

Naval Nostalgia & Racial Memory in the United States, United Kingdom, & the Netherlands

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Exigence

- Naval nostalgia culture in the United States, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands helps promote incomplete public memory about histories of enslavement, and ongoing oceanic settler colonialism (Na'puti)
- Intimate (Lowe) naval memory connections among these empires remains understudied in scholarship and obscured in popular naval culture

Project Description

- Seeks a comprehensive account of *naval nostalgia rhetoric* (language techniques for re-enacting idealized pasts through representations of watery warfare) across the histories and geographies of these three maritime empires
- Combines field-observation of the situated and physical arrangement of naval nostalgia with analyses of naval memory in popular culture, including painting, cinema, & historical novels

Context

- How do naval memory practices on the U.S. Pacific Coast, and occupied islands in Pacific archipelagoes, work together with naval memory sites on the U.S., Canadian, English, and Dutch Atlantic seaboard?
- This is a new attempt to elucidate connections among English and Dutch naval sites in the Atlantic, and present U.S. naval colonies (e.g. Oahu, Hawai`i)
- A physically situated understanding of how discourses of racial apology and amnesia are co-composed across these empires might provide resources for cultural literacy in the role the U.S. Navy plays in its ongoing and deadly settler colonial activities in Pacific archipelagoes

How is naval nostalgia physically arranged—in museums, battlefield monuments, active operations—across English, Dutch, and U.S. settler histories?

Background image: replica of the VOC East Indiamen ship Amsterdam, Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam, NL. Photo by the author.

Project Goals

- Seeding funds enable field research toward completion of scholarly works including essays and a monograph-in-progress
- Field research will enable methodologies grounded in listening to Indigenous and other anti-racist decolonial activism as both primary and secondary sources
- Seeding funds will enable further application for external fellowships in anti-racist studies of maritime history
- Research for this project will contribute to movements in rhetorical and cultural studies toward better literacy about popular imperial nostalgia texts (Hasian)

Academic Impact

- Rhetorical studies help build—and better understand—discursive techniques for human interaction and memory building
- U.S. rhetorical studies of imperial war monuments focus on collaboration and solidarity among European empires—“Naval Nostalgia & Racial Memory” tries to show how interconnected naval memory sites play active roles in violent conquest and settlement

- *Supported by the Special Initiative to Promote Scholarly Activity in the Humanities & the European Studies Center Faculty Grant for Research on Europe*
- *For further reading see: Lisa Lowe, **The Intimacies of Four Continents** (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Marouf Hasian Jr., “Skyfall, James Bond’s Resurrection, and 21st-Century Anglo-American Imperial Nostalgia,” *Communication Quarterly* 62, no. 5 (2014); Tiara R. Na’puti, “Archipelagic Rhetoric: Remapping the Marianas and Challenging Militarization from ‘A Stirring Place,’” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 16, no. 1 (2019); Kyle Kajihiro and Terrilee Keko`olani, “The Hawai`i DeTour Project: Demilitarizing Sites and Sights on Oahu,” in *Detours*, ed. Aikau and Vicuña Gonzalez (Duke University Press, 2019)*

