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**Paisley/Glamour in the Pacific**

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## Introduction

From the late 1920s to the present, a Pan-Pacific women's network has operated out of Honolulu. This book focuses on its first three decades. During these years, from 1928 until 1958 and over eight conferences, the association witnessed and contributed to enormous changes in world and Pacific history. Through turbulent years of Depression, world war, decolonization, and cold war, its delegates met to practice a new way of being in the world, one combining social reform with an anti-racist politics built upon ideals of cross-cultural exchange and interracial harmony. As such, the Pan-Pacific women's network contributed to a larger movement emerging out of the Pacific, its organization providing a specific venue for and by women internationalists of the region. What makes this group virtually unique as an object of study is its commitment to both rationality and affect as modes in which new models of being might be not only imagined but also put into practice. Delegates from nations on the Pacific Rim, and from those newly formed or still under trusteeship within the Pacific Basin itself, would prove eager to promote through its auspices an emotional as well as a political and intellectual response to the myriad changes being rapidly wrought by globalization and Westernization in their region. Through its parameters, they imagined a way forward in which political and historical differences, shaped by the previous century of imperial and colonial race politics, might be ameliorated in a shared respect for and engagement in cultural diversity. In so doing, they sought to combine the ideals of cultural internationalism with the realities of diversity, to combine a set of ideas with the actualities of individual subjects meeting in time and space and trying to learn more about the myriad obstacles to their greater understanding. That this project—to transcend the past—was inherently flawed is the starting point of this study, but equally a starting point is the acknowledgment of the motivation and intention of those who committed themselves to these claims for a cultural internationalist future. The conversation arising among this diversity of women across this Pan-Pacific represents a significant contribution to longer-standing internationalist interests in the formation of community,

the expression of constituency, and the politics of representation. For its participants, the first Pan-Pacific Women's Conference in 1928 appeared to launch that debate into a new era, one in which women's cross-cultural awareness was to provide a new praxis for peace in a globalizing world.

In 1928, exciting news of this gathering in the Pacific reached the Berlin Congress of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance. Recently formed in Hawai'i, the Pan-Pacific women's network was declared to "[offer] a unique opportunity to take a forward step in human progress." Meeting in "the cradle of a new civilization free from prejudices and hatreds of the Old World," delegates had discussed social reform in the Pacific, its participants endeavoring "to cultivate inter-racial friendship, coupled with knowledge and forethought" as they set about providing a new cross-cultural foundation for world politics.<sup>1</sup> This sense of being part of a significant moment in the modern history of women's and world cooperation was reiterated by the conference's honorary president, US feminist Jane Addams, who asserted that "something vital [has] been born in the Pacific."<sup>2</sup>

Following these propitious beginnings, the Pan-Pacific Women's Association (PPWA) was formed at a second conference held two years later, in 1930. The several high-profile international gatherings convened by the association in and around the Pacific over the ensuing years went on to promote global perspectives on the status and conditions of women in the region, and on democracy and international cooperation. They generated substantial local and international interest. Inspired by the cross-cultural and interracial politics characterizing its cultural internationalist outlook, the association and its conferences captured the imagination of several generations of women activists of the Pacific Rim and the Pacific Basin. Involving thousands of delegates from more than a dozen countries and trusteeships, conferences were held in Honolulu (the association's headquarters) in 1930, 1934, and 1949, in Canada in 1937, in New Zealand in 1952, in the Philippines in 1955, and in Japan in 1958. Mostly middle-class, Christian, English-speaking, and Western (or Western-style) educated women, these delegates spoke as modern experts in fields ranging from education, social work, and health to peace, population, and cultural anthropology. A core number among them, from the United States, Hawai'i, New Zealand, and Australia, would provide continuity in leadership, while a new cohort would shepherd the project into a Pacific marked in the 1950s by decolonization and cold war. Given the "East meets West" theme dominating early conferences, delegates from Japan and China would be particularly important figures, while non-Western women in growing numbers from the settler colonies, the Pacific islands, and then Southeast Asia would emerge as potent figures in the association's collective imagination and practical achievement. (Reflecting

the “East” and “West” framework that dominated the early PPWA, historical categories are used throughout this book alongside more current terms such as “Euro-American,” “Anglo,” and “Asian.”) Across the Pacific, women were mobilized as modernizing forces by both Western and non-Western nations; part of that mobilization included involvement in international networking. By the 1930s delegates from Pacific island nations and indigenous delegates from the settler colonies came to play an increasingly important part in shaping the PPWA’s self-representation as a progressive contributor to world politics, their involvement effectively fracturing the essentializing and universalizing categories of “East” and “West” frequently deployed by the association and contemporary commentators alike. Their contributions, challenges, and sometimes explicit interventions in the historical development of a Pan-Pacific women’s community, initiated in their name, constitute the driving interest of this book.

The PPWA was an association deeply interested in the role of interpersonal relationship and affect in the formulation of a truly international world order. This attention to the negative influence of racism and to its remedies in self-awareness and the praxis of open-minded cosmopolitanism complemented the PPWA’s interest in the formulation of ideology, in intellectual debate, and in factual exchange. Given this self-consciously dual aim, the early decades of the association offer a remarkable opportunity to investigate both the ideological and the experiential and subjective in internationalism, as well as their interconnections.

As recent moves to situate US and other imperial national histories within a transnational context suggest, international politics also offer a productive framework through which to investigate circulating flows of imperialism and colonization, of immigration and trade, and of ideas and scientific cooperation exceeding the boundaries of national history.<sup>3</sup> Paul Gilroy in 1993 called for cultural historians to study “cultural and political exchange and transformation” in order to produce “an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective.”<sup>4</sup> Certainly, thinking “beyond the nation” has resulted in greater focus on globalizing discourses emerging particularly strongly in the interwar years, but while the Atlantic has received considerable attention, the Pacific is only now beginning to gain recognition. It has emerged as a complex and dynamic site, one crisscrossed by imperial, colonial, and national histories thoroughly anchoring the United States and other Pacific Rim countries within its oceanic vastness.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the interwar years, during which this study begins, were decades of particular crisis in colonial modernity, as assumptions about empire, whiteness, and progress were undermined, and anticolonialism and decolonization appeared to threaten the old world order. While Europe

descended into a world war, the dawning of a “Pacific Age,” anticipated early in the twentieth century, found renewed valency among postwar internationalists promoting peaceful cooperation between the West and the rising powers of Japan and China. In interwar Hawai‘i, a Pan-Pacific community to parallel Europe’s League of Nations was heralded at the ocean’s crossroad.<sup>6</sup>

Among those progressives aiming for “development” along Western lines in the region, cultural internationalists rejected nineteenth-century racial foundations on which the world community continued to imagine itself, disavowing dominant anti-Asianism and proclaiming in its place a worldly outlook.<sup>7</sup> PPWA women would contribute a glamorous (if mostly maturely so) dimension to this Pan-Pacific model, creating in its wake an international network for a women’s transnational, cooperative politics. But while the politics of culture offered a language of shared expectation about the cooperative future of humankind, it was the management of population and development that gave literal expression to the modern global outlook, and social reformism constituted the practical work of the association. Just as “culture” and notions of civilization were closely aligned in Japanese thought as much as in the West, so were matters of population and social hygiene; indeed, the two themes combined in the interests of nationalisms across the region.<sup>8</sup> For many women’s groups in various countries (as for other Christian progressivisms claiming a global outlook), population management included eugenic intervention such as sterilization of the “unfit,” and some members of the PPWA in the 1920s also supported such ideas.<sup>9</sup> The eugenic interests of the association, however, would be expressed in softer forms, those of population engineering, social welfare, education, factory regulation, maternal health, and so on. The point here is that global thinking in terms of population and cultural thinking in terms of international cooperation did not preclude “racial” thinking bound by national borders, territory, and sovereignty. Matthew Connelly shows that these two trends—the one global and the other state-based—coexisted, if in tension, throughout these decades, leading on the one hand to notions of a “global family” and on the other to new ways to divide nations over competing concerns about racial degeneration, famine, or uncontrolled immigration.<sup>10</sup> At the same time as ideas about global population and health management were articulated through the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO), nongovernmental organizations like the Pan-Pacific women’s network proliferating in the Pacific similarly aimed to promote reforms with universal application across culturally diverse nation-states.<sup>11</sup>

