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Pacific Rim Discourse: The U.S. Global Imaginary in the Late Cold War Years

Christopher L. Connery

> . . . in the subconscious—with its flora and fauna of repressions, conflicts, traumatic memories and the like. Travelling further, we reach a kind of far West, inhabited by Jungian archetypes and the raw materials of human mythology. Beyond this region lies a broad Pacific. Wafted across it on the wings of mescaline . . . we reach what might be called the Antipodes of the mind.
>
> —Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*

> Thus this mysterious divine Pacific zones the whole world's bulk around it; makes all coasts one bay to it; seems the tide-beating heart of earth.
>
> —Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

> It is no longer continents that have become agglomerated but the totality of the planet that is diminished. . . . The continental translation

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that, curiously enough, we find both in the geophysician Wegener [Gondwanaland], with the drift of land masses, and in Mackinder, with the geopolitical amalgam of lands, has given way to a worldwide phenomena of terrestrial and technological contraction that today makes us penetrate into an artificial topological universe: the direct encounter of every surface on the globe.
—Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*

In the outer-space photograph most popular in this country, North America and South America are poised on the far right of the globe. The Earth is largely a cloud-laced ocean; the land a near irrelevancy: Melville's totalizing Pacific. Even without photographs, we have lived in the era of a cartographic Real for several centuries. "Imagined communities" and other geopolitical desires have always been read against a conjurable totality that gives the beyond to a border. Maps are ideology. Think of Fredric Jameson's synthesis of Kevin Lynch and Louis Althusser, where Lynch's "cognitive mapping" is read as Althusser's definition of Ideology itself: "the Imaginary representation of the subject's relationship to his or her Real conditions of existence."[1] Jameson's piece "Cognitive Mapping" is a call for a Utopian aesthetic—a cognitive mapping performed in the individual sphere *against and beyond* the dominant totality of capital. This essay is on the psychogeography of capital itself—the prescriptive cognitive mapping performed by capital's institutions in the service of the global imaginary—which is at once the imaginary of the totality and the prescribed Real against which any individual imaginary is constructed.

My argument, simply, is that the idea of the Pacific Rim came into being in the mid-1970s, that it was dominant in the U.S. geo-imaginary until the end of the 1980s, and that this dominance was determined by the particular stage of late capitalism marked by that period and by the economic and political situation of the United States in the late Cold War years.[2] Pacific Rim Discourse is an imagining of U.S. multinational capitalism in an era when the "socialist" bloc still existed, and it is the socialist bloc that is the

1. Fredric Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 353.
2. To my knowledge, Arif Dirlik is the first scholar to call attention to both the ideological character and the specific U.S. character of "the Asia-Pacific" idea. See Arif Dirlik, "The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure," *Journal of World History* 3 (Spring 1992): 55–79.

principle discursive and strategic Other. Pacific Rim Discourse, though, is a *non*-othering discourse. Unlike Orientalism, which Edward W. Said delineates genealogically as a discursive formation centered on a fundamental othering—an othering further grounded in the specific histories of colonialism and imperialism—Pacific Rim Discourse presumes a kind of metonymic equivalence. Its world is an interpenetrating complex of interrelationships with no center: neither the center of a hegemonic power nor the imagined fulcrum of a "balance of power."

The Pacific Rim is a well-used term that, since the late 1970s, has come to signify something to most Americans. It is almost exclusively an American usage; in East Asia, the Pacific island nations, Australia, and New Zealand, its use is clearly U.S.-derived. By 1973 or 1974, it appears to mean the United States and East Asia. The most extensive geographical definition of the term has been: peninsular and island Southeast Asia; China; Northeast Asia, including the Soviet Pacific region; Australia; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; the islands of the South Pacific; and the Pacific Coast of South, Central, and North America. For practical discursive purposes, the Pacific Rim consists of the United States, Canada, Mexico (tenuously, though—Mexico is often left out), Japan, China, the Four Tigers—also known as the Little Dragons or the East Asian NICs[3]—Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Singapore—and the up-and-coming, or minor-league, players: Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines.[4] The psychic center of the Pacific Rim is the United States-Japan relationship. China has played an important role in the mythic construction of the Pacific Rim as telos.

The origin of the term is geological, referring to the rim of volcanic and tectonic activity around the Pacific Ocean—the Bering Strait, Japan, China, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Coasts of North and South America. In the 1960s, the term, or the related *Pacific Basin*, comes to be used

3. NIC stands for Newly Industrialized Country. Although I prefer Bruce Cumings's acronym BAIR, for Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Industrializing Regimes, NIC is the choice of Pacific Rim Discourse.

4. Alexander Besher, *The Pacific Rim Almanac* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1990), xix. This is one of the single best sources for gauging the content and the tone of the Pacific Rim as "trend." The cover states: "A complete resource guide to the new center of the economic world. Covering all the facts, statistics, trends, products, and technologies of the entire Asia Pacific Region." For the identity of the Pacific Rim, see also Arif Dirlik, "The Asia-Pacific Idea," and Peter Gourevitch, "The Pacific Rim: Current Debates," *The Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science* 505 (1989): 8–23.

primarily in a national security context, as in the document by Mike Mansfield on the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations' study mission to the Western Pacific, *The Rim of Asia* (1967). The Vietnam War kept alive the national security context in which the Pacific Rim was discussed: Vietnam was a domino threatening the rest of Southeast Asia; Japan's security would be threatened by a Communist Asian mainland; Soviet interests in the Pacific were ominous. The end of the Vietnam War gave the lie to the domino theory, and although an anxiety over Soviet intentions in the Pacific continued to be voiced throughout the Reagan administration, it was always abstract; there was never any clear articulation of what those intentions might have been.

Many factors came together in the mid-seventies that both diminished the national security context and established the fundamental ground for Pacific Rim Discourse, among them: (1) the United States-China rapprochement; (2) the end of the Vietnam War; (3) the indisputable economic strength of Japan, with the attendant realization that Japan was no longer an admirable latecomer to modernization but an economic giant—a First World country; and (4) the worldwide economic downturn of the mid-1970s. It was an age when U.S. hegemony was questioned, or doubted, as never before in the postwar era.[5]

Pacific Rim Discourse has multiple genealogies and is better understood in the context of several discursive trajectories. I will treat primarily Orientalism, modernization theory, left-liberal humanist internationalism, and Cold War discourse. Pacific Rim Discourse was a tentative move into the anxious mythology of a putative new era, an era during which that fundamental characterization of the hegemon's view of its other—Orientalism—loses some of its utility. Although one encounters many Orientalist tropes, such as Japan bashing and more benign forms of essentializing in representations of East Asia during the Pacific Rim Discourse years, certain key structural factors have changed. Orientalism presumes an othering that is articulated in terms of categorical asymmetry: the Western hegemonic

5. Functionalist discussions of hegemony and "hegemonic stability" became quite common in political science and political economy beginning in the early to mid-1970s. For histories and critiques of the hegemony debates, see Arthur A. Stein, "The Hegemon's Dilemma: Great Britain, the United States, and the International Economic Order," *International Organization* 38 (Spring 1984): 355–86; Bruce Russet, "The Mysterious Case of Vanishing Hegemony," *International Organization* 39 (Spring 1985): 207–31; and Susan Strange, "The Persistent Myth of Lost Hegemony," *International Organization* 41 (Autumn 1987): 551–74.

national or imperial power counterpoised to its colony, dependency, frontier, or to an "Asiatic" empire or tribal confederation. When these sub- or extranational categories disappear (for the most part), however, the world knows only one category: the nation-state. At this horizon of the nation-state, the transnational imaginary can only become more abstract, more mythological, less analyzable in the strictly hegemonic terms on which Orientalism depends. There is, also, in this era, the more concrete perception that capitalism has worked its transformative miracles in one land of the Other—East Asia, particularly Japan. While Cold Warriors had wanted a strong, economically vibrant Japan, they had imagined Japan as a strictly *regional* hegemon. Japan as global power necessitated a reimagining of global categories.

