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THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION
OF THE PHILIPPINES AND
THE SELF-EXAMINATION, SELF-PRESENTATION
AND RE-PRESENTATION OF
AMERICAN IDENTITY

by

JENNIFER M. McMAHON

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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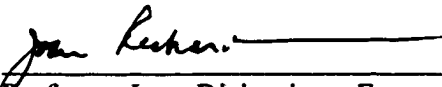
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Abstract**THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION
OF THE PHILIPPINES AND
THE SELF-EXAMINATION, SELF-PRESENTATION
AND RE-PRESENTATION OF
AMERICAN IDENTITY****by****Jennifer M. McMahon****Adviser: Professor John Brenkman**

This study is an exploration of the disruptions that can be perceived in American identity through a close examination of America's colonial experience in the Philippines in three different, but related, contexts. The first is an analysis of American writers' reactions to the colonization, specifically those of Mark Twain, W.E.B. Du Bois, and William James. These writers were vocal contributors to the debate surrounding the colonization, though, like the colonization itself, these works have been largely ignored. These writers identify contradictions in American identity, focusing on issues concerning race, capitalism, individualism, American innocence, exceptionalism, and self-reliance. These are issues that will resonate throughout the colonial experience, particularly

in how the Americans presented themselves to the Filipinos and how they were judged by them.

The second context considered in this study is the educational system established in the Philippines and how American literature was used by the colonial regime to introduce America to its colony and inculcate American values. Close readings of standard texts in the curriculum like Washington Irving's *The Alhambra*, Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*, and Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay *Self-Reliance* suggest that the very ideals American writers found threatened by the colonization were the same values promulgated by Americans in the Philippines. The irony of this effort was not lost on Filipino students, some of whom became writers themselves.

The third context considered is the early literature in English written in the Philippines and the implicit and explicit critiques offered by Filipinos of the American regime. Filipino writers like Paz Marquez Benitez, Maximo Kalaw, and Juan C. Laya provide a radical reinterpretation of the American mission. Their penetrating analyses, written in the early twentieth century, remain relevant today, especially in light of the very powerful forces of American cultural imperialism that influence world cultures in the early twenty-first century.

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INTRODUCTION

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

(Stanza #1, Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden")

It is little known today that the infamous poem "The White Man's Burden" was written by the British colonial Rudyard Kipling in 1899 to encourage America to colonize the Philippines. A debate that receives almost no critical attention today was raging in the United States about whether America should step onto the world stage as an imperial power in the far reaches of Asia. The effacement of this notorious poem's context and this important debate at the turn of the century signals a deep repression of an important turning point in American history.

Upon seizing this territory as part of the spoils of victory in the Spanish-American War, America began its ascent as a world power, no longer content to focus its attention on merely continental borders. It thus abandoned the insular policy of Manifest Destiny and became an active player in the global power games at the turn of the century. Maintaining a colony in Asia required a much more international outlook than had heretofore been necessary and laid the foundation for a fundamental shift in America's sphere of influence.

If, then, the colonization of the Philippines was so important, why has it been so neglected as to be all but forgotten in the American consciousness? This study will argue that the colonization foregrounds several fundamental contradictions in American identity, and that it is this uncomfortable irreconcilability between foundational myths and stark reality that has led to the overdetermined neglect of the colonization in studies of American culture. Specifically, the colonization challenged the bedrock ideals of American innocence and exceptionalism, racial equality and the work ethic, and self-reliance. The colonization of a people fighting for independence represented a blatant betrayal of all of these core values. It has been much easier to stress the victory of the Spanish-American War than to acknowledge the consequences of the spoils of that conflict.

There was nothing innocent about the American promise to help the Filipino people fight off the Spanish oppressor only to re-colonize them under the American flag. The pride which Americans took in their independence from colonial rule and their distinctly non-European stress on freedom for all was belied by the seizing of a foreign colony and the banning of the Declaration of Independence as a dangerous document. The racial rhetoric accompanying the subjugation of a darker people and the opportunities this afforded for cheap labor and new markets bespoke the American imbrication of capitalism and racism, rather than racial equality and the work ethic. And fighting a three year war

against a people fighting desperately for independence made a mockery of the professed American belief in self-reliance.

These contradictions go to the very heart of American identity and this instability generates a vital, if at times destructive, energy that reverberates throughout three important, and related, cultural productions connected with the colonization. The first is the reaction of American writers to the colonization, in particular the anti-imperialist writings of Mark Twain, W.E.B. Du Bois and William James. The second is the literature curriculum developed by American colonial administrators, and the third is the reaction of Filipino writers to the colonization in the early literature written in English. After a brief historical overview, this study traces the way the anti-imperialist essays of Twain, Du Bois, and James elucidate the abandonment of innocence, exceptionalism, equality, and self-reliance in pursuit of what they believe is misguided aggression and tyranny. Ironically, it is these very same ideals that American educators choose to promulgate as American values in their quest to turn Filipinos into their "little brown brothers." And, perhaps not surprisingly, these are the same myths that Filipino writers challenge on Filipino soil and find gravely wanting. The arc of this argument, then, moves from the domestic reactions within America, to the institutional hegemonic actions of American colonial administrators in the "contact zone" field of education, to the domestic reactions within the Philippines. This structure deliberately tries to balance American and Filipino viewpoints and to avoid what most traditional studies of the colonization have attempted -- to

gauge only the impact of American culture on the Philippines. While research on the influence of America in the Philippines is not without its uses, these studies tend to suppress the Filipino voice and elide Filipino resistance to the colonization and, thus, tend to re-enact the very domination being described. In so strongly privileging this aspect of the colonization, they also neglect how the colonial relationship with the Philippines may have affected American culture. In contrast, the structure of this paper lays the foundation to stress the relational quality of power and the currents of influence that moved back and forth across the colonial divide.

The middle section of this study focusing on the educational curriculum in the colonial Philippines acts as a bridge between the American and Filipino voices and suggests both the power and limitations of cultural forces in the domination of an entire culture. The Filipino writers engaging the narrative forms, language and themes of their American educational background suggests the force of the ideological apparatus of the colonial administration, particularly in the cultural sphere. Their discourse is framed by Western forms like the novel and the short story, their fiction is written in English, and the issues they raise are the very themes so prominent in the literature curriculum of their colonial youth. The work of Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault are the cornerstones for this middle section as both theorists elucidate the way power is managed and disseminated in the cultural sphere in an effort to reproduce and support the

hegemonic structure. Regarding education's crucial role in that enterprise, Foucault writes that

We should admit that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); . . . that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

(27)

On the other hand, what the Filipino writers actually say in their writings underscores what every teacher in the classroom knows -- that what is taught is not necessarily what is learned and the student will always bring his/her unique vantage point to the desk which cannot be erased or subsumed even in such an unbalanced power structure. As Partha Chatterjee writes, "Dominance . . . cannot exhaust the claims to subjectivity, for even the dominated must always retain an aspect of autonomy. Otherwise, power would cease to be a relation; it would no longer be constituted by struggle." (137)

In essence, this study is trying to strike two distinct middle grounds. The first is an active tension between the American and Filipino viewpoints. The second is an acknowledgment of the deep impact on Filipino culture caused by the American colonization while still clearing an autonomous space for the Filipino voice of resistance to the colonization. Thus, the structural framework of

this study is meant to both enact a balance between American and Filipino voices and suggest the relational quality between them, while still acknowledging and exploring the uneven power dynamic. There is an emphasis on the specific historical circumstances surrounding the colonization in an effort to delineate this relationship between colonizer and colonized with specificity. A criticism often leveled at postcolonial theory is its tendency toward universalizing colonial situations under one theoretical umbrella. A problem cited with Homi Bhabha's work, for example, is that while it has helped enormously to uncover the complex relations at play between the colonizer and colonized, its foundation in psychoanalytic and Lacanian theory has a strong homogenizing tendency that swallows up contingency. For example, Rosemary Hennessy and Rajeswari Mohan write,

Bhabha's careful insistence that the subject-other relation is culturally constituted still does not make it urgent for him to inquire into the historical specificity of that constitution. In other words, the historical pressures necessitating the subject-other axis to be cut at particular points -- for instance, the coalescing of the feminine and the colonized subject under imperialism -- and the material consequences at the conjunctural and global level of this demarcation of subjectivities elude his investigation.

His methodology tends not to allow for the nuances that are created in colonial situations like the Philippines where the Americans are actually the second

colonizer, a position which very much influenced their policies and ways of managing the native population. In addition, at times cultural theorists get so caught up in discourse analysis that the bleak brutality and real violence of a colonial situation get lost in the focus on language. While this study is, of course, focused on both culture and language, there is a concerted effort to keep the study grounded by historically contextualizing these phenomena and always keeping in mind both the physical and cultural violence of this colonization.

There is a close attention that is given to only a limited number of writers and their texts; this is a means of isolating the salient and provocative issues that emerge in each context. A broad survey of American anti-imperialist writing, of the educational curriculum in the colonial Philippines, and of Philippine literature in English during the colonial era are all important areas of research that need more attention; however, in an attempt to link these three areas and discover the complex weavings that tie them together, such a broad scope would not prove useful. While limiting the number of texts under review may silence voices that others hopefully will engage, it does allow for an amplification of the voices under review and encourages a dialogue among those voices that has never emerged before. In addition, the texts chosen for close study in each area are considered foundational so that while this analysis may not be all-inclusive, it can be considered representative.

In a review of what led to the colonization and what followed in its wake, it becomes clear that the United States was caught somewhat off guard by its own

colonial ambitions and that policy thereafter was often dictated by circumstance rather than a clearly defined colonial policy. There was obvious discomfort in the role of colonizer, though this unease did nothing to prevent the brutal suppression of a Filipino revolt. For their part, the Filipinos were caught somewhere between a rock and a hard place. While many participated in the revolution against American authority, eventually there evolved widespread recognition that the Americans were offering more in the way of educational and economic advancement than their previous colonizers, the Spanish. The Filipinos also realized that continuing the hostilities was tearing apart their own country and leaving the Americans almost unscathed; however, this fervently expressed desire for independence would color all political dealings between the Filipinos and the Americans in the years to come. President McKinley's colonial policy of "Benevolent Assimilation" was the first in a long line of ambivalent imperialist gestures designed to reconcile America's glorification of its own revolutionary origins with the suppression of the same in the Philippines. As a result, the entire colonization paradoxically was characterized as a tutelage in democracy.

American anti-imperialist writers were unimpressed by President McKinley's rhetoric promising benevolence and viewed the colonization as a grave betrayal of American ideals. Mark Twain, who called himself, "the American," mourned the loss of American innocence and the demise of American exceptionalism. He was outspoken in his disappointment and wrote several anti-imperialist essays attacking the colonization. In his most famous piece, "To The

Person Sitting in Darkness,” Twain addresses the proverbial savage in an ironic essay that reveals the brutality and deceit inherent to the process of colonization. Implicitly Twain posits an ideal, but lost, America that is innocent of this treachery and is still detached from the greed and degradation associated with Europe.

In contrast, W.E.B. Du Bois, a prominent spokesman for a beleaguered black community, saw the colonization as another in a long series of sordid racial betrayals, as another macabre illustration of racist capitalism at work. Though most of his writing on the plight of colonies was published after World War II, he did react vehemently to the American colonization of the Philippines. In particular, in a speech he wrote for a Philippine Independence demonstration to be held in New York and in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois expresses dismay that the American “color line” is expanding to the far reaches of Asia and that Filipinos will now be caught in the tangled web of American racism and capitalism.

William James, a former professor of Du Bois and long recognized as an prominent American philosopher, focused on what impact the colonization would have on the foundational American concept of self-reliance and feared the worst. In several private letters to friends and public letters to the editors of newspapers, he expressed the deepest concern about the fate of individuality and self-reliance in a culture that must systematize in order to cope with sudden expansion and an unruly colony. He believed the colonization of the Philippines would lead

America away from a respect for individuality and, instead, would encourage a reliance on various orthodoxies, abstract theories that would homogenize entire populations – both American and Filipino.

Twain, James and Du Bois were, and are, celebrated American writers and thinkers. They were united in their opposition to the colonization, but each imagined a different America under attack and their various perspectives reveal how fraught American identity was in this transition to becoming a world power. Close readings of their anti-imperialist writings explore the conflicting Americas that emerge in their works and how they can be understood in relation to one another and to the colonization itself.

The writings of the anti-imperialists were written very early in the colonization process when the country was still deciding what should be done with this unexpected possession. Later, American colonial educators in the Philippines would unwittingly choose to focus on many of the same ideals that anti-imperialist writers isolated and exposed as under siege by the colonization of the Philippines. The educational curriculum was specifically designed to bring the Philippines into the American fold. What better way to teach the new colony how to be American than to teach them American language and letters. The curriculum selection was obviously important in terms of deciding what being American actually meant. Raymond Williams notes in *The Long Revolution* that "what is thought of as 'an education' [is] in fact a particular selection, a particular set of emphases and omissions." Three texts taught frequently during the colonial

era were Washington Irving's *The Alhambra*, Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*, and Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Essay on Self-Reliance."

Through these texts, educators tried to define American values and export them to their colonial wards. In *The Alhambra*, Irving retells many Spanish folk stories and paints a portrait of Spanish culture to his American audience. Of the stories selected for the colonial curriculum, an implicit comparison is drawn between Spain, where the culture is rigidly stratified and corrupt, and America where the culture is, in theory anyway, both fluid and transparent. This subtle juxtaposition between the former and current colonizers attempts to reinstate American innocence and exceptionalism even within the colonial context.

Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* presents the value of the work ethic and does so in the context of Washington's arduous journey from slavery to exalted prominence. While Washington describes the problems of race in America, the chapters selected for the colonial curriculum emphasize the burden on the individual to overcome racial stereotypes through passionate and dedicated hard work. Washington presents an America where individual effort is rewarded and where racism can be overcome. In this text, the free market affords opportunities not available in more rigidly controlled societies.

Emerson's *Essay on Self-Reliance* might at first seem a strange choice for a colony – self-reliance being exactly what has been denied. Emerson, in this essay, calls for a radical reliance on individual volition. He rejects the cultural restraints imposed by society and argues for people to turn inward for spiritual

direction and nurture a soul that can refuse the usual attention paid to external customs and mores. Emerson's ideal individual is unfettered by community ties, and it is this aspect of his essay that appealed for a colonial administration threatened by tight-knit social networks that resisted Americanization.

Each of these texts played a particular role in the colonial project and was part of an overall attempt to Americanize the Philippines. Colonial educators isolated specific ideals that they believed could be exported and would represent America to the natives abroad. Experiences of students on the ground, however, often subverted the pedagogical pursuits of this colonial endeavor. It comes as no surprise that positioning America as exceptional, as a land of racial equality and opportunity, and as a bastion of self-reliance to an audience of colonial Filipino students would be a thorny undertaking at best. Many students, including the three Filipino writers in this study, could see the manifest differences between this America in the classroom and the America of their quotidian lives.

Maximo Kalaw, Juan C. Laya, and Paz Marquez Benitez were students in the colonial educational system, and each emerged a prominent educator and writer. Maximo Kalaw, Juan C. Laya, and Paz Marquez Benitez, sometimes overtly and sometimes quite subtly, offer in their fiction a penetrating critique of what these American ideals seemed to promise on Filipino soil and what was actually delivered. In addition, they anticipate many of the debates among post-colonial theorists in their various approaches to the possibility of resistance to the American regime. Kalaw focuses on the ambivalence of colonial rhetoric,

recalling the work of Homi Bhabha; Laya dramatizes native resistance to Americanization and offers fictional support to the arguments of Partha Chatterjee, while Benitez illuminates the devastating utter capitulation of a Filipino to an insidious and ubiquitous colonial pressure, anticipating in the early twentieth century Michel Foucault's work in the late twentieth century.

In his novel *The Filipino Rebel: A Romance of the American Colonization of the Philippines*, Kalaw examines the compromised nature of the political structure in the Philippines and its morally corrosive impact on all those who participate. Kalaw argues that the ambivalent rhetoric of independence and democracy in the colonial setting is more than just hypocritical; it is corrupt. This degradation is implicitly compared with that of the earlier Spanish regime and deemed more insidious because of its reliance on an eager Filipino acquiescence.

Juan C. Laya narrows his focus to one small and remote Filipino village, far away from the powerful machinations in the capital of Manila. But he too describes a kind of social corrosion. *His Native Soil* traces the difficult repatriation of Martin Romero who returns to his small village after earning a university degree in America. Romero is both extremely bitter about the cruel racial prejudice he has experienced in America, and absolutely convinced that American capitalism is far superior to anything the Philippines has to offer. If Romero is unaware of the complexity of his position -- one that both rejects his own assumed inferiority in America and one that inflicts an American-bred superiority on his family and neighbors in the Philippines -- Laya most certainly

is aware of the complications of this convoluted positioning. Laya uses Romero's arrival in his hometown and the events that follow to lay bare the disruptive dynamic of American capitalism in the traditional village setting; Laya also stresses the demoralizing effects of the racial prejudice that Martin has assimilated and used against his own family while head of a joint entrepreneurial venture. Ultimately, Laya illustrates how futile Romero's efforts are in changing the culture of his village and how resilient that local culture is in the face of his modernizing machinations.

Paz Marquez Benitez's story, "Dead Stars," narrows the focus even further to the plight of one man who has lost any sense of personal will. His claustrophobic feeling of a vague, but powerful, oppression leads him to marry a woman whom he no longer loves and abandon the woman whom he adores. Traditionally read as a tragic love story, "Dead Stars," is also a political allegory that exposes how the loss of even the dream of independence in the Philippines devastated a generation of patriots and left them psychically crippled, without desire, passion, or any feeling of control over their destinies. Her story, the darkest of the three, leaves no room for resistance of the native voice.

In an interesting reversal, all three writers interrogate the very same ideals that raised the shackles of American writers on American soil, and inspired American educators to a missionary's zeal on Philippine soil. In this case, though, the perspectives on American innocence and exceptionalism, racial equality and the work ethic, and self-reliance are grounded in the Philippine

experience; the focus is on how these ideals impacted culture in the Philippines. A close reading of this Filipino literature in English suggests the consequences have been less than ideal for the Philippines.

Many writers and historians have looked at the history of the various myths that constitute American identity but rarely with a look at how these ideas have been used and received abroad. Usually the focus is limited to a more insular history of how these ideals have developed within the domestic sphere. The pervasive belief in both American innocence and exceptionalism is usually traced back to early America's religious roots. The pilgrims, who fled both the decadence and the religious persecution of Europe, believed fervently that their motives were pure and driven by devotion to God. They defined themselves against the unholy Europe they had left behind and very deliberately established a society that was grounded on Protestant principles. This paved the way for an American society that has ever since maintained a stubborn belief in its own benevolence and purity, even in the face of compelling evidence otherwise.

The interplay of race and capitalism also goes back to the very foundations of American culture. American expansion, driven by opportunity and a relatively free market, was dependent on the elimination of Native Americans to free the land and the enslavement of African Americans to work the land. Both of these brutal tactics were justified by theories of racial superiority. This is not to suggest that racism did not exist elsewhere or exists only in tandem with capitalism; however, this is to assert that in American history the two are intimately bound.

Segregating the society by race ensured a large pool of unskilled, cheap labor. This was considered good business. The legendary opportunities that America offered were garnered at the expense of and often on the backs of its disenfranchised populations. Capitalism's emphasis on the free market of supply and demand also provided a veneer of objectivity that belied its actual racist operations. In America, hard work was considered the ticket to success and prosperity. What was usually left out of the equation, however, is that the market was not open to everyone. With this elision, capitalism in America helped propagate the idea that race was not a factor in the marketplace and, therefore, not a structural obstacle.

American emphasis on self-reliance, which willfully neglects its history of enslavement, is still considered a distinctive cultural feature, even today. Though the idea was canonized by Emerson, it was certainly a vital part of American culture before he put pen to paper. This idea too goes back to the cultural foundations laid by the original white American settlers. In the first place, the Puritans practiced a religion that put unusual emphasis on the individual and his/her relationship to God. The mediation required by more traditional Christianity was considered unnecessary and a dilution of the religious experience. In addition, unlike tradition-bound Europe, America was largely uncharted territory, both physically and socially. There was more room for individual choice as a result. If one disagreed with the principles of his/her community, one could move on to another with a freedom unknown in Europe.

As people began to move West, the populations became sparser and sparser; often settlers had to fend for themselves, fighting against both the cataclysms of nature and the lawlessness endemic to such a loosely organized society. This unfettered structure put far more weight on the individual. Gone were the intimate social networks that survived generation after generation in the “old” countries. The push to survive the trials of nature, loneliness, and violence was incited by the lure of free land. Never before had so many people been given the opportunity to own their own land and never before had the demand for labor so exceeded the supply; as a result of both of these factors, the focus on the individual was even more deeply cultivated. Though times had drastically changed by the turn of the century, there remained an abiding belief in the capacity of the American individual to overcome all obstacles by simply relying on the industry and ingenuity of the self.

As noted, all of these ideas, American innocence and exceptionalism, the imbrication of race and capitalism, and a deep faith in the individual, often are considered only in terms of their history on American soil. Broadening the scope to include the colonization of the Philippines reveals how the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in these ideas were manifest at the turn of the century – a harbinger of cultural wars that would be fought over and over again throughout the century. Also, this widening of perspective allows one to see how classic American texts, like *The Alhambra*, *Up from Slavery*, and *Self-Reliance*, could be used for hegemonic purposes. Like America’s role as a colonizing power during

the late imperial age, this aspect of American literary history has been woefully neglected.

The contradictions and complexities of the colonial enterprise in general, and its use of central American myths in particular, were deeply felt and astutely expressed by the very first generation of Philippine writers in English. Analyzing their work and emphasizing their critique is not a naive attempt to romanticize their positions in a colonial culture and obviate the oppression of that culture. The historical sketch that follows provides ample evidence that only a certain degree of dissent was ever tolerated. It is, however, to suggest that their voices offer an unexamined vantage point from which to understand American identity and the potential dynamics of that identity on the global stage. Their fiction does much more than that, but heretofore this aspect of their work has not been fruitfully explored.

It behooves Americans today to take note of their penetrating observations for American innocence and exceptionalism, race and capitalism, and a strong faith in self-reliance, all remain constitutive elements of American identity, playing a role in both domestic and international affairs. As American cultural hegemony permeates the globe, it is critical to listen to the voices that described both American methods of assimilation and its aftermath.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Take up the White Man's burden—
 The savage wars of peace—
 Fill full the mouth of Famine
 And bid the sickness cease;
 And when your goal is nearest
 The end for others sought,
 Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
 Bring all your hope to nought.