Through an investigation of this women’s Pan-Pacific, therefore, this book sets out to situate a women’s version of cultural internationalism within

the rewriting of twentieth-century world history of recent decades. By bringing together critical scholarship from across a range of fields—including cultural history, international relations and globalization, gender and empire, postcolonial studies, population and world health studies, world history, and transnational history—this study aims to bring into dialogue fields and analyses more usually held separate. This multifocal strategy is designed to extend the brief of a transnational scholarship in recent decades seeking to reach beyond state-centered and nation-based parameters. Necessarily, the study of cultural internationalism pushes the field of international feminism in particular further into the transnational domains of global race and culture politics, and into investigating the possibilities of progressive subjects among its memberships (not all of them privileged women).

Without a nation or state as its prior object, this study of Pan-Pacific internationalism requires a substantial deterritorialization of thinking and approach—a greater attention to the complex and dynamic relationships between subjects and their various accounts of modernity than, for example, recent studies of cosmopolitan desires among national subjects.<sup>12</sup> The PPWA calls for an investigation of the cross-cultural dimensions of multiple cosmopolitanisms, diversely articulated at international and transnational as well as national and local levels. Whereas my earlier work traced an interwar network of Anglo-Australian women interested in using British Commonwealth conferences held in London to advocate reform in their own country, including challenging aspects of Aboriginal policy in Australia, today in comparison this project seems restricted by its nationalist parameters and almost exclusive focus on white women.

The limits of internationalist interventions into the politics of “race” and the historical legacies of imperialism, nationalism and colonialism familiar to much contemporary world history were fundamental questions preoccupying women at the PPWA also. As I argue in this book, the resilience of race thinking and the limits of the cross-cultural ethos within the PPWA should be read not as constituting the organization’s failure to somehow transcend history, but rather as a reminder of the inherence of racialism to modern feminism and liberal thought more generally. Wishing to be unbounded by territory yet inevitably preoccupied by territorial issues, the Pan-Pacific conferences discussed in the following chapters provide unique insight into the profoundly interconnected histories of race and gender that have shaped feminist internationalism, as well as other progressive politics, and illustrate their on-the-ground, embodied, and passionate contestations. By viewing the interwar Pacific as a newly conceived territory of modernity in both spatial and temporal terms, this book sees the interwar period as a pivotal moment in the twentieth century, one in which new ways of think-

ing about the world opened up, however partially, to questions of diversity and difference at the global level that still occupy us today. Not least, these decades saw new accounts of the flow of populations across the Pacific, encouraging a generation of ethnographers, demographers, and anthropometrists to declare the similarities between the races and cultures and in the Pacific in particular, to announce the future intermixing of peoples and cultures as the Pacific solution to world affairs, and to predict the future advancement of world civilization. Warwick Anderson points out that racial intermixture was claimed by many of those undertaking studies in the Pacific such as Felix and Marie Keesing, who feature in this study, to announce the way forward for humankind, thus envisaging interracial relations in stark contrast to the disavowal of racial mixing in the United States and its anxious management in Australia and elsewhere. The Keesings were also critical of the mandate of their own country, New Zealand, in Samoa (alongside the United States), contrasting that regime with their ideal of advancement through dynamic racial and cultural flows.<sup>13</sup> As Tony Ballantyne explains, the region was conceptualized spatially and temporally as the product of waves of population linking more recent colonization to deep time.<sup>14</sup>

Feminist internationalism offers an important site from which to view these shiftings of race and culture politics and their interrelationship to the history of gender and modernity in the twentieth century. Writing out of the history of women's suffrage, feminist historians in previous decades have noted in interwar transnational women's networks articulations of anxiety about the management of progress and its relationship to inequalities between women. On the one hand, the Euro-American members of these networks sought to maintain cultural hierarchies by which progress was measured against Western feminist models. Following suffrage, women activists became involved in peace campaigns and in social reform advocacy, promoting the rights and conditions of women and children. Many joined professions then opening up to educated, middle-class white women such as social work. As the first decades of the last century proceeded, however, it appeared all too evident that women's rights were taking shape differently among decolonizing nations, where non-Western women had begun to occupy public office in larger numbers than were their supposedly more advanced Western sisters.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, those non-Western women who did participate in transnational networks faced highly contradictory conditions. While they claimed agency and voice within the world community of women, they were considered by their Western colleagues to have progressed less along the road to citizenship, both as individuals with limited experience in international activism and as representatives of the non-Western races, cultures, and nations.<sup>16</sup> Thus, although they were figures of central importance to Western

feminist internationalism's progressive discourse, simultaneously they were the objects of its civilizing mission. Adding further complication to any simplistic narrative of "progress," as we will see, of key importance to the PPWA in its aims to consolidate a women's community in the Pan-Pacific was the participation of women from newly decolonized nations like Indonesia and from trusteeships like Samoa. While delegates from these emerging nations and trusteeships were expected to learn how to be modern through their involvement in the PPWA project, they would come to use the opportunities of internationalism to articulate "advancement" in ways pertinent to their own personal, cultural, and national political aims. PPWA women of both Western and non-Western backgrounds shared a desire to promote cooperative relations through which a more humane world civilization could take shape. But they variously imagined a global community in which international cooperation between nations would lead to a transnational outlook capable of the complexities of increasing world interdependence.<sup>17</sup>

Hitherto, insufficient attention has been given to the role of non-Western women in shaping these dual histories of internationalism and modernity. Looking beyond established networks of Euro-American women's internationalism, during the interwar years we find a diversity of feminist international collaboration. Recent scholarship on women's internationalism has called for greater attention to the contributions of non-Western women to feminist internationalist efforts to think beyond national borders.<sup>18</sup> In their edited collection on feminisms and internationalism, Mrinalini Sinha, Donna J. Guy, and Angela Woollacott argue that we should aim to "defamiliarize" our assumptions about feminist internationalism by applying a global framework to our investigation. In this way, they argue, we can begin to acknowledge the "decolonizing impulses" that have driven "political organising across cultural boundaries," as well as the multiplicity of local, national, and imperial histories from which these impulses have grown. New work has shown that significant numbers of women internationalists sought to grapple with questions of hegemony in global power relations, of which Western feminism was itself far from innocent. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and other organizations not only invited women from beyond Euro-America into its membership but also saw in racism the roots of human conflict. While, by the 1920s, numbers of non-Western women adopted a degree of self-critique of the Eurocentrism dominating international collaboration between women in these years, others—such as Latin American women—founded their own regional networks.<sup>19</sup> Other new scholarship has shown that where non-Western women continued to participate in predominantly Euro-American women's international networks, through them they might criticize global standards set

by Western nations. Reminding us of immigration's impacts across national borders, for example, historian Rumi Yasutake has pointed out that members of the Japanese Woman's Christian Temperance Union (Japanese WCTU) worked with Japanese Americans of the WCTU in California toward the marital protection of immigrant Japanese women.<sup>20</sup>