Economic exploitation and Said's othering coincided in the imperial age, when an ideology of Western cultural or racial superiority overshadowed any theorizing of capitalism's teleological promise. The undeveloped world was undeveloped because of local factors. Modernization theory shifted the othering to a more purely temporal plane, in keeping with its capitalist universalist teleology. It could speak of "latecomers,"[6] whereby the Western present was the East Asian future. Just as modernization theory obliterated the spatial, the new realities of multinational capitalism in the Carter and Reagan years erased modernization theory's temporality. Japan and the East Asian NICs were no longer the West's past. In the eighties, if Japan was anywhere in time, it was in the future, with Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea at the very least in some version of the present. The Rim was a perfect image for a centeredness with no central power.

In his treatment of Louis Massignon, author of that oracular phrase "Nous sommes tous les Sémites," Said gives a crumb of respect to the humanist universalism that allowed such a line to be possible. Of course, this kind of internationalism is an affordable luxury to an imperial power. As E. H. Carr has noted, internationalism is the British credo in times of British hegemony, the French credo in times of French hegemony, and the U.S. credo in times of U.S. hegemony.[7] Tom Ferguson and Bruce Cumings, among others, identified an internationalist capitalist interest group who

6. For example, Marion J. Levy, Jr., *Modernization: Latecomers and Survivors* (New York: Basic Books, 1972).
7. E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919–1939; An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 108.

gained ascendancy in the Roosevelt presidency and from whom came the principal architects of Cold War policy.[8] There was also a group of scholars and critics during the Roosevelt years whose internationalism was more liberal-idealist. Like Massignon, the Asia scholars associated with the Institute for Pacific Relations and the journal *Amerasia* represent a tradition that is fundamentally *pre*–Cold War, antifascist left-wing humanist. As E. H. Norman wrote in 1937, in the first issue of *Amerasia*,

> We are united in the belief that citizens of the United States as members of a democracy have an inalienable right to know all the pertinent and efficient causative factors involved in our Pacific and Asiatic commitments and relations, that they may actively and critically follow the methods employed by our government in carrying out its policy in that region. We are also united in striving to attain the ultimate objective of promoting among all peoples inhabiting the periphery of the Pacific Ocean a harmony of relationships which transcends the merely legalistic concepts of justice with its emphasis on property over human rights or upon specious national honor or sovereignty over the economic welfare and the spiritual needs of the 700 million people who live on the islands or in the countries bordering the Pacific.[9]

In 1947, the poet Charles Olson published *Call Me Ishmael*. He reads the whaleship as the first American factory, and the American pursuit of the sperm whale into the Pacific (American whalers were the first to hunt the sperm) as prefiguring the United States as Pacific hegemon, a process Olson saw coming into fruition during World War II. For Olson, the Pacific was deliverance from the tyranny of Judeo-Christian humanism: "The Pacific is the end of the UNKNOWN which Homer's and Dante's Ulysses opened men's eyes to. END of individual's responsibility only to himself. Ahab is full stop."[10] Olson reworked the book while serving during the war at the Office of War Information, in its early years a bastion of liberal

8. Thomas Ferguson, "From Normalcy to New Deal: Industrial Structure, Party Competition, and American Public Policy in the Great Depression," *International Organization* 38 (Winter 1984): 41–94; Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 2: 3–121.
9. Quoted in John W. Dower, ed., *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman* (New York: Pantheon, 1975), 38–39.
10. Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947), 119.

antifascist idealism that was a direct descendant of the federally supported writers' projects of the New Deal.[11] Olson quit the OWI in 1944, when he became convinced of its growing rightward turn. The right-wing U.S. China lobby had triumphed in its efforts to turn U.S. policy against Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), specifically by the cancellation of Henry Wallace's planned visit with Mao in 1944.[12] The Cold War was beginning to emerge from World War II.

For Olson and like-minded antifascists, the wrong turn made by the United States became more clear with the dumping of Henry Wallace in favor of Harry Truman for vice-president and the gradual ascent of anti-communism over antifascism. Norman, the Institute for Pacific Relations, and *Amerasia* would later fall victim to Cold War hysteria in the United States, and the shadow of McCarthyism and anticommunism would color East Asian Studies in the United States into the 1960s. The utopian universalism articulated during *Amerasia*'s historical moment would never be revived. Pacific Rim Discourse is in no way a revival of that humanism, nor is it the opportunistic internationalism that is the luxury of a dominant power. It is an economically determined discourse that functions as the mythology of multinational capitalism within a national sphere. The United States, Japan, the East Asian NICs, and the second tier of developing Pacific nations (Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, coastal China) are linked in a Rim that is an imagining of transnational capital, a co-prosperity sphere. Japan and the NICs represent capital's transformative promise—their recent history is capital's teleology. China is the certain future. The discourse of equality and connectedness reflects, in part, a reaction to East Asian "success": When Japan is number one, the only way not to be number two is to transcend the nation.

A nation-state is a most particular mixing of the abstract and the material; in all articulations of nationhood, there is an abstraction—an idealism—that conflicts with the physical boundaries of any given nation-state. The United States, conceiving itself more than most nation-states in terms of lack, of externality (manifest destiny, the frontier, the new frontier, etc.),

11. Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 21. Tom Clark, *Charles Olson: The Allegory of a Poet's Life* (New York: Norton, 1991), 84–107.

12. Tom Clark, *Charles Olson*, 85. Wallace's name is probably better known in Northwest China than it is in the United States today. A pear-shaped melon he brought into China as a gift on this visit became widely cultivated in the Lanzhou area, where it is known in China today as a "Wallace-melon" (Chinese: *Walasi-gua*).

has been prone to the worst excesses of the violence of abstractionism. This impulse has been forcefully documented in Robert Drinnon's *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (the title is an allusion to Melville, who named Ahab's ship after the first Indian tribe to fall victim to colonial American genocide). Drinnon's book (1980) ends with the Vietnam War, on the eve of Pacific Rim Discourse. Although, as I have argued, Pacific Rim Discourse as non-othering discourse can be described as post-Orientalist, there are important links to the metaphysics of the Cold War.

