as the Good Gray Poet's *enfant terrible* and claimed Fenollosa's writings as the key archive for his poetic revolution. My first chapter examines anew Pound's China in light of his American ambitions: Pound's struggle with Whitman's influence was an agonistic battle with the American public, and his championing of Fenollosa was no less an American question. Pound was a self-appointed American ambassador in matters both literary and political, and in his long exile from the land of his birth, his American accent only became more pronounced. Pound discovered in Fenollosa's papers an illustration for the new poetry he envisioned, and with the crucial raw material of Fenollosa's research on Sino-Japanese art and writing, he became the most significant proponent of United States–East Asian alliances in American literary history. Pound anointed Fenollosa as the prime instigator of modernist Orientalism, and he upheld Fenollosa's aesthetic ideals throughout his long study of East Asian literature and culture. Hence, though Fenollosa failed to imagine a contemporary American hero, his own fate in the future union between East and West has been extraordinary: Fenollosa's *East and West* fell apart as a political epic, but the ultimate political epic of the twentieth century, Pound's *Cantos*, took seriously a vision of the East as a statal ideal in a sustained vision that unfolded over hundreds of pages. *The Cantos* created a new history of American statecraft, in which Confucian historiography crossed the Pacific and found its way, incredibly, to revolutionary America; and in taking this transpacific leap, Pound thunderously crossed the bridge first imagined by Whitman and subsequently gilded by Fenollosa.
Ezra Pound was utterly discredited in the postwar era—to Pound's detriment, his argument for the relevance of poetry to contemporary politics was proven by his own example—and his work was driven underground. Artists of the Beat Generation, whose social ideals bore almost no resemblance to the civilizational order Pound labored to achieve, rediscovered Pound as a subterranean influence. The heirs to Pound's legacy include a range of 1950s luminaries, but it was Gary Snyder, the focus of my second chapter, whose adherence to Pound's Orientalism was the most complete and significant. Like his predecessors, Snyder imagined a disciplining East capable of reforming a wayward West—but this time through Zen Buddhism. Pound championed Confucianism and banished Buddhists from the earthly paradise he presented in *The Cantos*; Snyder, by contrast, continues to be one of the most well-known and eloquent advocates for Zen in the United States. Despite a near-complete divergence in political and cultural stances, however, Snyder and Pound share a conviction in Fenollosa's union of East and West—and both actively promoted their visions for an ideal society as an amalgam of East and West. Snyder understood North America as “Turtle Island,” borrowing a Native American term for the land to suggest a natural order, and he embraced the practice of Zen as a means of accessing this state. Snyder crossed the Pacific in order to knit together Far West and Far East in an ecological vision which aligned a “native” understanding of America with an Asiatic vision, and we can measure the success of the future union of East and West imagined by the 1950s counterculture in the presently unavoidable and sometimes incoherent meldings of East and West which have become a commonplace in American culture.
The Whitman-Fenollosa-Pound-Snyder genealogy I trace is marked by a repeated desire to reinvigorate an epic sense of America through contact with the Orient. In returning to these canonical figures, I aim to account for the endurance of a highly visible figuration by reconsidering American interests. My rereadings of major literary innovators of American Orientalism seek to uncover formal structures in order to provide a framework for the many images of the Orient that this study necessarily neglects. In devoting the first half of this book to the Asiatic images of Pound and Snyder, I examine transpacific alliances plagued by fantasy. Pound's Confucian order and Snyder's primitivism seemed as fanciful in their respective contemporary moments as Whitman's ocean-crossing train and Fenollosa's impossible marriage, yet these political and social failures blossomed into aesthetic revolutions. Dreams of political or social purification through the touch of the Orient are fueled by an economic imperative that is part and parcel of American Orientalism; it is, after all, an ideal of commerce that has consistently transformed Oriental other into ally. Yet transpacific alliances are subject to constant aesthetic mystification; the hard facts of East-West relations seem to invite transcendent ideals, and the major poetic instigators of American Orientalism construct phantom bridges over the material connections that bind East Asia to the United States.

