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McMahon, Jennifer M.

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SELF-PRESENTATION

Take up the White Man's burden—
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
"Why brought he us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?"

"The White Man's Burden," Stanza 5

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, equality (buoyed by capitalism and the work ethic), 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" (quoted in Lardizabal 1956, 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 1989, 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 1995, 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. (1979, 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. (1905a, 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. For many, 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 1995, 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'" (quoted in May 1980, 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 1990, 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 1990, 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, n.d., 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. (1926, 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 1935, 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. Harrie Cole and his wife Mary, traveling 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 weekly 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. Harrie 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 Harrie 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 Harrie 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." (1906, 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 phenomenon:

> 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. (1994, 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. (1995, 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, n.d., 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" (1928, 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 (Thornton 1927, 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*. (1928, 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 "Self-Reliance." Selections from *The Alhambra* were taught throughout the American colonial period, while an excerpt from *Up from Slavery* was taught from 1919 onward; *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" (1965, 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" (1989, 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 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 1922, 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" (1960, 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 progressive 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. (1926, 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 that 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" (1926, 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 unmarried.

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 1964, 246; Salamanca 1968, 94–95; Stanley 1974, 269; Welch 1979, 155–56). 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. (1989, 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 (1992a, 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." (1980, 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 in a poor mining town in West Virginia to get an education after emancipation, 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. (1926, 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 1922, 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" (1977, 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 a darker echo of the same theme, 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" (1963, 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 "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. (quoted in Brands 1992, 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. (Emerson 1992, 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" (1988, 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 1979, 26–27). 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 forebears. 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, 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, leave a trace 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 "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. (1972, 45)

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