Modern theories of culture and cultural difference have played a key part in the history of cultural internationalism, no less so than in its important articulation as a women's politics in the Pacific region. Among international critiques of cultural and racial politics in a globalizing world, the PPWA offered a third kind of venue. It argued that a global world community would succeed only by embracing a politics of diversity. In effect, it sought to relativize Western women's asserted ascendancy through working with non-Western women. Locating itself, as it were, between Western and non-Western women's international networks, and drawing on both in the process, it imagined the women's Pan-Pacific as a site in which diverse individuals and their constituencies would produce cross-cultural dialogue at the regional level. The PPWA aimed to take women's internationalism into a new era in which solidarity would be built on, rather than succeed in spite of, racial and cultural difference. In doing so, it contributed to larger debates about the role of culture in understanding humanity. Wherein nineteenth-century models of "savagery versus civilization" structured notions of "race," by the early twentieth century "culture and personality" came to dominate anthropology and other forms of intellectual and political thought. Under the cultural model of the "mental differences of mankind," writes George W. Stocking Jr., those denied full participation in modern society were considered hampered not so much by "race" inheritance as by race prejudice and discrimination. And yet, like the racial hierarchies that cultural theories claimed to supersede, the mantra of "culture and personality" foundational also to PPWA anti-racism, could itself function as a form of determinism whether in pluralist or assimilationist applications.<sup>21</sup> This plasticity of articulation expresses something of the valency of culture politics in the twentieth century. Through its conferences in and around the Pacific, the PPWA aimed to enact an ideal of cross-cultural community in which a new cultural politics was to overcome the violent histories of "race." Claiming to find an antidote to racism in the promise of "culture," the PPWA would fail to come to terms with its own contribution to cultural hierarchies by which the relative "advancement" of peoples and nations was routinely measured (whether through the ethnographic claims of Western anthropology or toward justifying the genocidal impacts of colonization).<sup>22</sup> In aiming to distance itself from these relations, the PPWA posited a postcolonial community for women in the Pacific, through "encounters" staged at conferences.<sup>23</sup>

No previous study of the PPWA has followed its first three decades, a longer perspective allowing for due attention to the various means by which non-Western women shaped the Pan-Pacific project. Here again, the importance of affect to the association lends itself to the closer investigation of both ideology and experience in the formulation and reformulation of racial and cultural theory and identity politics. Where previous studies have focused on the interwar years, the following traces continuities and contrasts between the women's Pan-Pacific as imagined in the interwar years and the Pacific and Southeast Asia organization it became in the 1950s. Western and non-Western delegates who responded to the women's Pan-Pacific project over these decades were in large part familiar with Western (particularly US-dominated) feminist politics. They were members of local branches of Euro-American international networks with reach across the Pacific, including Federations of University Women, the WCTU, the WILPF, National Councils of Women, Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Women Teachers' Associations, Women's Institutes, and the Leagues of Women Voters established in the region in previous decades. As historian Patricia Grimshaw has pointed out, the considerable non-Western membership of these associations indicates the appeal of Christian social-reform feminism to women activists from many different nations and cultures.<sup>24</sup> Although women of many denominations, including Catholic and Protestant, and of a range of social views (both anti- and pro-birth control, for example), ultimately they shared the asserted democratic values of "liberal Christianity," emphasizing individual fulfillment through reform work toward improving the opportunities for women individually and collectively, perhaps universally, and through expanding women's influence in the areas of education, health, public life, and employment.<sup>25</sup> The PPWA provided for these possibilities and more. It was a clearinghouse through which new information on women and children in the Pacific—routinely overlooked by the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO)—hoped to find global circulation, influence public opinion, and, hence, shape national and international legislation. At conferences, delegates shared information concerning their work to improve the status of, and conditions for, women and children in their own countries. The association took seriously its role of informing Europe about Pacific women's affairs.<sup>26</sup>

As this book illustrates, it was also concerned about providing its delegates with cross-cultural experiences designed to challenge Western women's Eurocentrism, the resilience of which has been noted by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, writing of the figure of the "Third World woman."<sup>27</sup> The greatest challenge to this outlook would come through interventions made by the

non-Western delegates themselves. A significant number of PPWA delegates were professional women employed in the burgeoning social sciences; others were established leaders in women's affairs in government departments in the United States or were employed in health and education departments, hospitals, and schools across the region. As a result, North Americans among them would argue initially that a women-only forum was not needed in the Pacific, given that mixed-gender, nongovernmental organizations located in Honolulu already provided opportunities to report on research and find influence with public opinion. They would be persuaded otherwise, however, reminded of the necessity of a community among women in facilitating the progress of their "less advanced" sisters of the Pacific. By investigating these trajectories, this study reasserts the role of internationalism in the first half of the twentieth century, and of international feminism as a dynamic force in the reconfiguration of world affairs into the postwar era.

Previous research on the PPWA has highlighted several important aspects of its early years. These have included its location in Honolulu, the early participation of Japanese women, and the significant part played by West Coast and Hawai'i-resident US women in its Western membership. Writing in the late 1970s, Paul Hooper has shown that the PPWA contributed to, while emerging from, a Hawai'i-based world movement promoting international collaboration on cultural grounds. Hooper has situated the feminist internationalism of the Pan-Pacific network within the larger history of cultural internationalism emanating from Honolulu.<sup>28</sup> Since his writing, scholarship has emphasized the role of Japan in the emergence of this international environment and in nongovernmental organizations and international cooperation more generally.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Rumi Yasutake has argued for the centrality of the Japanese delegates to the successful formation of the PPWA. Without their cooperation, she asserts, the association would have failed.<sup>30</sup> Given the significance of East-West cooperation to the PPWA, her argument is well founded. Looking at US history, Alexandra Epstein, a historian of California women and internationalism between the wars, asserts the considerable impact of West Coast—and particularly California—women, who looked to the Pacific (as much as or even more than the East Coast) as their own backyard. Epstein shows that women in western states enjoyed their early experiences of enfranchisement in an era of great optimism for the League of Nations and the ideals of international community. Many activists living in Hawai'i considered themselves to have a specific role to play in its future too and joined the PPWA. As Epstein points out, "the Pacific" offered these women a ready location from which to pursue their interests in the transnational implications of research and campaigns for the protection of women, including in employment and

education, while working toward increasing the cultural diversity of the modern women's community.<sup>31</sup>

Viewing the PPWA from Australasian historiography, one is struck by the significance of the Pan-Pacific ideal to Australian women internationalists also. Along with women from the United States and New Zealand, Australians were key figures in the Pan-Pacific women's movement. Historian Angela Woollacott argues that the Australians among the PPWA membership were significant contributors to its efforts of cross-cultural collaboration. Despite the hierarchical context in which the PPWA was conceived, and in comparison with the British Commonwealth League (a contemporary Dominion women's network concerned with the conditions of women and children within the British Empire), Woollacott concludes that the early PPWA included greater numbers of non-Western delegates than seen previously in any Western feminist internationalist organization, a fact underlining the importance of non-Western women's interests to its reform agenda.<sup>32</sup> Adding due attention to New Zealand women, this study shows that both Australians and New Zealanders were particularly significant to the substantial if uneasy account of settler colonialism made by the association. From the early decades of the last century, Australasian women had claimed a unique position within Euro-American international feminism as success stories of their day; by securing national suffrage at the turn of the last century, they encouraged women's campaigns elsewhere in the world. At the same time, although allied by "blood" and history to Europe, they lived in the Southern Hemisphere and were situated geopolitically within the Pacific and Southeast Asia.<sup>33</sup> For such women, the future of world cooperation in the Pacific was of particular importance. At a distance from decision making in European-based international networks focused on the League of Nations, they knew about the politics of geography and were eager to call attention to the significance of their own region in formulating international cooperation. For these settler colonial women, the implicit premise that white women were to be the facilitators, and, if temporarily, the leaders, of the Pan-Pacific movement provided an exciting challenge.

