

A TRANSITIONAL MOMENT: WILLIAM MCKINLEY'S FOREIGN POLICY  
RHETORIC AND AMERICA'S OUTWARD TURN

By

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Submitted to the graduate degree program in Communication Studies and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date Approved: December 14, 2017

**Abstract:** The Spanish-American War marked a turning point in American history. For the first time in U.S. history, American soldiers were fighting overseas. After the war, the United States gained its first imperial territories. America's new position in the world created a new rhetorical exigence that called for a redefinition of the American people and the United States itself. This dissertation explores this transitional moment and the foreign policy rhetoric of William McKinley in three separate chapters—McKinley's rhetoric about the Spanish-American War, the redefinition of the American people, and redefinition of the country. Defending his decision to enter the war, McKinley used the ideograph of civilization, framing the war in moral terms for the country. By winning the war and adopting a rhetoric of civilization, McKinley socialized the United States into the great power club. In redefining the American people, McKinley appealed to the values of patriotism and unity, employing the rhetorical trope of the citizen-soldier as the embodiment of these two values. The citizen-soldier trope privileged white males, while women and minorities were downplayed in McKinley's conception of citizenship. In redefining the country, McKinley employed the trope of American exceptionalism. Here, McKinley redefined the nation from a primarily exemplarist nation to an interventionist state. Rewriting American history, McKinley demonstrated how the nation had always expanded and this latest expansion was America's natural progression as God's chosen people. The dissertation concludes by examining McKinley's rhetorical legacy, how he set the discursive boundaries for future presidents, and his place in the rhetorical presidency.

## Acknowledgements

There are a number of people I would like to thank. First, Dr. Jay Childers for chairing this dissertation and being my adviser during my time at KU. I cannot express how much admiration and respect I have for you. You have helped me grow as a scholar and as a person. You gave me the time I needed to find my way, to search, and try to find the table and conversation I belong in. Your patience with me is something I will always be grateful for. You have improved my writing and made me a better scholar in ways that I will continue to discover as I move on from KU. More than anything, I have always enjoyed and will cherish our conversations as we neared the end of a meeting. They usually wondered to some strange thing happening in my life or an update on your house construction or a minor story, but they always seemed to set me at ease and reassure me that everything was going to work out. Thank you.

Dr. Rowland, you were the first person I talked to from KU when I was looking at Ph.D. programs. We talked on the phone for at a least an hour about rhetoric, history, and politics. It was at this point that I knew in my heart that KU was the school for me to attend. I will never forget the lessons I learned in 955 or how teaching COMS 235 made me a better instructor, and a more insightful critic. Your support throughout my years at KU are something I will look back fondly, along with our discussions about politics after a colloquium or in Bailey.

Dr. Innocenti, your seminar was my first class on campus. Your warmth and inviting atmosphere made it easy to get acclimated to being a Ph.D. student. Furthermore, your insights into rhetoric and history helped me improve as a scholar. Along with studying essays for how they moved and were constructed, preparing me to write academic essays, your class taught me what it meant to be a scholar. Thank you for your time and effort in making me a better rhetorician.

Dr. Harris, your rhetoric of war class is still one of my favorite classes I have ever taken. Between the subject and the depth of knowledge you brought to every class, I loved attending every single day. I knew every day I attended I would either learn something new or rethink something I thought I knew. I would be remiss though if I did not mention noonball. Inviting me to play and giving me an outlet outside of academia has been a saving grace during periods of stress. And, no one, no matter where I go, will have as good of a turnaround in the post than you.

Dr. Reiff and Dr. Devitt, I thank you for your support and help serving as my outside members. I have appreciated your insights, thoughtfulness, and support in my defenses.

To the rest of the Department of Communication Studies, Suzanne Grachek, and John Fackler, thank you for all you have done to make me a better scholar and person in my time at KU.

To my mother, father, sister, and Dusty, I cannot express how much each of you mean to me and how your love and support while I have been at KU has kept me going. Mom and dad, from my first day of school to today you have emphasized the importance of an education. I cannot tell you how much of an influence that has had on me and how much I value everything you have sacrificed so I could do this.

To Lindsay Harroff, Emily Vietti, and Casi Bird, I thank each of you for reading different chapters of my dissertation, giving me feedback, and editing tips. Your kindness in telling me that while that page about coal's influence on England's imperialism is interesting, it could be cut down was greatly appreciated. Each of you helped improve my writing and thought process during this project. A special thank you to Casi, for all the support in every class (since we basically took all of them together) and throughout both the comps and dissertation process.

To the rest of the KU grad students, especially Hailey Drescher, Chelsea Graham, Abbie Hodgson, Weston Wiebe, Gretchen Montgomery, Michael Kearney, Brendon Bankey, Liz Miller, Sean Kennedy, Matthew Kay, Gaby Bird, Josh Morgan, Allie Chase, Haley Vellinga, Chong Xing, Igor Ristić, and everyone else, your friendship and support has been invaluable throughout this process and every day. You all are truly a special group and I have been thankful each and every day to have met you all.

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## Chapter 1: Setting the Scene: The United States in the 1890s

At 9:45 in the evening on February 15, 1898, a terrible explosion shook the U.S.S. *Maine* docked in Havana Harbor, Cuba. Initial reports indicated high casualties. In total, there were 266 dead, including 2 officers.<sup>1</sup> Survivors were unable to explain the cause of the explosion.<sup>2</sup> In an effort to uncover the cause of the explosion, President William McKinley launched a special investigative commission. However, American newspapers wasted no time in assigning the blame to Spain, even though Spain's departing Minister, Senor de Lomé, refused to believe Spanish forces were behind the explosion.<sup>3</sup> Leading the charge against Spain were the *New York Journal*, owned by William Randolph Hearst, and the *New York World*, owned by Joseph Pulitzer. Hearst's *Journal* ran the headline "Crisis is at Hand: Cabinet in session; Growing Belief in Spanish Treachery;" Pulitzer's *World* ran "Destruction of the War Ship *Maine* was the Work of an Enemy," with a subheading of "Naval Officers Think the *Maine* was Destroyed by a Spanish Mine."<sup>4</sup> Rhetorical scholar Elizabeth Lowry noted Hearst and Pulitzer were competing for the most sensational headlines of the day, with Hearst specifically believing "that a declaration of war would mean increased news coverage and more paper sales."<sup>5</sup>

The *Maine* crisis came on the heels of a setback in U.S.-Spanish relations. Six days before the sinking of the *Maine*, a private letter from de Lomé was published disparaging McKinley and Cuban autonomy. Pulitzer ran the headline "Worst Insult to the United States in Its History." With the *Maine* explosion, McKinley could not appear weak or inactive reinforcing de Lomé's criticism of him. As historian and biographer H. Wayne Morgan wrote about McKinley's interpretation of the *Maine* and de Lomé letter: "In his heart he knew that intervention was but a matter of time."<sup>6</sup>

In early March 1898, McKinley requested and received \$50 million to be spent at his discretion on national defense. The bill passed without a dissenting vote. Pressure for war from the public and both sides of the aisle increased throughout the month. By late March, McKinley feared if he resisted both public and congressional pressure any longer he might destroy “his party and any hope of a constructive national and international program in the future.”<sup>7</sup> After a month of failed diplomatic maneuvering to avoid war, by early April the president was ready to go to war. However, before McKinley delivered his request for a declaration of war to Congress, Democrat Joe Bailey rose in Congress to criticize the president. Bailey stated, “But if the President of the United States wants two days, or if he wants two hours, to continue negotiations with the butchers of Spain, we are not ready to give him one moment longer for that purpose.”<sup>8</sup> McKinley was irate with the hawkish Congress and their demands placed upon him. Some congressmen visited the president after Bailey’s speech. Rather than being greeted by McKinley’s typical genial personality, they were met with a rare show of wrath from the president. His faith in the people of America had wavered in their clamor for war. He told his personal secretary George Cortelyou, “The country should understand that we are striving to make our course consistent not alone for today, but for all time. The people must not be unreasonable.”<sup>9</sup> McKinley finally sent his “War Address” to Congress on April 11. The United States officially declared war on Spain on April 25, 1898. With this declaration, McKinley would send American soldiers to fight on foreign soil for the first time in American history.

Before American soldiers landed in Cuba, the U.S. Navy launched a surprise naval attack in the Philippines, destroying the Spanish fleet anchored in Manilla Bay, on the Philippine Island of Luzon. Admiral George Dewey’s surprise victory over the Spanish fleet in Manilla occurred on May 1, 1898, with Dewey’s fleet destroying seven ships and suffering only light casualties.<sup>10</sup>

American forces in Cuba did not have as easy a time as Dewey in the Philippines. Years of neglect and penny-pinching, along with keeping only a small standing army, left the United States undermanned and lacking basic supplies. Added to their trouble was a small general staff to organize, train, and equip over 200,000 volunteers. American forces were disorganized, with plans to invade Cuba delayed from early May until June 26, when American forces finally landed. After some initial difficulties, and the continued problem of disease, American forces were too much for the Spanish. By the end of summer, U.S. troops were victorious, defeating Spanish forces in the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. By early August, Spain requested a peace conference to end hostilities.

Even with the backdrop of American military blunders, few in Congress doubted America's eventual victory. By midsummer, while the fighting was still taking place, many in Washington turned their attention to the post-war settlement and America's future position in the world. Tennessee Senator E.W. Carmack, in a speech to his colleagues in June 1898, quoted a *Washington Post* editorial. Carmack read the following into Congressional record, "Ambition, interest, land-hunger, pride, the mere joy of fighting, whatever it may be we are animated by a new sensation. We are face to face with a strange destiny. The path of empire opens, and we must tread wherever it leads, whatever the sacrifice or peril. The taste of Empire is in the mouth of the people even as the taste of blood in the jungle."<sup>11</sup> Carmack described an historic change in American history. At the conclusion of the peace conference, the United States gained full control over Puerto Rico and the Philippines. In Cuba, the United States did not exert direct imperial control but was responsible for Cuba's development. The United States had become an imperial power, drastically altering its traditional foreign policy stance of non-interventionism. Such a dramatic shift in policy presented a new rhetorical challenge. McKinley needed to

convince the American people to support multiple military engagements beyond the North American continent, while simultaneously inserting America into global economic affairs in China and elsewhere. In the process, he redefined citizenship and the country to better align with America's new role in the world.

Despite numerous biographies and histories of McKinley and his presidency in other fields, there has been a dearth of scholarship on McKinley in rhetorical studies. To be sure, McKinley has garnered some attention. For instance, William Harpine wrote a careful analysis of the 1896 election between McKinley and William Jennings Bryan, tracking the different approaches taken by the candidates in an election that was vigorously followed in America with an 80 percent voter turnout.<sup>12</sup> Harpine also analyzed McKinley's rhetoric in a chapter in Martin Medhurst's *Before the Rhetorical Presidency*, examining the rhetorical evolution of McKinley from his "Inaugural Address" to his final speech in Buffalo.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Robert Ivie examined a single McKinley speech given in support of American imperialism at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha, Nebraska, on October 12, 1898.<sup>14</sup> Despite these and a few other fine works, there seems to be a clear imbalance between the important discursive work McKinley did at the turn of the twentieth century and rhetorical criticism of that work.<sup>15</sup> This dissertation project is an effort to remedy this imbalance.

When studying presidents and presidential rhetoric, it is important to remember that presidents are historical actors. As political scientist Stephen Skowronek remarked, "Their words and deeds will transform the contexts in which they act, but they must act by their own lights within the context given."<sup>16</sup> Skowronek continued, "a president comes to power at a particular moment in the course of national events, and vindication turns on the prospect for securing meaning of *that* moment on the president's own terms."<sup>17</sup> These critical transitional moments in

American history give presidents the opportunity to rearticulate and reshape America through their discourse, but not every president has this opportunity. I contend the uniqueness of McKinley's historical context provided him with a transitional moment to reshape and redefine the U.S. and its foreign policy. The rhetorical exigence faced by McKinley presented three unique questions that are the focus of this dissertation. First, given U.S. involvement in wars on foreign soil was an alteration to American tradition, how did McKinley justify this change? Second, such a massive change in foreign policy required a reimagining of U.S. citizenship to fit with America's new role in the world, how did McKinley transform and reimagine citizenship? Third, the change in American foreign policy also required McKinley to redefine America's role in the world. How did McKinley redefine the country?

In answering these questions, I argue McKinley served as an important transitional president, bridging the nineteenth and twentieth centuries during an important transition in the nation's history. His rhetoric represented the evolution of the nation from a major regional power to a great international power, adapting to the changing domestic and international contexts. To justify the Spanish-American War, McKinley employed the ideograph of civilization with the key modifiers of humanity, duty, and progress. In his justification, McKinley argued civilization imposed certain moral duties on the United States. Moreover, as a civilized state, the U.S. was responsible for upholding these duties in the international system. America's involvement abroad demanded new responsibilities from its citizens as well. To cope with these changes, McKinley used the constitutive power of presidential rhetoric to redefine Americans. McKinley's conception of citizenship prioritized patriotism and unity, specifically a unity overcoming regional divisions. Supporting his redefinition of citizenship, McKinley used the rhetorical trope of the citizen-soldier as an idealized version of his redefined American. With America's

increased role in the world, the country itself needed to be redefined. McKinley refocused American exceptionalism from an exemplarist interpretation of America's international role to an interventionist understanding. Together, these three ideas worked together to help McKinley transition the nation from concentrating primarily on domestic concerns to a more active role in the world.

In order to make this overall argument, the remainder of the introduction lays the theoretical and methodological groundwork underpinning my study and provides a snapshot of America in 1896. First, I overview presidential rhetoric, grounding my study in the past scholarship of the field and highlighting some of the key findings that guide my analysis. Second, I present my underlying methodological assumptions supporting my research. Specifically, I employ a close textual analysis, emphasizing the importance of context in understanding a text. Third, I provide a snapshot of the United States in 1896, exploring the political, economic, and racial tensions on the domestic front, as well as setting the scene globally and locating America's place in it. I conclude by previewing the arguments in subsequent chapters.

### **Presidential Rhetoric: A Review**

Studying presidential rhetoric has been part of communication departments since the early 1920s. Martin Medhurst, in his historical review of presidential rhetoric, noted its humble beginnings with only four journal articles appearing in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* throughout the 1920s.<sup>18</sup> The field expanded from only studying three presidents—Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt—to include James Madison, Theodore Roosevelt, John Q. Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Harry Truman in the following two decades after 1945. During this period, scholars primarily employed a historical-rhetorical approach

composed of background context, an examination of ideas, speech composition, and delivery. When Edwin Black published *Rhetorical Criticism* in 1965, a change occurred in the field. History was out, and criticism was in. Multiple methods replaced the historical method as the primary way to examine presidential rhetoric.<sup>19</sup> Yet, the field remained undefined until the mid-1980s, when books by Kathleen Jamieson and Roderick Hart were published, along with Theodore Windt Jr.'s article defining the field.

In his 1986 article, "Presidential Rhetoric: Definition of a Field of Study," Windt argued presidents have three main avenues of power available to them: constitutional, political, and power over public opinion (rhetorical). It is this last power that Windt focused on, examining how presidents used rhetoric to persuade the public, that is of interest to my study. Windt defined the field of presidential rhetoric, stating, it "is concerned with the study of presidential public persuasion as it affects the ability of a President to exercise the powers of the office."<sup>20</sup> According to Windt, studies should include an analysis and understanding of the target constituencies a president addressed and should be placed in the overall context of the administration to understand how rhetoric influenced that administration. Concluding his argument, Windt remarked, rhetoric was only one of the powers available to the president, but "in a democracy it may well be the fundamental power upon which all others rest."<sup>21</sup> The remainder of Windt's article focused on four categories of research (single speeches, movement studies, genre studies, and miscellaneous research) and looked toward the future of the field.

Since Windt's definition of the field of presidential rhetoric, rhetorical scholars have continued to examine and shape the field of presidential rhetoric. The rest of this section looks at some of the broader concepts concerned with the role of presidential rhetoric, including the role of rhetoric in the presidency, presidential leadership, and the rhetorical presidency, as well as key

ideas related to my study. The two key concepts I explore are the president's constitutive function in creating the American people and the role definition plays in the president's ability to define the nation, issues, and political reality.

The same year Windt published his article defining the field of presidential rhetoric, David Zarefsky published his book length treatment of Lyndon Johnson's rhetoric on the war on poverty. Opening his argument, Zarefsky acknowledged the significance of the presidency, observing, "Any such analysis must begin with the realization that in modern American society the presidency is the primary source of symbols about public issues."<sup>22</sup> The president's task, according to Zarefsky, "is to understand the situation and tap the national character in order to give expression to previously latent thoughts that would serve to unify and inspire people."<sup>23</sup> As one of the most prominent speakers in American politics, presidents have acquired the rhetorical power to shape the public's view of an issue or situation. President's select symbols to define the situation or issue, giving them considerable power to shape public perception. These symbols become powerful rhetorical tools for the president to draw on in their discourse. As Denise Bostdorff stated, "Because of the symbolic nature of our political world, the issues that presidents discuss are not objective, independent entities, but linguistic constructions."<sup>24</sup> Thus, everything from cities to oil fields to weapons exist materially, but the meaning of these symbols rests in the language used to describe them and assigned to them by powerful political actors. This role is assumed by the president in the U.S. It is in this sense that Vanessa Beasley described one of the rhetorical roles of the president as "teaching reality."<sup>25</sup> It is through language and giving voice to issues and symbols, imbued with meaning, that presidents shape political reality and gain both rhetorical and political power.

With an increase in both the number and type of speeches presidents deliver, there is little doubt rhetoric offers presidents the opportunity to appear presidential, leading the nation through a difficult crisis or toward a major national goal. In Leroy Dorsey's introduction to the *Presidency and Rhetorical Leadership*, he defined rhetorical leadership, stating, "rhetorical leadership could be defined as the process of discovering, articulating, and sharing the available means of influence in order to motivate human agents in a particular situation."<sup>26</sup> Simply, as Dorsey surmised, "to lead requires an ability to be rhetorical."<sup>27</sup> Zarefsky, in the same volume, went further, outlining recurrent themes in presidential leadership. Presidential leadership, according to Zarefsky, meant rising above the minimal requirements of the Constitution and bringing about transformative change. Key to such transformation is employing and discovering all the available means of persuasion in a given case to effect the change. Any rhetorician should recognize this last point as Aristotle's definition of rhetoric.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, in Zarefsky's review of presidential rhetoric since the founding, he observed presidents have always needed more power than granted to them by the Constitution to be successful leaders. To fill this gap between prescribed powers and desired power, presidents have used rhetoric work toward transformative change. There are two key strategies presidents have employed to enhance their power: conventional and innovative rhetoric.

Conventional rhetoric refers to rhetorical occasions when presidents can transform existing rhetorical practices or traditions, increasing their power. Inaugural addresses, State of the Union messages, and acceptance speeches fall into this first category. Innovative rhetoric occurs in instances where presidents expand their power either explicitly or through claiming significant new powers that are rhetorical in nature.<sup>29</sup> Presidents do this by claiming an electoral mandate, "going public" by appealing to citizens for support on an issue, reconstructing history,

or issuing foreign policy. Both conventional and innovative rhetorical strategies have been used to exhibit presidential leadership, demonstrating how presidents have expanded their power through discourse. Because of this the presidency, for Zarefsky, has always been rhetorical, beginning with Washington and continuing to the present day.<sup>30</sup>

Before moving on to specific findings about presidential rhetoric, I would be remiss if I did not mention the rhetorical presidency. Around the same time Windt, Zarefsky, and others were defining the field, studying the presidency as an institution was gaining prominence in political science. In 1987, Jeffery Tulis wrote *The Rhetorical Presidency*, building off a 1981 co-authored article, "The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency."<sup>31</sup> In that work, Tulis explained that presidents use rhetoric to appeal directly to the citizens in a bid to go over the heads of Congress to secure mass support of legislative initiatives.<sup>32</sup> Tulis did not render judgment on the rhetorical presidency as being good or bad; rather, he focused on rhetoric as a tool to analyze changes in the institution of the presidency. For Tulis, unlike Zarefsky, rhetoric only became worthy of study after the rise of the mass media. It was at this moment Tulis believed rhetoric became a force in shaping the presidency. According to Tulis, the first era began with the Founders and ended with Theodore Roosevelt. These presidents, Tulis noted, "proscribed the rhetorical presidency as ardently as we prescribe it."<sup>33</sup> Simply, rhetoric was not a primary part of the president's job. The second era began with Woodrow Wilson and continued to the present day. While Tulis' concern was on the institution of the presidency, his work has influenced the field of presidential rhetoric.

In *The Prospect of Presidential Rhetoric*, Henry Abbott and his colleagues wrote that there is a distinction between presidential rhetoric and the rhetorical presidency. Scholars focused on the presidency as an institution usually reside in political science departments. They

focus primarily on how rhetoric has changed and influenced the presidency. Typically, rhetoric is a secondary concern to the institutional changes of the presidency. Alternatively, scholars of presidential rhetoric work in communication departments, investigating how discourse was used to persuade a given audience on a given occasion.<sup>34</sup> However, there is a third option. Some scholars have attempted to bridge the gap, focusing on both rhetoric and how it has transformed the institution of the presidency. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson's book *Deeds Done in Words*, according to them, "is about presidential rhetoric." However, it also looked "at the presidency as it has emerged through the rhetorical practices of our presidents."<sup>35</sup> Mary Stuckey also combined the two areas of study. In her examination of Theodore Roosevelt's Brownsville speech, she claimed, "while presidential rhetoric had always mattered, under Roosevelt it began to assume an *institutionalized* primacy that it had lacked previously."<sup>36</sup>

My study is firmly based in presidential rhetoric, exploring how William McKinley's discourse persuaded his audiences in a particular context, giving primacy to McKinley's rhetoric. This does not mean there were no lessons to be taken away from my study about the presidency as an institution, but these were of secondary importance and only appear in my conclusion. This study draws from the rich scholarship of presidential rhetoric, utilizing some of its key findings as the groundwork for its findings. The remainder of this section digs deeper into some of the key findings presidential rhetorical scholars have uncovered.

Rhetorical scholars have made significant and diverse contributions to the scholarship on presidential rhetoric, examining presidential war rhetoric,<sup>37</sup> foreign crisis rhetoric,<sup>38</sup> the comforter-in-chief,<sup>39</sup> and studies on specific presidents,<sup>40</sup> among many other topics.<sup>41</sup> However, I focus here on two concepts relevant to this study: the constitutive function of presidential rhetoric and the president's use of definition.

In her research on American national identity, Mary Stuckey observed the diversity of identities Americans possess. She stated of Americans' complexity, "Americans at any given time have different sets of identities...variously composed of their experiences of national and international history, race(s), class, gender, region, sexuality, and life history."<sup>42</sup> American presidents articulate national identity striving to reduce these complex identities to a simple, singular American identity. Their rhetoric is intended to give life to "the *idea* of an American people *to* the American people."<sup>43</sup> Simply, American presidents construct an American identity discursively, creating the American people through constitutive rhetoric. Otherwise, individuals would merely exist in the United States, not as the American people, but as singular entities. Group identity as the people is a rhetorical construction. As Maurice Charland observed, "the people" do not "exist in nature, but only within a discursively constituted history."<sup>44</sup> Further still, Michael McGee argued, 'the people' "are conjured into objective reality, remain so long as the rhetoric which defined them has force, and in the end wilt away, becoming once again merely a collection of individuals."<sup>45</sup> Therefore, presidents need to give multiple speeches, enacting presidential leadership, and continually renewing and reminding Americans who they are. By enacting this constitutive role, presidents become the "symbolic guardians of national unity in the United States."<sup>46</sup> Citizens see the president as a representative of all Americans, whether they voted for him or not. The president should embody, and reflect rhetorically, the shared beliefs of the nation and the people he constituted. Because each president is different and faces different external exigencies, each president has some ability to rhetorically reshape and redefine the American people and the nation. As Campbell and Jamieson observed, presidents can persuade citizens to see themselves and the country in ways that are compatible with their views on government and the world.<sup>47</sup> Presidents do this by appealing to the shared beliefs of the nation.

In her work on presidential rhetoric, Vanessa Beasley stated, presidents “incorporate into their discourse the cultural logics and beliefs—*doxa*—that are assumed to be somehow shared by ‘the people,’ a rhetorical creation though they maybe.”<sup>48</sup> In studying presidential rhetoric, scholars uncover what the American people valued in an era, as well as how presidents discursively reshaped the American people to align with their administration’s values and goals. Through the stories, myths, and arguments presidents make to the American people, rhetorical scholars shed light on the presidency or presidencies under study. In these rhetorical narratives, presidents highlight the shared beliefs Americans hold in common and the governing priorities of the administration. By emphasizing the shared myths and narratives Americans have in common, presidents reestablish and reinforce the shared bonds between citizens. A set of shared beliefs, an American Creed, acts as the bond between citizens. Swedish Nobel-laureate Gunnar Myrdal wrote of the American Creed, stating, “Americans of all national origins, classes, regions, creeds, and colors, have something in common: a social *ethos*, a political creed. It is difficult to avoid the judgment that this ‘American Creed’ is the cement in the structure of this great and disparate nation.”<sup>49</sup> Unlike other nations, America’s diversity since its inception was unique. Accordingly, U.S. presidents promoted a national identity that could accommodate diversity. Thus, according to Beasley, “U.S. presidents have also repeatedly stated in their speeches that American national identity is based on certain shared beliefs. And they have just as regularly promised that anyone who holds these beliefs is fit to be an American.”<sup>50</sup> Presidential rhetoric gives voice to these shared beliefs. Without the president acting as the “symbolic guardian of national unity,” the bonds between American citizens may weaken, dissolving the union held together, in part, discursively.

Integral to any president's ability to create the people and garner support for his policies is the role definition plays in presidential rhetoric. Reality is perceived differently for each person, with the world and its shared meaning being constructed through rhetoric. Zarefsky demonstrated this point, arguing, "The referents of any given situation are not clear and univocal; rather, they are constituted by the participants in an interaction."<sup>51</sup> Americans from pundits to other political actors to everyday citizens shape and give meaning to their environment by naming situations around them. However, as demonstrated earlier, it is the president, with his rhetorical presence and stature in the nation, who has the most influence in shaping political reality. Simply, as Zarefsky stated, presidential rhetoric "defines political reality."<sup>52</sup> By naming a situation, presidents provide a "basis for understanding it and determining the appropriate response."<sup>53</sup> A president could define a situation as a war or a crisis or a non-event. Even the mere fact a president chose to speak about a particular situation or issue increased the salience of the subject. By raising the salience of an issue and defining it, presidents "can serve a long-term educative function, raising public consciousness about a particular issue or starting conversations that, over the long term, affect a variety of specific policies."<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, as Zarefsky observed, to choose one definition over the others is, in essence, "to plead a cause, as if one were advancing a claim and offering support for it."<sup>55</sup> The definition chosen by the president has implications for "what counts as data for or against a proposal, highlights certain elements of the situation for use in arguments and obscures others, influences whether people will notice the situation and how they will handle it, describes causes and identifies remedies, and invites moral judgments about circumstances or individuals."<sup>56</sup> Combined with the president's ability to constitute the American people, the president can define the American people and the nation. Telling them who they are, giving salience to certain

qualities over others, and suggesting how they should act in relation to the political reality the president described. Therefore, the president's power to define the situation and the people is one of the most powerful rhetorical tools he has at his disposal.

### **Rhetorical History and Close Textual Analysis: Tools to Uncover**

To explore McKinley's rhetoric, I plan on conducting a rhetorical history using a close textual analysis method. Thus, my approach is informed by scholarly discussion of both rhetorical history and close textual analysis. These threads share a concern with the role of context, both its influence on the text and its proper place in rhetorical analysis. I begin by discussing rhetorical history before moving to close textual analysis.

The rhetorical historian is in a special position to give an interpretation of the past based on his or her understanding of the symbolic system rhetors used at the time. According to Moya Ann Ball, rhetorical history "is a rhetorical perspective for investigating historical happenings, and it is a recognition that historical happenings come about most often because of and through rhetorical discourse."<sup>57</sup> The rhetorical historian looks at "how messages are created and used by people to influence and relate to one another."<sup>58</sup> From this perspective, history is viewed as a set of rhetorical problems and situations calling for rhetoric. Rhetorical critics go about solving these problems by choosing a historical lens, studying "how, and how well, people invented and deployed messages in response to a situation."<sup>59</sup> Rather than merely reconstructing the past, the rhetorical critic "makes informed judgments about the communication of the past, intertwining rhetoric, history, and criticism in the process."<sup>60</sup> Rhetorical historians recognize discourse as a "*force* in its own right," promoting or displacing relations within and among people.<sup>61</sup> Key terms and definitions were often open to interpretation and re-interpretation by different groups who sought to create a new understanding of history or a term for their benefit. Thus, the rhetorical

critic requires skill in deciphering what values, attitudes, and beliefs were imbued in the metaphors, myths, narratives and other language choices of rhetors. The role of the critic is to investigate language through the prism of history, but what does rhetorical history offer my or any other rhetorical project?

According to Kathleen Turner, rhetorical history offers “an understanding of rhetoric as a process rather than as simply a product; it creates and appreciation of both the commonalities among and the distinctiveness of rhetorical situations and responses.”<sup>62</sup> “Doing rhetorical history” allows the critic to consider “what persuasive discourse means within its historical context.”<sup>63</sup> To understand this situation and context, critics must understand the rhetorical climate of the era. A rhetorical history provides an understanding of “the context through messages that reflect and construct that context.”<sup>64</sup> Rhetorical history is key to understanding why certain choices and messages were employed, why certain symbols and messages resonated, and what roads were not taken. Rhetorical historians use archival research to illuminate the rhetorical climate of the era by suggesting “how people defined the situation, what led them to seek to justify themselves or to persuade others, what storehouse of social knowledge they drew upon for their premises, what themes and styles they produced in their messages, how their processes of identification and confrontation succeeded or failed.”<sup>65</sup> Rhetorical history is key to understanding why certain choices and messages were employed, why certain symbols and message resonated, and what roads were not taken. Rhetorical history provides rhetoricians a tool to study the text in context and, thus, discovering how they mutually influenced each other. Rhetorical histories offer a fuller understanding of how past generations communicated and a better understanding of the world we live in.

The social construction of the present does not exist without some understanding of the past or how society has reached its current point. The process of going back to the past is always necessary to better understand the present. As Zarefsky observed, “If the task sometimes seems difficult in the face of a fragmented public, weakened political parties, difficult issues, an accelerating news cycle, and the other characteristics of modern politics, it is worth reexamining earlier presidencies—not only to appreciate them more and see whence we came from, but to realize striking similarities and recurrent patterns of rhetorical invention.”<sup>66</sup> Even if no new documentary evidence was found and technology provided scholars with no new tools to study the past, the “continual reshaping of our own minds by the events and social processes of our own times would make us ask new questions and discard earlier interpretations as inadequate if not false.”<sup>67</sup> A rhetorical history of McKinley’s rhetoric offers a better understanding of how America became a major player on the international scene.

To better understand my texts of interest, I perform a close textual analysis of McKinley’s speeches. Barry Brummett explained there is no clear distinction between reading and close reading, but a *close* reading “is a mindful, disciplined reading of an object with a view to deeper understanding of its meaning.”<sup>68</sup> One of the ways a rhetorician can read a text closely is by cultivating a strong understanding of the text’s context and then reading the text through the context. Davis Houck and Mihaela Nocasian did exactly this in their examination of FDR’s first inaugural address. Houck and Nocasian analyzed archival documents to reconstruct the 1930s. By doing this, they were able to better grasp how the situation influenced Roosevelt’s construction of his first inaugural and the audience’s reception. In their cultivation of the context, they recognized a “symbiotic relationship between text and context.”<sup>69</sup> Texts and contexts influence one another.

What, then, should rhetoricians consider part of the context? Early rhetorical criticism primarily focused on the immediate context surrounding a speech and the audience's reception, but later scholarship demonstrated the insufficiency of such limited context. James Jasinski strove to create the theoretical basis for expanded contexts. In a critique of Michael Leff and G.P. Mohrmann's analysis of Lincoln's speech at Cooper Union, Jasinski took issue with Leff and Mohrmann's limited understanding of context that focused almost exclusively on the genre of a campaign speech and the reception by east coast Republicans. His major issue was the absence of any discussion of slavery in America and how this may have influenced Lincoln's speech. Leff and Mohrmann's focus on the purpose of ingratiation caused them to overlook how Lincoln relied on "the argumentative 'locus of the existent'" throughout the text to justify Lincoln's policy proposition within the larger context of slavery in the United States.<sup>70</sup> Their focus on the text and immediate context—a campaign speech—caused them to overlook a crucial cultural context. In "Lincoln at Cooper Union: Neo-Classical Criticism Revisited," Leff admitted his error and rectified it by rereading the text with an expanded context.<sup>71</sup> While this admission and correction expanded Leff's analysis, it did not clarify exactly what the larger context Jasinski sought would look like.

Jasinski wanted context to play a larger role in rhetorical criticism and was perplexed by critics who bracket off time periods from larger societal and global contexts.<sup>72</sup> Besides expanding the scope of context, Jasinski also called for an 'intertextual' reading. For Jasinski, "context is more than a passive frame or repository of purpose;"<sup>73</sup> rather, texts must be read in an intertextual matrix that places the text in "the linguistic context or 'cultural grammar'" of the era.<sup>74</sup> Better criticism comes from "an adequate textual 'ground' and a more detailed and nuanced sense of how that ground functions to enable and constrain textual practices."<sup>75</sup> Jasinski

called for rhetoricians to acquire a better understanding of the context of an era. Then, the rhetorician should take this knowledge and apply it to reading the text and understanding how audiences of that era would understand the discourse. For Leff, close textual analysis allowed for this expanded context and intertextual interplay. Leff reasoned the text functions in an intertextual network that did most of the meaning making. “The text is both a part and a whole,” according to Leff, “and to view it from one of these perspectives to the exclusion of the other is either to bracket the cultural resources that inform rhetorical production or to ignore the situated interest that motivate rhetorical action.”<sup>76</sup> An expanded context is not a basic history of the era, but an understanding of how the social, political, and cultural contexts influenced a text and how the text modified these contexts.

In my analysis, I examine both the domestic and international contexts to enhance my analysis. As my focus is on McKinley’s foreign policy rhetoric, my conception of context included the international scene, calling attention to larger international forces and trends occurring in the world that may have influenced McKinley’s discourse. In my first main chapter, for example, I explore the ideograph of civilization. I use the historical context of the nineteenth century to recreate how citizens of the era interpreted the term. I include a genealogy of the term throughout the nineteenth century in both the international and domestic spheres, examining the diachronic understanding of civilization. My diachronic analysis demonstrated how civilization functioned to divide the world into two camps, civilized and uncivilized people, leaving McKinley with a choice of which camp he would rhetorically place America. In the next two chapters, exploring McKinley’s redefinition of the America and its citizens, I focus on reconstructing the United States in the 1890s. In doing so, I establish how Americans viewed themselves and the nation. Then, by tacking back and forth between the context and McKinley’s

texts I analyze how McKinley used rhetoric to restructure and reshape the country and its people. The historical context throughout my analysis informs my understanding of this unique rhetorical moment in American history and how McKinley responded to it.

### **America in 1896**

On March 4, 1897, McKinley concluded his “Inaugural Address,” stating, “I congratulate the country upon the fraternal spirit of the people and the manifestations of good will everywhere so apparent.”<sup>77</sup> However, even a cursory glance at the election of 1896 or American history in the early 1890s would seriously call into question McKinley’s assessment of America’s spirit of fraternity dwelling throughout the nation. To explore this, I want to provide a snapshot of the United States as the McKinley administration began. This snapshot will focus on the campaign and election of 1896, the economic and racial tensions of the era, and where the world and the United States’ place in it stood when McKinley became president. Some of these contextual factors will be expanded in the coming chapters, providing a more complete description of the era.

The presidential campaign and election of 1896 was a highly contested race between McKinley and William Jennings Bryan. The contrast between the two campaigns was startling. Bryan toured the country, giving hundreds of stump speeches, while McKinley stayed in Ohio, speaking from his front porch. Bryan traversed the country giving both short and long speeches in towns and cities. He traveled over 18,000 miles, in an era of slow trains, delivering over 600 speeches, sometimes up to 30 a day, with nearly 5 million people hearing him speak.<sup>78</sup> McKinley, who was not nearly as gifted an orator, gave about half the number of speeches as Bryan and, unlike Bryan, McKinley never left Ohio. Rhetorician William Harpine wrote of McKinley’s approach, “The genius of McKinley’s Front Porch campaign was that it did not look

like a campaign. The impression could not be avoided that Bryan was stumping desperately for votes while McKinley casually waited at home for the people to endorse him. Nothing, however, could have been further from the truth: McKinley's energetic, well-organized campaign was not casual."<sup>79</sup> With each candidate vigorously campaigning for the presidency, the campaign was the first to resemble a modern presidential campaign. With civic participation near historic highs, Bryan lost the election but "received more votes than any winning presidential candidate before him."<sup>80</sup> As Harpine noted, "People cared about this election with a deep, almost unfathomable passion."<sup>81</sup> Such passion was a result of a deeply divided country.

In his study of presidential elections from 1888 to 1988, political scientist Harvey Schantz noted the elections of 1892 and 1896 were two of the three most fractured elections by regional sectionalism. Such extreme divisions can be seen in McKinley's regional deviations, winning in New England (+19.5) and the Middle Atlantic (+9) while losing the South (-16.3) and the Rocky Mountains (-34.1).<sup>82</sup> In the electoral college, the South voted "solidly for Bryan, as did every state west of the Mississippi save Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oregon, and California." McKinley captured those five states, along with "every state between the Mississippi and the Ohio rivers and all of the Northeast, plus Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware."<sup>83</sup> These results indicated a politically divided nation along regional lines. Driving this division were economic and racial tensions.

Citizens across the nation struggled with the transition from an agricultural to an industrial based economy and society, with some citizens losing their identity in the process. The problem was not merely one for farmers, who transitioned from small farms to larger industrial farms, but factory workers as well. Average industrial laborers found themselves paying more for products, while not seeing an increase in their wages. Many Americans saw a transfer of

wealth, with it moving from laborers to the producers.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, it should be of little surprise that two of America's worst and most violent labor strikes, the Pullman and Homestead strikes, occurred in the early 1890s. One factor driving this economic anxiety was the high protective tariff, the other was the gold standard. Historian H.W. Brands described the tariff as "a triumph for the capitalist class."<sup>85</sup> Brands also stated, "the agrarian West and South lined up against the tariff and the industrial Northeast lobbied in favor."<sup>86</sup> Southern and Western farmers believed the high protectionist tariff at home was being reciprocated abroad, keeping their food stuffs out of foreign markets, where farmers counted on these markets to make a profit. Whereas, the industrial north and east favored the high tariff to protect their burgeoning industries from European competition. Bryan and the Democrats ran against both the tariff and the gold standard. The Democrat's platform in 1896 stated, "We are unalterably opposed to monometallism, which has locked fast the prosperity of an industrial people in the paralysis of hard times."<sup>87</sup> Again, like the tariff, support for bimetallism came from Southern and Western farmers, miners, and other laborers who would benefit from the introduction of silver into the coinage of the United States.<sup>88</sup> Economic differences were just one issue that divided the nation, as racial tensions and discrimination increased drastically during the decade.

As the old Southern institution of slavery died out with the defeat of the Confederacy, newer political and social institutions were fighting to take its place. Working for equality and civil rights were people like George Washington Cable and Lewis Blair. Cable, author of *The Silent South*, and Blair, author of *The Prosperity of the South Dependent upon the Elevation of the Negro*, were strong proponents for equal treatment between the races. However, many Southern whites, especially the lower-classes, favored separation, taking cues from leaders like Alabama governor Thomas Jones. Speaking to conservative Democrats, Jones stated, "The

Negro race is under us; he is in our power... We are his custodians.”<sup>89</sup> The least Jones, and other Southerners could do, was extend basic civil rights and decent treatment to black Americans. Yet, the economic downturn in 1893 and regional tensions over economic issues exacerbated many white’s racist attitudes, as competition between low-wage white and black factory workers increased. Lower-class whites found it harder to extend such basic rights; rather, they sought confirmation of their racist ideology through enforced legal segregation. In 1896, the Supreme Court decided the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. With the Court’s decision, the phrase “separate, but equal” was introduced into America’s lexicon. With this decision, the era of Jim Crow dominated the South, creating legal segregation between the races and doing untold harm to race relations in the country for decades. Of course, the North was not necessarily a paradise for blacks, as Northern racism and segregation was subtler and less explicit.

Additionally, between 1870 and 1910, over twenty million foreigners emigrated to the United States, with more than 5 million Europeans alone entering the country in the 1880s, and not all of them from Western or Northern Europe, but some from the poorer areas of Eastern and Southern Europe.<sup>90</sup> These new immigrants came from countries generally considered inferior by Anglo-Saxons, both in Europe and the United States. Whereas immigrants from Germany and England were welcome, Latin and Slavic immigrants joined the lower classes of the United States. America had always been known for its’ ability to assimilate people into the national fabric, as Oliver Wendell Holmes declared, “We are the Romans of the modern world, -the great assimilating people,” but racial and economic tensions threatened to rend the national fabric apart.<sup>91</sup>

Domestically, the nation was divided, but as McKinley gazed outward, he saw something different. The world was united under the control of a few European nations and Japan, which

were all understood as great powers. The term great power has a difficult and elusive genealogy; however, historian Hamish Scott observed, the term great power entered the political lexicon in the third quarter of the eighteenth century to describe the emerging five great powers of Europe.<sup>92</sup> Great powers are states maintaining comparable military strength, with little distinction between them and no power greater than them. A key caveat is that economic influence by itself cannot qualify a state to be a full-fledged great power because economic power alone cannot repel a military invasion. Therefore, the United States, by definition, was not a great power until after the Spanish-American War, when it had strengthened its military and was recognized by the other great powers as one.<sup>93</sup>

What made these powers great? To begin, scientific thinking and understanding was applied to military affairs throughout Western states. The rise of the general staff, with its new command structure, offered greater flexibility and a more systematic approach to warfare. Inventions, like French officer Claude-Étienne Minié's rifle, increased the infantryman's rate of fire, accuracy, and velocity allowing for mass conscription of armies with easy to use powerful weapons.<sup>94</sup> Western military technological developments helped these powers dominate and control the large swaths of territory. The world of 1896, according to historian David Healey, "was still a world of empires, and the British Empire was still incomparably the largest and most imposing. All of the great powers, however, had colonial possessions and were ambitious for more; in all the world the United States now seemed the most important exception to the prevalence of national land-hunger."<sup>95</sup> In Asia, Britain dominated India, Burma, Siam, and parts of China, where major coastal ports were falling under control of Germany, Russia, and France, who also had colonies in Indo-China.

