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# ***WOMEN'S ANTI-IMPERIALISM, "THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN," AND THE PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WAR***

## ***Theorizing Masculinist Ambivalence in Protest***

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*During the Philippine-American War (1899-1902), the Anti-Imperialist League was the organizational vanguard of an anti-imperialist movement. Research on this period of U.S. imperialism has focused on empire building, ignoring the gendered activity of anti-imperialists in the metropole. The author outlines the constitutive relationship between gendered structures and experience that informed anti-imperialists' "contentious politics," using archival sources of the Anti-Imperialist League and anti-imperialist debates in newspapers. The author shows how anti-imperialist leaders informally included women's monetary donations, labor, networks, and reputations while formally excluding their full membership. Finally, the author shows how masculinist ambivalence, or the pattern of the gendered inclusions/exclusions of anti-imperialists, explains the incremental transformations and reproductions of gendered structures in anti-imperialists' contentious politics. The author suggests masculinist ambivalence has theoretical utility for explaining gendered inclusions and exclusions in movements that are not explicitly about gender conflict or change.*

**Keywords:** *contentious politics; intersectionality; masculinist ambivalence; race, class, gender; social movements*

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At the Chicago Liberty Meeting in April 1899, organized to protest U.S. imperialist advances in the Philippines, Jane Addams was the only woman of eight plenary speakers. There she stated, "To 'protect the weak' has always been the excuse of the ruler and tax-gatherer, the chief, the king, the baron; and now, at last, of 'the white man'" (Addams 1899). A few months earlier, in late 1898, the United States purchased the Philippines from Spain in the Treaty of Paris despite a preexisting revolutionary movement for independence. Subsequently, the Philippine-American War broke out, with Filipinos continuing to seek an end to colonial rule, be it the rule of Spain or the United States. President Roosevelt officially announced the war over on July 4, 1902, although fighting continued in some provinces through 1913.

With the U.S. military mobilized in the Philippines, U.S. citizens mobilized an opposition movement in the metropole. The Anti-Imperialist League (AIL), the vanguard of the movement, organized around the constitutional contradictions of imperialism and democracy. Those eventually identifying as "anti-imperialists" included men and women, people of various "races,"<sup>1</sup> conservatives and progressives, elites and laborers, Boston Brahmins and rural populists. The initial goal of the movement was to stop the United States from taking the Philippines as a colony. After the ratification of the Treaty of Paris in the Senate, the AIL endorsed William Jennings Bryan as an anti-imperialist candidate for president in the 1900 election, which yielded another defeat. It then appeared to many anti-imperialists that the United States was on an imperialist course that could no longer be stopped, so they dropped out of the movement. Those left focused on the news of the U.S. military committing egregious violence in the Philippines and became determined to expose such "atrocities" to the public. Some research on the AIL has touched on race and class issues within the movement (Beisner 1968, 1973; Foner and Winchester 1984; Jacobson 2000; Lasch 1958, 1973; Schirmer 1972; Tompkins 1970; Welch 1973, 1979). No study discusses the role of gender or women in the anti-imperialist movement. Yet women made material and symbolic contributions to the movement at home and abroad.

Traditional social movement theory is ill suited to account for women's participation in the AIL and anti-imperialism during this era. Protest and "contentious politics" (Tarrow 1998) has been treated as a male domain, with women, usually white, appearing primarily in accounts of *feminist* protest (Taylor and Whittier 1998, 1999; West and Blumberg 1990). Although mainstream political sociology and social movement theory have given scant attention (Taylor 1999) to scholarship on gender, feminist

approaches have been increasingly incorporated into the study of political activism over the past decade. These approaches allow more inclusive and historicized definitions of social movements and see power as dispersed beyond the state in cultural institutions (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008). This more open approach allows for an analysis of contradictions within movements and the potential for change in the midst of negotiating contradictions. Following women's contributions and the corresponding gendered relations shows the anti-imperialist movement was riddled with contradictions. While anti-imperialists lobbied state policies and were led by a male-dominated organization, they also took pains to oppose "the white man's burden," which they framed as a cultural issue, by emphasizing the value of a feminized side of "civilization," nonviolence, and by stressing the degrading effects of imperialism on democratic society.

My central goal in this article is to develop the concept of *masculinist ambivalence* to help explain the historical process of delineating gendered inclusions and exclusions within a masculinist (though seemingly gender-neutral) protest movement. To this end, I address the question of *how* gendered contradictions developed within the anti-imperialist movement as well as *how* gendered practices simultaneously maintained and changed gender structures. First, I discuss the literature on gender and social movements, which has revealed the significant effects of gender on ostensibly gender-neutral movements. Next, I outline a theory of masculinist ambivalence that accounts for gendered practices that simultaneously reproduce and change structures of gender inequality. I then discuss my sources and sociohistorical methods. In the second part of the article, I discuss the history of the movement, using the concept of masculinist ambivalence to explain the gendered relations of anti-imperialist opposition to "the white man's burden."

## GENDER AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Work on gender and political activism shows that gender potentially has significant effects on the course of movements and that women make crucial contributions in spite of gendered exclusions. For example, we know from Belinda Robnett's (1997) work that women's participation as "bridge" leaders in the civil rights movement, a seemingly gender-neutral social movement, provided the glue that kept activists on the ground connected. Mary Margaret Fonow's (1998) work has similarly demonstrated that women's participation provided new community-building

skills and challenged the male-dominated practices in a union strike in which male workers displayed a “virile unionism.” Although the civil rights movement and a 1980s union strike are separated by context and cause, activists practiced gendered inclusions and exclusions that affected maintenance *and* change to gender structures. As I will show, these patterns also played out in the anti-imperialist movement. Taylor (1999, 8) elaborates in the introduction in the second volume of the special issue of *Gender & Society* on “Gender and Social Movements” how feminist scholars have shown that analyses of gender in movements, including those not explicitly about gender conflict or change, have enabled clearer understandings of movement “emergence, nature, and outcomes.” Extending this project, I suggest we need a theory of gender and contentious politics that explains how gendered practices transform gender structures, while corresponding schemas simultaneously seem to reproduce them.