America's territorial ideology—its land-renouncing abstraction—has always been matched in policy by actions of absolute horror. The Cold War carried geopolitical abstraction to new limits, accompanied always by those weapons that could render the planet truly abstract. In *The Origins of the Korean War*, Bruce Cumings has given a convincing political economy of modern American foreign policy that is a welcome corrective to the status quo in the field of international relations.[13] He sees the particular Cold War ideologies of internationalism and containment theorized and practiced by Acheson, Kennan, Forrestal, Dulles, Rusk, Nitze, Harriman, among others, as having root in their own careers on Wall Street and in other institutions of U.S. finance capital that stood to benefit from an international economy free of trade barriers, anchored by strong regional economic powers. The Cold War geo-imaginary was similarly shaped by the psychic structures of the most developed stage of international capitalism.

For the Cold Warriors, the principle structural impediment to the international open market was inwardness. Nazi Germany had made Europe an inner-directed, self-supplied system. In the perverse logic of Cold War capitalism, communism was read not as class-based internationalism but as a Soviet expansionist replay of European totalitarianism. Acheson and Kennan's project was to counter the threat of a Soviet-dominated Eurasian continent turned away from the "free" world. William Pietz has convincingly shown the discursive continuities between Orientalism and Cold War discourse.[14] With the Soviet bloc constructed as the West's strategically significant Other, and with one defining characteristic of that Otherness being an Oriental closedness, the analytical project of the Cold Warrior becomes

13. For a trenchant critique of the ideology of the field, see Bruce Andrews, "The Domestic Content of International Desire," *International Organization* 38 (Spring 1984): 321–27.
14. William Pietz, "The Post-Colonialism of Cold War Discourse," *Social Text* 19/20 (Fall 1988): 55–75.

more purely psychological, more prone to metaphor and re-situations. So, in Cold War strategy, and in the field of international relations, we commonly encounter such bizarre formulations as the nation that "behaves," diplomacy as game theory, and "national interests." As Anders Stephanson characterized George Kennan's analytical project:

> Two discernible projects are therefore involved in understanding the other side. The first is the overarching task of determining the "real" position of the opponent, a task that can be carried out only within one's own given terms of truth. The second is the subordinate problem of understanding how the other party *thinks* he or she thinks and acts.[15]

This kind of essentializing psychologism combined with the strategic character of nuclear warfare to de-spatialize the globe. George Kennan was probably the last of the spatialists, articulating a geographically specific Western civilization as the strategic center for U.S. policy. Western Europe was the focus of his doctrine of containment, because "the older cultural centers of Europe are the meteorological centers in which much of the climate of international life is produced and from which it proceeds."[16] Another example of early Cold War spatiality was the notion of regional hegemony. Southeast Asia, viewed immediately after World War II as a market and raw materials source to alleviate Western Europe's dollar drain, is subsequently incarnated as Japan's potential hinterland, source of *its* markets and raw materials. NSC 68, authored primarily by Paul Nitze, and the principal justification for U.S. military intervention worldwide, internationalized the containment strategy. In giving every region in the world equal symbolic value, it made a world consisting *only* of abstract, symbolic values. Thus, Dean Acheson could completely deny the local character of the Korean War[17] and thereby strengthen the course that led to Vietnam. Military strategy in Korea and Vietnam followed neatly from this abstractionism: Nearly every town in Korea was leveled by U.S. bombing; Vietnam was first home to "strategic hamlets" and later the target of more aerial bombardment than the totals of all previous wars.

The binarism of Cold War thinking obliterated "local conditions"

15. Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 4.
16. Quoted in Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy*, 157.
17. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 2:628.

everywhere, Europe and the United States included. But capitalist universalism, the ideology that constructed the open world market as "natural," could never structurally abide the binary world inscribed by the *realpolitik* of containment. Cumings traces the evolution of the Korean war strategy from one of containment to the failed strategy of "rollback." Actually, an implied rollback was present in early containment thinking. Kennan thought that merely by slowing Communist momentum, Eastern European and Soviet communism would fall on their own when simply faced with the superiority of Western capitalism.[18] By the mid-1970s, the founding years of Pacific Rim Discourse, several developments fundamentally changed the Cold War binary equation: (1) the "loss" of Vietnam is utterly without geopolitical consequence; (2) Nixon and Kissinger's opening to China give the lie both to Communist solidarity and to the Asian domino theory; (3) it is clear that Japan's prosperity is not due to a position as regional hegemon but to its North American and Western European trade; (4) the failed revolution in Portugal and the definitive defeat of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in Italy finally make it clear that communism will not expand into putatively vulnerable "Southern Europe" (itself an ideological construction of the geo-imaginary); (5) Western bloc détente with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe seems to constitute an implicit renunciation of rollback tendencies.

By the mid-1970s, the Cold War binarism remains, but with less grip on the United States's geo-imaginary. Kennan's European-centered Western civilization, to be defended against Soviet barbarism, had been an easy and natural equation. Since the space of the Other can be occupied only by one category, however, the later emergence of a powerful Asian capitalist power can be accommodated only in the "us" of Western capitalism, which has the somewhat paradoxical effect of rendering moot Western capital's geographic specificity. As the Cold War drags on, particularly after its last "hot" outbreak in Vietnam, it becomes a bad old story. Europe becomes metonymically aligned with the static confrontationalism of U.S.-Soviet hostility and thus consigned to an anti-teleology from which the Pacific Rim is a deliverance. Reagan's "evil empire" is really a nostalgic, albeit macabre, blip on the discursive screen, serving mainly as an excuse to maintain a high-powered domestic military economy and to wage limited techno-war on the Third World.

The Cold War had codified that geopolitical abstractionism that made

18. Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 150–51.

possible the post-binary abstractionism of Pacific Rim Discourse. Indeed, the late Cold War's anti-teleology required a new spatial mythology for U.S. international capital. The idea of the Pacific Rim had a further advantage: It centered on an ocean. Water is capital's element. The idea of an ocean-centered westward movement of history, beginning with the Mediterranean, passing on to the Atlantic, and culminating in the Pacific, was commonplace in the late nineteenth-century United States. And as an extension of *America*, the Pacific would be at its essence a *non*colonial space where a pure capital would be free to operate. This mythology was behind President McKinley's secretary of state John Hay's Open Door policy for China and served in general to de-imperialize U.S. expansionist moves into the Pacific. The bourgeois idealization of sea power and ocean-borne commerce has been central to the mythology of capital, which has struggled to free itself from the earth just as the bourgeoisie struggled to free itself from tilling the soil. Movable capital is liquid capital, and without movement, capital is a mere Oriental hoard.

Indeed, as John Hay's remarks suggest, a truly *world* history happens only on and around oceans. John Hay's mentor was William Seward, secretary of state in the 1860s, who "understood that the primary objective of expansion would no longer be territorial, once the economy had been more industrialized. He considered that commercial expansion would now be the key to making America 'the master of the world.'"[19] The debate over Seward's policies and their consequences, the most immediate consequence being the United States's imperial ventures in the Pacific in the late nineteenth century, would last in modified form until the bipartisan triumph of internationalism in the Cold War years.