With most of the world controlled and dominated by a few powerful, technologically advanced nations, it was also quickly becoming more interconnected. With the rise of the locomotive and the dominance of the steamship, the transfer of materials and people was quicker than ever before. As an example, because of the railroad, transportation cost of goods was reduced in the United States from 1800 to 1880 by a factor between 30 and 70.<sup>96</sup> The effects of coal on the transformation of the world cannot be overstated. Historian Jürgen Osterhammel explained, “Coal gets steam engines moving, and steam engines drive spindles and pumps on ships and railroads. The fossil fuel age that dawned in the first third of the nineteenth century not only made possible the production of goods on an unprecedented scale but also greatly boosted the formation of networks, speed, national integration, and imperial control.”<sup>97</sup> It was not only people and goods that moved faster, but messages and information as well. The telegraph allowed for the free flow of information to stream across the world, allowing for a more efficient distribution of goods. By 1903 over 400,000 kilometres of telegraph wire connected the world with major hubs resting in large Western cities.<sup>98</sup> Same day communication meant manufacturers and markets could respond quicker sending oversupply in one region to an undersupplied region maximizing profits. The groundwork of an interconnected global economy was laid with every foot of rail and wire, but was the United States ready to compete in it?

The United States McKinley took over was an emerging economic powerhouse but militarily weak compared to its European brethren. Over the century, American wheat production increased by 256 percent, corn by 222 percent, refined sugar by 460 percent and coal by 800 percent.<sup>99</sup> The nation had slowly been increasing its proportion of world trade, rising from 8.8 percent of total world trade in 1880 to 9.7 percent by 1890, and it would see a further increase to 10.2 percent in 1900.<sup>100</sup> Not only was American trade increasing, it also erased any

trade imbalance. American imports in 1860 amounted to \$354 million, while exports were \$316 million, creating a trade imbalance. This imbalance lasted until 1874 when exports surpassed imports for every year except 1875, 1888, and 1913, a trend lasting until 1971 when a downward trend occurred.<sup>101</sup>

Yet, unlike European powers, a rapidly expanding economy was not matched with an equal build up in America's military forces. When war threatened between the United States and Chile in 1891, a dreadful realization set in upon president Benjamin Harrison: America's fleet was weaker than Chile's.<sup>102</sup> Enter U.S. naval officer and historian Alfred Thayer Mahan. In an 1890 *Atlantic Monthly* article, Mahan stated, "Whether they will or no, Americans must now begin to look outward. The growing production of the country demands it."<sup>103</sup> Mahan saw the need for expanding into foreign markets as necessary for continued economic success, but moving into foreign markets also increased the possibility of war. The competition for foreign markets created more instability and possibility for conflict. A strong navy, in Mahan's view, was needed to protect vital economic markets abroad.<sup>104</sup> In his seminal work, *The Influence of Sea Power on History*, he argued that "whoever is master of the seas is master of the situation."<sup>105</sup> Mahan's work found a ready audience in Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, and though neither were in the Senate in 1890, Mahan's argument was persuasive. Congress, after great debate and strong reluctance, approved the building of three new battleships, the *Oregon*, *Indiana*, and *Massachusetts*; and a fourth, the *Iowa*, two years later.<sup>106</sup> By 1896, the U.S. Navy was reaching the levels of other European powers, but the army was anemic. The American military could barely compete with middle-sized European countries like Serbia or Bulgaria, let alone the powerhouses of Great Britain, Russia, or Germany in 1897.<sup>107</sup> But the United States did not need its army up to that point in its history. While European

nations raced each other to colonize Africa and Southeast Asia, the United States “made little effort to conquer territory in the Western Hemisphere, much less outside it.”<sup>108</sup> But questions surrounding the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands and the worsening situation in Cuba raised the issue of just how prepared the United States was if it needed to use its military.

## **Chapter Previews**

Going out into the world, Americans brought with them their unique blend of optimism and moralism. In his study of the United States, Martin Lipset found Americans “are among the most optimistic people.”<sup>109</sup> This optimism was not only directed towards American citizens; it extended outward to all humans. In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville found in the United States a general feeling that all humans were “endowed with an indefinite faculty for improvement.”<sup>110</sup> Each person possessed the latent potential to improve the self and the world. Along with their optimism, Americans brought with them a strong sense of morality, of right and wrong, good or evil. Unlike European traditions, where churches were closely tied to non-democratic institutions and hierarchies in agrarian societies, the United States had a close intermingling between politics and religion. Being a good democratic citizen also meant being a good and virtuous citizen. Lipset described Americans as “utopian moralists who press hard to institutionalize virtue, to destroy evil people, and eliminate wicked institutions and practices.”<sup>111</sup> As the United States began its turn toward the world, Americans, with their optimism and moralism, saw a world waiting to be improved through U.S. action. The following is an outline of the rest of this dissertation, examining how the United States began to transition into that waiting world.

Chapter 2 explores McKinley’s use of civilization as an ideograph, focusing on how civilization was used as a warrant for the Spanish-American War. Justifying the United States’

intervention in Cuba, McKinley appealed to civilization, as both a legal concept and ideology to uphold. By waging a form of barbaric warfare against the Cuban people, the Spanish had broken the principle of civilization, permitting the United States to intervene militarily. The Spanish had failed to protect American citizens and property on the islands, providing further proof of Spain's failure. McKinley further described the situation in Cuba as one of anarchy and chaos, the antithesis to civilization's orderly, organized, and scientific idealization of civil society. Of particular interest, was McKinley's conception of duty, and how when employed in his rhetoric it mandated the United States to act in the world, upholding the principles of civilization.

McKinley's other key terms, humanity and progress, were critical in garnering support for his policies. Humanity appealed to Americans' moral sensibilities, making the war a moral crusade to relieve the oppressed peoples in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Progress embodied the tenets of the civilizing mission, spreading American values around the world. It also served as a reminder to Americans to push U.S. society forward, avoiding the regression of once great societies, like China.

Chapter 3 explores McKinley's redefinition of American citizenship. Going out into the world required a new conception of citizenship. Citizens needed to be aware of and support the United States' new position in the world. Focusing on two speaking tours of the Midwest in October 1898 and 1899, I explore how McKinley reimagined the U.S. citizen through the rhetorical trope of the citizen-soldier. The citizen-soldier became the idealized American. The citizen-soldier was a male, who sacrificed for his country in a time of crisis, but then when the war was over went back to his peaceful civilian life. He exhibited the traits of an ideal republican, being politically aware, fulfilling his duty to the country, sacrificing for the common good, and preserving his personal liberty and freedom. Employing the citizen-soldier trope,

McKinley proclaimed an era of patriotism and unity, ending the threat sectionalism posed to U.S. foreign policy. The nation could not fight overseas, while being divided at home. McKinley used the public memory of the Civil War, emphasizing the divided state of the nation, and replaced this memory with the new memory of unity, of a truly United States, in the Spanish-American War. While McKinley defined male citizenship through the citizen-soldier, McKinley did little to reimagine women's role in society. Rather, employing the trope of republican motherhood, McKinley stated women were to remain in the private sphere of the home, raising their children to be good citizens. The home was to be the hearth of liberty, a concept important to McKinley's rationale for redefining the nation, but never explicitly connected in his discourse.

To successfully orient the public to support a new U.S. foreign policy, McKinley also needed to redefine the nation. Chapter 4 follows America's rhetorical transformation from exemplarist power to an interventionist nation by 1900, with McKinley sending troops to China without Congressional authority. McKinley started his presidency, like all of his predecessors, following Washington's "Farewell Address" adage of remaining free of entangling alliances. However, four short years later, McKinley was telling Americans the world was changing, and isolation was no longer possible. The United States had a duty to act in the world. A few key rhetorical texts shed light on this transformation, including passages from McKinley's post-war tours of the Midwest, his "Fourth Annual Message," and his final speech at the Pan-American Expo in Buffalo. Throughout his rhetoric, McKinley championed interventionism, while he maintained the U.S. needed to stay true to its liberal values. The United States was protected by God and needed to maintain liberty at home, but McKinley also aligned the United States' history of expansion across the continent as a natural outgrowth of its' destiny. Therefore, American expansion overseas was a continuation of past U.S. policy. McKinley defined U.S.

expansion in economic terms, preferring more overseas markets for U.S. goods, not more territory. McKinley's foreign policy, according to historian Thomas McCormick, can be summarized as open doors, not closed, political and economic domination, instead of military, and an informal empire, rather than large scale colonialism.<sup>112</sup>

The conclusion serves to bring these three rhetorical moves together, demonstrating how McKinley's rhetoric transitioned the nation and adapted to the changes occurring at home and abroad. McKinley's use of the term civilization and humanity emphasized the morality of interventionism by arguing the U.S. should be a positive force for change in the world. The oppressed nations of the world could look to the United States not merely as a beacon of hope, but as a possible liberator and protector against illiberal threats. The moralism of civilization and humanity also factored into America's more active role in the world and its belief in American exceptionalism. America would not fall prey to the dangers of imperialism, which were so rampant during the era, because the U.S. was uniquely different from all other nations. Such beliefs continued after McKinley in his successor's rhetoric and actions in Latin America and Asia. This more active role would not be possible without the support of the American people. McKinley's utilization of the citizen-soldier trope helped Americans think of themselves as a united people and protectors of the Republic. Together with America's expanded role, the American Republic now stretched beyond its territorial borders. Americans now envisioned themselves as defenders of America's ideals at home and overseas. All of these changes helped the country transition into the role of a great power. I also argue McKinley's rhetoric set the discursive boundaries for his successors and his expanded rhetorical role changed his place in the rhetorical presidency. I conclude by emphasizing the need for rhetoricians to pay attention to

critical transitional moments in the country, as they offer presidents opportunities to reshape and redefine the country.

## Chapter 2 The Ideograph: Moralizing the Spanish-American War

The United States declared war against Spain on April 25, 1898. Four short months later, on August 12, the United States and Spain signed an armistice ending the military phase of the Spanish-American War. The quick victory with relatively little bloodshed prompted Secretary of State John Hay to comment, “It has been a splendid little war, begun with the highest motives, carried on with magnificent intelligence and spirit, favored by that Fortune which loves the brave.”<sup>1</sup> The importance of the Spanish-American War in United States history cannot be overstated. In 1902, future president Woodrow Wilson recognized its importance writing in *The Atlantic*, “No war ever transformed us quite as the war with Spain transformed us.” In explaining America’s transformation, Wilson added, “The nation that was one hundred and twenty-five years in the making has now stepped forth into the open arena of the world.”<sup>2</sup> The great powers of Europe recognized America’s victory, along with its strong economy, as fulfilling the necessary characteristics to be a great power, as outlined in the introduction. By the end of the fighting, the United States controlled Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Manilla. Stipulations in the armistice mandated that Spain evacuate any remaining forces in Cuba immediately and cede Spanish territories in the West Indies and Puerto Rico to the United States. However, the fate of the Philippines was not mentioned and remained in question heading into peace negotiations.

The Filipino people were in revolt against their Spanish colonizers when the Spanish-American War broke out. With orders from Washington, Admiral George Dewey steamed the Pacific squadron to Manilla, engaging and destroying the Spanish fleet anchored there. American forces quickly seized the capital city of Manilla on the main Filipino island of Luzon. However, the scant American forces did not have the strength to expand their influence beyond the city. Filipino rebels, for their part, did not know what to make of the Americans, who helped drive out

the Spanish but gave little indication of what America's role would be after the war.<sup>3</sup> Many Americans, especially those in the McKinley administration, wondered what to do with the islands. Should the United States annex all or none of the islands or just the island of Luzon? What about the Filipinos who hoped the United States would enable their independence? Were Americans conquerors and imperialists or liberators? These questions, and many more, weighed heavily on American president William McKinley.

Delegates from America and Spain opened peace negotiations on October 1, 1898, in Paris. There were two main issues to be solved at the Conference: the Philippines and Cuba. Spanish officials proposed to solve the Philippine problem first, before negotiating over Cuba, by requesting the evacuation of American forces from the islands. The American delegation sought to delay any negotiations over the Philippines because McKinley had not formulated America's official policy yet.<sup>4</sup> The United States' delegation dashed Spanish hopes of dealing with the Philippines first and focused on the Cuban issue instead to buy McKinley time. Secretary of State John Hay informed McKinley that the British, who feared a German takeover of the islands, hoped the Americans would take the entire archipelago. Leading Republicans Henry Cabot Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt pushed McKinley to accept a "large policy" of American territorial expansion. McKinley, meanwhile, had mixed feelings about retaining some or all of the archipelago. At the beginning of his term McKinley described his hopes to Carl Schurz: "Ah, you may be sure that there will be no jingo nonsense under my administration,"<sup>5</sup> referring to Lodge, Roosevelt, and Alfred Thayer Mahan's large policy of American expansion. As a Civil War veteran, McKinley knew all too well the "genuine horror of bloodshed."<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the prospect of a prolonged military engagement fighting the Filipinos did not appeal to McKinley's Christian roots. However, these same Christian roots could not allow McKinley to just abandon

the Philippines. He firmly believed the Filipinos were incapable of self-government, even as a U.S. protectorate. America had a moral duty to look after the Filipinos. From a political perspective, anything short of full annexation might invite invasion by Germany or another power, and returning the islands back to Spain would make America the laughing stock of the world. Domestically, McKinley undertook a speaking tour of the Midwest during October, taking the pulse of the nation as he went. McKinley returned convinced “the American people would not accept it if we did not obtain some advantage from our great victories in Manilla.”<sup>7</sup> McKinley was resolved to take decisive action, but the question remained how much of the Philippines would America seek? And, what would be its role on the island?

Being a resolute pious and religious man, McKinley got down on his knees and prayed to God for guidance. The story, as McKinley first told it to a group of Methodist ministers and then relayed to General James Rustling in an interview for *The Christian Advocate* in 1903, begins with an undecided President pacing the floor of the White House and praying to God night after night. “And one night late it came to me this way—I don't know how it was, but it came,” McKinley recounted.<sup>8</sup> He analyzed his options as such: “(1) That we could not give them back to Spain—that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) That we could not turn them over to France or Germany, our commercial rivals in the Orient—that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) That we could not leave them to themselves—they were unfit for self-government, and they would soon have anarchy and misrule worse than Spain's was.”<sup>9</sup> Having dismissed these three previous options as untenable and undesirable, he arrived at his decision. McKinley concluded “that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow men for whom Christ also died.”<sup>10</sup> McKinley reminisced that he then got a sound

night's sleep, awoke the next morning, and instructed his chief engineer of the War Department "to put the Philippines on the map of the United States." Pointing to a large map on the wall of his office, he exclaimed, "There they are and there they will stay while I am President!"<sup>11</sup>

The accuracy of this account has been questioned by historians, but critical to this study is McKinley's defense of keeping the Philippines, to "uplift and civilize and Christianize" them. Throughout multiple speeches McKinley consistently employed the ideograph of civilization as a defense for American foreign policy. Civilization underpinned McKinley's foreign policy, but it was also transformed through the modifiers of duty, humanity, and progress. I begin this chapter by focusing on civilization's genealogy, tracing two distinct paths. First, I explore its wider usage and evolution in European and international legal discourses. Second, I follow its development in American presidential discourse from Washington to Cleveland. After which, I provide a brief biography of William McKinley, focusing on the role of religion and duty in his life. I then review the rhetorical scholarship on the ideograph, before moving on to my analysis. In the remainder of the chapter, I argue that civilization was employed with duty and humanity during the Spanish-American War to persuade Americans of the moral necessity of war. These word groupings necessitated Americans to act on their principle beliefs, protecting civilization from the uncivilized Spanish. After the war, McKinley kept the same word grouping, presenting the moral argument that Americans had a duty to guide the Filipinos toward civilization. In his post-war rhetoric, McKinley also added progress to the mix. Civilization, based in the United States, would spread to the Philippines and eventually the entire globe. Progress and civilization were liberalizing forces, structuring a world order beneficial to the United States.

## The History of Civilization in the Nineteenth Century

Civilization was not a uniquely American concept. Human societies have separated themselves into civilized and barbarian camps since ancient times. A brief glimpse at Julius Caesar's *The Conquest of Gaul* or Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* would reveal Caesar's commentary on the savage and barbarian tribes of Gaul or Chinese attacks on barbarian encampments. Throughout human history, powerful empires have often viewed those outside their society as inferior, uncivilized peoples. However, such separating into civilized and uncivilized camps has important rhetorical consequences.

In *The Rhetoric of Empire*, David Spurr focused on a different sort of war than Caesar or Sun Tzu. Spurr cited the anthropological war against culture created by rhetoric. Spurr cited Jacques Derrida, who defined the anthropological war as "the essential confrontation that opens communication between peoples and cultures, even when that communication is not practiced under the banner of colonial or military oppression."<sup>12</sup> Derrida continued his critique of communication, specifically writing, and how it leads to a separation and rupture between cultures. Writing, according to Derrida, used the "violence of the letter," which imposed by one culture upon the other created a violence "of difference, of classification, and of the system of appellation."<sup>13</sup> Cultural subordination "begins in the act of naming and leaving unnamed, of marking on an unknown territory the lines of division and uniformity, of boundary and continuity."<sup>14</sup> By employing a language of civilization, imperial powers "spread and intensified the power gap between core [civilized] and periphery [uncivilized], while prompting 'modernizing missions' in many of the polities it encountered."<sup>15</sup> This rhetoric of difference emphasized the "notion of savage as *other*, the antithesis of civilized value."<sup>16</sup>

Rather than pursue a rhetoric of identification, as Kenneth Burke defined it,<sup>17</sup> transcending the separation between civilized and uncivilized, European great powers spoke the rhetoric of self-idealization. Spurr described a rhetoric of self-idealization as a rhetoric “deployed on behalf of a collective subjectivity which idealizes itself variously in the name of civilization, humanity, science, progress, etc., so that the repeated affirmation of such values becomes in itself a means of gaining power and mastery.”<sup>18</sup> Through communication and discourse, great powers continually reinforced their superiority over uncivilized peoples, not just technological or militarily, but culturally and rhetorically as well. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Europe imposed the standard of civilization not just on its neighbors but the world. Therefore, by the time McKinley took office and the U.S. became a great power, he could adopt and adapt his rhetoric to fit America’s new role as a great power or face the possibility of exclusion by the other powers. McKinley chose to adapt his rhetoric, creating a uniquely American interpretation of civilization, while still maintaining the core of civilization’s meaning. When McKinley invoked the ideograph of civilization, he employed a term with a historical ideological weight. The remainder of this section performs two critical tasks. First, it outlines the basic principles of the standard of civilization. Second, it explores the historical development of civilization, highlighting its implications in world affairs.

Political scientist Gerrit Gong identified five main principles of Europe’s standard of civilization: 1) civilized states guarantee the basic rights—life, dignity, and property—as well as freedom of travel, commerce, and religion of foreign nationals; 2) an organized political bureaucracy exists, running the state, and the state is capable of organizing for self-defense; 3) adhering to generally accepted international law, and maintaining a domestic judicial system with courts, codes, and published laws guaranteeing legal justice for all—foreigners and native

citizens; 4) international obligations of maintaining adequate avenues for diplomatic interchange and communication are fulfilled; and 5) civilized states by and large conform to accepted norms and practices of the ‘civilized’ international society—suttee, polygamy, and slavery were all “unacceptable practices.”<sup>19</sup> These represented the basic principles of civilized nations in the nineteenth century, rising to prominence after the Napoleonic Wars.

Prior to the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, ending the Napoleonic Wars and establishing the standard of civilization, relations between states were ruled by natural law since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Natural law presupposed an “all-powerful God who rules the world with wisdom and equity and in whose eyes all individual human actions are either meritorious or deserving of punishment.”<sup>20</sup> Natural law accepted the equality of all humans under the sight of God, offering nations a guiding principle in how to interact with new and alien peoples. There was an assumed “fundamental homogeneity” between all civilizations, establishing equality between peoples.<sup>21</sup> Political scientist Jennifer Mitzen described the transition after Westphalia, stating, “the Christian moorings of international law increasingly came undone in favor of law anchored by state practices.”<sup>22</sup> Within a state, the prince’s claims to governmental supremacy were now recognized as supreme over rival claims by religious leaders. Internationally, treaties were now guaranteed and recognized “horizontally” by other states and sovereigns, without the need for “vertical” or higher religious authority sanction. Through the use and inclusion of secular language in texts, the concept of Europe, rather than Christendom, began to emerge in the eighteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

In this changing landscape, the writings of Swiss legal philosopher Emmerich de Vattel become relevant to this transition. In his seminal work, *Law of Nations*, Vattel claimed states, not individuals, were the rights-bearing units of the European system. States were “the sole judges of

right and wrong and of their rights and obligations.”<sup>24</sup> Vattel concluded, “The Law of Nations is the science which teaches the rights subsisting between nations or states, and the obligations correspondent to those rights.”<sup>25</sup> Based on the legal writings of Vattel, and other legal minds, the five great powers of Europe created a standard of civilization for the international system after 1815. The system established by a pattern of “peace at home [Europe] and war abroad, and its accompanying sense of ‘civilized’ at home and ‘barbaric’ abroad.”<sup>26</sup> Waging both military and cultural wars, the civilized powers of Europe enacted the rhetoric of difference on the world.

Furthermore, to solidify their standing and further impose their perspective, Europeans enshrined the standard of civilization in international law. The legal standard of civilization was a result of twin problems facing Europe: protection of European possessions and peoples overseas and defining who was a civilized member of society. The more practical of the two problems was the need to protect European life, liberty, and property in possible hostile non-European nations. Europeans needed to figure out what rights they deemed universal for protecting their citizens and property overseas. The more difficult quandary was determining which nations deserved legal recognition, personality, and standing in international law.

By 1846, and appearing in all editions after, legal scholar Henry Wheaton’s *Elements of International Law* defined international law as an understanding “among civilized nations,” dropping the pretext of “Christian nations” from previous versions.<sup>27</sup> While legal scholar Lassa Francis Lawrence Oppenheim’s discussion of civilized nations and international law stated, “civilised [sic] States are, with only a few exceptions, Christian States,” he noted the greatest importance between civilized and uncivilized nations were “agriculture, industry, and trade.”<sup>28</sup> As a legal concept, civilization was evolving as a secular concept, separate from Christianity. The term civilization was not inherently Western, European or Christian; it was simply “an

expression of the assumptions, tacit and explicit, used to distinguish those that belong to a particular society from those that do not.”<sup>29</sup> In fact, many non-European nations had their own concept or standard of civilization based on their own cultural understandings. By East Asian or Islamic standards, Europeans for centuries were considered ‘barbarians’ or ‘infidels’ for failing to meet their standard of civilization.<sup>30</sup> However, with natural law giving way to the secularization of international relations and the West dominating the globe politically and militarily, the many definitions of civilization gave way to one—Europe’s definition. Formerly civilized states, such as Oriental kingdoms, Islamic emirates, or African chieftaincies, were now excluded from the family of nations.<sup>31</sup> For the first time in world history, “a global hierarchy of physical, economic and cultural power” existed.<sup>32</sup> The world was separated into three distinct categories of civilization: civilized states—Europe, white settlers, and some Latin Americans; ‘barbarous humanity’—Ottoman and Persian empires, Central Asia, China and Japan; and ‘savage humanity’—everyone else.<sup>33</sup>

While civilization was a secular concept, there was a holdover from Christianity, civilization’s civilizing mission. Civilized people had a deep desire to improve the human condition. Political theorist Gerrit Gong observed, “Man, the nineteenth century declared, was not intended to wait for knowledge and progress to be revealed. Instead, he was to discover them through his own efforts for the benefit of all.”<sup>34</sup> In this desire, the civilizing mission was created. The mission became a moral crusade for all civilized people. According to Gong, people took to it “with all the self-confidence and zeal that many thought the Christian reformers were losing in the face of secular science’s challenge.”<sup>35</sup> The civilizing mission can be viewed as religion’s shadow hiding behind the secularization of international relations. If science was going to dictate

who was civilized and uncivilized, then the civilized made it their mission to proselytize to as many uncivilized people as they could.

### **From Washington to Cleveland: Civilization and the American Indian**

While civilization started as a European concept, it had long been used in presidential rhetoric. McKinley was not the first president, nor the last, to employ civilization in presidential rhetoric. Past presidents' use of civilization focused on civilizing American Indians. Presidents saw American Indians as living outside the boundaries of American civilization. Thus, these native peoples needed Americans to bring them the blessings of civilization. Civilization was used to separate American citizens from native peoples, who happened to live within United States territory. This section overviews previous presidential rhetoric surrounding civilization, exploring civilization's rhetorical history in the United States.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the United States needed to maintain amicable relations with the European powers; however, its primary focus was on expanding the domestic frontier and dealing with American Indians. In his "Third Annual Message," Washington stated, "It is sincerely to be desired that all need of coercion in future may cease and that an intimate intercourse may succeed, calculated to advance the happiness of the Indians and to attach them firmly to the United States."<sup>36</sup> Washington hoped to attain these peaceful relations through providing impartial justice, equitable commerce, and keeping the peace between all peoples on the continent. By providing such benefits, Washington believed permanent tranquility could exist between the United States and American Indians. Such an accomplishment would, for Washington, reflect the "undecaying luster on our national character and administer the most grateful consolations that virtuous minds can know."<sup>37</sup> From its inception, the American government was to administer the benefits of civilization to peoples they believed lacked the

basic institutions of a civilized society. By providing these benefits, the United States' national character was enhanced in the eyes of the civilized world.

Mary Stuckey provided insight into the importance of American Indians in the rhetoric of early presidents. Discussing Thomas Jefferson's rhetoric, Stuckey observed Jefferson's rhetoric served as a model for future presidents in two ways. First, Jefferson understood cultural differences in terms of economics, minimizing the importance of culture. In his message to Congress regarding the Lewis and Clark expedition, Jefferson explained one of his primary missions was multiplying the number of trading houses with American Indians, with the hope it will lead them to "agriculture, to manufactures, and civilization."<sup>38</sup> By increasing contact with the American Indian through trade, Jefferson believed it would better prepare them to "participate in the benefits of our governments."<sup>39</sup> For Jefferson, economic activity was both a sign of a civilized society and a critical method for incorporating uncivilized peoples into civilized society. Second, this left American Indians with two options: either they could assimilate into American culture or they could disappear, both rhetorically and physically, from the American political landscape.<sup>40</sup> Jefferson focused on civilizing the American Indian, hoping to incorporate them into American society. From Jefferson to Jackson, rhetorical focus on American Indians centered on the idea of civilizing them.<sup>41</sup>

Andrew Jackson's presidency reframed the debate about American Indians. Instead of assimilating them into American culture, Jackson believed removing American Indians from American society would best foster them to become civilized. In his "Second Annual Message," Jackson compared the removal of American Indians and their troubles to that of white settlers on the frontier. Jackson noted

Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers; but what do they more than our ancestors did or than our children are now doing? To better their

condition in an unknown land our forefathers left all that was dear in earthly objects. Our children by thousands yearly leave the land of their birth to seek new homes in distant regions... It is rather a source of joy that our country affords scope where our young population may range unconstrained in body or in mind, developing the power and faculties of man in their highest perfection.<sup>42</sup>

In this address, Jackson's comparison implied moving west, settling the land, and dealing with hardship was a trait of American citizens. By failing to deal with such hardship, American Indians "had not yet been taught to want those things that settlers already desired," demarcating them as inferior.<sup>43</sup> Jackson saw the failure of American Indians to assimilate into American culture, initiating Jackson's call for complete removal and separation from American society. By his "Sixth Annual Message," Jackson stated

The experience of every year adds to the conviction that emigration, and that alone, can preserve from destruction the remnant of the tribes yet living amongst us. The facility with which the necessaries of life are procured and the treaty stipulations providing aid for the emigrant Indians in their agricultural pursuits and in the important concern of education, and their removal from those causes which have heretofore depressed all and destroyed many of the tribes, can not fail to stimulate their exertions and to reward their industry.<sup>44</sup>

Jackson's rhetoric shifted the debate about American Indians from merely focusing on civilizing them through assimilation into American society to completely removing them from American society. This rhetorical shift, as noted by Stuckey, created a racial marker of American citizenship. The label "American Indian" came to mean "savagery, wildness, freedom, and independence," while white came to mean "entitlement—to 'civilization' and land."<sup>45</sup> The forcible removal of American Indians from their land by Jackson started a trend between them and whites that lasted the rest of the decade. Americans continued to put forth claims about civilizing American Indians, then acted to remove them from the land when they failed to meet such expectations.

Presidents after Jackson focused less on physically removing American Indians from society, instead, returning to a theme of civilizing them. John Tyler stated, “With several of the tribes great progress in civilizing them has already been made. The schoolmaster and the missionary are found side by side, and the remnants of what were once numerous and powerful nations may yet be preserved as the builders up of a new name for themselves and their posterity.”<sup>46</sup> Tyler paired two common themes of civilization in the mid-nineteenth century: education and Christianity. Before 1846, when Christianity was removed from Wheaton’s *Elements of International Law*, there was an explicit connection between Christianity and the standard of civilization. To be a civilized nation or peoples was to be Christian; an idea that faded in Europe throughout the nineteenth century but remained powerful in the United States.

After the Civil War, Ulysses S. Grant, who saw his share of brutal warfare, decried the wars waged against American Indians as immoral, stating, “Wars of extermination, engaged in by people pursuing commerce and all industrial pursuits, are expensive even against the weakest people, and are demoralizing and wicked. Our superiority of strength and advantages of civilization should make us lenient toward the Indian.”<sup>47</sup> Grant concluded, “the benign influences of education and civilization” were the best ways to improve the lives of American Indians. Grant believed by doing this the United States “will stand better before the civilized nations of the earth and in our own consciences for having made it.”<sup>48</sup> For Grant, war against an inferior opponent undermined America’s moral position in the world. America should help lesser peoples, raising them to the standard of civilization, not conquering them through war.

Rutherford B. Hayes took the position that Europe and many international lawyers took toward uncivilized tribes: certain civilized laws and regulations would be adopted from time to time, but tribes were not expected to meet the complete standard of civilization all the time.

What this meant in practice was uncivilized states or peoples adopted certain laws, or had them imposed by civilized nations, but civilized nations did not expect uncivilized states to have the full complement of legal guarantees and protections available in Great Britain or the United States.<sup>49</sup> Grover Cleveland rhetorically separated American Indians into two groups: those who met a level of civilization and those who did not. He stated, “While some [American Indians] are lazy, vicious, and stupid, others are industrious, peaceful, and intelligent; while a portion of them are self-supporting and independent, and have so far advanced in civilization that they make their own laws, administered through officers of their own choice, and educate their children in schools of their own establishment and maintenance, others still retain, in squalor and dependence, almost the savagery of their natural state.”<sup>50</sup> Cleveland’s rhetoric toward American Indians most resembled the international legal framework established in Europe toward the rest of the world. There was a clear bifurcation between United States citizens, and the civilized world, and American Indians. Cleveland’s rhetorical bifurcation went deeper, separating American Indians into those who could possibly reach a higher standard of civilization and those who were beyond help.

What happened in American presidential rhetoric was the evolution of civilization from Washington to Cleveland, with each turn adding another layer to the term. With Washington, civilization focused on building good relations with American Indians, establishing the rule of law, and extending trade. Jefferson emphasized trade, but also invisibility, either through assimilation or physical disappearance. Jackson sought the complete removal of American Indians believing they were beyond civilization’s reach. Post-Jackson presidents reverted back to bringing civilization to American Indians through education, Christianity, and industry. Rhetorical remnants of education, the rule of law, and civilizing the uncivilized found their way

into McKinley's conception of civilization. However, the largest shift was extending civilization beyond the American continent. Past presidents had little choice in dealing with American Indians. They lived on the continent and interacted with U.S. citizens. McKinley chose to go to war with Spain, acquiring territory with people different from Americans, thus altering certain aspects of civilization. Unlike Jefferson or Jackson, McKinley could not ignore or remove these uncivilized people he chose to make visible through his foreign policy. Before examining McKinley's rhetoric, a brief biography of the president is needed because understanding his sense of responsibility is critical to understanding his rhetorical choice of employing the term duty in relation to civilization.

### **William McKinley: A Soldier from Ohio**

The personal history of William McKinley is important because it helps explain why the word duty was present in his rhetoric. McKinley's Methodist upbringing and military service instilled a strong sense of duty and responsibility in the future president. While in Washington, he attended weekly services where the themes of humanitarian duty and America's role in the world were preached, reflecting a larger religious discourse in the country. His background is also important in curtailing criticism of McKinley as a weak president.<sup>51</sup> McKinley was an adept president, who was skilled in the art of persuasion and reading his audience. His rhetorical style was softer, and less blustery, than his successor and Vice President Theodore Roosevelt, often leaving him in Roosevelt's shadow. Presidents that are considered strong have come to be thought of as great presidents.<sup>52</sup> But McKinley, being neither boisterous or strong in the way Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt or Andrew Jackson were, is often overlooked or mischaracterized. McKinley's strength resided in the stability and depth of his character. He was firmly in control of his presidency and had a clear vision for the United States.

Born in Niles, Ohio, in 1843, William McKinley was the last American president to have served in the Civil War. McKinley's mother, Nancy Allison McKinley, bore the main responsibility for raising her children, as her husband oversaw his foundries and other businesses. Mrs. McKinley imprinted on her children a strict sense of discipline and responsibility. She and her sister were active and devoted members of the Methodist church in Niles and were said to run "the church, all but the preaching."<sup>53</sup> Both William Sr. and Nancy wanted their children to have a better life, including a better education. William Jr. took to the classroom with much enthusiasm, including a strong liking for the school debating society. He believed education could help individuals discover God's purpose for them in this world. Raised as a devout Methodist and reflecting his deep attachment to his mother, McKinley adhered closely to a life of religious piety. When the Civil War broke out, McKinley believed it was his duty to serve but requested his mother's blessing first. Nancy replied, "if you think it is your duty to fight for your country, I think you ought to go."<sup>54</sup> Reflecting McKinley's duty to both God and country, he was morally strict compared to most of his fellow soldiers. McKinley did not drink, was chaste, and did not yet swear. Writing home, McKinley said of his strict observances: "It is by no means essential that an individual who has enlisted to defend his country should forget his early teaching and bury his parents' instruction in oblivion."<sup>55</sup> McKinley saw action on and off throughout the war, eventually being made brevet major of volunteers by Abraham Lincoln on March 13, 1865, for his "gallant and meritorious services' at Opequhan, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek."<sup>56</sup> McKinley's sense of responsibility and duty to God and country inspired him to return home and serve his country as a politician.

After the war, McKinley began a career in law that led him to meet many influential people throughout Ohio, a political breeding ground for national politicians. His gentle, soft-

spoken, and courteous disposition made him a favorite of many, including future president Rutherford B. Hayes. McKinley later left law for politics, running and winning a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, which he held from 1876 to 1890. While serving on Capitol Hill, McKinley dominated debates over the tariff and taxes. He had an adept understanding of industrialized America and used logic and reason to persuade his audiences, a trait that remained consistent throughout his political career. McKinley's power derived from "persuasion rather than force, and persuasion is seldom dramatic."<sup>57</sup> Although his preference for subtle personal diplomacy left him out of the limelight during his tenure in Congress, he was very influential in persuading his colleagues of the righteousness of his arguments behind the scenes. McKinley left the House of Representatives to return to Ohio, where he won the governorship in 1892. While serving as governor, McKinley kept order in an economically depressed state caused by the Panic of 1893, even while other nearby regions were wracked by riots. McKinley's success won him the aide of fellow Ohioan and millionaire steel industrialist Marcus Hanna, who organized McKinley's campaign and advised him during his presidential bid in 1896.<sup>58</sup> By the time McKinley reached the White House, he had survived more than twenty years in the political jungle of Ohio politics. His tenure as governor demonstrated McKinley's strong executive skills, many of which he would soon implement as president.

McKinley's personality did not change when he entered the White House. Rather, his devotion to God led him to Washington's Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal Church. Here, F.M. Bristol preached about "the providence of God in the events of history and America's unique role in the world's future."<sup>59</sup> Bristol's sermons reflected a larger religious context of Christian rhetoric surrounding the Spanish-American War, and subsequent debate over retaining Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Religious historian, Matthew McCullough, argued American

Christians in 1898 condemned any exploitation of the islands, but from their perspective they believed in aiding these territories as benevolent acts of charity. Exploitation of the islands or peoples by the Christian United States was impossible because they were Americans, not backwards Spaniards. Keeping with their moral and altruistic motives, retaining the territories would only help the formerly oppressed peoples find their way toward liberty. McCullough concluded, “In pursuing this duty imposed upon the nation by a wise providence, Americans could be confident that the same divine favor would secure for them a glorious, if unforeseeable, destiny.”<sup>60</sup>

### **The Ideograph: Building Blocks of Ideology**

Before analyzing McKinley’s rhetoric, I offer an overview of the ideograph and its characteristics. Ideographs are the structural elements of ideology signifying and containing ideological commitments. They orient their audience in a particular manner guiding them to a particular understanding of the world. In short, they are one term summations that orient the audience toward a specific interpretation of an event, an issue, or situation. They act as “God” or “Ultimate” terms by stifling questions surrounding the meaning or action being taken in the name of the ideograph. Unlike other “God” or “Ultimate” terms, Michael McGee wrote, ideographs call attention to the social rather than the rational or ethical human condition. These terms “exist in real discourse, functioning clearly and evidently as agents of political consciousness.”<sup>61</sup> Ideographs are usually already part of society and inherited by users when they are socialized into that society. McGee summarized the ideograph in four main points: 1) it is an ordinary term found in political discourse; 2) it is a high-order abstraction meant to provide collective commitment to an ill-defined goal; 3) it warrants the use of power, excuses behavior and belief which might otherwise be socially sanctioned; and 4) ideographs are culturally bound.

They are ideas that must be accepted to belong in a specific society, underscoring the culturally-bound nature of ideographs.

More importantly, ideographs convey an ideology. In fact, McGee argued ideographs are the rhetorical building blocks of ideology. For McGee, ideology in practice “is a political language, preserved in rhetorical documents, with the capacity to dictate decision and control public belief and behavior.”<sup>62</sup> Everyday political language builds a language of ideographs manifesting ideology. This everyday language, characterized by slogans and phrases, is a vocabulary of ideographs, and can be “easily mistaken for the technical terminology of political philosophy.”<sup>63</sup> Ideographs are powerful because they have the “capacity both to control ‘power’ and to influence (if not determine) the shape and texture of each individual’s ‘reality.’”<sup>64</sup> Uncovering how ideology functions through ideographs is critical to understanding the policy-making efforts of presidents. Historian Michael Hunt understood ideology as the starting point for comprehending policy, stating, “Suppose, to begin with, that ideology is central, not incidental, to policymaking.”<sup>65</sup> Hunt noticed policymakers using these “code words” to create shared meaning between the speaker and audience. As McGee explained, “Human beings are ‘conditioned,’ not directly to belief and behavior, but to a vocabulary of concepts [ideographs] that function as guides, warrants, reasons, or excuses for behavior and belief.”<sup>66</sup> Hunt concluded, “Policymakers steeped in these notions used them to reduce complicated problems to manageable proportions, to devise a personally appealing response, and to marshal support at home for the choices they had made.”<sup>67</sup> While ideographs aid the rhetor in making direct appeals using a language specifically crafted to carry with it specific assumptions, they carry a danger of simplifying complex and nuanced international situations without providing the proper context

for a full discussion of possible policy options. Yet, their rhetorical power and presence in society have made ideographs the building blocks of political discourse.

The social nature of ideographs made them an ideal place to study ideology in action, both rhetorical and material action. Ideographs are the link between rhetoric and ideology.<sup>68</sup> Ideographs are “vehicles through which ideologies or unconsciously shared idea systems that organize consent to a particular social system become rhetorically effective.”<sup>69</sup> Ideographs function to solidify the ideological commitments of individuals, but they also have a material function. They rouse audiences to act in a particular manner or at least condone certain actions by their government. Trevor Parry-Giles observed that ideographs “function to justify or validate collective policy by virtue of their operation in public texts.”<sup>70</sup> Ideographs are used by rhetors to secure public acceptance for collective behavior by utilizing ideological commitments by framing situations in a particular light, focusing the public’s attention to certain issues. Through such action, ideographs help narrow and limit the public’s response, ensuring the response is consistent with the rhetor’s ideology. This also allows rhetors to exercise social power by appealing to and constructing “the people” in whose name they will resolve the public issue.<sup>71</sup> Thus, rhetors create or draw attention to certain exigencies, allowing them to create “the people” and secure their consent to ideological solutions through the use of widely accepted ideographs. While this seems like the manipulation of the public through rhetoric, Parry-Giles was quick to defend against such assumptions. Rather, he saw such ideological power emerging from “a community’s symbolic environment and from the ability of rhetorical leaders to utilize and express a cultural vocabulary in powerful and persuasive ways.”<sup>72</sup>

While ideographs are lasting features of a society, their meaning is not static. McGee examined two different ways to study ideographs: diachronically and synchronically. Diachronic

study focuses on the expanding and contracting meaning of ideographs from the beginning of the society to its present.<sup>73</sup> A diachronic understanding of an ideograph analyzes changes in its usage over time. Synchronic study is “a situationally-defined synchronic structure of ideograph clusters constantly reorganizing itself to accommodate specific circumstances while maintaining its fundamental consonance and unity.”<sup>74</sup> The synchronic methodology focuses on the present understanding of the ideograph, including its range of meanings and cluster of words around the ideograph that may modify individuals’ understandings of it. McGee used the example of how the understanding of <equality> in relationship to liberty is modified when <equality> is clustered with “access” as compared to “being educated.” The cluster of words around the ideograph can alter its interpretation and its ideological commitments. More importantly, diachronic and synchronic cannot be separated. Ideographic understandings will always have a past that follows an ideograph to the present day, and the diachronic cannot overlook the present because “its entire *raison d’être* consists in justifying the form and direction of collective behavior.”<sup>75</sup> Understanding an ideograph’s past, and its cultural context, are important aspects of studying them.

The lengthy tracing of civilizations diachronic past, both in the United States and Europe, was intended to establish the rhetorical culture of the era. In their study on <equality>, Celeste Condit and John Lucaites define rhetorical culture as “the range of linguistic usages available to those who would address a historically particular audience as a public, that is, a group of potentially disparate individuals and subgroups who share a common interest in their collective life.”<sup>76</sup> While every rhetorical culture presents a wide range of potential foci, metaphors, allusions, etc., the ideograph, Condit and Lucaites argued, was the central organizing element of a rhetorical culture. Michael McGee, in his original essay on ideographs, described them as

being “bound within the culture which they define.”<sup>77</sup> Ideographs are culturally bound, meaning members of a community are “socialized, conditioned, to the vocabulary of ideographs as a prerequisite for ‘belonging’ to the society.”<sup>78</sup> Therefore, members of a society are expected to understand both the explicit and implicit expectations from members when ideographs are employed in rhetorical discourses. When the United States became a great power, McKinley was expected to adopt the rhetoric of civilization. By adopting, and adapting, the ideograph of civilization, McKinley helped socialize the United States into the Family of Nations.

### **Into the World: Civilization and the United States’ Destiny**

Even with its legal underpinnings and wide circulation in Europe, the term civilization does not immediately register as an American ideograph the way equality, liberty, or freedom might. However, civilization has played an important role in the nation’s rhetorical history and has been more present in the modern world than one might initially recognize. Carol Winkler introduced the ideograph <terrorism> by stating, “Terrorism functions as a signifier of American identity, defining what the nation stands for and against.”<sup>79</sup> Terrorism divided the world into those who are civilized and those who are uncivilized. Dana Cloud’s scholarship explicitly focused on the term <clash of civilization>. Cloud examined the modern-day interpretation of the term in relation to the U.S.-Afghanistan War. There are three important takeaways relevant to this study from Cloud’s work. First, the term helped symbolize the othering of the enemy. It set up a binary between the American “self” and, in Cloud’s study, the Afghan “other.” In this binary, one was associated with being morally good and reasonable, while the other was evil and irrational. Civilization functioned as a one-word encapsulation of war rhetoric delineating one side as good and one side as evil, with no middle ground. Second, war required vilification of the enemy, but occupation necessitated a humanitarian frame. In both the Afghan War and the

Spanish-American War, the United States occupied foreign soil, forcing civilization to adapt from an exclusionary frame of “otherness,” to a more inclusive cluster of words to win over those living under occupation. Finally, civilization, and similar ideographs, reduce a “complex set of geopolitical motives, strategies, and outcomes to a cultural binary.”<sup>80</sup> Only by closely examining the historical context, and unpacking the ideograph, can rhetorical scholars begin to understand the complex web of relationships the ideograph works to obfuscate.