The anti-imperialist movement provides a compelling case that allows me to develop such a theory. Research on women during the “age of empire” (Hobsbawm 1987) has largely focused on white women’s complicity with and contributions to empire building (Janiewski 2001; Tyrrell 1992; Ware 1992; Wexler 2000; Wildenthal 2001). The existence of important studies on women’s work *for* empire begs the question of why there is such a dearth of analysis on women’s anti-imperialism. While some research on social movements has focused on the role of women in resistance movements, because of different epistemological assumptions about social relations and a shared disheartenment over the “binary oppositions in social movement theory” (Taylor and Whittier 1999), I selectively draw from this literature and turn to a more inclusive and nuanced theory of structure. Social movement literature largely treats social movements and their itinerant parts as social units like “building blocks,” while I see them as products of processes and relations (for an in-depth critique, see chapter five of Sewell’s [2005] *Logics of History*). Therefore, the studies I do engage take care to show the *processes* of constructing gender and social movements rather than treating them as already formed units. Understanding social structures as the relational connections between cultural meanings, social movement practices, and the deployment of resources (Jung 2009), I suggest an alternative way of analyzing gender and contentious politics. Although I think analyses of masculinist ambivalence could also shed light on both processes of emergence and outcome, in this article I focus on the relationship between gender and the course of the anti-imperialist movement to develop the concept of masculinist ambivalence.

## THEORIZING MASCULINIST AMBIVALENCE

Masculinist ambivalence—"masculinist" referring to gendered hierarchy that normatively centers men's experiences—describes the process of confronting "ideal" masculinities or femininities in the practice of contentious politics. Confronting the ideal with the actual in practice begins a process of drawing gendered boundaries around who is included and who is excluded. Gender not only legitimates or de-legitimates movements, it is also negotiated to create the collective identities of movements (Gamson 1997; Taylor 1999), as in the label of "anti-imperialist."

Social theorist William Sewell Jr.'s (1992) *American Journal of Sociology* article, "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency and Transformation" provides a solid theoretical starting point for studies of race, gender, and class structures, taking into account their material and cultural dimensions (Beisel and Kay 2004; Jung 2009; Lewis 2004). Sewell shows schemas, or sets of meaning, and resources, like money or cultural capital, are linked and time-dependent with structures constituting compatible schemas and resources. I use this definition of structure to elaborate the relationship between experience and structures with the concept of masculinist ambivalence.

Experience is key to the change and/or reproduction of structures. Sewell's (1992) concept of rearticulation has an implicit concern with agents' use and integration of experience. Transformation occurs when schemas are contradictory and "rearticulated," or shown to be no longer compatible with prior meanings or the accumulation of resources (Sewell 1992; Jung 2009). Jung notes that "it is through human agency—the articulated enactment of schemas and mobilization of resources—that structures exist and persist, and it is through human agency—the *rearticulated* enactment of schemas and mobilization of resources—that structures change" (2009, 6-7). Therefore, the question of how actors use experience is one of agency.

Intersectionality theorists argue this framework is uniquely able to account for particular group experiences and their subsequent knowledge (Crenshaw 1989), such as in the case of standpoint theory. But intersectionality is less developed as a framework that accounts for connections between experience and social structures (Brewer 1993; Collins 2000). The problem lies in treating experience as separate from structures, rather than constitutive of them. Brewer (1993, 16) argues that intersectionality should reconstruct "the lived experiences, historical positioning, cultural perceptions and social construction of Black women who are enmeshed in and whose ideas emerge out of that experience."

Sharing Brewer's view, I argue that by comparing the experience of contentious politics on a common issue *across* the intersections of race, class, and gender, we can elaborate intersectionality to show the importance of prior experience in applying creative agency that contributes to the change and/or the reproduction of durable structures. Such analyses would take experience into account with transpositions, maintenance, or rearticulations of structures. In this direction Scott (1996, 384) states, "We need to attend to the historical processes that, through discourse, position subjects and produce their experiences." This is what the concept of masculinist ambivalence captures.

My purpose is to show rearticulations happen when contentious politics enliven new points of view and uncover previously unrealized contradictions. I emphasize Sewell's (1992, 2005) point that structures are not only constraining but also enabling, as is the case with gender and social movements. For example, protest expands women's roles as well as their consciousness by allowing them to become *aware of both their subordination and limited rights in the midst of crises that expand the boundaries of their activism* (West and Blumberg 1990). This was the case for many of the most active anti-imperialist women as they made contributions beyond their expected gendered roles and were given informal recognition.

I address a gap in the intersectionality literature and Sewell's theory of structure by showing that agents' use of experience is integral to transformation. "The white man's burden" explicitly racialized and gendered imperialism as white and masculine—bracketing capitalism in the conception of imperialism. For imperialists, "the white man's burden" reified a shared project of "civilizing" nonwhite people. For anti-imperialists, "the white man's burden" provided a nodal point of "civilization's" contradictions to challenge.

## SOCIOHISTORICAL ANALYSIS

As is common with marginalized actors in sociohistorical research, the evidence of Black and white women's and all working-class anti-imperialisms is uneven, buried in the asides of personal correspondence and tempered in publications (Jung 2003). However, as Taylor (1999, 11) states, "the goal of feminist research is to make women's experiences visible, render them important, and use them to correct distortions from previous empirical research and theoretical assumptions that fail to



recognize the centrality of gender to social life.” This orientation led me to research whether women were in the anti-imperialist movement, and in fact, evidence of women’s work exists in the archival collections of anti-imperialists as well as in the archives of newspapers. Empirically addressing women in the anti-imperialist movement, I draw on all available primary documents to describe the activities in which they were involved and the implications of their activism on the gendered relations of anti-imperialists.

I base this study on individual- and organizational-level data collected from archival and secondary sources. Individual-level data includes articles and poems by anti-imperialists published in newspapers other anti-imperialists read as well as personal letters in individual archival collections. Organizational-level data includes ledger books for the Boston AIL that anti-imperialists wrote and circulated, record books of the organization that included officer reports, member votes, and official policy, as well as correspondence of AIL officers acting in an official capacity to raise awareness of violence in the Philippines. I collected these documents mainly from the personal papers of AIL officers, although some works were available as independent publications, such as *Liberty Poems* (1900) and *Our Islands and Their Peoples* (1900). I examined the archives of *The Woman’s Journal* and various labor, socialist, and Black newspapers, such as *American Freeman*, *Journal of the Knights of Labor*, *National Labor Tribune*, *Social Democratic Herald*, *The Colored American*, and the *Workers’ Call*; as well as edited volumes of primary documents in Foner’s *Anti-Imperialist Reader* (Foner and Winchester 1984) and *Racism, Dissent, and Asian Americans from 1850 to the Present* (Foner and Rosenberg 1993), between 1898 and 1910 for evidence of working-class, Black, and women’s anti-imperialist activity in particular and gendered anti-imperialist politics in general that may not have appeared in the collections of AIL leaders. I cite primary documents using notes and abbreviate collections used repeatedly. See the appendix for a list of abbreviations of archives cited multiple times.