American isolationism has always found its greatest support in the interior. A history of the rise of the United States as an international power could be written as its escape from the predial bonds of its continentality. George Kennan wrote often of the Soviet national character as being determined less by Marxism than by its vast open plains—its terrestriality. Here, he echoes Hegel, whose *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* likewise divides the world into land and sea. For Hegel, terrestrial man can be content with simple fulfillment of needs. He who takes to the seas, however, does so for profit.[20] Kennan feared the insular tendencies that periodically

19. Gareth Stedman Jones, "The History of U.S. Imperialism," in *Ideology in Social Science*, ed. Robin Blackburn (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 222.
20. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Introduction: Reason*

surfaced in the United States almost as much as the landlocked tyrannical illiberality spawned on the Russian steppe.[21] Containment is containment of the awesome landedness of the Eurasian continent. We can read the Cold War on one level, as Orwell did in *1984* with the names of his world powers, as Ocean versus Land.

The Pacific, as Melville, Seward, Hay, and Olson had intuited, was the Last Ocean. Late nineteenth-century expansionist Whitelaw Reid called it "the American Lake," a sentiment that could still be echoed in 1949 by Douglas MacArthur, who called it an "Anglo-Saxon lake."[22] John F. Kennedy would specifically invoke the Pacific as part of his "New Frontier" in his acceptance speech at the 1960 Democratic Convention in Los Angeles. With the economic ascent of Japan and the East Asian NICs, however, the Pacific's multinational character was undeniable. The Pacific was no longer an American lake, and the 1973–1974 recession had rendered somewhat precarious any capitalist power's entry into a new frontier of prosperity. And from this precariousness: The Rim. Consider the word *rim*: A rim unites—it unites across oceans, across ethnic and racial divides. It presumes a unity, a centeredness with no center, a totality, an unbrokenness. A rim is thin. It is stable but precarious. One can fall off a rim. A rim is a horizon: the horizon of capital, of history, of space and time. It is a topology for the "suppression of distance" said to be characteristic of our times.

Third World countries are off the Rim. In the Cold War, Kennan had criticized all U.S. involvement in the Third World, including the Vietnam War and the rapprochement with China, as unnecessary attention to irrelevant localisms. He feared a diversion of U.S. attention away from its more pressing commitment to Europe.[23] This is symptomatic of the anachronistic character of all Cold War thinking. By the mid-1970s, Western Civilization was simply no longer a geographically meaningful construction. The opening to China—and all that it promised—was one significant mythological foundation for the new global imagination.

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in History, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister and trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 156–61.

21. Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy*, 203–4.

22. John W. Dower, "Occupied Japan and the American Lake, 1945–1950," in *America's Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asian-American Relations*, Edward Friedman and Mark Selden, eds. (New York: Pantheon, 1971), 170–71.

23. Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy*, 264. This is also the conclusion in Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, which has been reviewed as the most authoritative new history of Truman's Cold War.

The opening to China coincided with the winding down of the Vietnam War and also with some significant developments in the capitalist economy. The 1974 oil-shock recession was a dramatic demonstration of the interdependency and the volatility of the international economy. The 1974 recession inaugurated into the Western economies a rising level of structural unemployment, with an attendant weakness in the position of labor. Just as the solidarity of labor eroded, so did markets for industrial goods differentiate and fragment. Among manufacturers' responses to this general uncertainty were flexibility in working methods (particularly distribution, subcontracting, and inventory practices) and in labor markets. The labor force was segmented into a permanent skilled core and an unskilled part-time, casual, and largely female periphery.

I use the spatial terms *core* and *periphery* ironically, for in the post-1974 world, they have limited applicability as global geographic terms. Cores and peripheries coexist in the former cores and peripheries. The United States has primary and tertiary manufacturing zones, as well as the kinds of export processing zones one finds in Sri Lanka.[24] And the direction in the sub-tier of the Pacific Rim NICs, particularly Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines, seems to be not toward the generally equitable income distribution of Japan and the Four Tigers but toward a developed, urban core (Jakarta or Bangkok) with impoverished peripheries (Borneo or Northeast Thailand). Pacific Rim Discourse arises, in part, out of the impossibility of imagining a core in the old, concentric terms. The meaningless of core and periphery at the global level is one indication of the need for a new spatial imaginary. The difficulty of the economic imaginary is illustrated in the mid-seventies' phenomenon of the economic oxymoron, "stagflation" and "global Keynsianism" being two memorable examples.

The imaginative crisis was evident in 1977 at the beginning of the Carter presidency with his famous malaise speech, which illustrated for all the diminishment of the United States as a totalizing concept. Yet, Carter's first tactic in an economic downturn was inflationary, the most nation-bound of economic solutions. The increasing turn toward militarism in the late Carter presidency prefigured the global logic of Reaganism. The means of debt payment during the Reagan era would be more in keeping with Pacific Rim Discourse: paying with money borrowed from abroad. As Reagan's presidency progressed, Japan and the NICs were more and more the

24. As Mike Davis illustrates in Los Angeles. See Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 1990).

source of those funds. As we all now know, the Reagan recovery was a reverse New Deal. Big growth was exclusionary and benefited the poor very little. Appeals to national concerns, as in the rhetoric of the New Deal or the Great Society, were replaced by an extra-national trust in the market. Reaganism thus contributed in a distinct way to the conceptual deflation of the nation in the U.S. global imaginary. The United States could signify itself as a nation only militarily, hence the "evil empire" and adventurism in Grenada, Lebanon, Panama, et cetera. The lack of a comprehensible fit, however, between militarism and any articulable global politics or economics, rendered this signification system unworkable at the level of mythology. Hence the turn to the Pacific Rim.

The year 1974 also witnessed the election of Jerry Brown as governor of California. California figures very heavily in Pacific Rim Discourse in all of its stages. As I have mentioned before, the Pacific Rim is teleology, and its teleological character has been shaped in part by a residual American frontierism. The original frontier—the rush to the coast—is itself a dimension of the fear of land I mentioned earlier. What is the frontier, however, when it is no longer spatial? John F. Kennedy's evocation of the new frontier had located it not only spatially but temporally—as newness, promise. The idea of California fits into this in important ways. California was the cultural capital of the American late 1960s, and Jerry Brown's election was a confirmation of California's "unique character." Brown liked to talk of California as if it were an independent country ("the seventh largest economy in the world," he often said), as a place that faced both ways: back toward the East, and West, across the Pacific.

Over the course of the late seventies and eighties, California would be constructed ideologically as a multicultural, new world semi-nation, as the primary designated recipient of Japanese, Taiwanese, and South Korean capital. Los Angeles, of course, played a central role in this. *LA 2000: A City for the Future*, a report commissioned and financed by a corporate-dominated, mayorally appointed committee, painted a radiant picture of LA as capital of the twenty-first century, serving as a financial conduit to the Pacific trade, flush with Asian capital influx and enlivened by the "new immigrants," largely from Asia (read: "good" immigrants who have money and work hard). Los Angeles and California: interpenetrated and liking it.

