

2014

H-Diplo

H-Diplo Roundtable Review

www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables

Volume XV, No. 24 (2014)

3 March 2014

Roundtable Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse

Roundtable and Web Production Editor: George Fujii

Commissioned for H-Diplo by Thomas Maddux

Introduction by Judy Tzu-Chun Wu

Kornel Chang. *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. ISBN: 9780520271685 (hardcover, \$68.95/£47.95); 9780520271692 (paperback, \$31.95/£21.95).

Stable URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XV-24.pdf>

Contents

Introduction by Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Ohio State University	2
Review by Benjamin H. Johnson, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.....	4
Review by Beth Lew-Williams, Northwestern University	7
Review by Naoko Shibusawa, Brown University.....	11
Author's Response by Kornel S. Chang, Rutgers-Newark, State University of New Jersey.....	13

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041, USA.

Introduction by Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Ohio State University

Kornel Chang's *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands* examines a central tension in the history of American foreign and domestic relations, namely the push towards globalization and the simultaneous demand to protect national borders. Chang examines these dynamics by focusing on the Pacific Northwest, situating this region as a node in a broader network of migration, trade, and imperial state formation. It is the story of how the U.S.-Canada borderlands is crucial for understanding American ambitions and fears about the Pacific World.

It is fitting that Chang's book is the subject of an H-Diplo roundtable. The field of diplomatic history has expanded its focus beyond traditional state actors and formal political relations. Chang's work examines a range of historical subjects -- entrepreneurs and state officials, labor and anti-imperialism activists, labor recruiters and economic middlemen, white and non-white individuals—all of whom, despite their unequal access to power, engage in political debates about labor, migration, trade, and border formation.

Chang's insistence on situating these topics in an extra-local and extra-national framework is part of a broader historiographical turn towards 'empire' and 'transnationalism' in American Studies, Asian American Studies, and U.S. history. Rather than framing the dynamics in the Pacific Northwest as a local, regional, or community study, Chang emphasizes how individuals and ideals that cross national borders shaped the formation of class identities, racial ideologies and national boundaries.

The roundtable commentators each bring a unique lens to analyze Chang's work. Naoko Shibusawa highlights the significance of Chang's Pacific World framework, particularly in contrast to an Atlantic World perspective. Chang's book foregrounds how national state formation emerged in relation to the peoples and lands of the Pacific and in Asia.

Benjamin H. Johnson points to a long history of border negotiation and conflict between the U.S., Canada, and indigenous nations, a history that tends to receive less historiographical and popular attention compared to that of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Finally, Beth Lew-Williams foregrounds Chang's contributions to the scholarship on empire and on Asian American Studies, noting in particular the comparative ethnic perspective that he offers through his analysis of Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian immigrants. She also criticizes Chang's study, though, for its tendency to overlook certain historical actors, such as indigenous peoples and women.

The collective roundtable commentary illuminates the rich contributions of Chang's scholarship. *Pacific Connections* has the potential to speak to multiple academic audiences, including historians of diplomacy, borderlands, immigration, labor, U.S. Empire, and race. It is evidence that scholarship in these fields shaped Chang's formulation and execution of his project. In turn, *Pacific Connections* has the potential to foster dialogue and forge connections between academic subfields.

Participants:

Kornel Chang teaches history and American Studies at Rutgers-Newark, State University of New Jersey. His research has centered on the intersections of race, labor, migration, and borders in the Americas, and the United States' imperial projections into the Asia-Pacific world. His book *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands* was runner-up finalist for the 2013 John Hope Franklin Book Prize. His research has been published in the *American Quarterly*, *Journal of American History*, and *Diplomatic History* as well as a number of anthologies. He has held fellowships at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Charles Warren Center at Harvard University, the MacMillian Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University, and he is currently a fellow at the American Academy of Arts and Science, where he is working on *Occupying Knowledge: Expertise, Technocracy, and De-Colonization in the U.S. Occupation of Korea*, a project that examines the role of technocrats and expert knowledge in the U.S. Occupation of Korea.

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu is a Professor of History and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Ohio State University. She also co-edits *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*. Wu is the author of *Dr. Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards: The Life of a Wartime Celebrity* (California 2005) and *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era* (Cornell 2013). She is working with Gwendolyn Mink on a political biography of Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color congressional representative and the co-sponsor of Title IX.