Having found ample evidence of women’s involvement, I analyzed these documents for evidence of observable gendered conflict between anti-imperialists in public activities and personal letters. I found no explicitly gendered struggle between anti-imperialist women and men. However, as I discuss later, I noted the observable gendered conflict of imperialists emasculating anti-imperialists through derogatory feminizations. This led me to analyze anti-imperialists’ agenda-setting practices, such as how anti-imperialisms were framed and what possibilities for



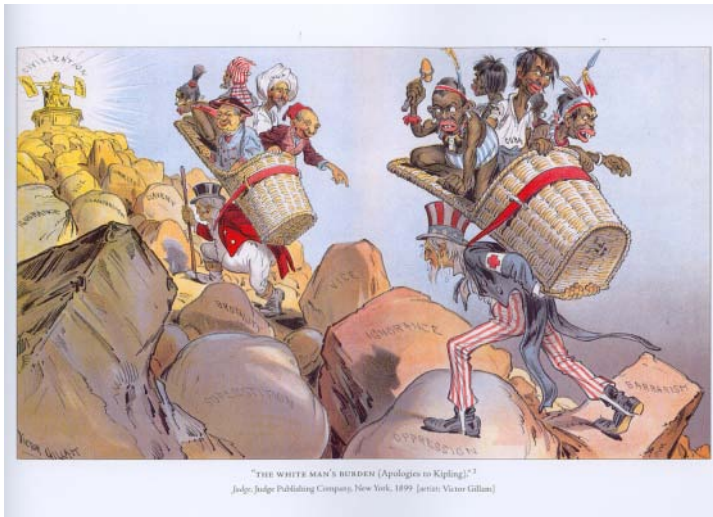
organizing were on and off the table. Finally, I analyzed these documents for cultural patterns of gendered domination stitched into the fabric of anti-imperialist activism that yielded gendered contradictions.

In the following section, I introduce the anti-imperialists, outlining the observable racialized, gendered, and classed conflict on the cultural terrain of “the white man’s burden.” I establish the relational differences between *anti-imperialisms* across social position and over time. Then I show how masculinist ambivalence explains the gendered practices of anti-imperialist men and women in negotiating contradictory gendered inclusions and exclusions through debating schemas, distributing resources, and performing contentious politics.

### THE WHITE MAN’S BURDEN AND MASCULINIST AMBIVALENCE

White men from privileged or well-known backgrounds represented the public face of the anti-imperialist movement, men such as steel-magnate Andrew Carnegie, labor leader Samuel Gompers, satirist Mark Twain, lawyer-activist Moorfield Storey, Charles Francis Adams Jr. (grandson of John Quincy Adams), Harvard philosopher William James, Yale sociologist William Graham Sumner, and reformers known for their connections to abolitionism, like William Lloyd Garrison Jr. However, rank and file anti-imperialists included many working-class whites, Black and white women, as well as Black men, all of whom disagreed with the path the United States was taking in the Philippines. These disagreements were not limited to state policy or electoral politics. They expanded into larger cultural issues of civilization. These debates appeared in the usual venues, newspaper editorials, protest meetings, and speeches in Congress. They also filtered into poems, polysemous images of peoples in “our islands” (Bryan 1899; Wexler 2000), mock villages in the 1904 World’s Fair (Rydell 1984), and novels (Pemberton 1899/1972).

For example, in February 1899, *McClure’s* magazine published Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The White Man’s Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands.” In the midst of debates over the United States’s involvement in the Philippines, the poem spread quickly. In it, Kipling advised the United States to take its place alongside Great Britain and make the sacrifices necessary for the civilization of those “half devil and half child.” However, it was also the inspiration for many anti-imperialist counterpoems, serving as a phrase for anti-imperialist ridicule because of contradictions between violence and civilization (see Figure 1).



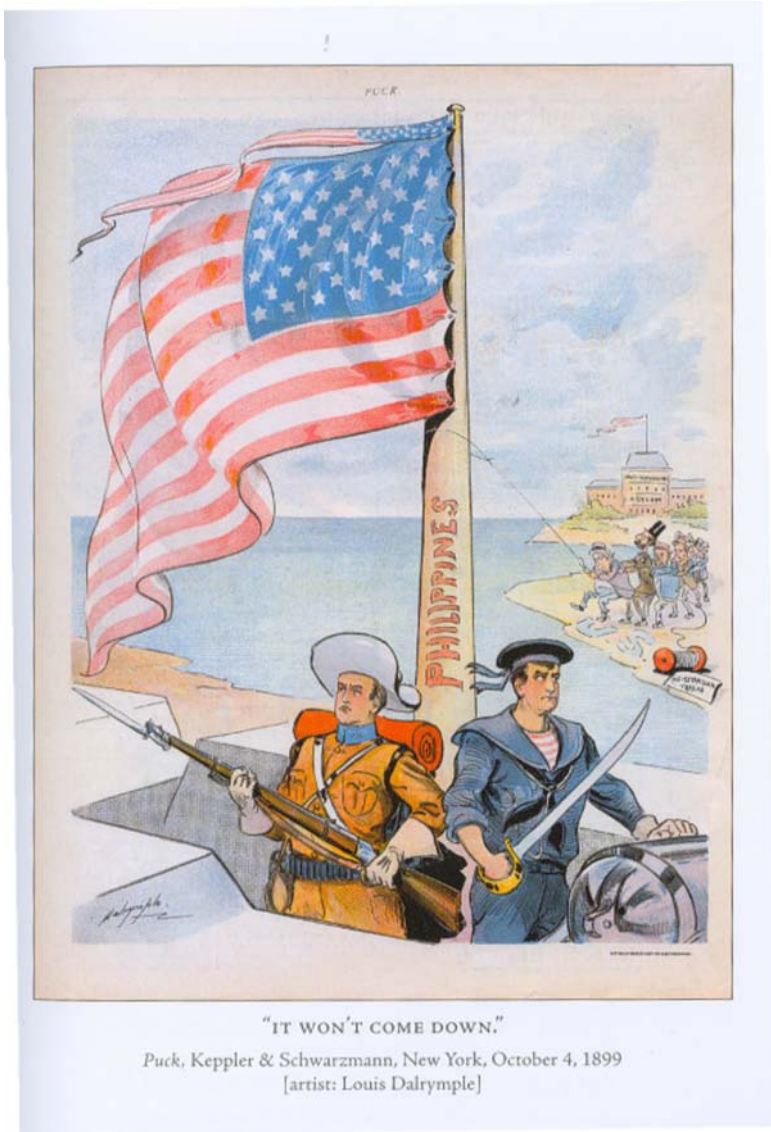
**Figure 1: “The White Man’s Burden (Apologies to Kipling)”**