This teleology, in which even a concrete space such as California is articulated more temporally than spatially, is also reflected in popular futurology. Its most conspicuous exponent has been Alvin Toffler, in his trilogy, appearing with a decennial regularity that in itself emphasizes its

temporality, consisting of *Future Shock* (1970), *The Third Wave* (1980), and *Powershift* (1990). To quote Toffler:

> *Future Shock*—which we defined as the disorientation and stress brought on by trying to cope with too many changes in too short a time—argued that the acceleration of history carries consequences of its own, independent of the actual directions of change.
>
> *The Third Wave* . . . [described] the latest revolutionary changes in technology and society . . . placed them in historical perspective and sketched the future they might bring.
>
> *Powershift* . . . focuses on the crucially changed role of knowledge in relationship to power.[25]

Most of the Pacific Rim Discourse is, as one might expect, in *The Third Wave*, which, as Toffler has on many occasions been proud to point out, was a best-seller in China and a favorite of Deng Xiaoping and Zhao Ziyang. There is nothing exceptional or unpredictable in *The Third Wave*'s particular instancing of the new global imaginary. It is typical Pacific Rim Discourse, full of "new trade patterns," "new alliances," "new interpenetrations," et cetera. The phenomenon described and/or created in *Future Shock*, though, is more formative of the character of the discourse. The new anxiety of the seventies and eighties, of which Toffler is a prophet, differs from the anxiety during the height of the Cold War, which naturally focused on a drastically uncertain future. Future shock is not really an anxiety about the future but about the present. What does the world look like? What's going on right now? How can we produce faster? How can we turn products around faster? It is the anxiety of pure speed as the spatial that is continually transcended and refashioned.

The Pacific Rim, being the new, the future, the space of temporality, and not coincidentally arising in the "information age," is constructed around an anxiety over knowledge, an anxiety created in part by the unexamined and undertheorized positing of knowledge as the new commodity. The American of the late Cold War years is exhorted to *learn*: learn Japanese; learn how they did it; learn where Taiwan is; learn from the experts. In 1975, one of the foundational years of Pacific Rim Discourse, the Harvard sociologist Ezra Vogel published one of the discourse's foundational texts, *Japan as Number One*, subtitled *Lessons for America*.

25. Alvin Toffler, *Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth, and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century* (New York: Bantam, 1990), xix–xx.

John Dower very effectively documents the ideological and historical nature of the hegemony of modernization theory in discourse on Japan in the 1960s, which derived from the broader interests of American capital, as well as from the specific goals of suppressing radical analyses of Japan and Japanese-American relations.[26] Japan, the successful latecomer, was not only to be living proof of capital's teleological promise but was to serve the specific function of example to the rest of Asia and counterexample to China.[27] By 1971, however, John Hall could say that "the heavy emphasis on modernization is clearly over," predicting inaccurately that the academic future would be the study of "tension models and confrontation situations."[28] Ezra Vogel's important book represented a different direction—the direction of Pacific Rim Discourse. Vogel's basic thesis is that Japan "modernized" by picking the best of what the world had to offer in administrative, fiscal, and productive technologies, and grafted these onto "Japanese" values, such as commitment to education, group organization, common goal-ism, and long-term planning-ism. The historicity of these "Japanese" values is, of course, unexamined in Pacific Rim Discourse. What is formative in Vogel's book, however, is the notion that in learning from Japan, the United States is really learning from a purified version of itself.

Much follows from this Vogelian moment. Social sciences once more fulfill their prescriptive promise, especially in "management science." By the end of the 1970s, the new management science became the most important cutting-edge component in American business schools. This reflects, of course, the explosive growth in the management-dependent service and information economy. It also reflects, however, the anxiety over productivity that characterizes the late seventies and eighties, despite a fundamentally expanding economy. Although management can rely, to a great extent, on workers' fear generated by the creation of a permanent high unemployment rate, fear itself is no solution to the productivity problem. Reconciling fear and the need for productivity increase is what is behind the new management. And the United States *can* learn from Japan. William Ouchi's *Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge* (1981) is the most popular representative of a yearly increasing body of work on Japanese management following Vogel's exhortation.

26. See his introduction to *Origins of the Modern Japanese State*.
27. The nation as "counter-example" was a potent ideological construction in the late sixties and seventies. For example, Mexico would serve, during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, as the Latin American counter-example to Cuba. It was for this reason that the United States lobbied so hard to have the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.
28. Quoted in Dower, *Origins of the Modern Japanese State*, 65.

In the urge to learn from Japan, Confucianism gets created as a national characteristic capable of explaining the success of Japan and the NICs. It is a very Protestant (in the Weberian sense) Confucianism,[29] however, embodying a strong work ethic that respects hierarchies and education. The explanatory power of Confucian essentialism was even bought by some Asian countries on the Rim. Confucius was revived in China, and, starting in the late 1970s, the Singaporean Ministry of Education began to carry out a restructuring of secondary and higher education to include a more coherent Confucian curriculum (with the aid of Western scholars of Confucianism, such as A. C. Graham, Yu Ying-shih, and Tu Wei-ming!). Learning from the group-oriented "team management" style of the Japanese corporation has been articulated in very concrete ways in the United States, most notably in U.S.-Japanese joint ventures as that between Toyota and General Motors in the NUMMI plant in Fremont, California. What "team management" is to the purveyors of Pacific Rim Discourse, however, is experienced as "management by stress" by workers, as Mike Parker and Jane Slaughter have so forcefully documented in their 1988 study of Fremont's NUMMI plant, *Choosing Sides: Unions and the Team Concept*. Anxiety and stress have a newly dominant role in the daily experience of post-1974 economic life. Pacific Rim Discourse produces and offers a solution for that anxiety.

One measure of the success of the various "learn from Japan" programs, and the generalized perception in the United States of the interdependency of the U.S. and Japanese economies, can be gauged in a *New York Times*-CBS poll, which found that in 1985, a central year of Pacific Rim Discourse, only 8 percent of Americans characterized their feelings toward Japan as "generally unfriendly." This figure rose to 19 percent in July of 1989 and 25 percent in February of 1990,[30] reflecting the protectionist, isolationist impulses that arise at what I describe as the endpoint of Pacific Rim Discourse. The antiprotectionist character of Pacific Rim Discourse is strong up until the beginning of its demise in 1989–1990, recalling the ascendancy of antiprotectionism in the internationalism of the Roose-

29. Related to the Confucian-Protestant equation, Harry Harootunian, in an unpublished paper entitled "America's Japan and Japan's Japan," has pointed out the connection between Robert Bellah's *Tokugawa Religion* and his later coauthored book about community in the United States—*Habits of the Heart*.

30. These statistics are quoted in Charles Burress, "The Dark Heart of Japan Bashing," in *This World*, magazine supplement to the Sunday *San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle*, 18 Mar. 1990, 7.

velt years. Any American articulation of an internationalist discourse will, of course, be antiprotectionist. There are important differences, however, between Kennan's antiprotectionism and that characteristic of Pacific Rim Discourse.