I make the following arguments throughout the rest of the chapter: 1) civilization was an ideograph employed by McKinley separating the world into two camps: civilized and uncivilized. This bifurcation was used to justify American military action against Spain; 2) civilization was modified by the terms humanity and duty. Duty necessitated action against Spain on behalf of the values encapsulated by civilization and humanity; 3) after the Spanish-American War, humanity and America’s duty to humanity, were brought to the forefront of McKinley’s argument, providing aid and helping the uncivilized; and 4) progress was crucial to a civilization’s health. Civilized nations move forward through technological advancements. Civilization as a standard and concept should progress throughout the world, bringing its blessing to all people.

### **1897: A Year of Change**

McKinley’s outlook on the world changed drastically from the beginning of 1897 to its end. As the year progressed, the situation in Cuba deteriorated quickly and the U.S.-Spanish relationship deteriorated faster. McKinley’s rhetoric also changed, moving from abiding by America’s long standing policy of non-intervention in another country’s affairs to opening the door for possible military intervention in Cuba. In this section, I argue that civilization served two key purposes. First, in McKinley’s “Inaugural Address,” civilization served as a marker of

distinction, separating the world into two categories: civilized and uncivilized or barbaric.

Second, in his “First Annual Message,” civilization was used to condemn Spain for their conduct in Cuba. When Spain failed to meet the standard of civilization, McKinley quickly censured their behavior.

### *McKinley’s Inaugural Address*

Civilization as a key rhetorical term appeared only twice in McKinley’s “First Inaugural Address,” once in reference to ratifying a treaty between the United States and Great Britain and the other regarding lynchings in America. Regarding the recent lynching’s of African Americans in the South, McKinley chastised his fellow citizens, stating, “Lynchings must not be tolerated in a great and civilized country like the United States; courts, not mobs, must execute the penalties of the law. The preservation of public order, the right of discussion, the integrity of courts, and the orderly administration of justice must continue forever the rock of safety upon which our Government securely rests.”<sup>81</sup> A hallmark of a civilized state was its adherence to the rule of law. Lynching broke the norms of civilized societies. Such actions were associated with barbaric nations, who were unable or unwilling to protect its citizens from such unlawful acts. It was simply not something civilized nations permitted. McKinley recognized for Americans to be taken seriously as a civilized state, such incidents cannot be tolerated and must be publicly admonished. After these remarks, civilization was almost exclusively used when McKinley spoke about foreign policy.

Foreign policy was not excluded from McKinley’s “First Inaugural Address,” as he maintained George Washington’s guiding principle of non-interference. McKinley affirmed this policy stating, “We have cherished the policy of non-interference with affairs of foreign governments wisely inaugurated by Washington, keeping ourselves free from entanglement,

either as allies or foes, content to leave undisturbed with them the settlement of their own domestic concerns.”<sup>82</sup> However, immediately following these expressed sentiments, McKinley left himself some rhetorical room for changing America’s position. Expounding on his foreign policy principles, McKinley stated:

It will be our aim to pursue a firm and dignified foreign policy, which shall be just, impartial, ever watchful of our national honor, and always insisting upon the enforcement of the lawful rights of American citizens everywhere. Our diplomacy should seek nothing more and accept nothing less than is due us. We want no wars of conquest; we must avoid the temptation of territorial aggression. War should never be entered upon until every agency of peace has failed; peace is preferable to war in almost every contingency. Arbitration is the true method of settlement of international as well as local or individual differences.<sup>83</sup>

Protection of American citizens abroad, while a reasonable statement by an American president, was a hallmark of European civilized states. In Europe’s pursuit of expansionist policies, these great powers pushed for extraterritorial rights for their citizens abroad, in conjunction with trade policies opening “uncivilized” states to the unmatched industrial and military strength of civilized states.<sup>84</sup> Add in the final two principles of McKinley’s foreign policy outlook—war being the last resort when peace has failed and arbitration being the true method of settling international disputes—and the pieces for an expansionist foreign policy were in place. While McKinley viewed war as reprehensible, he did not rule it out as a possibility, but it would only be as a last resort when all other diplomatic options had failed.

Concluding his exposition on foreign policy, McKinley urged the Senate to ratify a treaty between the United States and Great Britain, noting they had “a duty to mankind” because its passage advanced the cause of civilization.<sup>85</sup> The treaty’s passage improved relations between the world’s two most liberal nations, putting behind them their confrontational past, and represented a pact between two civilized nations, symbolizing America’s growing international influence as a power able to write the rules of international society. The treaty’s content is of

little importance, but McKinley's choice of duty paired with civilization is an important precursor to his rhetoric justifying the war; it is a connection I develop below. By pairing duty and civilization together, McKinley simplified and framed the choice for Senators. Either they lived up to the standard of civilization, thus fulfilling their duty, or they will have failed, lowering the United States' global position and possibly endangering relations between the two countries. McKinley's relatively peaceful rhetoric represented in his "First Inaugural" was short lived. With the events in Cuba quickly deteriorating, McKinley's rhetoric changed drastically by his "First Annual Message" in December 1897.

*The Growing Unrest in Cuba: McKinley's Rhetorical Shift in His "First Annual Message"*

Throughout a contentious 1897, McKinley pushed Spain to end the brutal *reconcentrado* policy of Spanish general "Butcher" Weyler. As the war raged between Cuban guerrillas and Spanish soldiers, Weyler decided to separate the Cuban people from the guerrillas by herding Cuban peasants into a series of fortified camps. Access to these camps was tightly controlled to limit the possibility of rebels entering and inciting trouble. While the logic was sound, the implementation was brutal. Conditions in the camps were horrendous with continual shortages of food, primitive to nonexistent sanitation, and rampant disease. Combined with a scorched-earth military policy outside the camps, the Spanish had turned Cuba into a miserable and desolate island. Through diplomatic pressure, the United States was able to get Weyler recalled and the *reconcentrado* policy reversed, but the imprint of the policy remained with McKinley.<sup>86</sup> In light of these events, McKinley's rhetoric changed dramatically from his inaugural.

McKinley employed civilization in his "First Annual Message" to draw a distinction between normal warfare and the policies of the Spanish. Offering a broad interpretation of the war, McKinley faulted both parties, noting, "The civilized code of war has been disregarded, no

less so by the Spaniards than by the Cubans.”<sup>87</sup> By including the Cubans in his assessment of uncivilized warfare, McKinley was setting up his future argument: Cubans were unable to end the war and govern themselves, thus American intervention and leadership were needed on the island. McKinley’s logic was if they cannot follow the proper civilized conduct of warfare, how will they be able to perform the duties necessary to run a state? In McKinley’s opinion, neither the Cubans nor Spanish were civilized peoples or fit to govern Cuba. While McKinley accused both combatants with charges of uncivilized warfare, the remainder of McKinley’s argument focused on Spanish atrocities, as any future military intervention rested on providing a *casus belli* against Spain.

Returning to the topic of Spanish policies, McKinley declared the *reconcentrado* policy as an “utterly failed” measure of war. The policy was “not civilized warfare,” but “extermination,” according to McKinley. Yet, McKinley was not finished with his criticism, continuing, “During all those years an utter disregard of the laws of civilized warfare and of the just demands of humanity, which called forth expressions of condemnation from the nations of Christendom, continued unabated.”<sup>88</sup> Concluding the verbal assault, McKinley described Cuba under Spanish rule. Cuban lands were laid to waste, dwellings destroyed, with “desolation and ruin” pervading the countryside. Cuba was in chaos, and Spain had lost the ability to maintain order on the island. Civilization and an end to the fighting were nowhere in sight. Spain’s continual failure to live up to the standard of civilization was pointed out repeatedly by McKinley, who was slowly laying the groundwork for intervention by the United States. Spain had failed to uphold some of the most basic tenants of the standard of civilization, including protecting foreign nationals and their property, maintaining a judicial court system for native and foreign citizens, and breaking international norms of warfare. Under such breaches of

civilization, Spain, being the ruler of Cuba, must rectify the situation or face potential consequences from the international community, including military intervention by an outside power. Spain's failure provided McKinley with a powerful warrant for potential future military action.

The deterioration of the situation in Cuba caused McKinley to reevaluate America's options. In a major shift from his inaugural, McKinley's "First Annual Message" opened the possibility of using force to restore order and civilization in Cuba. McKinley's preferred resolution to the insurrection was diplomacy through international arbitration. McKinley again praised international arbitration as the way the "civilized world is moving," with treaties originating from arbitration embodying "humane principles." For McKinley, international arbitration was the civilized method for handling disputes between mature and honorable nations, while war was the first option of the barbaric and savage hordes. Peaceful arbitration ensured a civil process for resolving differences between nations, without the loss of life or honor, which can occur either through military defeat or "uncivilized" military conduct. However, McKinley was not a pure idealist, believing the era of war was past, especially those between the civilized and uncivilized world. In his "First Annual Message," McKinley added a caveat: if arbitration failed, it would be America's "duty imposed by our obligations to ourselves, to civilization and humanity to intervene with force, it shall be without fault on our part and only because the necessity for such action will be so clear as to command the support and approval of the civilized world."<sup>89</sup> McKinley still preferred his first option, arbitration. However, if war came, it was not because of actions by the United States. Rather, war would be a result of Spanish intransigence and America's duty to uphold the standard of civilization.

Civilization was the key rhetorical term warranting a possible change in American policy from non-intervention to intervention in Cuba. Described above in detail, McKinley created an exigence in need of solving, framing his argument around Spain's uncivilized conduct. Cuba had become a chaotic situation, standing in stark contrast to the peaceful, industrious progress of the United States. As a civilized nation, the United States had a duty to contain, and if possible, end the chaos in Cuba. Spain, as a European colonial power, could no longer protect the rights or property of foreigners in Cuba, and their barbarous military conduct was held in higher contempt because they were supposed to be a more "civilized" people. Throughout his "First Annual Message," McKinley reiterated his openness and preference for peace but warned of war if the situation was not properly handled. McKinley warned Spain, stating, "Throughout all these horrors and dangers to our own peace this Government has never in any way abrogated its sovereign prerogative of reserving to itself the determination of its policy and course according to its own high sense of right and in consonance with the dearest interests and convictions of our own people should the prolongation of the strife so demand."<sup>90</sup> Throughout 1897, civilization acted as the key rhetorical marker dividing the civilized United States from uncivilized Spain and Cuba. Civilization, or the lack of, defined the situation in Cuba as unacceptable. McKinley's discourse prepared Americans to act in its defense. McKinley's rhetorical groundwork paid off in April 1898 when he requested a declaration of war, after the situation deteriorated even further.

### **1898: From Peace to War to Peace Again**

McKinley hoped to resolve the Cuban problem through peaceful measures, ideally international arbitration, but by his "First Annual Message" in December 1897, McKinley opened the door to using force to solve the issue. While McKinley spoke of force publicly, privately it was an option he hoped he would not have to use. Critics of McKinley labeled him a

“jingo,” a term used to describe a person overwhelmed by nationalistic sentiments who wages war for expansionist ambitions, but McKinley was no such person. McKinley disdained the idea of seizing parts of the Spanish empire.<sup>91</sup> In the first few months of 1898 McKinley did his best to uphold the premise of his inaugural by exhausting every peaceful option before war, but tensions between Spain and the United States reached a near breaking point in February. First, a private letter from Spanish Minister Enrique Dupuy deLome was made public and revealed Spanish reforms were merely cosmetic action designed to please the Americans. Yet, this was not the most explosive section. In the letter, deLome’s harshly criticized McKinley. deLome wrote of the Weyler situation and McKinley’s response, thusly, “It once more shows what McKinley is, weak and a bidder for the admiration of the crowd, besides being a would-be politician who tries to leave a door open behind himself while keeping on good terms with the jingoes of his party.”<sup>92</sup> As McKinley’s credibility was under question, an explosion aboard the U.S.S. *Maine* docked in Havana on February 15, 1898, killed 250 men and two officers.<sup>93</sup> The *Maine* incident sparked domestic pressure for war, though McKinley still did not budge, requesting an inquiry into the incident to stave off the possibility of bloodshed. After the *Maine* and deLome incidents, McKinley knew in his heart “that intervention was but a matter of time.”<sup>94</sup> Preparation for war was underway.

In early March, McKinley requested and received \$50 million to be spent on the army and navy. By late March, after working to reassure the business community that the economy would not reenter a recession akin to the crises of 1893-96, a telegram from political adviser and journalist W.C. Reick to McKinley stated, “Big corporations here now believe we will have war. Believe all would welcome it as relief to the suspense.”<sup>95</sup> McKinley, not one to quickly rush off to war, made one last ditch attempt to hold off the war, issuing a series of terms for Spain to

accept to avoid U.S. intervention on the island. Spain agreed to arbitrate the causes of the *Maine*'s sinking, accepted relief aid from the United States to Cuba, repealed the *reconcentrado* policies, and granted an armistice. However, they rejected McKinley's central demand allowing the United States to mediate the conflict without delay. A last-ditch attempt by the Vatican on Spain's behalf was also rejected because the Vatican's offer was only an armistice of hostilities and failed to grant direct U.S. involvement in Cuba, which was a necessity for McKinley and one Spain could never accept. With the failing of these last two efforts, on April 11, 1898, McKinley sent Congress a carefully worded declaration of war. The declaration was debated in Congress and officially signed by McKinley on April 29.<sup>96</sup>

Before moving to the rhetorical analysis of McKinley's "War Address," there is one other important context to discuss: the legal context. The nineteenth century was filled with European and American legal writing on military conflict and international affairs. One of the leading legal texts was L. F. L. Oppenheim's *International Law A Treatise*. In his section on intervention, Oppenheim defined it as "interference by a State in the affairs of another State for the purpose of maintaining or altering the actual condition of things."<sup>97</sup> Regarding the legality of intervention, Oppenheim concluded that though interventions were prohibited by the "Family of Nations," or the civilized great powers, such nations could intervene without penalty in the affairs of lesser, or uncivilized, states. Oppenheim outlined five instances when, at the time, a state was justified in intervening in another state's affairs. States may intervene to protect a protectorate, to protect citizens abroad, when a treaty was broken, or when the external affairs of another state was at the same time the affair of another state. The last set of circumstances was the vaguest and most pertinent to McKinley: "If a State in time of peace or war violates those principles of the Law of Nations which are universally recognised, other States have a right to intervene and to make the

delinquent submit to the respective principles.”<sup>98</sup> What exactly constituted breaking the “Law of Nations” was open to interpretation. Failing to pay debts owed to foreign countries to not protecting foreign nationals or their property to “egregious violation of their human rights” were all possible rationales for breaking the Law of Nations.<sup>99</sup> Regarding the issue of human rights, the abuse of such rights “within states is inconsistent with international order thereby justifying humanitarian intervention.”<sup>100</sup> McKinley made clear in his “First Annual Message” that the Spanish had violated basic human rights through the *reconcentrado* policy. Such violations, along with the *Maine*, further justified McKinley’s decision.

Symbolically, “Intervention lays bare what policymakers consider threatening to both domestic order and international security,” according to political theorists George Lawson and Luca Tardelli,<sup>101</sup> To an extent, intervention was less of a decision and more of a necessity to maintain both state security and international order. It was especially necessary when other options, including aid and diplomacy, were perceived as either impractical or ineffective.<sup>102</sup> By April 1898, humanitarian aid and diplomatic intervention had failed, with intervention the only remaining option left.

### **McKinley’s Declaration of War**

In this section, I analyze McKinley’s “Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain,” which blended a legal argument, built around some of the principles outlined by Oppenheim, with a moral argument grounded in the United States’ obligation to humanity. I begin with McKinley argument focusing on Spain’s failure to protect American economic interests and citizens on the island, representing a breach of the standard of civilization. I then move to McKinley’s main argument focused on the United States’ moral responsibility to intervene. McKinley justified American intervention using the ideograph of civilization, with

two key rhetorical modifiers: humanity/humanitarian and duty. While appeals to civilization supported McKinley's legal argument, his appeal to humanity was a more powerful moral warrant rallying the American people against Spain. Humanity prescribed that the United States should intervene in Cuba because the Cuban people were being oppressed, harmed, and exterminated. The United States must put an end to such atrocities because it was the right thing to do. Indeed, the duty to do the right thing necessitated action on the part of the United States to defend and uphold the principles embodied in civilization and humanity. If the United States believed it was a civilized nation, there was never a question of if they should intervene, but only when because the duty of a civilized nation demanded intervention.

McKinley's first argument for war was economic. In his request for a declaration of war, McKinley cited the "enormous losses to American trade and commerce" caused by the "exercise of cruel, barbarous, and uncivilized practices of warfare."<sup>103</sup> American dominance of Cuba's economy at the time cannot be overstated. From 1859 to 1897, Cuban exports to the United States rose from a mere 42 percent of their economy to a full 87 percent. American investors had approximately \$50 million in Cuban industries, and trade between the two countries totaled about \$100 million.<sup>104</sup> With the United States finally recovering from the 1893 recession, McKinley had to ensure American investments abroad were protected. Instability in the economy caused by chaos in Cuba could trigger another recession, potentially harming McKinley's presidency. Spain's failure to protect American property and trade in Cuba added to the characterization of their barbarity. The economy, however, was a minor grievance compared to Spain's inhumane actions.

To begin, Spain was already in a precarious position within the Family of Nations in Europe. While European states were generally considered civilized, or at least more civilized

than most of the rest of the world, Europe also created a racial hierarchy of nations on the continent. Atop this hierarchy were the Anglo-Saxons, which included the peoples of Great Britain and the United States. Germans were behind Anglo-Saxons because “they had lost their love of liberty.”<sup>105</sup> Peoples of Slavic decent were next because “they had displayed great endurance, patience, and strength (if not intelligence and a knack for innovation) as they had slowly but irresistibly extended their control over much of the Eurasian land mass.”<sup>106</sup> Lower on the ladder were the Latin people of Europe, including the French, Italians and Spaniards who “lacked vigor; they were sentimental, undisciplined, and superstitious; and consequently, they were of small account in international affairs.”<sup>107</sup> Spain was already among the least influential and weakest European nations, and its people were not highly thought of by the rest of Europe. Most telling of this was the silence coming from other European capitals in support of Spain.<sup>108</sup> McKinley’s characterization of Spain as “cruel, barbarous, and uncivilized” further reinforced racial stereotypes of Spain. Spain’s continued failure in Cuba, coupled with their brutal tactics removed any standing among the civilized nations for Spain. The conflict in Cuba was now defined by McKinley, and accepted by many throughout Europe, as a military affair between two uncivilized nations, allowing America to enter the fray without fear of losing honor or international standing. The United States would enter the conflict “as a neutral to stop the war.”<sup>109</sup>

To gain support for his call for war, McKinley invoked the vaguest legal and moral principle of civilization, the breaking of the principles of the Law of Nations, but also the principle with most rhetorical leeway. The United States entered the war not for selfish motives, but according to McKinley, the “dictates of humanity” called the United States to enter the conflict.<sup>110</sup> Acting to end “the hopeless sacrifices of life,” offered a stronger argument, than

intervening solely to protect American businesses interests. Spanish atrocities had shocked the “sensibilities and offended the humane sympathies of our people.”<sup>111</sup> Spain destroyed Cuba’s very means of survival and left “women and children, with aged and helpless men, enfeebled by disease and hunger.” According to McKinley, such acts were not acts of war, but of “extermination.”<sup>112</sup> The conflict had become a test of physical exhaustion, with death being the only victor. Faced with the question of what to do, McKinley, breaking with America’s long-standing non-intervention policy, replied, “It is no answer to say this is all in another country, belonging to another nation, and is therefore none of our business. It is specially our duty, for it is right at our door.”<sup>113</sup> McKinley concluded, “In the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, on behalf of endangered American interests which give us the right and the duty to speak and to act, the war in Cuba must stop.”<sup>114</sup> The case McKinley presented did not ask Congress whether the United States should intervene, but firmly stated why. The United States had a duty to civilization and humanity to stop the bloodshed and restore civilization.

The key connection between civilization, humanity, and the declaration of war was duty. Civilization and humanity were ideological building blocks Americans believed in, a better world built on cooperation and justice between nations. A world where civilized people could aid and help those with less. A world where war was not necessary, and differences were settled through arbitration because all nations were civilized. But this world did not exist, and these terms were references to moral ideals. It was their connection to duty that spurred the United States into action. Duty necessitated action on behalf of these ideals. For McKinley duty, was “what must be done, the action demanded of a nation governed by humanitarian principles when confronted with specific circumstances.”<sup>115</sup> Duty enacted these ideals and implied action. Whether the United States wanted to intervene or not became irrelevant because duty called forth

American intervention. Civilization, along with duty and humanity, oriented and prepared Americans to act in Cuba. But fulfilling America's duty was more than just kicking the Spanish out of Cuba, it was also about aiding the Cuban people.

To demonstrate America's humanitarian motives, McKinley included in his "Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain" a request for Congress to immediately release humanitarian aid to Cuba. McKinley petitioned, "in the interest of humanity and to aid in preserving the lives of the starving people of the island I recommend that the distribution of food and supplies be continued and that an appropriation be made out of the public Treasury to supplement the charity of our citizens."<sup>116</sup> Besides conducting a civilized military campaign aimed against only Spanish forces, the United States would increase its charitable aid to the most vulnerable groups in Cuba, demonstrating their commitment to the principle of humanity. Once the Spanish were defeated, the United States would remain, aiding the Cubans in re-establishing peaceful institutions throughout the island. McKinley promised to secure "the establishment of a stable government, capable of maintaining order and observing its international obligations, insuring peace and tranquillity [sic] and the security of its citizens."<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, before Congress declared war, they added the Teller Amendment. The addition of the Teller amendment to the declaration of war ensured the United States could not annex the island. The amendment was further evidence of America's pure motivations toward Cuba.<sup>118</sup> McKinley's message centered around humanity and the selfless character of the nation appealed to many Americans.

McKinley's declaration for war was met with enthusiasm across the nation.<sup>119</sup> Reasons for enthusiasm ranged from the belief in political or economic benefits to a desire for vengeance for the *Maine* to the desire to sell more newspapers. However, the religious newspaper the *Watchman* dismissed these "base motives" for the groundswell of support. Rather, their rationale

was a “hatred of oppression and injustice that has aroused the hearts of the people.”<sup>120</sup> The *Western Christian Advocate* supported McKinley’s humanitarian premise, stating, “he (McKinley) has refused to consider any of the historic causes for which wars have been waged, and signalizes the dawning of the twentieth century by making the cause of humanity the only cause great enough to justify the resort to arms.”<sup>121</sup> They continued, “It is the beginning of a new and holier dispensation. It mocks the selfish cry of human greed. It puts martial glory in bonds to human advancement. It subordinates revenge to the holiest purposes of charity.”<sup>122</sup> For McKinley, and many in the United States, civilization and humanity were not vague legal terms referring to rights possessed by certain nations, but moral terms denoting right and wrong, good and bad. For Americans, being a civilized nation, meant being a morally upright and a good nation with the ability to aid those less fortunate, and punish those who act wrongly.

McKinley employed civilization, humanity, and duty together to call a nation to war, but he would continue to use these three concepts, and add in progress as a fourth key term, in support of his post-war foreign policy. The following section examines McKinley’s post-war rhetoric by turning primarily to his Annual Addresses and texts from two Midwestern speaking tours, with the inclusion of some additional speeches from Georgia and Boston given in the winter of 1898-1899.

### **1898-1899 Speaking Tours: McKinley’s Quest to Defend Expansion**

McKinley’s rhetoric did not go unchallenged, as the anti-imperialists spoke out adamantly against McKinley’s foreign policy. Comprised of a hodgepodge group with varying reasons and rationales, the anti-imperialists sought to prohibit American territorial expansion. In support of McKinley’s policy were various religious groups, who again saw the opportunities to aid the less fortunate. Finally, Social Darwinists’ were present on both sides of the debate. As

proponents of racial superiority, they saw the dangers of becoming rulers of primarily colored peoples, an anti-imperialist argument, but they also saw the advantages of being instructors and guiding lesser peoples along the path of civilization.

*Roadblock to Expansion: The Anti-Imperialist Challenge*

As the Spanish-American War concluded, the United States found itself with the newly acquired territories of the Philippines and Puerto Rico and some form of control over Cuba. However, not all segments of the United States were as happy with the situation as the McKinley administration. A group opposing McKinley's actions, aptly named the anti-imperialists, were an eclectic group including German immigrant Carl Schurz, industrialist Andrew Carnegie, America's leading philosopher William James, Republican Senator George Hoar, progressive social critic, co-editor of the *North American Review*, and art professor Charles Eliot Norton, founder of *The Nation* Edwin Lawrence Godkin, and former president Grover Cleveland. The anti-imperialists were critical of McKinley's policies, especially his Philippines policy. Writing of McKinley, William James lamented, "I think that the manner in which the McKinley administration railroaded the country into its policy of conquest was abominable, and the way the country puked up its ancient soul at the first touch of temptation, and followed as sickening."<sup>123</sup> Charles Eliot Norton similarly wrote, "We believe that America had something better to offer to mankind than those aims she is now pursuing, and we mourn her desertion of ideals which were not selfish nor limited in their application, but which are of universal worth and validity."<sup>124</sup> Norton concluded, "She [America] has lost her unique position as a potential leader in the progress of civilization, and has taken up her place simply as one of the grasping and selfish nations of the present day."<sup>125</sup> Rather than advancing the cause of civilization and

humanity, as McKinley claimed, the anti-imperialists saw the acquisition of foreign lands, and particularly the Philippines, as a radical break with American principles.

Though anti-imperialist's reasons for opposing McKinley were diverse, one objection was fairly common from all: the issue of race. The Philippines had few, if any, Caucasian inhabitants, and adding the islands would have increased the United States' diversity to an alarming extent for the anti-imperialists. Godkin emphasized this notion in *The Nation*, writing there are "enormous difficulties into which we should be plunged by an attempt to rule dependencies inhabited by ignorant and inferior races, with whom it would apparently be impossible to get Americans to make any other union."<sup>126</sup> Carl Schurz feared once American expansion started it would not stop, and before long the United States would occupy Nicaragua to secure a canal. This would "bring us another lot of about 13,000,000 of Spanish-Americans mixed with Indian blood, and perhaps some twenty Senators and fifty or sixty Representatives, with seventy to eighty votes in the electoral college, and with them a flood of Spanish-American politics, notoriously the most disorderly, tricky and corrupt politics on the face of the earth."<sup>127</sup> Race played an important factor for the anti-imperialists, but also for McKinley. The United States was a majority Anglo-Saxon country, and as one, McKinley believed this positioned the United States to lead other countries toward civilization.

Civilization carried with it the weight of bifurcating the world into the civilized and the barbarians. The civilized world was almost exclusively, until the addition of Japan, European or of European decent, in the case of the United States. This heavy racial component was an important feature of European imperialism. European views of non-European societies turned cultural differences into racial differences to be explained away by the superiority of European genetic stock.<sup>128</sup> In the United States, civilization's racial component manifested more in the

United States' belief in bringing American values and institutions around the globe to uplift peoples. As the anti-imperialist exemplify, there were strong racist currents in American society, but for McKinley he firmly believed in America's mission. Though it was easy to criticize, historian John Dobson wrote, McKinley firmly "believed that whatever he did had his God's blessing."<sup>129</sup> McKinley's firm Methodist faith meant he had a responsibility to help those who were less fortunate, whether it was a poor person in need or an entire country in need of civilization, McKinley's character and motives were genuine. Again, the religious community and papers of the United States supported McKinley's policy.

Religious newspapers across the nation provided their backing of America's retention of Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Part of the reason for such fervent support was for the expansion of missionary opportunities. The religious press was filled with articles calling for missions "to assume the mantle of civilization where soldiers could carry it no further."<sup>130</sup> The other rationale was for Americans to fulfill their responsibility to the downtrodden of the world. The Presbyterian *New York Observer* wrote in mid-August 1898 regarding McKinley's options, "this government entered upon war for humanitarian reasons, to rescue a suffering people from misrule and oppression. The widening of the conflict has placed it in our power, if it has not made it our duty, to render a like service to another people suffering from the same intolerable tyranny." Similar arguments appeared in the *Independent*, *Christian Evangelist*, and South Carolina's *Baptist Courier*.<sup>131</sup> Newspapers and pastors across the United States reiterated McKinley's rhetoric of America's duty to civilization and humanity. By 1900, there were 26 million church members in the United States, out of a population of 76 million. And, this number could be a low estimate, since religion and religiosity often escape census takers and are difficult concepts to categorize.<sup>132</sup> When McKinley spoke about duty and civilization, large portions of

the population were familiar with America's duty to civilization from a religious perspective, but McKinley transformed their religious belief into political action. For those not persuaded by religious appeals, a scientific rationale, in the form of Social Darwinism, offered support for American territorial expansion.

In line with the era's emphasis on scientific thinking, Social Darwinism "gave the patina of science and modernity to feelings that were unscientific and ahistorical."<sup>133</sup> Proponents in the United States included popular lecturer John Fiske and general secretary of the American Evangelical Alliance Josiah Strong. Both Fiske and Strong believed in Anglo-Saxon superiority, citing Anglo-Saxon's talent for self-government and "pure spiritual Christianity" as the main reasons for their superiority.<sup>134</sup> Germany was below the Anglo-Saxons, having all the racial traits, but German support of free institutions was not as strong as Great Britain and the United States. The remaining European nations followed in some order, depending on social and cultural achievements, and racial makeup. All other nations and ethnicities, including China, ranked below these races and nations based on their lack of "strong" characteristics. Anglo-Saxons were thought to dominate the racial pyramid with their technological advancements, and general preference for more liberal political and economic policies. The British-American rapprochement after a century of unease sparked Social Darwinist's dreams of an Anglo-Saxon union to dominate the globe, spreading liberal policies around the globe.

### *McKinley Takes the Offensive*

McKinley, never one to take risks on policy without public support, decided to undergo two different speaking tours of Midwestern states in October 1898 and October 1899. The 1898 tour began in Iowa on October 11, 1898, and ended in Ohio on October 21, with stops in between in Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana. Over the ten-day span McKinley gave 57 speeches in

various small towns and large cities to garner support for the forthcoming peace settlement. The second Midwestern tour began on October 6, 1899, and ended on October 18. McKinley toured Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Ohio, giving 79 speeches over the twelve-day period. Also, over this time period, McKinley delivered his Second, Third, and Fourth Annual Messages to Congress, and an important series of speeches in Georgia in December 1898, and a speech in Boston at the “Home Market Club Dinner” in February 1899. These are the primary texts included in the rhetorical analysis of how McKinley employed the terms civilization, humanity, duty, and progress to create support for his retention of the Philippines and Puerto Rico.

McKinley’s speaking tour was an opportunity to discern public opinion about expansion, but it was also a chance for McKinley to reiterate the connection between war and humanitarian principles. On a stop in Springfield, Illinois, in 1898, McKinley claimed a great victory for all of humanity stating, “We have won great triumphs for humanity. We went to war, not because we wanted to, but because humanity demanded it. And having gone to war for humanity’s sake, we must accept no settlement that will not take into account the interests of humanity.”<sup>135</sup> Concluding his 1898 speaking circuit in his home state of Ohio, while speaking in Columbus, McKinley stated, “for new territory, no motive of aggrandizement, but that we might stop the oppression of a neighboring people whose cry we could almost hear.”<sup>136</sup> McKinley’s post-war speaking tour used the same set of ideographs, as his request for war, to justify American action. Either humanity demanded or the United States had a duty to civilization and humanity to act, reinforcing his audience’s belief of America’s mission to civilize other nations. Previous American wars—the Revolution, War of 1812, Mexican-American, and Civil War—were all fought in self-defense or for freedom, value based military conflicts for sure, but always on

behalf of the American people. McKinley's justification of intervening in another country, on behalf of its people and humanity, created new possibilities and responsibilities for the country. American intervention could now occur whenever and wherever the United States believed people were being oppressed.

Whether the United States' superiority came from its religious belief or its racial composition, the designation of being a leader in the world carried with it certain responsibilities. Political theorist Michael Hunt synthesized how the role of race factored into the issue of the Philippines: "To return the archipelago to Spain would be cowardly and inhumane. To leave the Filipinos to their own devices would be irresponsible and dishonorable. Racial superiority carried obligations that could be ignored only at the cost of throwing doubt on that superiority itself."<sup>137</sup> Such responsibilities manifested themselves in McKinley's rhetoric with a familiar trio of words: civilization, humanity, and duty. This time, rather than going to war, Americans had a duty to the people who now found themselves under American rule. Speaking in Savannah Georgia in December 1898, McKinley emphasized these new duties:

If it was duty to send them there, and duty required them to remain there, it was their clear duty to annihilate the fleet, take the city of Manila, and destroy the Spanish sovereignty in the archipelago. Having done all that in the line of duty, is there any less duty to remain there and give to the inhabitants protection and also our guidance to a better government, which will secure them peace and order and security in their life and property and in the pursuit of happiness?...Are we to sit down in our isolation and recognize no obligation to a struggling people whose present conditions we have contributed to make?...My fellow-citizens, whatever covenants duty has made for us in the year 1898 we must keep.<sup>138</sup>

Fulfillment of one duty, ending Spanish oppression, begot a new set of duties for the United States. Unlike entering the war, the new set of responsibilities were a direct result of American military intervention. The United States was responsible for the Philippines because it was American forces that liberated the island, and now it was America's responsibility to re-establish

civilization on the island. McKinley framed this final agreement as a covenant between the American people and duty. As a covenant in religious terms denotes an agreement between God and a chosen people, McKinley's covenant was an agreement between the United States, God's chosen nation, and a higher principle, civilization.

McKinley's most ardent defense of America's covenant, and newfound world status, was delivered in Boston at the "Home Market Club Dinner," in February 1899. Intervention in the affairs of uncivilized states did not require the consent of those people. In Boston, McKinley enquired, "Did we need their consent to perform a great act for humanity?... Was it necessary to ask their consent to capture Manila, the capital of their islands? Did we ask consent to liberate them from Spanish sovereignty, or to enter Manila Bay and destroy the Spanish sea-power there?"<sup>139</sup> Responding for the audience, McKinley firmly averred, "We did not ask these things; we were obeying a higher moral obligation, which rested on us and which did not require anybody's consent. We were doing our duty by them as God gave us the light to see our duty, with the consent of our own consciences and with the approval of civilization."<sup>140</sup> Civilization and duty work together creating a warrant for future intervention abroad. Similar to America's duty to protect the Philippines, the United States had an obligation to protect civilization. Where chaos threatened the institutions of civilization, the United States could intervene to contain and pushback the uncivilized threat. No approval was needed, as a duty to the moral and legal authority of civilization permitted American intervention in the affairs of uncivilized states. Civilization separated the world into two camps: nations that could intervene and those that could not. Civilized nations were subjects with the power to act, while uncivilized states lost autonomy and were acted upon by civilized states. Yet, for McKinley the United States faced consequences if it failed to live up to its obligations.

McKinley returned to his religious theme in his “Third Annual Message,” delivered in December 1899, but added consequences for the United States if America broke its covenant. Accepting its responsibility in the Philippines brought with it “a great opportunity,”<sup>141</sup> but failure to live up to its responsibility, such as abandoning the islands, would dishonor the United States in the eyes of the civilized world. Worse yet, the Philippines would be left to first “anarchy and finally to barbarism.” This uncivilized state was bad enough, but an even worse fate awaited the islands. McKinley worried that the islands would be flung like “a golden apple of discord, among the rival powers, no one of which could permit another to seize them unquestioned.”<sup>142</sup> In reference to the golden apple, McKinley referenced the apple that tempted Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, leading to the downfall of humankind. For McKinley, the Philippines were the golden apple that would bring other great powers into conflict over the islands. Thus, further warfare, destruction, and death would be brought to the islands if America shirked its responsibility to civilization. British and French officials even urged McKinley to retain the islands, so that Germany could not annex the islands.<sup>143</sup> Such was the temptation of the Philippines to European powers, and the fragility of relations between them, that one disagreement over a prized port and fueling station might lead to a great power war—a war delayed until 1914. A dereliction of American duty in the Philippines was a failure by the United States to uphold the standard of civilization. “Such an arrangement,” McKinley concluded, “would involve at the outset a cruel breach of faith.”<sup>144</sup> If the United States failed to live up to its treaty obligations, its covenant with civilization would be breached. For McKinley, the United States must act in accordance the principles of civilization and humanity, otherwise the honor and the character of the nation would be irredeemably harmed.

*Toward a Better Tomorrow: The Progress of the World*

The United States had been expanding its territory and institutions westward since its inception. With the conclusion of the wars against the American Indians in the late nineteenth century, the Census Bureau concluded the American frontier had closed in its 1890 report. The Census Bureau wrote, “Up to and including 1880 the country had a frontier of settlement, but at present the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line. In the discussion of its extent, its westward movement, etc., it can not [sic], therefore, any longer have a place in the census reports.”<sup>145</sup> American progress on the continent had ended, and historian Fredrick Jackson Turner seized upon these words critiquing the importance of the frontier in American history.

In his thesis, Jackson concluded, “The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.”<sup>146</sup> For Jackson, the frontier was “the meeting point between savagery and civilization.”<sup>147</sup> The availability of this frontier offered Americans a continual renewal deeply influencing the character of the nation. “This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society,” noted Jackson, furnished “the forces dominating American character.”<sup>148</sup> The frontier also offered the “most rapid and effective” means to Americanizing immigrants. The frontier offered an opportunity for all people to escape the hardships they had by moving west. Between 1820 and 1840, 700,000 immigrants arrived in America. The next twenty years saw 4.2 million immigrants arrive. But the wave of immigration between 1870 and 1910 was the largest by far with some 20 million foreigners entering the United States.<sup>149</sup> With the frontier closed and new land no longer available, the United States’ progress was halted. The Spanish-American

War and the newly gained territories offered McKinley, and the United States, a new frontier. In this section, I present three main arguments. First, the concept of progress was critical to civilization's health. Progress was a necessary component of a civilized state. Second, the materialization of progress took many different forms from post-offices to self-governing institutions. Third, McKinley presented a vision of a world order built around progress and American liberalism.

As early as October 1898, McKinley recognized progress as the key driving force behind civilization. Speaking at a banquet in Chicago, Illinois, McKinley told his fellow countrymen:

The progress of a nation can alone prevent degeneration. There must be new life and purpose or there will be weakness and decay. There must be broadening of thought as well as broadening of trade. Territorial expansion is not alone and always necessary to national advancement. There must be a constant movement toward a higher and nobler civilization, a civilization that shall make its conquests without resort to war, and achieve its greatest victories pursuing the arts of peace.

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Civilizations needed to progress. Without progress, civilizations stagnate in all areas of society, from economics to scientific and technological research to cultural advancements. To maintain their place among civilized nations, the United States needed to find areas to push its boundaries, whether physical or ideological. Progress was a key defining trait of a civilized society.

Uncivilized nations failed to move forward, eventually entering entropy, decaying, and finally dying. Viewing war as a destructive and backwards process, McKinley wanted to move the country forward, finding new peaceful ways to advance American civilization. With American traditions of progress being grounded in the liberal beliefs of individual freedom, the free exchange of goods and services, and representative democracy, the peaceful tutelage of lesser nations was a possible avenue to expand America's frontier.<sup>151</sup> In pursuing peace, the United

States had an opportunity to progress American civilization outside of its borders by spreading liberal institutions to the Philippines.

The benefits of civilization were diverse, and included education, self-government, and a modern postal system. After outlining a broad belief in progress, a few months later in December 1898, McKinley delivered his “Second Annual Message.” In it, he proposed creating a postal system in the Philippines. McKinley described the postal system as part of a “well-ordered union.” He further expounded, “It would be strange were the nations not in time brought to realize that modern civilization, which owes so much of its progress to the annihilation of space by the electric force, demands that this all-important means of communication be a heritage of all peoples, to be administered and regulated in their common behoof.”<sup>152</sup> Postal services were a sign of civilization, shrinking the time it took for a message to travel from one place to another, whether over an ocean or vast continent. Postal services defined a nation as civilized because it represented the manipulation and control of time and space through technological progress. Having the power to control information, its transmission, and the speed of transmission was a symbol of civilization. Being part of this civilized world, meant coming together with other civilized governments to agree on the technical standards and common procedures for international rail transport, post, and telegraphy.<sup>153</sup> Thus, McKinley connected being part of the postal system with being part of the larger civilized international community. Civilized nations made technological contributions to the international community, making the manipulation of time and space possible. As well as agreeing on the standards for communication and travel, civilized states controlled how information flowed, who could travel, and where they could go. Civilized nations needed to continue to push these boundaries and make these technological advancements, otherwise their societies would stagnate and be left behind. Either other nations

would surpass them or the whole of human civilization would decay and move backwards. Key to continuing progress was better education and more access to better education.

John Stuart Mill, in 1836, recognized education was necessary to rectify any defects of civilized society and to continue civilization's progress.<sup>154</sup> Without it, societies would crumble. Education was a key theme in both McKinley's Third and Fourth Annual Messages to Congress. A proper education would help the Filipinos progress as a people. Though the Filipinos were not ready for self-government in 1899, a proper education might allow them to follow in America's footsteps in the future. In his "Third Annual Address," McKinley stated, education was the basis for "future moral and industrial advancement of the [Filipino] people."<sup>155</sup> A proper education helped improve the lives of citizens on the island and was necessary for uncivilized people around the world to join the ranks of civilized states. Such an education "will commend to them [the Filipinos] in a peculiarly effective manner the blessings of free government."<sup>156</sup> By McKinley's "Fourth Annual Address" in 1900, the United States was the legal protector and instructor of the Philippines. As their mentor on the path toward civilization, it was the United States' responsibility to aid in the proper instruction of the Filipinos. In his "Fourth Annual Message," McKinley proclaimed, the "fundamental requirement for all people" was the access to a good education. As responsible emancipators of the Philippines, it fell upon the United States, according to McKinley, to "promote and extend, and . . . to improve the system of education already inaugurated by the military authorities."<sup>157</sup> A good education created the basis for a cultured and prepared citizenry, making self-government possible. Being an educated people was a necessary requirement of being a member of civilized society. The Filipinos in 1899-1900, were not able to be a self-governing people because they lacked the formal education that makes good democratic citizens, but under American tutelage they could one day.