Orienting Asian America
Whitman's headlong rush to the Orient in “Passage to India” hinted at another, crucial aspect of America's Asia: when he jotted down the 1869 junction between the great American railroads, he invoked an event that has become central to Asian American history and culture. The published photograph of the “Golden Spike” ceremony excluded the Chinese American laborers who toiled on the line in treacherous physical and social conditions. This now-famous exclusion has become one of the foundational outrages of Asian American studies, a field created out of a movement to redress such lacunae. Whitman imagined a train “on trackless seas” roaring across the Pacific, but Chinese pioneers who had already made the voyage in the other direction had a hand in creating this vehicle of westward expansion. The transpacific alliances and discords that shaped American Orientalism were deeply felt by Asians in the United States, whose fortunes were inextricably tied to the vicissitudes of United States-Asian relations.
Very different subjects made the transpacific crossing, the repercussions of transpacific alliances occasioned not only a reorientation in United States policy but also new arrivals to American shores. The history of Asian exclusion in the United States, which dates back to the landmark 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and persisted in the consistent barring of Asians from citizenship until 1952, reveals a preoccupation with regulating Asian bodies that corresponds to the rise of modern America. Considering the proliferation of anti-Asian policies at the turn of the twentieth century, Palumbo-Liu argues that “managing the modern was inseparable from managing Asian America” (17). His study *Asian/American* insists that Asians in America have been a determining force for “what ‘America’ was and is at any given moment” (2), and he pays particular attention to “early twentieth-century redefinitions of the American state” and its “particular blend of exclusionist practices coupled with liberal ideology, the latter used to distinguish the United States as the modern nation above all” (20). Asians in America in the years of exclusionist policy revealed the limits of the modern nation's liberal ideology, and the experience of Asians in various stages of civic alienation and incorporation in the United States vividly demonstrates the price of an image of the Orient which bears the imprint of economic relations: just as late industrialization was alternately applauded and punished in the Pacific, “economic animals” have been rewarded and rebuked in the domestic landscape. Asians in the United States became local targets for a popular ire that could quickly become violent: Americans who felt their livelihoods were threatened by an alternately desired and despised economic modernity attacked Asians imagined as economic machines—as Lye puts it, “modernization rendered visible” (94). The tenuousness of their civic status within the United States made their Americanness a subject of debate—one alive and well today.
In the late 1960s, ethnic activists created Asian America, a panethnic coalition in the service of radical political aims modeled on the tenets of black nationalism. Against a history of condescending and pejorative popular figurations of Asiatics, the movement created an Asian American past by enshrining two monuments of Asian American experience: the Chinese railroad worker and the interned Japanese American. The most significant document of the literary movement, the 1974 anthology *Aiieeeee!*, presented a primer for creating Asian American literature, in which activist artists culled together a literary past and suggested the kind of work that could eventually find its way into the canon. From its inception, Asian American literature limited the kinds of expressions that could be accommodated under its banner: Chinese and Japanese American experience took precedence, and left out from the canon were all those works which did not strike a note of defiance and whose literary expressions were illegible to the stated aims of the movement. Asian American literature was a tendentious formation, but its political aim gave birth to an Asian American consciousness that has become a crucial component of American literary study.

(p.18) The call to unity relied on an existing Western discourse, a fact which Gary Okihiro underscores in the very opening of his overview of Asian American history, in which he discusses the designation “Asian”:

Their classification as Asian was a European invention that named the Orient as spaces east of Europe and assigned natures, Orientalism, to its peoples. Accordingly, from 1850 to World War II, United States laws governing immigration, citizenship, and civil and property rights and social convention and practice lumped together Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Asian Indians, and Filipinos as an undifferentiated group. But that essentializing name was also made in America by Asians during the late 1960s, when they sought a pan-Asian identity premised upon a common past in the United States and upon a racialized politics that they believed would enable and lead to mobilization and empowerment. (xiv–xv)
In a thoroughgoing critique of Asian American literature, Susan Koshy points to this similarity between anti-Asian policies and Asian American literature as a conceptual failing: returning to the “common history of exclusion and racism” (325) that defines Asian American literature, Koshy argues that “this formulation is vitiated by its obsession with the white gaze” (325). Koshy opens her essay by assailing Asian American literature for its “lack of significant theoretical work” (316)—but perhaps her charge could be reformulated: it is not that Asian American literature lacks a theory, but that its theoretical basis is so closely tied to its politics. The binding theory of Asian American literature is antiracism: the fact of a determining white gaze pitched the movement into a mode of resistance. The reactive stance at the heart of Asian American literature makes it no less of a theory, and its staying power, despite formidable challenges over the years, proves its coherence.  