In her appraisal of the significance of the Pan-Pacific women's initiative, Woollacott notes the genuine commitment of Western women in the PPWA to engage with their non-Western counterparts in the Pacific. The PPWA's determined move into the region, she writes, represented a significant attempt at "global decentralisation" by feminist internationalism. The association exhibited a desire to "develop women's cooperation on women's issues across developed/developing, political, racial, religious and cultural divides."<sup>34</sup> As this book is able to elaborate, the essentially white women's network, with its rather amorphous aims of understanding and ex-

change, would indeed succeed in providing a stage from which a diversity of non-Western political perspectives and agendas gained an international presence, if not exactly in ways originally imagined. Perhaps because of its porosity, a wide range of women from different political as well as cultural backgrounds found a place under its banner, even where their intentions extended well beyond, or even contradicted, its benevolent politics of inclusion. As is discussed in chapter 6, a Black Nationalist arrived unannounced in the late 1930s and spoke to delegates about uplift and hope, for example, and Communist Chinese women participated in the 1950s. Ironically, given its predominantly middle-class membership, the determinedly cooperative outlook of the association provided a radical effect: the very act of women meeting across lines of significant sociopolitical difference would constitute one of the association's greatest achievements. In its politics of unity within diversity, the PPWA shared with WILPF, and with the World YWCA and the WCTU, a commitment to cultural explanations of difference and to the capacity for modernization among the less advanced peoples of the world, previously (in their view) hampered by Western imperialism.<sup>35</sup> Peace was an essential element of this community—the practice of peacefulness articulated through an engagement with, rather than fear of, other cultures and peoples. Drawing on these cultural and pacifist feminist traditions, the association saw a future in which cultural exchange could provide the basis for peaceful cooperation in a racially and culturally diverse Pacific, and hence a progressive model for the world.

As well as extending beyond the interwar years, my study extends previous accounts in its use of case studies detailing the interactions of non-Western women with their Western colleagues in the organization. These interactions illuminate, I argue, the intimate nature of the world of international politics where exchanges between women of diverse races and cultures were considered the very basis of its praxis. Over the years, the PPWA would begin to attract a small but varied population of non-Western delegates from beyond established internationalist networks among those largely unknown to Western women's circles (and hence to feminist historiography). These women would seek international recognition of their local campaigns, agendas, and concerns, as well as aim to shape the cultural international project of the association itself. In the process, they would often aim to disrupt resilient Eurocentric notions of "progress" and prescriptive notions of social reform, as well as challenge accepted organizational practices in which they, as "less advanced" women, were expected to play a subordinated role. While the disagreements that emerged between Western and non-Western women constitute a main subject of this book, so too does the glamour these women's presence ensured for Pan-Pacific women's internationalism. Being women

internationalists in the interwar Pacific was an exciting prospect, combining research and formal presentation with the thrill of exotic surroundings and the companionship of fascinating co-delegates. These evident attractions would find a new generation in the postwar era: in the aftermath of World War II, the association witnessed increasing participation by women from Southeast Asia, their importance to its future acknowledged in the name change to the Pan-Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA) in 1955.

The cultural internationalist ethos of the PPWA suggests the need for historians to think harder about the role of culture and consumption in feminist political, intellectual, and social history. Not only Western women who participated in the PPWA understood themselves to be cosmopolitan and modern in their efforts to model a new relationship between the races, peoples, and cultures of the world. In an age of burgeoning tourism in the Pacific, they enjoyed the ready combination of the delights of travel and tourism with the serious work of activism.<sup>36</sup> Contemporary interest in indigenous art and cultures expressed the importance of cosmopolitanism to



“Two gorgeous entertainments were tendered the delegates . . . one an afternoon Tea in honor of the Japanese delegates . . . the other a Tea by the Chinese community.” *Mid-Pacific Magazine* 36, no. 6 (1928): 426. Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

new ideas about culture, gender, and modernity in this era, as progressive women saw in the collecting of traditional handcraft, dress, or furnishings expressions of themselves as modern women.<sup>37</sup> Writing of Western feminism broadly, Caren Kaplan has described this cosmopolitanism as the “belief that the entire world is equally available to be occupied or represented or identified.”<sup>38</sup> Kristin Hoganson writes that elite white women and men of the early twentieth-century United States interacted intimately with the politics of cultural imperialism through their consumption of exotic objects. But while white women were seeking assurance of their modernity in the world, increasing globalization was creating anxiety concerning the maintenance of political and national hierarchies. Anxiety over cultural authority was expressed in enduring “colonial attitudes” and “colonizing ambitions” evident in the cosmopolitan appropriation of “lesser” non-Western cultural products, while seeking to maintain a civilizational superiority.<sup>39</sup> In her study of Asian cultures in the Western imaginary, Mari Yoshihara has revealed that fascination for “the Orient” formed a central theme within progressive gender politics in the early twentieth-century United States.<sup>40</sup> Cultural internationalism, with its interest in diversity, implied also a relative displacement of the West and Western women from the center stage of development and progress. This process of displacement would also be experienced by the PPWA, faced with criticisms by its non-Western contributors and self-critique within its Western-dominated leadership. Just as critical histories of gender and empire have brought into question “the community of women,” so have they drawn attention to the investments of white women in the relations of empire and colonialism.<sup>41</sup> Western women were themselves the beneficiaries of these relations of power, even as they sought to rearticulate them through relatively benign forms of leadership, such as in the Pan-Pacific women’s community.

Women who participated in the PPWA were therefore grappling with not only the contradictions of world history but also the future of world politics. As Nancy Stepan has pointed out, the popularization of cultural theory in the first half of the twentieth century did not dissipate the ordering power of “race” in world affairs.<sup>42</sup> Rather, the opposite was the case, as non-Western activists and writers increasingly claimed their place on the world stage. Calls for equity between the races (made by Pan-African groups and others in the late nineteenth century) had elicited “white panic” and saw the rise of white nationalisms in the early twentieth century. One of the first actions of the League of Nations had been to reject Japan’s call for an anti-racism clause to be included in its convention, in large part due to the refusal of settler colonies like Australia to remove immigration barriers.<sup>43</sup> Thereafter, the Japanese government would mobilize its own version of militant nationalism in its