Benjamin H. Johnson is Associate Professor of History and Global Studies at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and co-editor of the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*. He is author of *How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) and co-editor (with Andrew Graybill) of *Bridging National Borders in North America: Transnational and Comparative Histories*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010) and co-editor (with Pekka Hämäläinen of *Major Problems in North American Borderlands History* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2011).

Naoko Shibusawa is Associate Professor of History and American Studies at Brown University. She is the author of *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese* (Harvard University Press, 2006, pbk, 2010). Her forthcoming book, *Seduced by the East: The Treason Trial of John David Provoo*, will be published by the University of North Carolina Press.

Beth Lew-Williams is an ACLS New Faculty Fellow at Northwestern University appointed in history and Asian American Studies. She earned her PhD in history at Stanford University in 2011. She is currently writing her first book (under contract with Harvard University Press), which examines Chinese migration, anti-Chinese violence, and Chinese Exclusion within the context of U.S. imperialism in the nineteenth century.

Often celebrated as ‘the world’s longest undefended border,’ the Canada-United States line has in recent years attracted growing attention from historians. Although it marks the meeting place of two countries long at peace and marked by deep similarities – highly industrialized Euro-American settler states once part of the British Empire – the border, it turns out, has a long and revealing history in which conflict and rapid change are as important as harmony and stasis. It does not look so unmilitarized to the Mohawk and other Iroquois people who live along either side of its eastern stretches, or so tranquil to those who remember the invasions of Canada launched by Americans in 1775 and 1812.¹ The deep similarities between Euro-American and Euro-Canadian society have often made the border more, not less, important as a symbol of national distinctiveness, particularly to Canadians, a theme developed recently by Sheila McManus and in a different way in Paul Sharp’s 1955 classic *Whoop-Up Country*.² American Prohibition catapulted the alcohol-oriented America tourist trade into one of Canada’s leading industries, solidifying the widespread Canadian perception of the border as a bulwark against their cruder, more violent and philistine southern neighbors. The U.S. Border patrol stationed more personnel along the Canadian border than the Mexican border for at least the first two decades after its 1925 founding, building on decades of border policing against barred Asian and European migrants.³ At times this border has seemed very different than the much more heavily-studied Mexico-U.S. line, but it is also a revealing object of historical scrutiny.⁴

Kornel Chang’s *Pacific Connections* is a powerful and original entry into this burgeoning field. Chang’s deft and succinct examination of the Pacific Northwest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries connects the history of this border at a pivotal moment – the rise of Asian exclusion and the development of modern immigration enforcement to enact it – not only to the wider orbits of Canadian and American history but also to scholarly treatments of empire, race, and globalization more broadly.

¹ Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 2006).

² McManus, Sheila. *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press and Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Paul Sharp, *Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian-American West, 1865-1885* (New York, 1955; Reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973).

³ Stephen T. Moore, “Defining the ‘Undefended’: Canadians, Americans, and the Multiple Meanings of the Border during Prohibition,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 34 (Spring 2004): 3-32; Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 67, 197.

⁴ Benjamin H. Johnson and Andrew R. Graybill, eds., *Bridging National Borders in North America: Transnational and Comparative Histories*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010)

Whereas most historians who study this border are rooted in the national historiographies of the United States or Canada, Chang's point of departure (captured in the title) is to treat the Pacific Northwest as a place "where the American West, the Dominion of Canada, the British Empire, and Asia intersected and overlapped" (2). This perspective allows him to trace the development of the region as part of a larger moment of economic and imperial integration of the Pacific World, in which flows of capital and labor brought once far-flung peoples together even as they prompted quests for sharper racial and national boundaries. He recounts the familiar story of Asian labor in the Northwest through the lens of Chinese middlemen such as Yip Sang and the labor migrations between the Philippines, Hawaii, south China, and India. The middle portions of the book examine the activism of the region's white working class, which paid close attention to developments in the settler-colonies of South Africa and Australasia, and the linked anticolonial and labor movements created by Chinese and South Asian migrants. In the last chapter Chang focuses more tightly on the policing of the international border in the Northwest, emphasizing the ways that it reflected the desires of the Canadian and U.S. states to simultaneously foster global markets and curtail the threats of Asian migration, anti-colonial nationalism, and the labor radicalism that sometimes spanned the region's stark racial division.