With the post-1965 boom in Asian immigration, however, came a heterogeneous population whose artistic expressions did not always adhere to the founding principles of the Asian American movement. Some stalwarts of the movement adopted a combative stance against these writers, but as Asian American studies settled into the academy, new advocates extended the initial claims of Asian American literature to address a growing field of work. Lisa Lowe’s groundbreaking *Immigrant Acts* elaborated the significance of Asian exclusion—a history first brought together by Asian American activists—to the creation of “Asian American cultural forms as alternatives to national cultural forms and as sites for the emergence of subjects and practices that are not exhausted by the narrative of American citizenship” (x). Lowe’s critical work opened Asian American literature onto the terrain of culture, which she read as “a phantasmatic site, on which the nation projects a series of condensed, complicated anxieties regarding external and internal threats to the mutable coherence of the national body: the invading multitude, the lascivious seductress, the servile yet treacherous domestic, the automaton whose inhuman efficiency will supersede American ingenuity” (18). By positioning Asian American literature within a cultural site overdetermined by foreign anxieties, Lowe sustained the initial antiracist drive of the movement while opening it to new arrivals to the United States.
Building upon Lowe’s work of understanding Asian American studies within the terrain of culture, Kandice Chuh’s *Imagine Otherwise* pitches Asian American literature as theory by specifying Lowe’s culture as “the locus in which signification has material life” (19). Using the terms of poststructuralism, Chuh argues that Asian American literature is ultimately “a mediating presence that links bodies to the knowledge regimes of the United States nation” (27). We may thus read Asian American texts as themselves theories, in the sense that they reveal knowledge formations and apparatuses of power. By turning readers into theoreticians, Chuh’s formulation accounts for the difficulty of incorporating different kinds of figures under the sign of Asian American studies by positing what she terms a “subjectless discourse” (9) which constantly queries its own boundaries. What began as a project of several strident subjects has become subjectless in Chuh’s hands, and her theoretical innovation ultimately provides a mode of accommodating a wider range of literary texts while retaining the category of Asian American literature.

Critical accounts of Asian American literature thus grapple with the terms of its initial formation, whether in attempting to elude or expand its activist origins. From its inception, Asian American literature brandished its knowledge of Asian experience in both the United States and Asia in order to reveal the shortcomings of mainstream Orientalism. The activist movement took the terrain of culture as its battlefield in order to produce trenchant critiques of American policy, both foreign and domestic. I propose to reopen our understanding of the formation of Asian American literature by considering a presently disavowed past. To return to Orientalist literature as an instigator for Asian American literature is to examine anew a political and aesthetic response—one which has long been deemed a case of simple rejection—as a crucial point of contact which defined a literary movement. Ethnic nationalists forged their art against a tradition of Orientalism in American letters, and contemporary Asian American literature continues to react to an ongoing American Orientalism with deep roots in the modernist era. The often contentious conversations between Orientalist and minority poetics permit us to reconsider the foundational aesthetic stance of the ethnic nationalists, and, further, to understand contemporary Asian American literature as a continuing dialogue with the burden of transpacific relations.
This study suggests that reading Asian American literature against a backdrop of American Orientalism may help us attend to present theoretical demands for greater ideological range and fuller transnational contexts. The structure of American Orientalism, which made alliance contingent upon a commensurate abjection, effectively divided Asian groups within the United States. All Asians were branded as “economic animals,” but the specific fortunes of each group rose and fell with American foreign policy, and little common cause could be found in periods of sudden upheavals and chronic uncertainty. The panethnic coalition brought together Chinese and Japanese Americans, long riven by social, political, and cultural differences, and I read the union of Asian America as a response not only to blanket anti-Asian racism but to the divisive operations of American foreign policy, marked by partial and temporary alliances. By bringing to the fore differential relations across the Pacific, we may examine aesthetic expressions that contend with the alternating alliances and enmities that structure transpacific relations. Indeed, just as the movement’s central tenet of antiracism makes visible a history of racism, attending to transpacific alliances in Asian American literature reveals the far reach of American economic and military interests. In tying the Asian American revolution to a past of transpacific literary expression, we may account for a multiplicity of literary expressions which evoke transpacific journeys, past and present.