efforts to consolidate a Greater Asia.<sup>44</sup> In spite of the “guardianship of native peoples,” and the protection of minorities established under the League of Nations’ mandates system, the Wilsonian promise of self-determination for Asia and Africa failed to materialize.<sup>45</sup> Susan Pedersen shows that while the Permanent Mandates Commission at the League offered little hope for colonized peoples, “merely talking about administering territories differently” forced public debate about questions of empire. “Minorities” were part of the political landscape and international discourse in which the PPWA shared, given its interest in diversity.<sup>46</sup> In response to contemporary Pan-African, Pan-American, and Southeast Asian nonalignment movements calling for race equity, many commentators in the United States, Australia, and elsewhere wrote of the rise of the nonwhite races, conceiving of “the West” as an embattled alliance between nations bound by blood and civilization.<sup>47</sup> Political leaders in the United States and Australia, for example, drew from each other’s writings and strategies in formulating national policies designed to protect “whiteness.”<sup>48</sup> Following World War I, which had been fought in part on racial grounds and involved peoples in the colonies in European conflict, by the interwar years nonalignment and decolonization politics provided a critical counterpoint to Western domination, heightening Western anxieties. Far from signaling an end to Western domination, anti-racism became absorbed into the vocabulary of modern cultural imperialism, as much as of humanitarianism and internationalism. Following World War II, cross-cultural knowledge was widely considered an imperative to the progress of Westernization and “development” in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. During this period, the United States emerged as the world’s most powerful nation. Claiming to bring prosperity and democracy to the peoples of the region, it “sought to legitimate its world-ordering ambitions by championing the idea . . . of racial equality.”<sup>49</sup> Significant Anglo-American cooperation in the Pacific expressed a shared politics of whiteness.<sup>50</sup> But while the British Empire was being superseded as a global power, the United States did not label its own expansionist interests as imperial, this “inchoateness and insecurity,” providing the very conditions for subaltern alternative visions of international community to emerge in these decades.<sup>51</sup> According to Erez Manela, both anti- and pro-Americanisms were often closely aligned in the larger, global contexts of contemporary modernization, anticolonialism, and decolonization.<sup>52</sup> This complexity was also apparent in newer imperialist nation-states expounding anticolonial rhetorics alongside the virtues of cultural nationalism.<sup>53</sup> Accusations of cultural imperialism against the West would make their presence felt at the PPWA, as global tensions around race and rights were played out within its own community.

During these decades, women in both imperial and anticolonial na-

tions were routinely mobilized as bearers of national and racial as well as cultural invigoration. Reproduction, population, and immigration were considered matters for government and international study and intervention. In their account of Western nationalists in the early twentieth century, Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds note the paradox of this crucial period in world history when geopolitical alliances based on white nationhood expressed transnational and international inspirations but were necessarily biological and territorial in their methods and goals.<sup>54</sup> By the interwar years, the settler colonies in particular were undergoing considerable upheaval in regard to the reproductive ordering of racial relations. Increasing populations of mixed-descent indigenous people were becoming more vocal about rights to land and cultural heritage and about exclusion from the conditions of citizenship. Declining Anglo populations feared being “swamped” by immigrant newcomers who in wartime were said to threaten internal security and to require internment. Relations between nations, but also between populations within nations, were in a state of flux. As Mrinalini Sinha argues, what constituted individual and collective rights and how nations should act toward them were differently articulated across intersecting imperial and colonial locales with “entangled” histories and places, where European concepts of progress were at once shown to be partial and parochial yet to have the potential to be universal in their application.<sup>55</sup> This deconstruction and reconstruction process also characterized the PPWA, where Western women both described learning of their relative advancement and their own dissatisfaction with European standards of rights (especially concerning women and children) and hoping, through international work with women from other cultures and nations, to contribute to the potential for universal standards to be articulated cross-culturally and then achieved nationally.

Analyzing the cultural politics articulated by the Pan-Pacific women’s association offers insight into the ways in which one network saw women’s efforts in the arena of “culture” as the basis for a nonviolent, equitable world order. Its aim of incorporating diversity within unity has constituted a core tension during much of the past hundred years and more of feminist political thought.<sup>56</sup> The following account celebrates this tension, not as evidence of the PPWA’s relative success or failure, but as an expression of the necessary dissonance between its cultural internationalist ideal and the histories of race, empire, and colonization that marked its region and membership. As it would turn out, the Pacific provided little escape from the past. For one thing, while the attraction of the PPWA was enhanced by being headquartered in Honolulu, considered the alternative “Geneva” in the Pacific,<sup>57</sup> the much-admired melting pot of Hawai‘i had been annexed by force and was such a racial mix in part through the effects of indentured labor on which

the profits of its white US elite (haole) substantially relied. The PPWA never confronted these matters. If the Pan-Pacific figured in the cultural internationalist imagination as the site of harmonious development, a myriad of European powers had continued to hold colonial interests in the region since the previous century. From the 1870s, US expansion into the Pacific and Southeast Asia also proceeded rapidly. In addition to territorial acquisitions in the Philippines, Guam, and Hawai'i, US empire building reordered the economies of the region.<sup>58</sup> From the end of World War I, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia had gained mandate over previously German colonies in Samoa and Papua New Guinea. The postwar environment of increasing decolonization saw the growing influence of the United Nations (UN), with its focus on development and trusteeship. Arguing that inequality was the result of ignorance that could be changed by reeducating attitude—terms familiar to PPWA cultural internationalism—the UN proposed that “guardianship” now become “trusteeship” with the aim of self-rule. All peoples were entitled to a “peace founded . . . upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind,” and the emergence of new nation-states was deemed crucial to the development of international cooperation.<sup>59</sup> The “dependencies” of the Pacific islands were to be shepherded toward independence under the administration of Western nations, including Britain in Fiji, the United States and New Zealand in Samoa, and the United States in Hawai'i.<sup>60</sup> Where League of Nations assertions of guardianship toward native peoples influenced PPWA “East meets West” internationalism before the war, the UN focus on social justice and development in the Pacific nations would have an impact on the association's postwar aims.

The formation of a syncretic world civilization was at the heart of the PPWA's feminist inheritance. The idea of forming cross-cultural alliances between women of different nations and “races” had shaped liberal and Christian social-reform feminism from the late nineteenth century, particularly through explicitly theosophical women's politics in which “the East” constituted a much admired source of renewal in the imagination of avowedly “anti-imperial feminists.”<sup>61</sup> The PPWA offered a more secularized outlet for these complex desires. In his account of the discourse of civilization and decolonization, Prasenjit Duara describes the contradiction within the concept of Western civilization, seeking to justify imperial domination, to civilize and uplift but at the same time wishing to be “desired by the Other.” Following the disillusionment of World War I, other civilizations (often linked to decolonizing movements in India and Asia but also in the United States and the settler colonies) seemed to offer a more inclusive model for world citizenship. Having attributed opposite characteristics to Western and Eastern civilizations, it was a logical step to call for their

synthesis toward establishing a truly global worldview.<sup>62</sup> Women delegates in the PPWA ascribed to this orientalist yet decolonizing perspective, hoping that a syncretic Pacific would rehumanize Western modernity in its relationship to community and cultural life, while bringing the advancement of Westernization and industrialization to so-called less developed nations. Various antimodern movements of the early twentieth century similarly promoted the value of a renewed connection with cultural production, including in the Arts and Crafts movement that was important, for example, to the settlement project in Chicago.<sup>63</sup>

The critique of Western-style progress would have its part in PPWA ideology as well. Ensuring the importance of women to both domestic and public life was essential to the feminist critique, and perhaps Eastern women's growing involvement in national regimes would provide a way to find greater compatibility between the two. Several world-famous women internationalists quickly became advocates of this Pan-Pacific women's project. Best known among them was US feminist Jane Addams, founder of the American women's settlement movement and a renowned pacifist; she became the association's first honorary international president. Following a tour in 1922, Addams was nothing less than famous in Japan, and the Japanese WCTU would establish its own "Hull House" in Tokyo in 1927.<sup>64</sup> Already by 1925, Addams had agreed to act as honorary chair for the anticipated first conference, the appearance of her name on early correspondence no doubt lending the nascent movement substantial prestige. Another well-known and respected woman of her generation, the head of the League of Nations' Slavery Section, Dame Rachel Crowdy, would attend the first two conferences as the League's observer. Early recognition by the League of Nations and later affiliation with the UN and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) confirmed the standing of the PPWA while securing its reputation beyond the Pacific. Not least, conference papers would contribute to a major study on women begun under the League and carried through by the UN's Commission on the Status of Women in the 1950s. In addition to these two stars of the international circuit, female and male experts from various countries within and beyond the Pacific, including from Britain and India, would be guest speakers at conferences.