Education was only one aspect of society necessary for a civilized nation, and the larger task placed before McKinley and the United States was not going to be easy. Enumerating the benefits of accepting America's civilizing vision for the world, McKinley provided a vision of an international society built on nineteenth century American liberal values. His vision was a crude precursor to Wilson's liberal internationalism. In his 1899 speech at the Boston banquet, McKinley boldly accepted responsibility for the future of the Philippines. The United States would not rule as imperial overlords. Rather, they offered the Filipinos a "guiding hand and the liberalizing influences, the generous sympathies, the uplifting education, not of their American masters, but of their American emancipators."<sup>158</sup> Nineteenth century liberalism often sought to "offer 'tutelage' to people facing barriers of political, economic and cultural 'backwardness' that hindered their 'maturity.'"<sup>159</sup> Later in his Boston speech, McKinley argued for a brighter future for the Philippines, by bringing civilization and all of the blessings it brings. McKinley spoke about the transformation and his final vision of the islands:

a land of plenty and of increasing possibilities; a people redeemed from savage indolence and habits, devoted to the arts of peace, in touch with the commerce and trade of all nations, enjoying the blessings of freedom, of civil and religious liberty, of education, and of homes, and whose children and children's children shall for ages hence bless the American republic because it emancipated and redeemed their fatherland, and set them in the pathway of the world's best civilization.<sup>160</sup>

McKinley described the United States as the protagonist in this narrative, redeeming the hopeless Filipinos from a life of barbarism. Through hard work over many years, the United States—and civilization—would prevail over the dark forces of savagery and barbarism. The Philippines would be a mini-United States complete with civil and religious liberties. Similarly, Turner Jackson's theory of how the United States' frontier Americanized immigrants offered another insight. The new frontier of conquered territories would Americanize the native inhabitants,

making them civilized peoples in the mold of the Americans. McKinley defined civilization as a progressive force in the world, and the United States was the main actor who enacted civilization's liberalizing vision.

Europeans thinkers of the era began to connect notions of progress, especially the idea of civilized superiority, as a long historical progression from Ancient Greeks to modern day Europeans. For civilized nations, progress itself was "considered to be self-generating through characteristics internal to the West."<sup>161</sup> This interpretation of progress buttressed European's belief in their superiority, as though progress was a genetic characteristic expressed in European thinking. American ideas of progress were different. Writing of the United States, historian Eric Hobsbawm observed, "in the United States 'progress' was a national ideology."<sup>162</sup> Americans were of "the popular belief that the seat of civilization had over the centuries traveled west, from ancient China to Rome to Great Britain and finally to America."<sup>163</sup> The physical frontier of the United States may have closed in 1890, but the ideological frontier was just opening. A world full of potential, with peoples yearning to accept America's liberal institutions awaited. Progress, similar to duty, necessitated the United States expand its ideological reach. As McKinley noted in 1898, a nation that does not progress, stagnates and decays. To remain strong, to remain at the forefront of civilization, the United States needed to spread its own unique conception of civilization. Unlike Europe, which dominated its colonies and did not openly embrace liberal political or economic policies, except Great Britain, the United States would spread liberal institutions and values. The American republic would emancipate uncivilized barbarians from their foolish path, leading them toward civilization.

## Conclusion

Civilization represented a set of principles originally adopted by the great powers of Europe, with the United States and Japan being late adapters. The military and technological power of these countries forced this standard upon the rest of the world. However, it is important to note that for nations outside the “civilized” world progress and civilization were not seen as a blessing, especially at the expense of civilized nation tutelage. Rather, “‘Progress’ outside the advanced countries was therefore neither an obvious fact nor a plausible assumption, but mainly a foreign danger and challenger.”<sup>164</sup> As Europeans enshrined the standard of civilization into international law, the “violence of the letter” Derrida observed separated and subordinated uncivilized cultures and nations to the standard of civilization. Progress was made at the expense of uncivilized states, as civilized powers implemented changes to their cultural, political, and social structures.

Yet, much of McKinley’s rhetoric overlooked this potential pitfall. Rather, McKinley adopted the rhetoric of civilization, adapting it to fit the unique domestic contexts of the United States. He aligned America’s interpretation of civilization with its attitudes toward religion, progress, and race, tailoring his rhetoric to meet his audience’s beliefs. By doing so, McKinley’s discourse helped persuade Americans to support a war and peace settlement built on the legal and moral framework of civilization. Furthermore, in adopting a rhetoric of civilization, McKinley socialized the country into the Family of Nations. America’s motivations, encompassed in rhetoric, signaled to other great powers that the United States met not only the material requirements of being a great power but the principles of civilization as well.

McKinley’s rhetoric focused on Americans’ duty to fulfill civilization’s precepts. First, during the Cuba crisis and Spanish-American War, the United States had a duty to civilization

and humanity. McKinley's conception of duty necessitated action on behalf of the oppressed people of Cuba. To be a civilized nation, meant the United States could not overlook the barbaric atrocities happening at its doorstep. McKinley's rhetoric aligned with the religious and moral beliefs of many Americans of the era. Furthermore, McKinley undertook war on behalf of humanity and civilization, setting the precedent for future interventions by the U.S. on behalf of oppressed peoples. Second, when deciding whether to keep the Philippines, McKinley again appealed to civilization and humanity. This time because the United States had a duty to help the Filipinos progress toward civilization. Progress was used as a key modifier to civilization, becoming a force pushing peoples around the world to reach for the standard of civilization. Third, for American citizens, progress meant more technological and scientific research, raising the standard of civilization even higher. Thus, creating a vicious circle where great powers push the boundaries of civilization further, forcing uncivilized nations to meet constantly moving goals. Such a cycle ensured the great powers kept their position and remained unchallenged by uncivilized states who could not meet such high standards. The connection between civilization and progress continued after McKinley, including in Woodrow Wilson's rhetoric. Mary Stuckey wrote, "In this formulation, the 'decay' of 'weaker' civilizations had nothing to do with the actions of Americans or the American government but was the product of historical inevitability."<sup>165</sup> However, the term civilization underwent a dramatic change after World War II.

After McKinley, the world changed significantly over the course of the next fifty years. Highlighted by two catastrophic world wars and the downfall of most civilized states, the resonance of civilization faded. Civilization was closely tied to European colonialism, subjugating millions of native inhabitants to European rule. Post-World War II international

society saw a decolonial movement across much of the world, with native inhabitants overthrowing European colonial governments—the United States granted the Philippines independence in 1946. However, such a powerful ideograph did not simply disappear but morphed into something else. Political scientist Gerrit Gong offered two possible routes of evolution for civilization: “standard of human rights” and “standard of modernity.” For our purposes, the “standard of human rights” appears to resemble McKinley’s conception of civilization and humanity. Civilization did not disappear, rather it transformed into the legal standard and “principle of respect for and protection of human rights.”<sup>166</sup> Such rights, including the protection of life, liberty, property, and individual dignity, were embedded in articles 55 and 56 of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on Human Rights.<sup>167</sup> This new standard appears to encompass the more universal aspect of humanity from McKinley’s rhetoric, without the violent separation of the world into civilized and uncivilized states.

### **Chapter 3 The Citizen-Soldier: Redefining Citizenship**

Over a ten-day span in 1898, William McKinley gave 57 speeches in various small towns and large cities across the Midwest to garner public support for the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American War. The tour began in Iowa on October 11, 1898, and ended in Ohio on October 21, with stops in Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana. In 1899, McKinley went on a second Midwestern speaking tour, giving 79 speeches over twelve days. The second Midwestern tour began on October 6, 1899, and ended on October 18, making stops in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Ohio. Throughout both tours, McKinley argued for keeping the territory won during the Spanish-American War, a major departure in U.S. foreign policy. McKinley asserted the American flag was already there and abandoning the islands would be dishonorable. The tours presented McKinley with many epideictic speaking opportunities, providing multiple occasions to reimagine American citizenship, aligning with his new foreign policy agenda.

By the 1890s, the United States was neither a new country nor one unfamiliar with war, but it was unaccustomed to fighting wars on foreign soil. The nation gained its independence through a war, fought a costly Civil War, and, through a series of small wars against native inhabitants expanded across the continent. Yet, the Spanish-American War was the first foreign war for the country, asking Americans to fight and die on foreign soil. During the Spanish-American War, Americans fought for country, but they also fought for civilization and the freedom of peoples ranging from those just off the American shore, in Cuba, to those in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, in the Philippines. This change in motive required a redefinition of both U.S. citizens and the United States itself. This chapter seeks to examine the former, with

Chapter 4 focusing on the latter. That is, this chapter explores the following question: How did McKinley reimagine American citizenship to fit with a more active U.S. foreign policy?

I argue because of America's new international role McKinley reimaged citizenship through epideictic discourse, highlighting national patriotism and unity, both of which became key characteristics of his new model of citizenship—the citizen-soldier. The citizen-soldier trope in rhetoric has been with the country since its founding, with rhetorical scholar Jennifer Mercieca calling it the patriot hero, one of the country's founding fictions.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the usefulness of this trope was limited by its connection to the past, as the patriot hero defended the U.S. Constitution and Americans but did not go abroad to fight for U.S. values or end tyranny. Therefore, McKinley needed to update the trope, reflecting the new situation the country found itself in the autumn of 1898. McKinley used the epideictic opportunities of his speaking tours to redefine and imbue the citizen-soldier with the values needed as the country became a great power.

To make this argument, I examine citizenship during the Gilded Age, focusing on Mary Stuckey's work on Cleveland's conception of U.S. citizens. Cleveland conceived of citizens as good workers, discussing citizenship in terms of money and work, but such framing, as I argue, buckled under the economic pressures of the era requiring a new definition of citizenship. I follow this by discussing how presidents can use epideictic rhetoric to shape the country's values and reconstitute the American people. In my analysis, I make four main arguments. First, McKinley appealed to Americans sense of national patriotism and service. Second, McKinley used the Civil War as a public memory of disunion, replacing it with the Spanish-American War as a new memory of unity. McKinley's use of epideictic rhetoric sought to invigorate a sense of unity and patriotism in the country, overcoming economic and cultural divisions. Third, McKinley emphasized the citizen-soldier's commitment to duty and republican civic virtue,

acting as a model for Americans and peoples throughout the world to follow. McKinley's citizen-soldier was also defined by his manliness, affirming men's place in society. Finally, McKinley's rhetoric promoted the ideology of republican motherhood, relegating women to the private, non-political sphere.

### **A Divided Nation: A Need for A New Definition of Citizenship**

When Grover Cleveland won the presidency in 1884 and again in 1892, he was charged with maintaining, balancing, and preserving order within the United States, a task that was becoming increasingly difficult as the nation expanded. America's ability to assimilate multitudes of new immigrants, along with an increasingly active women's movement and various other groups vying for political salience, created tensions throughout the nation. According to Mary Stuckey, Cleveland balanced these demands "in ways that legitimized persistent ascriptive hierarchies, encouraged the disciplinary project of assimilating citizens, and naturalized continuing economic stratifications."<sup>2</sup> During Cleveland's two non-consecutive terms, money remained the one reliable indicator of an individual's worth. As Stuckey succinctly explained, "Citizenship was about money," and a citizen's "civic duty was thus rendered into the language of commerce."<sup>3</sup> Cleveland defined a good citizen as a good worker. Good citizens found their place in the national hierarchy, accepted their role, and did their job, understanding and trusting others in society to faithfully execute their assigned role to achieve the best results for the country. Cleveland's rhetoric of hierarchy, social stratification, and commerce may have been successful during his first term (1885-1889), but during his second term (1893-1897) it exacerbated social and sectional tensions in the country. Moreover, a citizenship framed in economic terms did little in the face of McKinley's exigency of the Spanish-American War and America's new role in the world.

The United States at the end of the nineteenth century was still divided, slowly healing from the Civil War, but still suffering setbacks. Though the Civil War had ended 25 years before the dawn of the 1890s, many in the North “still judged the South to be a backward and blighted region trapped in delusions of the Lost Cause.”<sup>4</sup> Vanessa Beasley described the era thusly, “As the population’s differences grew at the end of the nineteenth century’s end, so did its discontents. At times, the only thing that the American people seemed to share was a federal government.”<sup>5</sup> Even the federal government seemed to treat its citizens differently, giving whites full protection of the law, while minorities, especially blacks, faced increasing discrimination.

White and black Americans were equals in the eyes of the Constitution, but in practice very little had changed since the Civil War. The United States, as it is still today, was embroiled in racial tensions, with the continued injustice of black Americans being treated as second class citizens in their own country. The case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, decided in 1896, is perhaps most emblematic of the recodification of racial segregation throughout the South. *Plessy vs. Ferguson* enshrined the phrase “separate, but equal” into American political lexicon, until 1954 when *Brown vs. Board of Education* reversed it. *Plessy* ushered in the era of Jim Crowe laws, making blacks invisible in Southern politics. Writing about African American citizenship in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Mary Stuckey concluded, “Finally visible, but as yet undifferentiated, their exclusion was justified by characterizations of them as inimical to the national order, characterizations that applied to the group as a whole.”<sup>6</sup> President Cleveland’s rhetoric included blacks in the polity, but in Cleveland’s rhetorical hierarchy, blacks were on a lower, if not the lowest, rung of society. Such a hierarchy allowed Cleveland to rhetorically maintain all citizens had guaranteed rights, but the lack of political power of minority groups, including women and blacks, meant Cleveland paid them little rhetorical attention. While

appearing to be oppressive and undemocratic, Stuckey argued, Cleveland did not see it this way because “each place [on the social hierarchy] was equally important, each place served the greater good, just in different ways...serving cooperatively in one’s appropriate place became the means for equal treatment.”<sup>7</sup> Race was a problem Cleveland could bypass because of black’s anemic political power, but there were larger issues undermining Cleveland’s notion of citizenship that he could not dodge as easily.

Cleveland’s conception of citizenship relied on the language of money and industry, but the Panic of 1893, a disastrous economic downturn, undercut the language of money. The Panic brought American industry and the economy as a whole to a standstill. Historian H.W. Brands described the effects of the Panic of 1893: “Consumers stopped purchasing, retailers canceled orders, factories shut down, workers drew pink slips, and commodity prices plunged. The iron and steel business was flattened overnight. Big, well-financed corporations retrenched and lived off reserves; smaller firms dissolved. Credit contracted with a suffocating sound.”<sup>8</sup> Especially hard hit by the Panic was the farming community, primarily located in the West and South.

An *Atlantic* article described the toll of the Panic on farmers, “Following the loss of profit has come also a certain loss of dignity. The tiller of the soil, who in the days of our fathers was the embodiment of economic independence and of civic virtue, has passed away. He is a stock figure no longer the orator, but only of the humorist. His relative social standing has been lost. The ‘sturdy yeoman’ has become the ‘hayseed.’”<sup>9</sup> The agrarian West and South blamed falling agricultural prices on the Tariff Act of 1890. The tariff’s passage set off a political storm, polarizing the country, as historian H.W. Brands noted thusly, “as the agrarian West and South lined up against the tariff and the industrial Northeast lobbied in favor.”<sup>10</sup> Farmers took offense that protected industries benefited from a higher tariff but almost no farmers did. Moreover,

farmers found it onerous that they had to buy their equipment on a protected market, with no competition, but had to sell on an unprotected and competitive market.<sup>11</sup>

The West and South also took issue with United States currency policy, specifically the gold standard. The 1873 Coinage Act slipped through Congress and was signed by president U.S. Grant essentially demonetizing silver. The Act firmly put the United States on the gold standard, abolishing the right and ability to turn silver bullion into legal tender.<sup>12</sup> With the economic downturn in 1893 and the discovery of silver deposits in Nevada, Colorado, and Utah, many Western silver mine owners referred to “the demonetization of silver as ‘the Crime of ’73.’” Indebted farmers, mainly located in the West and South, also “took up the epithet...as they felt the tightening pinch of ‘sound money’ and looked to inflation for relief.”<sup>13</sup> Those in the South and West found their champion in William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic nominee in 1896, who decried these economic policies in his “Cross of Gold” speech. In it, Bryan concluded, “We will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns; you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.”<sup>14</sup> Northeast business fears were palpable in the *New York Times* headline the following day: “THE SILVER FANATICS ARE INVINCIBLE: Wild, Raging, Irresistible Mob Which Nothing Can Turn from Its Abominable Foolishness. SOUND-MONEY MEN SURELY DOOMED TO DEFEAT.”<sup>15</sup> Economic issues split the nation and the election of 1896, with the South and West voting heavily in favor of the bimetalist and populist Bryan, while McKinley heavily won the industrial northeast and Middle Atlantic.<sup>16</sup> The nation seemed more divided by region and class, with labor strikes threatening to undo the economic hierarchy.

The good citizen as a good worker formula of citizenship was straining under the pressure of the Panic of 1893. The souring of the economy saw some of America’s largest and

most violent labor strikes in its history—the Homestead and Pullman Strikes.<sup>17</sup> Contemporary historian Brooks Adams wrote of the American economy at the time, “friction will infallibly exist between capital and labor,”<sup>18</sup> but the U.S. economy will falter only “if her administrative machinery generates friction unduly.”<sup>19</sup> Adams placed the undue friction in the American economy at the feet of capital’s treatment of labor, writing, “Derange them [the workers] and there would immediately follow an equivalent loss of energy [in America’s economic machinery].”<sup>20</sup> Citizens were finding it more difficult to find and stay in their designated place in Cleveland’s economic hierarchy.

Cleveland’s definition of citizenship and rhetorical hierarchy were failing. Citizens found it harder to fulfill their role, while others prospered off their backs. The United States was becoming the land of the working poor, with factory workers and farmers finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet, while owners accumulated vast amounts of wealth. A new definition of citizenship was needed. The Spanish-American War offered McKinley the chance to redefine Americans, as the war had momentarily united the country against an outside enemy. McKinley’s decision to go on two speaking tours offered him epideictic opportunities to recast American citizenship, using the feelings of national unity and patriotism to solidify his new definition.

### **Creating Rhetorical Community Through Epideictic Rhetoric**

Presidents face a difficult task in creating unity in the United States because of the diversity of races, creeds, and other identifying beliefs in the United States. “Americans at any given time have different sets of identities,” according to Mary Stuckey, “which, taken together in their contradictory complexity, are variously composed of their experiences of national and international history, race(s), class, gender, region, sexuality, and life history.”<sup>21</sup> However,

through the use of epideictic rhetoric, presidents are able to reconstitute the American people, the Inaugural Address being the most notable opportunity, but also through other epideictic occasions. As Campbell and Jamieson have written, “all presidents have the opportunity to persuade us to conceive of ourselves in ways compatible with their views of government and the world. At the same time presidents invite us to see them, the presidency, the country, and the country’s role in specific ways.”<sup>22</sup> Presidents can use epideictic’s value appeals to create a shared identity. Vanessa Beasley observed, “U.S. presidents can use these themes not only to speak about allegedly constitutive American ideals, the backbone of the shared belief hypothesis, but also to promote more specific attitudinal postures that these ideals necessitate.”<sup>23</sup> Epideictic occasions for presidents provide them with opportunities to reaffirm and reinvigorate communal values, but also to lay the ground work for policy initiatives.<sup>24</sup> Epideictic rhetoric, through its praise and censuring functions, plays an important role in a president’s ability to reshape communal values and definitions of citizenship. The remainder of this section discusses the rhetorical strategies available to presidents during epideictic encounters.

Epideictic rhetoric presents rhetors and audiences with opportunities to reflect, contemplate, and reimagine communal definitions and values. In discussing epideictic rhetoric and reflection, Gerard Hauser remarked epideictic rhetoric encourages “the constitutive activity” of “reflecting on public norms for proper political conduct.”<sup>25</sup> During the epideictic encounter, it is the rhetor’s responsibility to carve out and create a “timeless, consubstantial space” for reflection.<sup>26</sup> These moments of reflection “help us to scrutinize our own privately and publicly held beliefs and prejudices, to evaluate them, and to decide whether to reaffirm or reform them.”<sup>27</sup> In this timeless space, epideictic rhetoric can act as a “force for change.”<sup>28</sup> Epideictic speech, according to Cynthia Sheard, “moves its audience toward a process of critical reflection

that goes beyond evaluation toward envisioning and *actualizing* alternative realities.”<sup>29</sup> Alternate realities are a possibility, because despite the apparent permanence of epideictic narratives, as Denise Bostdorff noted, “they actually are quite fluid, for rhetors choose which narratives they wish to promote and which values and heroes they want to privilege.”<sup>30</sup> The rhetor may employ new or reimagine older rhetorical symbols, imbuing them with the virtues they want to instill in the community. These symbols can be used to “inculcate change” and “challenge old prejudices and imagine new worlds.”<sup>31</sup> As the new symbols and narratives coalesce through the epideictic encounter, one, “real” world is made probable through epideictic performance. John Murphy explained that such a world comes into being through “a collaborative creation of speaker and audience as they establish the appropriate relationship between each other in a new world.”<sup>32</sup> Through epideictic rhetoric’s reflective function, rhetors can shape cultural values by emphasizing particular values and narratives above others. This reordering of values, or the introduction of new values, creates a new vision and alternative paths forward for communities.

As one new reality becomes evident during the epideictic encounter, it is in these moments presidents can reimagine citizenship. To be successful, there are a few critical rhetorical strategies presidents can use. Epideictic rhetoric is part of a larger set of communal ritual performances intended to “preserve cultural traditions, collective memory, and political order—not to stand apart from or transcend them.”<sup>33</sup> As part of communal rituals, epideictic rhetoric instructs “audiences in communal rights, duties, and responsibilities by contrasting praiseworthy to blameworthy customs of conduct.”<sup>34</sup> Epideictic rhetoric allows a rhetor to instill cultural values in a community by praising particular virtues or blaming other unwanted values. Another strategy, according to rhetorician Scott Consigny, in his study of *Gorgias*, is the ability to adapt terminology to the audience and to deploy commonplaces or accentuate their

importance.<sup>35</sup> Celeste Condit expounded upon these ideas by creating pairs: definition/understanding and shaping/sharing of community. For each pair, the first term indicates the function for the speaker, and the second the function for the audience. When some event, person, group or object is confusing, troubling or new, speakers employ epideictic rhetoric using the define/understand function. Here, rhetors use the power of epideictic to explain the social world, defining and explaining events facing a society in terms of the audience's values and beliefs. In the case of McKinley's rhetoric, the new exigency was the United States fighting a war overseas. To explain this new event, McKinley would need to define the United States' and American citizens' roles in terms familiar and relatable to them. Through this function, the speaker gains the power to define the issue or event, while the audience gains a better understanding of what is occurring. The second pairing, shaping/sharing community is closely related to the first. A sense of community, be it local or national, is developed and maintained through epideictic rhetoric and relies on shared heritage and identity. By taking time to work through new experiences and definitions, in the shared reflective space of the epideictic encounter, rhetors, especially presidents, can strengthen the bonds between individuals by explaining to them what virtues and values they share. Presidents will likely employ familiar rhetorical symbols and tropes, helping reaffirm a community's sense of belonging, heritage, and identity, fulfilling the shaping/sharing function.

In the subsequent sections, I explore McKinley's use of epideictic rhetoric, its transformative power, and the changes in American citizenship it articulated. Epideictic rhetoric offered McKinley a powerful rhetorical strategy to praise the values of national patriotism and unity, reimagining Americans as exemplars of these virtues. To support his argument, McKinley used the commonplace of the citizen-soldier as a model of republican citizenship, giving citizens

an ideal to imitate. By using these strategies, McKinley tore down the stratified economic hierarchy of Cleveland. He replaced it with a citizenship based on service that was theoretically open to all Americans, fostering internal cohesion in the country. While he does not transform Americans into the transcendent global citizens based on a shared ideology of Woodrow Wilson, he does begin the rhetorical shift of strengthening America's shared national, not regional, identity based on universal values that can be exported.

### **An Era of Patriotism: The Beginnings of a New Citizen**

Following the Spanish-American War, McKinley undertook his two speaking tours of the Midwest. On these tours, he had over a hundred epideictic speaking opportunities. Seizing on epideictic's transformative characteristics, McKinley began to reimagine U.S. citizens to fit with the new reality facing the country, one which required the nation and its citizens to take a more active role. Throughout the tour, McKinley continually reinforced the importance of American patriotism. Patriotism has been a critical value since the founding of the United States. As Mercieca has written, "There was little room for a 'patriot subject' in the old monarchical fiction, but once monarchical subjects were cast as republican citizens, patriotism could be the defining characteristic of every American."<sup>36</sup> An American patriot at the Founding "was one who defended the constitution from corruption, thereby acting above party and faction to preserve liberty of all."<sup>37</sup> By 1885, patriotism under McKinley's predecessors, Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison, was defined in monetary terms. However, similar to Cleveland's definition of citizenship, this definition of patriotism was buckling under the economic turbulence of the era. Before examining McKinley's conception of patriotism, where he redefined patriotism as a citizen's service to the country, I want to overview Cleveland's and Harrison's rhetoric of economic patriotism and its pitfalls.

Cleveland's patriotic rhetoric, like his rhetoric of citizenship, was framed in the language of money and work. Speaking about the tariff in his "Third Annual Message," Cleveland stated, "But if in the emergency that presses upon us our manufacturers are asked to surrender something for the public good and to avert disaster, their patriotism, as well as a grateful recognition of advantages already afforded, should lead them to willing cooperation."<sup>38</sup> The corporation was the patriotic entity sacrificing for the country, not the citizen, who was relegated to a passive role. In his "Fourth Annual Message," Cleveland recognized the growing wealth gap between capital and labor, remarking, corporations are "fast becoming the people's masters."<sup>39</sup> To restrain these interests, Cleveland called upon the patriotic citizen, stating, "it is our duty as patriotic citizens to inquire at the present stage of our progress how the bond of the Government made with the people has been kept and performed."<sup>40</sup> But this request from Cleveland contradicted his own definition of citizenship. For Cleveland, Americans were to be satisfied good workers, working diligently and not disrupting the system. But here they were supposed to question the bonds between citizen, government, and corporation, a role hardly suited for the good citizen finding his place in the hierarchy and remaining there. Continuing in his "Fourth Annual Message," Cleveland admitted to the dangers of a language of money, stating, "The existing situation is injurious to the health of our entire body politic. It stifles in those for whose benefit it is permitted all patriotic love of country, and substitutes in its place selfish greed and grasping avarice."<sup>41</sup>

Cleveland's successor and predecessor, Benjamin Harrison also framed patriotism in economic terms. Remarking on the friction between labor and capital over wages, Harrison stated, "A general process of wage reduction can not be contemplated by any patriotic citizen without the gravest apprehension."<sup>42</sup> The interest of the patriotic individual was framed in

relation to how much he could earn or how much he would lose by acting. Sacrifice for the country became a cost/benefit analysis, with the love of one's country replaced by the cold, calculating thought of how much an action benefited each citizen. Economic patriotism would not be an effective model during the Spanish-American War or going out into the world because it created friction and division, not unity, between citizens. It limited a citizen's role to being a worker, with no responsibility for protecting or promoting American values, and was based on the language of money, not the language of sacrifice, duty or love of one's country.

Dividing the United States was a set of economic and cultural issues; however, McKinley declared throughout his two speaking tours the end of sectionalism and the birth of an era of patriotism. For McKinley, he praised patriotism as a virtue all citizens should possess and defined patriotism through a citizen's service to the nation. According to McKinley, at a stop in St. Paul, Minnesota, "The patriotism of the American people takes the place of a large standing army."<sup>43</sup> In Aberdeen, South Dakota, McKinley stated, "You got it from your fathers; and it is a patriotism that never deserts and never encourages desertion."<sup>44</sup> American patriotism had always defended the nation because it was embodied in the spirit of every citizen from generation to generation. Unlike a patriotism based on money, McKinley's definition of patriotism of service was available to all (male) Americans, not just the wealthy or the powerful. For McKinley, the visible demonstration of a citizen's patriotism was their willingness to serve the nation. In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, McKinley remarked of the patriot's willingness to volunteer, "To the Executive's call for volunteers no more prompt response was received than came from the patriotic people of the South and the West."<sup>45</sup> Patriotism as service to America was a virtue that resided in the hearts of all Americans, and stirred them to action upon McKinley's request.

Americans' patriotism was the virtue that conquered the disputes between capital and labor, between Northerner and Southerner, and between Republican and Democrat. For citizens, part of being a patriot was placing their love of country over regional disputes, supporting the federal government and the constitution. In an 1898 stop in Denison, Iowa, and an 1899 stop in Quincy, Illinois, McKinley announced an era of patriotism. Patriotism was responsible for erasing political party lines and partisanship of past generations. The voice of partisanship was hushed, with only "the voice of patriotism . . . heard throughout the land."<sup>46</sup> "Patriotism is an all-conquering sentiment in the American heart," according to McKinley in Lake Preston, "It triumphs over mere politics."<sup>47</sup> For McKinley, a patriotic citizen placed his or her love of the country above any one political issue. McKinley praised the patriotic citizen, who forgot about the animosities he held against other Americans and instead joined together for the good of the United States. The true American citizen thought of himself as an American first, and any other identity second.

Patriotism was praised as a virtue of a good citizen, while the unpatriotic voices opining against McKinley's policies were harshly condemned. Speaking in Canton, Illinois, in 1899, McKinley declared, "He who would stir up animosities between North and the South is denied a hearing in both sections."<sup>48</sup> Upon reaching Cedar Falls, Iowa, ten days later, he stated, "The orator of hate, like the orator of despair, has no hearing in any section of our country."<sup>49</sup> In both cases, speakers seeking to sow division were labeled and criticized for their unpatriotic behavior and insidious motives. And in both cases, McKinley was supremely confident that these "orators of hate" would receive no hearing from the American people, who were unified in purpose and cause. McKinley most clearly articulated political unity as his motive for censoring un-patriotic speech in an 1898 speech in Creston, Iowa. He stated, "As we have been united and therefore

strong and invincible in the war, we must continue united until the end of this struggle; we must have no differences among ourselves while we are settling differences with another government. When we have made that settlement in the interest of justice and civilization and humanity, then we can resume our own domestic differences.”<sup>50</sup> The great fear for McKinley was the recurrence of a divided home front during peace negotiations with Spain, threatening the peace treaty.

While such denouncements may conjure images of totalitarian regimes, McKinley did not seek the end of political debate in the United States, only the divisiveness politics had become. While the military victory won a decisive peace for the United States, if the home front fractured along the squabbling sectional lines of 1896, America’s hard-fought peace could be in jeopardy. Echoes of this argument were present in a speech in Galena, Illinois, in 1899. There McKinley remarked, “We are now a united country, and we are united for the right; we are united for liberty; we are united for civilization; we are united for humanity; And being thus united, we are invincible.”<sup>51</sup> Patriotic Americans recognized the importance of domestic unity in light of America’s larger role in the world. They could express their patriotism in two ways: volunteer and serve in the military or support those who did.

Patriotism united Americans in their service to the country, coming from every region to join one army under the flag of the Republic as citizen-soldiers. Such service demonstrated the connection between citizenship and military service.<sup>52</sup> The citizen-soldier represented the true spirit of the patriot, whose obligation, in stark contrast to the career soldier or draftee, was unsullied by “state coercion and thus arguably *more* true to the citizen-soldier ideal.”<sup>53</sup> Americans displayed their patriotism throughout the war, as McKinley remarked in 1899, “Our troops represented the courage and conscience, the purpose and patriotism, of their country. Whether in Cuba, Porto Rico, or the Philippines, or at home awaiting orders, they did their full

duty, and all sought the post of greatest peril. They never faltered.”<sup>54</sup> The American citizen-soldier and the support of their fellow citizens represented the true mark of American patriotism. Unlike European states, who had large professional armies, the United States relied on the patriot to defend the nation. The citizen-soldier tradition arose in America from a fear of large standing armies being used as a tool of tyranny against its citizens. The earliest iteration of the citizen-soldier was the patriot hero. As Jennifer Mercieca described, “the American citizen was now conceived of as the patriot hero who would defend liberty by eschewing parties and factions and supporting and defending the constitution.”<sup>55</sup> Therefore, in the United States, a tradition arose of all free adult men responding to the call of duty, an act of political service, when a powerful tyrannical force threatened the freedom of U.S. citizens. Unlike previous iterations of patriotism and the citizen-soldier, McKinley’s conception traveled overseas. Wherever the American flag flew, the patriot’s heart and desire to defend the United States followed.

Not every citizen, especially women, could serve as a citizen-soldier in 1898. For these citizens, McKinley relied on an early formation of the patriotic rhetoric of “Support the Troops.” Rhetorical scholar Roger Stahl wrote about the evolution of the rhetoric of “Support the Troops,” a common phrase to any of us remembering the post-9/11 George W. Bush years. There has always been patriotic rhetoric in the style of “Support the Troops,” but as Stahl observed, the twentieth century’s discourse was subtler in directing public attitudes toward conflicts. Stahl noted, such rhetoric “works as a regulatory mechanism for disciplining the civic sphere itself—that is, it functions to subvert citizen deliberation.”<sup>56</sup> McKinley’s rhetoric during his two October speaking tours promoted an early conception of this “support the troops” discourse for non-citizen-soldiers. All Americans rushed to support the flag. Americans fighting overseas literally followed the flag into battle, while those at home supported the troops. For these citizens, there

was one requirement: support those who did go to war, in any way possible. Speaking in Lake Preston, South Dakota, in 1899, McKinley commented, “If the patriot, for any good reason, does not go to war himself, he always supports the soldier who does, and shelters and cares for his family while the head of it is at the front.”<sup>57</sup> The orders were clear, for those who were unable to go to war, they must support those who could and help their families as well. Every American was expected to make sacrifices for the country during a time of war, those able should serve in the military, while those at home needed to support the war effort.

McKinley’s conception of national patriotism was rooted in the citizen’s service to the country, either through directly volunteering to serve in the military or supporting the troops. He believed it was the citizen’s duty to serve, protect, and support the nation. Unlike placing citizens into a hierarchy, McKinley’s definition of citizenship was open to all and required their unity, as equals in supporting the United States.

### **An End to Sectionalism**

McKinley’s speaking tour praised patriotic citizens who supported the citizen-soldier and McKinley’s foreign policy. Implied in this patriotic discourse was a second virtue: national unity. Americans’ should forget about the divisions at home, putting aside sectional issues, and focus on being a united nation. Throughout his speaking tours, McKinley needed to persuade citizens they were Americans first and Southerners or Northerners or Westerners second.

Patriotic Americans support for their fellow citizens united the nation, lessening the sectional tensions that had divided them. The new reimagined citizenry of the United States would be united in duty and purpose, as McKinley sought to rhetorically mold citizens to fit the United States’ new position in the world. In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in October 1898, McKinley stated, “No development of the war has been more gratifying and exalting than the complete

unification of the nation. Sectional lines have been obliterated; party differences have been hushed in the great chorus of patriotism which has been heard from one end of the country to the other.”<sup>58</sup> Near the beginning of his 1899 tour, in Canton, Illinois, McKinley reiterated this point. In Canton, he remarked, “We are no longer a divided people.”<sup>59</sup> However, such proclamations were hollow if citizens did not act on their desire to be a patriotic and united nation. Americans demonstrated their new national unity by answering the president’s call to serve. In Hoopstown, Illinois, McKinley remarked, “every State of the Union, North and South, rushed forward by hundreds of thousands to serve their country; and they will not abate their patriotism till every rebellion everywhere and by whomsoever conducted shall be put down.”<sup>60</sup> Americans’ patriotism and response to McKinley’s call to serve helped ease divisive regional differences. In Fargo, North Dakota, in 1899, McKinley remarked, “The last eighteen months have born impressive testimony of the patriotism of the American people. The call for two hundred thousand troops was promptly responded to by the people of the United States, without respect to party, creed, section, or nationality.”<sup>61</sup> McKinley’s emphasis on volunteerism and service united Americans across the country, lessening the importance of local identities in the face of external exigencies. Americans could focus their energy on combating the dangers lurking in the international sphere, not confronting each other over tariff or monetary policy.

However, the largest regional difference has yet to be addressed: the divide between the North and South. As the last president to serve in the Civil War and someone who remembered the damage done to the nation by it, McKinley needed to heal and replace the memory of disunity with a new memory of unity. In his rhetoric, McKinley used the collective memory of the American Civil War to tell a narrative of disunity between North and South, and replaced it with the new memory of the North and South united, under one flag against a common enemy.

While the past was not completely replaced, McKinley used epideictic rhetoric to restructure the social bonds between North and South to tell the tale of a unified nation. Before analyzing McKinley's use of memory, I want to briefly discuss memory's application and connection to epideictic rhetoric, and rhetorical studies in general.

In Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson's work on the presidency, they found that in epideictic rhetoric *memoria* or collective memory of a shared past was an important resource for the rhetor.<sup>62</sup> *Memoria* is different from history. History refers to "those punctuations of the time that have been accepted by the majority of intellectual communities as an authentic record of the past."<sup>63</sup> Whereas collective memory is "the public acceptances or ratifications of these histories on the part of broader audiences."<sup>64</sup> Kirt Wilson added, "Memory is not comprised simply of facts about the past, nor is it solely myth. It is, instead, a rhetorically negotiated commingling of history and commemoration, each form dictating slightly different exigencies."<sup>65</sup> Rhetorically, collective memory has three important functions—it helps create individual and collective identity, it maintains cultural traditions, and it lets communities forget.

Rather than recounting the past as a set of static facts, rhetors invoke collective memory to emphasize certain narratives for their audience. By artistically portraying the past, rhetors hope to instill certain values in their audience through praising or blaming the actions of characters. Kirt Wilson stated of epideictic moments of commemoration, it "is an *epideictic* enterprise that builds communal identity and values."<sup>66</sup> Epideictic address offers a condensation of symbols constituting "the value, meaning, and communal *relationship* that a society has with its past."<sup>67</sup> In this way, commemoration and epideictic rhetoric celebrating collective memory instructs communities by telling them who they are and what values they should embody. Bostdorff added that in certain cases rhetors may draw on collective memory to unite highly

fragmented audiences.<sup>68</sup> A skilled rhetor can restructure the past in light of new events, creating a unified narrative for a previously divided community. As Wilson noted, “The speech acts that comprise commemoration are not concerned primarily with accuracy, but place a greater emphasis on emotional resonance and the utility of a narrative to warrant judgment or to structure social relationships.”<sup>69</sup> By shaping the audience’s perception of the past, rhetors create a shared interpretation of the past. This is especially true when the rhetor and audience are further removed from the original event. Lastly, but most importantly, Marouf Hasian Jr. and Robert Frank observed collective memory involves selective forgetting. As new memories are formed, some old memories are forgotten or replaced. With every new generation, a debate occurs, recirculating and renegotiating which memories will be retained in our texts, museums, and minds.<sup>70</sup>

McKinley’s epideictic opportunities on his speaking tours offered him a chance to reshape U.S. domestic identity, replacing the memory of the divisive Civil War with the Spanish-American War, exemplifying the unity of the American people. A common refrain heard from McKinley, as typified in Canton, Illinois, was “The boys of the South with the boys of the North fought triumphantly on land and sea in every engagement of the war.”<sup>71</sup> But, McKinley also used more specific examples, as this excerpt from Boone, Iowa, in 1898 demonstrated: “It is a sight inspiring to behold that in our war the troops of the North brigaded with the troops of the South; that Iowa troops were brigaded with the troops of Georgia, and commanded by that distinguished ex-Confederate, whose name is so familiar in the annals of the Civil War, so that once more we were all together.”<sup>72</sup> “Our war” was a new memory constructed by McKinley, where a new generation put to rest the animosities of the past to forge a new bond. As McKinley stated in Evansville, Indiana, in 1899, “The best men of the South came—the sons of the old Confederate

soldiers; the best men of the North—the sons of the old soldiers of the republic. All joined together in heart and hand to maintain the flag of their country and follow wherever it might lead.”<sup>73</sup> The sons of disunion came together, to create a new and lasting bond built on fraternity and sacrifice for each other.

The disunity of the Civil War faded into the past, as McKinley emphasized the unity and fraternity Americans felt toward each other in the wake of the Spanish-American War. As McKinley encapsulated in Chicago, “Fraternity and union are deeply embedded in the hearts of the American people. For half a century before the Civil War disunion was the fear of men of all sections. The word has gone out of the American vocabulary. It is spoken now only as a historical memory.”<sup>74</sup> The Civil War’s memory was one with little power over the unity of people. Americans were now united in purpose and loyalty to the federal government. As McKinley declared in Tipton, Indiana, the North and South are united “with one aim, with one purpose, and with one determination—to stand by the government of the United States.”<sup>75</sup> Now, united in a common effort and purpose, the United States would have “its widest influence” in the realm of international relations, as McKinley stated in St. Louis.<sup>76</sup> The Civil War’s disunity was a historical footnote, a memory of the past, dividing and weakening the nation at home and overseas. Americans found a new purpose, in the Spanish-American War, uniting citizens from both the North and South.

To support his rhetoric and the unity embodied in the new memory, McKinley employed two rhetorical strategies. First, he used religious rhetoric to seal a new covenant between the American people. Second, he relied on the symbolism of the American flag, with all Americans fighting under one flag, exemplifying the end of division between North and South.

To seal this new bond and complete the new memory, McKinley spoke in religious terms. Religious themed rhetoric has been particularly useful in creating social cohesion in the United States, given its ethnic and cultural diversity. Rhetorician Vanessa Beasley argued, “American civil religion offers the same promises that most religions do: rebirth, redemption, and renewal—the ability to overcome the past by becoming part of the *Novo Ordus Seclorum*.”<sup>77</sup> Speaking in St. Louis in 1898, McKinley declared, “North and South have mingled their best blood in a common cause, and to-day rejoice in a common victory. Happily for the nation to-day, they follow the same glorious banner, together fighting and dying under its sacred folds for American honor and for the humanity of the race.”<sup>78</sup> Six days later, in Tipton, Indiana, McKinley described the new bond between North and South as a “holy alliance.”<sup>79</sup> A year later, in Evansville Indiana, McKinley reiterated the shared sacrifice, stating, “We have been more than reconciled—cemented in faith and affection; and our reuniting has been baptized in the best blood of both sections of our beloved country.”<sup>80</sup> The Spanish-American War blood-shedding offered the United States an opportunity of rebirth, through a new baptism. Unlike the Civil War, the North and South did not fight each other in fratricide; rather, they fought together to achieve a new victory together. They shared sacrifice, through spilling of blood together on the battlefield, to consecrate America’s new union. Their mingling of blood sealed the new collective memory between North and South. Prior to the Spanish-American War, unity was a concept with no tangible symbol. After the war, the symbolic consecration of mixing blood through sacrifice united the nation. The United States post-1898 was a new, united country after going through the ritualized “baptism of foreign fire.”<sup>81</sup>

McKinley employed one more commonplace of American patriotism to symbolize unity: the American flag. In Boone, Iowa, McKinley stated, “Every section of this country loves the old

flag dearly, and we have but one flag, and that the glorious Stars and Stripes.”<sup>82</sup> While speaking at a banquet in Chicago, McKinley declared, “The Blue and the Gray march under one flag. We have but one flag now, ‘the same our grandsires lifted up, the same our fathers bore’—that flag which you kept stainless and made triumphant.”<sup>83</sup> Symbolizing America’s new unity was American soldiers, from all corners of the nation, as McKinley noted consistently, marching and fighting under the flag of the United States. In McKinley’s rhetoric, the flag served as the symbol of a unified America. While marching and fighting under the flag demonstrated unity to the United States, it also demonstrated loyalty to the President, the Constitution, and the federal government. The American flag symbolized the values of the United States embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, which the South rebelled against. Now, by marching under the flag, the South displayed their loyalty to the Union. The memories of the Blue and Gray, and multiple flags under which Americans fought, were over. The United States was united, under one flag, with one set of principles and values moving forward.