New Bridges
The second half of *Apparitions of Asia* considers Asian American writing which must contend with the potent formulation of American Orientalism. Asian American poets faced a singular plight: the poetic revolutions of the twentieth century were shot through with Oriental hallucinations. Figures like Fenollosa's protégé, Okakura Kakuzo (Tenshin), paraded their allegiance to American Orientalism. Okakura embodied East-West connections: he became the curator of Fenollosa's collection of Oriental art in Boston—and, echoing his mentor, Okakura "began to call Japan a 'museum of Asia.'" He published books about Japan and the Orient in fluid and polished English, the most famous of which, *The Book of Tea* (1906), continues to charm readers. In *The Book of Tea*, Okakura presents a "philosophy of tea" as a small but significant example of a transpacific link: "Strangely enough humanity has so far met in the tea-cup. It is the only Asiatic ceremonial which commands universal esteem...in this single instance the Oriental spirit reigns supreme" (11). Okakura describes an intimacy with the Orient that has already touched every Western home, presenting a finessed version of the union that Fenollosa's *East and West* sketched with less success: Okakura's example of tea brings together aesthetic and commercial interests. The Fenollosa-Okakura pair has echoes in American literary history: dramatist and poet Sadakichi Hartmann served as Whitman's secretary, and Yone Noguchi was Joaquin Miller's houseboy. Such literary intimacies are rarely discussed, but in capitalizing on their transpacific privileges to craft their own alliances, these figures demonstrate the seduction of American Orientalism.
The transition from American literary Orientalism to Asian American literature was not simply a clean break, and my third chapter reads the complicated appeal of this past in the bizarre and little-known case of David Hsin-Fu Wand, whose career captures in miniature the trajectory of my study: he began his career as a protégé of Pound, renounced this influence to dally with Snyder, and finally ensconced himself within the Asian American activist movement. Wand poses as a cautionary tale; his vacillations are illustrative for their excessiveness, and he usefully rehearses the different options available to Asian American poets. His Orientalist past kept him from full acceptance into Asian American studies, but his poetic trajectory was not so alien to the activist practitioners who considered him a tardy convert to their cause. Activist poets of the Asian American movement not only denounced Orientalists, they grappled with figures tainted by East-West alliances. My analysis reads reactions to American Orientalism in the work of prominent Asian American activist poets who echoed the Beat forms deeply influenced by Pound. *The Buddha Bandits Down Highway 99*, a significant 1978 poetic creation jointly authored by key activist poets of Asian America, engages in a conversation with Snyder's "Night Highway 99"; against the backdrop of Snyder's vision, these poets present their Asian American imaginations along the dark river of the Western highway. Lawson Fusao Inada, one of the Buddha Bandits and a major instigator of Asian American literature, presents critical responses to the prisonhouse of American Orientalism that turn to different American cultures in order to give voice to an Asian American subject. Inada's verse displays the multiple dialogues of Asian American literature, which writes against a literary past at the same time as it invokes a bitter history through a range of American voices and literary strategies.
Led by Frank Chin, the movement’s most vocal and inventive spokesperson, activist Asian American artists singled out a handful of writers who mistakenly and uncritically invoked modernist Orientalism in their work; chief among the violators was Maxine Hong Kingston, whose stated aims of writing a modernist epic branded her a comprador. I open the final chapter of this study with Kingston’s attempts to venture into a modernist literary past. Kingston’s 1976 *The Woman Warrior* drove the retheorization of Asian American literature; despite vociferous detractors from the activist camp, it was largely her work that occasioned the expansion of the field. Because her work transformed the Asian American literary landscape, I read Kingston as a model for subsequent reorientations of the canon. The recent work that has spurred a similar reconsideration of Asian American literature is Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s 1982 epic *Dictée*, which presented a significant formal return to the modernist epic. My reading of this now-canonical text delves into the echoes between Cha’s work and Pound’s epic: I read her modernist allusions as formal attempts to reveal the modern history of American involvement in the Far East. The recent work of Myung Mi Kim follows Cha in employing modernist forms to unveil a literary and political past that binds Asia to the United States. In reading these late crossings on a bridge constructed by American alliances with the Far East, I demonstrate the persistence of these transpacific connections in American and Asian American literature throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.
The figures I examine in this study all performed cultural work through aesthetic forms: they yoked literary endeavors to political aims. Visions of more beautiful futures have always been the province of aesthetic production, but in each of the cases I consider, literary work is the preferred mode for expressing a critical stance toward contemporary politics. None of these artists accepted a division between aesthetics and politics, and they imagined their poems in the public sphere. Each of them performed ambassadorial functions; they are, to use Kirsten Silva Gruesz's potent phrase, “ambassadors of culture”: they fashioned themselves as diplomats of cultural traffic by applying their aesthetic tastes to political ideologies. In the two halves of my study appear two different kinds of ambassadors: Gruesz distinguishes between “a ‘top-down’ model of cultural transmission,” in which the artist “validates his own authority through a tradition of taste and prestige understood to be the culturally dominant one” and “a ‘bottom-up’ model,” in which the artist “stands in for his readership, representing interests, and values, their knowledge before the tribunal of Tradition” (17). Literary scholarship tends to separate its analyses of “top-down” and “bottom-up,” but this study follows Gruesz's conviction that they can exist in “dialectical relation” (17) in order to suggest that we may discover something new about cultural formation by considering both sides. Apparitions of Asia charts the pressure a newly “opened” Pacific region exerts on American literature; my emphasis on the formal expressions of this deeply transforming influence follows the ambassadors themselves in their belief that poetry is uniquely capable of registering cultural shifts—and creating new cultures.

