Filipinos under the American Colonial Gaze

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Abstract

In 1898, when the United States took control of the Philippine Islands, Americans were new to colonization. Unlike their Old World counterparts, they were not as well versed in the hierarchies of civilization that had justified European imperial power for many centuries. They were, however, familiar with scientific racism and they were anxious to learn as much as they could about their new colonial subjects. American politicians, who favored the appropriation of the Philippines, as well as scientists and journalists, were critical in training the American public to think of themselves as colonial masters. Dean C. Worcester was stationed in the Philippines as an official in the American government. During his tenure, he published numerous articles about the Philippine people, which were usually accompanied by photographs he had taken. His message in all his publications was clear: Filipinos were savages and needed the United States to help them progress to a more civilized stage. Worcester eventually became the single most widely read writer on the subject of the Philippine Islands in the United States. His publications are critical to the story of American imperialism because they are a window into how the American public came to understand their most significant colonial possession. This paper will closely examine one of Worcester’s articles published in National Geographic Magazine in 1911, paying special attention to his photographs and how he used those images to prove the so-called “savagery” of the island inhabitants.
Although Americans are hesitant to see the United States as an empire during any period of its history, it has, nevertheless, occupied, often with brutal force, other parts of the world. The occupation of the Philippines by the United States is perhaps the clearest example of this.

Like European colonialism, American colonialism had to be justified in some way. How could the country that had boldly declared, “all men were created equal” justify domination in the Philippines where they made sure that people “remained subordinate, exploited, and unfree?” If, however, the United States thought of the Filipinos, not as unequal, but as biologically and culturally behind their American colonializers, colonialism made perfect sense. Within the context of colonialism, civilized Americans could “tutor” their “little brown brothers” until they achieved a civilized state.

In order to “prove” the inferiority of the Filipinos, at least to themselves, Americans relied on scientific racism aided by photography. In this paper, I will show that scientific racism helped to justify American colonialism in the Philippines and that in some cases certain kinds of photography not only justified colonialism, but also became a form of domination itself. Lastly, I will show that some Filipinas resisted the colonialism by returning the colonial gaze.

I will use two primary sources in this paper. The first is a study conducted in 1903 (published in 1904) on the prisoners of the Bilibid Prison in the Philippines, the results of which were published in a book entitled *Album of the Philippine Types.* Subjects of the study came from thirty-seven provinces and islands and were all men. Photographs and measurements of the men were displayed at the Saint Louis World’s Fair in 1904. The second source is a National Geographic Magazine article written by Dean C. Worcester in 1912 entitled, “Head-Hunters of Northern Luzon.”

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3 Daniel Folkmar, *Album of Philippine Types (Found in Bilibid Prison in 1903) Christians and Moros (Including a Few Non-Christians)* (Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 1904). Note to reader: this book does not have numbered pages. I will cite references to this book by numbering the pages myself starting with the first page of the Introduction.
combination of text and 100 photographs taken by Worcester or photographers working for him, the 100-page article features the indigenous people living on Luzon Island, one of the islands in the Philippines. Because both of my primary sources are based on scientific racism, I will trace the history of scientific racism before turning to my sources.

**SCIENTIFIC RACISM**

Aryanism, the idea that northern European races were superior to other races, was the central tenant of scientific racism. Proponents believed that civilization and race were related, and that race determined how civilized a specific people could become. Vacher de Lapouge, a French writer, advocated the measurement of head size and shape, as well as other physical characteristics. He devised an index against which these measurements could be compared, and he was not the only one who did this. Anthropometry, the practice of creating indices for human body measurement, became widespread. The use of statistical data to “prove” racial differences made racism appear scientific. As one scholar explained, proponents of scientific racism “were confident in part because they took comfort in numbers and data in the face of the frightening complexity of racial issues.” Not surprisingly, social scientists used this mounting data to create a taxonomy of races. These notions spread rapidly through Europe and the United States; by 1870 these ideas had become accepted by the American public and by the beginning of the twentieth century, they had morphed into a burgeoning eugenics movement.