SOURCE: Judge, 1899. From *The Forbidden Book* (Ignacio et al. 2004).

More than a phrase, “the white man’s burden” was a cultural schema with a set of masculinized aspirations for the United States in the Philippines, aspirations to which anti-imperialists vehemently objected. It was against the tidal pull of this schema that anti-imperialists navigated their course.

Building the movement around an identity of anti-imperialist politics gave it a bottom-line inclusiveness—one needed only to disagree with holding the Philippines as a U.S. colony regardless of the progressive or racist reasons for these objections. But inclusions had their limits. Masculinist ambivalence helps to understand these limits. For example, in the structure of the AIL’s organization, women were informally included, with the AIL leadership accepting their contributions in the form of monetary donations, networks, reputations, and labor. While a handful of exceptionally influential women were named vice presidents over time, this honor simultaneously went to scores of men. Even so, AIL vice presidencies were purely symbolic offices secured by invitation. The office amounted to having one’s name listed on official letterhead for the AIL to reap the benefits of individuals with well-regarded reputations; it came with no other responsibilities.

While anti-imperialists were carving out the organization and its agenda, imperialists were there to oppose them at every turn. In her work, *Fighting*



**Figure 2: "It Won't Come Down"**

SOURCE: *Puck*, October 4, 1899. From *The Forbidden Book* (Ignacio et al. 2004).

NOTE: This image literally shows the tension between the nationalist masculinities of the imperialists, embodied in the physically large, strong, young, white soldiers; and the miniscule, older, white anti-imperialists, many dressed as women, apropos the "aunties." Anti-imperialist men were called "old women with trousers on," "squaw men," the "old lady element of public affairs," and were said to resemble a "nagging wife" (Hoganson 1998, 177).

for *American Manhood*, Kristin Hoganson notes “imperialists derided the antis’ manliness” (1998, 175). Supporters of imperialism did this through depicting anti-imperialist men in cartoons as the “aunties,” feminizing their opposition to the Philippine-American War (see Figure 2). Feminizing anti-imperialists was meant to de-legitimize their public influence on imperialist policies (Hoganson 1998). Hoganson states, “Depicting men as women was the most effective way of showing they lacked the manly character necessary for political authority” (1998, 176-77). But even for imperialists, Anglo-Saxon men’s supposed “adaptability,” previously seen as so advantageous for prior progress, now needed to be reconsidered in light of colonial contact with “savage” Filipinos (Newman 1999). Therefore, during the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War, *martial* masculinity hegemonically redefined the relationship between gender, race, and nation (Hoganson 1998), emphasizing white men’s independence. This put the masculinities of other white men, like anti-imperialists promoting cautiousness, in question with regard to their claims to patriotism and citizenship. Targeting governmental policies for change meant that the AIL’s main audience would be enfranchised citizens (i.e., in 1899, mainly white men), and imperialists appealed to the same audience. Though formulations of it were contested, the schema of “the white man’s burden” was inescapable.

The intersectionality of anti-imperialists’ race, class, and gender informed their views (Collins 2000). Therefore, there was no single coherent anti-imperialism. Rather, there were multiple anti-imperialisms. For example, in the context of “the white man’s burden” debates, anti-imperialist leaders had an ambivalent take on gender and on women’s roles as anti-imperialists. They spent little time discussing women, gender, or themselves as “emasculated” men in their correspondence to each other—a function of their gendered privilege (Kimmel 2006). Their anti-imperialism came from a particular conception of their role as *responsible citizens*, carrying out their obligations to keep the nation true to its democratic legacy. While they espoused freedom, liberty, and self-determination, they practiced patriarchal control of the resistance. While they tried to prevent the nation from committing violence against racialized imperialist subjects, they kept Black men and women at the margins.

Rejoinders to “the white man’s burden” also filled the pages of Black publications in various forms of “the Black man’s burden” (Gatewood 1975). Some Black men like Clifford H. Plummer, who was secretary of the National Colored Protective League and an attorney in Boston, were involved with plans to form a Black auxiliary to the AIL (Gatewood

1975), and more formed their own organizations such as the Colored National Anti-Imperialistic League<sup>2</sup> and the Negro National Anti-Imperial and Anti-Trust League (Foner and Winchester 1984, 167). Booker T. Washington wrote to the New York AIL declaring his support of anti-imperialist efforts<sup>3</sup> and publicly declared his opposition given already existing “race problems” (Gatewood 1975). Kelly Miller, a professor at Howard University and a colleague of W. E. B. Du Bois in editing *The Crisis*, authored a broadside (an extended pamphlet) published by the AIL that stated, “The whole trend of imperial aggression is antagonistic to the feebler races. It is a revival of racial arrogance.”<sup>4</sup> The anti-imperialist analyses of Black men ranged from radical to moderate, but they were all rooted in critiques of spreading race prejudice beyond the U.S. “race problems” with Indians and Blacks (Gatewood 1975). Led by Ida B. Wells and the African American woman’s club movement, the antilynching campaigns at the turn of the twentieth century were seen as anti-imperialism by these women, including Anna Julia Cooper and Ida B. Wells (Carby 1985).

Although anti-imperialist leaders periodically made arguments comparing lynching Black men at home with torturing Filipinos in the colony, their practices of exclusion reproduced stratification across race, class, and gender within the movement. Anti-imperialist leaders appreciated and accepted the support of women and women’s organizations, but they were not open to taking on gender inequality along with anti-imperialism, though Susan B. Anthony did seek the support of men in the AIL.<sup>5</sup> Keeping gender politics off the table enabled a situation where gendered contradictions could coexist, explicitly invoking gender schemas only if immediate benefits were clear.