At an address to a conference on the Pacific Rim in Laguna Niguel, California, in 1985, Reagan's secretary of state, George Schultz, said, "We are all members of the community of nations surrounding the Pacific. The Pacific has become the twentieth century's economic fountain of youth."[31] Schultz's anti-protectionism vis-à-vis Japan, at the very twilight of the Cold War (Gorbachev became premier in March 1985), represents a significant shift from Kennan's anxiety over American isolationism with regard to Western Europe. For Kennan, free trade was the legacy of the liberal enlightenment and was of a piece with Enlightenment notions of democracy and civil society. Kennan feared that without a strong identification with the values of Western Civilization, which he located geographically in Western Europe, U.S. anti-Soviet resolve could weaken and the United States itself could face internal decay. In Schultz's formulation, in Pacific Rim Discourse, civilization is conflated with the de-spatialized, purely temporal character of capital itself. The discontinuity between Cold War discourse and Pacific Rim Discourse could not be expressed more strongly.

In what follows, I will examine Pacific Rim Discourse in select locations, both institutional and generic, concluding with some speculation on the end of the discourse. It is natural that, given the coincidence of Pacific Rim Discourse and the information age, with its attendant anxieties over knowledge, Pacific Rim Discourse would be prominently staged in the U.S. academy. An article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on 17 May 1989 documented the proliferation of programs in Pacific Rim or Pacific Basin studies in American universities over the course of the 1980s. This has been a national phenomenon, but it is disproportionately present on the West Coast, particularly in California. The Pacific Rim Task Force was formed by the California state legislature in 1985, and it made numerous policy recommendations and reports to the legislature in 1986 and 1987. In 1986, the California state legislature passed ACR (Assembly Concurrent Resolution) 82, which mandated public institutions of higher education in California to assess ways of "meeting the needs of the state in furthering [California's] economic position and leadership within the Pacific Rim," to "carry out its responsibilities to immigrants of Pacific Rim countries," and to assess the

31. Publicity brochure, Center for Pacific Rim Studies, University of San Francisco.

need for Pacific Rim specialists, scholarly exchanges, and exchange programs, and for a Center for Pacific Rim Studies.[32] UCLA had opened its Center for Pacific Rim Studies (an interdisciplinary nondegree-granting research and teaching center) in 1985. UC San Diego won the University of California system's prize: the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IRPS). Several private colleges and universities in California, among them the University of San Francisco and Dominican College, have also established institutes of Pacific Rim studies. The 1987 report of the Pacific Rim Commission of California State Universities was entitled *The Future of the Pacific Rim Is Now*.

The publicity literature of nearly all of these institutions reveals the articulation of Pacific Rim studies as a business discourse. They are centered around the social sciences or on business/management curricula. All have significant degrees of multinational corporate funding. Those that offer graduate degrees, such as IRPS at UC San Diego, emphasize in their placement literature the new and special knowledge that their graduates possess to enable them to work in Pacific Rim institutions or locales. These institutions represent the next stage of evolution of the increasingly unfashionable "area studies" programs. "Area studies," in the United States, were tied ideologically and financially to U.S. defense strategy. It is only natural that as the Pacific Rim achieved discursive prominence in the waning years of the Cold War, business and economics would become its main foci in the academy.

The academically fashionable character of Pacific Rim studies, and the attendant amount of money going into it, has occasioned a significant amount of academic retooling, particularly among social scientists originally working on Latin America or Africa. East Asia is the right way to develop—its success is also the path to professional success for scholars working in development-related fields. Gary Gereffi is a sociologist at Duke University, whose earlier work was on Latin America but who, in 1990, with Donald Wyman, published *Manufacturing Miracles: Paths of Industrialization in Latin America and East Asia*. Gereffi noted in 1989 that "it is virtually impossible to find a conference on Latin American development that does not incorporate comparative research on East Asia."[33]

32. California Postsecondary Education Commission, Report 87-25, *Institutional Reports on Pacific Rim Programs*, Sacramento, Calif., 1987: 1.
33. Ellen K. Coughlin, "Confronting the 'Asian Century': Scholars Turn Westward to the Pacific Rim," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 35, no. 36 (17 May 1989), A10.

The discourses of newness and knowledge anxiety fueled a spate of special series and articles in newspapers and news magazines throughout the 1980s, with numerous cover stories in *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Fortune*, *Forbes*, and other publications. In 1985, the editors of *Time* magazine organized "Time Newstour '85," a month-long tour of East Asia by journalists and three dozen major corporate heads. In 1986, the *Los Angeles Times* inaugurated a weekly Pacific Rim supplement (which was discontinued by 1990).

The historical romance was an important source of the American imagining and essentializing of Asia. The founding text here, of course, is *Shogun*, James Clavell's best-seller, published in 1975. The tremendously popular television mini-series based on Clavell's book was first aired in 1980. *Shogun* romanticized the first Western contact with the then "new" Japan, a Japan that was hyperaestheticized, cultured, strong, and pure. Its hero triumphs and humanizes himself by "turning Japanese," underscoring Vogel's lesson, which was published in the same year as Clavell's book. There have been many *Shogun* spin-offs, mostly set in China.

Slightly more highbrow is a subgenre of novel I call the Japanese *Wanderjahre*. In these novels, young American men go to Japan for a year or two and either find themselves or muse on the confusion of life reflected in the odd juxtapositions that surround them (such as Coke machines in Buddhist temples). Jay McInerney's *Ransom* (1985) is typical of the subgenre in which the hero learns some aspect of traditional Japanese culture (karate, in this case) and thereby grows up and gains the centeredness and strength with which to combat American dissipation.[34] Brad Leithauser's *Equal Distance* (1985) is a mixture of the modern American family romance with the Hemingwayesque expatriate novel.[35] The debt to *The Sun Also Rises* is obvious, down to the triangular configuration of young angst-ridden male, cynical older expatriate male, and expatriate female love interest. Hemingway's earthy significations of the European "real" are replaced by the facilely essentialist cultural juxtapositions that provide the background to all work in this genre.

34. Another example of this subgenre is John David Morley's *Pictures from the Water Trade: Adventures of a Westerner in Japan* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1985). In this case, the Western hero is initiated into the modern Japanese demimonde of bars and sex, and learns about life through his Japanese love affair.
35. See also, in this vein, John Burnham Schwartz, *Bicycle Days* (New York: Summit Books, 1989).

The use of the Japanese setting for what are otherwise fairly typical *bildungsroman* serves in part to naturalize the locationality of Japan. Although there is a certain amount of evocation of Japanese traditional customs, what is generally most exoticized in these novels are the very juxtapositions of "East" and "West" referred to above. The Coke machines are, in the paradoxical workings of Pacific Rim Discourse, more exotic than the Buddha images. *Equal Distance* also offers a cynical 1980s reading of the internationalist humanism of E. H. Norman and the Institute for Pacific Relations. The novel's protagonist is on leave from Harvard Law School, nominally serving, during a year in Japan, as research assistant to a Japanese professor of international law. The professor's fervent desire for a genuine international law based on moral principle is read as Japanese quirkiness, like those Coke machines in the temples.