(Stanza #3, Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden")

The colonization of the Philippines came as something of a shock to many Americans, including Mark Twain, who had just spent many years abroad. The Spanish-American War, at first, seemed to conform to traditional American values as he understood them. The United States had entered the war in the role of "liberator," assisting the Cubans in their quest for independence from what had become brutal Spanish control. The Teller Amendment, passed in Congress at the onset of the war, assured Americans that the United States was not interested in acquiring foreign territory, but, instead, simply wanted to help the close neighbor in its fight for freedom. President McKinley had emphatically stated in his address to Congress at the end of 1897, "I speak not of forcible annexation. . . . That by our code of morality would be criminal aggression." (qtd. in Freidel 78)

The Philippines, also under Spanish control, was initially of secondary concern; however, once the United States was officially at war, all of Spain's territories became vulnerable to attack. Roosevelt had sent a fleet under the command of Commodore Dewey to wait in Hong Kong just in case the hostilities

escalated to an all-out war. There is some controversy about whether Roosevelt, as second-in-command at the Navy, had the authority to send this authorization to Commodore Dewey; even today it is not clear whether this was a rogue command and he was simply motivated by his personal imperial ambitions or whether he was acting in line with the military strategy of the administration. In any event, the command was never rescinded, and Dewey waited in Hong Kong for further orders. While in Hong Kong, he made contact with a group of Filipino rebels who had been exiled in exchange for promised reforms from the Spanish colonial government. The reforms, which included expanding educational opportunities and giving Filipinos a voice in the government, were never enacted; therefore, this group, led by Manuel Aguinaldo, was eager to resume the revolution to overthrow Spanish dominion. They predicted accurately that American naval power added to their own extensive revolutionary army would be sufficient to topple the already fragile Iberian hierarchy.

These revolutionaries, part of a secret society called the *Katipunan*, had waged their own war against the Spanish for nine months beginning in 1896. Woefully short of resources and split by internal division, they had few options but to negotiate with the Spanish when reforms were offered in exchange for the leaders' exile. In that time, however, they had built up a substantial network in the villages which they knew could be reinvigorated fairly easily.

On February 15, 1898, the American battleship the *Maine* was believed to have been blown up by the Spanish in the harbor of Havana. The ship did blow

up, but is not at all clear today, nor was it clear then, that this was an aggressive act by the Spanish, who were busy, at the time, conceding to nearly all of Washington's diplomatic demands regarding Cuba. In a recent *New York Review of Books* article (April 23, 1998), Hugh Thomas writes that the research indicates it was probably an accident. Still, Americans believed that this was a deliberately provocative gesture by the Spanish, and the United States lost no time in declaring war on Spain, proclaiming in its war cry, "Remember the *Maine!* To Hell with Spain." (qtd. in McDougall 394). Dewey was ordered to sail to the Philippines. By American invitation Manuel Aguinaldo was on board when Dewey landed in the harbor of Manila and, on May 1, 1898, easily destroyed the Spanish fleet. Aguinaldo went to work on the ground and, with wide popular support from the Filipino people, was able to blockade the Spanish colonials into a small area at the center of the capital city within two months.

The insurgent forces in the Philippines claimed that an agreement very similar to that with Cuba's freedom fighters had been reached before they joined forces with the Americans. This arrangement stipulated that America would hand over Cuba to the revolutionaries after victory over the Spanish was assured. Aguinaldo understood that the United States was again acting in the role of liberator and would leave the Philippines as soon as the Spanish were defeated. Before setting sail for their home country with the Americans, Aguinaldo and his fellow exiles sent a cable to their compatriots in the Philippines stressing America's desire for Philippine liberty:

Divine Providence is about to place independence within our reach. The Americans, not from mercenary motives but for the sake of humanity and the lamentations of so many persecuted people have considered it opportune to extend their protecting mantle to our beloved country. . . . The Americans will attack by sea and prevent reinforcements coming from Spain. . . . The insurgents must attack by land. . . . There where you see the American flag flying, assemble in numbers; they are our redeemers! (qtd. in Paulet 244)

Assured of eventual victory, Aguinaldo published a declaration of independence on August 6, 1898, though, by then, there were already signs that his version of the story would clash with that of the Americans in Washington.

After Spain's official acknowledgment of defeat, the United States lost no time in denying that any such agreement regarding the liberation of the Philippines had been made and frequently alluded to the lack of any written proof. With mounting tensions in the Philippines, the United States proceeded, under the terms agreed upon in the Treaty of Paris at the end of 1898, to pay twenty million dollars to Spain for the transfer of sovereignty over the archipelago of more than 7,000 islands.

Many different reasons have been offered for America's turn toward empire in the wake of so many public pronouncements declaring absolute lack of interest in acquiring territory. In 1902, J.A. Hobson theorized that it was the

inevitable search for markets driven by the rapid acceleration of America's capitalist industrial economy. (1) What Frank A. Vanderlip, the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, wrote in *Century Magazine*, in 1898, certainly supports this argument: “[W]e see with sudden clearness that some of the most revered of our political maxims have outlived their force. . . . A new mainspring . . . has become the directing force . . . the mainspring of commercialism.” (555) With this focus on “commercialism,” the Philippines was heralded as the gateway to the largest concentration of potential consumers in the world, China. Senator Alfred Beveridge commented:

American factories are making more than what the American people can use; American soil is producing more than they consume. Fate has written our policy for us, the trade of the world must and shall be ours. . . . The Philippines is logically our first target. The Philippines is ours. Beyond them are China's illimitable markets. (qtd. in Wolff 63)

The allure of China was part myth and part recognition that the phenomenal expansion of American territory, with its concomitant development of settled communities and markets, was winding down. The 1890 census had reported that the amount of unoccupied land in the states and the territories was negligible. (Paulet 224) Frederick Jackson Turner wrote his famous treatise on the demise of this growth in 1893. In “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” he writes, “And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of

a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history.” (62)

Other motivating factors for colonization included a strong desire for naval ports and coaling stations to support an expanding navy. (McCormick 56) Alfred Thayer Mahan, a naval strategist, wrote a compelling book in 1890, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*. This book persuasively argued that global power required a strong navy. In order to sustain a modern naval fleet that could traverse both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, ports were required throughout the world for fueling. It was with this in mind that in July 1898 William Dean Howells wrote to Henry James, “Our war for humanity has unmasked itself as a war for coaling stations.” (qtd. in Harrington 655-6)

Another ingredient inciting colonial ambition was the yellow press. It is said to have played a hand in driving the United States into the Spanish-American war in the first place, and galvanized the euphoria of conquest. (Wisn 52)

William Randolph Hearst is famous for his sensational coverage of the Spanish atrocities in Cuba and for his prophetic comment to an artist on his staff, “You furnish the pictures; I’ll furnish the war.” (qtd. in Wisn 53) William James commented on this strategy in a letter to his brother, Henry James:

We eat, drink and sleep War. It is a [sic] altogether new phenomenon, ascribable I suspect for the most part to deliberate newspaper criminality. The abominations of the press have literally passed all belief, and the word WAR in enormous capital

letters repeated for two months past on every front page of the 'great dailies' has at last produced its suggestive effect. It must come, to relieve the tension. (*The Correspondence of William James* 25)

Thus, as James suggests here, the press is generally acknowledged to have fueled the imperialist fire, if not to have actually started it in the first place.

And finally, many historians have argued that President McKinley did not have that much room to maneuver. It would have been anti-climatic and politically unpopular to hand the Philippines back to Spain, so recently depicted as cruel and tyrannical; however, there was wide consensus that left to its own devices, the Philippines would have been extremely vulnerable to conquest by another nation, in particular Germany or Japan. (McDougall 396) There is much evidence to suggest that McKinley was not fully aware of how much popular support Aguinaldo enjoyed, nor how far along the rebels were in setting up an independent government (Blount 294-302); though, even if he had known, racism most likely would have prevented his considering the Filipinos a formidable enemy and, therefore, would not have outweighed these other factors.

This racism contributed to the impression in America that the Filipinos would be unable to govern themselves. Not only would they be vulnerable to colonization by Germany or Japan, but there was also the sense that the Philippines would implode from within in part because of Filipinos' purported baser natures. In addition, there were legitimate reasons to be concerned about

the possibility of an independent Philippines, notwithstanding faulty social Darwinian logic. Filipinos, then, were governed far more by regional affiliations than by any sense of belonging to a construct called "The Philippines" and there was a fair amount of distrust among the major ethnic groups, the Tagalogs, the Cebuanos, the Ilocanos, not to mention the Muslims in Mindanao who are still fighting for independence. There were over 98 languages employed in the Philippines and different currencies were used on the various islands. Thus, there was not a cohesive entity that could be relied upon to rally under one flag and under one self-designated group of leaders. Without the glue of Spain as a common enemy, these groups may have turned on one another for control of the archipelago.

In the end, it may be an amalgamation of all of these factors coalescing into an imperial pressure too powerful to resist; or, as William H. Taft stated in 1905 in *The National Geographic Magazine*, perhaps it's that "[w]e blundered into colonization." (363)

President McKinley, himself, alludes to these pressing issues only vaguely in his first public address regarding the colonization of the Philippines. In the ambiguous style that would come to characterize American colonial discourse, McKinley roots his defense of colonization in a combination of aggressive economic pragmatism and passive religious fatalism. On November 21, 1899, he said in an address to a group of Protestant ministers:

When next I realized that the Philippines had dropped into our laps, I confess I did not know what to do with them. I sought counsel from all sides. . . . I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight; and I am not ashamed to tell you gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night. And one night late it came to me this way -- I don't know how it was, but it came: (1) That we could not give them back to Spain--that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) that we could not turn them over to France or Germany--our commercial rivals in the Orient--that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves--they were unfit for self-government--and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4) that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and *Christianize* them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed, and went to sleep, and slept soundly, and the next morning I sent for the chief engineer of the War Department (our map-maker), and told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States (pointing to a large map on the wall of his office), and there they are, and there they will stay

**while I am President!. (“Remarks to Methodist Delegation,”
emphasis added)**

As it turned out, most Filipinos already were Christianized, a vestige of the fundamental link between the Catholic Church and the Spanish colonialism. Missionaries had been proselytizing the Christian faith for almost three hundred years. This then left the project of civilization, American style.

The effort to civilize, however, had to overcome the immediate hurdle of the Philippine Independence movement which had not evaporated with the change in sovereignty. Indeed, the betrayal they felt from the Americans, their former allies, only seemed to strengthen the Filipinos’ determination to found an independent nation. They were not interested in President McKinley’s paternalistic protection and waged a bloody revolutionary war against American rule. Though this rebellion was often characterized in the American press as limited to a small group of Tagalogs, the ethnic group centered in Manila, General MacArthur, the army commander in the Philippines (and father to his more famous son who liberated the Philippines from Japanese occupation during World War II), disagreed. In March 1899, General MacArthur commented to a journalist:

When I first started in against these rebels, I believed that Aguinaldo’s troops represented only a faction. I did not believe that the whole population of Luzon was opposed to us; but I have

been reluctantly compelled to believe that the Filipinos are loyal to Aguinaldo and the government he represents. (qtd. in Blount 309)

In October of 1900, he wrote:

Most of the towns secretly organized complete insurgent municipal governments, to proceed simultaneously and in the same sphere as the American governments and in many instances through the same personnel. . . . In all matters touching the peace of the town, streets and bridges, and the institution of schools, their open activity was commendable; at the same time, they were exacting and collecting contributions and supplies and recruiting men for the Filipino forces, and sending all obtainable military information to the Filipino leaders. . . . The success of this unique system of war depends upon almost complete unity of action of the entire native population. That such unity is a fact is too obvious to admit discussion. Intimidation had undoubtedly accomplished much to this end, but fear as the only motive is hardly sufficient to account for the united and apparently spontaneous action of several millions [sic] people. One traitor in each town would effectually destroy such a complex operation. (qtd. in Stanley 77-8)

In spite of MacArthur's assessment, this widespread support for Aguinaldo was never openly acknowledged by the American government; they continued to characterize the rebellion as limited to a small number of Tagalogs.

In fact, administrators often portrayed the Tagalogs as the potential oppressors of other ethnic groups in the Philippines and Americans as the liberators of the non-Tagalogs. It is interesting to note that the phenomena described by MacArthur, of simultaneous collaboration and resistance, is similar to the way in which Filipino writers in English both supported the colonial regime by their active participation in its institutions, particularly in education, and resisted its strictures in their fiction. It would be much simpler if we could see the Filipinos as simply collaborators or resisters but, in fact, more often they were both and acted in both capacities at the same time.

Initially, the Americans and Filipinos engaged in a traditional war, but the Filipinos were at a serious disadvantage in terms of weaponry; as a result, they gradually, in late 1899, shifted to a guerrilla war in which they could use the popular support they enjoyed and their familiarity with the terrain to their advantage. This incited the Americans to engage in brutal tactics in an effort to suppress the diffuse and insidious rebellion and has led some historians to draw parallels between the Philippines and Vietnam.

Reports from journalists in the Philippines describing the details of the war and the methods employed to claim victory were censored by the army, but many reporters were able to circumvent this by sending their articles to America via Hong Kong. The misinformation being fed to Americans because of the zealous censorship eventually led several journalists to send a joint protest which was published in newspapers all over the country. It said in part:

We believe that, owing to official despatches [sic] from Manila made public in Washington, the people of the United States have not received a correct impression of the situation in the Philippines, but that those despatches have presented an ultra-optimistic view that is not shared by the general officers in the field. ("American War Correspondents")

One aspect of the war that the government was loathe to discuss was the use of torture and the consolidating of far-flung villages into small, congested camps; these actions became increasingly prevalent as the army fell victim to guerrilla attacks. Both of these methods were disturbingly reminiscent of Spanish brutality in Cuba -- exactly what had caused such heated moral indignation just months earlier. The water cure was the most famous approach used by the American army for gathering information from the enemy. In its research about this practice, the Anti-Imperialist League described this testimony by Herbert Yenser, an American soldier in the Philippines:

Witness will testify that . . . he crept into a loft over the guard house and through cracks in the floor saw the prisoner brought in. . . A Macabebe scout [Filipino soldier recruited for service in the American army] attached to the seventh Calvary assisted by the troopers administered the water cure. First a pipe was placed in the victim's mouth and then water poured in until his abdomen became much distended. Then the men jumped with both feet

upon the victim's stomach with such force that the water spurted from his mouth over three feet in the air. The second time this operation was performed blood also came out with the water.

(Welsh Papers)

Another soldier said, "A man suffers tremendously; there is no doubt about that. His suffering must be that of a man who is drowning, but who cannot drown."

(qtd. in Drinnon 320)

Not surprisingly, the casualties from the war were much more severe among the Filipinos; reliable statistics are not available but most historians agree that at least 16,000 died in battle, and over 200,000 died from famine and disease due to conditions caused by the war. (Buss 4; Gibney 5; Welch 155) Historian Luzviminda Francisco believes this number is grossly underestimated and puts the figure at more than 600,000 deaths total. (19) The Americans suffered approximately 4,000 dead and 3,000 wounded. (Buss 4) The overall brutality of the war is suggested by a comment made by General Shafter in April 1899:

It may be necessary to kill half of the Filipinos in order that the remaining half of the population may be advanced to a higher plane of life than their present semi-barbarous state affords. (qtd. in Francisco 11)

What finally ended the war was the capture of Manuel Aguinaldo by an American soldier named Frederick Funston on March 23, 1901 and the American policy of establishing schools as soon as an area was pacified. Offering public

education to the masses was both the cornerstone of what President McKinley called the process of “Benevolent Assimilation” and a military strategy.

MacArthur viewed it as “an adjunct to military operations calculated to pacify the people and to procure and expedite the restoration of tranquillity throughout the archipelago.” (qtd. in Constantino 45) President McKinley perceived it in a rosier light as the distinctive American method of colonization. Whereas the Spanish had offered public education to almost no one, and the British in its vast colonies had set up a system to educate a native elite, the Americans were going to educate the masses. This change did convince many Filipinos that they were not in the same colonial boat with a different flag. (Soliongco 23-4; Manlapaz ix)

In the very beginning of the American colonial enterprise, as rebellious areas were brought under control, soldiers were directed to put away their weapons, set up schools, and begin the teaching in English that would be soon be taken up by professional teachers en route from America; thus, cooperation with the American government was associated directly with access to education. (May 79) Stanley Karnow writes in *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* that “the educational effort . . . proved in time to be the single most important element in reconciling Filipinos to the United States presence.” (153) In addition, the American colonial administrators included prominent Filipinos in almost every facet of the newly established government. In essence, the Americans were offering what the Spanish had refused, more educational opportunities and a voice in government.

The “Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation,” issued by President McKinley just after the Treaty of Paris was negotiated (but before ratification), set the tone for a colonial administration in the islands characterized by ambivalent rhetoric, defensive posturing, and obvious discomfort in the role. The last paragraph reads:

[I]t should be the earnest wish and paramount aim of the military administration to win the confidence, respect, and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines by assuring them in every possible way that full measure of individual rights and liberties which is the heritage of free peoples, and by proving to them that the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule. In the fulfillment of this high mission, supporting the temperate administration of affairs for the greatest good of the governed, there must be sedulously maintained the strong arm of authority, to repress disturbance and to overcome all obstacles to the bestowal of the Philippine Islands under the free flag of the United States.

(“Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation”)

What is most striking about this pronouncement is its repeated references to liberty, freedom, and individual rights in the context of establishing formal military dominion over an alien people. It betrays a real anxiety about how to reconcile the myth of America as the haven for the free with its new venture in

empire-building. McKinley's choice of adjectives, "benevolent," "mild," "temperate," all seem designed to deflect attention from what is clearly a warning to the Filipino people that the United States is assuming control and will brook no dissent. Essentially liberty is assured to those who do not create a "disturbance," that is to those who do not challenge American authority, a very circumscribed liberty at best. William James recapitulated the thrust of the proclamation: "We are here for your own good; therefore unconditionally surrender to our tender mercies, or we'll blow you into kingdom come." ("The Philippine Tangle" 156) The desire "to win the confidence, respect, and affection" of the people seems incongruous with the establishment of military authority but is typical of American discourse at the time, a discourse shaped by the contradictions at the root of this colonial enterprise.. The Americans wanted to be liked, wanted to be considered in the old light as the perennial safeguarders of individual liberty, even while they were banning the Declaration of Independence as an incendiary document. (Zwick xxxiv)

This chronic ambivalence is revealed strikingly in two Supreme Court cases that were argued together, decided together, and announced on the same day in 1901. Known as "the Insular Cases," both *DeLima v. Bidwell* and *Downs v. Bidwell* involved a dispute over how goods imported from the new colonies should be categorized for tax and tariff purposes. Though each case concerned products imported from Puerto Rico, the decisions were to apply to all insular possessions, including the Philippines. The cases, argued by the same attorney,

Frederick R. Coudert Jr., were brought because S.B. Downs & Co. and D.A. DeLima & Co., both wholesale importers, believed that the extra taxes they had paid on goods from Puerto Rico were unfair. According to their arguments, these goods should have been considered domestic and, therefore, exempt from those taxes which effectively functioned as tariffs on foreign imports. Amazingly, the Supreme Court came to opposite conclusions and issued decisions that are “irreconcilable.” (*DeLima*, Justice Gray dissent 220) On the one hand, Puerto Rico (and, by inference, the Philippines) was considered “not a part of the United States” (*Downs v. Bidwell* 287); on the other hand, “Porto [sic] Rico was not a foreign country.” (*DeLima v. Bidwell* 220) This seemed to leave the insular possessions in “no man’s land.” They were neither foreign nor domestic.

Congress, as well, had been rent with indecision, and it was not at all clear that the Senate would ratify the Treaty of Paris. There was heated debate leading up to the ratification, which passed by only two votes on February 6, 1899, and after ratification, as word got back about the war being fought on Filipino soil against Filipino people. The fighting actually began two days before ratification, and there was speculation that it was incited by the Americans in order to sway the vote in Congress. (*Imperial* 28) In a foreshadowing of what was to come, *The New York Times* headline read, “Hostile Natives Whipped” on the day after the military skirmish. (qtd. in Townsend 240)

The American colonial period in the Philippines lasted until 1933, when a Commonwealth was established under the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act passed by Congress in 1932. This provided for a ten year transition period which would end with the declaration of Philippine independence. In 1943, however, the Philippines was under the control of the Japanese and nowhere close to independence. The Filipinos suffered tremendously during this period, and it is generally acknowledged that MacArthur's liberation of the Philippines went a long way toward tempering any lingering hostility toward American rule. On July 4, 1946, President Truman declared the Philippines a sovereign nation and the tutelage in democracy was officially at an end.

Of course, these historical dates belie the complex ties that still bind the Philippines and the United States. Until very recently, the United States still maintained military bases in the Philippines and certainly American global cultural hegemony continues an established tradition of influence. In addition, the diaspora of Filipinos to the United States in the wake of Marcos wrecking what was the strongest economy in Asia has deepened the familial ties across the continents. The Marcos regime, with its unadulterated American support, was perhaps the natural outcome of the American colonial tutelage in democracy. In other words, a colonial democracy that was in no way democratic lay the groundwork for a dictatorial democracy that was equally unrepresentative and even more sinister. While this historical sketch suggests how America practically "blundered" into colonialism, it also shows how, once in the role of colonizer,

America transformed itself to wield the immense power necessary to operate a colony. The legacy of this transformation is still felt today and was certainly foreshadowed in the pessimistic writings of the anti-imperialists.

SELF-EXAMINATION

Take up the White Man's burden—
 Have done with childish days—
 The lightly proffered laurel,
 The easy, ungrudged praise.
 Comes now, to search your manhood
 Through all the thankless years,
 Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
 The judgment of your peers!