Because of women’s personal experience with violence, it was an early focus of their activism, and they associated it with an indiscriminate masculinity. Although many women supported anti-imperialism, most of the women directly involved with the AIL were white and middle-class, a fact that enabled them to make monetary contributions to the movement. White women from the Midwest and the East Coast formed auxiliary organizations of the AIL.<sup>6</sup> The women’s auxiliary of the Boston AIL petitioned other women for support in 1899. They implored,

We, women of the United States, earnestly protest against the war of conquest into which our country has been plunged in the Philippine islands. We appeal to the Declaration of Independence, which is the moral foundation of the constitution you have sworn to defend, we reaffirm its weighty words.<sup>7</sup>



Other women's organizations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Congress of Mothers, and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) also took official anti-imperialist stances, offering the AIL support.<sup>8</sup> WCTU leadership educated affiliated women on international affairs and violence in the Philippines, which they attributed to prostitution and liquor (Papachristou 1990).

Two women, Jane Addams and Josephine Shaw Lowell, transcended the expected roles for women of the AIL. Both of these white women acquired informal leadership positions as extraordinary "individuals" with valuable resources. Both had prior experience as reformers, informing their anti-imperialism and their style of activism, which was familiar to progressives.

Addams is frequently listed as one of the AIL's most well-known vice presidents. She lent her name to the anti-imperialist cause as well as spoke at the 1899 Chicago Liberty Meetings against imperialism. In her speech, "Democracy or Militarism," Addams opened, "None of us who has been reared and nurtured in America can be wholly without the democratic instinct. It is not a question with any of us of having it or not having it; it is merely a question of trusting it or not trusting it" (Addams 1899), illuminating from her standpoint as a middle-class white woman that democratic values were taken for granted by U.S. Americans. Therefore, she allowed anti-imperialists to use her social capital to support democracy.

In 1901 Josephine Shaw Lowell, another middle-class white woman, was the first woman appointed vice president of the New York Anti-Imperialist League. Lowell had lived with her husband in military camps during the Civil War. She subsequently devoted her life to philanthropic and reform work in the New York region. Like Addams, she was a seasoned and connected reformer when she took on the cause of anti-imperialism.<sup>9</sup> As an anti-imperialist, Lowell was well into her sixties and deeply involved in the New York AIL.<sup>10</sup> She contributed generous monetary donations and significant emotional support for her friend, the New York AIL secretary, Edward Ordway (e.g., see correspondence from 1903 in Box 1, EO; see appendix). She gave opening and closing remarks at multiple AIL meetings.<sup>11</sup> She had the most prolific correspondence with Ordway of any anti-imperialist, making suggestions as to the best and most effective courses of action. She agitated for more protests and public demonstrations against imperialism, specifically requesting something akin to what had been done during the abolitionist movement.<sup>12</sup> She favored gathering petitions against imperialism in the

Philippines with signatures of prominent Americans, and the New York AIL followed her preference.

However, Lowell was aware of the gendered politics around women's involvement in anti-imperialist activities. Demonstrating masculinist ambivalence at the individual level, Lowell believed that keeping her name off petitions and other public matters would garner more support for anti-imperialism than taking credit for her activities. Therefore, she asked to have her name left off petitions even though she had often conceived and implemented them.<sup>13</sup> This was a rare case of considering gender as a factor in anti-imperialist strategy, and predictably, it was considered by a woman. She also feigned ignorance at how much money she was donating to persuade Ordway to take her frequent and generous donations.<sup>14</sup> Lowell's performance illustrates how she used her reformer experience as a subject *and* agent at the intersection of her race, class, and gender in the service of anti-imperialism by supporting the coexistence of gendered contradictions, maintaining gendered schemas, and rearticulating gendered practice by expanding her role in the movement.

Another woman who provided networks and labor for the AIL was Mary Storer Cobb of Northampton, Massachusetts, where she helped form a chapter of the AIL.<sup>15</sup> With evidence of atrocities being committed by the U.S. military in the Philippines, most sensationally through the "water cure"<sup>16</sup> torture, and "reconcentration" camps, the AIL agitated public debate specifically on violence. This led to a Senate Investigation on Affairs in the Philippines (hereafter referred to as SIAP), which included lines of questioning on the violence committed by the U.S. military.<sup>17</sup> Cobb's unique contribution was preparing soldiers to go before the SIAP.<sup>18</sup> Her work was behind the scenes, yet crucial to the anti-imperialist campaign to expose violence in the Philippines, which had been the central issue for anti-imperialist women, regardless of race, from the outset.

### **Debating Schemas: Women in the Public Debate on Imperialism**

Mainstream research on social movements tends to focus on a narrowly defined political arena, which often misses the contributions of women made behind the scenes (Ferree and Merrill 2000; Taylor 1999), such as Cobb. Anti-imperialist women frequently made interventions in the public debate through poems, which have gone without note because of androcentric definitions of the political. Kipling's poem advising the U.S. on the Philippines, "The White Man's Burden" (now infamous as a



euphemism for imperialism), sparked a flood of anti-imperialist poems in response. At the turn of the twentieth century, poems were a legitimate public medium for both women and men (Harrington 2002; Nelson 2001). Contributing a poem to a public forum was just as appropriate as a letter to the editor for political expression, with newspapers allotting space specifically for the genre. The poems I select in this section directly respond to “the white man’s burden” and demonstrate the author as a subject of prior experience and as an anti-imperialist agent.