### **The Citizen-Soldier**

So far, I have focused on U.S. citizens being patriotic and united, but McKinley also gave his fellow Americans an idealized model of citizenship: the citizen-soldier. This section examines who the citizen-soldier was and what traits he exemplified. The citizen-soldier was among the best and brightest of his generation, following a long line of American volunteers who served their country. The citizen-soldier was willing to fulfill his duty and sacrifice for the country, but also happy to return to civilian life, living the life of an active citizen of the republic. He was the embodiment of republican virtue and self-government. The citizen-soldier was also male, and in all but a few cases, he was white. McKinley’s emphasis on masculinity represented

a new model of masculinity for men to follow after massive unemployment caused men to question their masculinity and place in society.

The citizen-soldier came from a long line of U.S. patriots, with McKinley placing the latest group of volunteers from the Spanish-American War in historical context. In Marshalltown, Iowa, McKinley stated of the volunteers, “They did just as the old soldiers of the other volunteer army did—they did their whole duty, and were willing to bare their breasts to the enemy’s bullets, and sacrifice their lives, if need be, for the honor of the government of the United States.”<sup>84</sup> In Redfield, South Dakota, at a stop in 1899, McKinley stated, “We have never lacked soldiers to defend any cause in which the country has been engaged, from the days of 1776 down to the present hour.”<sup>85</sup> The American citizen-soldiers of the Spanish-American War were just like the soldiers who won the Revolution, the Mexican-American War, and all the other armed conflicts they were called upon to serve. Moreover, the citizen-soldier was the average man, not some mythic unattainable hero, from the U.S., exemplifying patriotic spirit. At the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, McKinley continued praising the ordinary soldier, stating, “New names stand out on the honor-roll of the nation’s great men and with them, unnamed, stand the heroes of the trenches and the forecastle, invincible in battle and uncomplaining in death. The intelligent, loyal, indomitable soldier and sailor and marine, regular and volunteer, are entitled to equal praise as having done their whole duty, whether at home or under the baptism of foreign fire.”<sup>86</sup> While the great names would be remembered by history—one can think of Admiral Dewey or Teddy Roosevelt and the “Rough Riders”—McKinley honored the unnamed soldiers, who did their duty without complaint. The citizen-soldier represented the regular American citizen, an unnamed man from any region of the country, answering the president’s call and performing his duty in service of the country.

Citizen-soldiers were dutiful, serving the nation in its time of need because that was how a good citizen acted. At a stop in Duluth, Minnesota, McKinley explained, “It [the government] is defended, whenever it is assailed, by its citizen soldiery.”<sup>87</sup> It is this attitude that McKinley described as “a glorious citizenship,” in a speech in Ames, Iowa, in 1898.<sup>88</sup> For this citizenship, according to McKinley, continuing in Ames, “meets every emergency and responds to every crisis in the life of the nation. The American people have never failed, no matter how great the emergency, no matter how grave the crisis, to measure up to the highest responsibilities of honor and duty.”<sup>89</sup> In lieu of a standing army, the U.S. relied on its citizen-soldiers to fulfill their duty when the nation was threatened, reflecting the relationship between citizen and state.

State militias, comprised of citizen-soldiers, “came to be identified with liberty and constitutional government, which effectively made military service in time of war a responsibility of citizenship.”<sup>90</sup> McKinley used the First South Dakota, a unit of volunteers, as an exemplar of a citizen’s patriotic duty and responsibility. In an 1899 speech, in Huron, South Dakota, McKinley affirmed, “The First South Dakota refused to accept the advice of the unpatriotic and stayed and upheld the flag. They did not come home until they had placed that flag stainless and spotless in the hands of the new army we sent.”<sup>91</sup> McKinley described it as their choice to stay and fight, demonstrating the freedom American volunteers have, even as soldiers on the battlefield. Such a choice to stay or run was an example of a soldier exercising “his personal liberty, his freedom to govern his life as he saw fit.”<sup>92</sup> Both choices fell into the construct of self-government, but McKinley praised staying and fighting, demonstrating for future generations the virtue needed to be a good citizen. The citizen-soldier’s bravery to stay symbolized his commitment to the nation. It was the duty of U.S. citizenship for men to be available for military service when the nation called.

The U.S. citizen-soldier was a volunteer, not a draftee forced to defend his nation. Thus, the rapid response of male citizens throughout the nation filled McKinley with pride, and reinforced the volunteer nature of American military service. As McKinley stated, during a speech in Decatur, Illinois, “More than two hundred thousand soldiers responded to the call of country, coming from homes of our fellow-citizens everywhere, the bravest and the best.”<sup>93</sup> The American soldier was a neighbor, a friend, a person every American knew and interacted with daily. They were not professionally trained military warriors, like the professional armies of Europe. Also, unlike their European counterparts, American citizen-soldiers were volunteers. Speaking in Atlanta, Georgia, McKinley declared, “The army whose valor we admire, and the navy whose achievements we applaud, were not assembled by draft or conscription, but from voluntary enlistment. The heroes came from civil as well as military life. Trained and untrained soldiers wrought our triumphs.”<sup>94</sup> The two hundred thousand volunteers mixed with the small trained Army of the United States, but all American soldiers went to war willingly. As historian Ricardo Herrera observed about American volunteerism and its connection to self-government, “Enlistment was a contractual agreement freely entered into by soldiers and the government. Between two contracting parties, equity could be achieved and maintained only by a soldier who was sure of his right and ability to govern his own life.”<sup>95</sup> McKinley’s praise of the volunteer nature of America’s army, and the rapid response of citizens to his call, reinforced the values of self-government and citizens’ freedom to choose their destiny. Such choice to serve demonstrated “the patriot’s spirit of obligation,”<sup>96</sup> compared to the forced coercion of draftees by the government. Americans’ willingness to respond so positively and quickly to McKinley’s call was the manifestation of the “era of patriotism” described by the president.

The economic troubles of the 1890s left many men in need of work and income to support themselves and their families. Men went from being independent farmers or craftsmen to dependent industrial workers or indebted farmers. Stuckey wrote of male citizenship, during this time, “The attitude of manliness, so important to the late nineteenth century, could be exhibited by a wageworker, so long as he retained the manly attitude toward that work.”<sup>97</sup> The manly worker was idealized for having the virtues of forthrightness and independence, he was vigilant and unafraid, serving as a model of citizenship in the industrialized age.<sup>98</sup> However, such a state of mind was only possible for a few, as many farmers, laborers, and other disconnected men became dependent on others for a wage, creating a crisis in male identity across the nation. By placing the citizen-soldier in historical context of proud, male citizens, McKinley established an identity for male citizens to assume.

The citizen-soldier was exclusively male, with his traits being an example for Americans and those around the world to imitate. In a 1898 speech in Clinton, Iowa, McKinley described the war as a trying period, during which the United States “stood together as one man.”<sup>99</sup> Throughout both speaking tours, McKinley described the “sons” and “boys” serving overseas as the “best” and the “bravest,” men who were “sacrificing” for their country, fulfilling their “duty,” and who were “heroic,” “noble,” and “vigilant.”<sup>100</sup> Historian Candice Bredbenner explained this male dominated rhetoric, stating, “The badge of civic membership distinguished as the country’s most honorable and demanding—the obligation to fight for the defense of the nation during wartime—has remained firmly affixed to the resident male.”<sup>101</sup> A male citizen’s availability to serve the state in a time of emergency enhanced the worth of his citizenship, and this availability also provided the country with comfort whenever the nation was threatened.<sup>102</sup> Late nineteenth century women’s suffrage arguments “were turned aside because they had failed

to contribute demonstrably to nation's defense—reflecting both the gendered nature of militarized republicanism and its continuing hold over the American imagination.”<sup>103</sup> The male citizen embodied the basic virtues necessary for a stable republican government. He was a faithful civilian, attuned to the politics of the nation, but also self-sufficient and focused on his work. The citizen-soldier fulfilled his duty to the state, through his military service in times of crisis, and then returned to a peaceful civilian life. McKinley's focus on male citizen's responsibility and duty reinforced the male's standing in the nation, emphasizing the dominant rhetorical space for white males in the political sphere and social hierarchy.

With these vivid descriptions of the American citizen as a volunteer soldier, one could easily think the main function of the citizen was to serve in the military. Yet, the true identity of America's citizen-soldier, like his patriot hero predecessor, was fundamentally civilian. Patriotism called men to serve their country and defend it against threats, but at their core, Americans were a peace-loving people. In St. Paul, McKinley stated, “The patriotism of the American people takes the place of a large standing army. We do not need such an army in the United States. We can have an army on any notice if the nation is in peril or its standard is threatened. Eager is every American citizen to answer the call to arm, and just as eager to come back to the paths of peace when the emergency is past.”<sup>104</sup> At Hoopestown, Illinois, McKinley similarly stated, “Our people become soldiers of the republic to defend their lives and what they love; but the moment the emergency is over, that moment they rush back to the peaceful walks of citizenship.”<sup>105</sup> Political theorist Eliot Cohen commented on the citizen-soldier's dual role: no matter how skilled one becomes or adapts to military life, “in the core of his being, [he is] a member of civil society.”<sup>106</sup> McKinley echoed such sentiments in Egan, South Dakota, stating, “We, as a people, never go to war because we love war. Our chief glory is not in the triumphs of

arms, but in the in the triumphs of peace. We love peace; we abhor war.”<sup>107</sup> As members of civil society, the volunteer citizen-soldiers believed they “were active participants in the republican experiment through their military service...They illustrated what many soldiers believed was the inseparable connection between citizenship and bearing arms on behalf of the Republic.”<sup>108</sup> Fighting to defend the nation or its principles was just one function of citizenship. Once the threat had passed, the citizen-soldier enthusiastically went back to his peaceful life because his core characteristic was peace.

Following the peaceful core of its peaceful people, McKinley could be assured the American government would act in accordance with such peace-loving principles. In Hoopetown, Illinois, McKinley stated, “The government of the United States rests in the hearts and consciences of the people. It is their government; it represents them; it is the agent of their will; and while we are not a military government or military people, we never lack for soldiers in any cause which the people espouse.”<sup>109</sup> The government of the United States reflected the will of the people, and according to McKinley that will was peace. McKinley’s argument rested on the hearts and minds of the American public returning to civilian life after the Spanish-American War, just as he described Americans from past wars returning to their peaceful paths. This representation of the American people also fits with Chapter 2, and both the analysis of American’s duty to act and McKinley’s own personal aversion to war. McKinley had exhausted every diplomatic option before finally requesting a declaration of war. The American people, according to McKinley, were a peaceful people, provoked to military conduct by uncivilized acts in Cuba. In McKinley’s new conception of citizenship, neither the nation nor its people would allow American values to be desecrated and devalued overseas. However, it would also not go abroad in search of fights either. McKinley praised the path of peace, citing in his Annual

Messages a desire for arbitration to international problems. Furthermore, on his tours McKinley touted America's small standing army and its national shield. Referring to the shield, McKinley stated, there "are to be found the olive-branch and the arrows, indicating our power in war and our love of peace; but be it said, to the glory of the American nation, that we never have drawn the arrows from their quiver until we have tended to our adversary the olive-branch of peace."<sup>110</sup> Employing national symbols, and the universal symbol of peace in the olive branch, McKinley defined the temperament of the American people, and his citizen-soldiers, as peaceful but still always ready and willing to defend the nation and its principles.

### **Non-White Males and Women: The Other Roles in American Society**

The citizen-soldier, a white man, was McKinley's model of U.S. citizenship throughout his speaking tours after the Spanish-American War. However, a question remained: what about non-white male citizens and women? Good citizens rushed to meet the call of the president, but not every American could volunteer for service due to age, gender, and physical capability. Black men could and did serve their country, but, like Cleveland, McKinley spent little time discussing them. However, his sparse remarks do lend insight into their place in society. Women were not able to serve in the military, yet they played an important role as republican mothers for McKinley.

Non-white males, unlike women, could volunteer and serve in the military, and at least in theory had political power, but there was little discussion of the racial make-up of the volunteer army. Speaking in primarily white towns, the assumed citizen-soldier was male and white, except for two speeches when McKinley explicitly noted a race. In his speeches in both Columbus, Ohio, and at the Quinn Chapel in Chicago, McKinley observed the fidelity, patriotism, and loyalty of black men serving in the military.<sup>111</sup> At Quinn Chapel, McKinley

stated, “Your race has demonstrated its patriotism by its sacrifices, its love of the flag by dying for it. That is the greatest test of fidelity and loyalty. The nation has appreciated the valor and patriotism of the black men of the United States.”<sup>112</sup> McKinley thanked black men for their military service and their demonstration of patriotism. They had passed the toughest test one can take, putting one’s life on the line for their country. In this way, McKinley opened up a rhetorical space to include black men in the political realm. They were recognized, like white citizen-soldiers, for their patriotism and service to the country. Yet, McKinley went no further in discussing how their military service might translate into progress in the political or social sphere. In Columbus, McKinley remarked, “All honor to the regulars and the volunteers, and to the marines, black and white, of every nationality who marched under the glorious banner of the free to a victory for God and civilization.”<sup>113</sup> Theoretically, the ideal make-up of America’s volunteers was supposed to represent the state, coming from all backgrounds. The ideal, represented in Columbus by McKinley, was a volunteer force comprised of “rich and poor, black and white, Christian and Jew [serving] alongside one another in similarly Spartan surrounding—at least in theory.”<sup>114</sup> Ideally, all boundaries, whether regional or racial, had given way to a volunteer army representative of the nation. Yet, these remarks about black men or of a multi-racial military were few and far between. Black men only made an appearance when they were the target audience or when McKinley wanted to make a broader observation about the make-up of the volunteer forces. Otherwise, they disappeared into the background. The idealized citizen-soldier was still male and white, privileging their service and granting them rhetorical and political salience.

McKinley’s portrayal of another politically disadvantaged group, women, differed little from previous presidents. As Vanessa Beasley observed, “when presidents of this era did

mention American womanhood in any detail, they seemed more intent on promoting previous conceptions of gender rather than on commenting, either negatively or positively, on current and/or emergent ones.”<sup>115</sup> Indeed, McKinley’s rhetoric reinforced women’s role in society as the republican mother. Conceived in the classical formulation of the Spartan mother, American women were to raise sons prepared to sacrifice for the common good, providing “an apparent integration of domestic and political behavior, in a formula that masked political purpose by promise of domestic service.”<sup>116</sup> According to Beasley, “some aspects of the ideology of Republican motherhood suggested that American women would be most effective as political agents if they remained behind the scenes of U.S. society.”<sup>117</sup> While men were occupied with self-interested pursuits of business and politics in the public sphere, women, keeping with the expectations of republican motherhood, were in charge of the home, the private sphere. Here, women were expected “to be loving, full-time mothers, devoted to raising their children to be Godfearing, solid citizens.”<sup>118</sup> Women’s expressions of patriotism were best exemplified by the “principles they inculcated in their children.” Women demanding the right to participate equally with men in the public sphere “were deemed not real women by the ideologists of True Womanhood.”<sup>119</sup> Rather, the ideal woman “made the pursuit of virtue in a separate sphere centered on the home the touchstone of feminine identity.”<sup>120</sup> During the late nineteenth century, women expanded their public role from just church attendance to social clubs.<sup>121</sup> However, these movements failed to influence presidential rhetoric in the era, as Beasley concluded, “we can hear the most powerful men in the free world ignoring, and thus perhaps resisting, social changes that were already in motion all around them.”<sup>122</sup>

McKinley’s rhetoric does little to alter Beasley’s claim; rather, his discourse celebrated women’s role in raising civic minded and virtuous children. In an 1898 speech, in Chicago,

Illinois, McKinley praised the home, women's traditional sphere, stating, "The power of the republic is in the American fireside. The virtue that comes out from the holy altar of home is the most priceless gift this nation has; and when the judgments of the people are spoken through the homes of the people."<sup>123</sup> The home, for McKinley, was the central symbol of stability, a place where virtue resided, a sacred realm, the heart of the nation uncorrupted by outside forces. In Marshalltown, Iowa, McKinley described the home as providing citizens with the "holiest [of] sentiment," a place where "virtue resides."<sup>124</sup> The overseer of the home, in the United States, was the mother. Speaking in Brainerd, Minnesota, he stated, "There is not a man anywhere in our country who, remembering the affectionate counsels of his mother, has not been helped in resisting wrong and adhering to right. It is that American home, where love is found and virtue presides, that is the hope of our republic."<sup>125</sup> It was in this idyllic home where families met, and family life, according to McKinley, "lies at the very foundation of this popular government of ours."<sup>126</sup> "As long as we keep the home pure," McKinley reasoned, "so long will we keep our government pure."<sup>127</sup> The American home inculcated virtue in its citizens, and was the bedrock of American society. The strength of the American government was drawn from the virtuous home and the honorable and upright American citizens residing there. Women contributed to the public sphere by protecting the purity of the home, for creating a loving, stable home and rearing the next generation of Americans. This was their sole role and duty in the public sphere.

## **Conclusion**

If the United States was going to be an active participant in world affairs, the concept of what it meant to be an American needed to be reimagined. Throughout his two speaking tours of the Midwest, McKinley sought to redefine citizenship in the model of the citizen-soldier. Wherever the American flag went, the citizen-soldier was sure to follow, acting as a mini

ambassador to foreign peoples around the globe. The citizen-soldier, through his adherence to republican values and ideology, served as a model for people everywhere to emulate. The citizen-soldier was educated, patriotic, inculcated with American republican virtues, and fulfilled his duty to the common good. Citizen-soldiers expressed their republican principles by choosing to serve, defending the nation and its principles globally, while returning to civilian life once the crisis had ended. Their willingness to volunteer demonstrated their commitment and patriotism to the United States. They were not professional warriors, in the mold of European armies, but farmers, businessmen, and statesmen, all coming together for the love of country. When a foreigner met a citizen-soldier, he was meeting an example of the United States.

By using foreign policy to unite the country, McKinley reestablished internal cohesion in the nation. The “other” for citizens became the vast uncivilized world, not their fellow factory worker or farmer or Democrat or Republican. The citizen-soldier embodied the virtue of patriotism, acting as a symbol of unity in a divided country. Uniting a nation still divided by the aftermath of a civil war, sectional animosity about race relations, and economic policies was not an easy task. Citizen-soldiers represented the country’s unity, coming from all corners of the country and answering the president’s call to serve in a time of need. The intermingling of their blood on the battle field consecrated a new covenant between America’s diverse regions. Aiding in McKinley’s goal of unity was the construction of a new public memory, with the virtue of unity imbued in the Spanish-American War replacing the divisiveness of the Civil War. Replacing the memories of North fighting South were memories of Northerners and Southerners fighting together under one flag, the flag of the Union. The Blue and the Gray were used to mark a period in time, an era of division, which was gone. It was replaced by a new era, one of unity and patriotism.

Not every citizen could be a citizen-soldier, but their model of patriotism was an example for others. If the citizen-soldier fulfilled his duty by sacrificing his time and possibly his life for the country, then other citizens could support the troops by making small sacrifices on the home front for the war. Yet, McKinley's rhetoric primarily focused on politically viable groups, white males. Black males only factored into McKinley's rhetoric when they were the target audience, which was rare, demonstrating their insignificant political power. Women's role in this new conception of citizenship changed very little from previous iterations, with a focus on republican motherhood, education, and raising virtuous, civic minded children. Mothers were expected to maintain the private sphere, refraining from prominent roles in the public sphere. However, the private sphere of the home was important to McKinley's conception of the United States as a world actor. In the next chapter, I shift focus from reimagining citizens to McKinley's reimagining of the country. Part of McKinley's argument was the nation's values would not change even as it was more active in the world. McKinley grounded this belief in women's ability to preserve the hearth of liberty and freedom, the home, providing stability domestically and a bedrock for the government to act abroad. However, McKinley never explicitly made this link that would have increased women's salience politically or rhetorically. Rather, McKinley privileged the male public sphere and deeds of the citizen-soldier, over the private sphere.

American citizenship under McKinley was in transition. The social hierarchy and language of money of the Cleveland administration and Gilded Age crumbled under the economic and social pressure of the era. The exigency of the Spanish-American War and the ensuing territorial occupation afterward necessitated a united citizenry. A divided domestic front, with infighting between regions, would undercut U.S. power abroad. McKinley's goal was to persuade Americans that they had more in common than different. McKinley began the effort of

uniting the nation that Woodrow Wilson would assume as a given during his presidency. Wilson assumed an ideological cohesion in the United States. This American ideology was so potent that it transcended the nation and could possibly encompass the world.<sup>128</sup> McKinley settled for uniting the nation behind a set of common virtues and symbols, with a citizen's primary identity being national, not local or regional. McKinley's national identity was important because, unlike Cleveland's hierarchy which limited citizens to a rung on the economic hierarchy and limited their potential, McKinley's national identity was theoretically open to all Americans, including minorities. While McKinley did not privilege or validate minority claims, a national identity based on universal rights for all Americans opened up the rhetorical space for future claims of inclusion based on a shared ideology and universal values.

## Chapter 4 American Exceptionalism and Interventionism: Redefining America

America's economic downturn in 1893 had numerous causes, but many believed one of the main causes was the oversaturation of the domestic market. Moreover, many thought the solution was finding new markets abroad for American goods. American diplomat Charles Denby, who headed a United States delegation to China, extolled China's potential as a market for American goods.<sup>1</sup> Even some anti-imperialists, including Edward Atkinson, Carl Schurz, and Andrew Carnegie opposed the Spanish-American War on moral grounds but were in favor of economic expansion into Asia, especially China. Denby, Atkinson, and others saw the potential of four hundred million Chinese, trapped in a traditional agrarian economy, as potential customers for all of America's manufactured goods.<sup>2</sup> These four hundred million Chinese represented the fabled 'China market,' a panacea for America's economic troubles. One reason for Americans to view China as a new large market was it fell outside colonial influence by a single great power.<sup>3</sup> Since 1844 and the signing of the Treaty of Wangxia, the U.S. was granted most-favored-nation status in China, automatically giving the Americans any trade rights the Chinese ceded to other nations.<sup>4</sup> Simply, China was viewed as being open to American business, as Atkinson predicted in a speech delivered to the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce in April 1898, American cotton exports would soon find a market in China.<sup>5</sup>

In March 1898, British diplomats broached the subject of China with their American counterparts. Specifically, the British inquired if the United States was interested in joining the British to oppose Europe's continental powers from expanding their power in China. At that time, McKinley's attention was solely focused on America's collision course with Spain over Cuba. Therefore, McKinley declined, citing he was unaware of any occupation of China that promised to interfere with American trade. When John Hay, America's ambassador to Great

Britain, returned to Washington in June, the subject was broached again. McKinley, engrossed in the war, again declined. However, Secretary of State William Day, writing to John Hay, replied, “the outcome of our struggle with Spain may develop the need of extending and strengthening our interests in the Asiatic Continent.”<sup>6</sup> “To most Americans China was a dim and mysterious continent of its own,” according to McKinley biographer Wayne H. Morgan, “presided over by yellow orientals of fabled cunning and devious designs.”<sup>7</sup> Its culture, art, people, and history were all obscure subjects for most Americans, creating a sense of mystery and enchantment, as few Americans could discuss China intelligently. However, with America’s acquisition of the Philippines, a stepping stone to reach China, Americans were about to receive a crash course in China and its complex international situation.

From 1899 to 1901, China would serve as the first test run of America’s new interventionist foreign policy. After the Spanish-American War, the McKinley administration increased its efforts in China, working with the great powers of Europe to secure unfettered access to Chinese ports and markets. An anti-foreign uprising in 1899 brought a new set of challenges, and a new course in American foreign policy. With Americans under siege by Chinese rebels, McKinley sent American troops to fight alongside European powers, putting down the rebellion. However, McKinley sent the troops without a declaration of war, causing some domestic rumblings during the 1900 presidential election. Clearly, He needed to rhetorically justify his actions. Furthermore, by the time of his death, McKinley was a proponent of American action in the world, citing the shrinking of the world and increased interconnectedness between all nations. Through America’s involvement in China, McKinley redefined U.S. national identity.

Chapter 3 examined McKinley's redefinition of U.S. citizenship, dealing with America's changing position in the world. This chapter examines how McKinley redefined the country's role in the world. Specifically, this chapter explores the following question: How did McKinley redefine America's role in the world after the Spanish-American War? Throughout this chapter, I argue McKinley redefined America's role in the world by employing the rhetorical trope of American exceptionalism, transitioning the nation from a primarily exemplarist nation to a more interventionist one. In doing so, McKinley framed America's interventionism in moral and economic terms, setting up America's informal empire. To make this argument, I will begin by looking at McKinley's post-war critique of America's victory and his decision to keep the Philippines. This section's texts will be drawn from his two Midwestern speaking tours, just like Chapter 3, selecting representative texts of McKinley's rhetoric. In his post-war tours, McKinley emphasized U.S. territorial expansion was a natural historical consequence of America's destiny to be a great nation. I then explore McKinley's justification for military action in China, without Congressional approval, by examining his "Fourth Annual Message." My analysis continues by critiquing two instances of McKinley's use of the phrase "prophet or orator of evil," used at a Banquet speech in Boston in 1899, and his "Second Inaugural Address." Such a phrase was used to unite Americans against a rhetorical "other," providing support of McKinley's new interventionist policies. I conclude by analyzing his last speech delivered in Buffalo, paying close attention to his argument for U.S. engagement in the world, specifically, the importance of American economic engagement and foreign trade.

Before beginning my analysis, the concept of American exceptionalism needs to be outlined. First, I explore the principles of American exceptionalism, its two strains—exemplarism and interventionism, and American exceptionalism's influence on U.S. policy and

rhetoric. I then overview how American exceptionalism evolved in the United States prior to McKinley, mainly exploring how past presidents interpreted and used it. After this set up, I move onto my analysis of how McKinley transformed the nation from exemplarism to interventionism. I conclude by discussing the implications of such a change.

### **A Special Nation: American Exceptionalism**

Americans often think of themselves as different from Europeans and the rest of the world. In the American version of its past, “it is America’s isolation and detachment from Europeans that are stressed: the forging of a separate political tradition; the making of an American ‘exceptionalism.’”<sup>8</sup> Europe was left to toil in dynastic, class, and ethnic struggles, while Americans were left to create their own future pursuing freedom liberated from the shackles of the Old World. To Europeans, the United States with its colossal scale, lack of a standing army and small navy, and decentralized government was hardly a state at all. The United States was free to develop on its own with little outside interference, but this was primarily due to the maritime dominance of Britain’s Royal Navy and no major European power wanting to ruin the peace of 1815. With little interference from Europe, American exceptionalism took root acting as a frame for both domestic and foreign policy debates.<sup>9</sup> To investigate America’s development, I will first discuss the main principles of American exceptionalism, followed by how presidents discussed foreign policy prior to McKinley.

#### *American Exceptionalism*

Belief that America and Americans are unique, different, or an outlier from other nations in the world has been present since the first colonists arrived on the shores of Massachusetts. Seymour Martin Lipset summed up the ideology of American exceptionalism in five words: liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire.<sup>10</sup> These five values make up

the American Creed. Americans, unlike other nations, derive their sense of themselves not through a common history or biology but through an ideology called Americanism. Lipset explained, “In Europe, nationality is related to community, and thus one cannot become un-English or un-Swedish. Being an American, however, is an ideological commitment.”<sup>11</sup>

Americanism is not a matter of birth but of values. Accepting or rejecting these values is what makes an American. These values often make repeated appearances in political rhetoric throughout American history, as politicians reinforce the importance of these value in American culture. No politician employs American exceptionalism more than U.S. presidents.

David Zarefsky observed American exceptionalism incorporates a feeling of “chosenness... (presumably by God) to play a distinct role on the stage of history.”<sup>12</sup> Americans have been “given a special mission to fulfill,” with God “guiding and directing them.”<sup>13</sup> According to Zarefsky, there are five consequences to rhetorically employing American exceptionalism. First, it imbues policy discussions with a moral tone. Or as Lipsett put it, “Americans are utopian moralists who press hard to institutionalize virtue, to destroy evil people, and to eliminate wicked institutions and practices.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore, policy deliberations are not rational discussions of how to achieve goals; they are moral choices between good and evil. Second, compromising on commitments becomes harder because Americans believe such commitments are divinely sanctioned. Put simply, compromise goes against God’s predetermined plan for the nation. Third, it provides a teleological explanation for events: that God’s people will be redeemed in the end, no matter the obstacles placed before them. Fourth, it minimizes the need for self-reflection or self-doubt due to the belief that America’s actions must be right or God would not have had America undertake them. Fifth, justifying policies to external audiences is minimal because God’s will does not require the approval of other

nations.<sup>15</sup> Overall then, American exceptionalism is a powerful argumentative tool because it is used to justify policies while simultaneously shutting down debate about alternatives by pointing to a teleological explanation of God's will.

The dexterity of exceptionalism makes it a useful rhetorical strategy, especially for presidents. However, it is important to note that exceptionalism is not a static concept but “a fluid and adaptive idea that can be interpreted in different ways.”<sup>16</sup> Indeed, there are two main strands of American exceptionalism: exemplarism and interventionism. Advocates of both strands share the main assumptions of Americanism including America's divine role in the world and not being subjected to international norms. However, they differ as to the means for how to achieve America's destiny.

While proponents of both strands hold the belief that America is a unique nation chosen by God to fulfill a special destiny in the world, exemplarists believe America should remain aloof and disengaged from the world. To realize its destiny, the United States “should engage in activities that make itself a beacon for others to emulate.”<sup>17</sup> Such domestic activities include “perfecting American institutions, increasing material prosperity, integrating diverse populations into one America, and continuing to strive for more civil rights.”<sup>18</sup> A core principle of exemplarism is perfecting democracy at home and refraining from intervening in foreign affairs. According to political scientist Trevor McCrisken, intervention overseas “would probably harm the other nation but also would most likely undermine the American experiment at home.”<sup>19</sup> Moreover, American values cannot be spread overseas through active engagement, but other nations will see the example set by Americans and choose to accept American principles. Therefore, in the realm of international affairs it would be best if Americans remained “aloof from the world's troubles,” with only “peaceful trade relations abroad.”<sup>20</sup>

By contrast, interventionism rejects exemplarism's passive role in foreign affairs. Interventionism argues "that the United States must project this exceptionalism through active engagement of the world not only economically, but politically, culturally, and socially."<sup>21</sup> America should not only be active, but it is responsible for "leading the world in continued progress and defending those who subscribe to similar ideals."<sup>22</sup> Whereas European nations sought to rule over their new colonial territories making people their subjects, interventionist exceptionalism rejects this path for the United States contending that "unlike other nations, the United States is incapable of seeking dominion over other peoples in its self-interest."<sup>23</sup> Interventionists "believe that inside every foreigner there is the potential, even the desire, to be an American."<sup>24</sup> After all, being an American is not necessarily a birthright "but the willingness to believe in a certain set of political and social principles and values."<sup>25</sup> American exceptionalism makes it impossible for the United States to act like any other nation.

America's turn to interventionism was rooted in the Spanish-American war and McKinley's rhetoric. The United States was primarily an exemplarist nation from its first settlers in Virginia and Massachusetts to the 1890s. There was a short interlude in this exemplarist tradition when America expanded westward under the rhetoric of manifest destiny, but it nevertheless rejected expansion beyond American soil—land that was contiguous with the North American continent. Therefore, McKinley's understanding and strategic rhetorical development of an interventionist American exceptionalism represented a dramatic shift in exceptionalism's interpretation. To understand just how dramatic that shift was, what follows is a very brief overview of American exceptionalism from John Winthrop to William McKinley.

*Exemplarism: An American Tradition*

America's exemplarist roots began with John Winthrop's famous declaration: "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."<sup>26</sup> However, less well known are the lines immediately following this declaration. In those lines, Winthrop warned that if these new Americans failed to uphold God's promise they "shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us, till we be consumed out of the good land whither we are going."<sup>27</sup> American exceptionalism began as a challenge to Americans to be righteous and upright people or face the wrath of a vengeful God. Americans were to be an example to all people not because of divine providence but because of their moral living and righteous action. Colonists, though of European descent, clearly viewed themselves as distinct peoples from their European backgrounds, but not until after the American Revolution could a uniquely American foreign policy develop.

This exemplarist perspective remained through the establishment of the Republic. George Washington provided the guiding principle for how the newly established America should interact in the world. In his "Farewell Address," Washington warned, "It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world."<sup>28</sup> America's connection with Europe should extend as far as commercial relations but "as little political connection as possible."<sup>29</sup> For Washington and many of his generation, Europe's concerns were foreign and of little importance to America. According to Washington, "it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her [Europe's] politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities."<sup>30</sup> America's policy toward the world would be one of neutrality and non-intervention. America assumed a defensive stance toward the world to ensure its basic institutions remained free from corruption. During the Napoleonic

Wars, Thomas Jefferson reiterated Washington's declaration of neutrality. Jefferson called for friendship with all belligerents and desired open harbors for American goods. In his "Third Annual Message," Jefferson defined America's identity, stating, the United States was "to merit the character of a just nation, and maintain that of an independent one, preferring every consequence to insult and habitual wrong."<sup>31</sup> Three decades later, John Q. Adams continued an exemplarist interpretation of America's role in the world.

Adams, echoing Winthrop, reasserted America's exemplarist roots, stating in a speech before the House of Representatives, America was "a beacon on the summit of the mountain, to which all the inhabitants of the earth may turn their eyes for a genial and saving light, till time shall be lost in eternity, and this globe itself dissolve, nor leave a wreck behind. It stands forever, a light of admonition to the rulers of men; a light of salvation and redemption to the oppressed."<sup>32</sup> These citizens of a new nation were associated with "civilized men and christians [sic]...bound by the laws of God, which they all, and by the laws of the gospel, which they nearly all, acknowledged as the rules of their conduct."<sup>33</sup> Turning to foreign relations, Adams acknowledged the United States' traditional policy of respecting the independence of other nations. When conflicts emerged, the United States abstained from interfering, even, according to Adams, "when the conflict has been for principles to which she clings."<sup>34</sup> The United States not only acted as a beacon to all other nations, but it was critical it remained free from engaging in conflicts abroad, no matter how strong the case for intervention appeared. Adams concluded, the United States does not go "abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause, by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example."<sup>35</sup> Clearly, Adams maintained America's exemplarist role. The United States

was to be a beacon of freedom and a moral voice in international affairs, even when intervention could spread American principles. However, by the late 1830s and 1840s, westward expansion brought with it new rationales for expansion under an interventionist interpretation of the United States' role.

*Manifest Destiny: From Sea to Shining Sea*

Three hundred American families moved into Texas from 1819-1821, and by 1830 there were a total of 15,000 Americans living in Texas. When Mexico took away the rights of many Texan-Americans, they rebelled. After a quick war, Texas gained its independence and eventually sought statehood. Added to Texas' petition was the need for the United States to expand its economic markets and increase its land for agriculture. These twin needs drove many Americans west to California and Oregon.<sup>36</sup> These events sparked new rationales for American expansion under the term *manifest destiny*, which incorporated many of exceptionalism's missionary beliefs. Though not explicitly termed manifest destiny in 1839, John L. O'Sullivan made its principles known. America was not a nation led by "emperors, kings, nobles, demons in the human form called heroes," but by patriots who had "no aspirants to crowns or thrones."<sup>37</sup> Americans were not "led by wicked ambition to depopulate the land, to spread desolation far and wide, that a human being might be placed in a seat of supremacy."<sup>38</sup> Rather, America sought to "establish on earth moral dignity and salvation of man... America [has] been chosen; and her high example shall smite unto death the tyranny of kings, hierarchs, and oligarchs."<sup>39</sup> Six years later the term manifest destiny appeared in arguments for annexing Texas. Arguing that England, France, and others had intruded on the continent to inhibit America's greatness, O'Sullivan charged them with preventing America from fulfilling "our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions."<sup>40</sup>

However, American president John Tyler was not so quick to indict Europe, hoping for a more peaceful existence. In his “Second Annual Message,” Tyler stated, “Our great desire should be to enter only into that rivalry which looks to the general good in the cultivation of the sciences, the enlargement of the field for the exercise of the mechanical arts, and the spread of commerce--that great civilizer--to every land and sea.”<sup>41</sup> Competition between Europe and the United States should stick to these arenas, omitting politics or political alliances. Tyler maintained America’s traditional policy of abstention “from interference in all questions exclusively referring themselves to the political interests of Europe.”<sup>42</sup> Tyler hoped America’s non-interference stance would induce a similar stance from Europe toward America. However, many Americans believed Texas and other territories on the North American continent should be incorporated into the United States if they so desired.

Ultimately, Tyler’s rhetoric could not prevent the spread of the term manifest destiny in American’s discourse. Manifest destiny was quickly appropriated in the Congressional debate over annexation. On January 3, 1846, Massachusetts Representative Robert C. Winthrop employed the term in defense of annexation

I mean that new revelation of right which has been designated as *the right of our manifest destiny to spread over this continent*. It has been openly avowed in a leading administration journal that this, after all, is our best and strongest title; one so clear, so pre-eminent, and so indisputable, that if Great Britain had all our titles in addition to her own, they would weigh nothing against it. The right of our manifest destiny! There is a right, for a new chapter in the law of nations; or rather, for the special laws of our own country; for I suppose the right of a manifest destiny to spread, will not be admitted to exist in any nation except the universal Yankee nation!<sup>43</sup>

Defenders of manifest destiny, including Representative Frederick P. Stanton of Tennessee, made clear “it is our destiny to possess the whole of Oregon; but this destiny does not make it right; it is our destiny, because it is right.”<sup>44</sup> Representative Edward Dickinson Baker of Illinois

added, “We had a continent before us in which to spread our free principles, our language, our literature, and power; and we had a present right to provide this future progress.”<sup>45</sup> The proponents of manifest destiny adopted the principles of intervention believing America’s spread across North America furthered the progress of civilization. However, it is important to note the limits of manifest destiny compared to the interventionist strain in the 1890s. Manifest destiny applied only to the continental United States, and was not a warrant for American involvement in Europe, Asia or any territory outside of North America. Representative Stanton recognized these limits, stating, “the law of nature...forbids that nations on one continent shall have rights on another by implication, extension, contiguity, or by any other invisible, intangible, metaphysical principle whatever.”<sup>46</sup> Baker’s rationale for expansion was “to secure our safety, in the widest and highest sense.”<sup>47</sup> He had no desire to expand overseas. Jacob Brinkerhoff from Ohio more explicitly limited manifest destiny, stating, “it strikes me that our ‘manifest destiny’ is never to prepare for war till war comes. It arises from the character of our institutions—from the character and habits of our people, who are a peace-loving people and devoted to the industrious pursuit of the arts of peace.”<sup>48</sup> Stanton added that the peoples of the “United States owe it to themselves—they owe it to this continent, and the world—to resist the application of those principles.”<sup>49</sup> The principles Stanton referred to were the military conquest of East India by Great Britain. America may inhabit the land between the Atlantic and Pacific, but any action outside its borders was considered dangerous and an abandonment of its core principles.

The Mexican-American War was an outlet for citizens’ energy over manifest destiny, but the invasion of Mexico made even John L. O’Sullivan fear the United States went too far. O’Sullivan stated, “I am afraid it was not God that got us into the war, but that He may get us out of it is the constant prayer of yours very truly.”<sup>50</sup> Echoing John Winthrop, O’Sullivan warned if

Americans acted poorly, God would punish them. The Mexican-American War ended with a victorious United States and an expansion of America's western territory.

However, America's expansionist tendencies cooled, and American presidents reasserted a restrained foreign policy strictly adhering to America's traditional non-interventionist policy. Zachary Taylor, one of the heroes of the Mexican-American War, extended sympathy for all peoples seeking civil and political liberty, but believed America should refrain from taking any action to support such action. In his "Inaugural Address," Taylor affirmed this position citing "the admonitions of history and the voice of our own beloved Washington to abstain from entangling alliances with foreign nations."<sup>51</sup> Millard Fillmore asserted America could lead the march toward civilization, rather than following others, by adhering to a doctrine of neutrality.<sup>52</sup> Franklin Pierce believed the United States demonstrated little in its history of aggression. Furthermore, for Pierce, the United States only sought the cultivation of peaceful relations with the world. During his administration, he intended to "leave no blot upon our fair record."<sup>53</sup> A major reason these presidents turned away from intervention was increasing tension over slavery on the domestic front. Americans did not lose interest in foreign affairs completely, but, according to historian Walter LaFeber, they "went about dealing with foreign policy differently."<sup>54</sup> After the Civil War, U.S. citizens turned their attention to settling the vast western territory of the United States, fighting a series of wars with American Indian tribes.

#### *After the Civil War: The World Comes Calling*

Andrew Johnson, the first post-Civil War president, was initially an unyielding exemplarist, citing Washington's recommendation to remain free from intervening abroad. He noted the general "harmonious" relations between Europe and the United States. However, he did observe democratic revolutions abroad, offering many tempting opportunities for the United

States. Yet, initially at least, Johnson settled on an exemplarist, non-intervention foreign policy, stating in his “First Annual Message, the United States has “wisely and firmly refused to become propagandists of republicanism.”<sup>55</sup> However, as the years passed, there was an increase in democratic revolutions throughout the world, especially in Latin America, needing and requesting American support. The post-Reconstruction era saw American interest and power expand into Latin America, and a few, very small inroads in Asia. The United States had become a continental power, with little ambition for international glory or power, but the countries surrounding America did offer opportunities for action.<sup>56</sup>

By his last annual message, Johnson had shifted his thinking. He recognized the United States has done too little to support the states surrounding it. Johnson, in a rhetorical shift that represented this change, stated, “too little has been done by us, on the other hand, to attach the communities by which we are surrounded to our own country, or to lend even a moral support to the efforts they are so resolutely and so constantly making to secure republican institutions for themselves.”<sup>57</sup> United States preoccupation with preventing European colonization had caused it to go blind to the establishment of harsher and more tyrannical governments throughout Latin America. These governments were worse, according to Johnson, “than any known to civilized powers.” Johnson proposed a new policy, sanctioning “the acquisition and incorporation into our Federal Union of the several adjacent continental and insular communities as speedily as it can be done peacefully, lawfully, and without any violation of national justice, faith, or honor.”<sup>58</sup> Johnson argued, annexation was equally or less injurious, than the “chronic revolution and anarchy” already present. Under such a policy, Johnson would not tolerate any unlawful expeditions to expedite American intervention. What the U.S. could offer Latin America was aid to help solve its “political and social problems.”<sup>59</sup> Johnson urged the U.S. to adapt its’ national

policies to deal with the decline of European power in its neighborhood. Johnson's shift would not be implemented, as he was impeached within a year, ending his presidency.

However, the proposal supporting U.S. neighbors, with greater involvement in Latin America, was an idea future presidents considered. The United States, since the Monroe Doctrine, had sought to achieve one major foreign policy goal: hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. It would be a hemisphere without European colonization or the threat of a rival great power. With European powers concentrated on colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Indian subcontinent, the United States was given nearly free reign in North and South America.

President U.S. Grant recognized a new world, one that Johnson may have wished for, with the spreading of American values and institutions around the hemisphere. In his "Second Annual Message," Grant observed the change by stating, "While we make no effort to impose our institutions upon the inhabitants of other countries, and while we adhere to our traditional neutrality in civil contests elsewhere, we can not be indifferent to the spread of American political ideas in a great and highly civilized country like France."<sup>60</sup> However, Grant also noted that the spread of American values did not always go to such civilized countries like France, a country with no need of American support. Rather, referring to San Domingo, Grant noted, they "are not capable of maintaining themselves in their present condition, and must look for outside support. They yearn for the protection of our free institutions and laws, our progress and civilization. Shall we refuse them?"<sup>61</sup> Grant's solution to San Domingo's problem was annexation by the United States, with Grant referring to its stable government, large consumer population for American goods, and adherence to the Monroe Doctrine as rationales for American annexation. Grant's proposal failed, but it is important to recognize a shift in American thinking. Countries espousing a desire to adopt U.S. values, but without the know how

to implement its style of government, were potential places for the United States to help. The United States would not intervene to spread democracy, but if a country asked for help, Grant reasoned the U.S. should not at least think about aiding them.