(Stanza #7, Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden")

The first anti-imperialist league was formed in Boston, Massachusetts on November 19, 1898, but soon there were similar organizations all over the country. These leagues were extremely vocal, comprised mainly of writers and academics, and, for a time, generated much discussion about America's venture into imperialism. Their focus was very much on the impact the colonization of the Philippines would have on American culture, and much less so on its consequences for the Philippines. Their 1899 platform emphasizes this sentiment:

Much as we abhor the war of "criminal aggression" in the
 Philippines, greatly as we regret that the blood of Filipinos is on
 American hands, we more deeply resent the betrayal of American
 institutions at home. The real firing line is not the suburbs of
 Manila. The foe is our own household. The attempt of 1861 was
 to divide the country. That of 1899 is to destroy its fundamental
 principles and noblest ideals. (Anti-Imperialist League 30)

The anti-imperialists, though primarily centered at the universities, also included businessmen like Andrew Carnegie, who offered to give the U.S. government a check for twenty million dollars if it would give up its recently purchased sovereignty. He saw colonialism as expensive and obsolete and publicly mounted his argument in *The North American Review*:

Some of the organs of manufacturing interests, we observe, favor foreign possessions as necessary or helpful markets for our products. But the exports of the United States this year are greater than those of any other nation in the world. Even Britain's exports are less, yet Britain "possesses," it is said, a hundred "colonies" and "dependencies" scattered all over the world. The fact that the United States has none does not prevent her products and manufactures from invading Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and all parts of the world in competition with those of the British. "Possession" of colonies or dependencies is not necessary for trade reasons. (361)

Carnegie is basically arguing for the sort of economic penetration that would come to characterize neo-colonialism in the late twentieth century. (Miller 118-9)

The stance of the anti-imperialists against the colonization was not a popular one, but their positions as leaders and thinkers in American culture afforded them much visibility and some degree of influence, at least until the re-election of President McKinley in 1900. This election was largely viewed as a

mandate on imperialism, especially by revolutionaries in the Philippines who anxiously awaited the vote. (Gates 53) William Jennings Bryan, McKinley's Democratic opponent, had declared himself a staunch opponent of the colonization of the Philippines, and this became a defining issue between the two candidates. Unfortunately for the imperialism mandate, Bryan was also a supporter of "free silver," a movement favored mainly by farmers who were hit hard after the Civil War by tight monetary policies that kept interest payments high on their substantial debt and prices low on their goods. Supporters of William Jennings Bryan believed that switching to a cheaper, silver-backed currency would loosen the flow of currency in the country and relieve pressure on the farmers. Many voters, who might have supported his anti-imperialist position, felt compelled not to vote for him because they thought "free silver" would be disastrous for the economy. Mark Twain commented on this to a reporter:

Not long ago we had two men running for President. There was Mr. McKinley on one hand and Mr. Bryan on the other. . . . I don't know much about finance, but some friends told me that Bryan was all wrong on the money question, so I didn't vote for him. I knew enough about the Philippines to have a strong aversion to sending our bright boys out there to fight with a disgraced musket under a polluted flag, so I didn't vote for the other fellow. (qtd. in Gibson 84)

The fact that William Jennings Bryan ran three times as a Democratic candidate on a free silver platform indicates its local support among certain Democratic constituencies, but its lack of popular support nationwide.

In any event, Bryan lost in 1900, and the anti-imperialist movement lost much of its steam after that. In part this was because so much faith had been placed on that election as the dam that would stem the tide of expansion and imperialism. When it failed, it became clear that there was no political will in the country to build the dam at all. But the failure of the anti-imperialists to end the colonization and bring the United States back to its insular roots also is due to the fact that the anti-imperialists were not offering any viable alternatives, except to turn back the clock. (Beisner 233) To an American public excited by victory over the Spanish, swayed by McKinley's rhetoric of carrying the "white man's burden" to the backward Philippines, and buoyed by economic prosperity, offering such a lifeless alternative was not at all compelling.

Still, while the debate raged, those who participated were forced to take a long, hard look at American culture and evaluate what constituted its foundations in order to answer why the colonization was such a betrayal of American ideals. This soul searching is apparent in the writings of Mark Twain, W.E.B. Du Bois and William James, all three vocal and prominent public intellectuals, and all three members of the Anti-Imperialist League. In their examinations of the colonization and its impact on American culture, each writer emphasizes specific fundamental conflicts in American life that will reverberate again and again

throughout the twentieth century, but are especially resonant in America's colonial legacy.

Mark Twain, who one critic calls "America's quintessential representative," was bitterly disappointed that a war of liberation so quickly turned into a war of expansion. He was a well known and well regarded public figure by this point in his career. Having just returned from one of his long trips abroad, during which he managed to pay off his substantial debts without declaring bankruptcy, Twain was considered both honorable and astute. He was held in high regard by most of the American public. Still, most people considered him a humorist and did not necessarily appreciate his direct attacks on imperialism. Certainly many of his writings about the colonization were never published because they were considered potentially too damaging to his reputation. Still, he did publish "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," his most prominent and widely read article about the colonization of the Philippines, which was lauded by the anti-imperialists and reprinted in sympathetic newspapers all over the country. According to Twain, William Dean Howells, also an anti-imperialist, warned him of the possible consequences of printing his scathing critique:

Howells said I ought to have that ["To the Person Sitting in Darkness"] published . . . Howells also said that I must go hang myself first, and when I asked what I should do that for, he said to

save the public the trouble, because when that story appeared in print they would surely hang me. (qtd. in Gibson 88)

And, indeed, many readers wrote in to their respective newspapers complaining of this dark turn taken by Mark Twain. One, who believed Twain had gotten the whole issue wrong, commented:

The only cure we can recommend for those who have been taken in by Mr. Twain's joke is to read with care the original authorities, the official sources, from which he would have it appear that he drew the information so amusingly perverted in his article. Then will the reader perceive that Mr. Twain's picture of our relations to the Filipino insurgents, of their part in the military operations before Manila, of their nature and disposition, and of the beginning of their war with us, is a travesty of the truth, a reckless travesty we should call it if the presumption of comic intent did not exclude harsh judgments. It is a pretty heavy way to be funny, for a man who reads a joke wants to have his laugh the same day. ("Certainly False, But Probably Funny.")

In "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," Twain focuses on two fundamental American beliefs that he sees as under attack by this recent imperialist venture. The first is American exceptionalism, the idea that America is distinguished from its greedy, corrupt European neighbors by an emphasis on freedom, a vital democratic tradition, and a pronounced disinterest in the colonial feeding frenzy

of the nineteenth century. The other related tenet that Twain returns to again and again is that of American innocence. The ways in which America is exceptional provide the basis for a belief in the purity of the American soul, its inherent maintenance of what Twain refers to as its “clean hands.” Both of these aspects of American culture are severely challenged by the colonization of the Philippines, which has all of the earmarks of European land-grabbing and very little in the way of purity of motive.

This particular conflict, between the reality of American greed and oppression, and the rhetoric of American ideals, came as little surprise to W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois was, at the time of the colonization, a professor at Atlanta University and had already become a prominent spokesman for black Americans. He soon would publish *The Souls of Black Folk*, which would permanently establish his place in American history and letters. Du Bois’s biographer David Levering Lewis describes the impact of *The Souls of Black Folk* when it appeared in 1903:

It was one of those events epochally dividing history into a before and an after. Like fireworks going off in a cemetery, its fourteen essays were sound and light enlivening the inert and despairing. It was an electrifying manifesto, mobilizing a people for bitter, prolonged struggle to win a place in history. (277)

One of the important essays in *The Souls of Black Folk* outlines the fundamental disagreement between Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, probably the most

powerful black American in the country at that time. Du Bois argues against limiting black education to the industrial sciences and promotes the kind of liberal education that allowed him to develop a critical consciousness. He sees Washington as far too accommodating to white supremacy and far too willing to sacrifice black pride and progress in the hopes of fostering a passive equanimity between the races. Given their respective positions, it is perhaps not surprising that Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* later will be chosen for the colonial curriculum in the Philippines as a standard bearer for the work ethic and racial harmony.

Du Bois discusses the colonization of the Philippines in *The Souls of Black Folk* as well as in a speech he wrote for a rally in New York City against imperialism. Both texts make it clear that he sees the fundamental conflict in American culture as its pervasive racism and the sinister way in which capitalism fuels that racism. Of course, the colonization of the Philippines was not Du Bois's main focus and one does not see the single-minded focus of both Mark Twain and William James on this specific issue. But this is because, unlike Twain and James, Du Bois sees this in the larger context of American racial history. His participation in the debate, though less discussed in the history books and less prolific, is still crucial as he is one of the very few anti-imperialists to align the Filipinos with the black population in America and link their oppression as motivated by a capitalist economy.

William James, Du Bois's former professor at Harvard University, was certainly aware of the racial overtones of America's dealings with the Philippines, but his main concern was the demise of self-reliance in a society grown too big to allow for the particular and the individual. He saw expansion as anathema to the maintenance of a spirit of freedom in America. He understood, rightly, that colonization required a plethora of institutions and a rigidly defined culture for export. The primacy of the individual, the nurturing of a community that tolerates difference, has no place in such a system. James expressed his disgust publicly in several letters to the editor of *The Boston Transcript* and privately in letters to his family and friends.

At the time, James was a philosophy professor at Harvard University and was still several years away from publishing *Pragmatism*, a text that is now considered the first treatise of a distinctly American philosophy. He had already, though, published his other important text, *The Principles of Psychology*, and was an esteemed member of the Harvard faculty. His letters are written as exhortations to the American public, hoping to guide the masses back to a more humane path through clear reasoning. George Cotkin describes James's increasingly active stance as a public intellectual:

The passion behind James's political edge in the years surrounding the turn of the century, especially in his anti-imperialism, resides in the pressing and significant challenge then being issued against his philosophical and personal vision. James longed to return home

from European sojourn so that he might, as an intellectual,
 'influence American ideals.' (125)

It is clear from his arguments against the colonization that the seeds of the basic tenets of Pragmatism are already present in his reaction. He castigates Theodore Roosevelt for his constant use of abstractions, a tendency in traditional philosophy that James abhors. He argues that colonialism inhibits the recognition of experiential reality, the primacy of which the philosophy of pragmatism will come to promote. Primarily, though, James focuses on the fate of the individual in the America of the twentieth century and pessimistically forecasts its corrosion by the forces driving expansion and colonialism.

Mark Twain, W.E.B. Du Bois, and William James each perceived a different national soul threatened by this imperialist expansion. As Ania Loomba writes, "[T]he nation can be better comprehended by understanding that the 'nation' itself is a ground of dispute and debate, a site for the competing imaginings of different ideological and political interests." (207) Yet, they all reacted with disgust and dismay. Twain's version of America was a bastion of innocence, an exception to European rigidity and avarice; Du Bois saw an America already rent by racial division and oppressed by capitalist hegemony; and James celebrated the primacy of the individual and the toleration of difference. Only Du Bois saw that the ideals espoused by Twain and James already were rent with contradictions on domestic soil and that this latest venture merely moved the arena to the global stage.

It is interesting that the writer who, as noted earlier, called himself “**the American**” (qtd. in Budd 13, emphasis added) and whose writings were exported to Filipino students in an effort to inculcate American values, was so vehemently against the colonization. According to the *Springfield Republican*, an anti-imperialist newspaper in Massachusetts, Mark Twain was “the most influential anti-imperialist and the most dreaded critic of the sacrosanct person in the White House that the country contains.” (“Untitled Editorial”) Roger Bledstein comments on Twain’s self-perceived role as a public intellectual in America:

Mark Twain styled himself the literary spokesman for the middle class in the Gilded Age. And by means of hyperbole, humor, cynicism and sarcasm, he emphasized both his attraction to and revulsion for American values. (43)

In his writings, Twain strongly lamented two aspects of the colonization of the Philippines: the now overt participation by America in the European practice of greedy land-grabbing and America’s irretrievable loss of innocence.

In Twain’s focus on the European echoes of American imperial greed, he draws attention to a radical shift in one paradigm of American identity. America had been a country rooted in its tradition as a former colony and was now moving toward participation in the global power struggles that became prevalent in the late nineteenth century. Charles Francis Adams, also an anti-imperialist, notes this shift as well:

Under a sense of obligation, impelled by circumstances, perhaps to a degree influenced by ambition and commercial greed, we have one by one abandoned our distinctive national tenets, and accepted in their place, though in some modified forms, the old-time European tenets and policies, which we supposed the world, actuated largely by our example, was about forever to discard. (25)

This movement toward what were perceived as Continental values attacked the sense of American exceptionalism that many saw as crucial to its definition. A powerful ingredient in what constituted America was that it was not England or Europe. The shift in definition involved framing American identity not against the worn-out, decadent rituals of Europe, but against the savagery and the “uncivilized” peoples of the Philippines. Now America was aligned with the Western tradition, rather than an enlightened exception from it. Frederick Funston, at the time a famous soldier in the Philippine-American War because he captured Manuel Aguinaldo, describes the relationship between the Americans and the Filipinos within the new paradigm with an abrasive confidence:

I am afraid that some people at home will lie awake nights worrying about the ethics of this war, thinking that our enemy is fighting for the right of self-government. The word “independent,” which these people roll off their tongues so glibly, is to them a word, and not much more. It means with them simply a license to raise hell, and, if they got control, they would raise a fine crop of

it. They are, as a rule, an illiterate, semi-savage people, who are waging war, not against tyranny, but against Anglo-Saxon order and decency. (qtd. in Brands 58)

Frederick Funston's well publicized public statements and the notorious trickery that Funston used to capture Aguinaldo inspired Twain to write "A Defence [sic] of General Funston," which was, in fact, an attack on him personally and his views. In contrast to Funston's celebration of "Anglo-Saxon order and decency," Twain disparages "our obsequious hold on the rear-skirts of the sceptered land-thieves of Europe." He hopes that America will "be what we were before--a *real* World Power, and the chiefest of them all, by right of the only clean hands in Christendom, the only hands guiltless of the sordid plunder of any helpless people's stolen liberties." (122)

Twain's emphasis on clean hands is a symptom of his very nostalgic view of America. In his anti-imperialist writings, he portrays American history, heretofore, as unblemished, as a noble example of innocence. This view seems very sentimental in the face of the near extermination of the Native Americans and the very recent legacy of slavery. It is certainly doubtful that these abused and pillaged communities would have associated theft and greed only with Europeans. In other writings, Twain is more aware that this innocence is more construct than reality. In *Following the Equator* he writes, "The very ink with which history is written is merely fluid prejudice." (392) Still, he also understands that this view of American innocence held sway with the public;

therefore, its disappearance would be perceived as a real loss. The religious underpinnings of American culture, specifically the rigid morality of its first settlers, cultivated a pervasive sense that America could do no wrong. Twain was trying to appeal to that sensibility.

All of these preoccupations, the shift to global power with its concomitant loss of innocence and the power of narrative in framing history, are manifest in his most famous anti-imperialist essay, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness." Interestingly, in this essay "the person sitting in darkness" is not "silent and sullen," one of Kipling's depictions in "The White Man's Burden." Instead, this person, representative of the oppressed peoples of Asia and Africa, voices judgment and condemnation of the colonial exploits of the English, Germans, Russians, and Americans. At one point, this person says to himself, "It is yet *another* civilized power, with its banner of the Prince of Peace in one hand and its loot basket and its butcher knife in the other. Is there no salvation for us but to adopt civilization and lift ourselves down to its level?" (14)

The essay, published in 1901 in the *North American Review*, begins by juxtaposing three lengthy quotations from newspaper articles all published on Christmas Eve of the previous year. It then proceeds to discuss the subject of one of those articles, the exorbitant reparations demanded by missionaries in the wake of the Boxer Rebellion. After that it considers, in a tone that vacillates between sarcasm, irreverence, and feigned collusion, the recent ventures by England, Germany, Russia and the United States. In the essay's treatment of each country,

one by one, America's actions are aligned with those of its European cohorts. Throughout the essay, Twain alludes to colonial exploits as either a "business" or a "game," often interchanging the two references. In the transition to his focus on America and the Philippines, he explicitly parallels England and the United States:

The game was in our hands. If it had been played according to American rules, Dewey would have sailed away from Manila as soon as he had destroyed the Spanish fleet--after putting up a sign on shore guaranteeing foreign property and life against damage by the Filipinos, and warning the powers that interference with the emancipated patriots would be regarded as an act unfriendly to the United States.

. . .

But we played the Chamberlin game [specifically referring to English territorial aggression in the Boer War], and lost the chance to add another Cuba and another honorable deed to our good record. (15)

It is the corruption of this "good record" which is the focus of the end of the essay. In this section, Twain advises his audience, presumably Americans, what they should say to their colonial audience, the people sitting in this ironic darkness. He writes, "let us audaciously present the whole of the facts, shirking none." The style of this confession is sarcastic and allows Twain to juxtapose an

ideal version of America in the shadows of the summary. He suggests that America say:

There have been lies; yes, but they were told in a good cause. We have been treacherous; but that was only in order that real good might come out of apparent evil. True, we have crushed a deceived and confiding people; we have turned against the weak and the friendless who trusted us; we have stamped out a just and intelligent and well-ordered republic; we have stabbed an ally in the back and slapped the face of a guest; we have bought a Shadow from an enemy that hadn't it to sell; we have robbed a trusting friend of his land and his liberty; we have invited our clean young men to shoulder a discredited musket and do a bandit's work under a flag which bandits have been accustomed to fear, not to follow; we have debauched America's honor and blackened her face before the world; but each detail was for the best. We know this.

(19-20)

Twain implies that his ideal America would have been truthful, would have helped the Philippines to establish a republic, would have acknowledged and honored the trust between former allies. No doubt there were many Americans who would have disputed this characterization of America, but Twain was certainly tapping into a powerful myth in American culture that guilt lay with the corrupt Europeans while purity of both motive and action flourished in America.

In the tale that Americans will tell to the Filipinos, Twain emphasizes both the naiveté, dishonor, and treachery in the story and the process of storytelling itself. Twain foregrounds this process and the powerful role of narrative in three ways. First, he gives advice on performance. In addition, Twain structures the essay so that several different voices emerge and the author appears to be moderating among these diverse points of view. Finally, he alludes to the power of storytelling in the biblical allusion of the title. While all of these elements draw attention to both the process of telling a story, Twain also reiterates over and over again the devastating results of some of the stories being told. In the passage cited above, a purported defense of American actions, his verbs are relentlessly aggressive. The Filipinos have been “crushed,” “stamped out,” “stabbed,” “robbed.” This is one story among many, but it is a story with teeth.

It is with this particular narrative that Twain interjects suggestions about how to tell the story. For example, he writes:

Of course, we must read the war telegrams to the person, in order to keep up our frankness; but we can throw an air of humorousness over them, and that will modify their grim eloquence a little, their rather indiscreet exhibitions of gory exultation. . . . [I]t will be well to practice on them in private first, so as to get the right tang of lightness and gayety to them. (18)

And later he notes:

Of course, we must not venture to ignore our General MacArthur's reports [persistently acknowledging Philippine resistance to American rule]--oh, why do they keep on printing those embarrassing things?--we must drop them trippingly from the tongue and take the chances. (19)

The pronouncements with "the right tang of lightness and gayety" and the reports "drop[ped] trippingly from the tongue" are an attempt to undercut the message of military suppression. This ambivalence is very reminiscent of the statements made by President McKinley, who spoke so earnestly about "individual rights and liberties" in his "Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation."

The formal structure of the article also focuses the reader's attention on narrative. The author's voice follows the voices of three other writers who are connected by the publication of their articles on Christmas Eve. This technique continues throughout the article so that the author seems to be a mediator among these competing narratives, a biased but not monolithic voice. For example, after Twain disparagingly comments on the article which sympathetically portrays the success of the missionary Rev. Mr. Ament, who has collected fines from Chinese villages, he includes another article, also published on Christmas Eve, which presents the point of view of a Japanese correspondent commenting on the ubiquitous presence of missionaries in Asia:

It is now felt as essential that the Western Powers take cognizance of the sentiment here, that religious invasions of Oriental countries

by powerful Western organizations are tantamount to filibustering expeditions, and . . . that stern measures should be adopted for their suppression. The feeling here is that the missionary organizations constitute a constant menace to peaceful international relations. (9)

This focus on missionaries and conversion is the other way in which Twain stresses the power of storytelling. The title of the piece, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," is an allusion to the conversion of the people of Galilee to Christianity in the Bible: "The people which sat in the darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." (Matthew 4:16) In the same way that Twain posits an American innocence now lost, the purity of conversion, both religious and cultural, has been corrupted in the modern age of business and games. In his choice of articles on Christmas Eve which all speak of various kinds of degradation, Twain suggests that the stories of the twentieth century carry darkness, not light. The final, and perhaps most provocative image, in his essay is of the American flag transformed to suit its new role as a beacon of decay: "We can have our usual flag, with the white stripes painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and crossbones." (21)

Twain deploys his full arsenal of anti-imperialist arguments in "To the Person Sitting in Darkness." He wrote many different anti-imperialist essays, but this, his most famous, captures the tenor of his attacks on American colonialism. In a narrative of exceptional force, he mourns the ruinous loss of American

exceptionalism and innocence and attempts to rewrite the story of America in the twentieth century.

W.E.B. Du Bois did not see this most recent American venture as a complete betrayal of all that America stood for, but rather as more of the oppressive same. The rhetoric of racial superiority in the context of economic exploitation did not appear to be a new phenomenon to him. Du Bois writes of the “crime of this happy-go-lucky nation which goes blundering along with its Reconstruction tragedies, its Spanish war interludes and Philippine matinees, just as though God really were dead.” (*The Souls of Black Folk* 174)

Racism was pervasive both in America’s direct dealings with the Filipinos and in the debate about the Filipinos. Both sides in the anti-imperialist debate often argued along racial lines, either pleading that we should come to the rescue of this savage people or that these barbarians would mongrelize the already fragile fabric of American racial superiority. David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University and member, with W.E.B. Du Bois, of the Anti-Imperialist League, argued that the Filipinos were “a substratum of Malays, lazy and revengeful, over these a social layer of thrifty Chinese and canny Japanese, then next a Spanish aristocracy and a surface scum of the wanderers of all the world.” (qtd. in Bresnahan 10). Senator John Daniel of Virginia made a rather less urbane argument: “There are spotted people there and, what I have never heard of in any other country, there are striped people there with zebra signs upon them.” (qtd. in Brands 30) The first governor of the Philippines and later president of the United

States, Howard Taft, referred to the Filipinos more benignly, but in a no less racially biased way, as “our little brown brothers.” During the Senate hearings, one Senator argued that the Filipino

would not be capable of self-government if every one of them were a college graduate. . . . The fact is I do not believe that the best educated Filipino in the world is as capable as the average illiterate sane, sound-minded Anglo-Saxon living in rural districts of this Republic. . . . It is not a question of book learning, but a question of race. . . . I do not think the annals of history contain an instance where a mongrel race has ever been able to maintain for any length of time a stable form of government, and it is not fair to expect too much of the Filipino. (qtd. in Weston 126)

There was very little question in the minds of most imperialists and anti-imperialists that Filipinos, as Asians and as a darker race, were inherently inferior. Almost all discussion of and with the Filipinos was clouded by this more or less overt racism.