Chang's story ends with the U.S.-Canada border that is so familiar to us as a harmonious line between two white-settler states with very similar values and geopolitical interests. From my perspective as a borderlands scholar, one of the great contributions of *Pacific Connections* is its historicization of this outcome, treating it not as commonsensical and foreordained but rather demonstrating how it happened. Here the white labor movement is a key factor in envisioning the region as a coherent whole not so much divided as united by a common border. As Vancouver delegate M.A. Beach said to a 1907 gathering of the Washington Federation of Labor in Tacoma, "in fact [I] have spent a number of years on this side of the imaginary boundary line. I say, imaginary boundary line, because I suppose from a national standpoint we are divided, but from a wage earners' standpoint we are not divided" but rather "brothers working for a common cause." That cause was the protection of a white working class threatened by "a people totally unfit for the conditions of this country." In this cause "there is a bond of friendship, a fraternity, existing between us that no imaginary line can sever" (96). Yet this was not mere parochialism or isolationism; indeed, it drew on a "pattern of anti-Asian riots, petitions, and discriminatory legislation that was almost identical across the Anglophone settler world" (97). Beach and his compatriots were deeply informed not just about developments across the border that they frequently crossed, but also in Australasia and South Africa, where the numbers and economic might of South Asians in the Natal made it "a warning of the inevitable Asian invasion that would take place if Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian immigration continued to go unchecked" (103).

As the host of mechanisms designed to limit Asian migration and political mobilization became more effective in the early twentieth century, it became easy for white Canadians and Americans to forget this contested chapter of their shared border history, or the ways in which their shared ties to Asian labor had first "produced technologies and practices like border patrol and checkpoints, immigration detention and deportation, and travel and identification documents [as] standard, even natural expressions of state sovereignty that

would be brought to bear against new foreign threats” (178). By the 1920s, the border between the more obviously different United States and Mexico appeared as the more fraught boundary. Seattle Immigration Commissioner Luther Weedon proclaimed in 1924 that “we don’t and won’t have as much trouble along the Canadian border as we will along the Mexican border . . . The Mexican border will be the big problem of the future” (178).

Review by Beth Lew-Williams, Northwestern University

In *Pacific Connections*, Kornel Chang offers a history of the formation of the U.S.-Canadian borderlands abutting the Pacific Ocean. Chang does more than give needed attention to America's often-neglected northern border; he offers a provocative and insightful intervention into borderlands history, by placing the boundary line within the transnational and imperial history of the Pacific World. While U.S. historians traditionally think of these lands as the far west, Chang reorients his analysis, seeing this territory as the eastern edge of the Pacific. In Chang's rendering, Seattle and Vancouver become Pacific Rim cities, hubs that connected their hinterlands to the Pacific World of commerce and imperial imaginings.

Chang seems to have anticipated Paul Kramer's 2011 call in the *American Historical Review* for scholars to "think with the imperial."¹ Kramer defines "the imperial" as "a dimension of power in which asymmetries in the scale of political action, regimes of spatial ordering, and modes of exceptionalizing difference enable and produce relations of hierarchy, discipline, dispossession, extraction, and exploitation." Instead of focusing on the shape of U.S. imperialism (formal or informal, visible or invisible, nowhere or everywhere), Kramer urges historians to use the imperial as a framework for considering an "interconnected world... wrought in hierarchy and power" and to write "connecting histories" of societies that imperial forces brought into contact.²

In his detailed study of the U.S.-Canadian borderlands, Chang skillfully accomplishes much of what Kramer proposes. Like many transnational and borderlands histories, Chang's book highlights the movement of people, goods, and ideas; but he also pays careful attention to imperial connections and power. He defines the United States as an empire and sees the Pacific Northwest as a region of "intense imperial contest" (9). This perspective allows him to break down traditional divisions between the history of continental expansion into the U.S. West and the history of overseas expansion into Asia. He reminds us that both stories are connected and mutually reinforcing projects of U.S. imperialism. And he traces how these imperial projects simultaneously promoted mobility and gave rise to the hardening of national borders.