Women, in particular, were more likely to express their political views through poems. The less direct format of poetic imagery allowed these disfranchised citizens a more conventionally accepted but still public outlet for civic participation. One of these women, Alice Smith-Travers, contributed the poem “The White Man’s Burden,” published in the Black Indianapolis newspaper *The Freeman*, March 4, 1899, focusing on the horrors of violence and the “Judas”-like behavior of the United States. She wrote,

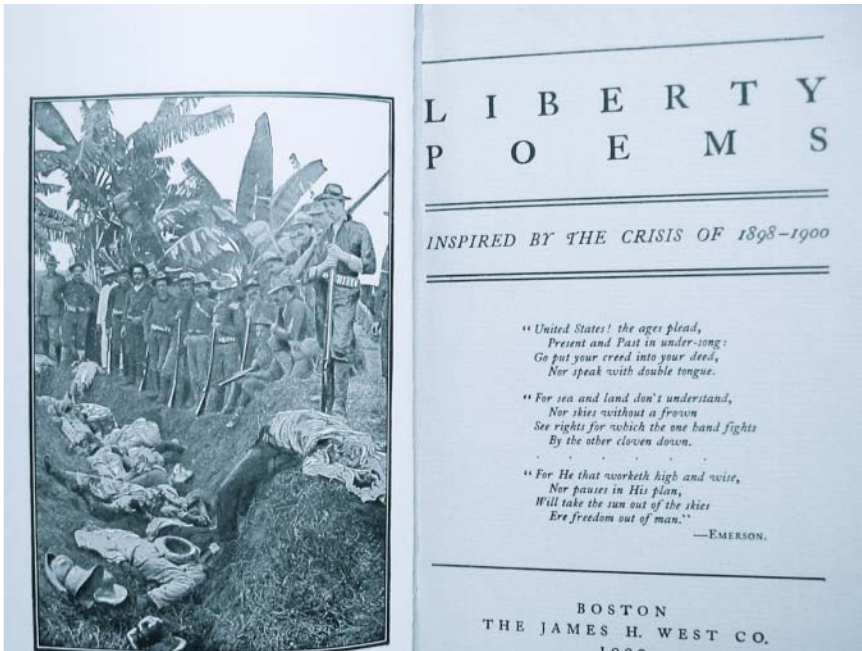
“Take up the white man’s burden!”  
That causes the heart to quake  
As we read again with horror,  
Of those burnings at the stake,

Of white caps riding in the night,  
And burning black men’s homes,  
Of the inmates shot as they rush out  
And the awful dying groans,

Of crimes that would outnumber  
Those in the foreign Isle,  
Committed by heath [*sic*] people  
“Half devil and half child.”

Then free those Filipinos [*sic*] people,  
From the accursed rule of Spain,  
And put on them the shackles [*sic*]  
Of a haughtier nation’s reign.

With “Judas” acts in every form,  
Conceivable by man,  
And the thirst for blood, and greed for gold  
Is surely the white man’s plan.<sup>19</sup>



**Figure 3: Liberty Poems: Inspired by the Crisis of 1898-1900**

NOTE: On the inside cover of this volume is a picture of a trench in the Philippines, with dead Filipinos and U.S. soldiers standing over them. Picture taken by author.

Smith-Travers's analysis shows her criticism of "civilization" and "the white man's burden" as a subject produced through the experiences of witnessing violence as a Black woman in the United States. Her clarity on the contradictions of imperialist violence, through irony, rearticulates imperialism as Anglo-Saxonist disagreements *over* (rather than with) "civilization." Additionally in 1899, Anna Manning Comfort, a leading white suffragist, connected the problem of the "white man's burden" with lynching, treatment of Indians, and women's suffrage in her poem "Home Burdens of Uncle Sam."<sup>20</sup> By 1902, this line of argumentation had been adopted (or co-opted) by the AIL in the campaign to expose violence in the SIAP.

As an organization the AIL also contributed poems to the debate, including some authored by women. In 1900, the New England AIL published a volume titled, *Liberty Poems: Inspired by the Crisis of 1898-1900* (see Figure 3), whose publication was underwritten by Mary

Pickering, a substantial AIL donor.<sup>21</sup> In total, the volume included 76 poems, with most written by anti-imperialist leaders and 13 authored by women.

Expressing their standpoint in newspapers, women consistently highlighted the violence being committed in the Philippines and raised the question of women's suffrage, pointing out the hypocrisy of (purportedly) spreading liberty abroad while disfranchising citizens at home. They expressed their indignation concerning "the white man's burden" both as citizens without the vote and as women, many of them mothers, with a moral duty to show their abhorrence for violence committed in the name of liberty.<sup>22</sup> However, these explicitly gendered anti-imperialisms were conventional women's issues and outside of the formal agenda of the AIL. Therefore, they did not disrupt the masculinist practices of the organization, but they did add another dimension to anti-imperialist debate.

### **Deploying Resources: Women's Monetary Contributions**

Besides entering the public debate as women with criticisms of violence, women with anti-imperialist views were contributing monetarily to the AIL. Between 1898 to 1902, the dates recorded in the AIL ledger books, women made 29 percent of the total number of donations to the AIL's funds.<sup>23</sup> Even more significant, of the total AIL budget between 1898 to 1902, multimillionaire Andrew Carnegie—who contributed \$1,000 at a time—contributed 20 percent of the total funds, women's contributions totaled 33 percent of the AIL funds, and other men's contributions totaled 47 percent of the AIL funds.<sup>24</sup>

Given the relative unavailability of independent expendable income for women during this period, the fact that women gave more than their representative numbers demonstrates anti-imperialist women's deep concern and corresponding mobilization over imperialism. This is an economic example of the rupture between gendered schemas and resources that exemplifies masculinist ambivalence in the AIL, showing women's expanded role—nudging along their inclusion—despite the insistent exclusion of women's leadership in, or public influence over, the AIL.

### **Enacting Rearticulations: Women in the Philippines**

At the individual level, women were also involved in anti-imperialist activities in the Philippines. The wife of a captain stationed in the

Philippines first wrote back to a newspaper in the United States, breaking the story on the military's use of the "water cure" in cooperation with her husband. Together they thought it better for her to expose the story as his wife than for him as a commissioned officer.<sup>25</sup> This set anti-imperialists into a fury of investigations regarding violence used by the military and general conditions in the Philippines, leading directly to their involvement in the SIAP.

One investigator informing the AIL was Helen Calista Wilson. In 1903, under the anonymity of "A Massachusetts Woman," she published her impressions on the reconcentration policy while on a fact-finding mission sponsored by a former anti-imperialist executive committee member, F. Fiske Warren.<sup>26</sup> Warren sponsored her independently of the AIL, although her information aided AIL activities at home. Her information on the reconcentration policy published in 1903 was the first information available to the public demonstrating how the military operations in the Philippines were affecting the Filipino people, not just insurgents. She later made more systematic analyses of the policy, sending back reports to the *Springfield Republican*, until it was abandoned in 1906 (Kramer 2006). As with Addams and Lowell, the AIL used her skills as an "individual" with the ability to speak Spanish and network both with U.S. colonials, especially other stenographers and teachers, in the colony as well as elite Filipino families.