There was a long and highly developed tradition of racist discourse upon which both sides of the imperialist debate could draw. Experience with Native Americans and African Americans provided a strong foundation for asserting control over a people perceived to be inferior and justifying that inferiority in terms of race. Social Darwinism sought to establish a scientific basis for claims that Americans were further evolved than the darker races. An example of this

reasoning is provided by Congressman Sulloway of New Hampshire, who described with pride Social Darwinism at work in November 1898:

The Anglo-Saxon advances into the new regions with a Bible in one hand and a shotgun in the other. The inhabitants of those regions that he cannot convert with the aid of the Bible and bring into his markets, he gets rid of with the shotgun. It is but another demonstration of the survival of the fittest. (qtd. in Adams 17)

American scientists devoted an incredible amount of energy to proving Darwin's theories in the context of racial distinctions. In *The Mismeasure of Man*, Stephen Gould illustrates how social policy, explicitly or implicitly advocating white racial superiority, was couched in the veneer of scientific objectivity. He quotes American anthropologist D.G. Brinton:

The adult who retains the more numerous fetal, infantile or simian traits, is unquestionably inferior to him whose development has progressed beyond them. . . . Measured by these criteria, the European or white race stands at the head of the list, the African or negro at its foot. . . . All parts of the body have been minutely scanned, measured and weighed, in order to erect a science of the comparative anatomy of the races. (145)

Not surprisingly, nearly every white scientist who attempted to rank the different races, came to the same conclusion -- whites were far superior. They established this conclusion using a variety of different methods, including measurements of

skulls and newly developed IQ tests. Thus, there was a wide consensus among white Americans, for and against the colonization, that they were natural leaders of civilization and that this leadership was biologically determined. Christopher Lasch, in his article “The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man,” comments on the prevalence of this view among the American public:

The fact is that the atmosphere of the late nineteenth century was so thoroughly permeated with racist thought (reinforced by Darwinism) that few men managed to escape it. The idea that certain cultures and races were naturally inferior to others was almost universally held by educated, middle-class, respectable Americans – in other words, by the dominant majority. (330)

This racial perspective influenced all of America’s dealings with the Filipinos and gave an even broader perspective to Du Bois’ prediction that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line.” (41) W.E.B. Du Bois and others saw direct links between America’s attitudes towards its black population and its colonial population. In addition to the disturbing echo in American soldiers’ references to the Filipinos as “niggers,” and a dramatic increase in lynchings in the South during the Philippine-American War, Du Bois recognized with dismay that American blacks and Filipinos were joined in a cultural and economic oppression. With institutionalized slavery only recently abolished, the defense of America’s recent conquest offered by Senator Beveridge must have been extremely disturbing:

It is elemental. It is racial. . . . [God] has made us the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. He has given us the spirit of progress to overwhelm the forces of reaction throughout the earth. . . . It holds for us all the profit, all the glory, all the happiness possible to man. (Beveridge 372)

In “The Disenfranchised Colonies,” Du Bois reacts to this kind of racist construct for evaluating the past and imagining the future. He writes:

For the most part, today the colonial peoples are colored of skin; this was not true of colonies in other days, but it is mainly true today. And to most minds, this is of fatal significance; coupled with Negro slavery, Chinese coolies, and doctrines of race inferiority, it proves to most white folk the logic of the modern colonial system: colonies are filled with peoples who never were abreast with civilization and never can be. (677)

Du Bois saw the incentive behind this “modern colonial system” as economic. He was at a point in his career where he perceived racism as intimately bound up with capitalism. He considered this step toward colonization of the Philippines as galvanized by the markets and cheap labor it promised and the natural resources in the Philippines to be exploited. There was now a dramatically bigger labor pool of unskilled workers at the mercy of monopolies and large conglomerates. In the notes for a speech he was to give on February 23, 1925 at Cooper Union in New York City for a Philippine Independence

demonstration, he directly links this economic incentive with narratives rooted in faulty racial logic. He writes:

Independence is not being denied the Filipinos because they are incapable of it but rather because today it is profitable to keep the colored races in subjection. This subjection varies from actual slavery up through serfdom and a low-wage system to a system of public monopolies. The best modern method of insuring this domination of dark labor is by spreading propaganda which will hinder democratic development from crossing the color line. A vast propaganda of this sort is going on. It is not scientific because science is more and more denying the concept of race and the assumption of ingrained racial differences. But a cheap and pseudo-science is being sent broadcast through books, magazines, papers and lectures which makes the mass of people in civilized countries think that yellow and brown people and black people are not human in the same sense that white people are human and cannot be allowed to develop or to rule themselves.

The money which supports this propaganda comes directly and indirectly from the profit accruing from the denial of political democracy and industrial democracy to the mass of colored laborers and this same vast profit it is which serves in cultured

countries to keep the mass of workingmen from realizing industrial democracy and from using their political power to free themselves.

Du Bois' theoretical focus on the capitalist aspects of colonialism at the systemic level reverberates in one black soldier's letter from the Philippines to the editor of the *New York Age* about the situation on the ground. He writes:

[T]he Americans, as soon as they saw that the native [Filipino] troops were desirous of sharing in the glories as well as the hardships of the hard-won battles . . . , began to apply home treatment for colored peoples: cursed them as damned niggers, steal from and ravish them, rob them on the street of their small change, take from fruit vendors whatever suited their fancy, and kick the poor unfortunate if he complained, desecrate church property, and after fighting began, looted everything in sight, burning, robbing the graves. (Gatewood 279-80)

Du Bois was one of the few to focus on the economic oppression inherent in a colonial structure. Most anti-imperialists focused on the negative effect this colonization would have on America, not the Philippines. If they considered economic factors at all, it was in the context of the American economy. This step toward colonialism, with the markets, cheap labor, and raw materials it promised, exacerbated his discouragement about the racial situation in the United States.

In addition to these cultural and economic ties that bound American blacks and Filipinos, Du Bois also discusses the Philippines in *The Souls of Black Folk*

because of the malaise a certain segment of the black community experienced in the expansion of American racism to the far corners of the globe. There were many who hoped to escape the suffocation of the American experience by leaving its shores, but moving outside of an American sphere of influence now seemed a naive dream. Du Bois writes of those blacks whose reaction to oppression is angry militancy:

[T]hey hate the white South blindly and distrust the white race generally, and so far as they agree on definite action, think that the Negro's only hope lies in emigration beyond the borders of the United States. And yet, by irony of fate, nothing has more effectually made this programme seem hopeless than the recent course of the United States toward weaker and darker peoples in the West Indies, Hawaii, and the Philippines,--for where in the world may we go and be safe from lying and brute force. (89)

Where, indeed. It is a question that remains unanswered today.

The cultivation of this “lying and brute force” and its impact on American and Filipino civilization was of paramount concern to William James; specifically, he feared the demise of the power of the individual and the escalation of the mechanistic systematization of social control. The exercise of transplanting a culture on unwilling subjects was deeply disturbing to James, who prized the local, the individual, and the concrete. He saw American values being abstracted

and then manipulated into an orthodoxy to service the colonial enterprise. In a letter to a friend in 1899, he wrote:

The bigger the unit you deal with, the hollower, the more brutal, the more mendacious the life displayed. So I am against all big organizations as such, national ones first and foremost. . . . System, as such, does violence whenever it lays its hands upon us. The best Commonwealth is the one that most cherishes the men who represent residual interests, the one that leaves the largest scope to their peculiarities. (qtd. in Matthiessen 633-34)

This notion of the nation becoming “big” which James returns to again and again in his writings about the Philippines echoes Alexis de Tocqueville in his narrative about American culture, *Democracy in America*. De Tocqueville wrote:

All passions fatal to a republic grow with the increase of its territory, but the virtues which should support it do not grow at the same rate. . . . Great wealth and dire poverty, huge cities, depraved morals, individual egoism, and complication of interests are so many perils which almost always arise from the large size of the state. . . . It is therefore permissible to say that nothing is more inimical to human prosperity and freedom than great empires.
(159)

For James, this movement toward empire, by its nature, necessitated a blindness to the Filipino point of view. There would be no way to run a colony effectively

without first making the dynamic American spirit static, and then imposing that petrified vision on an audience notable only for its utter pliancy. He wrote to Henry James, "Our national infamy is I fear irremediable, after our massacring of these poor Filipino 'rebels' with whom we have refused to hold any communication. The day of 'big'ness--big national destinies, political parties, trade-combines, newspapers, is sweeping every good principle and quality out of the world." (*Correspondence* 50) Colonization called for the singular will of the monopoly, a modern enterprise for which he had only disdain. He saw the imposition abroad of a colonial will as a slippery slope which would ultimately lead to the demise of the individual at home.

In an unusual display of public indignation, William James wrote several letters protesting American policy to the *Boston Transcript*. In his first letter, referred to now as "The Philippine Tangle," he argues for moderation in the face of the passions incited by military conquest, for a recognition of the Philippine people as a people with an inner reality that cannot be manipulated at will, and for an overall condemnation of this turn toward militant and insidious aggression. He compares American expansion into Asia to "the infernal adroitness of the great department store, which has reached perfect expertness in the art of killing silently and with no public squealing or commotion the neighboring small concern." (156) In addition, he returns again to the idea of America becoming "big" and the consequences of this transition. He writes:

In this affair we have to deal with a factor altogether peculiar with our belief, namely in a destiny which must be 'big' at any cost, and which for some reason it has become infamous for us to disbelieve in or refuse. We are to be missionaries of civilization, and to bear the white man's burden, painful as it often is. We must sow our ideals, plant our order, impose our God. The individual lives are nothing. (157)

The multiplicity of a society of individuals cannot be sustained in push toward empire. Paradoxically, becoming "big" does not create space for the individual, but rather consumes it in the systematization necessary to "sow our ideals" on foreign soil. In James' lament that "the individual lives are nothing," he speaks of both Filipinos and Americans.

Frank Lentricchia argues in *Ariel and the Police* that James' engagement with the Anti-Imperialist movement led to his development of the philosophy of pragmatism. In James' revolt against the abstract and theoretical in favor of the concrete and particular, Lentricchia sees an attempt to give philosophical weight to a political position. While there is scant evidence to suggest such a direct evolution from political crisis to philosophic declaration, certainly there are direct parallels between James' philosophical and political outlooks. James himself makes this clear in another letter to the *Boston Transcript* about the Philippines:

In the hegelian philosophy the worst vice that an oration or any other expression of human nature can have is abstractness.

Abstractness means empty simplicity, non-reference to features essential to the case. Of all the carnivals of emptiness and abstractness that the world has seen, our national discussions over the Philippine policy probably bears away the palm. The arch abstractionists have been the promoters of expansion. (“Governor Roosevelt’s Oration” 162)

According to James, one of the main problems with abstract rationalism, the philosophical position he associates with imperialism, is that it attempts to encompass the entire universe in one over-arching theory. Inherent in this process is a disregard for difference, for particularity. Multiplicity is banished in favor of uniformity. In many of James’ writings, he aligns this methodology with a totalitarian approach to the world. In his book *Pragmatism*, James writes, “The rationalist mind, radically taken, is of a doctrinaire and authoritative complexion: the phrase ‘*must be*’ is ever on its lips. The bellyband of the universe must be tight. A radical pragmatist, on the other hand, is a happy-go-lucky anarchistic sort of creature.” (116)

For James, the radical pragmatist is an anti-imperialist, one who allows for various competing narratives, that is one who recognizes the subjectivity of both Americans and Filipinos, and who is not engaged in planting an order. James shared with Twain and Du Bois both an anti-imperialist oppositional stance as well as a pessimism about where this new narrative of colonial empire building would lead the United States in the future.

In terms of their assessments of American culture, their perspectives are distinct, though Twain and James share many of the same concerns, albeit with different emphases. They also share some of the same problems in terms of what weakens their critiques. In taking such a reactionary stance, their attacks become ungrounded both from past American history and the forces that are shaping American society at the turn of the century.

For Twain, his willful neglect of American greed on domestic soil and his naïve invocations of American innocence render his arguments rather impotent. For James, his emphasis on the individual blinds him to the economic, political and strategic interests that are driving the colonization. George Santayana, a fellow philosopher at Harvard, said that William James

held a false moralistic view of history, attributing events to the conscious ideals and free will of individuals: whereas individuals, especially in governments, are creatures of circumstance and slaves to vested interests. These interests may be more or less noble, romantic, or sordid, but they inevitably entangle and subjugate men of action. . . . Catastrophes come when some dominant institution, swollen like a soap-bubble and still standing without foundations, suddenly crumbles at the touch of what may seem a word or idea, but is really some stronger material force. . . . James, who was a physician and a pragmatist, might have been expected to perceive this. (qtd. in Beisner 50)

W.E.B. Du Bois was all too aware of these material forces and his argument, though less developed regarding this specific colonization than his fellow anti-imperialists, remains the most potent. He recognized the economic and historical domestic forces shaping American imperial policy in the Philippines and, thus, was less mired in the naivete that blinded Twain and James. The myths of innocence, exceptionalism, and self-reliance held no sway with the representative of a people who had been brutally enslaved on American soil for economic gain.

The anti-imperialists were not very effective in changing governmental policy or in dampening American enthusiasm for an imperial role on the world stage. To proponents of expansion, the anti-imperialists seemed old-fashioned, conservative, and cranky. They were more interested in complaining and criticizing than in offering productive solutions to thorny problems. James himself wrote, "To the ordinary citizen the word anti-imperialist suggests a thin-haired being just waked up from the day before yesterday, brandishing the Declaration of Independence excitedly, and shrieking after a railroad train thundering towards its destination to turn upon its tracks and come back." ("Address on the Philippine Question" 83)

The anti-imperialist debate may not have changed the course of American history, but the attack waged is an important, and often overlooked, window on the contradictions and complications associated with the foundational myths constituting American identity. The voices of Twain, Du Bois, and James isolate

specific conflicts that continue to affect cultural politics today, but certainly had a significant impact on the development of American hegemony in the Philippines. Their success lies in uncovering the faultlines that would continue to rock the colonization throughout the American tenure. It is no accident, but instead the discernment of these anti-imperialist writers, that the American ideals they see challenged become the very tenets that get exported to the Philippines.

SELF-PRESENTATION

Take up the White Man's burden—
 In patience to abide,
 To veil the threat of terror
 And check the show of pride;
 By open speech and simple,
 An hundred times made plain.
 To seek another's profit,
 And work another's gain.

(Stanza #2, Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden")

If the anti-imperialists were trying to defend the American ideals they perceived under attack by the colonization of the Philippines, the Bureau of Education in the Philippines was presenting many of those same ideals as integral to American culture and worthy of passionate emulation by the Filipinos. The myths of American exceptionalism, capitalism with its concomitant stress on the work ethic, racial equality and opportunity, and self-reliance were all exported with a missionary zeal by American educators. The mandate from President McKinley to begin the process of "Benevolent Assimilation" in the Philippines fell largely to the education department with its vast public school system established under the direction of Frederick W. Atkinson, a former principal from Massachusetts who was recommended to Governor Taft by Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University. Schoolhouses were built with amazing speed all over the Philippines and were considered the best venue to both present an ideal America to a captive student audience and to shape Filipino culture according to that image. Early in his administration, Atkinson wrote, "The home government demands rightly that as soon as possible the people of these Islands shall become

Americanized. We must begin with the child. You cannot make Americans of the adult Filipinos . . . we may make of the child what we choose.” (qtd. in Lardizabal 91) Atkinson’s comment suggests that in the colonial domain schools were among the most powerful and vital of what Mary Louise Pratt has called the “contact zones” between the colonizer and the colonized. These are spaces in which both parties are engaged in intimate and complex negotiation. Education was a particularly effective tool in establishing control because it promulgated societal values and offered a particular way of understanding the world. This is why education is so important in Gramsci’s notion of hegemony which has been described as

the process of control whereby a ruling social group exercises its hold over society by means of the sociocultural institutions it creates. Hegemony entails consensus acquired through the free acceptance of a particular worldview and its related values. This “ideology” is experienced as a series of practices involving the whole of the individual’s social, political and ethical being.

(Dombroski 4-5)

What the colonial administration chose to teach in order to Americanize the student body and, thus, what educators desired to make of these Filipino children illuminates a very different perspective on how America imagined itself during this venture into colonialism. The same themes that anti-imperialists like Mark Twain, W.E.B. Du Bois, and William James so passionately brought to the

fore are echoed, but on Philippine soil they are part of the colonial offensive. Not surprisingly, the fraught complexity of teaching these ideals in the colonial context – for example, teaching the value of self-reliance to colonial wards – is never openly addressed or even acknowledged in the administration's rhetoric. Instead, these ideas are presented as part and parcel of the purely benevolent gifts offered by the colonial enterprise.

The educational system established by the early American government was primarily designed to provide a basic grounding in literacy, arithmetic and civics for all Filipinos. It was a highly centralized system that dictated curriculum, teacher selection and salaries, school building design, and textbooks from the main bureau office in Manila. Though conditions varied widely in the Philippines, the school system was remarkably consistent throughout the archipelago in its daily operations.

This desire to provide basic language and arithmetic skills to the general public is in stark contrast to the educational policies of other Asian colonies governed by the British and Dutch. (Paulet 318) The British administrator Lord Macaulay presents the more traditional colonial view of education as a mechanism by which to create an elite who will bridge the gap between the colonizer and the colonized:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class

of persons, Indian in look and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. (359)

The Spanish had even resisted allowing this “class of interpreters” to emerge, though a mestizo elite had ultimately formed and had been instrumental in Spain’s demise in the Philippines. In promulgating public education for the masses, the Americans were taking an entirely different approach to colonization. In his article, “American Education in the Philippines,” Governor Taft explains:

The chief difference between their policy and ours, in the treatment of tropical people, arises from the fact that we are seeking to prepare the people under our guidance and control for popular self-government. We are attempting to do this, first, by primary and secondary education offered freely to all the Filipino people; and, second, by extending to the Filipinos wider and wider practice in self-government. (264)

The seeds of this approach are both pragmatic and historical. In the first place, it was very clear that education was a vital tool in the pacification of the Filipino rebels. Having soldiers lay down their guns and open schools as soon as an area was pacified appealed both to an American audience troubled by the brutal suppression of a revolutionary army and to a Filipino audience longing for stability and a chance at prosperity. Education was a compelling enough reason to give up the dream of independence. In addition, Americans looked back to their dealings with Native Americans and Southern blacks as a touchstone for

how to manage another disenfranchised population. (Paulet 6, 11) Frederick Atkinson, in particular, looked to Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee as a model for the Philippines. In April 1900 he wrote to Washington, "Education in the Philippines must be along industrial lines and any and all suggestions from you and your work will be invaluable." (qtd. in May 92)

Although it was Atkinson's goal to set up industrial schools throughout the Philippines, he only succeeded in establishing one and a poorly equipped one at that. (Arcilla 46) The curriculum he initiated was basically the same as the Massachusetts school where he had just been principal. His successor, David Barrows, emphasized a more academic training and began tailoring the texts for Filipino children. Teachers had complained vehemently about using textbooks that showed, for example, Jack and Jill playing in the snow or eating an apple, while their students lived in the tropics, had never met a Jack or Jill, and had never seen, much less tasted, an apple. David Barrows was followed by Frank White who, like Atkinson, believed manual training was crucial and expanded the curriculum at the intermediate level to include such activities as making handicrafts for commercial sale (even though there was no domestic market for these products) and tending school gardens.(Arcilla 50) This kind of vacillation in the early administration plagued the system for its entire tenure. Sometimes the emphasis was on manual training and sometimes on literacy, though in both cases the schools were to be designed to produce productive and responsible colonial citizens. Though there was never any firm commitment as to when the

Filipinos would be ready for independence, the administration always stressed that the educational system was designed to teach them the art of self-government.

It fell, of course, to the teachers to make sense of these policy changes and create these model colonial citizens. As noted, American soldiers were the first teachers, but they were quickly replaced by the approximately 1,000 teachers who arrived from the United States. Their selection was based on examinations as well as recommendations from universities and school administrators. Some were attracted by the substantially higher salaries; some were drawn by the sense of adventure, and most felt that they were involved in a noble endeavor. Many believed the Filipinos were a backward and barbarous race and brought to their jobs a passionate desire to shed light on this perennial darkness. One former teacher writes in his reminiscences, "Dear Reader, if you have not been through such a situation there is no way by which I can explain clearly how much foreigners [read American teachers] suffered in order to help educate the Little Brown Brothers." (Carrothers 4) David Barrows describes some of the difficult conditions encountered by the American teachers:

Life in the provinces was disorganized. Communications were lacking. Many islands were infested by ladrones, or bandits. Local government, upon which the maintenance of primary schools depended, did not function well at first. A severe epidemic of cholera in 1902-1903 swept the Archipelago. (288)

Another teacher who later became the Director of the Bureau of Education wrote with typical messianic zeal, “The sending of almost one thousand teachers to an *unknown land on the other side of the world for the purpose of developing a subject race into an independent one* was something new in the history of the world.” (Marquardt 33)

Reading through one teacher’s correspondence home makes manifest how initial enthusiasm and a distinctively American mission to educate all Filipinos often dissolved into traditional colonial contempt. Harry Cole and his wife Mary, travelling aboard *The Thomas*, were among the first teachers to arrive in the Philippines. All American teachers were later referred to as Thomasites whether or not they actually arrived on that particular ship, but the Coles did and were part of the first wave of pioneer teachers. The Coles’ primary motive was to earn enough money to buy a house back in Michigan, though they were also interested in travel and believed the American mission an honorable one. Both wrote frequent letters home, and their experiences are vividly recorded. Mary Cole’s letters tend to be more cheerful and anecdotal, though less reflective than her husband about what they are doing in the Philippines and why. Though she taught the Filipinos daily, she seldom refers to them at all, except to describe the mess her *muchacho*, a male servant, made of a meal or the most recent religious holiday that allowed her a day off. Harry Cole’s letters are initially enthusiastic and hopeful but soon become increasingly intolerant, angry, and even violent. The following excerpts illustrate this progression:

[August 23, 1901] Our business will be to establish schools and teach the native teachers English etc. etc. The teacher (American) will be the power behind the throne, so to speak. I think we are going to like it very much. The people are a very bright intelligent race and nothing like the negro race.