In particular, Chang emphasizes the contradictory nature of U.S. imperialism, which sought the 'open door' abroad and a 'closed gate' at home. Starting in the late nineteenth century, American "empire builders" simultaneously perused the imperialist dream of unfettered access to Asian markets and the nationalist vision of strict boundaries against Asian migrants. Chang joins a conversation with Delber McKee, Michael Hunt and (recently) Gordon H. Chang and Paul Kramer, all of whom have explored these conflicting American

¹ Paul A. Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World" *American Historical Review*, 116 no. 6 (December 2011), 1354.

² Kramer, 1349, 1353, 1386.

policies.³ Kornel Chang offers a particularly nuanced reading of these dual state impulses, arguing that they were not locked in a zero-sum relationship, but could be overlapping and mutually constitutive. In addition, he shows the local stakes of this paradox, arguing that the borderlands were formed by these warring impulses.

Chang tells a story of the U.S.-Canadian borderlands that primarily centers on Asian mobility and Asian Exclusion. Building on the work of Erika Lee, Chang convincingly argues that Asians were central to the formation of the U.S.-Canadian boundary. Though the line between the United States and Canada had been drawn at the 49th parallel since 1846, it remained largely unguarded and ignored for decades. It was U.S. and Canadian attempts to police Asian mobility starting in the 1880s that gave meaning to this imaginary line between the two nations.⁴ Focusing on Asian migrants also allows Chang to emphasize the borderland's "pacific connections," the people, goods, and ideas that crossed the pacific.

Though Chang does not frame his book as Asian American history, one of the book's largest contributions is to the history of the Asian diaspora in the Americas. Asian American historical scholarship – especially work on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – has been primarily focused on California. To date, the best book-length studies of Asian migrants in the Pacific Northwest borderlands during this period have been two dissertations by Robert Wynne and Todd Stevens.⁵ As a work on the Asian diaspora, *Pacific Connections* is particularly impressive in its inclusion of multiple nationalities. Chang shows how Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian migrants were not just bound by ahistorical notions of their Asian-ness. They shared similar experiences when they migrated through U.S. and British imperial circuits, worked as migratory contract laborers, and faced exclusion through violence and laws.

Chang's first and second chapters focus on the Chinese and Japanese middlemen who enabled the cross-pacific movement of Asian goods and peoples, which constituted the "life blood of the imperial system" (61). Here, Chang is building on an expanding literature that works to reframe Asian merchant-contractors as powerful middlemen. Chang's transnational framework makes it easy to see that these Asian elites were not just successful businessmen; they played an essential role in the development of the northern

³ Delber McKee, *Chinese Exclusion versus the Open Door Policy 1900-1906: Clashes over China Policy in the Roosevelt Era* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1977); Michael Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Gordon H. Chang, "China and the Pursuit of America's Destiny: Nineteenth-Century Imaginings and Why Immigration Restriction Took So Long," *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 15 (June 2012), 145-169; Paul A. Kramer, "Empire against Exclusion in Early 20th Century Trans-Pacific History," *Nanzan Review of American Studies*, 33 (2011), 13-32.

⁴ Erika Lee, *At America's Gate: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 151-188.

⁵ Robert Wynne, "Reaction to the Chinese in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia, 1850-1910." Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1964; Todd Stevens, "Brokers between Worlds: Chinese, Merchants and Legal Culture in the Pacific Northwest, 1852-1925." Ph.D. diss. Princeton University, 2003.

borderlands and the expansion of British and U.S. commercial ventures in Asia. Using extensive archival research, Chang first details the lives of two Chinese members of the “managerial elite,” Chin Gee Hee and Yip Sang. Chinese middlemen provided invaluable assistance to U.S. and British imperial projects, helping to coordinate the trans-pacific movement of peoples and goods necessary for western imperialism. But when the United States and Canada enacted policies intended to exclude Chinese workers in the mid-1880s, Chinese elites also worked to undermine the colonial project by facilitating “subversive forms of mobility” (19). The Asian managerial elite attempted to profit from both the open door and the closed gate. When smuggling Chinese became too costly, employers turned to Japanese workers until they too faced immigration restriction. Tracing the rise of a Japanese firm, the Oriental Trading Company, Chang reveals how Japanese middlemen used U.S. imperialism to temporarily undermine Japanese Exclusion. When Japanese workers could no longer migrate to the United States, the Oriental Trading Company began recruiting Japanese from America’s new colony, Hawaii. For a short time, the firm took advantage of the contradictions between U.S. imperial expansion and domestic gatekeeping.