Notes:

(1.) Beongcheon Yu discusses this “first poetic treatment of Japan by any major American poet” (63).

(2.) Malini Johar Schueller analyzes Whitman's fascination with India, in particular “the theory of the common ancestry of Europeans and Asians” (191).


(4.) Emerson famously kept a journal called “The Orientalist” in the 1850s. Arthur Christy notes that Emerson recognized an “Oriental quality” in Whitman (250).
(5.) Quoted in Yu 70.

(6.) Iriye frames this economic interest within “the Jeffersonian dictum of ‘peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations’ “ (14).

(7.) In “Orientalism, an Afterword,” Said emphasizes this point, arguing that “the development and maintenance of every culture requires the existence of a different and competing alter ego” (35).


(9.) Although Said begins his introduction by saying that “Americans will not feel quite the same about the Orient, which for them is much more likely to be associated very differently with the Far East (China and Japan, mainly)” (1), he goes on to explain that “the American Oriental position since World War II has fit—I think, quite self‐consciously—in the places excavated by the two earlier European powers [Britain and France]” (17).

(10.) Lye explains that “‘China’ and ‘Japan’ provided examples of a high‐civilizational discourse whose intersection with the problematics of late modernization uniquely marked off East Asia from other regions of the non‐Western world” (10).

(11.) Palumbo‐Liu points out that United States support for Japan's restoration far exceeded the support designated for the Marshall Plan: “the American effort in the Asia‐Pacific region constituted a second and continuing Marshall Plan in all but name” (264).

(12.) This phrase is taken from the title of Christopher Benfey's *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics, and the Opening of Old Japan*.

(13.) Chisolm 28. Chisolm notes that Fenollosa is credited with inspiring “the turning point of Japanese thinkers toward German philosophy” (42).

(14.) Quoted in Yu 94.
(15.) Quoted in Chisolm 50–51.

(16.) Chisolm cites Fenollosa's own accounts of his cataloging labors: “I have recovered the history of Japanese art from the 6th to the 9th centuries A.D. which has been completely lost”—and in exhuming treasures from Buddhist temples, Fenollosa described priests “everywhere greedy for my certificates” (53). Victoria Weston frames Fenollosa's commercial considerations: “Fenollosa argued that art was intrinsically national, and that only by remaining true to its unique character would Japanese art attract international prestige and foreign buyers” (27). His precise calibrations of scarcity created a market for objects newly visible as rare art.