One member of such a family, Clemencia Lopez, visited the United States as a guest of the AIL in 1902 and 1903 (Zwick 2001). She spoke to various groups across the United States, specifically disputing the idea that Filipinos were too uncivilized for self-government. She was living evidence to the contrary according to instructors at Wellesley College, where she studied English and persuaded other women of the importance of the anti-imperialist cause (Zwick 2001). Lopez spent almost two years in the United States speaking on conditions in the Philippines. Because the U.S. military government in Batangas had imprisoned three of her brothers (Zwick 2001), she also made a special appeal to President Roosevelt on behalf of her family, which was submitted as evidence in the SIAP. In her farewell speech at a luncheon given in her honor by the AIL, she said,

When I planned to return to my native land it never occurred to me that my friends would gather to bid me farewell. Still less could I have expected that the gathering should be presided over by the friend of John Brown [Mr. Sanborn]; that the words of parting should fall from the lips of the son of the Liberator [Mr. Garrison]; that I should see among the guests the secretary of Charles Sumner [Mr. Storey]; and that there should be present in

propria persona that aged and honored paladin of liberty, Gov. Boutwell. These names became famous at a time when the victim was the black man. Now it is the brown.<sup>27</sup>

Like other Filipino nationalists, she was familiar with the history of racist exclusions of U.S. democracy and understood the implications for new racisms on democracy in the Philippines under U.S. rule. *As a woman*, she was able to speak out in the United States without posing a threat, while her brothers were considered enemies of the state. In this context, masculinist ambivalence served her particular cause more than feminist politics espousing gender equality could have.

### MASCULINIST AMBIVALENCE AND CONTENTIOUS POLITICS

The creative application of prior experience influenced how anti-imperialists argued against “the white man’s burden” and for democracy. Initially, the leadership of the AIL argued over ideals of masculine citizenship, middle-class white women argued over the ideals of civilization, Black men argued against the conflagration of race prejudice, and Black women argued with the existence of civilization as it was defined. Noting these differences is not enough; they were relationally constituted through the *experience* of being anti-imperialist as subjects constituted at the intersection of race, class, and gender. After the defeat of Bryan in 1900 and a period of shared anti-imperialist struggle, white men increasingly adopted arguments over ideals of civilization and all anti-imperialist debates focused on violence such as those Black anti-imperialists had earlier espoused regarding violence in the metropole (e.g., lynching) and violence in the Philippines. Imperialists essentially won the debate over masculine citizenship. Therefore, the more inclusive and democratically based arguments proved to be the most robust for anti-imperialists over time.

The AIL struggled within the limits of gendered schemas of citizenship and nation, rather than taking stances that posed challenges to gender inequality. It did, however, acknowledge the utility of women’s resources and adopt their focus on violence. Although Edward Atkinson noted as early as 1899 that having influential women in public leadership roles would be beneficial for gaining the support of organized women’s groups in the United States (Hoganson 1998), and Herbert Welsh made efforts to obtain women activists, mentioning to AIL president Moorfield Storey

that well-known women would be helpful for organizing other women,<sup>28</sup> no organized plans were made to involve women as a group.

Despite this, over time women were increasingly granted the symbolic office of vice president of the AIL.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, in 1909 a committee was appointed to “consider the propriety of inviting women to become members” of the AIL (rather than the auxiliaries they had previously constituted). Following up at a meeting in 1910, the AIL deemed inviting women members “inexpedient” and continued their formal exclusion.<sup>30</sup> Having been feminized by imperialists, white anti-imperialist men faced a kind of “double bind” (Einwohner, Hallander, and Olson 2000) of formally identifying with anti-imperialist women and further de-legitimizing anti-imperialism with the mainstream (although they had already lost widespread support by this time) and of not fully including women at the risk of alienating them and losing their resources. Although AIL leaders maintained male domination as a strategic resource to secure legitimacy, “paradoxically, diversity often increases the resources and power of challengers” (West and Blumberg 1990, 21). This was recognized by some white anti-imperialist men but not fully embraced, ultimately limiting the appeal of the AIL. Just as the long list of vice presidents was a symbolic message of anti-imperialists’ social capital, so was the official exclusion of women as members symbolic of who was qualified to be an “anti-imperialist” to those outside the anti-imperialist movement. Homosocial politics based on “the white man’s burden” tightened the boundaries of exclusion around anti-imperialism, even as anti-imperialists struggled for democracy.

## CONCLUSION

In the case of anti-imperialists, masculinist ambivalence resulted in *informal* inclusions and *formal* exclusions. Therefore, there was no clearly or cleanly defined “in”-group. Anti-imperialists creatively deployed gendered resources without reconciling gendered contradictions. Masculinist norms were not disrupted, if sometimes questioned, creating a space where women’s informal leadership was acceptable for extraordinary *individuals*, while women *as a group* were funneled into activities already established as gender appropriate, such as planning anti-imperialist luncheons, hosting Filipino guests, and forming auxiliary organizations. Within the AIL, masculinist ambivalence stifled the possibility of explicitly gendered contentious politics opposing imperialism through informal inclusions of women’s resources (such as money, social capital, and

cultural capital) and formal exclusions of women's membership. Similar gendered relations existed during the civil rights movement (Robnett 1997) and the steel workers' strike of 1985 (Fonow 1998), suggesting this concept has utility for other cross-gender movements that are not about gender conflict or change. In Sewell's (1992, 2005) terms, masculinist ambivalence incrementally rearticulated structures by changing practices without changing schemas. Imperialists and anti-imperialists used gender schemas as a rhetorical resource. Therefore, the problem of gender inequality was subordinated with silence, while gendered resources were exploited to further the shared anti-imperialist cause, something Ferree and Roth (1998) call "exclusionary solidarity."

Masculinist ambivalence highlights the durability of gender structures through the maintenance, and the articulation, of schemas while showing their pliability as they are simultaneously rearticulated through more inclusive practices of contentious politics. AIL leaders enacted masculinist ambivalence by failing to acknowledge the agenda-setting effects of imperialists' feminization of them and subordinating gender politics in the movement. Nevertheless, women were involved in the AIL to such an extent that the AIL would not have been able to achieve many of its goals without the monetary resources or the social networks of women. Women's contributions were key to the successes anti-imperialists achieved.