[November 5, 1901] But we have been here [Palo, Leyte] over five weeks now and it is getting to be an old story. I find this work very monotonous trying to teach these monkeys to talk. They will chatter and grin just about like monkeys, and when the children get to catching lice on each others heads in school, I think all the more that I am just trying to train wild animals.

[February 16, 1902] In fact the more I see of this lazy, dirty, indolent people, the more I come to despise them. I came here with the desire to help them, to enter their homes, and to try to uplift them. But it seems to me a useless task.

[June 30, 1902] And I guess it is a good thing I am not a soldier, for I am afraid I should shoot every 'dirty nigger' I should come across if I were out on a 'hike.' Too many Americans have already been sacrificed to the treachery of these people. . . . [O]ne is almost involuntarily driven to do things here that he would never think of and would despise in himself if he were among human beings.

[November 17, 1902] Anglo-Saxons have, with the greater capacity, struggled for hundreds of years to attain the present imperfect standard of government. How can we expect a colored race, with the baser natures and the natural tendencies to evil, to attain without years and years, or even generations, of training, even to a crude imitation of a good form of government?
(Correspondence File)

Though Harry Cole is only one teacher among many and there were certainly those who were far more open-minded and respectful, his attitudes toward the Filipino people are typical of a colonial official toward the native population. What is distinctive about Harry Cole's thoughts are that they are not distinctive at all in the study of colonialism. The extreme "othering" evident in his letters describing a devolution from "a bright intelligent race" to a race considered not

even human is fundamental to the rhetoric of empire. The Americans may have introduced a more open and embracing public education system, but this does not mean that the Filipino students were openly embraced or treated as anything other than racially inferior.

This sense of inferiority is very clear in various student essays written in 1905. One American teacher, Frederick G. Behner, whose papers are collected at the University of Michigan, saved his students' essays, and they frequently reveal a deep sense of Filipino inadequacy. Rufina Alma writes in her Oration, "We have so many pupils that come from other towns to attend our school to be civilized because uncivilization is the worst thing that a person could be." (Behner, Student Papers File #1) It is clear from other essays that the students have been taught that what the Americans are offering through this education is "civilization" and that the Filipinos, left to their own devices, are universally uncivilized. Another student, Marcelo S. Augustine, describes the Filipino revolutionary war effort as essentially impotent:

The natives were fighting for independence at this time, so we fought against the Americans very hardly, but we could not succeed. The reasons why we could not succeed is this: we are not well united and we do not know how to rule; we are not a powerful nation and we speak different languages; we have no weapons and we have no rail-road. But the Americans were wise.

united, powerful, speak one language, and they had the advantage in every way. (Behner, Student Papers File #2)

This pervasive sense that America is always posited as the ideal against a weak and subordinate Philippines is echoed in “The Kindergarten as an Americanizing Influence,” an article written for a magazine published by the Bureau of Education. The writer proudly recounts this anecdote:

A visitor to our provincial capital school the other day asked of one of the pupils, “Why do you come to school?” The answer was: “To learn.” “To learn what?” “To learn American ways.” “And why do you want to learn American ways?” “Because they are the best ways.” (26)

It is clear that the Americans were offering not just literacy, arithmetic, civics and handicrafts. They were also offering a way of understanding America, the Philippines, and the relationship between the two. African writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o comments on this phenomena:

Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective

without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. (442)

One important vehicle for imparting values associated with "American ways" was the English language. At first the Americans assumed that classes should be conducted in Spanish, but it soon became clear that very few Filipinos could speak or read Spanish. With over eighty native languages, it seemed impractical to try to teach in the native tongues. Thus, they decided that English would be the language of instruction. It would be cheaper, easier, and a much more powerful tool in the civilizing mission. The English language was considered to carry within it the traditions and ideals of the West. What better way to bring Filipinos American culture than to bring them American language. As Benedict Anderson writes:

Immensely confident of Anglo-Saxon world hegemony and the place of English as the language of capitalism and modernity, the colonial regime effortlessly extruded Spanish and so expanded an English-language school system that by 1940 the Philippines had the highest literacy rate in Southeast Asia. (18-19)

Because of the need to teach both language and culture, literature in English, and in particular American literature, got far more emphasis in the colony than it did at home, where classical texts were considered the repository of civilization. For example, the high school curriculum in the Philippines did not differ very much from its counterpart in the United States, except in this stress on language and

reading. (Hemingway 70) The choice of literature, then, became very important as it had to serve both pedagogical and polemical purposes. Ella Barron, a high school principal in Manila, wrote, “[T]he Bureau of Education has given special attention to social and ethical values. The new supplementary readers . . . are rich in ideals of good citizenship, of home and country, loyalty and service, thrift, conservation, and cooperation.” (190)

The literature curriculum itself remained remarkably stable during the colonial period, roughly from 1902, when the first high school was founded, to 1933, when the Philippine Commonwealth was established. (Whitfield 104) For the most part this stability was for economic reasons. It was just too expensive to buy new textbooks and train teachers in the new material. And, as noted, the curriculum was virtually the same throughout the archipelago because of the centralized structure. Closely looking at a few of the texts that were taught during the American tenure opens a window onto what kinds of literature the colonial administration thought would be appropriate in this colonizing mission and what messages they believed could be imparted through literature. Ella Barron reiterates the desire to use literature as a “civilizing” force:

 Holding to the modern doctrine which regards education as the adaptation of the individual to his social and physical environment, the aim of the present secondary courses in English is to produce a desired and clearly defined change in each individual student’s *behavior*. . . . In other words, the purpose of the English courses is

to help each student acquire *new skills, new habits, and new attitudes*. (189)

Three texts that were deemed suitable for this mission were Washington Irving's *The Alhambra*, Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*, and Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Essay on Self-Reliance*. Selections from *The Alhambra* were taught throughout the American colonial period, while an excerpt from *Up from Slavery* was taught from 1919 onwards; *Self-Reliance* was introduced into the curriculum in 1911. Usually Irving and Washington were taught in the freshman year of high school, a year reserved for American literature, while Emerson's essay was taught in the senior year, a year dedicated to the study of rhetoric. Sophomore and junior years were devoted to British literature which generally included Shakespeare, a selection of poetry, and novels by George Eliot.

Miguel Anselmo Bernad, a Filipino literary critic and student during the colonial regime, writes, "Filipinos are so familiar with American literature that it has helped to shape their mind." (15) The choices of texts from the American canon are extremely interesting in terms of what portrait colonial educators were trying to paint of American culture and what influence they thought those particular texts would have on shaping Filipino minds. As Gauri Viswanathan writes in her study of the literature curriculum in British India, "The curriculum is conceived here not in the perennialist sense of an objective, essentialized entity but rather as discourse, activity, process, as one of the

mechanisms through which knowledge is socially distributed and culturally validated.” (3)

Washington Irving

Washington Irving’s *The Alhambra* is actually about Spanish culture, not American, and this is exactly the point. The society described in Washington Irving’s *The Alhambra* is indolent, corrupt and static. *The Alhambra* is based on Irving’s travels in Spain, and so it seems no coincidence that the excerpts selected for a textbook published by the Bureau of Education emphasize the inertia of Spanish culture, the corruption inherent in its justice system, and the rigidity of its social mores. (Philippine Islands, Bureau of Education 23-68) In the American effort to convince both the Filipinos and themselves that theirs was no ordinary empire, it was extremely important to distinguish American culture from its colonial predecessor. As Esteban De Ocampo succinctly notes, “[T]he Americans tried their best to stress the evils of Spain in contrast to the American policy of benevolent assimilation.”(5) Frederick Behner’s student, V.F. Birtraux, seems to have gotten this message loud and clear. He writes in his essay, “Progress,” “Centuries of years we have been with the Spanish but the majority of us could not advance a single step; especially those who lived in the country did not have any chance at all. These Americans. . . in a few years have given us an idea of the modern world and at once the greatest progress these islands have ever known.” (Behner Student Papers File #3) The two selections of *The Alhambra* chosen for

this Bureau of Education textbook implicitly make the distinction between an indolent Spain and a vital America.

Of course, maintaining American exceptionalism was not given as the official reason for teaching *The Alhambra*. In Francisco M. Africa's *Students' Guide in English Literature for Philippines Secondary Schools*, a kind of *Cliff Notes* for the Bureau of Education textbook, he writes that students are taught Washington Irving because he is

considered one of the founders of American national literature. He is the first American short-story writer, essayist and man of letters of conspicuous ability. Like Longfellow, he serves as the interpreter to English readers of the charm of Spanish history and romance. (52)

The first charming story is "The Legend of the Moor's Legacy," and it tells of a poor and simple citizen of Granada, Pedro Gil, who lives within the fortress of the Alhambra. The story describes his good deed to a dying Moor and his inheritance from the Moor of a secret and magical legend which leads to a buried treasure underneath the fortress. Though the story ends happily with Pedro finding the treasure and moving to Portugal a rich man, in the journey to this happy ending, Pedro is subjected to the undermining gossip of his neighbors, the irresponsibility of his frivolous and petulant wife, and the corruption and greed of a judge. He is trapped in a society that punishes the poor for being poor and rewards the lazy indulgences of the upper classes. Magical intervention is the

only way out for Pedro. According to Francisco Africa, “Several moral lessons may be drawn from the “Legend of the Moor’s Legacy”: (a) an act of charity is always rewarded; (b) avarice is always punished; (c) every person must mind his own business.” (54)

The second story is again a fairy tale, but this time one of romance. The isolated and beautiful Jacinta has no hope of marrying the man she loves because she does not have the proper social standing. She overcomes this barrier after she is given a magical flute by a ghost. The incredible beauty of her music brings her to the attention of the court and soon makes her an eligible bride. Again, without the help of supernatural forces, Jacinta would have remained beautiful, isolated, and alone.

This reliance on the magical and supernatural is in stark contrast to the “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” ethos professed by the Americans. Spanish culture is portrayed as romantic and rich, but, at the same time, stultifying and oppressive. There is a chasm between the powerful and the powerless, the rich and the poor, the aristocratic and the commoner, and there is no earthly way to bridge that gap. What the Americans are trying to communicate is that one of the things they are offering is opportunity and the chance to raise one’s social standing in a fluid society that acknowledges education and industry.

While this may have been the message, it was certainly not the reality for very many Filipinos. A bigger middle class was eventually created and was made up largely of the civil servants who were educated in the American system, but

the overall economic structure was left mainly intact and that prevented any large scale window of opportunity for the Filipino masses. For the most part in the Philippines, the many poor stayed poor and the few rich stayed rich. (McWilliams 246; Salamanca 94-5; Stanley 269; Welch 155-6) Stanley Karnow writes:

The Americans coddled the elite while disregarding the appalling plight of the peasants, thus perpetuating a feudal oligarchy that widened the gap between rich and poor. They imposed trade patterns that retarded the economic growth of the islands, condemning them to reliance on the U.S. long after independence. The American monopoly into the Philippines also dampened the development of a native industry. At the same time, the unlimited entry of Philippine exports to the U.S. bound the archipelago inextricably to the American market. Economically at least, the Filipinos were doomed to remain 'little brown brothers' for years. (198)

In spite of the American desire to emphasize its exceptional nature, Mark Twain's alignment of the United States with "the sceptered land-thieves of Europe" is perhaps a more accurate comparison. ("A Defence of General Funston" 122)

Booker T. Washington

In contrast to the oppressive Spanish culture depicted in *The Alhambra*, *Up from Slavery* portrays America as a land of dynamic competition, tolerance,

and opportunity. It is interesting that Booker T. Washington was both in the background of the Philippine educational system, providing a pedagogical model, and also in the foreground with the teaching of his autobiography which describes his incredible journey from slavery to respected educator and leader of the black community. As an educational prototype, Washington's work at his school Tuskegee was described this way in the magazine *Philippine Education*:

Booker Washington's idea is not to give the negroes a fancy book education but to train them in the practical pursuits of life, and to teach them that what is needed in this world is sober, steady-going, industrious and thrifty men and women. In many respects this school might serve as a model for many others, since it seems to answer very effectively the demands of the times for practical education. ("Work at Tuskegee" 9)

There are two main reasons why *Up from Slavery* would have been so appealing for colonial educators at that time. The first is Washington's discussion of race in America, which places the burden of improvement on the individual and gives little heed to the effects of systemic racism. The second is his pronounced emphasis on the opportunities afforded by hard work. As Glenn May writes in *Social Engineering in the Philippines: the Aims, Execution and Impact of American Colonial Policy, 1900-1913*:

White America knew Washington not as the complex man of many faces, described in Louis Harlan's biography, but as a black man

who accepted segregation, opposed black militancy, and asserted that industrial education at Tuskegee was valuable “in teaching economy, thrift and the dignity of labor and giving moral backbone to the students.” (92)

Washington’s emphasis on hard work and acceptance of racial distinctions would be considered important among a people deemed both hopelessly lazy and racially inferior. In addition Washington shows the movement from slavery, i.e. colonization, to leadership, i.e. self-government. His successful handling of this transition is attributed to his application of American values.

In particular, Washington cites his absolute reliance on his own intelligence, energy, persistence, and labor as the foundation to his incredible success. In the textbook published by the Bureau of Education, only the first three chapters of *Up from Slavery* are included; these describe his early life as a slave on a Southern plantation, his extraordinary efforts to get an education after emancipation in a poor mining town in West Virginia, and his long journey to Hampton where he was finally educated while working as a janitor at night. Washington’s emphasis on education as the key to his overcoming so many obstacles resonates well for a colonial regime that proffered education as the key to its benevolence. Booker T. Washington was offered as a model, someone with whom the Filipinos could identify and emulate. Africa reiterates this point advising students:

The life of Booker T. Washington furnishes a very good example of humble determination to overcome poverty. His life of unselfish devotion to the improvement of the negro race must give school-children an inspiration for service. (57)

To American educators the identification between blacks and Filipinos must have seemed natural; in their eyes, both groups were dark and racially inferior. What is appealing about Washington's autobiography is that he does not challenge the idea that there are racial differences while he encourages the so-called inferior race to work within the established system to advance. This didactic message from Washington would suit colonial purposes very well:

This country demands that every race shall measure itself by the American standard. By it a race must rise or fall, succeed or fail, and in the last analysis mere sentiment counts for little. During the next half-century and more, my race must continue passing through the severe American crucible. We are to be tested in our patience, our forbearance, our perseverance, our power to endure wrong, to withstand temptations, to economize, to acquire and use skill: in our ability to compete, to succeed in commerce, to disregard the superficial for the real, the appearance for the substance, to be great and yet small, learned and yet simple, high and yet the servant of all. (Philippine Islands, Bureau of Education 217)

The colonial message, however, may have been somewhat undermined by the reluctance of Filipinos to identify themselves with someone as dark skinned as Booker T. Washington. In the Philippines, very dark skin was associated with the Negrito tribe, which was considered the most primitive; and like many other colonial cultures, light skin was associated with the ruling class and, therefore, considered far superior. While Americans saw a natural equation between Filipinos and Black Americans, the elite group of Filipinos who were able to reach the high school level in their education did not necessarily see the parallel at all. In "Literature as a Maker of National Myths," Maximo D. Ramos comments that *Up from Slavery* was "an inspiring autobiography which the anti-Negrito young Filipinos . . . were soon making fun of for Washington's black skin and un-Caucasoid profile rather than soaking up his message of getting to the top by hard work." (59)

This "message of getting to the top by hard work" was certainly the other important reason that this text became part of the American canon in the Philippines. Over and over again in American commentary about the Philippines, Filipino disparagement of manual labor is considered abhorrent and in need of deep reform. For example, in an article written for *The Philippine Teacher* in 1906, E.J. Albertson writes,

Work, a word avoided in the past by Filipinos of almost all classes, a word smothered by erroneous interpretation and false pride. If in the four years or more that our schools have been organized, we

have accomplished nothing else save this one thing, namely, caused the Filipino boy and girl to turn to manual labor courageously, with willing hands, our time and labor have not been spent in vain. (25)

In the same vein, but with a darker edge, Charles Conant, writing in 1902 for *The Atlantic Monthly*, claims:

The labor problem promises to be a serious one at first in the Philippines, because of the lack of inclination among the natives to systemic work. The nightmare of an invasion of the United States by “a flood of Filipino cheap labor,” which has disturbed the dreams of some of the opponents of expansion, would lose its terrors by a visit to the islands. The average Filipino laborer in competition with American labor would have about as much chance of survival as a mouse in a threshing machine. (369)

Teaching Booker T. Washington’s *Up from Slavery* was part of the colonial campaign to show by example what could be accomplished if one accepted Washington’s belief that “labor is dignified and beautiful.” (226) W.E.B. Du Bois, with his focus on the economic forces and racism driving colonization, would perhaps not have been surprised by the selection of Booker T. Washington’s text. Whereas colonial rhetoric stressed the improvements to Philippine society if it adhered to Washington’s precepts, it is clear that a colony of hard workers, consumers, and believers in the economic and cultural system

could only benefit the colonizer. Positing Booker T. Washington as a model was a way of exporting an American ideal without disturbing the American colonial reality.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Essay on Self-Reliance* seems like a less obvious choice for a colonial government to make. Certainly this text has a central place in the American literary canon, but urging colonial citizens toward self-reliance does not, at first, make sense. The Philippines' first attempt at self-reliance, their declaration of independence, was brutally suppressed by the Americans. However, Emerson's essay works well in the American colonial context for two reasons. The first is the colonial administration's professed desire to lead the Filipinos to self-government. American colonialism was described as an apprenticeship of sorts so that introducing the idea of American self-reliance would be part of the training toward independence. Because the government would never commit to any kind of timetable, teaching a text like this showed at least an attempt at good faith. Interestingly, Emerson's grandson, Cameron Forbes, was appointed Governor of the Philippines in 1921. His statement regarding Philippine independence is typical of the paternalistic and vague statements made by the Americans:

The position of the [Filipino] people, while demanding independence—and sometimes absolute and immediate independence—has been very generally that they believe in

fairness, wisdom and disinterestedness of the United States and will abide cheerfully by whatever decision is made. And if we find they are not ready for independence now, they propose to buckle to and make themselves ready for it later. (qtd. in Brands 121)

The second reason for teaching *Self-Reliance* involves Emerson's extreme emphasis on the individual. Yet another way in which the Americans wanted to transform Filipino culture was to diminish the strong community and family ties that bound people into complex social webs – webs that often excluded the Americans and their influence. Encouraging individuality and independent thought would be more threatening to native Filipino culture than to colonial control. For example, the following excerpt could potentially inspire a rebel within the community without creating a rebel against the government:

Check this lying hospitality and lying affection. Live no longer to the expectation of these deceived and deceiving people with whom we converse. Say to them, O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. . . . I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. (36)

Frank Lentricchia comments on the weak political will this kind of radical self-reliance engenders when he writes that “the disturbing implication of Emerson's divestiture of agency and sovereignty from the individual was political passivity,

not political action.” (119) Of course it was only this personal kind of self-reliance that was actually encouraged, a self-reliance that celebrated the individual at the expense of the family and community but not the government. Political and economic self-reliance were not part of this equation and, in fact, both became increasingly diminished as the colonial regime became more entrenched. Politically, even after a Philippine Congress was established, the American governor maintained veto power over all congressional acts and, thus, had to be consulted and appeased in all decisions. As for the economy, the establishment of free trade between the United States and the Philippines in 1909 wedded the two economic systems together so that the Philippines became a primary exporter of raw materials and significant importer of manufactured goods. (Douglas 26-7) Even after independence was declared in the Philippines, the economy was extremely dependent on American free trade. Teaching *Self-Reliance* while, at the same time, deepening the culture of dependence through the systemic mechanisms inherent to colonialism would, perhaps, have been most disturbing to William James who looked back to Emerson as one of his philosophical forbears. Still, both James and the colonial administration recognized that Emerson wrote and spoke in a peculiarly American fashion and both would use his ideas, albeit for very different ends. For James, the self-reliant individual was naturally opposed to all systems, especially a colonial system; however, for the American colonial government, the self-reliant individual could serve as a buttress to the system by weakening native communal and familial ties.

These differences speak to the larger issue of what happened to these myths on Philippine soil in the colonial context. If, in America, the bedrock themes of exceptionalism, equality, hard work, and self-reliance seemed in danger of corrosion because of the colonization, in the Philippines these ideas seem to gain a kind of insidious strength. They were presented as not just what made America great, but it was the very lack of these values that made the Philippines weak. Colonial administrators and teachers were able to use these myths as a way of defining themselves against their colonial subjects. This insidious disparagement of Filipino culture was certainly part of the colonial baggage left after independence was declared, along with one of the highest literacy rates in Asia.

The works of Washington Irving, Booker T. Washington, and Ralph Waldo Emerson are often studied in the light of their American legacy, but rarely in terms of their American colonial legacy. Their ideas, however, do have a legacy in the short stories and novels by early Filipino writers in English. These recurrent myths take another turn as colonial writers begin to interrogate the disjunctions and contradictions inherent to the American ideals transplanted on Philippine soil. The fraught complexity of teaching Washington Irving's *The Alhambra*, Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*, and Emerson's *Essay on Self-Reliance*, though never acknowledged by the Bureau of Education, was not lost on Filipino students. Paulo Freire comments on the necessity to understand that these contradictions exist and are often recognized by students, that providing

an education is not as simple as making a pedagogical bank deposit in a student's mind:

Those who use the banking approach, knowingly or unknowingly . . . fail to perceive that the deposits themselves contain contradictions about reality. But sooner or later, these contradictions may lead formerly passive students to turn against their domestication and the attempt to domesticate reality. They may discover through existential experience that the present way of life is irreconcilable with their vocation to become fully human.

(45)

Maximo Kalaw, Juan C. Laya, and Paz Marquez Benitez all make this discovery.

RE-PRESENTATION

Take up the White Man's burden—
 Ye dare not stoop to less—
 Nor call too loud on Freedom
 To cloak your weariness;
 By all ye cry or whisper,
 By all ye leave or do,
 The silent, sullen peoples
 Shall weigh your Gods and you.