Closely related to the idea that physical traits showed a specific race to be more advanced than another was the idea of social or cultural evolution. One scholar wrote, “Evolution could work on culture as well as biology because each individual embodied that culture in his or her inheritance of

6 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 16.
9 Ibid., 18.
10 Ibid., 20.
the social behaviors, mental traits and intellectual acuity.”\(^{13}\) Put another way, there was such a thing as behavioral evolution or cultural evolution.\(^{14}\) In the same way that human bodies could evolve into a physically higher state, so too could whole cultures evolve toward civilization.\(^{15}\) The French biologist Jean Lamarack was a champion of this view\(^{16}\) as was Lewis Henry Morgan, who was dubbed the “father of American anthropology.”\(^{17}\)

Following Lamarack’s lead, social scientists charted where different cultures were in relationship to Western culture, which was placed at the top.\(^{18}\) All cultures were on “different rungs of a ladder that lead to the achievement of” Western civilization.\(^{19}\) Morgan explains this further:

> As it is undeniable that portions of the human family have existed in a state of savagery, other portions in a state of barbarism, and still other portions in a state of civilization, it seems equally so that these three distinct conditions are connected with each other in a natural as well as necessary sequence of progress.\(^{20}\)

All groups, argued Morgan, could move from savagery to barbarism and from there they could “win their way to civilization.”\(^{21}\)

**BILIBID PRISON STUDY**

The Bilibid Prison was a penitentiary with about 3,000 men from thirty-four different provinces and islands around the Philippines,\(^{22}\) only eighty of which ended up in the *Album*, compiled by Danial Folkmar. The study was an anthropometrical look at native men. One historian writing about Folkmar’s work in 2008 noted that it was an “attempt to break down the physical features of its subjects—to archive the other’s body, as it were—

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 21–22.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 26.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., 21.
\(^{17}\) Ibid., 22.
\(^{18}\) Ibid.
\(^{19}\) Ibid.
\(^{22}\) Folkmar, *Album of Philippine Types*: 1.
and isolate them as measurable parts.” Campomanes explains further that the study was an effort to “break down the body politic of the colonized, to redraw it as an operable field of control and surveillance.”

By measuring the Filipino body, colonizers could achieve domination over the Filipino body. Researchers photographed the heads and necks of subjects twice: the frontal view and the right profile. It is important to note here that the photographs in the Album were taken by the researchers themselves. They did not just use photographs that might have been on file with the prison. Researchers were not interested in documenting their subjects as prisoners but as a racial individuals; they probably used the Bilibin Prison because it afforded easy access to subjects who could not protest their inclusion in the study. Nevertheless, similarity between these “scientific” photographs and mug shots is difficult to ignore and does set up a parallel in the Western mind between this racial group and criminal conduct (Figure 1).

Figure 1. A Cagayan of Cagayan Province, held in Bilibid Prison from Album of Philippine Types: Christians and Moros, Plate 8.

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24 Ibid.
In addition, researchers measured and recorded the size, shape and weight of their subjects’ bodies. They measured the height, arm span, chest and weight of each prisoner, but paid special attention to the features of the head. Using the length and breadth measurements of the head, researchers produced a cephalic (of the head) index. Some subjects, for example, were categorized as “brachycephalic’ or short-headed class of peoples.” Other subjects were described as “long-headed” or “broad-headed.”

Researchers were also particularly interested in the nose. They used the height and breadth of the nose to produce a nasal index. The table with which accompanied each photo had the measurements for each subject and the corresponding nasal indices (Figure 2). They also took note of skin color and hair color and texture. In the introduction of Album, Folkmar described some subjects as having “a brown skin, sometimes approaching the Mongolian yellow” and “straight black hair.”

Figure 2. Metrics on Cagayan prisoner that were thought to have ethnographic value, from Album of Philippine Types Christians and Moros.

26 For more on how cephalic indices were calculated see J.G. Garson, “The Cephalic Index,” Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland 16(1887): 11–17.
27 Folkmar, Album of Philippine Types: 2.
28 Ibid., 3.
29 For a fuller description of have nasal indices were calculated see R. Srivatsan, “Native Noses and nationalist Zoos: Debates in Colonial and Early Nationalist Anthropology of Castes and Tribes” in Economic and Political Weekly 40(19), (May 7-13, 2005), 1986-1998.
30 Folkmar, Album of Philippine Types: 2.
If scientific racism was a way of justifying the American colonialism of the Philippines, the *National Geographic Magazine* was one of the major vehicles whereby many Americans came to understand scientific racism; it was the way they learned that colonized people were not advanced and needed to be colonized. Worcester’s article should be understood not only in the context of scientific racism, but in the context of the *National Geographic Magazine* in which it was published.