The self-critique of Western feminism that took place within the bounds of the PPWA was in itself a politics of reform. Extending the influence of Western women's organizations already present in the Pacific, the PPWA provided a unique location from which social reform and liberal women's internationalism might revisit its own history. Rearticulating Western social reform and pacifist and protectionist feminism in the Pacific context, the PPWA not only relocated Western women's internationalism geographically

but also sought to turn back the clock, attempting to rewrite its genealogy through the conditions of “less advanced” cultures and women, while looking toward a more syncretic world model for the future of women’s cooperative work. It hoped to achieve these aims with the collaboration of the “women of the East”—women from Asian countries whose civilization contained the familial and communal elements considered since lost to women in the overly individualistic West. Where pacifism had split the movement during the war, peace politics were given renewed significance in a Pacific in which globalization increasingly entailed socioeconomic cooperation between nations. Where dispute over protection versus equality politics had divided the women’s movement in the past, so now the cross-cultural context of an unequally developed Pacific appeared to confirm the need for legislation governing the conditions of women in order to ameliorate the impact of Westernization on their lives. The aim of self-determination through protection dominated the League of Nations’ accounts of women’s and minority rights in these years but would later lose favor at the UN, when feminists supporting an Equal Rights Amendment in the United States ultimately superseded “equity with difference” feminism and its protectionist approach.<sup>65</sup> Those continuing to support separate legislation protecting women’s economic, social, and political rights would find commonality within the PPWA. Here the protection of difference found renewed currency through its cultural application. Among opponents to the Equal Rights Amendment, Mary Anderson of the US Women’s Bureau would become a US Mainland delegate to the PPWA and the international director of its Standards of Living and Wages Project. She would lead a committee to study wages among women in the Pacific, work that underlined the PPWA’s central role as a leading body for new research on the socioeconomic, political, health, and welfare status and conditions of women and children in the Pacific.<sup>66</sup>

Given this mix of social reformism with a self-consciously anti-racism politics, PPWA’s concentration on international culture extends our understanding of the woman-centered concerns of Western-style feminism. The women’s Pan-Pacific project was not feminist in the simple sense of being concerned primarily with suffrage; rather, it envisaged a role for professional women in advancing the status of not only women in general but also of cultures and peoples around the globe. The process of debating how this advancement would take shape in different nations and cultures brought the commonalities and differences between women into sharp focus.<sup>67</sup> The universal application of Western-style progress, like the premise itself of a community of Pan-Pacific women, highlighted the question of how to apply a politics of diversity to the needs of political collaboration. Women of the Pacific were seen to be awakening from the constraints of “tradi-

tional” society to face potentially new forms of exploitation through rapid Westernization. Considered not yet in a political or social position to collectively demand equity in the workplace, at school, or in the home, they were to learn about social reform and its transnational application through the mentorship of women in “more advanced” nations. Hopefully, they would not make the same mistakes as their Western peers. Through this teleological lens, the impending processes of modernization looked similar to the ravages of industrialization experienced by women in Western communities during the previous century, when Western women were considered to have lost their former status in community and family life.

With its cornerstone conference experiences of “interracial friendship,” “international cooperation,” and “cross-cultural understanding,” the PPWA was one of the first feminist groups of the twentieth century to confront the competing claims to territory, resources, and representation that result from globalization (and its imperial precedents) and that we recognize today as challenges facing modern democracies around the world.<sup>68</sup> Non-Western women were among initiators and shapers of this political, intellectual, cultural, and social agenda. For Westerners who also supported cultural internationalism, the substantial involvement of non-Western women signaled the success of the PPWA to secure a future of interracial harmony in the Pacific. Building on their experience of women’s internationalism, these Western-oriented women from the non-West pursued the potential of feminist organization toward moderating the impacts of development in a globalizing world. Asian, Indian, and Chinese women had become members of local branches of Western women’s international organizations (many represented at the PPWA) engaged in the promotion of “Christian internationalism, civilization and women’s liberation” in the Pacific region from the 1890s.<sup>69</sup> A small number had directly participated in international conferences in Europe, alongside Western women who were considered to be their guides into international community.<sup>70</sup> Their collaboration in far greater numbers in the new Pan-Pacific project appeared to legitimate the PPWA’s claim to provide a vital and unique forum in which the women of the region might find their own voice. Indeed, its cultural feminist outlook emphasizing democratic, national development and the need to moderate globalization proved amenable to women from newly decolonized countries in the Pacific, to those from the trusteeships and settler colonies (many of whom were involved in anticolonial movements alongside men) and, as we will see, to African American women from the United States. The diverse contributions made by these women would take the Pan-Pacific women’s community beyond the realms imagined by its founders. The quite different impacts of engendered histories of race, empire, and colonization upon the

lives of women delegates would be reflected in their diverse perspectives on the significance and value of social reform and cultural internationalism to their region.

The PPWA's interest in diversity extended beyond the question of inclusivity to that of development. The "Pan-Pacific ideal" already held weight in Asian as well as Euro-American Christian reform circles. While the League provided a European perspective on world affairs, among Asian progressives dialogue between "East and West" in the Pacific was widely considered equally essential to the future of world peace. Across the Pacific, internationalists hoped that, in the "Pan-Pacific" dominated by Japan and the United States, competing East-West interests might be peacefully negotiated. Writing of cultural internationalism in the Pacific, Japanese scholar Akira Iriye shows that in Asia, as well as in Europe and America, internationalists recognized the need to regulate the rapidly advancing effects of globalization. These advocates of East-West internationalism were concerned that, unless steered in a "peaceful, constructive direction," unregulated Westernizations would have negative impacts on the region.<sup>71</sup> The moderation of competing Japanese and US nationalism was a key issue in this future, while, as nation-states proliferated in the postwar era, power relations shifted more generally around the globe. Those inspired by internationalism hoped that "a wider world over and above separate states and national societies" would result and that "individuals and groups, no matter where they are, [would] share certain interests and concerns."<sup>72</sup>

The global consciousness of this women's network situates its historical emergence and contribution to contemporary debate about the future of world affairs centrally within the major themes of twentieth-century world history. Not least among these was Japan's contentious place among the advanced nations. If accepting that non-Western cultures might follow their own paths toward modernization, internationalists hoped to ensure nonetheless that the Pacific would do so alongside the West.<sup>73</sup> The rise of Japanese nationalism and the struggle between the United States and Japan for domination in the Pacific had undermined early hopes that the Pacific would provide the birthplace of world cooperation in the twentieth century.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, argues historian Tomoko Akami, by advocating "a Pacific-centred perspective of the world" Pan-Pacific activists helped to transform the region from a periphery of Europe to a "central stage in world politics."<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the persistence of international organization throughout these decades constitutes an extraordinary counternarrative to a twentieth century dominated by racism, war, and violence. And, as Iriye adds, the affiliation between the UN and nearly two hundred international organizations (including the PPWA) after World War II "was a major chal-

lunge to the geopolitics of the emerging Cold War that was threatening to divide the world.”<sup>76</sup>