Chapter three offers a fascinating and powerful analysis of transnational anti-Asian sentiment and white working-class consciousness. Chang recognizes that racial identity formation is the result of local, national, and global forces, but he chooses to focus on the latter. He shows how racial ideas and identities were “spawned and then circulated” across Anglophone imperial networks (91). Anti-Asian activists from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa imagined a transnational working-class community that was predicated on the shared racial identity of ‘whiteness.’ In these sites of U.S. and British imperialism, white workingmen defined their race and class by contrasting themselves with Asian ‘coolies.’ The result of circulating activists, ideas, and policies was anti-Asian agitation in much of the Anglophone world. Unfortunately, Chang sells his argument short by asserting that it does not apply to the better-known anti-Asian movement in California. “Whereas the California story of Asians as the ‘indispensable enemy’ was rooted in U.S. politics and culture and grew out of the seemingly inexorable east-west push of Manifest Destiny,” Chang writes, “in the Pacific Northwest, the nexus of white supremacy and Asiatic exclusion was born out of U.S. and British imperialism and a larger struggle to demarcate the boundaries of a ‘white pacific’” (90). Can the anti-Asian movement in the U.S. West be bifurcated so simply?

After exploring transnational white identity in the borderlands, Chang next turns to South Asians who asserted radical Asian manhood in response to U.S. and British imperialism. While imperial circuits facilitated the movement of anti-Asian agitation, they also created “pathways through which a global politics of resistance circulated and proliferated” (119). South Asian revolutionaries who had been radicalized by anti-colonialism collaborated with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), an interracial union against the globalization of capitalism. IWW activists tried to organize a multiracial movement on both sides of the U.S.-Canadian boundary, but the organization ultimately could not overcome the racial, cultural, and linguistic differences of its members. This transnational radical movement did, however, alarm U.S. and British leaders. In his final chapter, Chang explores the hardening of border control in the 1910s in response to labor and anti-colonial

radicalism. He argues that both gatekeeping and imperialist impulses created the modern U.S.-Canadian border. U.S. and British leaders wanted to police Asian bodies, but they also wanted to curtail activism that threatened their empires. The border was forged through “inter-colonial cooperation”(148), which gave social reality to the imaginary line by the early 1920s.

Pacific Connections demonstrates the significant potential of merging imperial and borderlands history, but it also suggests possible shortcomings of this framework. While this approach puts some people in closer focus, it leaves others entirely outside the picture. Indigenous people are conspicuously missing from Chang’s narrative, not because they were absent from the borderlands during this period but presumably because their lives did not obviously connect across the Pacific. Likewise, Asian women, who lived stationary and constricted lives relative to their male counterparts, have little place in this rendering of the imperial borderlands. And white settlers of the borderlands only appear in the narrative when they interact with Asian migrants, by employing Asian labor forces, rallying for Asian Exclusion, or promoting trade across the Pacific. In order to fully understand “the making of the U.S.-Canadian borderlands,” there is more work to be done on the peoples and processes that lay outside of Pacific imperial circuits.

There is also more work to be done in order to understand Chang’s central theme: the conflicting impulses of global capital expansion and domestic gatekeeping. Chang expertly outlines how the people of the U.S.-Canadian borderlands lived in the shadow of this paradox, both suffering from and exploiting its contradictions. But questions remain about the paradox itself. Was it new, timeless, or evolving? Was it the product of separate interest groups or conflicted leadership? Is it only a paradox in hindsight or was it perceived as contradictory at the time? *Pacific Connections* focuses on the ramifications of boundary-making while empire-building and leaves open questions about why the United States began this dual project in the first place.