Rutherford B. Hayes thought so when he discussed possible U.S. intervention in the Samoan Islands. A representative from the Islands who requested the U.S. government “recognize and protect their independence, to establish commercial relations with their people, and to assist them in their steps toward regulated and responsible government.”<sup>62</sup> Hayes acknowledged the progress the Samoans had made “in Christian civilization and the development of trade” and worried that without American support they would be unable to “maintain peace and independence.”<sup>63</sup> Yet again, the United States balked. The country was not ready for overseas territories—the Islands would be acquired by McKinley in 1899. In both Grant and Hayes’ rhetoric, traces of a change in the United States’ attitude can be detected, but neither Grant nor Hayes proposed going to war to spread American values. U.S. citizens were steadfast in their exemplarist beliefs, with the next two presidents, Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison, strongly reasserting exemplarism.

During his two non-consecutive terms as president, Cleveland emphatically maintained the exemplarist stance. Cleveland symbolized this tradition, as he refused on multiple occasions to annex the Hawaiian Islands. In her work on this refusal, Mary Stuckey has shown that the Cleveland administration believed Americans during the Gilded Age were most concerned with the domestic economy, not the exportation of American values. Citizenship in this era was “about money.”<sup>64</sup> Cleveland defined the government as a neutral actor, making him hesitant to act abroad, as it would require the government to be more than neutral. However, he was not unaware of the way the world was moving. Cleveland clearly saw a distinction between civilized

and uncivilized nations. In his opinion, these two worlds could not coexist. He clearly stated this opinion in his "Second Annual Message," in 1886, opining, "But barbarism and civilization can not live together. It is impossible that such incongruous conditions should coexist on the same soil."<sup>65</sup> The logical conclusion from Cleveland's rhetoric was a clash between civilized and uncivilized was inevitable, forcing the United States to act, whether it wanted to or not. But, it would not be Cleveland who forced this confrontation. Benjamin Harrison, who was both from Ohio and the same political party as McKinley, flatly rejected any sort of interventionism. In an address in Rochester, New York, Harrison affirmed America's exemplarism stating, "We are happy in our great national isolation-happy, as your distinguished orator has said, that we do not need to burden our people to maintain standing armies, and do not live under a perpetual threat that the chariot wheels of war may roll through our peaceful villages."<sup>66</sup> Harrison firmly believed America was forever safe from invasion because of the oceans. "No nation in the world is able to wage war, on our soil," Harrison averred, "and when the generous work upon which we have entered of building, equipping, and manning a suitable navy is completed, no nation in the world will be hasty to engage us upon the sea."<sup>67</sup> Any territorial expansion outside of these safe continental borders weakened America's natural defensive barrier of the Atlantic and Pacific. The safest strategy for the United States to pursue was perfecting democracy at home, maintaining peaceful trade with all willing nations, and refraining from any military adventures abroad or annexing any other territory.

American presidents from Washington to Cleveland primarily employed a rhetoric of exemplarism, with many of the presidents citing Washington's famous "no entangling alliances" line as the basis for their foreign policy. America for its first one hundred twenty years was primarily an exemplarist nation, working to perfect its institutions at home, while remaining

neutral abroad. Presidents saw the nation as part of the civilized Christian world, but fundamentally different and separate from Europe. The political concerns of Europe were of little or no concern to the United States. However, the winds of change were blowing. As American power grew, so too did its ambitions and scope. Andrew Johnson, U.S. Grant, and Rutherford Hayes, all sought to change American policy to help lesser nations on the path of toward democracy and civilization. While there was rhetorical evidence to indicate changes in presidential rhetoric, there was no political follow-through, as in each of these instances Congress and the American people rejected these calls. But these presidents could not have proposed these policies without some domestic support. As I discussed above, interventionist ideas of men like Alfred Thayer Mahan were gaining traction in U.S. society, urging America to look abroad and see its future. U.S. citizens were slowly changing their opinion. If presidents reflect the population that elected them, then McKinley's election and discourse will lend insight into why his attempts to redefine the nation, and its policy, were successful when others had failed. To understand this political and cultural change, I explore McKinley's foreign policy rhetoric beginning with his Midwestern tour of 1898 and ending with his last speech in 1901.

### **America Enters the World Stage**

As discussed in previous chapters, McKinley came into office with a relatively unknown approach to foreign affairs, and the first year of his presidency did little to clarify his thoughts on the subject. Over the first year in office, his rhetoric reflected a continuation of past presidents on the subject. In his inaugural, McKinley embraced American exceptionalism, stating, "Our faith teaches that there is no safer reliance than upon the God of our fathers, who has so singularly favored the American people in every national trial and who will not forsake us so long as we obey His commandments and walk humbly in His footsteps."<sup>68</sup> He also continued America's

long standing non-interference policy, remarking, “We have cherished the policy of non-interference with affairs of foreign governments wisely inaugurated by Washington, keeping ourselves free from entanglement, either as allies or foes, content to leave undisturbed with them the settlement of their own domestic concerns.”<sup>69</sup> But after his first year in office, America’s position in the world changed dramatically. Over the next four years he presided over a war, annexed islands in the Caribbean and Pacific, sent 5,000 troops to China as part of an international coalition, and petitioned the great powers of the world to keep China open to trade.

I begin my analysis with texts from McKinley’s Midwestern tour and a speech to soldiers at an encampment in Boston, which he delivered right after the Spanish-American War. The texts selected are representative of McKinley’s redefinition of American national identity and the role it should play in the world. Next, I examine McKinley’s “Fourth Annual Message” to Congress, justifying military action against the Boxers in China. My analysis continues by analyzing a unique phrase, “the prophet or orator of evil,” and how U.S. opposition to the prophet of evil necessitated an active nation abroad. The phrase appeared in an 1898 speech in Boston, an 1899 speech in Illinois, and his “Second Inaugural Address.” I also include McKinley’s final address in Buffalo, New York, in the final section. Here, McKinley presented his most cogent arguments for an interventionist definition of the country.

#### *God’s Victory: The Spanish-American War and Its Consequences*

McKinley justified the Spanish-American War as a war to protect and advance civilization. The conflict in Cuba had been going on for decades, with America’s exemplarist beacon doing little to change the situation on the island. The perceived threat of anarchy and barbarism was too close to American shores for the country to do nothing. McKinley reasoned America’s honor would suffer more if he allowed the conflict to continue, rather than intervening

to stop it. The short duration of the war and the relatively easy American victory was a sign for McKinley of God's blessing. As he traveled across the Midwest in 1898 and 1899, he propagated this belief, slowly changing the rhetorical trope of American exceptionalism.

Visiting soldiers in Boston in 1899, McKinley praised their victory, declaring, "You fought in a holy cause, which, under the providence of God, triumphed."<sup>70</sup> As noted in the previous chapters, part of what made the soldiers exemplar citizens was their ability to perform their duty. Included in this duty was obediently following God's plan for themselves and the nation. By structuring the victory as a "holy cause" and under God's protection, McKinley framed the debate in religious and moral terms. To support his argument, McKinley cited America's history and quick victory as signs of God's work. Speaking in Rushville, Indiana, in 1898, McKinley recounted America's victory, stating, "Providence has been very kind to us. We have been through a war which lasted only a little more than one hundred days, a war happily not on our own, but on distant shores." McKinley continued, "And yet in that short period we have achieved a victory which will be memorable in history. There has been nothing like it recorded in military annals."<sup>71</sup> The short duration of the war, fought on foreign soil, with America being victorious, were all signs of God's plan in action. God did not want to punish the country with a long, costly, destructive war, but instead rewarded the United States for its obedience to His plan with a quick and decisive victory. Further proof was given at a stop in Carroll, Iowa, in 1898. There, McKinley placed the victory in-line with the country's blessed history, stating, "Providence has been extremely kind to the American people—kind not only in the recent conflict of arms, but in every step and stage of our history from its very beginning until now. We have been singularly blessed and favored."<sup>72</sup> The Spanish-American War was another sign of Providence's role in a long line of victories for the country.

While I argued earlier that McKinley justified military action for civilization and humanity, he also employed American exceptionalism to retroactively justify his decision to involve the country in the affairs of Cuba and the Philippines. Part of America's exemplar past, stretching back to Winthrop, was that God would punish the United States if it strayed from his plan. But America's quick and decisive victory was evidence that McKinley had acted wisely and in accord with God's will. Unlike past moments of interventionism, which took place on the continent, the Spanish-American War demonstrated the United States could act abroad without paying a divine price. McKinley argued the United States had a moral duty to declare war, but prior to the U.S. victory the trope of American exceptionalism was limited because there was little evidence from God that this was the right set of actions. However, once victory was secured, McKinley believed all the United States had to do was perform their moral duty and God's preplanned destiny would follow. This belief was encapsulated in Chicago, in 1898, with McKinley stating, "Duty determines destiny."<sup>73</sup> With the success of the war and God's destiny unfolding, McKinley used the trope of American exceptionalism to further justify action overseas.

Speaking in St. Louis in 1898, McKinley looked toward the future, stating, "We must gather the just fruits of the victory. We must pursue duty step by step. We must follow the light as God has given us to see the light, and he has singularly guided us, not only from the beginning of our great government, but down through every crisis to the present hour."<sup>74</sup> Heading into the future, the United States must be guided by God, and as a nation it should be obedient to His will. At the Trans-Mississippi Expo in 1898, McKinley declared, "Right action follows right purpose. We may not at all times be able to divine the future, the way may not always seem clear; but if our aims are high and unselfish, somehow and in some way the right end will be

reached.”<sup>75</sup> Similar to how McKinley did not know how the Spanish-American War would unfold, he could not know how the post-war settlement would develop. However, a lesson of the Spanish-American War was the United States performed its’ duty and acted morally, by helping a less fortunate people throw off the bonds of imperialism. Therefore, moving forward the United States should continue to act in accordance with these moral principles to ensure the teleological end God had planned for the country. McKinley continued at the Expo, stating, “The genius of the nation, its freedom, its wisdom, its humanity, its courage, its justice, favored by divine Providence, will make it equal to every task and the master of every language.”<sup>76</sup> In the end, because Americans were God’s chosen people, they were equipped with the necessary skills to overcome any obstacle they may face. The country would avoid the pitfalls of European imperialism because God and righteous duty guided the United States. As long as the United States remained committed to God, His values, and His plan, God would see the country through any difficulty overseas. This rationale for action was applied to the Philippines.

As previous chapters have discussed, one of the main arguments opposing McKinley’s postwar plans was the moral danger of annexing of the Philippines. The anti-imperialists, more ardently than others, argued annexation would tarnish the United States, a sin the country could never come back from. However, McKinley countered this argument in two ways. First, McKinley appealed to the United States’ past, demonstrating expansion had always been a part of the country’s history. Speaking in Redfield, South Dakota, in 1899, McKinley argued the United States had been adding territory since its inception. America had not only been adding territory, but according to McKinley, “we have been adding character and prestige to the American name. We have planted our flag in Porto [sic] Rico, in Hawaii, and in the Philippines. We planted it there because we had a right to do so.”<sup>77</sup> Adding territory was not abnormal, but a

regular occurrence throughout American history. Furthermore, the underlying rationale was if God had been guiding the nation since its inception, then God accepted and blessed the United States continued expansion. If God did not ordain this, then God would have intervened and prevented the United States' expansion or at least punished the nation. Simply, the United States had been expanding since its inception. Expansion had always been a part of the United States character, and expanding to these new overseas, non-contiguous territories was merely the next, inevitable step in American history and of God's plan.

Second, the debate about the Philippines was over because God had given the United States the territory, and there was no going against God's will. In Iowa Falls, Iowa, in 1899, McKinley declared, "It is no longer a question of expansion with us; we have expanded...I believe, my fellow-citizens, that this territory came to us in the providence of God."<sup>78</sup> More explicitly, McKinley stated in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1899, "They are there because, in the providence of God, who moves mysteriously, that great archipelago has been placed in the hands of the American people."<sup>79</sup> God gave the United States its new territorial possessions. The reasons may not be clear in the moment, but it was not for Americans to question God's plan for the country. The right course of action, as had been proved by America's history, was to be obedient to God, to follow his plan, and to act morally in their responsibilities. Questioning God's plan could cause God to question Americans' loyalty to His destiny for the country, a fate few Americans dared to undertake. Clearly, McKinley defined expansion as God's gift to limit potential counter-arguments, framing the debate in favorable terms.

Additionally, McKinley's defense of the United States' territorial acquisition framed the debate in moral terms, making it about what was right and wrong, not about what policy was most effective or logical. McKinley had four possible options regarding the Philippines: 1) return

them to Spain; 2) turn them over to European imperialists; 3) grant them independence, leaving them to the whims of European imperialist and the world; or 4) keep them, educating and uplifting the Filipinos.<sup>80</sup> Giving them back to Spain would directly go against God's divine plan for the nation. God delivered victory over Spain, rejecting His gift was morally unacceptable. The second and third options followed similar logic, as both options merely exchanged Spanish oppression for either another European power or anarchy. Both were equally morally reprehensible, as well as realistically impractical. The United States would be giving up a new economic market and a key port to a rival or the third option would likely lead to a conflict between European powers for control of the islands. Thus, the fourth option was the most moral and logical option. The United States would be doing a good deed by uplifting and educating the Filipinos, as well as keeping their obedience to God by accepting and making use of His gift. By acting this way, the United States would prevail because God had chosen them for this mission in the world. However, America and McKinley did not turn completely away from their exemplarist roots. The United States could act in the world, but there were responsibilities the United States needed to fulfill to be successful.

McKinley, and those firmly supporting his position, believed the United States acting in the world was a positive change in American foreign policy. However, in McKinley's speeches, he observed obligations the United States would need to meet to be worthy of its new position and destiny. Reflecting on the Spanish-American War in Chicago, in 1898, McKinley outlined the burdens of the war. Referring to the past five months, he stated, "They have been so full of responsibilities, immediate and prospective, as to admonish the soberest judgment and counsel the most conservative of action. This is not the time to fire the imagination, but rather to discover in calm reason the way to truth and justice and right, and, when discovered, to follow it with

“fidelity and courage, without fear, hesitation, or weakness.”<sup>81</sup> While America’s victories have been great, they were not a reason for ego or braggadocio because victory came with great responsibility. In Huron, South Dakota, in 1899, McKinley continued with the theme of responsibility, stating, “It is given to the strong to bear the burdens of the weak; and our prayer should be, not that the burdens should be rolled away, but that God should give us strength to bear them. And the burdens which this war placed upon the American people unsought and unexpected...came not to us of our seeking, but as one of the inevitable and unescapable results of that war.”<sup>82</sup> America as a strong nation, with an upright and robust citizenry, had a responsibility to guide and help lesser nations. But again, such responsibilities require sober judgment and wise decision-making. By acting in the world, the United States accepted the responsibility of being a great people. They were responsible not only for their fate but for the fates of the people they were guiding. Therefore, they cannot shun the responsibilities God placed upon them. Americans needed to remain faithful to the values that brought them these new duties, otherwise, their failing would cause a moral decay throughout the citizenry.

Interventionism did not relieve Americans from their moral responsibility to be exemplars of virtue; rather, it shifted the scene of exceptionalism from the continental United States to the shores of other nations. The U.S. was no longer an idle actor, intended to be imitated, but an active agent seeking to imbue others with American values. McKinley, as well as many of his fellow citizens, believed they were up for the challenge.

A core characteristic of American exceptionalism is that deep down, every person, no matter their creed, race, or country of origin, yearns to be an American. What the United States would now bring to the world was its values. Returning to his 1899 speech in Iowa Falls, McKinley declared, “we mean to meet these responsibilities, and we mean to carry our education

and our civilization there.”<sup>83</sup> The United States by accepting the responsibility it won in the Spanish-American War would act to spread its values to other peoples, helping them toward America’s vision of a world order. While there was definite racial discrimination in the United States, both in practice and thought, Americans deeply believed all peoples yearned for their values and would accept them as their own. McKinley summarized this conception of Americanness in an 1899 address in Chicago, stating, “In boundless wealth of soil and mine and forest nature has favored us, while all races of men of every nationality and climate have contributed their blood and brains to make the nations what it is.”<sup>84</sup> Unlike British or French or Russian or German imperialism, where natives could never become citizens because of their country of birth, being an American was not about birth or blood but the acceptance of a set of ideas and values. The United States did not need to colonize territory like Europeans, rather, the United States sought to export ideas, shaping the world in America’s image, not through force, but persuasion. Would its values conflict with other nations and occasionally need to be defended militarily? Yes, but McKinley and future presidents firmly believed an exemplar nation at home and spreading American ideas abroad, especially through trade, were not paradoxical and aligned the world with the United States.

### **China: Justifying Military Action in McKinley’s Fourth Annual Message**

American actions in China from 1899 to 1901 demonstrated McKinley’s new interventionist approach to foreign affairs and international politics. Even before the war, market expansionists in the United States urged the country to establish a set of Pacific island outposts to reach China. American businessmen saw the 400 million Chinese, stuck in a mainly agrarian society, as the largest market available for American goods.<sup>85</sup> With the Philippines under American control, there was no bigger proponent of American economic expansion in the Pacific

than Indiana Senator Albert Beveridge. Speaking to his colleagues in the Senate, Beveridge called the Philippines the key to the “illimitable markets” of China, adding China was “our natural customer.”<sup>86</sup> Beveridge believed the Philippines acted as the Gibraltar of the Pacific, controlling trade to the East. For Beveridge, any American statesman that prohibited the United States from commanding the islands was committing a “crime against American trade.”<sup>87</sup>

In September 1899, Secretary of State John Hay sent the first Open Door Note to the great powers of Europe and Japan. Hay’s impetus for sending the Note was the continued erosion of China’s sovereignty by Europe and Japan, threatening America’s most favored nation status in China.<sup>88</sup> Hay sought a simple commitment and enshrinement of the status quo established decades before. The three main points were: 1) no interference in a treaty port, sphere of influence, or leased territory; 2) China’s treaty tariff would continue to apply and levied equally on all applicable goods, and the levies were to be collected by the Chinese government; and 3) the powers would not levy any higher dues on vessels frequenting their port or using their railroads than shall be levied on vessels of its own nationality.<sup>89</sup> With the exception of Russia, Hay received relatively quick and positive responses to his request. Russia, after long diplomatic negotiations, eventually consented on the first two points, but was silent about the third. Hay took it as a positive response and on March 20, 1900, he published a circular stating all the nations replied favorably and the issue had been settled “as final and definitive.”<sup>90</sup> Important to note, China did not have a say in the Open Door Note or the continued growth of the great powers’ hold over the country.

After decades of foreign dominance and humiliation, it should be no surprise that anti-foreign sentiments in China boiled over into an open rebellion against the foreign powers. Originating in northeast China, the Boxer Rebellion lasted from 1898-1900. Leading the anti-

foreign, anti-Christian resistance was a group of *Tuans*, military-style bands of individuals who had existed for centuries and had gained legal recognition by the Imperial Chinese government. The *Tuan* leading the uprising was the Society of Harmonious Fists, or Boxers for short. The Boxers recruited peasants, playing on the growing anti-foreign sentiment and targeting Christian missionaries and their few converts. By 1900, the Boxers had made their way to Peking, killing French and Belgian engineers and American missionaries. The Western powers, including the United States, tried sending small contingents of troops to protect their legations in Peking, but they were not able to get through.<sup>91</sup> A larger multi-national relief force of 2,000 soldiers was sent to relieve the delegates. They captured the Chinese forts at Taku, outside of Tientsin on June 17. However, no Americans participated in the seizing of the forts, as American admiral Kempff ignored pressure from the other great powers to participate. On June 20, 1900, the Chinese government declared war on all foreign powers, including the United States and ordered all foreign diplomats to leave the country. German minister Baron von Kettler protested the order, but he was shot and killed in the street.<sup>92</sup> News of the German minister's death did not reach the outside world until July 1, 1900, as the foreign legations had been cut off from the outside world by the Boxers since June 20. The original multi-national relief force was unable to reach Peking.

In light of these events, Hay circulated the Second Open Door Note on July 3, 1900. The Note was a little over 300 words long but indicated a major shift in U.S. foreign policy. In the Note, Hay wrote, "The purpose of the President is, as it has been heretofore, to act concurrently with the other powers, first in opening up communication with Peking and rescuing the American officials, missionaries, and other Americans who are in danger."<sup>93</sup> McKinley, according to Hay, acted to guard and protect "all legitimate American interests."<sup>94</sup> However, neither Hay nor McKinley explicitly detailed what these American interests were. Exercising this broad mandate,

McKinley sent 5,000 American troops to join the other great powers to relieve the legations and end the rebellion. The United States joined a coalition of European powers, exercising military power on foreign soil, without a Congressional resolution authorizing McKinley's action. By August 14, 1900, the multinational force reached Peking, relieving the embattled diplomatic legations. McKinley wanted to bring home the troops quickly, fearing the charge of imperialism could be used against him in November's presidential election. He was not wrong to fear this possibility. At home, the *Philadelphia Times* derided McKinley, writing, "an absolute declaration of war by the executive without the authority or knowledge of Congress, and it is without excuse because it is not a necessity."<sup>95</sup> After deliberating among his cabinet, McKinley kept a small contingent of troops in Peking, with the rest returning to the Philippines. The subject of China was not broached in McKinley's rhetoric until his "Fourth Annual Message" in December of 1900. The rest of this section will analyze part of McKinley's "Fourth Annual Message" addressing the situation in China.

McKinley's first strategy relied on American preconceptions of the Chinese, with assumptions based on Social Darwinist thinking and implied racial stereotypes. McKinley depicted the Chinese as primitive people, making all their actions and beliefs seem foolish. McKinley concluded the Chinese were unable to handle the progress the great powers were bringing to China. Essentially, Americans and Europeans had advanced too far compared to the Chinese. He stated, "The telegraph and the railway spreading over their land, the steamers plying on their waterways, the merchant and the missionary penetrating year by year farther to the interior, became to the Chinese mind types of an alien invasion, changing the course of their national life and fraught with vague forebodings of disaster to their beliefs and their self-control."<sup>96</sup> Signs Western nations recognized as civilization and progress were seen by the

Chinese as markers of a foreign invasion. After blaming anti-foreign agitation as the cause for the Boxer Rebellion, McKinley dug deeper, stating, “Their origin lies deep in the character of the Chinese races and in the traditions of their Government.”<sup>97</sup> McKinley concluded his characterization of the Chinese government’s failure to curb anti-foreign sentiment, stating, these “inflammatory appeals to the ignorance and superstition of the masses, mendacious and absurd in their accusations and deeply hostile in their spirit, could not but work cumulative harm.”<sup>98</sup> Chinese attacks on Western progress could not be prevented because the Chinese were tragically flawed people, misinterpreting the progress of the world as an attack on their country.

Similar to Cuba, China represented another case of an uncivilized people rebelling against Western progress and standing in direct contrast to his definition of the United States. McKinley’s elements of racial inferiority were underpinned by elements of Social Darwinism in American society. Social Darwinism, a theory popularized by Herbert Spencer in the socioeconomic sphere, applied Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection and survival of the fittest to races and nations. At the apex of nations were the United States and Great Britain, the leading Anglo-Saxon countries of the world. While American exceptionalism does not denote a specific race as exceptional, it does prioritize a set of beliefs. McKinley defined China as a backward civilization that was unfit, unprepared, and unwilling to accept American values or beliefs. For example, McKinley sought the liberty of faith for all in China, stating, “insecurity of those natives who may embrace alien creeds is a scarcely less effectual assault upon the rights of foreign worship and teaching than would be the direct invasion thereof.”<sup>99</sup> Chinese society stifled basic freedoms Americans accepted as universal rights. Moreover, a nativist sentiment on the West Coast, due to large numbers of Chinese immigrants, influenced Americans negative perceptions of the Chinese. McKinley’s rhetorical definition of China played to these larger

societal depictions of the Chinese in the United States. According to political theorist Michael Hunt, the Chinese were depicted as “servile” and “cheap labor” willing to destroy the workingman. As a source of cheap labor, they threatened white American’s economic position. Living in Chinatowns, huddled together with little interaction with whites, Chinese immigrants were labeled as a threat to the public’s health and wellbeing.<sup>100</sup> Already depicted as a domestic threat to Americans, it was a small leap for them to see China’s anti-foreign and anti-Western attitudes as a threat to America’s position in Asia. China represented the perfect scapegoat to justify McKinley’s decision to send troops overseas.

The Chinese, in McKinley’s description, were actively resistant, unwilling to accept American tutelage. The Chinese actively worked to undermine Western progress, while the Americans watched and waited, hoping for peace between all parties involved. Such a description was used to depict a factual accounting of events, removing American agency and making them a bystander to the rebellion. According to Denise Bostdorff, presidents use this rhetorical strategy of removing American agency to create a narrative of a “completely objective, factual state of affairs that has occurred as a result of some other party’s actions.”<sup>101</sup> In McKinley’s narrative, the United States became the victim of circumstance, deflecting any potential action by the U.S. that may have attributed to the crisis.<sup>102</sup> McKinley thoroughly detailed China’s actions against foreigners over the months leading up to the siege in Peking. He downplayed America’s role in the situation, stating, “The United States, while not participating in the joint demonstration, promptly sent from the Philippines all ships that could be spared for service on the Chinese coast.”<sup>103</sup> American seamen did not participate in the attack, but were merely present with American soldiers onboard protecting the diplomats. It was the Chinese, with their primitive anti-foreign sentiment, who were responsible for the crisis over the summer.

McKinley provided further characterization, calling China a state in “virtual anarchy.” Taken as a whole, the scene was one of anarchy and disorder, with a set of characters comprised of unfriendly, uncivilized Chinese threatening passive American citizens. The situation called for quick and decisive action. A failure to intervene by McKinley, according to his past rhetoric and personal belief, would be a failure of his and America’s duty.

However, there was hope. American intervention could help the Chinese. Americans living in China emphasized the weakness and vulnerability of China, reinforcing the nativist message, but they also believed American finance, trade, and mission work could turn or civilize China. However, to be civilized, the Chinese would need to be the passive student, learning from their American tutor.<sup>104</sup> China’s weakness was an inherent character flaw that only Western, specifically American, guidance could help overcome. While McKinley relied on racial stereotypes to blame China for creating a situation mandating American action, he did not give up on the Chinese people altogether.

Instead, McKinley placed most of the blame for the uprising on the “evil counselors” in China. “For the real culprits,” according to McKinley, were “the evil counselors who have misled the Imperial judgment and diverted the sovereign authority to their own guilty ends, full expiation becomes imperative within the rational limits of retributive Justice.”<sup>105</sup> Evil took the form of a speaker or orator, someone whose words corrupt others for their own personal gain. The “evil counselors” were to blame for influencing the Chinese people to rise against Western traders and dignitaries. They seduced the Chinese people with tales of Western impropriety and corruption, fanning the flames of rebellion. Here, the evil counselors influenced China away from the path of progress and enlightenment, rejecting American values of hard work and sacrifice. The results of the Boxer Rebellion, like any false prophet throughout the Bible, was

failure and destruction. The Boxer Rebellion represented a divine administration of justice. God punished China for their foolishness and selfish acts, and the United States, acting as a moral agent and chosen people, acted, not with words, but deeds to restore the situation. McKinley designated the U.S. as an interventionist nation, tasked with the mission to confront evil throughout the world and restore justice. McKinley in his appeal to the Chinese government sought justice, not retribution or tribute. He requested that China “treat with just sternness the principal offenders, who are doubly culpable, not alone toward the foreigners, but toward Your Majesty, under whose rule the purpose of China to dwell in concord with the world had hitherto found expression in the welcome and protection assured to strangers.”<sup>106</sup> McKinley did not seek vengeance, but justice. Vengeance was an immoral act, going against God’s will and America’s moral dictates. Whereas, justice redressed the wrongs perpetrated against God’s chosen people. Additionally, it was not every Chinese citizen who went astray, but only a few. Most of the Chinese could still be reached once these evil counselors were dispensed of, putting China back on the long path toward Americanization.

McKinley’s rhetorical strategy in his “Fourth Annual Message” was an early example of justificatory rhetoric during a foreign crisis, using American exceptionalism as an underlying rationale for intervention. This strategy has been employed often since the Cold War as a deliberative strategy used during a crisis to explain why military action was taken. Its main function has been to explain to Congress and the American people why military action was undertaken in a situation, and at times, Congressional authorization.<sup>107</sup> Crisis rhetoric, unlike war rhetoric, has a beginning, middle, and end, even being announced and concluded in the same statement. Because of the nature of the crisis and the different expectations of presidential rhetoric in 1900, McKinley could discuss the entire crisis in one speech a few months after the

crisis. This rhetorical strategy incorporated McKinley's previous strategies, justifying American action based on an anarchical scene filled with threats to Americans and American interest. Playing off American exceptionalism's moral framing, McKinley claimed the U.S. had to confront an evil in the world, making the decision one of good versus evil, not one from a host of possible policies. McKinley limited the scope of the intervention to rescuing the imperiled legation, obtaining redress for the wrongs incurred, securing the safety of American life and property, and preventing the spread of disorder, defining Hay's ambiguous objectives in the Second Open Door Note.<sup>108</sup> Having accomplished this limited scope, McKinley confidently stated, American forces "withdrew from active hostilities."<sup>109</sup> The quick resolution of the crisis did not call for further justification. McKinley had navigated and resolved the crisis, without incurring too many casualties. His rhetoric relied on the belief that the United States was qualitatively a different nation, seeking not territorial domain in China, but the end to a dangerous situation for Americans and Chinese citizens. His proof of this claim was the quick withdrawal of American troops after the crisis, leaving no lingering doubts about America's intentions. Such justificatory rhetoric would become a staple of presidents explaining American military action overseas in the years to come from U.S. actions in Latin America to Dwight Eisenhower's rhetoric about Formosa and the Middle East to Lyndon Johnson with the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

Furthermore, McKinley's victory in the election of 1900, where Bryan's charges of imperialism against McKinley fell flat, ended the need for further rhetorical justification outside his annual address. By successfully concluding the crisis, McKinley could claim victory, creating a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end, without justifying where his new presidential

power derived from. All Americans needed to know was the Chinese threatened American interests, and their president responded, did his duty, and defended them.

### **Pay Heed All Who Do Nothing: The Prophet of Evil**

As discussed in the last section, McKinley blamed the “evil counselors” in China for inciting the rebellion. However, this phrase was not a one-off phrase specifically related to China; rather, it was an important concept underpinning America’s new interventionist attitude. In this section, I examine two other instances of this phrase: in Boston, Massachusetts in 1899, and the other in his “Second Inaugural Address” in 1901.

To unite Americans behind his vision, McKinley needed to depict a world filled with un-American “others,” who posed a threat to American interests, giving warrant to a more interventionist policy. Parts of this argument are grounded in American civil religion. In her work on American national identity, Vanessa Beasley described how America’s civil religion can unite a culturally and ethnically diverse citizenry. It can also unite citizens around an articulated global mission for the United States. Beasley wrote, “they [presidents] can unite the American people by providing a global, un-American ‘them’ against which the citizenry can feel like a distinctive, united ‘us.’”<sup>110</sup> Presidents do not merely articulate a set of principles American identity is based upon, but they employ “civil religious themes to promote a particular attitudinal pose as similarly constitutive.”<sup>111</sup> McKinley created a distinctive other, the prophet of evil, standing against American principles, calling forth Americans to unite and rally against him.

At a dinner banquet in Boston, in 1899, McKinley warned his audience about the prophet of evil, stating, “The prophet of evil would do nothing because he flinches at sacrifice and effort, and to do nothing is easiest and involves the least cost.”<sup>112</sup> The prophet of evil takes the easy path, letting the doers take the responsibility and obligation of getting things done. The prophet

preferred America to refrain from acting, sitting on the sideline doing nothing. “If the doubters were in a majority,” McKinley warned, “there would, it is true, be no labor, no sacrifice, no anxiety, and no burden raised or carried; no contribution from our ease and purse and comfort to the welfare of others, or even to the extension of our resources to the welfare of ourselves.”<sup>113</sup> The prophet of evil preached pure exemplarism, an America watching the world, letting those suffer under the oppression of others—in this case the Cubans under Spanish oppression. It was true, the prophet’s path according to McKinley would be one of “ease.”<sup>114</sup> Americans would not suffer death or risk the dangers of war. The country would be safe, sitting behind its two oceans, disturbing no one, but at what cost? McKinley framed the debate around exceptionalism’s principle of good or evil, not a realist approach to American foreign policy. Two paths were presented for the country to follow. The first was the path of the righteous, selfless nation. The second was promoted by the prophet, the path of the voyeuristic sloth. The former promoted hard work and action, in the service of humanity. The latter seduced America with promises of ease and comfort—little work was required. The choice for McKinley was easy. For McKinley, the identity of the country was based on its citizens, and he would not let his nation of citizen-soldiers falter in their duty against the prophet of evil. His redefinition of citizenship and of the country supported each other in their purpose of a more active United States. The traits of those following the prophet stood in opposition to McKinley’s definition of Americans. The citizen-soldier was superior to the prophet because he did not shirk his responsibility to the nation or the world, he sacrificed for his fellow citizens, and helped those less fortunate in the world. For McKinley, America was filled dutiful citizens, destined to take McKinley’s path.

McKinley’s clearest rejection of the prophet of evil occurred in the final year of his presidency, in his “Second Inaugural Address.” In his “Second Inaugural Address,” McKinley

again criticized the prophets of evil, stating, they “were not the builders of the Republic, nor in its crises since have they saved or served it.”<sup>115</sup> Rather, they “are obstructionists who despair, and who would destroy confidence in the ability of our people to solve wisely and for civilization the mighty problems resting upon them.”<sup>116</sup> The prophet of evil became the antithesis of McKinley’s definition of America. The United States had always been a nation of optimistic builders, creating a better world. Now, the country was charged with the responsibility to act in the world, building a better world in America’s image. Yet, these prophets had disparaged the United States’ ability and mocked its responsibility from the founding. They were the naysayers warning of America’s doom, fearing the U.S. would lose its’ moral position in the world or God would abandon them. This was not the identity of the United States McKinley created throughout his first term, and he would not let the nation slide back into it during his second.

McKinley then shifted to constituting a new policy, projecting American values outward to the rest of the world. Americans were guided by the faith of their fathers, a mighty force bringing progress to the world, not fear and inaction. Americans have always been entrenched in freedom at home, according to McKinley, but they also “take their love for it with them wherever they go, and they reject as mistaken and unworthy the doctrine that we lose our own liberties by securing the enduring foundations of liberty to others. Our institutions will not deteriorate by extension, and our sense of justice will not abate under tropic suns in distant seas.”<sup>117</sup> McKinley’s words were the clearest rejection of exemplarism by a president to that point in American history. The United States did not lose its position in the world by acting, spreading freedom and liberty. Its institutions did not fall into disrepair with God abandoning the nation and its people. Rather, American values were bolstered by their spread and acceptance by other peoples. These values resided in the hearts of Americans, not a physical geographical

location. Such a belief embodied the belief every person can be an American if they accept its values. The country and world would be strengthened by the spread of American values, as more people would experience and accept the values of freedom and liberty. Strengthened by his successful first term, McKinley believed God wanted the United States to engage the world, being a positive force throughout the world.

In regard to territorial expansion, McKinley stated, “As heretofore, so hereafter will the nation demonstrate its fitness to administer any new estate which events devolve upon it, and in the fear of God will ‘take occasion by the hand and make the bounds of freedom wider yet.’”<sup>118</sup> The United States would not wage war to acquire new territory, but if it gained territory from defending its ideals, it would not shy away from its responsibilities. Expansion should not be a punishment or curse, but an opportunity to spread freedom. All of this was possible if, and only if, the United States accepted the responsibilities God placed on them, blending the principles of interventionism and exemplarism. The United States must continue to be true to its values of freedom and liberty to be worthy of these blessings. Interventionism for McKinley was not a rhetorical trope of just acting in the world to act, and God will take care of the rest. Rather, interventionism was an effect of acting on American ideals, and believing all people deserved to live under their blessing. The prophet of evil was the rhetorical “other” American citizens could rally against, uniting the nation in support of a new interventionist policy. The world was changing, and the role of the United States in the world needed to change with it.

### **Buffalo: Toward A New World**

In Buffalo, McKinley framed American interventionism in economic terms, establishing reciprocity as the official economic policy of the nation. He concluded, the policy of reciprocity would solve the nation’s overproduction problem. Such overproduction, according to McKinley,

“must be relieved through a foreign outlet and we should sell everywhere we can, and buy wherever the buying will enlarge our sales and productions, and thereby make a greater demand for home labor.”<sup>119</sup> Reciprocity’s basic principles lowered or eliminated tariffs on products, creating a freer international market, with such policies becoming the basis for present day free trade agreements. American intervention overseas, under McKinley’s leadership, was not based on military interventionism, but economic. McKinley saw the shrinking of the world through communication, transportation, and technology—the forces of globalization—not as a threat to American industry, but the keys to its’ success. For McKinley, the world was one, large global market, opening to American goods, but first he needed to persuade the American people of this vision.

The changing world led McKinley to Buffalo to speak at the first Pan-American Exposition. The world had been coming together since the 1750s, a process we would today call globalization. Between 1800 and 1913 the volume of world trade increased twenty-five-fold, with three-fourths of all international trade occurring between Europe, North America, and Australia-New Zealand. All of Europe West of the czarist empire had become a free trade zone. As historians Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels Petersson concluded, “There was simply no escaping one another.”<sup>120</sup> In Buffalo, McKinley echoed that sentiment, stating, “Geographic and political divisions will continue to exist, but distances have been effaced. Swift ships and swift trains are becoming cosmopolitan. They invade fields which a few years ago were impenetrable.”<sup>121</sup> Industrialization had made trade and travel between countries easier, quicker. Whether it was the telegraph bringing news from around the world in minutes, the steamship or railroad transporting people and goods quicker than ever before, or machines reaching new, previously unreachable lands, the world was moving forward. McKinley plainly put it, “Isolation

is no longer possible or desirable.”<sup>122</sup> He concluded, “God and man have linked the nations together. No nation can longer be indifferent to any other.”<sup>123</sup> The United States, and for that matter no country, could remain isolated from the rest of the world anymore. The United States could no longer sit behind its buffer of oceans, shining as a beacon to the rest of the world. America was going to have to interact with the world, whether it wanted to or not.

McKinley favored economic engagement with the rest of the world. Whereas European powers settled on colonizing the world, engaging in military conquests throughout Africa and Asia, McKinley preferred the United States expand its economic power. Business was the true arena for civilized nations to engage. Without such competition, according to McKinley, “we would be clinging to the clumsy antiquated processes of farming and manufacture and the methods of business of long ago, and the twentieth would be no further advanced than the eighteenth century. But though commercial competitors we are, commercial enemies we must not be.”<sup>124</sup> Business and economic competition brought progress, with progress came more universal and American values. McKinley’s interpretation of history saw economics as the key to success, not military conquest. McKinley believed no nation could compete with American industry in a free market. By opening up the world’s markets to U.S. products, McKinley believed the U.S. would fulfill its destiny by leading the world toward a more prosperous future.

The problem facing the U.S. was not a military one, but an economic one. Specifically, few nations outside the U.S. and Great Britain believed in lower tariffs, much less free trade. As McKinley stated, “The expansion of our trade and commerce is the pressing problem. Commercial wars are unprofitable.”<sup>125</sup> McKinley sought to expand America’s overseas markets by engaging in an economic policy called reciprocity. Reciprocity was defined as the mutual lowering of tariffs on list of goods between nations, resulting in an increase in exports by

relieving overproduction the domestic market could not consume. McKinley called it the “natural outgrowth” of America’s industrial development. Just as American territorial expansion after the Spanish-American War was deemed to align with America’s past, so to was America’s new interventionist spirit of opening new markets. McKinley described reciprocal trade agreements as being “in harmony with the spirit of the times.”<sup>126</sup> If the United States was going to be a global power, spreading its ideals around the world, then one of the fastest ways to engage other nations was through trade. Freer trade provided the economic benefits of empire, without always resorting to military force, protecting the United States moral position in the world, while also allowing it to be a more active agent. American interventionism under the guise of American exceptionalism, during the McKinley presidency, was defined by economic expansion. Whether it was Puerto Rico, the Philippines or China, McKinley framed interventionism as an economic necessity to further the nation along God’s predetermined path.

McKinley saw globalization and the interconnecting of the world as a challenge and an opportunity. The Spanish-American War was the transformative event that allowed McKinley to redefine the United States, and in the process, reshape the world in America’s image. Unlike Adams reluctance to act or Congress’ unwillingness to support Grant’s and Hayes’ ambition, McKinley believed it was America’s destiny, its divinely inspired path to help other nations. The United States went from being only a beacon of light to the world to also being an active agent in bringing that light to the world.

## **Conclusion**

McKinley’s presidency represented one of the more dramatic shifts in foreign policy rhetoric. In 1897, McKinley adhered to the exemplarist vision for the United States. The best America was an America perfecting its domestic institutions, serving as a beacon of hope for all

the nations of the world. As the world continued to shrink and crises arose threatening American interest, McKinley recognized the need for change. The Spanish-American War provided McKinley with the opportunity to redefine the nation. In the peace settlement, the United States gained overseas territories. Rather than seeing this as a perversion of American exceptionalism, McKinley saw its natural progression of America's history, pivoting the nation away from exemplarism and toward interventionism. If the United States represented God's chosen people and God gave the United States a quick victory, then the territories must be part of God's plan for the country. The United States' victory and territorial expansion made it a great power in the eyes of the world. This new status brought new responsibility. The first major challenge McKinley and the country faced after the war was a chaotic situation in China.

McKinley's actions in China and rhetoric afterward continued to reshape and redefine the nation. Even though McKinley saw the Philippines as part of God's plan, he was still personally reluctant to wage war for territorial expansion. Rather, the United States' destiny was in the domination of economic markets. A militarily weak position in China led McKinley to seek some sort of assurance from the other powers guaranteeing America's economic rights. John Hay's First Open Door Note should not be read as an edict dictating American policy, unlike present day statements with America being the lone superpower; rather, it was a framework intended to establish diplomatic agreement for the open door principles. It was a statement intended to continue diplomacy in China, rather than incite conflict and more partitioning of the nation. Hay achieved what he wanted, a commitment to keep the ports open to American trade without discrimination. When the Boxer Rebellion threatened American interests again in China, McKinley took the revolutionary step of sending American soldiers overseas to intervene, without congressional request or approval. What became evident after, and what Theodore

Roosevelt was more aware of and willing to employ as president, was America's position in China and elsewhere depended on American military force.<sup>127</sup> McKinley justified his actions by describing a nation in chaos and turmoil, blaming not the entirety of China, but a specific set of "evil counselors" who led China astray. Such depictions appeared in two other McKinley speeches, being employed as a rhetorical "other" to galvanize the nation behind a more interventionist foreign policy.