During the fifteen years following the United States-China rapprochement, it seemed that nearly every American who spent more than two months in China wrote a book about it, thus The China Journal. These China journals took two main forms: accounts by journalists who had been posted in China after the "opening,"[36] and more personal accounts written by Americans who had gone to China to teach or work.[37] A major subtext informing all of these writings was the Cultural Revolution. During the Cultural Revolution, China had been "closed." Now that China was "open," it was the newest land of the new. No U.S. writing about any other foreign country during this period approaches the volume of writing about China. Why the interest? The journalists' accounts pictured a repressive government and, depending on the particular journalist, a social structure embodying various degrees of repression. Nevertheless, there were important cases

36. A representative sample includes Fox Butterfield, *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York: Times Books, 1982); David Bonavia, *The Chinese* (New York: Lippincott and Crowell, 1980); John Fraser, *The Chinese: Portrait of a People* (New York: Summit Books, 1982); and all of the China-related writings of *New Yorker* writer Orville Schell.

37. This is a much longer list. Some randomly selected titles include: Lois Fisher-Ruge, *A Peking Diary: A Personal Account of Modern China* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979); Vera Schwarcz, *Long Road Home: A China Journal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Richard Terrill, *Saturday Night in Baoding* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1990); Peter Brigg, *Shanghai Year: A Westerner's Life in the New China* (San Bernardino: Borgo, 1987); Mark Salzman, *Iron and Silk* (New York: Random House, 1986); Rosemary Mahoney, *The Early Arrival of Dreams: A Year in China* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1990); Bill Holm (with an introduction by Harrison Salisbury), *Coming Home Crazy: An Alphabet of China Essays* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1990).

of individual heroism and massive evidence of the people's fundamental humanity and understandability.

Pictorially and representationally throughout most of the twentieth century, China had been the location of the human mass, the crowd—that surfeit of humanity which is, by its nature, inhuman. The China journals rehumanize. The "year in China" genre, often in diary form, is relentless in its depictions of the minutiae of the authors' daily lives: eating, shopping, traveling, teaching, and socializing. Daily life signifies humanity, and I locate these writings within Pacific Rim Discourse in that their familiarization of Chinese daily life serves to extend the discursive space of a generalized humanity to the world's most populous country and formerly most massively designated Other. There is also, however, in these writings, a note of nostalgia for a vanished sense of American daily life. China is somehow more "real," because the stakes of interpersonal relations are higher. Although the universalism that is demonstrated in Americans' ability to live in China, to understand China, and to make Chinese friends has in it some of the leftist humanist universalism we noted in Massignon and in *Amerasia*, it is recuperated discursively to new ends.

The role of film in the construction of the post–World War II global imaginary cannot be overstated. Just as Hollywood studios scripted the rhythms and motions of wartime daily life for American matinee-goers, so did the deluge of Hollywood films that hit Western Europe after V-E Day function as an advance guard for the Marshall Plan. European hearts and minds were won over from a recrudescent communism, or they at least softened toward international capitalism, by the big screen American visions of cleanliness, abundance, and speed. The facility with objects deployed so regularly in postwar Hollywood films—cigarette lighters, cocktail accessories, cars, clothes, et cetera—stimulated a commodity cathexis, a new kinetics of commodified culture, that helped consumption to proceed at its needed rapid pace. And while the United States played on Western European screens, a particular vision of Europe began to return to the United States. In the 1950s, and extending into the pre-Vietnam 1960s, as the United States became more and more accustomed to itself as the predominant global power, big Hollywood technicolor productions set in Europe began to appear with greater frequency, with stars such as Cary Grant, James Stewart, David Niven, Audrey Hepburn, and Doris Day. I refer to films such as *An American in Paris* (1951), *Roman Holiday* (1953), *To Catch a Thief* (1955), *Paris Blues* (1961), *Charade* (1963), and *The Two of Us* (1966). The European location shots give the films the look of the

most expensive travelogues ever made, full of long tracking shots and overheads of iconically European sites (the Roman forum, Notre Dame, the Trevi Fountain, Mont Blanc . . .) from cranes and helicopters. The cinemascopic arrogance of these shots accords with the new American hubris, the new post–Marshall Plan, Europe-directed internationalism. Europe is not an exotic, as Asia continues to be represented in films during these years, but a luxurious and hoary realm of material and historical excess, newly consumable thanks to U.S. pluck and technical know-how. The colorful and luxuriant foreign locale becomes, through this European origin, an important marketing device in American film and television (in television, note the series "I Spy"), generally, and a significant reflection of American global hegemony.

There were far fewer of these films after the beginning of the Vietnam War. Europe began to lose its signifying power, and the pattern of the foreign locale seems to be more generalized, less overtly emblematic of the U.S. position in the globe, and more purely visually exotic. There is no definitive pattern of Pacific Rim films in the United States. Their numbers do not match the number of films with European locales during the formative era of American cinematic internationalism. The vocabulary of the Pacific Rim location[38] can be traced, though, in two somewhat related films, one produced at the beginning and one near the end of the period of Pacific Rim Discourse: *The Yakuza* (1975, Sidney Pollack directs, Paul Schrader writes, Robert Mitchum and Takakura Ken star) and *Black Rain* (1989, Ridley Scott directs, Michael Douglas and Takakura Ken star).

In *The Yakuza*, the enemies are bad *yakuza* and bad American gangster-capitalists who are in cahoots. (Difficult as it may be to imagine now, the anticorporate message was fairly common in American films of the late sixties and seventies). The heroes are Takakura's character, a retired, honorable *yakuza*, and Mitchum's character, a World War II occupation hand returning to the Japan he loves and to the women he has left behind. Mitchum, in a spirit somewhat reminiscent of *Shogun*, grapples a lot with *on* and *giri*, "traditional" Japanese values which he acquires and with which he triumphs over evil. In *Black Rain*, the heroes are police (Takakura's character is a Japanese detective; Douglas's character is a New York detective tracking a killer in Japan) and the villains are *yakuza*.[39] But the *most* evil

38. I except Vietnam War films, which are part of a different discursive trajectory.

39. Andy Garcia plays Douglas's fellow policeman, a happy, carefree, culturally sensitive, virilely heterosexual American. In order for the Fiedleresque homoerotic miscegenation subtext to proceed, he, of course, must meet an early death.

villain is a new breed of *yakuza*—young, immoral, and referred to in the film by older *yakuza* as being more like an American criminal. Takakura's character, through his association with Douglas's character, learns to be less stiff, less bound by the rules, to "go for it." Douglas's character, through his association with Takakura's, is purified. He was a corrupt cop in New York; now no more. The formula for success for Americans is, then, the "natural" American spirit purged of moral laxity. For Japanese, it is "Japanese" honor and humanity purged of bureaucratic inhibition and psychological rigidity. Americans need to work harder and to be less selfish; Japanese need to open up their closed psychic markets.

