Oceans connect. They also divide. In other words, oceans have histories: not only technological and environmental histories of distances, currents, and navigation but also social, political, and cultural histories of human intervention into the organization of space. These are histories of both integration and segregation. These histories are often hard to track. The depiction of integration or fragmentation is often relative, dependant on how previous eras are depicted. Moreover, convergence and divergence often take place simultaneously, and the perception of those processes will vary according to what is being analyzed. Most significantly, the representation of convergence or divergence is often entwined with deep intellectual, political, and cultural assumptions.

The global wave of transoceanic mass migration from the 1840s to 1930s exhibited these trends of simultaneous integration and segregation. These migrations were truly global phenomena that left few parts of the world untouched. They were entangled with the economic and political transformations that also spanned the world after the industrial revolution, both as flows of human intercourse generated and channeled by those transformations, and as agents that actively carried those transformations deeper into the urban cores and distant frontiers of the world. The Atlantic and Southeast Asian Seas were important conduits of these increasingly dense, multidirectional connections. Grounded in connections established over the previous half millennium, these flows (with the exception of those leaving Africa and some seafaring groups such as the Malays and Bugis) greatly expanded in terms of numbers, varied origins, new destinations, and diverse peoples over the course of the nineteenth century. The Indian Ocean was also an important space of mobility during the mass migration, although it is hard to distinguish the space of the ocean from that of the British Empire in understanding this mobility. Moreover, as one of the main regions of world oceanic mobility for over two thousand years, the diversity of peoples and destinations may actually have decreased during this more recent phase of migration. Finally,
the Pacific Ocean, despite a brief surge of interaction from the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, became more of a border to human mobility by the end of the nineteenth century. The same is true for the waterways that connected the major oceans, which increasingly became lines of segregation rather than channels of integration over the course of the century.

These concurrent trends of integration and segregation took place not only in terms of the material distribution of people, but also corresponded to growing discrepancies in material wealth and power, and intensified understandings of social and cultural differences. We now take for granted the macro-divisions of the world into categories such as East and West, the seven continents, or developed and undeveloped as natural historical divisions that increased interaction will overcome. But actually, these are divisions that emerged hand in hand with the great forces of interconnection and integration over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These conceptual macro-divisions, such as that drawn across the Pacific or those that divided Europe from Africa and Asia, were the very same spaces where many of the first institutions of modern border control were pioneered. Cultural and political insistence on difference helped to justify these border institutions, which, in turn, helped make some differences into realities. Perhaps the greatest effect of these borders is that they helped to exclude many parts of the world from inclusion into the grand narratives of world history, even as they were becoming increasingly integrated into the very processes of that history.

I have made the case elsewhere for the global scale and increased segregation of global migration from the 1830s to 1920s. After briefly summarizing that work here, I want to consider its implications for our understanding of migration history. At the very least, it provides more material for the comparative study of migration flows. It can also suggest ways to think more carefully about the effects of human mobility, and even about the causes and nature of inequalities and

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