I wonder if anyone else noticed the similarity between the covers of Kornel Chang's *Pacific Connections* and Daniel T. Rodger's *Atlantic Crossings*? Both covers feature big, black ocean liners—appropriately facing west in Rodger's book and east in Chang's. Perhaps this was intentional—for surely the title of Rodger's 2000 book must have crossed Chang's mind as he titled his own 2012 book. Rodger's focus on transatlantic reformers during the Progressive era is a perfect counterpoint to Chang's study of transpacific workers and radicals in roughly the same time period as they, too, responded to capitalism.¹ Chang not only shifts our geographic orientation, but also our political and epistemological ones. This is a welcome relief—with no disrespect to Rodger's very fine and much acclaimed work—for it is indeed refreshing to break out of the Atlanticist perspective that continues to dominate Americanist historiography. Lest my friends who specialize in U.S.-European relations misinterpret me, I am not saying that the Pacific perspective is more important than the Atlantic one, or that we should minimize the Atlantic World. I am saying, however, that a Pacific perspective that Chang provides is essential for more accurate understanding of U.S.-state building. And so perhaps I should confess here that I am probably not the most 'objective' reviewer of *Pacific Connections* as I have been its fan since it was in manuscript form.

The outstanding contribution of *Pacific Connections* is showing the relationship between state formation and 'globalization.' Capitalist expansion and imperialism since the nineteenth century resulted in an unprecedented movement of people near and far across the globe. But while strangers from different shores provided much needed labor forces in the United States, they were also reviled and deemed unfit for citizenship by those already here or the recently arrived who could claim whiteness. The influx of racialized 'strangers' spawned a range of informal and legislated maneuvers to maintain and extend racialized categories. After all, the nation was created through the construction and enforcement of ethnoracial differences to determine who was entitled to land, to the fruits of their own labor, or to participation in representative politics. Reified as inconvertible biological destiny, race turned people of African, Asian, and indigenous ancestry into exploitable labor that was fundamental to capitalist accumulation and economic development.

Chang's five chapters outline not only how the labor and capital flows from Asia were essential to the settler colonial project in the Pacific Northwest, but also the ramifications of relying upon racialized labor. Quite admirably, he pays equal attention to capitalist and state attempts to monitor and control people as well as to radical labor and anti-imperialist activist to resist exploitation and restrictions. Both sides, Chang emphasizes, were transnational and inter-colonial in scope—deriving ideas, techniques, and strategies from across the Pacific. He sustains his arguments based on research drawn from British colonial archives, U.S. and Canadian state archives, private papers, and printed sources. This is a project that melds the insights of postcolonial studies and critical racial theory with recent

¹ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Harvard, 2000).

scholarship on the histories of capitalism, U.S. empire, borderlands, immigration, radicalism, and labor. But although *Pacific Connections* is theoretically sophisticated, the prose remains crystalline and the arguments straightforward.

The questions and conversations that Chang pushes aren't simply on the level of scholarly discourse, but actually get to the heart of knowledge production in U.S. universities. Many of us in history departments across the nation have been involved in difficult conversations and debates with colleagues regarding future hires. Do we shore up 'core strengths' (i.e., maintain the status quo focus on the United States and Europe), or do we venture into 'new areas' (i.e., the rest of the world)? Due to vested interests especially around graduate training, there remains strong resistance to the wider vision that Chang promotes. Hence my gratitude to Chang's work for demonstrating in a rigorously researched and theoretically sophisticated study the possibilities of an expanded vision of our past. I noticed that a colleague teaching a course on the history of capitalism has included an article derived from *Pacific Connections* on his syllabus. He did so without my urging, proving to me how much we needed Chang's study and continue to need more like it.

Author's Response by Kornel S. Chang, Rutgers-Newark, State University of New Jersey

I want to thank Benjamin Johnson, Naoko Shibusawa, and Beth Lew-Williams for their close and thoughtful reading of my book. I am gratified not only by their encouraging responses but by the fact that despite their different areas of expertise—borderlands, U.S. foreign relations, and American West and Asian American history—they grasped the central aims and arguments of the book. *Pacific Connections* traces the global movements behind racial and national borders in the Pacific Northwest, examining how, to invoke the words of the late David Noble, the region was formed through both the quest for boundless markets on one hand, and bounded nations, on the other.¹ The book explains how the seemingly contradictory impulses of opening and closing borders operated in tandem, even dialectically, to constitute a transnational region with shifting boundaries. *Pacific Connections* is my effort to write empire into the history of migration and vice versa. The transnational turn in the humanities and the social sciences has produced more nuanced accounts of (im)migration, but too often, in my opinion, they have, under the rubric of globalization, ascribed emancipatory meaning to cross-border mobility and exchanges. By identifying the unequal power relations embedded in diasporic and transnational movements, one of my book's aims was to push back at 'the world is flat' trend.²