In both spatial and temporal terms, the PPWA’s contribution to the emergence of the Pan-Pacific as a force in world politics points to the significance of orientalism to the study of twentieth-century women’s internationalism. Integral to this mapping of the Pan-Pacific was the idea of an “awakening” of the Orient. The notion of meeting with the Oriental woman in her “own” domain—the Pacific—represents a twentieth-century chapter in a longer history of orientalism within Western feminist thought. Feminist historian Leila Rupp has shown that Western feminist internationalism had long been invested in the “hierarchical rankings embodied in dominant assumptions about progress, civilization, and the emancipation of women” and that the “startling contrast” between the veiled, confined, and degraded Oriental woman and the Western woman bolstered their claims to leadership in the international movement before World War I.<sup>77</sup> The “woman of the East” had long been considered by Western women to be among the most oppressed and enslaved of womankind, standing for the degeneracy of Eastern culture as a whole. Western women travelers, missionaries, activists, writers, and painters contributed to gendered views of the East in which the oppression of Oriental women stood for the backwardness of Oriental cultures.<sup>78</sup> Liberating the Oriental woman, along with campaigns for abolition, suffrage, and pacifism, constituted founding features of Euro-American feminism.<sup>79</sup> Historian Ian Tyrrell has noted of the WCTU that “the world of women could never be separated from the world of empire” and that non-Western women were mostly understood as joining the international women’s movement under the guidance of their Western colleagues.<sup>80</sup> The shared secular Christian values that played an important role in encouraging the involvement of non-Western women in the PPWA social reform agenda continued to provide for the “relations of rescue” intrinsic to the white woman’s civilizing mission.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, writes Tyrrell, Western women who were engaged in “mobilising” local temperance and women’s societies inevitably came into contact with nationalist politics. In the process, they saw evidence of a future in which European authority would be questioned, and Westernization described as cultural imperialism.<sup>82</sup>

In anticipating the combination of East and West, the PPWA joined numbers of Western intellectuals who, from the late nineteenth century, had adopted a less virulent attitude toward the East than the xenophobic, anti-Asian policies instigated by various nation-states might suggest.<sup>83</sup> Among them, theosophists saw in cross-cultural exchange between East and West the seeds of unprecedented advancement in human culture.<sup>84</sup> Other anticolonial internationalist traditions hoped similarly to establish a new basis for

relations between West and East in the (supposedly) postimperial age. The democratic replacement of the “empire subservience” previously experienced by India, Turkey, China, and Japan, it was hoped, would help to defuse the emergence of anti-imperial nationalisms. Engagement with the “awakening East” was considered by many commentators to be essential to a cooperative world future.<sup>85</sup> But if the Orient was a place of both oppression and possibility in the Western feminist imagination, it was also an actual realm in which elite women from Eastern countries used Western feminist principles to advance their own feminist traditions. Orientalism was a transnational feminist language shared between elite Western and Eastern women, in which Eastern women were to become agents in their own progress. Tomoko Akami argues that Eastern internationalists were engaged in a form of self-orientalizing through their participation in Pacific-based internationalism, as Japanese members of the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR) identified with aspects of Occidentalism.<sup>86</sup> In joining Western women’s international networks, Karen Kelsky adds, Japanese women expressed a desire for forms of Western modernity and universalism “eroticized” in Japan from the late nineteenth century.<sup>87</sup>

Alongside the “woman of the East,” increasingly the involvement of Pacific island women constituted the success or failure of the PPWA project. In an era in which imperial nations faced the need to reconstitute themselves in an increasingly postcolonial context, indigenous peoples and cultures offered a new originary moment, typically imagined as prehistoric, by which to proclaim a connection to place for settler nationhood.<sup>88</sup> Native cultures, while not considered civilizations, were to contribute, nonetheless, to the emergence of a new era in world affairs through the connection they maintained between community, land, and cultural life. Furthermore, Indigenous women were considered the most in need of protection and guidance. Western international feminist traditions had long claimed to uplift “native” and indigenous women. In forwarding their own enfranchisement, from the late nineteenth century British imperial feminists had sought to speak in the name of these “less fortunate sisters” throughout the empire while, by the 1920s and 1930s, British Commonwealth women—including Australians—had begun to criticize internationally the conditions of indigenous women in settler colonies or under colonial rule.<sup>89</sup>

Pacific island delegates who joined the association—not unlike women from Japan and China—held necessarily complex identifications with the version of Westernization promoted by its internationalism. They asserted their own agency within a feminist narrative that mostly assumed their premodern status as women of less advanced—even primitive—cultures. Tourist images of the Native Hawaiian woman expressed in mod-

ern form longer-standing colonial projections of sexual fantasy and adventure.<sup>90</sup> Ironically, it would be for similar reasons that Pacific island women would become prized delegates at PPWA conferences, where they were soon to take center stage. Their presence seemed to assure the PPWA's achievement of its goal to become an innovative, cross-cultural regional network working for the women of the Pacific Basin. Along with Asian and Southeast Asian women, they contributed to the frisson that characterized PPWA conferences. Initially not expected to participate in their own right, they would come to dominate proceedings—from the 1950s, alongside women from newly decolonized nations such as Burma and Indonesia. Most had received Western-style education from missions, while some were still living under forms of trusteeship. New histories of missions point to the pivotal role played by such women in negotiating changes within their own cultures through mobilizing various forms of Christian respectability politics.<sup>91</sup> As Kumari Jayawardena has shown of South Asia, the emergence of women's rights networks applying Western Christian ethics toward anti-colonial politics was an inadvertent outcome of missionary women's efforts to Christianize local woman.<sup>92</sup>

This presence of women from the non-West requires a rethinking of the routine opposition between the international and the national in world history. At the PPWA, as at the League, nationalism and internationalism were not situated in opposition but were considered to be complementary. The association saw the formation of loyalty to a national constituency to be integral to an international outlook. Thus national delegations were to be nominated by national branches (where these had been established), usually comprising representatives of key international women's organizations. On paper, the tenor was conservative. For the most part, governments actively supported their national delegation's involvement in the PPWA through providing letters of approval and greeting to hosting conferences. Only two attempts at government intervention would take place in this period, the first relating to Aboriginal policy in Australia, and the second to communism and the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, each a subject of considerable controversy. A peremptory report on the association by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, undertaken in 1956, would find little of concern. Rarely controversial, PPWA conferences were seen as glamorous and elite affairs between intellectual women and were positively reported in local and national press, attracting large audiences to public sessions wherever they were held.

However, the nation was a more volatile foundation for a cross-cultural organization than the PPWA allowed, emerging as a concept inherently radicalizing of its conference proceedings. Like other internationalist move-

ments interested in Western and non-Western collaboration, the PPWA aimed for the formation of national identity not inspired by race or constrained geography but by the ascendancy of “culture,” a shared experience of difference offering “oneness” with global humanity.<sup>93</sup> The newly modernizing non-Western woman was to learn this condition of oneness through understanding herself first as an individual, then as part of a national collective. She would then come to see beyond those boundaries toward world identity. As Leila Rupp reminds us, however, national identity was experienced differently between women involved in international networks.<sup>94</sup> Among many non-Western delegates, nationalism represented anticolonial struggle against a history of imperialism and colonialism in which white women were inevitably implicated.<sup>95</sup> In one sense, the emotive, cultural model of national representation adopted by the PPWA allowed for these different investments.<sup>96</sup> But nor did anticolonial nationalist governments necessarily enfranchise women, and many in this position joined in the hope of improving conditions in their own countries. Similarly, by the mid-1930s Japanese women peace activists would be condemned by an increasingly militaristic government.<sup>97</sup> By participating in the PPWA, such women engaged in an implicit critique of their own governments.<sup>98</sup>

At the same time as “progress” in the West was being questioned by Pacific internationalists, and “race” was rejected by progressives as a measure of capacity for advancement, the idea of “national culture” as a way of reformulating global civilization remained attractive to many contemporary progressives, including women in the PPWA. In her discussion of pre-World War I British imperial feminist interests in “the Indian Woman,” Antoinette Burton has pointed to the fundamental interconnection between the imperial and the national in feminist articulations of their civilizing mission within the British imperial nation-state. These women were engaged in the “invention of new, ‘feminist’ narratives of national history,” she writes, built upon “distinctly feminized narratives of cultural progress.”<sup>99</sup> A similarly close interrelationship between culture, civilization, and national status would frame the “anticolonial” project of development and modernization under the PPWA. In her study of the IPR, Akami has shown that the rise of national culture and national character or “type” among interwar progressives constituted a highly political process aiming to (re)instate the nation-state above emergent gender, class, ideological, or race identities.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, national type was articulated through the PPWA and not always to “progressive” effect. As we will see in chapter 4, through the asserted incompatibility of Asian people with Western national cultures, Australian delegates argued in favor of discriminatory immigration laws to protect national whiteness in countries like their own.