Additionally, McKinley's presidency enhanced the powers of the office in both military and economic spheres. His actions in China expanded presidential war power. Past presidents had used force against nongovernmental groups threatening American interests or citizens, but McKinley used force against a recognized government, without a declaration or authorization from Congress. England's *Spectator*, writing about the changing conception of the American presidency, stated, it was "neither more nor less than elective monarchy, limited as to duration, and regulated as to finance, but otherwise nearly unfettered."<sup>128</sup> As president, he became responsible for finding and securing new overseas markets to keep the economy growing. Future presidents now had similar expectations to manage foreign trade, with his two successors using Big Stick Diplomacy (Theodore Roosevelt) and Dollar Diplomacy (Howard Taft) as their strategic economic policies. A more active economic policy correlated to a more active and interventionist U.S. foreign policy, as U.S. economic interests abroad needed to be protected and kept open through force, as the Boxer Rebellion exemplified.

The shift in McKinley's rhetoric also marked the recognition of what we presently term globalization. McKinley redefined the nation because the world necessitated this change. Machines, industrialization, and technology reshaped the world. The world Washington lived in was vastly different than McKinley's era. As McKinley observed in his last address, isolation

was no longer possible. However, just because the U.S. was going to be more active, this did not mean it had to abandon its' core values. McKinley was not willing to abandon American principles embodied in exemplarism of being moral and a beacon to other nations domestically, but rather, McKinley's rhetoric demonstrated a blending of exemplarism and interventionism. Americans would be both exemplars and active in the world. For McKinley, an interventionist U.S. meant it was a great power, chosen by God, and active in the world, if, and only if, Americans were faithful to their values. What made Americans exceptional was their values, their institutions, and their adherence to the rule of law. McKinley warned on multiple occasions, and nowhere more clearly than in his "Second Inaugural Address," that America's success at home and overseas depended on its fidelity to American values. Americans needed to be obedient to God, and God would help them fulfill their destiny. A failure to do so would result in its failure overseas.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion: McKinley's Rhetorical Legacy**

On September 6, 1901, McKinley attended the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. That afternoon he was scheduled to attend a public reception at the Temple of Music. A little after four in the afternoon, as McKinley stood in the reception line greeting the public, anarchist Leon Czolgosz fired two bullets at the president. One bullet bounced off a button, while the other lodged inside McKinley. Czolgosz did not try to escape or kill himself, rather he was quickly wrestled to the ground. McKinley told George B. Cortelyou, a personal assistant to the president, not to harm Czolgosz. In that moment, McKinley believed Czolgosz was “some poor misguided fellow.”<sup>1</sup> The president was rushed out of the building and immediately into surgery. The bullet inside McKinley could not be found. The doctors chose not to use an X-ray machine, even though the Exposition had one on display. As sun light faded, Doctor Rixey closed the incision without drainage, placing a bandage and antiseptic over the wound. For a week after the assassination attempt, there was an air of hope as McKinley regained consciousness with no complications and was in good spirits. However, a week after the shooting, McKinley spiked a fever and could not eat. Gangrene set in, as cleanliness and disinfection were still relatively new and rare in 1901. On Friday, September 13, McKinley's wife Ida and a few close associates were allowed to see him. He said weakly, “Good-bye, good-bye all. It is God's way. His will, not ours, be done.” Then he murmured his favorite hymn, “Nearer my God to Thee,” before losing consciousness. A little over six months into his second term, McKinley passed away at quarter past two on the morning of Saturday, September 14.<sup>2</sup>

Writing of the importance of McKinley's presidency, biographer Wayne Morgan noted, presidents after McKinley would employ the latent powers of the presidency McKinley had awakened to transform the office and the nation. However, such a transformation could not have

occurred without McKinley, who rekindled the power of the presidency and ameliorated the diverse forces that disturbed the country throughout the tumultuous 1890s. Part of McKinley's success stemmed from his rhetorical power. McKinley's power, according to Morgan, "lay in persuasion rather than force, and persuasion is seldom dramatic."<sup>3</sup> McKinley's rhetorical style lacked the flair of his successor, but he was adept at synthesizing diverse views into policies that were acceptable to the majority of the country.

Before continuing forward, I want to briefly summarize the main arguments I have presented. I began this dissertation with the claim that the unique contextual circumstances surrounding McKinley's presidency presented him with the opportunity to redefine and reconstruct America's foreign policy. Given this context, I proposed to explore and answer three questions: First, how did McKinley justify sending troops overseas to fight the Spanish-American War? Second, how did McKinley transform and reimagine citizenship? Third, how did McKinley redefine the country?

In answering the first question, I argued McKinley employed the ideograph of civilization, supported by the key modifiers of humanity, duty, and progress, to support his decision to go to war. The deterioration of the situation in Cuba created an external exigence, an uncivilized crisis necessitating action by the United States. Simply, inaction by the U.S. was unacceptable. Therefore, McKinley argued the United States had a duty to civilization and humanity to intervene, ending the war and bringing peace to the island. To answer my second question, I claimed McKinley appealed to the values of unity and patriotism to heal a divided nation. Through these appeals, McKinley employed the trope of the citizen-soldier to reimagine male citizenship and align with his foreign policy. Citizen-soldiers were ideal male citizens of the republic, defending the nation and its values when called upon and returning to their peaceful

civilian lives after the war. After the war, the United States had new responsibilities that required a redefinition of the country. In answering my last question, I argued McKinley redefined American exceptionalism from exemplarism to interventionism. McKinley claimed the United States should be active in the world. As God's chosen people, the country was immune from the dangers of imperialism. To support this argument, McKinley reconstructed American history, claiming the country had always been expansionist and this latest turn did nothing to alter its core values.

To conclude, I want to explore McKinley's rhetorical legacy. I begin by tracking McKinley's three main rhetorical moves—the ideograph of civilization, redefinition of Americans, and redefinition of the country—and trace their rhetorical trajectory after his presidency. After tracing McKinley's rhetorical legacy, I take up two final arguments before concluding. First, I examine how all three rhetorical moves by McKinley worked together, setting the discursive boundaries for his successors. I concentrate on how each of the three moves supported each other, creating a cohesive and complete argument. Without one of them, McKinley's argument would have faltered. Second, I reevaluate McKinley's place in the rhetorical presidency. I conclude by reiterating the need for scholars, especially rhetoricians, to pay attention to transitional moments in American history. These moments offer presidents opportunities to redefine and reconstruct the nation.

### **Tracing McKinley's Rhetorical Legacy**

McKinley's premature death did not end his influence in the country. McKinley's rhetoric set new precedents and paths for his successors to follow. This section looks at how Roosevelt and Taft continued McKinley's discursive messages. However, before moving forward, I want to speculate on why presidents may look to their predecessors, continuing certain

rhetorical trajectories. In their examination of presidential genres, Campbell and Jamieson stated, “the genres analyzed in subsequent chapters are those we see as the structural supports for the edifice of the presidency. Through them, presidents perform functions that are useful, and sometimes essential, to maintaining the powers of the executive.”<sup>4</sup> Campbell and Jamieson continued, stating, presidents “carved out genres that mark beginnings and endings, preserve the executive powers of the presidency, adapt it to changing conditions, and promote policy initiatives and respond to them.”<sup>5</sup> Presidents continue to employ and replicate rhetorical genres because they serve several larger purposes from maintaining rhetorical traditions to serving certain civic rituals to continuing rhetorical strategies that were successful. Moreover, as Michael McGee argued, ideographs do not disappear from society, rather their meaning changes.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, certain ideographs in presidential rhetoric, like genres, could be employed consistently by presidents. Tracing their legacy will illuminate new understandings of presidential rhetoric. As demonstrated by my review of American exceptionalism as a rhetorical trope, I contend a similar argument can be made for examining its usage by McKinley’s successors, especially given the dramatic shift indicated by McKinley’s rhetoric.

A second reason for examining McKinley’s rhetorical legacy is because presidents, according to Mary Stuckey, “are inherently conservative in their political as well as their rhetorical choices.”<sup>7</sup> Such conservatism is a product of the presidency as an institution. Legal scholar William Marshall wrote historical examples are often cited by defenders of expanded presidential power. According to Marshall, “The use of such powers by previous Presidents stands as authority for a current or future President to engage in similar actions.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, as Marshall concluded, “every extraordinary use of power by one President expands the availability of executive branch power for use by future Presidents.”<sup>9</sup> As the institution of the presidency

acquired power, rather than give it back, the presidency retained power once it was gained. A similar argument can be made for rhetoric. Presidents have used rhetoric to defend their expanded power. If a president found a successful rhetorical strategy to defend their acquisition of power, then it would be logical to conclude they would continue such a rhetorical strategy until it no longer held sway. Campbell and Jamieson concluded, “The effect of earlier presidential rhetoric on the discourse of subsequent presidents is illustrated by presidential war rhetoric, in which the lines of argument available and the timing of its appearance, although not the essential form, have been strongly influenced by precedents.”<sup>10</sup> Therefore, examining McKinley’s rhetorical legacy provides insight into how his successors viewed his rhetorical strategies and what strategies were helpful defending McKinley’s expansion of presidential power.

I begin my look at McKinley’s rhetorical legacy by examining the term civilization, briefly tracing its continued use by Roosevelt and Taft, but also looking at its decline after World War I. I continue in the next section by focusing on how McKinley’s conception of the citizen-soldier helped shape America’s changing military policies. I conclude this section with an analysis of America’s increased intervention in Latin America and Asia.

*From Civilized States to First World: Transformation of an Idea*

McKinley employed the ideograph civilization to delineate the difference between great powers and the rest of the world. Civilized powers were leaders of industry, technology, and military might, demonstrating a significant edge over the rest of the world. Civilized states prized education and literacy, looking down on those societies who lagged behind their standard. Most importantly, civilized nations brought order to the world. When Cuba and Spain continued to escalate their retaliatory attacks against each other, McKinley believed the United States had a

moral duty to civilization and humanity to intervene. McKinley's war rhetoric used civilization as an ideograph to build a moral case for American intervention in a war where America's *casus belli* was not self-evident. Supporting civilization were the key terms of duty, humanity, and progress. By employing duty in conjunction with civilization, McKinley argued the United States had a responsibility to bring order and peace to Cuba. By including the term humanity, McKinley strengthened his warrant for American action. The U.S. was not acting for some material gain but answering a higher moral call to end an uncivilized conflict. In the process, civilization would progress around the world, turning uncivilized states into civilized states. Would they reach the civilized status of great powers? Probably not, but McKinley believed through American guidance the world would progress to a better overall condition. Most importantly, McKinley's emphasis on going to war for humanity's sake created a new rationale for war or military intervention abroad: human rights. When people's rights were threatened, the United States could argue intervention to end oppression was morally acceptable.

Civilization as an ideograph was still viable to McKinley's immediate successors, Roosevelt and Taft. Roosevelt continued employing civilization as a sorting tool between civilized and uncivilized peoples, with civilized nations becoming increasingly peaceful toward each other. In his "Second Annual Message," Roosevelt opined, "As civilization grows warfare becomes less and less the normal condition of foreign relations. The last century has seen a marked diminution of wars between civilized powers; wars with uncivilized powers are largely mere matters of international police duty, essential for, the welfare of the world."<sup>11</sup> Following McKinley's belief about globalization and interconnectedness of the world, Roosevelt put his faith in international institutions, like The Hague, as symbols of civilized states' peacefulness. Roosevelt claimed, "More and more the increasing interdependence and complexity of

international political and economic relations render it incumbent on all civilized and orderly powers to insist on the proper policing of the world.”<sup>12</sup> As a great civilized power, Roosevelt recognized, like McKinley, the United States needed to play a larger role in creating and sustaining peace around the globe. In his statement announcing the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, he stated, “In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama, and in endeavoring to circumscribe the theater of war in the Far East, and to secure the open door in China, we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of humanity at large.”<sup>13</sup> Roosevelt used McKinley’s modifier of humanity to defend American interventionism and to appeal to the standard of civilization as a rationale for such action.

Taft’s rhetoric maintained McKinley’s desire to help civilize uncivilized peoples. Under Taft, the U.S. began examining different options for working with other nations to uplift regions around the globe. In Taft’s “First Annual Message,” he stated, “This Government was among the foremost in the great work of uplifting the uncivilized regions of Africa and urging the extension of the benefits of civilization, education, and fruitful open commerce to that vast domain, and is a party to treaty engagements of all the interested powers designed to carry out that great duty to humanity.”<sup>14</sup> Taft echoed McKinley’s discourse of duty, humanity, and civilization, while focusing on the need for civilized states to bring progress to uncivilized peoples. Civilization in presidential discourse from McKinley to Taft focused on how the U.S. could be a positive moral actor in the world, uplifting the downtrodden. However, civilization as an ideograph began to fade in 1914.

Prior to World War I, civilizations, especially the European great powers, marveled at their progress and the backwardness of other nations. However, in a span of twenty years the

world's "civilized" powers brought unprecedented death and destruction to the globe. As historians Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels Peterson observed, "Gone was the basic consensus on what constituted 'civilized' realpolitik and acceptable deportment that had been worked out over centuries of European diplomatic history."<sup>15</sup> Over the course of these calamitous decades, civilization as an ideograph collapsed. The destruction wrought by civilized states during two world wars exposed the gap between civilized and uncivilized as merely rhetorical. Progress as a modifier proved to be fragile, as a revisionist powers sought to reorder the international system.<sup>16</sup> By the end of 1945, the former imperial powers of Europe were now second tier powers, as the United States and Soviet Union, both strongly anti-imperialist, squared off in the Cold War. The French fought in Algeria and Indo-China, in hopes of keeping their colonies, but were defeated in both cases.<sup>17</sup> Civilization has made a modest comeback, with the likes of Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Yet, its resonance as an ideograph pales in comparison to its pre-World War I influence.

Outside the sheer material destruction brought by war, a number of other reasons factored into civilization's downfall. To begin, after the founding of the League of Nations and the United Nations, it became anachronistic and insulting to the larger number of non-European nations to be called uncivilized, as they became full political and legal members of international society. In 1955, there were twenty-five Afro-Asian states in the U.N. Five years later there were fifty-three members, and by 1971, over 70 percent of the 132 members were non-European.<sup>18</sup> The distinction between civilized and uncivilized states was unnecessary, as the Family of Nations had grown to include almost all nations. Furthermore, this excluded the fact that Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Syria were founding members of the U.N.<sup>19</sup>

A second major reason came from the non-European nations at the U.N. initiating a crisis in international law. Non-European and former colonial states sought to rid international law of all traces of the standard of civilization, removing the Eurocentric and oppressive language from treaties and agreements. Members of the U.N.'s International Law Commission asserted, "the Commission should refrain from using the expression 'civilized countries', even if article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice used it. That expression dated back to the colonial era with its concept of the 'white man's burden'." <sup>20</sup> Anti-colonial movements gained steam throughout the post-World War II world. By December 1960, the U.N.'s "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples" rejected delaying independence of colonies based on inadequate political, social, or educational preparedness. The declaration also affirmed the subjection of peoples as an impediment to world peace. But most importantly, it declared, "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." <sup>21</sup> As the standard of civilization disappeared from international law, its meaning in public discourse was transformed.

While the Third World sought to erase all rhetorical remnants of the standard of civilization, the West transformed their discourse and means of control. The world was no longer separated into civilized and barbarian states. Rather, nations were designated as either First or Third World, replicating the core-periphery international order established by the standard of civilization. Civilized states kept their ideology, but used different labels. There was, and still exists, a rhetorical gap between First and Third World. States labeled Third World were still less developed and lagged behind First World nations in terms of technology, military power, and other key indicators of prosperity. While former colonial powers no longer sought direct control

over Third World nations, they still felt the white man's burden, manifesting in the need to help the Third World develop. As political theorists Buzan and Lawson stated, "The colonial obligation of the metropolitan powers to 'uplift' the natives morphed into an obligation on the part of the rich world to 'assist' in the 'development' and 'modernization' of the 'Third World.'"<sup>22</sup> Such a desire was couched in the rhetoric of human rights, as the First World believed it was a human right to have adequate nutrition, clean water, shelter, and education. By examining the downfall of civilization as an ideograph, it becomes apparent McKinley's pairing of civilization and humanity together was a precursor to the First World's discourse on humanity and human rights decades before the rest of the world.

*Citizen-Soldiers and the Rise of the National Guard*

McKinley's rhetoric of citizenship focused on uniting the country against Spain and, more importantly, healing the regional divide highlighted by the lingering North/South division. This sentiment was short lived, not because McKinley failed but because he was successful. Delivering his "First Annual Message," mere months after McKinley's death, Teddy Roosevelt remarked about the Spanish-American War veterans,

No other citizens deserve so well of the Republic as the veterans, the survivors of those who saved the Union. They did the one deed which if left undone would have meant that all else in our history went for nothing. But for their steadfast prowess in the greatest crisis of our history, all our annals would be meaningless, and our great experiment in popular freedom and self-government a gloomy failure. Moreover, they not only left us a united Nation, but they left us also as a heritage the memory of the mighty deeds by which the Nation was kept united. We are now indeed one Nation, one in fact as well as in name; we are united in our devotion to the flag which is the symbol of national greatness and unity; and the very completeness of our union enables us all, in every part of the country, to glory in the valor shown alike by the sons of the North and the sons of the South in the times that tried men's souls.<sup>23</sup>

Not only does Roosevelt echo McKinley's rhetoric of unity, he also employed McKinley's symbolism of the flag, recognizing the unity between the North and South. McKinley's

successful reunion of the nation allowed, and necessitated, a rhetorical shift of American citizenship by his successors. Roosevelt focused his attention on what made a good citizen and how one becomes a good citizen. The biggest concern in Roosevelt's first term was addressing the wave of immigrants entering the country and naturalizing new immigrants into America's culture. The use of the citizen-soldier was rare during both Roosevelt and Taft's administrations, as the United States was not at war. However, there were some brief instances of its use that indicated major changes in U.S. society.

In his "First Annual Message," Roosevelt connected civilization's spread with McKinley's belief in the citizen-soldier. Speaking about the Army's potential as a positive force in the world, Roosevelt stated, "In the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico it has proved itself a great constructive force, a most potent implement for the upbuilding of a peaceful civilization."<sup>24</sup> Roosevelt redefined the Army's role, transforming it from solely a fighting force to a multipurpose tool. The Army could be employed on humanitarian missions bringing elements of civilization with them. In this regard, citizen-soldiers were representatives of the United States, modeling the traits of republican citizenship for others to learn. While this is a minor shift rhetorically, it indicated an expansion of the military's role in foreign policy. As the United States entered more foreign wars, U.S. soldiers were called upon more often. Larger and more expansive wars expanded their duties, including the occupation of territory, defending American ideals, rebuilding war torn cities, towns, and states after wars, and bringing relief to those in need after natural disasters. These increased duties also represented America's commitment to bringing civilization to all peoples of the world on what could now be termed humanitarian missions. Such a combination indicated American troops were not solely a fighting force, but also a moral force acting to create a better world.

By Roosevelt's "Eighth Annual Message," a new threat to American unity was on the horizon, class consciousness. Similar to regionalism during McKinley's presidency, class consciousness and economic stratification endangered American unity. Income inequality threatened to subvert citizens' loyalty to the country by placing loyalty to their class over country. Roosevelt praised all Americans for their refusal to give into such divisive tendencies, following in McKinley's footsteps by appealing to Americans' patriotism. Echoing McKinley, Roosevelt stated, "they repudiated the effort to get them to cast their votes in response to an appeal to class hatred, have emphasized their sound patriotism and Americanism."<sup>25</sup> Such patriotism, according to Roosevelt, was "acting simply as good citizens, as good Americans, without regard to fancied--and improper--class interests." He concluded, "Such an attitude is an object-lesson in good citizenship to the entire nation."<sup>26</sup> Patriotism was used both by McKinley and Roosevelt to unite Americans threatened by division. Roosevelt's borrowed McKinley's patriotic theme, defining a good citizen in terms of their patriotism.

Roosevelt's appeals to the citizen-soldier were sparse, but the symbol had some residual potency during Taft's presidency. After McKinley, returning Spanish-American War veterans and male citizens thought of themselves as citizen-soldiers. Returning volunteers could either serve in their local state guard or militia or the U.S. Army. The army was not an option for many Americans, as the U.S. still maintained a small standing force. However, citizens could express their patriotism by serving in the local guard or militia. A lasting effect of America's acquisition of overseas territory and continued search for markets was more and more money, material, and men were required to maintain it. The problem was America's citizen-soldiers, as members of the local or state guard, were not under federal jurisdiction and could not serve overseas. In 1903, U.S. Secretary of War Elihu Root and Charles Dick, a Republican congressman from

Ohio, pushed through the Dick Act, establishing the National Guard in its modern form. The Federal government allocated money for state forces, in the form of training and equipment, making them subject to inspection and supervision by the army.<sup>27</sup> By 1912, Taft recognized that providing just equipment and training was not enough, as these units were still state organizations and could serve overseas. In his "Fourth Annual Message," he echoed McKinley's citizen-soldier trope. Taft claimed, "The officers and men are ambitious and eager to make themselves thus available and to become an efficient national reserve of citizen soldiery."<sup>28</sup> The problem was not the citizen-soldier, but the limits placed on his service. Taft's rhetorical effort in his "Fourth Annual Message" was reminiscent of McKinley's discourse, as it assuaged any fear of a strong federal military by employing the term citizen-soldier and militia. Such symbolism reinforced the benign nature of this increased federal power, while expanding America's military capabilities. Taft favored a new bill, supported by the War Department and representatives of the National Guard, that paid the National Guard from the U.S. Treasury. Passing this bill, according to Taft, provided the U.S. "with a first line of citizen soldiery, upon which its main reliance must depend in case of any national emergency."<sup>29</sup> Taft's presidency ended before any such legislation was passed, but in 1916 Wilson signed the National Defense Act, requiring individuals to swear an oath of allegiance to both their state and federal government. This allowed either the governor or president to call up the national guard, permitting them to serve in America's wars overseas. The citizen-soldier was no longer just a volunteer in a time of crisis or a member of the local militia; rather, he became a symbol of national defense, outfitted with equipment and training provided by the federal government.

*American Interventionism: Banana Republics in Latin America*

Perhaps, no area of foreign policy under McKinley changed as drastically as America's willingness to use military force overseas to secure its interests. McKinley declared war against Spain, but more importantly, he ordered American soldiers to intervene in China to maintain America's economic privileges. McKinley was even willing to go as far as establishing a naval base off the coast of China. After the election of 1900, McKinley asked his ambassador to China, Edwin Conger, to investigate the possibility of an American base at Samsah Bay, in the Fukien Province. The Japanese, who had already begun to spread their influence in the province, advised the administration that this was a poor decision which they did not approve. The matter was closed.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, McKinley's five years in office set a policy precedent favoring interventionism. A shift in rhetoric accompanied McKinley's change in policy.

McKinley's rhetoric still employed American exceptionalism, except he now favored an interventionist interpretation of the rhetorical trope. McKinley argued the nation could not become an imperial power because it was inherently different from other nations. This unique American character permitted the U.S. to be active overseas, while not falling prey to the imperialist tendencies of European powers. Throughout his Midwestern tours, McKinley praised interventionism and expansion overseas, restructuring American history to make America an expansionist nation from its founding. His new policy appeared to be a natural continuation of U.S. policy and history. McKinley's rhetorical shift was subtler, than his successor, as he did not give a major speech announcing a new foreign policy doctrine, the proverbial McKinley Doctrine. Rather, McKinley's rhetoric evolved over time from his inauguration in 1897 to his last speech in 1901, adapting to the changing global context. McKinley, always reluctant to use military force, was more reluctant and cautious in intervening overseas than his successors. War

or intervention for McKinley was a last resort. However, once McKinley set the precedent for intervention, he could not undo it.

In the Pacific, American forces fought the Filipinos until 1902, with the U.S. suffering 4,000 deaths and 2,800 wounded. The Filipinos by contrast, according to U.S. estimates, suffered 20,000 killed in action and up to as many as 200,000 civilians killed from war-related deaths.<sup>31</sup> In the Caribbean, U.S. marines landed no fewer than twenty times between 1898 and 1920, with a majority of these occurring after McKinley.<sup>32</sup> Such interventions by the United States were justified by American presidents as acts benefiting all humankind. According to Roosevelt in his “First Annual Message,” interventions were “a most regrettable but necessary international police duty which must be performed for the sake of the welfare of mankind.”<sup>33</sup> By 1903, Roosevelt was acting on his words. When Panamanian rebels revolted against Colombian authorities, Roosevelt sent a small fleet to prevent Colombia from ending the rebellion, violating the 1846 pact with Colombia giving them sovereignty in the region. Hay, still Secretary of State, negotiated the Bunau-Varilla treaty giving Panama \$10 million and \$250,000 annually for a ten-mile-wide strip of land for the Panama Canal.<sup>34</sup> A little over a year later, Roosevelt continued to expand on McKinley’s policy of interventionism by declaring the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

Roosevelt announced his corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in his “Fourth Annual Message.” He began by reinforcing a common American foreign policy theme of desiring no further territorial expansion. Instead, Roosevelt stated his desire for a peaceful, orderly, and prosperous relationship with America’s neighbors. Like McKinley, Roosevelt grounded his intervention in historical precedent, the Monroe Doctrine. In another rhetorical move, Roosevelt imitated Hay and McKinley’s ambiguous definition of America’s interests overseas. Roosevelt

never defined how nations were to be decent in social and political matters. Rather, he focused and emphasized the consequences of being a bad neighbor. Roosevelt warned, “Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.”<sup>35</sup> What remained unclear was the circumstances that would provoke American intervention. However, Roosevelt left little doubt the United States would use force to protect its interests. Following McKinley’s trajectory, Roosevelt defined the U.S. as an interventionist nation.

Furthermore, Roosevelt continued to increase America’s global presence by offering support for those seeking freedom. While Ulysses S. Grant and Rutherford B. Hayes failed to persuade the country of this position, McKinley had succeeded. Building off McKinley’s successful interventionism, Roosevelt stated, “It is a mere truism to say that every nation, whether in America or anywhere else, which desires to maintain its freedom, its independence, must ultimately realize that the right of such independence can not be separated from the responsibility of making good use of it.”<sup>36</sup> Roosevelt continued McKinley’s trajectory by defining interventionism abroad as a policy in America’s best interest. The United States had a duty to uphold civilization under McKinley, they now had a responsibility to aid nations threatened by tyranny.

While Roosevelt continued McKinley’s rhetorical legacy, albeit with major stylistic differences, Taft’s foreign policy rhetoric deviated significantly. To begin, unlike McKinley and Roosevelt, Taft “cared little about managing news releases, saw few reporters, withheld

information, and took the position that the public had little right to be informed.”<sup>37</sup> Taft allowed a hostile New York congressman to label his foreign policy “dollar diplomacy,” without realizing the negative connections this label associated with Wall Street’s exploitation of average Americans. Throughout Taft’s presidency, constant unrest in Nicaragua required American troops to bring order. In Honduras, an expedition of U.S. investors, led by Sam Zemurray and backed by the United Fruit company, took effective control over Honduras’ custom house, creating the prototypical banana republic.<sup>38</sup> In China, Taft and his Secretary of State Philander C. Knox defended the open door. However, more upheaval in China and the decline of the Qing government impinged on America’s already dwindling trade with the country. Taft’s actual policies did not deviate significantly, but he cared little about using rhetoric to defend his policies. Whereas Roosevelt followed McKinley’s meticulous attention to rhetoric, Taft allowed those outside his administration to frame the debate. He did not attend to the rhetorical defense of his policies in the same manner as his predecessors.

### **Setting the Discursive Boundaries of the Twentieth Century**

By expanding presidential power through rhetoric, McKinley maximized the transformative nature of the context to redefine the nation. McKinley’s rhetoric set a precedent for his successors to follow but he also set some discursive boundaries that were not challenged throughout the century, becoming accepted norms. The roots of America’s moralistic interventionism and the military industrial complex originate from this era. I explore the roots of these two ideas and how McKinley’s three rhetorical moves worked together to support his policy.

McKinley’s three rhetorical strategies examined here worked together, reinforcing the morality of America’s interventionism overseas. Past presidential appeals to civilization focused

on Americans settling the continent, bringing civilization with them the further west they went. Civilization typically referred to the lands on the American continent. Post-Civil War presidents, especially Grant and Hayes, attempted to expand the contextual and ideological meaning of civilization to encompass the globe but their appeals fell flat. During the post-Civil War era, civilization's meaning expanded to include the Western hemisphere, but global concerns and the larger precepts of civilization were not part of America's purview. The United States focused on becoming the hegemon of the Western hemisphere. With European powers concentrated on colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Indian subcontinent, the United States had nearly free reign in North and South America. More territory was not the priority of the United States, as it already controlled a vast continent that was resource rich.<sup>39</sup> Rather, the United States focused on increasing its exports and economic influence in the region.<sup>40</sup> At the first Pan-American Conference, measures for keeping the peace and promoting trade in the hemisphere were created. Specifically, according to historian Walter LaFeber, "an arbitration convention to help settle disputes, a recommendation to build a railroad connecting North and South America, and the establishment of the Commercial Bureau of American Republics (or the Pan American Union)."<sup>41</sup> The U.S. had become the dominant power in the Western hemisphere. The U.S. focused on establishing and protecting civilization in the Americas, yet more was required of the country.

In his rhetoric surrounding the Spanish-American War and its settlement, McKinley employed civilization as an ideograph to frame the contest as a worldwide moral battle between right and wrong, expanding the contextual frame of civilization to include the world. If the United States wanted to consider itself among the civilized nations of the world, it needed to adopt the rhetoric of civilization and accept the responsibilities of being a great power. The

United States could no longer remain isolated and uninvolved in world affairs. By employing civilization, McKinley socialized the United States into the international system. As a civilized nation, the U.S. worked with other great powers to fend off threats to peace from uncivilized states. How the United States and future presidents thought about America's place in the world traced back to McKinley's rhetoric. The emergence of the United States as a world actor was a consequence of the Spanish-American War, with McKinley being the first president to articulate America's role on the world stage as a great power. The United States would be a moral actor with a global purview, supporting and intervening in uncivilized states around the globe when their actions threatened American values or interests.

While civilization presupposed a moral purpose, a more explicit appeal was needed to persuade Americans of fighting overseas. Writing on American culture, Samuel Huntington concluded, "Since liberalism deprecates the moral validity of the interests of the state in security, war must be either condemned as incompatible with liberal goals or justified as an ideological movement in support of those goals."<sup>42</sup> For the first century of America's existence, the United States shied away from sending Americans overseas to fight. The United States was a peaceful republic, standing as a beacon of freedom for other nations to imitate. America only fought in wars on the continent, defending the republic from external—England and Mexico—or internal threats—the Confederacy. Wars overseas were simply incompatible with American liberal ideology. American wars prior to 1898 were still framed as moral wars, as the country was defending itself, but foreign wars represented a failure to heed Washington's "Farewell Address." As anti-imperialists argued in 1898, American intervention on foreign soil represented a moral failing, a sin the country could not come back from. However, McKinley used an

interventionist definition of American exceptionalism to support liberal goals and expand America's role in the world.

American exceptionalism always presupposed American values to be universal values that appealed to all people. No matter the race, creed, or culture American values would attract people. By being a city upon a hill, Americans demonstrated their superiority in hopes of persuading others to adopt these values. However, the Cuban situation represented a problem. Only ninety miles from the United States, Cuba was embroiled in a decades long conflict with Spain. Not only was the conflict a repudiation of civilized principles, it was also confounding how a nation so close to the United States could fail to adopt its values. Such a failure called into question exemplarism as a strategy of spreading American values. Thus, McKinley's turn toward interventionism as a new strategy to spread American values was his answer to this problem. The United States would intervene overseas to not only curb uncivilized threats, but to spread American values. McKinley could continue to employ exceptionalism's moral rhetoric of God's chosen people, but now he could also send troops into Cuba. In McKinley's rhetoric, the United States had always been an expansionist power, willing to help those yearning to be like Americans throughout its history. Furthermore, being God's chosen people made the United States uniquely different from imperialist European powers. Rather than conquering and controlling territory for territorial expansion, the United States intervened for moral reasons. American intervention made the world safe for American values and helped peoples around the world become more like Americans. McKinley's interpretation of American exceptionalism reframed its interpretation for future presidents.

As McKinley expanded the context of America's role and its preferred strategy for achieving its goals, he needed to prepare American citizens for their new role in the world. He

did this by emphasizing the unity and patriotic spirit of the citizenry in the face of uncivilized threats to America's global objectives. To fend off these threats, McKinley called upon all male citizens to see themselves as citizen-soldiers, ready and willing to defend the republic and its values when the president called. McKinley's American embodied the traits of an exemplarist citizen—patriotic, unified, and the best and the brightest the nation had to offer—but also included a willingness to sacrifice for the country and fight overseas to protect American interests. As citizens would be fighting overseas more often, they needed to blend the best traits of exemplarism with the willingness to intervene. Each citizen-soldier had to embody the principles of the United States, as their actions overseas served as examples for uncivilized people to imitate.

Furthermore, McKinley's emphasis on the citizen-soldier laid the groundwork for a slow militarization of the country. For many decades, the military and standing army were seen as a threat to the republic. Historian James Wood, stated, "Standing armies represented a threat to individual liberty, that military service was a duty and responsibility of all citizens, and upon an exaggerated faith in the military capabilities of American manhood."<sup>43</sup> Prior to the Civil War, the American military was the antithesis of the freedom loving citizen-soldier. Observers of the American military noted, often disdainfully, "that the army's ranks were well populated by foreigners—men stereotypically presumed to more suited to a life of military subordination than independent-minded, freedom-loving Americans."<sup>44</sup> A British observer described "the United States' peacetime military force as the 'scum of the population of the older states . . . worthless German, English, or Irish emigrants."<sup>45</sup> The United States military was a place for immigrants and other undesirable male individuals of U.S. society. It did not reflect the values many Americans sought in an ideal citizen. Thus, McKinley's use of the citizen-soldier trope helped

reshape American's perspective on military service. As Ricardo Herrera explained, "Men capable of governing their passions and conquering their weakness were more virtuous and, therefore, better citizens. By conquering and controlling their passions voluntarily, instead of through compulsion, these soldiers further reinforced their republican identity."<sup>46</sup> With America's increased interventionism overseas, a larger army was needed, slowly normalizing a larger military.

From McKinley to Taft, citizen-soldiers went from serving the state to the federal government. As described above, the National Guard had been reorganized and was now equipped with gear and training provided by the federal government. National guard members signed oaths to both their state government and the federal government. They could be called up to serve by the president. While the National Guard was not part of the U.S. Army, refraining from a strong centralized military buildup many Americans still feared, its incorporation under the federal government enhanced America's military potential. The president's power also increased, as he now had a larger military reserve force to use in emergencies or to call up to protect America's interests overseas. Such power meant that presidents no longer needed to rely solely on American diplomatic maneuvering to solve problems but could rely on a trained military force if needed. As the decades passed in the twentieth century, American presidents would rely on these citizen-soldiers to answer their call to defend the country in many conflicts spanning the globe and to aid millions in humanitarian need. Being a soldier in the army or National Guard was no longer perceived as being an outcast or lower tier citizen but as a patriotic protector of American values. The army was no longer a threat to the nation but a key protector of the country. The army's transformation from a threat to protector of liberty began

with McKinley's rhetoric during the Spanish-American War, beginning the change of how Americans viewed soldiers and the military's role in U.S. society.

Finally, the three rhetorical moves undertaken by McKinley worked together to transform American foreign policy. Without one move, the other two would have faltered. Civilization brought with it an expanded set of responsibilities for the U.S., engaging it in the world, not just on the continent or in the hemisphere. By adopting a rhetoric of civilization and the standard of civilization, McKinley socialized the U.S. into the international system as a great power. Civilization helped frame the larger debate surrounding interventionism overseas as a clash of good versus evil, us versus them, and acted as a moral warrant for U.S. action overseas. Civilization's expanded context was closely related to McKinley's reinterpretation of American exceptionalism. The U.S., according to McKinley, had always been an expansionist power and American expansion and action in the world was a positive force. As God's chosen people, the United States was the only country who could remake the world without falling prey to imperialism and the dangers associated with intervention. Civilization and interventionism metonymized larger geopolitical issues to a simple persuasive appeal: the United States was fundamentally different from other nations, and to bring order, civilization, and American values it needed to act in the world. However, without a capable citizenry, who saw themselves as active participants in this new global mission, McKinley's vision would have stumbled, if not failed altogether. A nation that was deeply divided by regional and cultural issues could have undermined McKinley's vision. However, his rhetorical appeals to unity and patriotism helped heal the divided nation. His use of the citizen-soldier rhetorical trope reimagined American men into defenders of the republic and civilization. McKinley's three rhetorical moves reinforced each other, strengthening his persuasive appeal.

## The Rhetorical Presidency

While not the main focus of this dissertation, McKinley's increased rhetorical output, concentration on policy, and emphasis on persuading Americans to accept his definitions of citizenship and country has implications for our understanding of the rhetorical presidency. Jeffery Tulis' *The Rhetorical Presidency* included only a few brief sentences and one full paragraph discussing McKinley. Tulis described McKinley as pushing the limits of nineteenth century presidential rhetorical practices, appearing "quite often" in public, but nevertheless McKinley was rhetorically unspectacular.<sup>47</sup> Extending his criticism even further, Tulis accused McKinley of failing to address the public on any important policy issues of his administration:

However, the speeches emerged as general discussions of the requisites of prosperity and make no mention of pending bills or treaties. There is no speech that even alludes to the Spanish-American War, the sinking of the Maine, the problem of "Jim Crow" laws, or the United States policy toward the Philippines, all major issues faced by McKinley. Indeed, much of McKinley's rhetoric was characteristic of the century as a whole: expressions of greeting, inculcations of patriotic sentiment, attempts at building 'harmony' among the regions of the country, and very general, principled statements of policy, usually expressed in terms of the policy's consistency with that president's understanding of republicanism.<sup>48</sup>

In 2007, Tulis revised his assessment of McKinley. Concerning McKinley's lack of speeches on public-policy, he wrote, "I was simply wrong. McKinley specifically mentioned the very issues I claimed he ignored."<sup>49</sup> However, his overall assessment remained the same as his original conclusion. McKinley "pushed against the boundaries of the nineteenth-century constitutional order, but not beyond it."<sup>50</sup> Tulis maintained his insistence that the rhetorical presidency began with Wilson, but my examination of McKinley's rhetoric has implications for this claim.

While Tulis described McKinley as rhetorically unspectacular, he failed to see the importance of McKinley giving more speeches than past presidents. Not all presidential rhetoric is transcendent and inspiring, and can border on the banal at times. However, Vanessa Beasley

observed, even the most ordinary speech serves an “important social function by promoting a sense of enduring democratic unity in the United States.”<sup>51</sup> McKinley’s rhetoric may not have always been groundbreaking or moving, but his mere presence and the repetition of his definition of a unified nation were rhetorically significant as he traveled the country. McKinley’s speeches represent the necessary, if not sometimes tedious, rhetorical work needed to maintain a coherent American national identity. As a symbol of national unity, presidents are responsible for holding the nation together and reminding its citizens of their common bond. To do this, McKinley became more rhetorically active throughout his presidency. He continually referenced Americans’ shared beliefs, reinforcing their commonality and unity as a people.

Furthermore, McKinley’s extensive travel as president ensured more people heard and saw him, than past presidents. This allowed ordinary Americans to hear the president and his message for themselves, taking in the moment and being part of the rhetorical act of being American. During his presidency, McKinley traveled the Midwest twice, in 1898 and 1899, and toured Texas, New Mexico, and Los Angeles in 1901, making McKinley the most traveled president in American history up to that point. In his second term, McKinley had larger plans for traveling and speaking. He desired to travel to Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. If he would have lived to make these trips, he would have been the first president, in the presidential role, to travel outside the continental United States while in office.<sup>52</sup> McKinley’s decision to travel and his increased rhetorical output, set a precedent for future presidents to follow that Tulis underappreciated. Modern presidents are not only expected to travel the country, but overseas as well. They are often expected to travel overseas within the first few months of their presidency, with Americans and foreigners alike critiquing their performance. Teddy Roosevelt observing McKinley’s increased travel schedule undertook a speaking tour of California in 1903, and

became the first president to travel abroad, heading to Panama in 1906. Taft went to Panama and Mexico, and Woodrow Wilson traveled extensively at home and abroad as president.

McKinley's increased travel helped break the characterization of a president operating solely from Washington, allowing his successors to travel the country and world with their rhetoric reaching millions.

At the heart of Tulis' argument are the twin propositions that the president goes over the heads of Congress using rhetoric to promote policies to the American people and the president has become the unquestioned popular leader of the country, changing the institution of the presidency and American politics in general. McKinley traveled outside of Washington often, going directly to the American people to support his foreign policy initiatives and to reimagine Americans as a united people. If citizens could not see McKinley on his tour, his personal assistant George Cortelyou made sure his speeches were sent to all major press services and newspapers across the nation.<sup>53</sup> McKinley used rhetoric as a tool to persuade the American public of three important ideas. First, the United States went to war with Spain over ideological differences, underpinned by the concepts of civilization and humanity, demonstrating a consistent moral theme to American foreign policy. Second, the divide between regions could not continue, as it was a threat to the nation. McKinley reminded Americans of their unity based on their shared beliefs. Third, interventionism and American action in the world was a natural evolution of the country's history. As a great power, the U.S. had a duty to be an active participant in shaping the international system. Examining these arguments and his travel schedule offers a solid case that McKinley, at the very least, began in earnest the transformation of the presidency as an institution. McKinley strengthened his popularity with most Americans and the powers of presidency as an institution through his rhetorical practices.

Before concluding, I want to briefly speculate on why McKinley was able to increase his rhetorical footprint. First, the end of the nineteenth century saw a culmination of technology that made it possible for McKinley to travel longer and over greater distances, while staying in contact with Washington. The telegraph, and eventually the telephone, made it possible for the president to constantly monitor what was going on while being away. Improvements in rail technology allowed McKinley to steam across the country, completing trips in days compared to weeks or even months. Second, foreign affairs were a primary focus of the McKinley administration. Interventionism in foreign policy required more of an explanation to the public, than maintaining an exemplarist policy. Furthermore, most Americans are poorly informed about foreign affairs, affording presidents an opportunity to bring a foreign policy issue to the public's attention. With their increased knowledge about foreign affairs and a successful foreign policy, an increased rhetorical footprint would help presidents appear more presidential and increase their ethos.<sup>54</sup> Thus, McKinley's decision to speak about his success was in his best interest. Third, the prophets of evil and isolationists arguing against an interventionist foreign policy required a rhetorical response. McKinley needed to persuade Americans that an active United States was in the country's best interest. He was changing a hundred-year tradition that most Americans assumed would not change. To do this, the president needed to be active and speak more often to citizens. Taken together, these reasons factored into McKinley's increased rhetorical activity.

### **Conclusion**

Evaluating the McKinley administration, historian George Herring stated, "The War of 1898 reinforced Americans' sense of their rising greatness and reaffirmed their traditional convictions of national destiny. It sealed the post-Civil War reconciliation of the Union."<sup>55</sup>

McKinley rhetoric was an important factor in garnering public support for territorial expansion and domestic unification. When McKinley spoke, the people believed he spoke for them. For example, in Clinton, Illinois in 1898, McKinley stated, “Your voice, when constitutionally expressed, is commanding and conclusive. It is the mandate of law. It is the law to Congress and to the Executive.”<sup>56</sup> Here, he demonstrated his rhetorical strength and the trust of the people in his presidency.