(17.) Fenollosa purchased enough artistic treasures—with the help of another “Gilded Age misfit,” William Sturgis Bigelow—to stock Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts with the largest and most distinguished collection of East Asian art outside of Asia. Thus, at the same time that Fenollosa was championing national preservation in Japan, he was carting away many of the choicest pieces, a paradox that occasioned some soul-searching: in an 1884 letter to Morse, Fenollosa pondered, “Already people here are saying that my collection must be kept here in Japan for the Japanese. I have bought a number of the very greatest treasures secretly. The Japanese as yet don't know that I have them. I wish I could see them all safely housed forever in the Boston Art Museum. And yet if the Emperor or Mombusho [Department of Education] should want to buy my collection, wouldn't it be my duty to humanity, all things considered, to let them have it? What do you think?” (quoted in Chisolm 65). These “greatest treasures” were shipped to Boston. In fact, Fenollosa's clandestine purchases triggered new legislation in Japan barring the removal of cultural treasures.
Fenollosa’s role in Japan is as Weston puts it, “a hotly contested subject” (2); in recent work, art historians have refuted his centrality in “inventing Japanese art.” As Christine Guth argues, “The process of reevaluation of Buddhist Art was already well under way when Ernest Fenollosa, the man widely credited with promoting the appreciation of Buddhist Art in Japan and the West, arrived in Japan in the fall of 1878” (109). In a similar vein, Ellen Conant demonstrates that there is little evidentiary basis for Fenollosa’s belief that a “debilitating” westernization had taken place (12) and goes on to argue that Fenollosa was not the only Westerner to dabble in Japanese art: Conant notes a German attempt to “revamp a new Westernized school of art in Kyoto in 1880” (20) and an Italian engraver who cataloged ancient art in 1878 (22). Cohen cites one prevailing characterization of Fenollosa as a “reactionary Japanophile” (27).

The title of part 4 of Fenollosa’s epic.

Discussed and cited in Chisolm 55.

Chisolm 127.

Palumbo-Liu discusses Japan’s new-found stature, which led Americans to question “whether the Japanese should even be considered as Asians” as popular perception separated “the enterprising, modernizing Japanese state from the ‘mass’ of Asia” (32).

Yunte Huang’s *Transpacific Displacement* uses the expansiveness of transpacific migration to read both high modernist and Asian American poetry. Huang writes, “Placed in the larger perspective of transpacific displacement, which is, as I argue, indispensable to the creation of American literature, Asian American literature will be able to maintain its subversive role in undermining the ‘American’ canon without risking the danger of segregating itself” (6). Though my reading of American Orientalism differs from Huang’s argument for ethnographic discourse, I share Huang’s premise of a transpacific context in order to suggest a relationship between this “American” canon and Asian American literature.
(24.) In a recent critique of this founding premise of the movement, Viet Thanh Nguyen complicates its political imperative by situating the 1968 formation of Asian American identity in a larger context of “the maturation of a global capitalism that had the ability to turn even resistance into a commodity” (4). Nguyen provides a valuable analysis of the packaging and promotion of resistance.

(25.) Chuh's analysis provides a cogent response to Koshy's suggestion that Asian American studies has a “catachrestic status”: “I use the term ‘catachresis’ to indicate that there is no literal referent for the rubric ‘Asian American,’ and, as such, the name is marked by the limits of its signifying power. It then becomes our responsibility to articulate the inner contradictions of the term and to enunciate its representational inconsistencies and dilemmas” (342).

(26.) See Benfey (102-107) for an account of Okakura's Western conquests.

(27.) Just as Fenollosa took advantage of his official role to smuggle Eastern treasures, Okakura collected Chinese art for the Museum of Fine Arts at a propitious moment of political unrest: “When chaos came, when grave robbers ran rampant and Chinese connoisseurs feared for the safety of their collections, Okakura was there with Boston money” (Cohen 46).

(28.) Karatani 156.

(29.) Juliana Chang's important anthology *Quiet Fire* includes these early Asian American poets.