For the most part, the *National Geographic Magazine* grew up with American colonialism. Established in 1888, it had ten years to develop its policies and begin circulation, before the United States took possession of the Philippines. Its audience was largely middle-class, white Americans. More than this, it appealed “largely to families whose current realities were middle-class, but whose aspirations tended toward the educated, ‘cultural’ life-style of upper-middle-class professionals.” The readership, among other things, was interested in America’s new found role as a colonial power and the *Geographic* “published articles on the geographic and commercial possibilities of America’s new possessions, discussed the benefits of colonialism, and assigned itself a role of arbitrator in determining the proper spellings of parts of the world hitherto unknown or ignored and now brought into view by colonialism.” As the *Geographic* documented foreign lands for Americans, it also “presented ‘primitive peoples for western perusal’” and in doing so, they created the colonized “other.”

The Philippines was a favorite topic in most illustrated magazines of the period, but the *Geographic* was especially interested in the Pacific island country. It published thirty articles about the Philippines between 1898 and 1908.

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 16.
34 Ibid., 18.
35 Ibid., 19.
36 Ibid., 23.
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*Geographic’s* principal tool in the colonial project was photography. Photography gave readers the impression that “the objects presented actually occurred in nature in the way they were photographed.”\(^{38}\) Photographs were assumed to be “reality itself.”\(^{39}\) As one scholar explained, “If photographs showed gigantic trees and awe-inspiring mountains, then all the trees were gigantic and all the mountains awe-inspiring. When photographs depicted Indians as ‘savages,’ Indians were confirmed as savages.”\(^{40}\) Moreover, editors of the *Geographic* favored techniques that hid the photographer’s “point of view” as much as possible, thereby adding to the impression that what readers saw in the pages of the magazine was indeed the truth.\(^{41}\)

Once the photographs had been assembled into an edition of the *Geographic*, the collection of photographs in the magazine replaced the “context of origin.”\(^{42}\) Editors of the *Geographic* imposed a new order or organizing philosophy on the images in much the same way that designers of the museums and world exhibitions did. In those arenas, the “midways were invariably constructed as evolutionary ladders.”\(^{43}\) The *Geographic* mimicked this approach by “putting articles on the United States side-by-side with articles on the non-Western world [which] helped depict progress and cultural evolution.”\(^{44}\)

The *Geographic*’s perceived legitimacy as an information source had its roots in the “scholarly veneer” that was typical of the publication.\(^{45}\) It saw itself as “both a broker and maker of scientific knowledge,” and yearned to “speak with the voice of scientific authority,” but at the same time maintained itself “outside of and unconstrained by the scientific community.”\(^{46}\) Indeed, the magazine met the expectations of its audience by “manipulating the boundaries between science and entertainment.”\(^{47}\) It “glorified” the “exotic and ritualistic aspects of primitive societies” and

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\(^{39}\) Ibid.


\(^{41}\) Lutz and Collins, *Reading National Geographic*: 29.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., 23.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 25.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 6.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 24.

\(^{46}\) Ibid.

\(^{47}\) Ibid.
“sensationalized head-hunting, cannibalism, mutilation, or tattoo. . . .”\(^\text{48}\)
Just as world exhibitions “equated the non-Western world in tangible ways with peep shows and freak shows, playing on images of the harem, the overblown sexuality of the East, and the general projection of the forbidden desires of whites onto dark-skinned peoples,”\(^\text{49}\) so did the Geographic entertain its readership with titillating glimpses of the native people. Many of the characteristics about the type of material that was included in *Geographic* and the way that the material was presented are exemplified by Worcester’s article about the people of Northern Luzon.