Reflecting the fragility of “the nation” as a representational category, the formation of national delegations at the PPWA saw the reinscription of slippages between race, people, and culture characteristic of a world still marked by empire and colonization. Decisions concerning the membership of national delegations gave expression to various anticolonial, settler, and indigenous politics, as well as other minority identity politics abounding in the Pacific, often reiterating racial and colonial hierarchies. Put most simply, membership in a delegation might be earned through residency status alone. Thus a white Australian woman social reformer working in Shanghai would lead the first Chinese delegation in 1928. Or, reflecting settler colonial relations between delegates, Maori women (indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand) who first joined the PPWA did so under the leadership of a white (Pakeha) New Zealander and contributed to perform interracial harmony for the 1934 conference. The excitement caused by their presence underlined the powerful effect of cross-encounters staged at conferences. These were women whose apparent nonwhiteness constituted them as desired commodities of the PPWA, combining the visual appeal of diversity with the political intention of cross-cultural exchange.

The desire to reformulate interracial relationships—taking them from the racial hierarchies of old-world imperialism into the new global delights of interethnic mix—necessarily focused PPWA attention on reformulating settler colonialism. Through their involvement in the PPWA, settler colonial delegates found opportunities to represent themselves as engaged in a cooperative project with indigenous minorities. Indigenous women who became involved in Pan-Pacific women’s internationalism were also interested in this notion but, as we will see, reversed its intention by calling on their settler colleagues to work *with them* on rights campaigns at home. In so doing, they articulated their own versions of “national” identity, from a minority, but also often elite, perspective.<sup>101</sup> These women embarked self-consciously on a process of becoming internationalists, in which their shared but at times opposite experiences of Westernization became the subject of disagreement as much as cultural exchange.<sup>102</sup> This study of the PPWA aims to extend the parameters of “the political” to include the investigation of such intimate encounters enacted at conferences. Now that non-Western women were “awakening” in the 1920s, a new women’s cooperative agenda for the Pan-Pacific region would need to be articulated. The PPWA promoted a politics of interracial “friendship,” emphasizing the importance of affectionate relationship between individuals, and the collective kinship found in challenging the status quo.<sup>103</sup> At PPWA conferences, the rational work of social reform was to be complemented by the emotional and spiritual benefits of interpersonal change. Historian Jon Davidann argues that although

a leading Honolulu-based internationalist network, the IPR asserted the rational nature of international exchange. Without attending to the emotive and the interpersonal, such ideas could never succeed.<sup>104</sup> Within the PPWA, the practice of cross-cultural friendship meant challenging deeply held suspicions about difference that blocked peaceful relations between peoples and cultures. The idea was that from individual change would grow world change, an aim necessarily difficult to translate into practice or to quantify and, as we have noted, ultimately doomed in its wish to transcend history—although, as this book argues, the attempt is worthy of our attention. In the 1930s at least one leading delegate would refuse to treat cross-cultural awareness with the worthiness often reached in opening conference keynotes, her irreverent accounts of conference meetings (discussed in chapter 3) a welcome counterpoint.

In summary, this study sets out to investigate the global vision of a Pan-Pacific women's community. It investigates the fractured and flawed nature of that effort's achievements through the eyes of several of its central participants as they struggled with the central concerns of their day: diversity and progress, universalism and difference, globalization and cultural identity. Jane Haggis, a historian of gender and colonialism, suggests that we acknowledge the complexity of these kinds of cross-cultural interactions between women by recognizing them as "worldly" exchanges. Such interactions involve diverse agents engaged in acts of translation across cultural, racial, and political divides and in complex negotiations of knowledge and power.<sup>105</sup> When viewed as sites of worldly interaction, PPWA conferences emerge as dynamic spaces exceeding the notions of advancement articulated by their Western progenitors. In such spaces, writes cold-war historian Christina Klein, "the multiple voices of allied, but still distinct, voices [can] be heard. [These spaces] serve as forums in which ideas associated with residual, emergent, and alternative models of international engagement [can] find expression alongside affirmations of dominant ones."<sup>106</sup> Where initially the PPWA envisaged a Pan-Pacific in which Western women traveled into the region in expression of their responsibility to the international women's community, the diversity of non-Western women encountered there spoke to a multiplicity of Pan-Pacifics. Racial and national loyalties, as well as cultural politics and social reform, energized these women in their Pacific work. By their very presence, indigenous delegates' involvement in the PPWA refuted primitivist narratives of inferiority or even "disappearance." In a more dynamic sense, their various participations in the association expressed the resilience of their own cultures as well as their own interests in internationalism and modernity for women. They were also (if necessarily differently) engaged in the anti-racist project of the women's Pan-Pacific; they too anticipated that, by form-

ing personal and collective connections with women of other races, peoples, and cultures, they would be advancing a Pacific women's community. How and why such women claimed the cultural internationalist vision as their own, inserting themselves as key figures within the Pan-Pacific organization, structures the following chapters.

Chapter 1 considers the first conference and the ambiguous position occupied by Oriental women as both future collaborators in the Pan-Pacific project and as women considered yet to emerge into modernity. In chapter 2 we investigate the ways in which the association was established and the decolonizing process it underwent as questions about representation and the Pacific island woman took center stage. Chapter 3 looks at the increasingly important part played by settler colonial indigenous women at Pan-Pacific conferences as the performers of interracial harmony. Chapter 4 considers the theme of peaceful cooperation promoted on the eve of World War II in 1937 and examines how anti-Asian immigration restrictions operating in Australia and Canada threatened the cultural internationalist ideal of the friendly and cooperative exchange between women delegates. Following the war, the association gradually re-formed, to meet again in Honolulu in 1949, and a new generation of nonwhite women from decolonized and settler colonial nations represented their own organizations in the Pan-Pacific. Chapter 5 investigates the relationship between handcraft and identity promoted at the 1952 conference and how the cold war affected the ideal of international cooperation in the era of decolonization. At the 1955 conference, held in the Philippines, the association changed its name in response to the growing importance of women from Southeast Asia to its profile and future. In chapter 6 the appearance of the first African American woman at the 1937 conference is compared with the first African American delegate, who in 1955 brought to the fore questions about the relationship of US race relations with the Pan-Pacific cultural internationalist project. In the conclusion the revival of "East meets West" as a basis for world cooperation endorsed by the UN in 1958, and a PPSEAWA conference, at last in Tokyo, return our discussion to the first Pan-Pacific Women's Conference held thirty years earlier and the contributions of the association, in the interim, to world culture politics.