(Stanza #6, Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden")

In *Democracy and America*, Alexis de Tocqueville writes, "[O]nly strangers or experience may be able to bring certain truths to the Americans' attention." (256) In 1925, Paz Marquez Benitez published what is considered to be the first short story in English of literary worth and offered her own certain truth about America. This is a mere quarter of a century after the Americans had colonized the Philippines, set up the public school system, and introduced the English language to the Filipinos. The speed with which Filipinos took to the English language and began expressing themselves in essays, journalism, fiction, and poetry is remarkable for a territory under colonial rule. India was the first of the British colonies to have a novel published in English, and this was after about two centuries of English imperial control. ("Filipino Novel in English" 3)

Of course, in the Philippines, there already was a tradition of literature in both Spanish and in some of the native languages. Early critics, and some later ones as well, talk about English literature in the Philippines as though it were created in a vacuum, as though it just appeared *ex nihilo*. (Abad 376) This,

however, was not the case. In fact, Jose Rizal, a cultural hero then and now in the Philippines, made his mark first by writing two novels critical of Spanish corruption and oppression, and second for his execution because the Spanish were so threatened by his critique. Thus, the idea of writing literature in the language of the colonial power was part of a venerable tradition, as was using that literature to comment on the colonization itself.

Philippine literature in English was mainly cultivated at the University of the Philippines, which was established by the Americans in 1910. Very quickly after the English program was established, literary journals were established that could function as an organ for students' literary pursuits. This initial period of literary activity is often referred to as the "Period of Imitation" (Echols 151) or the "Period of Apprenticeship" (Fernandez 46; Santillan-Castrencia 546) because of the students' indebtedness to the American and English models offered by their professors. The tone of condescension evident in this period's titles is manifest also in most of the criticism written about Philippine literature in English by both Americans and Filipinos. These two assessments, written in 1931 and 1966 respectively, are typical of what is written about this period in particular and Filipino literature in English in general:

The faults generally are lack of conciseness, lack of strict constructive form, shallowness, and sentimentalism. Brevity and economy are virtues which need stressing at present in Filipino English. The writers tend to flow on in a sort of unrestrained flux,

till the thought becomes deliquescent. The softness which is in the climate and people may produce tenderness and delicacy of expression. But it also makes much work invertebrate and mulluscan. It lacks direction and the force which comes from concentrated intensity. And even in editorials and articles we find that the appeal is to sentiment and not reason. There is too much emotionalism and not enough clean, hard logic. (Moore 528)

...

This brings us to what I think is the crisis of Philippine letters: lack of significance in theme, no universality of interest, and absence of plain old-fashioned substance. (Carunungan 68)

The pervasive negativity of the critical judgments about Philippine literature in English has contributed to its erasure from the radar screen of literary studies. Over and over again in the critical literature, one reads that there is really very little worth mentioning. This is, of course, not the case, and these sentiments are clearly rooted in the American disparagement of practically all native efforts of any kind. That these sentiments are then echoed by Filipinos is not surprising given the colonial yardstick they inherited. In a review of the early literature in English, there are several stories and novels that are worth our attention today. The three works in this study are extremely interesting texts that reward close examination, though even in the Philippines, only "Dead Stars" is regularly taught today.

One of the engaging and important aspects of this early fiction is its direct and indirect commentary on the Americans and their legacy. This is not to suggest that all literature written in English was solely, or even primarily, a critique of the Americans. Still, in several texts written during the colonial period, the colonization of the Philippines and its impact on Philippine culture is either an implicit or explicit concern of the writer. In the case of Paz Marquez Benitez's "Dead Stars", the commentary is not overt at all, and, in fact, no other critical readings surveyed have addressed this aspect of her story. (Grow; Manlapaz; Pineda-Ofreneo) In contrast, Maximo Kalaw's *The Filipino Rebel: A Romance of the American Occupation of the Philippines* and Juan C. Laya's *His Native Soil* are quite explicit in their desire to analyze American colonialism and its effects, both immediate and long-term.

All three writers interrogate the myths surrounding American identity that Mark Twain, W.E.B. Du Bois, and William James felt were threatened by the colonization, and question the ideals that American educators tried to impart to their "little brown brothers." The dream of America that their teachers tried to impart with such fervor is exposed as nothing short of a nightmare on Filipino soil. Given the evident fractures between the rhetoric and the reality of the American regime, it is no wonder that these same themes would resurface in a light unanticipated by the American colonizers.

Maximo Kalaw examines the political system of the colonial Philippines and lays bare the inherent corruption in a system that pretends to be democratic,

while still under American control. Like Mark Twain, he portrays an American involvement in the Philippines that is hypocritical, cruel, and no exception to its European forbears. If anything, the Spanish in this novel have more culture and more honor than the Americans; this is in striking contrast to the Spanish depicted in Washington Irving's *The Alhambra*.

Juan C. Laya questions American racial tolerance and the transformative power of capitalism. Booker T. Washington's optimism about opportunity and racial tolerance notwithstanding, Laya's protagonist, Martin Romero, returns to his remote village in the Philippines after a long stay in America with a college degree in hand and an incredible bitterness about the brutal treatment of Filipinos in the United States. The discouragement and systematic oppression experienced by Martin are more in tune with Du Bois's characterizations in *The Souls of Black Folk* than the Horatio Alger success described in *Up from Slavery*. Laya explores in *His Native Soil* whether America really is the land of opportunity, and whether its ideals are doomed to failure in the Philippines because of the total lack of regard for the Filipino perspective. This blind approach to Filipino reform is assumed by Martin, who returns to his village with an American sureness of his own superiority. He realizes too late that both his attitude and his business methods deeply alienate his family, who also happen to be his investors. In spite of his obnoxious confidence, or indeed because of it, Martin Romero's return is a personal and financial failure.

Paz Marquez Benitez, described by critic Jonathan Chua as occupying “a premier position in the history of Philippine literature in English,” very subtly describes a man with no sense of self, with no ability to resist external, societal pressures. (16) The dissipated sense of individuality that William James predicted at the beginning of the colonization is writ large in the protagonist of Benitez’s short story, Alfredo. Emerson’s vital and empowering self-reliance is utterly vacant in Alfredo, who is paralyzed by an enveloping pressure that he cannot name or see. His capitulation to these forces is symptomatic of an entire generation’s acquiescence to American rule and its loss of any passionate vitality.

In close readings of each of these texts, it becomes clear that each author has a distinct focus and approach. Though they all are commenting on the colonization and all explore issues of collaboration with and resistance to the American regime, they do not speak with one voice. Indeed, the debates that characterize late twentieth century post-colonial studies, particularly with regard to the potential for resistance in the colonial setting, are clearly evident in this early colonial fiction. Kalaw explores the various positions available to natives in relation to the colonial power, focusing on one character’s moral corrosion under the influence of ambivalent colonial rhetoric. In contrast, Laya emphasizes the vigor of native resistance to Americanization, while Benitez depicts utter capitulation to the hegemonic pressures of colonial culture. So, while each writer is exploring the impact of the colonization on the Philippines and Filipino participation in that impact, and while each writer recognizes and unveils the

contradictions inherent in American rhetoric, the theoretical analyses differ considerably.

Maximo Kalaw's novel *The Filipino Rebel: A Romance of the American Colonization of the Philippines* locates the root of the problem in the fissure between the values professed by Americans and the political system established in the colony. Maximo M. Kalaw was successful under the American regime, but he was still very critical of what he saw to be the ravages of colonization on the Philippines. Educated in law and political science in America, political science professor at the University of the Philippines, and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, his novel explores the systemic corruption inherent in the colonial government and the consequent demoralization of the Philippine people.

In the preface to this novel published in 1930, Kalaw writes that he “began cherishing the hope of presenting to our people and to the world a sketch of our national life.” Like Homi Bhabha, he homes in on the ambivalence of colonial rhetoric as fundamental to the relationship between colonizer and colonized. According to Bhabha, this ambivalence is the result of the instability caused by the narcissistic colonizer exercising authority over and at the same time being dependent on the colonized. Because the identity of the colonizer is at all times predicated upon an identification with and opposition to the colonized, there is a fundamental dependence that always threatens to overwhelm and undermine colonial authority. Bhabha writes that colonial discourse

is an apparatus that turns on the recognition and disavowal of racial / cultural / historical differences. . . . The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction. . . . Although the "authority" of colonial discourse depends crucially on its location in narcissism and the Imaginary, my concept of stereotype-as-suture is a recognition of the *ambivalence* of the authority and those orders of identification. ("DissemiNation" 196-7; 207)

Bhabha goes on to argue that this ambivalence opens up space for resistance in the guise of colonial mimicry. He describes "the menace of mimicry" as "[colonization's] double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority." (*Location of Culture* 88) For Kalaw, however, the complex mirroring between the Americans and the Filipinos is the basis for a moral corrosion. Instead of this mimicry disrupting the authority of the American regime, it merely serves to expose the weakness of the colonized's collaborative position in relation to that authority. In this novel, Kalaw diagrams three distinct positions for the native vis a vis the colonial power -- total rejection, slavish participation, and emigration.

In outlining these positions, the novel focuses on three main characters, Don Pedro, Juanito, and Josefa. Don Pedro is an old-fashioned, mestizo patriot.

Part of the land-owning upper class during the Spanish regime, he is loved by his tenants, respected by his contemporaries, and revered by the masses as a revolutionary war hero. Unlike most of his colleagues who formed the inner-circle around Aguinaldo in running the Philippine-American war, Don Pedro refuses to sign the oath of allegiance to the United States after Aguinaldo is captured; consequently, he is exiled to Hong Kong. He prefers exile to betraying his promise to fight for an independent Philippines. While very noble, Don Pedro's decision is not very pragmatic.

Don Pedro's godson, Juanito, chooses a different course. Juanito, younger, more vibrant, less cautious, fights very bravely as a revolutionary and is also regarded as a hero. Before the war begins, he travels widely, including to the United States, and returns to the Philippines just as the Americans arrive. He is, at first, very eager to accept their help in fighting the Spanish. Unlike Don Pedro, who resents the political oppression but basically admires the Spanish, Juanito hates the Spanish for their cruel treatment of his parents, who had been exiled for their political activism and died prematurely while in exile. Still, when America betrays the Philippines and establishes military control, Juanito passionately tries to defend its fragile independence and suffers much hardship as a guerilla soldier. At the end of the war, aware that the Americans are firmly in control of the country, he is fairly easily persuaded to sign the oath of allegiance. Unlike Don Pedro, he wants to continue fighting for the Philippines but within the framework of the American colonial regime. Because of his travels, he speaks some English

and is immediately recruited into Governor-General Taft's government to act as an interpreter.

According to Kalaw, it is a devil's bargain that Juanito has made. The American government extended an unusual amount of power to the Filipinos, and Juanito is able to take advantage of this, rising quickly from interpreter to lawyer to Assemblyman to Senator. In spite of this meteoric success, however, his power is circumscribed completely. He is beholden to the party leaders, who are beholden to the American Governor-General, who will sacrifice political and monetary capital only with the promise of complete loyalty. The Filipinos appear to have and to exercise power, but it is merely a complicated game of patronage fueled by greed and political materialism. Though the platform of the party to which Juanito belongs calls for independence, there is almost no effort to press for it for fear of losing what Kalaw refers to as "pork barrel." Kalaw describes a vicious web in which Juanito cannot afford to displease certain constituents and, thus, spends lavishly, often from his own pocket, to extend political favors and patronage; in addition, he cannot afford to displease the party leaders and so almost never votes his conscience, but instead votes always for some compromise that a select elite has worked out with the Americans. The focus of the novel is this fall from revolutionary hero to compromised hack. In the end, he goes so far as to openly support American business interests and, only then, is he voted out of power. Covert support has been tolerated all along, but the electorate draws the

line at such a blatant violation of trust and votes him out of office. Juanito dies shortly thereafter of “heart trouble.” (261)

In stark contrast to Juanito, Josefa emerges wholly successful at the end of the novel. She and Juanito meet while he is a guerilla soldier and fall in love while on the run from the Americans. They perform a marriage ceremony in the woods with Juanito promising to marry her in a church as soon as they rejoin civilization. Josefa is a simple village girl and, under normal circumstances, their marriage would be unthinkable because of their different class positions. The war, though, works as a great leveler, and they are married by Juanito’s servant under the stars. When the war is over, Josefa decides to spend time becoming educated so that she will be “worthy” of someone of Juanito’s standing in society. During this time, Juanito begins to question his commitment to her. He has very little money of his own; without the support of a wealthy family, his political ambitions seem fruitless. Therefore, he ultimately decides to abandon Josefa and the son she conceived before they separated (about whom he is unaware); instead, he marries the daughter of Don Pedro. When Josefa learns of Juanito’s betrayal, she has already become fluent in both Spanish and English. Devastated and humiliated, she decides to leave the Philippines and accepts the invitation of her kind American teachers to join them on their passage back to America. Under their sponsorship, she flourishes in the United States and becomes a highly respected spokeswoman for women’s suffrage as well as Philippine independence. The penultimate scene in the novel is a dinner in Hong Kong

where Juanito, Don Pedro and Josefa, who now calls herself Juana, discuss Philippine independence and assess their different vantage points.

Thus, Kalaw outlines through Juanito, Don Pedro and Josefa three different ways that the native population coped with the colonization, that is collaboration, exile, and emigration. This is clearly a pessimistic view, as Juanito is the only character who stays in the Philippines, and the novel ends with his death due to "heart trouble." Though Kalaw grounds his critique of colonization in the ambivalence of American discourse, his critique diverges sharply from Homi Bhabha regarding the opportunities that instability opens for resistance. In his novel, the only spaces from which effective resistance is possible are Hong Kong and America.

Juan C. Laya takes a much different, though equally dark, approach in the novel *His Native Soil*. In this text a remote village successfully repels all attempts at Americanizing and modernizing its indigenous culture. Partha Chatterjee argues that there is often a cultural domain that remains impervious to the colonizer's attempts at transformation, allowing the natives to retain local spiritual values even though they have relinquished control of global political and economic institutions. Chatterjee posits that this carved out cultural sphere ultimately sows the seeds of a burgeoning nationalism. He writes:

[The colonized] construct their national identities within a different narrative. They create . . . a cultural domain -- marked by the distinctions of the material and the spiritual, the outer and the

inner. This inner domain of culture is . . . where the colonial state is not allowed entry, even as the outer domain remains surrendered to the colonial power. The rhetoric here . . . is of love, kinship, austerity, sacrifice. The rhetoric is in fact antimodernist, antiindividualist, even anticapitalist. (273)

Laya's text is a fictional illustration of this argument, except that there is no productive use of this retention of cultural values. In fact, this spiritual resilience promises only to perpetuate the cycles of poverty and superstition, not to fuel a quest for independence.

Laya's novel was published in 1940 and won the Commonwealth Literary Contest. Written while he was a government-sponsored student at the Indiana University studying for a Masters in English, Laya went on to become a prominent educator and editor of textbooks. His novel was noted for its "actuality of background, vividness of characterization and social significance" (qtd. in Lava 30) and was proclaimed a "distinct landmark in the history of Filipino fiction." (qtd. in Torres 56). This work earned him 2,000 pesos in prize money and celebrity as a respected writer. His facility with English, his attention to the nuances of life in an isolated Philippine village, and his rendering of the difficulty of moving between American and Philippine cultures drew high praise. In later years, however, the novel's appeal waned. Discussions with scholars in the Philippines today indicate that it is seldom read or taught, even in Philippine Literature in English courses.

The novel begins with the return of the protagonist Martin Romero to his hometown of Flores. He is repatriating after eleven years spent in America, years in which he worked in many different menial and degrading jobs in order to put himself through college at the University of Washington. His university degree and his time spent in America give him immediate status in the community, though the townspeople are also wary as other repatriates have not adjusted very well and have caused trouble in the past. Upon his return, Martin is told:

They are a queer lot, these repatriates. There's a little runt of a Pinoy who brought home a ferocious American wife – brought her to a nipa hut to eat salted fish. She could not stand his toothless relatives gaping at her and she refused to eat *saluyot* [okra]. A few days later she disappeared, ran away to Manila. Then there is the Pinoy who came home with an M.A. but he could not get a job, so he married a rich spinster. Now he is a gentleman of leisure like Attorney Murcia and other successful men. But even spinsters are getting very rare, *chico*. (8)

Soon after his homecoming, Martin speaks to his father about selling their land in order to provide the capital for a new business. Martin needs the support not just of his father but of his entire extended family. Owning land is their only security against the ravages of both nature and a cruelly unfair economic system so Martin's proposal is considered radical and risky. Finally, though, he convinces everyone to contribute and gives each a job in the Romero Mercantile

Exchange. Martin's idea is fairly simple. Traditionally, his family members would grow rice and then sell it to a local Chinese businessman; the merchant then transports the rice to the markets and sells it at a substantial profit. Martin's plan is to knock out the middleman by collecting the rice of his family and their neighbors and then transporting and selling the rice themselves. This all goes fairly smoothly until a flood destroys the rice crops, and Martin ventures into other businesses to make ends meet. By this point, he has alienated most of his family because of his imperial manner and does not consult with anyone for advice. The result is that the family quietly resists Martin's strictures and operates secretly behind his back. They stop working with any kind of diligence. They contribute to his isolation by not speaking to him, and by not speaking to each other when he is around. They basically allow Martin to continue running the business until it runs itself into the ground, but they don't allow themselves to be transformed in any way. He purchases a store at an exorbitant price and then is dogged by a debt that he cannot repay. Eventually he liquidates everything except for the store goods and moves the store to Flores, only to realize that the townspeople have no money to buy the mostly frivolous goods in the store. Eventually, Martin is forced to close down the business and repays all of his relatives with the remaining store goods. His father has died, and he decides to leave to start over again in a town where no one knows him. Martin recognizes his relatives' silent victory toward the end of the novel. He tells his cousin, Edad:

This place has beaten me. It has beaten America and me. Coca Cola and swing may come to tickle the young, but these only tickle. Edad. Deep below this frivolous crust is the mysterious obstinacy of the race. America will never get at it. It crumbles under her rude strength. It has crumbled under mine, Edad. (399)

Martin's family's defiance reaches a crisis not in the economic sphere but in the cultural sphere -- marking the very distinctions outlined by Partha Chatterjee. Martin's repatriation was incited by his father's illness. Don Venancio had been near death when his family called for a *santiguar* to be performed. This is a ritual ceremony designed to drive out unseen, evil spirits. After the ceremony, his father recovered, though was still frail from old age. Upon his return, Martin had insisted that any relapse would be treated by a doctor in the hospital though his father does not believe in modern Western medicine. When Martin leaves to liquidate the business and move the store to Flores, his family takes advantage of his absence and requests another *santiguar* for Don Venancio, who has become very weak again. Martin happens to arrive in the middle of the treatment, which involves physically beating the father in order to drive out the evil spirits. Martin is incensed and feels utterly betrayed as he knows they waited for his absence to plan the ceremony. It is, at this point, that he realizes that he actually has no power in the family and asserts only nominal authority. His failure is total.

Still, Laya makes it clear that Martin's failure is not necessarily a victory for his family. They have resisted Martin's version of American assimilation, only to be left in the confining entrapments of a feudal economy. Their ultimate betrayal of Martin and all he represents, allowing a witch doctor to perform a sacred ritual, leaves the old gentleman beaten, further weakened, and soon dead. America and Martin may not have beaten them, but it is not at all clear that they are not beaten by other forces, including their self-perpetuating poverty and their own superstitions. Their willful freedom in the straightjacket of poverty is reflected in the novel in the wild rantings of an insane woman who lives in the village, chained by her sisters in a garret. With her shackled body and her haunted and irreverent voice, she poignantly reflects the village's stubborn assertion of a freedom that leaves them trapped. The portrait of the insane woman, her schizophrenic moods, her passionate and willful shrieks that cannot unlock the chains, is the portrait of the Philippines that emerges in this novel.

Laya writes:

The insane woman was laughing now—shrieks of laughter that seemed sharp and brittle. The noise of festivity seemed to calm down suddenly, while her laughter rang out. She would weep soon. Her laughter always ended in weeping when it became too much to remain laughter any longer and caught at her throat and choked her, and she would stare blankly and break down on her hands, her hair streaming wildly in clotted strings. And she would

soon weep in the garret where she lived, in the darkness. But just now she was laughing in splintered shrieks. (371)

Laya's novel suggests that, like the shrieks of the mad woman, Philippine culture is splintered in spite of such a potent native resistance to Americanization. Still, it is Paz Marquez Benitez who paints the darkest picture of the three authors in her portrayal of a Philippines under American rule, for in her story it is the protagonist whose very soul is splintered. Whereas in *The Filipino Rebel and His Native Soil*, the impact of American imperialism is clearly delineated and manifests itself in obvious ways, in "Dead Stars" the oppression is ubiquitous and amorphous, and therefore impossible to resist. This movement in depictions of power relations in the novels to the short story from obvious to subtle exertions of power mirrors the historical changes in power relations that Foucault traces in *Discipline and Punish*. He writes that "[t]raditionally power was what was seen, what was shown and what was manifested and, paradoxically, found the principle of its force in the movement by which it deployed that force. Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility." (187) For Foucault, this change in the way power was deployed removed the possibility of effective resistance as there ceased to be a space outside of the disciplinary regime from which to launch dissent. Similarly for Benitez, the nature of the colonial influence, its utter invisibility, removes the possibility of any resistance.

Paz Marquez Benitez is today considered a pioneer in the writing of literature in English in the Philippines. Her work received wide critical acclaim

when she began writing fiction and essays in the early 1920's, and her stories are still frequently anthologized. Paz Marquez Benitez also taught the first creative writing class at the University of the Philippines, and was a respected editor. As a writer, editor and teacher, Paz Marquez Benitez is a foundational figure in the study of Philippine literature in English. Born in 1894, she was part of that very first generation of students who came of age entirely under American tutelage and who witnessed the radical shifts in culture that were inevitable after American occupation. In an interview, she recalled that "all of her teachers were American . . . except for one." (*The Writer and His Milieu* 5)

It is not, then, surprising that "Dead Stars," her most famous story, can be read as a meditation on the American colonization of the Philippines and its impact on Filipino culture. Though most often analyzed as a story of failed romance and a lamentation on middle-aged disillusionment (Joaquin 121), it also can be understood as a pointed critique of the quiet devastation wrought on the Filipino psyche by the insidious pressures of colonial hegemony.