**DEAN C. WORCESTER**

At the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century, Dean C. Worcester controlled the information that Americans got about their newest colonial possession more than any other single figure. He also “wielded immense power over the design and implementation of the United States policies in the Philippines.”\(^\text{50}\) Originally a zoology professor at the University of Michigan,\(^\text{51}\) Worcester was appointed to the new Philippine Commission in March 1900. Academic training in zoology may seem like an odd background for a member of a new colonial administration, but given the climate of scientific racism and the faith that many Westerners placed in biological and cultural evolution and the responsibility that many believed colonial powers had to aid less advanced races, Worcester was a rather obvious choice. He served under both Presidents McKinley and Taft.

After working with the Schurman Commission, he was appointed as the Secretary of the Interior in the Philippines in 1901, a position he held until 1913 when he retired. No other colonial official served as long as he did. During and after his tenure in the Islands, he published articles and books about the Philippines, traveled the lecture circuit (including two appearances in New York’s Carnegie Hall), and testified before Congress. Between 1911 and 1913, he published four articles in the *National Geographic Magazine*, two of which took up the entire issue.

Worcester’s message to the American public was clear: the Filipinos were savages and needed the United States to help them progress to a more advanced state. This justified long-term American colonialism in the Islands.\(^\text{52}\) In a report in 1910, Worcester wrote, “At the outset, it should

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\(^{48}\) Ibid.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 25.

\(^{50}\) Rice, "His Name of Don Francisco Muro," 50.

\(^{51}\) *New York Times*, March 15, 1900: 2.

\(^{52}\) Rice, "His Name of Don Francisco Muro," 49–50.
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be clearly understood that the question involved is not one of the fitness of the Filipinos to govern themselves, but is one of their ability and fitness to dominate, justly control and wisely guide along the pathway to civilization alien peoples, some of whom are warlike.”

Worcester completed his message with examples of how American colonialism had worked to civilize the “savage” Filipinos. He wrote that in the Islands “a good state of public order has been established. Headhunting, slavery, and piracy are now very rare . . . in many instances the wild men are being successfully used to police their own country.” Reporting on the contents of one of Worcester’s New York City lectures, the New York Times explained that each picture shown in the presentation “told a story of the marvelous progress made by America in teaching civilization to the savage tribes of the Philippines . . . the savage, naked, dirty, and unkempt, was shown in the still photographs, while at the same time a one-time savage, clothed, intelligent in appearance and clean, later was shown in moving picture.” Later Worcester wrote, “We have set the feet of these backward wards of the United States firmly on the road that leads onward and upward and they are traveling it . . .”

Worcester’s meaning was clear and straightforward, but his methods were not. Recent scholarship on Worcester’s photography casts doubt on the validity of his work. According to Mark Rice, many of the photographs were staged or “deceptively captioned.” Worcester’s most widely circulated and enduring image is a series of three photographs in which a Filipino man is shown to move from the status of a savage to that of a civilized person over the course of two years (Figure 3) as a result of his experience serving in a military unit that was supervised by the Americans. Rice’s close examination of Worcester’s original negatives and notes revealed that the man in the third picture is very likely a different person than the ones in the first two. Moreover, the man in the first pictures was never in any military service. Instead, he served time in prison between the first two pictures. Other photographs, Rice explained, showed tell-tail signs of being staged. For example, piles of clothes in the corner of some photographs indicated that subjects had been wearing clothes before the photography session, but had been asked or ordered to disrobe. Other

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53 Worcester, "Head-Hunters of Northern Luzon," 74. Quoted in Rice, "His Name of Don Francisco Muro."
54 Rice, "His Name of Don Francisco Muro," 68.
55 Ibid., 69.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
photographs “decontextualized” subjects by placing them “in front of white back drops so as to isolate them from their surroundings, thereby directing the viewer’s gaze to the physical characteristics of the subjects.”\textsuperscript{58} In his zeal to convince Americans that only American colonization would civilize the “Filipino savage,” Worcester created “savage bodies” with nothing more than his camera.\textsuperscript{59}

Figure 3. Progress toward civilization from \textit{The Philippine Problem, 1898-1913} by Frederick C. Chamberlin (1913).

Worcester’s approach to his photographs of his subjects was a kind of “spectacle,” common in colonial displays at world’s fairs and museums everywhere in the Western world. Most Americans were happy simply to enjoy Worcester’s work and the new-found status it afforded them as imperial masters, but Worcester was not without his critics. James Blount published a book entitled, \textit{The American Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-}\textsuperscript{58} 

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 55.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 52.
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*1912,* in which he drew attention to Worcester’s pension for “spectacle,” by calling him, “the PT Barnum of the ‘non-Christian tribe’ industry.”