The AIL's formal exclusions and informal inclusions of women demonstrate the process of masculinist ambivalence in contentious politics and the influence of agents' use of experience in transforming and/or reproducing social structures. Feminist scholarship has demonstrated links between the construction of political subjects as women and men and the construction of gendered power with the nation and state (Mayer 2004). The case of anti-imperialist opposition to the "white man's burden," both a political poem and a gendered schema, reconfirms these findings. Feminist scholarship on the political also disrupts the construction of the feminine and its association with womanhood as subordinate to the masculine and manhood (Mouffe 1992). The anti-imperialist movement valued feminized aspects of "civilization," such as nonviolence, showing these values were not inherently subordinate to martial masculinity. Anti-imperialists lauded and depended on the critical stance toward violence taken by the march of "civilization." Therefore, this case shows the subordination of gendered contradictions in the anti-imperialist movement was an achievement maintained through masculinist ambivalence.

The imperialist "white man's burden" carries with it a persistent historical project of gendered contradictions conflating white "masculine



domination” (Bourdieu 1998) with the U.S. nation-state. While competing masculinities redefined citizenship outside the movement, masculinist ambivalence reconstituted gendered practices within the anti-imperialist movement, both constraining and enabling women’s anti-imperialist protest as well as reproducing and transforming structures of gender inequality in contentious politics.

## APPENDIX

### Archival Sources with Multiple Citations

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EO, Edward Ordway Papers Manuscript Division of the New York Public Library. Ordway was the secretary for the New York based Anti-Imperialist League (AIL).

MLC, Maria Lanzar-Carpio Papers, Special Collections at Hatcher Graduate Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Lanzar-Carpio was a doctoral student at University of Michigan in Political Science through the Pensionada Program.

MSLOC, Moorfield Storey Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

MSMHS, Moorfield Storey Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. Storey was an anti-imperialist leader based in Boston, member of the AIL executive committee, and served as president after George Boutwell.

JZ, in Jim Zwick, ed., *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*, <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/> (accessed September 8, 2005). Zwick compiled a significant online archive of anti-imperialist papers, which were available in 2005 through Jim Zwick’s now-obsolete Web site, boondocksnet.com.

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## NOTES

1. I enclose race in quotes in the first reference here to underline its socially constructed, time-dependent meaning.

2. Jim Zwick, “Colored National Anti-Imperialistic League,” [http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/people/colored\\_ai\\_league.html](http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/people/colored_ai_league.html), JZ (for JZ, see the appendix).

3. Letter dated May 14, 1901, Box 1, EO (for EO, see the appendix).

4. Kelly Miller, “The Effect of Imperialism upon the Negro Race,” *Anti-Imperialist Broadside*, No. 11 (Boston: New England Anti-Imperialist League, n.d. [1900]), <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/ailtexts/miller00.html>, JZ.

5. Letter dated Jan. 20, 1900, Box 1, EO.

6. Jim Zwick, “Illinois Women’s Anti-Imperialist League” and “Women’s Auxiliary of the Anti-Imperialist League,” [http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/people/illinois\\_womens\\_ail.html](http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/people/illinois_womens_ail.html), JZ.

7. Women's Auxiliary of the Anti-Imperialist League, "Women Make an Appeal/In Behalf of the Foundation Principles of the Republic," *Springfield Republican*, May 30, 1899, <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/ailtexts/wai10599.html>, JZ.

8. MSLOC (for MSLOC, see the appendix); EO; Record Book Vol. I, Anti-Imperialist League, MLC (for MLC, see the appendix).

9. Newspaper clipping, undated, Herbert Welsh Papers, Special Collections, Hatcher Graduate Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

10. Anti-Imperialist League Papers, Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.

11. Letter dated October 19, 1899, EO.

12. Letter dated November 27, 1901, Box 1, EO.

13. Letter dated January 10, 1902, Box 1, EO.

14. The exact amount is unclear as the New York Anti-Imperialist League ledger books are not included in any of the collections. For example, see letter dated January 25, 1902, Box 1, EO.

15. Jim Zwick, "Suffrage and Self-Determination: Women in the Debate about Imperialism," <http://boondocksnet.com/ai/wj/>, JZ.

16. The "water cure" was an ironic label. The contemporary "water curist" movement encouraged drinking a lot of water to improve health and well-being.

17. Senate Investigation on the Affairs in the Philippines, 1902, Congressional Hearings.

18. Mary Storer Cobb Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

19. Alice Smith-Travers, "The White Man's Burden," *The Freeman* (Indianapolis), March 4, 1899, <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/kipling/smith.html>, JZ.

20. Anna Manning Comfort, "Home Burdens of Uncle Sam," *The Public* 2 (May 13, 1899), <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/kipling/comfort.html>, JZ.

21. Jim Zwick compiled "Ladies for Liberty: Women's Poems against Imperialism and War," dedicated to Mary G. W. Pickering, who "paid the entire expense of publishing the [*Liberty Poems* volume]"; [http://www.boondocksnet.com/ail/lit/powems\\_by\\_women.html](http://www.boondocksnet.com/ail/lit/powems_by_women.html), JZ.

22. A Mother, "A Lament from Kentucky," *The Woman's Journal* 30 (Feb. 25, 1899), [http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/wj/wj\\_18990225a.html](http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/wj/wj_18990225a.html), JZ.

23. Box 1904-1935, MSMHS (for MSMHS, see the appendix).

24. *Ibid.* These numbers come from my calculations based on the information found in the ledger books of the Anti-Imperialist League.

25. Correspondence from Herbert Welsh to Storey, January 31, 1902, MSLOC.

26. Helen C. Wilson, "A Massachusetts Woman in the Philippines," (Boston: Fiske Warren, 1903), <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/ailtexts/hcw.html>, JZ.

27. Clemencia Lopez, "Reply by Senorita Lopez," a Farewell Luncheon in Honor of Senorita Clemencia Lopez, October 5, 1903 (Boston: Fiske Warren, 1904), <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/vof/clopez03.html>, JZ.

28. Letter dated February 4, 1902, Box 1, MSLOC.

29. Lanzar, Maria. "The Anti-Imperialist League." Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1928.
30. Record Books of Anti-Imperialist League, Vol. 4, MLC.

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