The visuals of the two films are also revealing. *The Yakuza* consists mainly of interior shots, which are either hypermodern office shots or hyperaestheticized "traditional Japanese" residential interiors. The look of *Black Rain*, as in all of Ridley Scott's films, is one of its stars. It is very pointedly set in Osaka, with many shots establishing the hypercommercialized glitz and grit that is a Ridley Scott trademark. The film opens with an aerial shot of a smog-drenched sunrise as the camera pans down over an industrial district punctuated with smokestacks. One climactic scene is in an Osaka steel mill, which appears as an eerie mixture of Japanese automation and dark, American industrial heartland grit. The final scene—the big gun-down—is extra-cinematically emblematic of the nearing American economic decline that would be one of the end-markers of Pacific Rim Discourse. The earlier Osaka scenes were very expensive to shoot, and the finale, set on a *yakuza* country estate, had to be filmed on a very un-Japanese-looking Sonoma County vineyard. This locational dissonance was probably not noticed by most American viewers, partly because of the very Japanese-looking farmhouse constructed in the vineyard. I have been told that the owners of the vineyard were planning to convert the farmhouse into a restaurant.

Postnationalism or transnationalism has, of course, always been central to science fiction in books, comic books, and in films, and it is thus a natural location for Pacific Rim discursive moves. Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), set largely in Japanese-occupied San Francisco (the Japanese and the Germans won World War II), is eerily prescient. Dick's fiction has had a strong influence on the newer subgenre of cyberpunk, which posits a hyper–information age, postnational neural network of computers and artificial intelligence, and a withering of all boundaries—whether between nation and nation or between humans and machines. A Japanese-American linguistic and cultural mix and a transnational, de-centered corporate authority structure inform such novels as William Gibson's trilogy and Bruce Sterling's *Islands in the Net* (1988), as

well as new comic book titles, such as *Hard Boiled*, *Big Numbers*, and *Give Me Liberty*. The ocean gives way to "the net." Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner* (1982), based on Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968), was very influential in providing the visual imaginary of this postcatastrophic, Asian-Californian demimonde mix,[40] and the visuals of *Blade Runner* have influenced all of the futuristically noir comic book series mentioned above.

Related to the cyberpunk trans-Pacific imaginary is the *anime* subculture in the United States, which consists largely of fan networks that report on and exchange Japanese *manga* and film—animation and live action—that are generally set in a dystopic future and involve violent clashes between humans and robots. *Akira*, an anticorporate apocalypse that had a limited commercial release in the United States, and *Gunhed*, a cheaply made multinational cloning of *The Terminator* and *Alien*, which exists in live-action and animated versions and which circulates primarily on bootlegged tapes in the *anime* subculture (there is at least one electronic bulletin board devoted to *anime*), are two examples of this. The *anime* subculture values the once-disparaged computer-generated artificiality of much Japanese animation, seeing in its animation technique—fewer variations between frames combined with wildly distorted mise-en-scène—a version of hacker-accessible high aesthetics suited to its members' garage-punk nihilism. The cyberpunk and *anime* enactments of the trans-Pacific postnation are largely dystopic—the alienated underside to the dominant character of Pacific Rim Discourse I have described thus far.

The End of Pacific Rim Discourse

Toward the end of the 1980s, several factors signal a weakening of the hold of Pacific Rim Discourse on the U.S. global imaginary. The failed movement in Tiananmen Square and the attendant sense that China might not, after all, be on the Rim taints one of the region's most tantalizing promises. More important was the end of the Cold War—in Berlin, Prague, Bucharest, and Moscow. The Pacific Rim as a localized, sheltered space, sheltered from the U.S.-USSR confrontation, loses some of its necessity.

40. The recently released "director's cut" of *Blade Runner* was even stronger on the atmospheric visuals, and less centered on the film-noir ruminations of its central character, played by Harrison Ford. The Japanese cultural mix of *Blade Runner*, however, is original to Scott's film and is not a feature of Dick's novel.

The recent economic downturn in the United States, and the outbreak of Japan bashing that has accompanied it, undoubtedly has also contributed to the weakening of capital's global myth-engine.

A significant quantity of recent "Japan bashing"[41] signals a retreat from Pacific Rim Discourse internationalism. In two prominent examples, James Fallows's article "Containing Japan" (*Atlantic Monthly*, May 1989) and Clyde Prestowitz's book *Trading Places: How We Allowed Japan to Take the Lead* (1988), Japan is criticized precisely for being too Japanese, for subscribing too rigidly to its myth of uniqueness and, for Fallows, for having insufficiently developed universalist principles. Both of these writers show the desire to localize universality, which is the standard American nativist incarnation of bourgeois Enlightenment thought.

These critiques of a failed internationalism are matched by the post–Pacific Rim and by the post-1989 free marketeers who have abandoned even the wide confines of the Pacific. This is seen in Besher's use of the term "global rim,"[42] or in "management guru" Ken'ichi Omae's notion of the Interlinked Economy, which he elaborates in his recent book, *The Borderless World* (1990):

> An isle is emerging that is bigger than a continent—the Interlinked Economy of the Triad (the United States, Europe, and Japan), joined by aggressive economies such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. . . . It is becoming so powerful that it has swallowed most consumers and corporations, made traditional national borders almost disappear, and pushed bureaucrats, politicians, and the military toward the status of declining industries.[43]

Pacific Rim Discourse does not simply end. A recent conference of "Pacific Rim" business and trade representatives in San Francisco (September 1992) included several speeches suggesting that the Pacific Rim's fall from fashion in the wake of Europe's transformation might have been premature, in view of Europe's current difficulties. Yet, the functional lives of global imaginaries seem to be getting shorter and shorter—witness the early death of the New World Order or the two-week life span of Bill Clinton's New

41. On Japan bashing, see Masao Miyoshi, "Bashers and Bashing in the World," in Masao Miyoshi, *Off Center: Power and Cultural Relations between Japan and the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 62–96.

42. Besher, *Pacific Rim Almanac*, xxi–xxii.

43. Ken'ichi Omae, *The Borderless World* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1990), x–xi.

Covenant. The American power structure's current imaginative vacuum—the bankrupting of American mythological image production capacity—is unparalleled in U.S. history.

Pacific Rim Discourse will have residual life in many of those areas where pure newness is the currency, such as in academic conference organizing and management seminars. Pacific Rim Discourse—perhaps the most obvious articulation of Paul Virilio's notion of the disappearance of space and time as tangible dimensions of social life—will resist the attempt to historicize it. Its mutation into "the global rim" is characteristic of its reach. But a failure to historicize it, and a failure to question its conceptual categories, can allow it to threaten even the most counter-hegemonic and oppositional projects. The current rewriting of Atlantic history, as in the work of Marcus Rediker and Paul Gilroy, is a valuable re-creation of a working-class Atlantic, or an Atlantic of the African Diaspora, that contests the Atlantic of Western imperialism. But perhaps there is a danger in working within the dominant conceptual category of the ocean, given that it is capital's favored myth-element. We should likewise be wary of constructing an oppositional Pacific Rim, seeing in its "dynamism" a new challenge to U.S. and European hegemony. Such challenges might, indeed, be taking place, across national boundaries and in the Pacific region. But let resistance write its own geography. We should always bear in mind how, why, and by whom the idea of the Pacific Rim was created. Here, in the early 1990s, when all transformations disappoint and nothing seems to really end, the need to historicize remains as great as ever.