Most importantly, McKinley’s rhetoric stands as a reminder to scholars to pay attention to key transitional moments in history. These unique contextual moments offer presidents the opportunity to redefine and reconstruct the nation in ways that have been overlooked in presidential rhetoric. As a field, we have examined a lot of these moments. However, there are still many more that remain unexamined. This project was just one study attempting to shed some light on these key rhetorical and historical moments. McKinley was not always stylistically impressive, but he understood his audience. He knew how to transform his policies into terms familiar to the public, making his policies appear to be an expression of the public’s will. He used rhetoric to persuade the American people and to provide a sense of calmness and stability in the face of extraordinary change in the nation and world. Biographer, Wayne Morgan, described his presidency thusly, “The years of his presidency were transitional. He stood not as the last old-fashioned chief executive nor as the first modern one, but as something in between, trying through his policies of conservative conciliation to ease his country and his people into the new position their responsibilities demanded.”<sup>57</sup> McKinley’s rhetoric, like his presidency, was not wholly part of a past bygone era or of a new modern one but an important transitional point for the nation, the presidency, and presidential rhetoric.

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<sup>2</sup> Louis Fisher, “Destruction of the *Maine* (1898),” The Library of Congress, accessed September 28, 2013, <http://loc.gov/law/help/usconlaw/pdf/Maine.1898.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> “The Maine Blown Up. Terrible Explosion on Board the United States Battleship in Havana Harbor.” Fisher’s report from 2009 concludes that a computer simulated model run by the Advanced Marine Enterprises (AME) stated, “We conclude that while a spontaneous combustion in a coal bunker can create ignition-level temperatures in adjacent magazines, this is not likely to have occurred on the *Maine*, because the bottom plating identified as Section 1 would have blown outward, not inward.”<sup>27</sup> It was “plausible” that a mine caused the explosion.” However experts who worked on the Rickover study in 1974 concluded it was a design flaw in the *Maine* and the explosion came from within the ship. When the 1998 AME report came out, the participants of the Rickover study and even some of the AME experts still doubted that it was an external explosion that sunk the *Maine*.

<sup>4</sup> “Crucible of Empire: The Spanish-American War,” PBS, accessed September 27, 2013, <http://www.pbs.org/crucible/frames/journalism.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Lowery, “The Flower of Cuba: Rhetoric, Representation, and Circulation at the Outbreak of the Spanish-American War,” *Rhetoric Review* 32, no. 2 (2013): 176.

<sup>6</sup> H. Wayne Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963), 361.

<sup>7</sup> Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 369.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 372.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 372.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis L. Gould, *The Spanish-American War and President McKinley*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1982), 94. The victory can be attributed to Theodore Roosevelt, who in January 1898 sent the Pacific fleet, under Dewey’s command, orders to prepare for an attack on Manila if war was declared. Roosevelt’s foresight, and the approval of the plans by McKinley, paved the way for America’s quick victory to begin the war. See Walter LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2: The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 133. Also, Gould, *The Spanish-American War*, 94-95.

<sup>11</sup> The exact date of this quote is undecided. John Lukacs cites the quote was written in June 1896, see John Lukacs, *A New Republic: A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 204. Tuchman in the *Proud Tower* chronicles it after the sinking of the *Maine*, before the start of the war in 1898, see Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War, 1890-1914*, (New York: A Random House Trade Paperback, 1994), 167; It appears in Senate Records given by E.W. Carmack on June 16, 1898, cite: 31 Cong. Rec. 3, 758 (1898). Carmack was quoting the *Post*. John Lukacs cites the *Post* publishing it in 1896. The actual *Washington Post* article could not be found through the historical newspaper database, searching both 1896 and 1898 dates.

<sup>12</sup> William D. Harpine, *From the Front Porch to the Front Page: McKinley and Bryan in the 1896 Presidential Campaign*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> William Harpine, “William McKinley and the Emergence of the Modern Rhetorical Presidency,” in *Before the Rhetorical Presidency*, ed. Martin Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008): 307-328.

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<sup>16</sup> Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics of Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to George Bush*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 18.

<sup>17</sup> Skowronek, *The Politics of Presidents Make*, 18.

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- <sup>19</sup> Medhurst, "From Retrospective to Prospect: The Study of Presidential Rhetoric," 7-13.
- <sup>20</sup> Theodore Windt Jr., "Presidential Rhetoric: Definition of a Field of Study," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1986), 103.
- <sup>21</sup> Windt, "Presidential Rhetoric," 103.
- <sup>22</sup> David Zarefsky, *President Johnson's War on Poverty Rhetoric and History*, (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1986), 6-7.
- <sup>23</sup> Zarefsky, *President Johnson's War*, 7.
- <sup>24</sup> Denise Bostdorff, *The Presidency and the Rhetoric of Foreign Crisis*, (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 4
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- <sup>27</sup> Dorsey, "Introduction," 9.
- <sup>28</sup> David Zarefsky, "The Presidency Has Always Been a Place for Rhetorical Leadership," in *The Presidency and Rhetorical Leadership*, ed. Leon Dorsey (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 22.
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- <sup>71</sup>Michael Leff, "Lincoln at Cooper Union Revisited: Neo-Classical Criticism Revisited," *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 3 (2001).
- <sup>72</sup>Jasinski, "Instrumentalism, Contextualism, and Interpretation in Rhetorical Criticism," 198.
- <sup>73</sup>Jasinski, "Instrumentalism, Contextualism, and Interpretation in Rhetorical Criticism," 212.
- <sup>74</sup>Jasinski, "Instrumentalism, Contextualism, and Interpretation in Rhetorical Criticism," 212; Performative traditions do not determine discursive practice, but they shape and enable certain practices and constrain others. They can be both quite narrow (conspiracy in American political discourse) or broad (civic republicanism as performative tradition). They can be tied to an institution or diffused throughout a political culture—213.
- <sup>75</sup>Jasinski, "Instrumentalism, Contextualism, and Interpretation in Rhetorical Criticism," 218.
- <sup>76</sup>Michael Leff, "Lincoln at Cooper Union Revisited: Neo-Classical Criticism Revisited," *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 3 (2001): 239.
- <sup>77</sup>William McKinley, "Inaugural Address," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, March 4, 1897, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25827&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>78</sup>H.W. Brands, *The Reckless Decade: America in the 1890s*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 280-281.
- <sup>79</sup>Harpine, *From the Front Porch to the Front Page*, 37.
- <sup>80</sup>Harpine, *From the Front Porch to the Front Page*, 5.
- <sup>81</sup>Harpine, *From the Front Porch to the Front Page*, 5.
- <sup>82</sup>Harvey L. Schantz, "The Erosion of Sectionalism in Presidential Elections," *Polity* 24, no. 3 (1992): 360-361.
- <sup>83</sup>Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 286.
- <sup>84</sup>See H.W. Brands, *American Colossus: The Triumph of Capitalism, 1865-1900*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2011), 539-540; Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 96.
- <sup>85</sup>Brands, *American Colossus*, 540

- <sup>86</sup> Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 96.
- <sup>87</sup> Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 258.
- <sup>88</sup> Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 186-187.
- <sup>89</sup> Quoted in Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 217
- <sup>90</sup> LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 44.
- <sup>91</sup> The Holmes' quote is from: Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1892), 19.
- <sup>92</sup> Hamish Scott, *The Emergence of the Eastern Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 7-8.
- <sup>93</sup> Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 194-196. Relations between great powers are guided by a few guiding principles. Great powers recognize the sovereignty of other great powers, lessening the possibility of conflict between powers. This mutual recognition manages great power relations by preserving the balance of power. No power seeks to aggrandize itself at the expense of another great power. Such mutual recognition helps avoid or control crises in their relations, limiting or containing war with each other. Great powers also retain special rights, lesser nations are not afforded. They maintain the right to intervene, military or otherwise, in lesser states, preventing the spread of anarchy and chaos. Such interventions preserve the international order, curbing possible threats to the great powers. Through their technological and military influence, great powers guide international society by leveraging their strengths, agreeing to respect one another's spheres of influence, and conducting joint action through a great power concert when a threat to their status rises, from Bull, 200-207; Also see Barry Buzan and George Lawson, *The Global Transformation: History, Modernity and the Making of International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 178-79; and Bull, 200, 207-220.
- <sup>94</sup> Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*, 483-493.
- <sup>95</sup> David Healy, *US Expansionism: The Imperialist Urge in the 1890s*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 11.
- <sup>96</sup> Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*, 73.
- <sup>97</sup> Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 62.
- <sup>98</sup> See Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*, 76; and Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*, 722.
- <sup>99</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 242.
- <sup>100</sup> David A. Lake, *Power, Protection, and Free Trade: International Sources of U.S. Commercial Strategy, 1887-1939*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1988), 31
- <sup>101</sup> LaFeber *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 25
- <sup>102</sup> LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 74-75.
- <sup>103</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward," *The Atlantic*, December 1890, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1890/12/the-united-states-looking-outward/306348/>.
- <sup>104</sup> LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 110.
- <sup>105</sup> Tuchman, *The Proud Tower*, 146.
- <sup>106</sup> Tuchman, *The Proud Tower*, 148. Large scale representations of the "Great White Fleet," as it had been named, were on display at the 1893 Chicago's World Fair representing America's national achievement and honor. The fleet also represented and complimented the vast industrial and scientific displays per LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 108.
- <sup>107</sup> Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, 248.
- <sup>108</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), 235
- <sup>109</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 51.
- <sup>110</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. and trans. Richard D. Heffner, (New York: Signet Classic, 2001), 157.
- <sup>111</sup> Lipset, *American Exceptionalism*, 63.
- <sup>112</sup> Thomas McCormick, *China Market: America's Quest for Informal Empire 1893-1901*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Inc., 1990), 128.
- <sup>1</sup> Quoted from John Taliaferro, *All the Great Prizes: The Life of John Hay, from Lincoln to Roosevelt* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2013), 330.

- <sup>2</sup> Woodrow Wilson, "The Ideals of America," *The Atlantic Monthly* 90, no. 6 (1902): 721-734, <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/02dec/wilson.htm>.
- <sup>3</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad since 1750*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), 197-217; and John Dobson, *Reticent Expansionism: The Foreign Policy of William McKinley* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1988), 102.
- <sup>4</sup> H. Wayne Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963), 408.
- <sup>5</sup> Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 294.
- <sup>6</sup> Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, (New York: Random House, 2001), 583.
- <sup>7</sup> Taliaferro, *All the Great Prizes*, 339.
- <sup>8</sup> Originally from: James Rusling, "Interview with President William McKinley," *The Christian Advocate* 22 January 1903, 17, [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1257](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1257). Accounts similar to Rusling's are found in Taliaferro, *All the Great Prizes*, 339; LaFeber, *The American Age*, 213. Dobson, *Reticent Expansionism*, 115; and Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 411-412.
- <sup>9</sup> Rusling, "Interview with President William McKinley."
- <sup>10</sup> Rusling, "Interview with President William McKinley."
- <sup>11</sup> Rusling, "Interview with President William McKinley."
- <sup>12</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), (1967) 107.
- <sup>13</sup> Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 110.
- <sup>14</sup> David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 4.
- <sup>15</sup> Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*, 165.
- <sup>16</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 7.
- <sup>17</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, (University of California Press, 1950), 20-22.
- <sup>18</sup> Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 110.
- <sup>19</sup> Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1984), 14-15 & 24.
- <sup>20</sup> Ernest L. Fortin, "St. Thomas Aquinas," in *History of Political Philosophy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 265.
- <sup>21</sup> Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Globalization: A Short History*, trans. Dona Geyer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 55.
- <sup>22</sup> Jennifer Mitzen, *Power in Concert: The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Global Governance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 71.
- <sup>23</sup> Mitzen, *Power in Concert*, 68-69.
- <sup>24</sup> Mitzen, *Power in Concert*, 71.
- <sup>25</sup> Monsieur Emer De Vattel, *The Law of Nations; or Principles of the Law of Nature, Applied to The Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, trans. Joseph Chitty, Esq. (Philadelphia: T. & J. W. Johnson, Law Booksellers, 1844), lv.
- <sup>26</sup> Barry Buzan and George Lawson, *The Global Transformation: History, Modernity and the Making of International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 185.
- <sup>27</sup> See Gong, *The Standard of Civilization*, 54; and original text used Henry Wheaton LLD., *Elements of International Law*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1866).
- <sup>28</sup> L. Oppenheim LLD., *International Law A Treatise* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905), 10-11.
- <sup>29</sup> Gong, *The Standard of Civilization*, 3.
- <sup>30</sup> Gong, *The Standard of Civilization*, 7.
- <sup>31</sup> Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 33.
- <sup>32</sup> John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Rise and Fall of Global Empires, 1400-2000*, (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), 298.
- <sup>33</sup> Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*, 98.
- <sup>34</sup> Gong, *The Standard of Civilization*, 51.
- <sup>35</sup> Gong, *The Standard of Civilization*, 51.
- <sup>36</sup> George Washington, "Third Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, October 25, 1791, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29433&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>37</sup> George Washington, "Seventh Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 8, 1795, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29437&st=&st1=>.

- <sup>38</sup> Thomas Jefferson, "Transcript of Jefferson's Secret Message to Congress Regarding the Lewis & Clark Expedition," *Our Documents: A Collaboration Effort Among National History Day, The National Archives and Records Administration, and USA Freedom Corps.*, January 18, 1803, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=17&page=transcript>.
- <sup>39</sup> Jefferson, "Transcript of Jefferson's Secret Message to Congress Regarding the Lewis & Clark Expedition."
- <sup>40</sup> Mary Stuckey, *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 37.
- <sup>41</sup> James Madison stated in his "First Annual Message," "With our Indian neighbors, the just and benevolent system continued toward them has also preserved peace, and is more and more advancing habits favorable to their civilization and happiness." Monroe in his Inaugural expresses a similar theme stating "With the Indian tribes it is our duty to cultivate friendly relations and to act with kindness and liberality in all our transactions. Equally proper is it to persevere in our efforts to extend to them the advantages of civilization;" and John Q. Adams expressed similar sentiments hoping "to promote the civilization of the Indian tribes." See James Madison, "First Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, November 29, 1809, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29451&st=&st1=>. James Monroe, "Inaugural Address," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, March 4, 1817, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25807&st=&st1=>. John Quincy Adams, "Inaugural Address."
- <sup>42</sup> Andrew Jackson, "Second Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 6, 1830, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29472&st=&st1=>. Jackson's wording seems odd to the modern reader, but the University of Louisiana Lafayette's online excerpts of Jackson's "Second Annual Message" has the same wording (<http://www.ucs.louisiana.edu/~ras2777/amgov/jackson.html>).
- <sup>43</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 55.
- <sup>44</sup> Andrew Jackson, "Sixth Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 1, 1834, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29476&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>45</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 59.
- <sup>46</sup> John Tyler, "Second Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 6, 1842, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29484&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>47</sup> Ulysses S. Grant, "Second Inaugural," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, March 4, 1873, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25821&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>48</sup> Ulysses S. Grant, "Second Inaugural."
- <sup>49</sup> Rutherford B. Hayes, "Third Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 1, 1879, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29520&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>50</sup> Grover Cleveland, "First Annual Message (first term)," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 8, 1885, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29526&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>51</sup> John Dobson does an excellent job at discussing McKinley's journey from inept to respected. See John Dobson, *Reticent Expansionism: The Foreign Policy of William McKinley* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1988), 1-17.
- <sup>52</sup> Jennifer R. Mercieca and Justin S. Vaughn, "Barack Obama and the Rhetoric of Heroic Expectations," in *The Rhetoric of Heroic Expectations*, eds. Justin S. Vaughn and Jennifer R. Mercieca (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 2-6.
- <sup>53</sup> Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 5.
- <sup>54</sup> Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 16.
- <sup>55</sup> Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 18.
- <sup>56</sup> Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 30.
- <sup>57</sup> Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 528.
- <sup>58</sup> See Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*.
- <sup>59</sup> Matthew McCullough, *The Cross of War: Christian Nationalism and U.S. Expansion in the Spanish-American War*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), 115.
- <sup>60</sup> McCullough, *The Cross of War*, 101
- <sup>61</sup> Michael Calvin McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66, no. 1 (1980): 7.
- <sup>62</sup> McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 5.
- <sup>63</sup> McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 5.
- <sup>64</sup> McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 5.
- <sup>65</sup> Michael Hunt, *Ideology in U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 3.
- <sup>66</sup> McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 6.

- <sup>67</sup> Hunt, *Ideology in U.S. Foreign Policy*, 16.
- <sup>68</sup> See Dana L. Cloud, "'To Veil the Threat of Terror': Afghan Women and the <Clash of Civilizations> in the Imagery of the U.S. War on Terrorism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* vol. 90, no. 3 (2004): 288; Jim Kuypers and Matthew T. Althouse, "John Pym, Ideographs, and the Rhetoric of Opposition to the English Crown," *Rhetoric Review* vol. 28, no. 3 (2009): 229.
- <sup>69</sup> Cloud, "'To Veil the Threat of Terror,'" 288.
- <sup>70</sup> Trevor Parry-Giles, "Ideology and Poetics in Public Issue Construction: Thatcherism, Civil Liberties, and 'Terrorism' in Northern Ireland," *Communication Quarterly* vol. 43, no. 2 (1995): 183.
- <sup>71</sup> Parry-Giles discusses creating "the people," p. 184. However, there is also Michael C. McGee, "In Search of 'The People': A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61, no. 3 (1975): 235-249; Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the People Quebecois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 2 (1987): 133-150; Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56, no. 2 (1970): 109-119; and Vanessa B. Beasley, *You, the People: American National Identity in Presidential Rhetoric*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011) are also other sources for constitutive rhetoric.
- <sup>72</sup> Parry-Giles, "Ideology and Poetics in Public Issue Construction," 192.
- <sup>73</sup> McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 14.
- <sup>74</sup> McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 14.
- <sup>75</sup> McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 14.
- <sup>76</sup> Celeste Michelle Condit and John Louis Lucaites, *Crafting Equality: America's Anglo-African Word*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), xii.
- <sup>77</sup> McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 9.
- <sup>78</sup> McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 15.
- <sup>79</sup> Carol K. Winkler, *In the Name of Terrorism: Presidents on Political Violence in the Post-World War II Era*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 2.
- <sup>80</sup> Cloud, 291-292.
- <sup>81</sup> William McKinley, "Inaugural Address," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, March 4, 1897, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25827&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>82</sup> McKinley, "Inaugural Address."
- <sup>83</sup> McKinley, "Inaugural Address."
- <sup>84</sup> See the Treaty of Nanjing in Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*, 135-36.
- <sup>85</sup> McKinley, "Inaugural Address."
- <sup>86</sup> H.W. Brands, *The Reckless Decade: America in the 1890s*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 305-306.
- <sup>87</sup> McKinley, "Inaugural Address."
- <sup>88</sup> McKinley, "Inaugural Address."
- <sup>89</sup> McKinley, "Inaugural Address."
- <sup>90</sup> McKinley, "Inaugural Address."
- <sup>91</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2: The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 148
- <sup>92</sup> LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 132; Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 356.
- <sup>93</sup> See both "The Maine Blown Up. Terrible Explosion on Board the United States Battleship in Havana Harbor," *The New York Times*, 15 February 1898, pg. 1; and Louis Fisher, "Destruction of the *Maine* (1898)," The Library of Congress, accessed September 28, 2013, <http://loc.gov/law/help/usconlaw/pdf/Maine.1898.pdf>.
- <sup>94</sup> Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 361.
- <sup>95</sup> LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 134
- <sup>96</sup> LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 131-137; Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 305-316
- <sup>97</sup> L. Oppenheim LL.D., *International Law A Treatise* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905), 181.
- <sup>98</sup> Oppenheim, *International Law A Treatise*, 183-184.
- <sup>99</sup> John MacMillan, "Intervention and the ordering of the modern world," *Review of International Studies* 39, (2013): 1044.
- <sup>100</sup> Richard Little, "Intervention and non-intervention in international society: Britain's responses to the American and Spanish Civil Wars," *Review of International Studies* 39, (2013): 1112
- <sup>101</sup> George Lawson and Luca Tardelli, "The past, present, and future of intervention," *Review of International Studies* 39, (2013): 1247

- <sup>102</sup> Lawson and Tardelli, "The past, present, and future of intervention," 1247
- <sup>103</sup> William McKinley, "Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, April 11, 1898, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=103901&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>104</sup> George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 310. Gould, *The Spanish-American War and President McKinley*, 24.
- <sup>105</sup> Hunt, *Ideology in U.S. Foreign Policy*, 78.
- <sup>106</sup> Hunt, *Ideology in U.S. Foreign Policy*, 78-79.
- <sup>107</sup> Hunt, *Ideology in U.S. Foreign Policy*, 79.
- <sup>108</sup> Dobson, *Reticent Expansionism*, 65-67
- <sup>109</sup> McKinley, "Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain."
- <sup>110</sup> McKinley, "Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain."
- <sup>111</sup> McKinley, "Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain."
- <sup>112</sup> McKinley, "Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain."
- <sup>113</sup> McKinley, "Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain."
- <sup>114</sup> McKinley, "Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain."
- <sup>115</sup> McCullough, *The Cross of War*, 119.
- <sup>116</sup> McKinley, "Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain."
- <sup>117</sup> McKinley, "Message to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War With Spain."
- <sup>118</sup> McCullough, *The Cross of War*, 24.
- <sup>119</sup> Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 316; Herring *From Colony to Superpower*, 311-314.
- <sup>120</sup> Quoted in McCullough, *The Cross of War*, 23.
- <sup>121</sup> "Strike—for Humanity," *Western Christian Advocate* (Cincinnati, OH), April 20, 1898, 31.
- <sup>122</sup> "Strike—for Humanity," 31.
- <sup>123</sup> William James, *The Letters of William James*, ed. Henry James, (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), 2:289.
- <sup>124</sup> Charles Eliot Norton, *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, eds. Sara Norton & M.A. DeWolfe Howe, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918), 2:290.
- <sup>125</sup> Norton, *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, 290.
- <sup>126</sup> Edwin Lawrence Godkin, "The Week," *The Nation*, March 24, 1898, 216.
- <sup>127</sup> Carl Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, eds. Fredric Bancroft & William A. Dunning, (New York: The McClure Company, 1908), 3:441.
- <sup>128</sup> See Darwin, *After Tamerlane*, 341-342.
- <sup>129</sup> Dobson, *Reticent Expansionism*, 23.
- <sup>130</sup> McCullough, *The Cross of War*, 100.
- <sup>131</sup> Direct quote is from McCullough, *The Cross of War*, 104, for the rest see McCullough *The Cross of War*, 103-105.
- <sup>132</sup> Edwin S. Gaustad & Leigh Schmidt, *The Religious History of America: The Heart of the American Story from Colonial Times to Today*, (San Francisco: Harper, 2004), 277-279.
- <sup>133</sup> LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 41.
- <sup>134</sup> Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 289
- <sup>135</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Springfield, Illinois, October 15, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 127-128. William McKinley, "Speech at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, October 14, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 295.
- <sup>136</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Columbus, Ohio, October 21, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 151-152.
- <sup>137</sup> Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 81-90. Both Robert Ivie and Robert Saldin make similar conclusions about McKinley's discourse around annexation of the Philippines. Saldin notes McKinley annexation was the best course for the Filipinos because they were "unchristian savages," see Robert P. Saldin, "William McKinley and the Rhetorical Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011): 126. While Ivie observed McKinley's rhetoric reflecting America's standing in the world as "world leader in material and moral affairs," Robert L. Ivie, "William McKinley: Advocate of Imperialism," *Western Speech* 36, no. 1 (1972), 22.
- <sup>138</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Banquet of Board of Trade and Associated Citizens, Savannah, Georgia, December 17, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 175.

- <sup>139</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Dinner of the Home Market Club, Boston, February 16, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 189.
- <sup>140</sup> McKinley, "Speech at Dinner of the Home Market Club," 189.
- <sup>141</sup> William McKinley, "Third Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 5, 1899, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29540&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>142</sup> McKinley, "Third Annual Message."
- <sup>143</sup> LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 152
- <sup>144</sup> McKinley, "Third Annual Message."
- <sup>145</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 1, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm>.
- <sup>146</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 1.
- <sup>147</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 3.
- <sup>148</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 2-3.
- <sup>149</sup> For the first two stats see Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad since 1750*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), 130-131. For the last, LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 44.
- <sup>150</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at the Citizens' Banquet in the Auditorium, Chicago, October 19, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 135.
- <sup>151</sup> Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*, 103
- <sup>152</sup> William McKinley, "Second Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 5, 1898, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29539&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>153</sup> Osterhammel and Petersson, *Globalization: A Short History*, 86.
- <sup>154</sup> John Stuart Mill, "Civilization," in *The Collected Works of John Mill, Volume XVIII-Essays on Politics and Society Part I*, ed. John M. Robson, Introduction by Alexander Brady (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 116-147, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/mill-the-collected-works-of-john-stuart-mill-volume-xviii-essays-on-politics-and-society-part-i>,
- <sup>155</sup> McKinley, "Third Annual Message."
- <sup>156</sup> McKinley, "Third Annual Message."
- <sup>157</sup> William McKinley, "Fourth Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 3, 1900, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29541&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>158</sup> McKinley, "Speech at Dinner of the Home Market Club," 191.
- <sup>159</sup> Lawson and Buzan, *The Global Transformation*, 106.
- <sup>160</sup> McKinley, "Speech at Dinner of the Home Market Club," 193. McKinley made similar remarks later that year in Minneapolis, Minnesota. McKinley speaking in Minneapolis, stated, the Filipinos "will not be governed as vassals or serfs or slaves; they will be given a government of liberty, regulated by law, honestly administered, without oppressing exactions, taxation without tyranny, justice without bribe, education without distinction of social condition, freedom of religious worship, and protection in 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,'" William McKinley, "Address at Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 12, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 269.
- <sup>161</sup> Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*, 98
- <sup>162</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 31. It is also important to note that for nations outside the "civilized" world does not see progress as a blessing. Rather, Hobsbawm notes "Progress' outside the advanced countries was therefore neither an obvious fact nor a plausible assumption, but mainly a foreign danger and challenger," 30.
- <sup>163</sup> Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 295.
- <sup>164</sup> Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, 30.
- <sup>165</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 113.
- <sup>166</sup> Gong, *The Standard of Civilization*, 91.
- <sup>167</sup> Gong, *The Standard of Civilization*, 85-93; and Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*, 177
- <sup>1</sup> Jennifer Mercieca, *Founding Fictions*, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2010), 43.
- <sup>2</sup> Mary Stuckey, *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 107.
- <sup>3</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 114.

- <sup>4</sup> H.W. Brands, *The Reckless Decade: America in the 1890s*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 242
- <sup>5</sup> Vanessa B. Beasley, *You, the People: American National Identity in Presidential Rhetoric*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011), 20.
- <sup>6</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 135; Around eight million blacks were excluded from voting or holding office during this era. George White's (R-NC) departure in 1901 marked the last time a southern African American would sit in Congress until Andrew Young (D-GA) in 1967, and he was the last black Congressman for 28 years, until Oscar Stanton De Priest won election in Illinois in 1929. Walter LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2: The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 47. See "People," *History, Arts & Archives: United States House of Representatives*, <http://history.house.gov/People/Search?Term=Search&SearchIn=LastName&ShowNonMember=true&ShowNonMember=false&Office=&Leadership=&State=&Party=&ContinentalCongress=false&BlackAmericansInCongress=true&BlackAmericansInCongress=false&WomenInCongress=false&HispanicAmericansInCongress=false&CongressNumber=71&CurrentPage=1&SortOrder=LastName&ResultType=Grid&PreviousSearch=Search%2CLastName%2C%2C%2C%2CFalse%2CTrue%2CFalse%2C70%2CLastName>.
- <sup>7</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 137.
- <sup>8</sup> Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 63.
- <sup>9</sup> "The Political Menace of the Discontented," *The Atlantic*, 449, <http://www.unz.org/Pub/AtlanticMonthly-1896oct-00447>.
- <sup>10</sup> Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 96.
- <sup>11</sup> Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 182
- <sup>12</sup> Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 204
- <sup>13</sup> Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 151.
- <sup>14</sup> William Jennings Bryan, "Democratic National Convention Address," *American Rhetoric*, July 8, 1896, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/williamjenningsbryan1896dnc.htm>.
- <sup>15</sup> "THE SILVER FANATICS ARE INVINCIBLE," *The New York Times*, July 7, 1896: 1.
- <sup>16</sup> Harvey L. Schantz, "The Erosion of Sectionalism in Presidential Elections," *Polity* 24, no. 3 (1992): 360-361.
- <sup>17</sup> Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 128-176.
- <sup>18</sup> Brooks Adams, *The New Empire*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1903), xxxiii-xxxiv.
- <sup>19</sup> Adams, *The New Empire*, xxxiii.
- <sup>20</sup> Adams, *The New Empire*, xxxiii.
- <sup>21</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 3.
- <sup>22</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 8.
- <sup>23</sup> Beasley, *You, the People*, 47.
- <sup>24</sup> Campbell and Jamieson, *Presidents Creating the Presidency*, 48
- <sup>25</sup> Gerard A. Hauser, "Aristotle on Epideictic: The Formation of Public Morality," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1999), 17.
- <sup>26</sup> Dale Sullivan, "The Ethos of Epideictic Encounter," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 26, no. 2 (1993), 128.
- <sup>27</sup> Cynthia Miecznikowski Sheard, "The Public Value of Epideictic Rhetoric," *College English* 58, no. 7 (1996), 777.
- <sup>28</sup> Sheard, "The Public Value of Epideictic Rhetoric," 777.
- <sup>29</sup> Sheard, "The Public Value of Epideictic Rhetoric," 787.
- <sup>30</sup> Denise Bostdorff, "Epideictic Rhetoric in the Service of War: George W. Bush on Iraq and the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Victory over Japan," *Communication Monographs* 78, no. 3 (2011), 299.
- <sup>31</sup> Denise M. Bostdorff and Shawna H. Ferris, "John F. Kennedy at American University: The Rhetoric of the Possible, Epideictic Progression, and the Commencement of Peace," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100, no. 4 (2014), 430.
- <sup>32</sup> John M. Murphy, "'Our Mission and Our Moment': George W. Bush and September 11<sup>th</sup>," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6, no. 4 (2003), 610.
- <sup>33</sup> Bradford J. Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic: Rhetorical Form and Commemorative Politics on September 11, 2002," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92, no. 1 (2006), 5.
- <sup>34</sup> Bradford J. Vivian, "Up from Memory: Epideictic Forgetting in Booker T. Washington's Cotton States Exposition Address," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 45, no. 2 (2012), 191.
- <sup>35</sup> Scott Consigny, "Gorgias's Use of Epideictic," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 25, no. 3 (1992), 285-289.
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- <sup>38</sup> Grover Cleveland, "Third Annual Message (first term)," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 6, 1887, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29528&st=Patriotism&st1=>.
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- <sup>41</sup> Cleveland, "Fourth Annual Message."
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- <sup>46</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Denison, Iowa, October 11, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 97.
- <sup>47</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Lake Preston, South Dakota, October 14, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 290-291.
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- <sup>49</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Cedar Falls, Iowa, October 16, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 304.
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- <sup>51</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Galena, Illinois, October 16, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 313.
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- <sup>53</sup> Ronald R. Krebs, "The Citizen-Soldier Tradition in the United States: Has Its Demise Been Greatly Exaggerated?," *Armed Forces & Society* 36, no. 1 (2009), 165.
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- <sup>59</sup> McKinley, "Speech at Canton, Illinois, October 6, 1899," 229.
- <sup>60</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Hoopetown, Illinois, October 11, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 259.
- <sup>61</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Fargo, North Dakota, October 13, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 279.
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- <sup>64</sup> Hasian Jr. and Frank, "Rhetoric, History, and Collective Memory," 98.
- <sup>65</sup> Kirt H. Wilson, "Debating the Great Emancipator: Abraham Lincoln and Our Public Memory," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13, no. 3 (2010), 460.
- <sup>66</sup> Wilson, "Debating the Great Emancipator," 459.
- <sup>67</sup> Wilson, "Debating the Great Emancipator," 459.
- <sup>68</sup> Bostdorff, "Epideictic Rhetoric in the Service of War," 300.
- <sup>69</sup> Wilson, "Debating the Great Emancipator," 459-460.

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- <sup>72</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Boone, Iowa, October 11, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 95; Similar to William McKinley, "Speech at Yankton, South Dakota, October 14, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 299.
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- <sup>78</sup> McKinley, "Speech at the Coliseum, St. Louis, Missouri, October 14, 1898," 121-122.
- <sup>79</sup> McKinley, "Speech at Tipton, Indiana, October 21, 1898," 141.
- <sup>80</sup> McKinley, "Speech at the Fair Grounds, Evansville, Indiana, October 11, 1899," 254.
- <sup>81</sup> William McKinley, "Address at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition at Omaha, Nebraska, October 12, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 104.
- <sup>82</sup> McKinley, "Speech at Boone, Iowa, October 11, 1898," 95.
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- <sup>84</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Marshalltown, Iowa, October 11, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 92.
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- <sup>90</sup> James Wood, "Anglo-American liberal militarism and the idea of the citizen-soldier," *International Journal* (2007), 407.
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- <sup>92</sup> Ricardo A. Herrera, "Self-Governance and the American Citizen as Soldier, 1775-1861," *The Journal of Military History* 65, no. 1 (2001), 32.
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- <sup>96</sup> Krebs, "The Citizen-Soldier Tradition in the United States," 165.
- <sup>97</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 137
- <sup>98</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 137-138.
- <sup>99</sup> Clinton, IA, 85.
- <sup>100</sup> See Pittsburgh, PA, 212-213; Fargo, ND, 280-81; Aberdeen, SD (285); Sioux Falls, SD, 297; Dubuque, IA, 311; and Jackson, MI 336.
- <sup>101</sup> Candice Bredbenner, "A Duty to Defend? The Evolution of Aliens' Military Obligations to the United States, 1792-1946," *The Journal of Policy History* 24, no. 2 (2012), 224.

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- <sup>103</sup> Krebs, "The Citizen-Soldier Tradition in the United States," 161.
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- <sup>27</sup> Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," 83.
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- <sup>30</sup> Washington, "Farewell Address."
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- <sup>33</sup> John Q. Adams, *An Address delivered At the request of a Committee of the Citizens of Washington*, 26.
- <sup>34</sup> John Q. Adams, *An Address delivered At the request of a Committee of the Citizens of Washington*, 29.
- <sup>35</sup> John Q. Adams, *An Address delivered At the request of a Committee of the Citizens of Washington*, 29.
- <sup>36</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The American Age*, 104-108.
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- <sup>42</sup> Tyler, "Second Annual Message."
- <sup>43</sup> Robert C. Winthrop, "Congressional Globe," 29 Cong. 1<sup>st</sup> Session Cong. Globe 132 1846, January 3, 1846, 134.
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- <sup>46</sup> Stanton, "Congressional Globe," 29 Cong. 1<sup>st</sup> Session Cong. Globe 199 1846, January 14, 1846, 200.
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- <sup>57</sup> Andrew Johnson, "Fourth Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 9, 1868, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29509&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>58</sup> Andrew Johnson, "Fourth Annual Message."
- <sup>59</sup> Andrew Johnson, "Fourth Annual Message."
- <sup>60</sup> Ulysses S. Grant, "Second Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 5, 1870, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29511&st=&st1=>.
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- <sup>65</sup> Grover Cleveland, "Second Annual Message (first term)," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 6, 1886, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29527&st=&st1=>.
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- <sup>67</sup> Harrison, "Address at the Dedication Ceremony for the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Rochester, New York."
- <sup>68</sup> William McKinley, "Inaugural Address," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, March 4, 1897, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25827&st=&st1=>.
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- <sup>70</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at G.A.R. Encampment, Boston, February 17, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 194.
- <sup>71</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Rushville, Indiana, October 21, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 146.
- <sup>72</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Carroll, Iowa, October 11, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 96.
- <sup>73</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at the Citizens' Banquet in the Auditorium, Chicago, October 19, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 134.
- <sup>74</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at the Merchants' Exchange, St. Louis, October 14, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 118; Also see McKinley, "Speech at Carroll, Iowa, October 11, 1898," 96.
- <sup>75</sup> William McKinley, "Address at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition at Omaha, Nebraska, October 12, 1898," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 106; Also see McKinley, "Speech at the Citizens' Banquet in the Auditorium, Chicago, October 19, 1898," 134.
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- <sup>77</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Redfield, South Dakota, October 14, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 287.
- <sup>78</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Iowa Falls, Iowa, October 16, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 302; Also see: William McKinley, "Speech at Madison, Wisconsin, October 16, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 318.
- <sup>79</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Youngstown, Ohio, October 18, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 343.
- <sup>80</sup> LaFeber, *The American Age*, 213.
- <sup>81</sup> McKinley, "Speech at the Citizens' Banquet in the Auditorium, Chicago, October 19, 1898," 133.
- <sup>82</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Huron, South Dakota, October 14, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 289-90.

- <sup>83</sup> McKinley, "Speech at Iowa Falls, Iowa, October 16, 1899," 302.
- <sup>84</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at the Citizens' Banquet, Chicago, October 8, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 244.
- <sup>85</sup> Dobson, *Reticent Expansionism*, 11.
- <sup>86</sup> H.W. Brands, *The Reckless Decade: America in the 1890s*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 334.
- <sup>87</sup> Brands, *The Reckless Decade*, 334-335.
- <sup>88</sup> See Darwin, *After Tamerlane*, 351; Samuel Eliot Morrison, Henry Steele Commager, and William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Growth of the American Republic Volume Two*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 261-262; Walter LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2: The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 161; Further European expansion, with the original being British control of Canton and Hong Kong, began with China's defeat at the hands of the Japanese in 1895. The Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed in April of 1895, forced China to recognize an independent Korea, gave part of Manchuria to Japan, as well as Taiwan and the Pescadore islands. China was also forced to pay an indemnity to Japan, leading to European powers lending China large sums of money, which were "secured against the collateral of territorial and commercial rights." Europeans fearing the collapse or partition of China, like Africa, rushed to seize territory. In 1897 and 1898, Russia took Port Arthur and the Liaotung Peninsula, providing access to the interior of Manchuria. Germany quickly moved on the port of Kiaochow in the Shantung province, while France got the lease to Kwangchow bay, next to its colony in Indo-China. The British added the port of Wei-hai-wei, and even the Italians got in on the action seizing Sanmun bay. These seizures did not even account for the massive railway leases given out to European companies, leaving China with little power or control in its own country over trade and transportation. The British, who had previously guaranteed open trade and maintained the status quo, were overextended militarily by the costly war in Khartoum, South Africa, and the crisis between the British and French on the upper Nile at Fashoda.
- <sup>89</sup> John Hay, "Mr. Hay to Mr. Choate No. 205, September 6, 1899," *Foreign Relations of the United States: Correspondence Concerning American Commercial Rights in China, 1899 1901*, 132-133.
- <sup>90</sup> John Hay, "Instructions Sent Mutatis Mutandis to the United States Ambassadors at London, Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Rome, and to the United States Minister at Tokyo, Washington, March 20, 1900," *Foreign Relations of the United States: China Treaties and Agreements*, 235.
- <sup>91</sup> See Dobson, *Reticent Expansionism*, 182; LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 165
- <sup>92</sup> See Dobson, *Reticent Expansionism*, 184-85 for more context.
- <sup>93</sup> John Hay, "Mr. Hay to Mr. Herdliska, Washington, July 3, 1900," *Foreign Relations of the United States: Negotiations of the Powers for the Restoration of Order in China, 1899 1901*, 299, from heinonline.org. For purposes of the Second Open Door Note, there was only one copy to be found. It was the Note sent to Austria-Hungary, but all notes were sent out on the same day, July 3, 1900, to all the powers.
- <sup>94</sup> Hay, "Mr. Hay to Mr. Herdliska, Washington, July 3, 1900," 299.
- <sup>95</sup> Quoted in Lewis L. Gould, *The Spanish-American War and President McKinley*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1982), 221-222.
- <sup>96</sup> William McKinley, "Fourth Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 3, 1900, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29541&st=&st1=>.
- <sup>97</sup> McKinley, "Fourth Annual Message."
- <sup>98</sup> McKinley, "Fourth Annual Message."
- <sup>99</sup> McKinley, "Fourth Annual Message."
- <sup>100</sup> Michael Hunt, *Ideology in U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 70.
- <sup>101</sup> Denise Bostdorff, *The Presidency and the Rhetoric of Foreign Crisis*, (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 9.
- <sup>102</sup> Bonnie J. Dow, "The Function of Epideictic and Deliberative Strategies in Presidential Crisis Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Communication* 53, (1989), 297; Richard A. Cherwitz and Kenneth S. Zagacki, "Consummatory Versus Justificatory Crisis Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 50, no. 4 (1986), 310.; Carol K. Winkler, *In the Name of Terrorism: Presidents on Political Violence in the Post-World War II Era*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 198.
- <sup>103</sup> McKinley, "Fourth Annual Message."
- <sup>104</sup> Hunt, *Ideology in U.S. Foreign Policy*, 70-71.
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- <sup>108</sup> McKinley, "Fourth Annual Message."
- <sup>109</sup> McKinley, "Fourth Annual Message."
- <sup>110</sup> Beasley, *You, the People*, 50.
- <sup>111</sup> Beasley, *You, the People*, 51.
- <sup>112</sup> William McKinley, "Speech at Dinner of the Home Market Club, Boston, February 16, 1899," in *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley: From March 1, 1897 to May 30, 1900*, (Doubleday & McClure Co.: New York: 1900), 190.
- <sup>113</sup> McKinley, "Speech at Dinner of the Home Market Club, Boston, February 16, 1899," 190.
- <sup>114</sup> McKinley, "Speech at Dinner of the Home Market Club, Boston, February 16, 1899," 190.
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- <sup>117</sup> McKinley, "Inaugural Address (second term)."
- <sup>118</sup> McKinley, "Inaugural Address (second term)."
- <sup>119</sup> William McKinley, "President McKinley's Last Public Utterance to the People in Buffalo, New York," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, September 5, 1901, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=69326&st=&st1=>.
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- <sup>122</sup> McKinley, "President McKinley's Last Public Utterance to the People in Buffalo, New York."
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- <sup>127</sup> Dobson, *Reticent Expansionism*, 199, 206.
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- <sup>3</sup> Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 528.
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- <sup>5</sup> Campbell and Jamieson, 7.
- <sup>6</sup> Michael Calvin McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66, no. 1 (1980): 1-16.
- <sup>7</sup> Mary Stuckey, *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 8.
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- <sup>11</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, "Second Annual Message," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*, December 2, 1902, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29543&st=citizen&st1=>.
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- <sup>21</sup> "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples," *United Nations*, <http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/declaration.shtml>.
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- <sup>31</sup> George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 329.
- <sup>32</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2: The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 186.
- <sup>33</sup> Roosevelt, "First Annual Message."
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- <sup>35</sup> Roosevelt, "Fourth Annual Message."
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- <sup>39</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), 235-237. Also see LaFeber, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume 2*, 70, for Blaine's belief to economically dominate the hemisphere.
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- <sup>47</sup> Jeffery Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 61, 65.
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- <sup>49</sup> Jeffery Tulis, "The Rhetorical Presidency in Retrospect," *Critical Review* 19, no. 2 (2007), 487.
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<sup>55</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 335.

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<sup>57</sup> Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, 527.