"Dead Stars" is structured in three sections and told mainly from the point of view of Alfredo Salazar, a young attorney from a respectable family. For four years he has been engaged to Esperanza, a woman from a similar family background; unfortunately, his passion for her was regrettably short-lived, though not brief enough to prevent an engagement; when "Dead Stars" opens, their marriage is fast approaching. Shortly before this impending wedlock, he meets Julia Salas, the young, vibrant niece of his neighbor Judge del Valle. She is

unaware that he is engaged and seems to enjoy his frequent visits over a period of about six weeks. Eventually, however, she finds out about Esperanza, who has likewise found out about her. Alfredo is forced to recognize his fate which is that he cannot leave Esperanza and face the social condemnation for himself and humiliation for Esperanza that this betrayal would certainly incite. He does not feel that he has a choice, and marries Esperanza, learning to live with the occasional bouts of yearning and regret. Years later, he visits Julia's town on legal business and sets out to find her home. Julia sees him on the street in front of her home and welcomes him. He has been in love with her, or at least her memory, for years; still, during their brief meeting, he realizes that whatever feeling she inspired is gone, that something is missing in her or in him that has quashed that long-burning flame. He returns home suddenly aware that this passion he has secretly nurtured is like "the light of dead stars, long extinguished, yet seemingly still in their appointed places in the heavens." (12)

The tone of the story is melancholic, and it is easy to see why most critics have focused on the theme of romantic disillusionment, at the expense of a more political reading. Still, there is strong textual evidence that a political allegory lies just below the surface. Alfredo is strongly identified as a young man who is straddling the traditional, Spanish-influenced, Filipino culture and the new, Americanized Philippines. Onofre D. Corpuz compares the American and Spanish culture in the Philippines. He argues that the American "outlook is thoroughly secular, its methods are technological rather than spiritual, and its

personnel are trained technicians and professional administrators rather than pious laymen and ecclesiastics.” (4) Alfredo’s family ties and his past are clearly rooted in the Spanish mestizo tradition, but his future as a young lawyer in the colonial judicial system lies with the Americans. Francisco Araneta describes the generational chasm among the educated classes caused by the American colonization:

The break from Spanish meant the segregation of the new generation from the ones that immediately preceded them. It was a break not only from the past of Mabini and Del Pilar [revolutionary heroes], but a cleavage even between the Spanish speaking father, and the boy who grew up reading Horatio Alger. The thinking men who wrote in Spanish could exercise little influence on the boys that would form the intelligentsia. (13)

While Alfredo is described as torn between these two cultures. Esperanza, the woman to whom his future is inextricably tied, is described with language reminiscent of the Americans. For example, she is “Esperanza the efficient, the literal-minded, the intensely acquisitive” (9); she is “always positive” (10). These qualities were often associated with the Americans and were used as evidence by Americans of their cultural superiority. American efficiency was juxtaposed to Filipino laziness, American rationality held in contrast to Filipino superstition and religious fanaticism, American acquisitiveness posited against Filipino nonchalance and fatalism. Alfredo’s commitment to Esperanza is a transition to a

full alignment with the values she represents. Julia, in stark contrast, is more vital, spontaneous, and less grounded. If Alfredo is straddling the new American and the traditional Filipino cultures, and Esperanza is firmly aligned with the powerful Americans, then Julia is nostalgically associated with an unfettered Philippines, with the short-lived independent Philippines. As Angus Fletcher notes in *Allegory*, there is a long tradition in allegorical tales of setting up this kind of sharp opposition, what he calls “dualism in its theological sense, where it implies the radical opposition of two independent, mutually irreducible, mutually antagonistic substances.” (222) In her political allegory, Benitez positions Esperanza and Julia in such a polarized relationship.

The descriptions of Alfredo’s meetings with Julia are characterized by dreamy language, a romantic intensity, and a youthful vibrancy missing in the rest of the story. Describing their weekly meetings at Judge del Valle’s house, Benitez writes:

It was so easy to forget up there, away from the prying eyes of the world, so easy and so poignantly sweet. The beloved woman, he standing close to her, the shadows around, enfolding.

Alfredo says to Julia,

“Down there . . . the road is too broad, too trodden by feet, too barren of mystery.”

Julia offers escape from the oppressive world represented by Esperanza. Her last name, “Salas,” suggests home, but this is a home that is imaginary and

can only offer temporary solace. The conflict between these two cultural forces, the reality of a colonial regime and the nostalgia for independence that never really took, is a conflict that especially affected Benitez's generation and that of her parents. In her evocation of Alfredo's struggle to reconcile his passion for Julia and his duty to Esperanza, Benitez traces his sense of a nameless but ubiquitous oppression, his fleeting desire for a retreat into a nostalgic and illusory free space, his recognition of what his life with Esperanza will be like, and his ultimate capitulation to the passive obedience required of a colonial citizen. In this resignation, he reminds himself of "[t]he climber of mountains who has known the back-break, the lonesomeness, and the chill, [who] finds a certain restfulness in level paths made easy to his feet. He looks up sometimes from the valley where settles the dusk of evening, but he knows he must not heed the radiant beckoning. Maybe, in time, he would cease even to look up."

Alfredo's submission is foreshadowed in the opening lines of the story when he is introduced as alienated from both his past and his future and passively open to the penetration of a pressure that is powerful and yet as diffuse as the air coming through his window. Benitez writes,

Through the open window the air-steeped outdoors passed into his room, quietly enveloping him, stealing into his very thought.

Esperanza, Julia, the sorry mess he had made of life, the years to come even now beginning to weigh down, to crush—they lost their concreteness, diffused into formless melancholy. (3)

The melancholic despair that permeates the story is evident here. It is rooted in a sense that the both the past and the future are lost. Sitting alone in his room, Alfredo is trapped, both by external forces and his intense internalization of an oppression from the outside that is "stealing into his very thought." The narration is often focused through Alfredo's consciousness and this sensation of being enveloped occurs over and over again throughout the story. Alfredo is consistently unable to offer any resistance to this suffocation, except in his relationship with Julia which is, at once, distinguished by a sense of freedom and by a sense of doom. In other words, like many illicit affairs, this carved out space is not a viable space and collapses at its first brush with the outside world.

This sense of unviability and collapse, then, marks each of the texts under consideration. What links these texts, aside from being noteworthy examples of early colonial fiction, is their deep foreboding about where the American colonization has left the Philippines and the Filipinos. Kalaw suggests one must leave the Philippines in order to maintain a life with dignity; Laya portrays a resistance that is as forceful as it is futile, while Benitez reveals the cost of capitulation as an utterly attenuated subjectivity. The same issues that engage postcolonial theorists today regarding how a colonized people cope with imperialist hegemony were also being explored by these early twentieth-century writers. And like the current debates, their texts reveal strong differences as to whether resistance is at all possible and, if it is, how it operates and to what effect. There is, however, agreement that "benevolent assimilation" is an inherent

contradiction and each writer unveils the discrepancies between the situation on the ground and the American rhetoric of the classroom. They expose the hypocrisy of an innocent and exceptional America, the promise of racial equality and the work ethic, and the myth of self-reliance.

It is easy to see why America would appear as neither innocent nor exceptional in these texts. In *His Native Soil*, Laya suggests that among the most painful experiences of Martin's stay in America was his realization that this promised land was nothing like what had been promised. Additionally, however, by having Martin adopt such an American perspective, Laya shows that there is nothing exceptional in America's view of Filipinos, that they treat the native people with the same kind of contempt experienced by all colonized peoples. In Martin, the reader sees a bitter disillusionment with American ideals, but also the stranglehold a belief in American superiority still has on him. Martin returns from America disaffected by his experience there, eager to escape the drudgery of the work offered to Filipinos in America, and bitter about the alienation caused by virulent racism. He no longer sees America as a land of opportunity and a land open to all regardless of race, creed, or color. He knows that his race and color have shaped his experience into one of unrelenting difficulty, and it is with relief, if some trepidation, that he returns to the Philippines. Still, in spite of the hypocrisy that he has now experienced first-hand on American soil, he maintains a firm belief in American supremacy and adopts a colonial manner when dealing

with his relatives. Martin disparagingly refers to the village in a conversation with his father, a respected elder in the community:

Look what chance for culture the people have. Not even a movie house! No lending library. Newspapers arrive one day late. Everything culturally dead, people apathetic to change. Don't look so forlorn. Tatang. Why, before I know it, I may get into your habits of thinking and be like the other useless young men around here – afraid to do anything that the old do not think respectable. (129)

Frantz Fanon comments on this kind of alienation in the colonial context:

The experience of colonial domination shows that, in the effort to perpetuate exploitation, the colonizer not only creates a system to repress the cultural life of the colonized people; he also provokes and develops the cultural alienation of a part of the population, either by so-called assimilation of indigenous people, or by creating a social gap between the indigenous elites and the popular masses. As a result of this process of dividing or of deepening the divisions in the society, it happens that a considerable part of the population, notably the urban peasant *petite bourgeoisie*, assimilates the colonizer's mentality, considers itself culturally superior to its own people and ignores or looks down upon their cultural values. (57)

Martin's blind faith in his own superior methods, particularly those learned in his business courses at the University of Washington, prevents him from taking any account of local conditions, both economic and cultural. Shortly after his return to Flores, he says about his family and neighbors, "Sometimes it was best not to reason with them; he would merely start doing what he thought best to do and overrule objections with a stubbornness harder than their set notions" (65). This remains his attitude throughout the novel and is his undoing. Though his family never confronts him outright, in his isolation he doesn't realize that they challenge him behind his back, recognize his mistakes, and quietly withdraw their support; it is this passive resistance which ultimately wins out. Laya clearly shows how an ideal forced on an unwilling people, even in the guise of real benevolence, is doomed when no attention is paid to local context. Martin has assimilated a belief in American capitalism and its strategies but also a willful disregard for the Filipino perspective. His desire at the end of the novel to go where no one knows him is understandable as he has created a kind of no-man's land for himself in his own community. Any sense of belonging will have to start from scratch.

Martin's experience in America is only alluded to indirectly in the novel, but it is clear that for both himself and for the other boys from Flores who left with him at the behest of unscrupulous labor brokers, it was a an uphill struggle. Opportunities for Filipinos were mainly limited to migrant farm work, and the chances to move beyond this debilitating and usurious world were slim. Martin's

successful completion of a university degree comes at the cost of losing touch with many of his friends and relatives who never leave the fields. He describes that world in a speech to the town of Flores:

America is a land of plenty, but it is also a brutal place. Many Filipinos there have tried to fit themselves in that huge scheme—and found a foul place to rot in. If they are weak and bewildered, they are soon stinking comfortably—a hopeless life of seasonal work and seasonal leisure, with time to idle about in the street corners of San Francisco and drink and gamble or run around like common bums. (115)

Martin's bitterness runs even deeper, though, because, in spite of all of these hardships, he was able to get an education, something the Americans had been offering as the road to opportunity since the beginning of the colonization. The myths concerning racial tolerance and bountiful opportunity founder when Martin reaches American soil, but the promises surrounding education dissipate when he reaches the Philippines.

The novel suggests two reasons why education leads to a dead end in the Philippines. The first is that the only jobs available, and these are few and far between, are through the civil service. These positions are acquired through government exams which are very competitive, though the jobs are not challenging or well paid. When Martin's father presses him to get this respectable employment, Martin responds:

Tatang, I can't stand typewriting all day in an office. I won't be ordered about anymore. For ten years I've eaten my heart out seeing men driven about like cattle. Years of that—no time for my own self. And here, clerical job—that's all the opening there is in the government service. In Manila I saw two former classmates of mine. They are still getting sixty pesos a month as slaves. (134-5)

And even if jobs were available to university graduates, and in spite of American indoctrination concerning the value of the work ethic, Martin is continually encouraged to take advantage of his new status in order not to work. Work is still considered a sign of poverty, and, therefore, is looked down upon by the community. Martin is discouraged by his friends and relatives from ever engaging in anything resembling labor so as not to lose his position in the community. For example, when he offers to drive the horse and carriage that is taking him home for the first time, his uncle exclaims, "My son, you must not do that! The people will stare at you! And what would your father say? You will disgrace yourself—you a graduate from America. Give me the reins, son, please!"(17) And during that carriage ride, the first piece of advice he gets is to assert his exalted position, marry a rich spinster, and live the life of a "gentlemen of leisure." (8) Martin's idea to start a business of his own, thereby avoiding both clerical work and spinsters, is not considered entrepreneurial, but distasteful. The Chinese merchants, who traditionally acted as the brokers for the farmers have always been treated with both jealousy and disdain. Their merchandising, though

necessary, is considered vulgar and certainly not suitable for a university graduate. As Laya writes, "To them, as to Don Venancio [Martin's father], merchants were essentially dishonest and treacherous." (133)

Martin returns home convinced otherwise and stubbornly proceeds to impose his will on those around him. There are many things about Flores that Martin now sees as a repatriate, through a lens shaped by his experiences in America. As noted, though critical of his own experience in the United States, he still views his village with condescension and dismay. The novel, though narrated in a third-person voice, is largely focalized through Martin's consciousness which constantly notices the unsanitary conditions, the pervasive corruption, the exploitative labor conditions, the plethora of superstitions, and the patriarchal oppression. What Martin doesn't bother to notice is the intricate kinship network that does provide a safety net for his family, the traditions that have tied the community together for many years during feast and famine, the beauty of his brother's and his father's improvised poetry, and the wisdom that his elders have gleaned from life experience and common sense. The novel recognizes both that Martin is objecting to real concerns, to conditions that will continue to exploit the poverty-stricken villagers, and that his wholesale condemnation is unwise spiritually and practically.

Through Martin, Laya describes both the horrific experiences of Filipinos in America and, simultaneously, by his adoption of it, the imperial attitude typical of Americans in the Philippines. In both instances, the United States is portrayed

with a brutality that was certainly not included in its self-presentation in the colonial classroom. This is an empire that is neither innocent nor exceptional. Paz Marquez Benitez also critiques this colonial attitude in "Dead Stars" and also uses a Filipino character to do so.

As noted, in "Dead Stars" it is Esperanza who represents the American sensibility and through the contrast between Alfredo's relationship with her and with her rival Julia, Benitez is able to show the dark edges of the colonial perspective. Esperanza represents what the Americans were offering the Filipinos, and the arc of the story suggests what an cold and unsavory offering that was.

Esperanza's rigidity is indicated in her response to Alfredo's sudden disappearance on Sundays, a day they usually spent together. Now, of course, he is spending those afternoons with Julia. When she asks him about it, he answers that he has been working and occasionally visiting with Judge del Valle (not mentioning the Judge's enticing sister-in-law, of course). In response, Esperanza

dropped the topic. [She] was not prone to indulge in unprovoked jealousies. She was a believer in the regenerative virtue of institutions, in their power to regulate feeling as well as conduct. If a man were married, why, of course, he loved his wife; if he were engaged, he could not possibly love another woman. (5)

Of course, this belief in institutions profoundly shaped American colonial policy. Their method of transforming Filipino culture, and regulating "feeling as well as

conduct.” was to establish various types of institutions, primarily educational, judicial, and political. Though of course that process is dynamic, there is a certain rigidity and staticity inherent to any institution. Their purpose is to reign in irregularity and promote uniformity, a mission that Esperanza seems to share at a more local level. Onofre Corpus describes the American model, which Esperanza represents, in detail:

The basic innovation introduced by the Americans in this respect was the establishment of what Max Weber calls ‘rational bureaucracy’ --- that is, government as a social apparatus deliberately and rationally used to implement public policies. The distinct outlook of government under this regime was secular and technological, which implied a style of management that emphasized rational and impersonal efficiency in governmental behaviours or transactions. . . . In contrast to the almost feudalistic society during most of the Spanish occupation, Filipino society in the American period became what we now call modern. (11)

In contrast to Esperanza’s bland inflexibility and her associations with efficiency and the virtues of institutions, Julia is described as having a “tantalizing charm . . . of naturalness, of an alert vitality of mind and body, of a thoughtful, sunny temper, and of a piquant perverseness which is sauce to charm.” (6) This is the most vivid description of Julia that is offered in the story. Her vitality is mentioned often, but it seems what is most appealing about her is that she is not

Esperanza and not part of the “real” world. Alfredo describes being with her as an experience of being “Elsewhere” (7) and a time when “he lived only in the present . . . with such a willful shutting out of fact as astounded him in his calmer moments.” (6) Julia offers escape from his grim reality. Alfredo is both saddened and relieved when Julia says she is returning to her parents’ home. He has been unable to stop seeing Julia and unable to break his tie to Esperanza and, therefore, passively resigns himself to her departure.

This atmosphere of isolation and dreamy escape ends abruptly in the second section of the story, which takes place in a far more public space. This part of the story opens with Alfredo standing in the town square watching a religious procession, the scene invoking all of the pageantry and deep ritualism associated with Filipino Catholicism. Benitez writes:

Into the quickly deepening twilight, the voice of the biggest of the church bells kept ringing its insistent summons. Flocking came the devout with their long wax candles, young women in vivid apparel (for this was Holy Thursday and the Lord was still alive). . . . Soon a double row of lights emerged from the church and uncoiled down the length of the street like a huge jeweled band studded with glittering clusters where the saints’ platforms were. Above measured music rose the untutored voices of the choir, steeped in incense and the acrid fumes of burning wax. (8)

The strong sense of community and passion abruptly ends when Esperanza enters the picture:

The sight of Esperanza and her mother sedately pacing behind Our Lady of Sorrows suddenly destroyed the illusion of continuity and broke up those lines of light into component individuals.

Esperanza stiffened self-consciously, tried to look unaware, and could not. (8)

This effect that Esperanza has on Alfredo's perception, the splitting into fragments of something continuous, is again interesting in light of its strong association with another American tenet, the foundational belief in the individual. The Americans had worked very hard in the Philippines to promote support for individual endeavors and to break down the strong communal and religious ties that Americans felt fostered superstition, further entrenched poverty and inhibited progress in the Philippines. Esperanza's effect on the scene is both alienating and awkward, not unlike the Americans' presence in the Philippines.

Not surprisingly, when Alfredo unexpectedly sees Julia as well in the procession, her image evokes a very different response: "Suddenly, Alfredo's slow blood began to beat violently, irregularly. A girl was coming down the line—a girl that was striking, and vividly alive, the woman that could cause violent commotion in his heart, yet had no place in the completed ordering of his life." Once again, Julia is associated with a vitality in stark contrast to

Esperanza's self-consciousness, and with a passion that is unsustainable in the "completed ordering of his life."

Alfredo's chronic passivity and his sense that his future is not really in his hands are both evident in his last conversation with Julia before marrying Esperanza. He explains obliquely that while he does not want to marry Esperanza, he must. When Julia challenges whether he sure this is what he should do, Alfredo responds with his usual allusion to the force of external pressures. He says to her, "[T]here is a point where a thing escapes us and rushes downward of its own weight, dragging us along. Then it is foolish to ask whether one will or will not, because it no longer depends on him." (9) Alfredo's sense of self is utterly dissipated as he begins to imagine his life with "Esperanza waiting, Esperanza no longer young, Esperanza the efficient, the literal-minded, the intensely acquisitive." (9)

This meeting with Julia is followed immediately by a confrontation with Esperanza. His discussion with her centers around a servant of Esperanza's family who has run off with a man to whom she is not married; though, of course, the subtext of this conversation is Alfredo's relationship with Julia. Esperanza expresses her moral outrage and sense of betrayal to which Alfredo is, at best, indifferent. Esperanza's strong belief in her own moral superiority and the absoluteness with which she expresses herself carry colonial overtones. She expects both loyalty and a sense of indebtedness from her servants much like the Americans expected both loyalty and gratitude from the Filipinos. Alfredo

comments, "You are very positive about her badness" (10) and then thinks to himself. "Esperanza was always positive."(10)

Like Juan C. Laya, Benitez uses a Filipino character to illuminate American characteristics and their impact on the local culture. Maximo Kalaw, in contrast, incorporates American characters into his novel and sets up an opposition between the Americans and Filipinos with Juanito as the bridge between them. In doing so, Kalaw illuminates how complex the relations were between the colonizer and the colonized, at least in the upper echelons of Filipino society. Juanito has the most interaction with the colonial regime, and it is through him that Kalaw most vividly explores the inherent deception and consequent corruption in a political community that espouses "American" values in a colonial context. Juanito has participated in a game that cannot be won, and the corrosion of his moral fiber is inevitable. Juanito personifies the fracture between a political system, effectually under military domain, that is only marginally representative and a political rhetoric that is forever espousing liberty and democratic principles, even in a colonial setting. H.W. Brands comments on this aspect of American-Filipino relations in his study of the American colonization of the Philippines:

That the elites spoke the language of Filipino nationalism while relying on the U.S., and that American leaders espoused democracy for Filipinos even as Washington reinforced rule by the

elites, made for a tangled relationship between the two countries and the two peoples. (vii)

Don Pedro, who has remained interested but utterly aloof, offers a running critique of that tangled web. His noble stance is always implicitly or explicitly held in contrast to Juanito's expedient concessions. Kalaw's portrayal of Josefa suggests that it is possible to maintain integrity while still taking advantage of what America has to offer. It remains important, though, that it was on American soil that she was able to achieve success. The novel is very pessimistic about whether her intellectual and moral maturity would ever have been nurtured in the colonial Philippines.

The colonial system, and its inherent degradation, is depicted most clearly through Juanito's political career, but the rhetoric of the American government is revealed more subtly in the encounters between the main characters and the various American characters who populate the novel. Except for the one soldier who captures Juanito, they are an admirable group who mean well, treat the Filipinos with respect, and believe their mission is noble. So while the American government's ruthless war and inept government seem to do nothing but wreak havoc on the Philippines, individual interactions with Americans are nearly always positive. The soldiers are noteworthy for not pillaging any of the towns they occupy; instead, most often, they immediately begin working to improve the town through effective sanitation measures and the establishment of schools. Governor Taft is described as a straight-forward man, in plain dress, with a warm

smile and an open manner. Juanito is said to have “admire[d] the character of the first American administrators who came to govern the country.” (98) Don Pedro in his visit to America after his exile finds that “individually Americans practiced the square deal and endeavored to be fair.” (112) Josefa’s American teachers are described as “very kind and immensely interested in their students.” (116) After her long stay in the United States, she declares that “Americans are a just and liberty-loving people. It is only a question of telling them the facts.” (253). In this consistent portrayal of Americans who were not colonial ogres and who do seem to embody “American” values, Kalaw is able to suggest the complicated nature of the colonial enterprise. The inconsistency between a liberty-loving people and their colonial regime, between a representative government that seems to only represent the interests of the colonial power, between “practicing the square deal” and the boondoggle of the Paris Treaty is at the heart of why Juanito is so completely compromised. He believes the rhetoric and the government are aligned; he believes he is still a Philippine patriot serving the people. He does not understand that this fracture is fatal.