Naoko Shibusawa perceptively notes the similarities between my book cover and that of Daniel Rodger's *Atlantic Crossings*. While my choice of image was not an intentional counterpart to Rodger's book, I hoped to make the case for a Pacific perspective with the cover, as Shibusawa suspected. With the image of a Canadian Pacific Railway steamship entering Asian waters teeming with Chinese junks, I sought to emphasize the asymmetries and power dynamics that defined Anglo-American engagements with the Asia-Pacific world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In doing so, the book highlights the connection between frontier expansion—the history of the North American West, that is—and overseas empire building in Asia and the South Pacific. Generally speaking, western historians have studied continental expansion, and U.S. diplomatic and international historians have studied overseas U.S. empire-building. This academic division of labor has obscured their intertwining histories, erasing the linkages that propelled westward expansion in this period. Beth Lew-Williams gets to the heart of the book when she writes: "He reminds us that both stories are connected and mutually reinforcing projects of U.S. imperialism. And he traces how these imperial projects simultaneously promoted mobility and gave rise to the hardening of national borders." At the same time, I took pains to show that western imperial power was far

¹ David Noble, *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). Also see Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

² On this score, my work drew from the insights of Ann Laura Stoler, "On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty," *Public Culture* 18:1 (2006): 125-146; and Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002). Paul Kramer makes a similar point in his article "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *American Historical Review* 116:6 (Dec. 2011): 1348-1391, arguing that transnational scholarship too often falls into the "language of post-sovereignty—of flows, exchanges, connections, and interactions." The article appeared after my book was in production.

from absolute, that the very networks that enabled Anglo-American expansion also contained the seeds for resistance and rebellion. What I call a transnational subaltern politics was also riddled with its own set of conflicts and ambiguities.

The history of conflict and violence recounted in *Pacific Connections*, in which Chinese merchants, Japanese and European migrants, Anglo labor activists, South Asian and white radicals, and local civil servants were locked in a contest over the boundary, was meant to unsettle the myth of the U.S.-Canadian boundary as the longest unguarded border in the world. If the dominant image of a peaceful northern boundary is largely true now, it wasn't always the case. And, in fact, the myth of a harmonious line was made possible by white settler violence and state efforts to institutionalize white supremacy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One of my post-publication regrets was that I didn't emphasize this point strongly enough, so I was heartened to read Benjamin Johnson's comment that "one of the great contributions of *Pacific Connections* is its historicization of this outcome, treating it not as commonsensical and foreordained but rather demonstrating how it happened."

Beth Lew-Williams observes shortcomings with my framework, noting the absence of indigenous people and Asian women. I take her point: the colonial histories of Euro-American-Native contact and Euro-American interactions with Asian migrants were interconnected and their entanglement was part of the making of the western U.S.-Canadian borderlands.³ My project originally began as a study of Chinese (im)migrants in Washington State and British Columbia. However, my archival research persistently put me into contact with other peoples and places beyond the Northwest coast, prompting me to reconfigure the project so as to take them into account. I found the task of tracking Chinese merchants, Japanese contract laborers, Anglo labor activists, and South Asian and white radicals across the Pacific challenging enough. The thought of adding to the cast of characters (and the additional issues that would accompany them) was simply too daunting. This isn't meant as an excuse, nor is it meant to mitigate the importance of bringing together indigenous history and migrant studies as part of the study of empire. I hope the gaps in my study will point to directions for future research. In fact, I'm planning a future project on the twentieth century incorporation of Alaska into the U.S. political economy, which will focus on indigenous and Asian migrant labor, to fill some of these gaps.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041, USA.

³ Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871-1921* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010). On aboriginal cross-border mobility in the Pacific Northwest, see Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).