It is Don Pedro who will illuminate this for him by underscoring the capitalist motivations behind the colonization. Don Pedro understands that no matter how much the government talks about democratic principles, a colony is a colony, thereby exploding the American myth of racial equality and economic opportunity on Philippine soil. A colony is not governed by democratic principles and was not founded for the good of the Philippine people. In Don Pedro’s view,

the drive to colonize and to maintain a colony is largely economic and the power exercised is essentially dictatorial. He speaks with passion when he says:

Imperialistic propagandists have deadened our ears with the story that America has come to our country not to exploit us or to enslave us, but to uplift, to civilize, and to train us in the art of self-government. In servile imitation of their masters many of our political leaders have echoed such pronouncements, thereby helping to perpetrate America's absolute control over the Philippines. We have been told that we cannot be given our coveted independence because such an altruistic mission has not been as yet realized.

Now that a few American industries find a strong rival in our products. lo! Almost a majority of the American Senate have found, and soon probably the entire Congress will find, that the time has come for Philippine independence. Let us not dispute this fact. America may be a great nation, but her government came here chiefly for economic gains, and it will leave us only when American industries out of rivalry prefer to see us free rather than a part of America. (201)

Don Pedro's analysis is remarkably similar to that of Aime Cesaire's in *Discourse on Colonialism*, written some forty-two years later:

[T]he essential thing here is to see clearly, to think clearly -- that is, dangerously -- and to answer clearly the innocent first question: what, fundamentally, is colonization? To agree on what it is not: neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease and tyranny, nor a project undertaken for the greater glory of God, nor an attempt to extend the rule of law. To admit once and for all, without flinching at the consequences, that the decisive actors here are the adventurer and the pirate, the wholesale grocer and the ship owner, the gold digger and the merchant, appetite and force. (173)

For all of Don Pedro's astute and prescient analysis, however, he offers no solutions to those who live in the Philippines, to those who are trying to work their way through the colonial system. Exile is obviously not an option for most people. Don Pedro is supported in his noble ideals by his vast property holdings in Manila that have increased in value during the American regime. He is squarely posited as the hero in the novel, but his wisdom and dignity don't go very far given that he resides in Hong Kong. His analysis is astute, but he offers no way out except his own abject refusal to participate.

While Kalaw lays bare the capitalist motivations behind the colonization, Laya explores the impact of capitalism on local culture. *His Native Soil* primarily focuses on Martin's attempt and failure at cultural transformation through the mechanism of a free market ideology. He thinks if he can establish a competitive,

efficient enterprise, then everything else will fall into place. In the first days of the business, in the blush of fresh enthusiasm,

Martin worked hard like the rest, for he wanted to give an example of just what he expected of everybody. There was nothing like the first few days to teach everybody lessons in efficiency. Show them how to move, how to work. Efficiency, efficiency! He would tolerate no dawdling. He was determined to have a smooth-working organization at any cost. (211)

What is most revealing about this passage, which is focused through Martin's voice, is the imperial attitude that Martin assumes towards his employees, who are also his family. The voice is certainly not very far away from a colonial administrator's voice in its assumptions about the natives' inherent laziness and the need to "show them how to move." Martin deliberately isolates himself because he fears that any kind of emotional connection will undermine his authority, which he feels he must maintain at all costs. He says at one point, "I have no relatives among those who work in the company. I recognize none." (242-3) This is in spite of the fact that they are all his relatives and have all invested their own money to set up the business. Laya writes, "Martin was determined to impress everybody with the importance and the sternness of his position and the seriousness of the job of making money. It was his aim to discourage familiarity as much as possible." (205)

This behavior is considered very strange by his family members who are operating under very different assumptions, not having attended the University of Washington business school. They recognize and respect a close kinship network which is the very foundation of their societal relations. They grant Martin this unbridled power for a while, awed somewhat by his manner and impressed by his education. Eventually, though, they both resent his total disregard for their input and recognize that he is not making astute business decisions.

His lack of consideration for the local context is not limited to social mores. For example, he buys a store from a disreputable character without fully investigating the store, its inventory, and the business it does. Martin's aunt, Tia Sebia, who is an excellent businesswoman, hears through her extensive connections that Martin has been duped. Of course, he never bothered to consult her even though she ran her own store in Flores for many years. Then Martin, after overpaying for the store, decides to move it from a central market village to his own village. Again, he doesn't consult his family who could have told him that people were not accustomed to purchasing such things in town and that most of Flores could not afford the goods in the store. After the flood destroyed the rice crops, most villagers could barely manage to get enough to eat. Martin, though, is so busy trying to do everything himself and so busy not listening to his family, that he doesn't even realize what desperate straits his neighbors are in. The store, of course, goes bankrupt and Martin is forced to shut down the Romero Mercantile Exchange, admitting abject failure.

Martin represents a kind of rampant individualism, a self-reliance run amok that is completely out of sync with Filipino culture. His utter disregard for his relatives and their viewpoints, a notion encouraged by Emerson in "Self-Reliance", leads to Martin's ruin. Martin's absorption of an American tenet proves not just useless but destructive in the Philippine context. In an interesting twist, however, it is the very lack of any kind of self-reliance that leads to Alfredo's downfall in "Dead Stars." Where Martin exercises a willful neglect of society's expectations, Alfredo has no will at all and is utterly acquiescent to his community's demands. Benitez suggests that his lack of will is a result of the amorphous oppression personified by Esperanza. The Americans may teach self-reliance, but they create an atmosphere in which it could never survive. This becomes abundantly clear in the last part of "Dead Stars" when Alfredo visits Julia Salas' town eight years after his marriage to Esperanza. Through a third-person focalized narration, the reader learns that

He was not unhappy in his marriage. He felt no rebellion: only the calm of capitulation to what he recognized as irresistible forces of circumstance and of character. His life had simply ordered itself; no more struggles, no more stirring up of emotions that got a man nowhere. (11)

Interestingly, he practices a kind of retreat, but the freedom he discovers is very circumscribed because not viable in any kind of social space, not unlike his

escape to Julia Salas many years before. For him now utter alienation is a kind of solace. Benitez writes:

The essential himself, the himself that had its being in the core of his thought, would, he reflected, always be free and alone. When claims encroached too insistently . . . he retreated into the inner fastness, and from that vantage he saw things and people around him as remote and alien, as incidents that did not matter. (11)

Though Alfredo's retreat is a kind of freedom in oppressive circumstances, it seems more self-annihilating than self-preserving. This extreme disengagement is a defensive acknowledgement that his will is impotent. Both "things and people" are lost to him because his submission has been so total.

Given this corrosion of his soul, it is not surprising that Julia no longer matters to him, though he does not discover that she too has become part of what is "remote and alien" until he sees her again. He has nursed an affection for her for many years without realizing that his submission to those external, read colonial, pressures associated with Esperanza required also a relinquishment of the passion and freedom of Julia Salas. The latter is not sustainable in the ordered and regulated world of the former. When he realizes after their meeting that "he had been seeing the light of dead stars," he also realizes that a world untouched by Esperanza, a world untouched by the Americans, is forever lost. Benitez's final words of the story are a lamentation for this loss:

An immense sadness as of loss invaded his spirit, a vast homesickness for some immutable refuge of the heart far away where gardens bloom again, and where live on in unchanging freshness, the dear, dead loves of vanished youth. (12)

The heavy sense of nostalgia that lingers after reading “Dead Stars” is also present in *The Filipino Rebel* and *His Native Soil*. In *The Filipino Rebel*, it is for the nobility and honor of men like Don Pedro. In *His Native Soil*, it is for the simplicity and honesty of men like Martin Romero’s father. Paz Marquez Benitez, Maximo Kalaw, and Juan C. Laya, all of whom were personally successful under the colonial regime, did not see the colonization itself as a success. All of these writers seem to long for something that never really existed, a Philippines unfettered by any colonial influence. The dark hypocrisies of colonialism, unacknowledged in the rhetoric of the American administration, are laid bare in their fiction.

However, what distinguishes each of these works is as interesting as what links them. Each writer has focused on a different aspect of the colonization and an analysis of this fiction thus opens up many different aspects of the colonial experience. The power relations between colonizer and colonized operate differently in each work and illustrate just how complicated the post-colonial dynamic is. In addition, in close readings of their texts, it becomes clear that while all three texts interrogate the colonial power dynamic and the American myths bequeathed by colonial educators, each portrays a different Philippines

under siege. The only link is the deep pessimism each expresses about the fate of the Philippines under American dominion. This is especially evident when one realizes that to the extent later theorists' works are evoked, like those of Bhabha and Chatterjee, it is without their celebration of nativist efforts at resistance.

That said, the argument of this study is that these writers did, in fact, use their literature as an effective tool of resistance. In voicing their protest, and writing back to the American tradition they inherited, they were able to clear a space for effective dissent that is still relevant today, particularly in light of American cultural hegemony throughout the world. Of course, their fiction did not change the course of American - Filipino relations, or right the imbalance between them, but their work does illustrate that this is a relationship and that the cultural critiques go both ways.

Philippine literature in English, both the early works considered in this study and the later works for which these were the foundation, are not just about the tortured relationship between America and the Philippines, and there is much more that could be said, and hopefully will be said in future studies. There is a dearth of critical literature in this area and many contributions still to be made. The admittedly narrow focus of this study is an attempt to tease out the dialogue among Filipino writers regarding the colonization and the broader dialogue among American writers, American colonial educators and these Filipino writers regarding how America is imagined in their work.

CONCLUSION

Take up the White Man's burden.
 To you who thus succeed
 In civilizing savage hordes,
 They owe a debt indeed;
 Concessions, pensions, salaries,
 And privilege and right—
 With outstretched hands you raised to bless
 Grab everything in sight.

Take up the White Man's burden.
 And if you write in verse,
 Flatter your nation's vices
 And strive to make them worse
 Then learn that if with pious words
 You ornament each phrase,
 In a world of canting hypocrites,
 This kind of business pays.

(Stanza #'s 6 & 7, Ernest Howard Crosby, "The Real White Man's Burden")

The excerpt from the poem above was written by Ernest Howard Crosby, also a member with Mark Twain, W.E.B. Du Bois, and William James of the Anti-Imperialist League. This kind of cynicism is the other side of the nostalgic coin that the Anti-Imperialists held onto so dearly. Though they revered what they believed were the traditions of an honorable America, they were also extremely bitter and discouraged about America's fate in the twentieth century. If the Anti-Imperialists were not successful in turning back the clock and stemming the tide to global power, at least they were able to take a long, hard look at American culture and what actually constituted the American dream.

For Twain, especially after his extensive travels abroad, America was distinguished by its "clean hands" and its utter lack of interest in the greedy land

struggles across the Asian and African continents. He saw first-hand the inherent exploitation in these colonial systems and was proud that heretofore America had had no part in this wholesale degradation (at least not on foreign soil). American innocence and exceptionalism were threatened by the colonization of the Philippines, as it had all of the earmarks of European rapacity; the consequent shift in paradigm from defining America against Europe to defining America against the Philippines was a radical redefinition and one unwelcomed by the Anti-Imperialists.

Interestingly, the American educators reverted back to the traditional definition in their presentation of American innocence and exceptionalism. In utilizing *The Alhambra* to emphasize the distinction between colonizers, America made every effort to define itself against the Spanish legacy of greed and corruption. This does not mean that the defining of America against the native population was undermined; the entire colonial project reinforced that particular definition. In effect, in the image of America presented to Filipino students, colonial educators were having it both ways. They presented an America that positioned itself against a “savage” Philippines *and* an avaricious Spain. In this ideal America, the United States remains sovereign, innocent, and exceptional.

It is this image of colonial power that is exploded by Maximo Kalaw in *The Filipino Rebel*. In his novel, America is portrayed as brutally quashing a revolution for freedom, installing a political system that is inherently hypocritical and corrupt, and insidiously drawing the native elite into that web of deceit. In

his text, it is the mestizo Don Pedro, very much the Spanish gentleman, who emerges as an exceptional character and who maintains his own innocence through exile. America is no longer innocent, and if still defined against Spain, it certainly pales in the comparison.

W.E.B. Du Bois would probably not have argued with Kalaw's portrayal. In *The Souls of Black Folk* and in his anti-imperialist speech, though, Du Bois focuses on a separate issue. He crystallizes one of the most important issues of the colonization – the racist logic igniting the conflagration of colonization and the way in which capitalism was fueling the fire. Du Bois saw the problem of the “color line” spreading to Asia and feared the people of the Philippines would be used as potential cheap labor for the capitalist machine. This was only too reminiscent of his America at the turn of the century.

Booker T. Washington, Du Bois's chief antagonist on domestic black issues, paints a very different picture of America in his autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, for students in the colonial Philippines. In his text, race is a problem only to the extent that one allows it to be. One of the lessons Francisco Africa, author of the *Students Guide* referenced earlier, advises students to learn from Washington is that

[e]very persecuted individual and race should get much out of the great human law, which is universal and eternal, that merit, no matter under what skin found, is, in the long run, recognized and rewarded. (59)

For Washington, this merit is achieved through hard work. In a market economy, this kind of effort is “recognized and rewarded” and allows the “persecuted individual or race” to succeed in spite of these initial obstacles.

If this was the kind of opportunity that Juan C. Laya’s character, Martin Romero, expected when he arrived in America, and Laya suggests that Martin did harbor these expectations, then he was sorely disappointed. The jobs available to him and his compatriots from the Philippines were severely restricted because of their race. Hard work in the fields was rewarded with very little pay. The perseverance required for Martin to secure an education is extraordinary and opens no doors to interesting jobs upon his return to the Philippines. In spite of his bleak experiences abroad, Martin is convinced of the benefits of capitalism and tries to take his entrepreneurial skills back to his village of Flores. This is a complete failure, not least of which because Martin has assimilated America’s racist ideology and turns it against his own village and family.

It was the fear that these kinds of ideologies would take on such tremendous and pervasive force in an expanded and more bureaucratic America that most worried William James. His prediction that the heterogeneous flux of an individualist America would never survive in a colonial power structure is borne out by the following comment by Frederick Atkinson, the first director of colonial education in the Philippines:

To state the situation briefly, our government is attempting by the exercise of the best possible effort to create homogeneity from the

heterogeneity which it found on its arrival, furnish a strong, civil constitution for the archipelago and fit the people to take care of themselves. (410-11)

William James was certainly in support of the Filipinos' taking care of themselves; he just did not see how that could be encouraged in a colonial framework.

He might have been very surprised to find his mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Essay on Self-Reliance* included in the colonial curriculum. This was certainly one way to introduce the concept without radically threatening the colonial structure. This is especially true as Emerson is far more interested in this essay in releasing oneself from community ties than political ties. Teaching Emerson was a means to teach an American value without disrupting the American regime. Donald E. Douglas reaffirms the colonial educators' dependence on education as a vehicle for cultural transformation and what that transformation would entail:

Reiterated time and time again during the colonial period was the administration's faith in the efficacy of education to change the attitudes of the people, make them responsible citizens and imbue them with all the virtues which had made America great – diligence, hard work and self-reliance. (4)

That teaching *Self-Reliance* may not have been enough to encourage Filipinos to "take care of themselves" while the colonial structure remained

steadfastly secure is suggested by Paz Marquez Benitez's story, "Dead Stars." Her protagonist, Alfredo, is crushed by nameless but ubiquitous societal forces and ultimately has no self on which to rely. In marrying Esperanza, he succumbs to those nebulous and suffocating demands, fully engages in the power structure and disengages from the last shreds of his own vitality. In Benitez's story, the Americans, represented by Esperanza, have "planted their order" as James predicted, but the plants themselves wilt under the hegemonic pressure.

It is arguably the vexed nature of the foundational myths of innocence and exceptionalism, racial equality and the work ethic, individualism and self-reliance, that has allowed them to be such a cogent force in both America and in America's representations abroad. Their very instability has fueled a desire for constant redefinition, for constant reiteration, and this process of continually needing to articulate America's bedrock ideals, so as to provide a stable self-definition that remains elusive, always has required a radical other. Thus, it is not just that the American colonization of the Philippines exposes the disruptions in the myths that celebrate American culture (which it does), but also that these very fractures can be seen as a galvanizing factor in inciting the colonization in the first place. Toni Morrison comments on this abiding desire for self-definition against an oppressed black population in both American history and literature in her *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. She argues that the Africanist presence in both spheres "is the vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; not repulsive, but desirable; not helpless,

but licensed and powerful; not history-less, but historical; not damned, but innocent; not a blind accident of evolution, but a progressive fulfillment of destiny." (51-2)

In the wake of the assimilation of both Native Americans and Black Americans, America needed to look elsewhere to stabilize an inherently slippery identity, an insecurity exacerbated by the dramatic pressures brought on by the rapid transformations of the American economy and culture at the turn of the century. Though Twain and James write as though the colonization represents a radical break with American tradition, it can be understood more accurately as part and parcel of a long tradition of aggression in the name of innocence, racism in the name of equality, and oppression in the name of self-reliance. The remarkable repression of the Philippine experience in the annals of American history reflects, perhaps, the failure of this imperial adventure to provide any coherence to American identity and signals its common links with the various other acts of violence against minority groups that many would just as soon forget in their descriptions of American history and identity.

But these contradictions are not just evident in the historical record. A closer look at Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay on *Self-Reliance* reveals similar tensions. This, perhaps, explains why Emerson, a foundational figure in nineteenth-century American thought, is at once the guiding spirit for the anti-imperialist writers, a touchstone in the hegemonic colonial curriculum, and a figure of critique for Filipino writers. Harold Bloom calls Emerson "*the*

American theoretician of power," and certainly his ubiquitous presence in each sphere of the American colonization of the Philippines indicates the deep relevance of his thought to the American experience in all of its manifestations, even those that have been repressed. (20)

Emerson's essay is celebrated for its eloquence and because it is one of the first literary expressions of an American faith. As such, it has seemed almost beyond reproach, for the essay is written with such confidence and good will of the American spirit. But Emerson's mellifluous essay also suggests the dark underside of the acclaimed American ethos of self-reliance. Underneath the calls to individuality, courage and perseverance lies an abject denial of history, a blind naïveté about the hierarchical nature of society, and a thinly veiled aggression. Like the seemingly invincible myths that founder on Philippine soil, so too does Emerson's essay darken when cast in the light of the colonization.

One can already see in this early American essay one of the mechanisms by which the myth of American innocence will be perpetuated. Emerson basically argues for a thorough grounding in the present moment, an utter disregard for history and custom. He does this in order to discourage a slavish attention to the past which he sees as imprisoning, but it is easy to discern where this abandonment of the past allows for a forgetfulness about the ravages of that past. His tone of willful disavowal is disturbing in light of what will come to be forgotten. He writes:

Whence then this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and majesty of the soul. Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye maketh, but the soul is light; where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury, if it be anything more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming. (34)

Needless to say much of American history would not be considered a "cheerful apologue" and Emerson's license, indeed encouragement, to forget has contributed to a perennial innocence that is divorced from the reality of America's being and becoming a global power.

Emerson's radical individualism is also blind to societal disparities that do not allow for the freedom of movement and action that he envisions for himself, a relatively wealthy, white, native-born New Englander. His call to dole out "a pull yourself up by your bootstraps" ethos rather than offer compassion or charity may work in an equitable world, but that wasn't the world he lived in. It would be difficult, for example, for a sharecropper in West Virginia or a colonized Filipino to agree that "[d]iscontent is the want of self-reliance: it is infirmity of will." (40) This elision of actual market conditions, of institutionalized inequalities, preserves an optimistic, ethereal faith in the equality of opportunities in America and a belief that the work ethic is a means of seizing those opportunities.

Emerson goes on to write:

Regret calamities if you can thereby help the sufferer; if not, attend your own work and already the evil begins to be repaired. Our sympathy is just as base. We come to them who weep foolishly and sit down and cry for company, instead of imparting to them truth and health in rough electric shocks, putting them once more in communication with their own reason. (40)

This passage suggests something else that lies just beneath the surface of Emerson's expression of an American faith in the individual -- violent aggression. This violence erupts at two provocations. The first, noted in this passage, is when someone is positioned as the victim and intimates that this person should be helped by force to help himself -- clearly not a far cry from the rhetoric of colonial officials in the Philippines. The second provocation to a suggestion of violence is when something or someone stands in the way of the fulfillment of one's natural destiny. Emerson proclaims:

No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if everything were titular and ephemeral but he. (26)

This kind of individualism seems a license to narcissistic amorality, a kind of local manifest destiny. This is a self-reliance that very possibly denies others the opportunity to pursue the same, especially if they are the "opposition". And,

indeed, by fulfilling its nature, America left the Philippines with only a titular and ephemeral self-reliance at best.

William James writes that "Emerson himself was a real seer," and it is easy to glean America's complex future in his works, especially in his essay *Self-Reliance*. ("Address at the Emerson Centenary in Concord" 23) For his ideas were not only behind the rhetoric of colonial administrators as has just been illustrated, but also inspired American anti-imperialists, in particular James, Du Bois, and Twain. He is their literary forbear and laid the groundwork for their calls to maintain an American nobility even in the face of the sweep of history and baser temptations.

So it is clear that the contradictions in American identity are not exposed for the first time by the American colonization of the Philippines, but that they have their roots deep in the American experience, both literary and historical. What distinguishes this period, however, is the turn from the domestic to the international sphere. Never before had America tried to shore up these vicissitudes on foreign soil in the role of colonial master; heretofore, this kind of self-definition/oppression had been a domestic affair.

It is not only important to revisit the colonization of the Philippines because it has been unduly forgotten (read repressed), but also because it invites analysis of how these myths with their inherent contradictions played out in another culture and how the forced recipients responded. In America's increasingly global role, it is this latter viewpoint that is often neglected. If

Americans tend to be blind to the splintering fractures that constitute American identity, those who are feeling the effects of an overwhelming cultural hegemony are not. Philippine writers in English demonstrate in their fiction that, in spite of intense hegemonic pressure, they were able to discern the dark undercurrents of American innocence, equality, and self-reliance and write back against them.

"Benevolent-Assimilation" is not just a policy initiative from the annals of American history; it is one way of thinking about the Americanization of world culture today. It is important that we listen to the voices of Maximo Kalaw, Juan C. Laya, and Paz Marquez Benitez and those in similar positions today, not just because they are often neglected, but because, as de Tocqueville noted, they "bring certain truths to the Americans' attention."

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