**WORCESTER’S ARTICLE**

Worcester’s article in the *Geographic* divides the people of the Northern Luzon into tribes. He begins the article by explaining that there are seven non-Christian tribes in this area of the Philippines and “all but one of these tribes have, until recently, engaged in head-hunting.” The tribes are the Negritos, Ilongots, Kalingas, Ifugaos, Bontoc Igorots, Tingian, and the inhabitants of “No-Man’s Land.” Each section of the article focuses on one of the tribes and begins with a brief discussion of where the tribe lived and an estimated number of tribal members.

Worcester’s effort to count tribal members and locate them geographically is part of his job as the Secretary of the Interior of the Philippine Islands and reflects the imperial instinct we have explored all semester to quantify and locate colonized people in order to control them. In order to help his readers tie the Northern Luzon tribes to a geographic location, Worcester includes a map with the article. Reflecting a Westerner’s reliance on maps, Worcester comments on the uselessness of his map during his first visit, complaining that one area on the west side of Northern Luzon had several deep harbors that were not shown on the map and that the “long stretches of coastline proved to be 10–15 miles out of place.” His strong desire to locate tribal peoples geographically is frustrated by the nomadic tendencies of the Negrito tribe.

Each section of the article focuses on one of the tribes, looking closely at the physical characteristics, clothing, housing, and cultural traditions. Because the focus of my paper is on how Worcester’s article reflected scientific racism, I will present the clearest examples from his photographs and text of this regardless of which tribe Worcester is discussing.

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61 Ibid., 578. Quoted in Rice, "His Name of Don Francisco Muro," 50.
63 Ibid., 837.
64 Ibid.
The principles of scientific racism—both biological and cultural—are evident in the article. He does not use statistics to make his case; instead he uses simple text and photographs to illustrate his contention that the Filipinos are a primitive people. The pictures fall into roughly five categories: 1) Filipinos are physically inferior to Westerners, 2) Filipinos are technologically backward, 3) Filipinos are culturally inferior, and 4) Filipinos are savage and engage in monstrous customs.

FILIPINOS ARE PHYSICALLY INFERIOR TO WESTERNERS

The first two pictures represent photographs from the first category—Filipinos are physically inferior to Westerners. Here we see that Worcester has posed himself next to a Filipino man (Figure 4). Worcester, who stands up straight, is significantly taller than his partner, whose pose is more relaxed. Worcester’s goal with the photograph is to show the physical difference between the two men. The caption reads, “A typical Negrito Man with Secretary Worcester; [t]his photograph shows the relative size of the Negritos compared with a 6-foot American.”

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65 Ibid., 846.
Here Worcester used “his own body as a standard against which to compare his subjects’ size, skin color, and clothing.”66 Certainly the clothing of the two men differs greatly, but perhaps the most important difference is that the man on the left is wearing very little. His relative nakedness is coded in the Western mind as uncivilized.67 Philippa Levine explains that colonialism worldwide produced “the trope of the ‘naked native.’”68 The “naked native” intrigued Westerners for several reasons.

66 Rice, "His Name of Don Francisco Muro," 55.
67 Ibid., 73.
Native bodies were “naturalized as naked;” photographs of naked natives seemed to show that they were closer to nature and therefore inferior. Naked bodies also seemed to facilitate scientific inquiry into native bodies. Naked bodies were objectified images and as one scholar explained, “once objectified, these bodies could be analyzed, categorized, classified, and ordered with the cold gaze of scientific distance.” Of course, the naked native also allowed for an erotic, titillating colonial gaze, a subject I will return to in the last section of the paper. Worcester, then, was not only using the relative size of the man on the left to show his inferiority, but also his lack of clothing. The relative nakedness of Worcester’s subjects remained a dominate feature of almost all of the photographs in his article. Another photograph takes another approach to show that Filipino bodies are inferior to Western bodies. This photograph shows a Bontoc Igorot climbing a tree (Figure 5). To the Western reader, steeped in the discourses of Darwinism and racism, it would have been difficult not to see that the subject looks like a monkey, making it easy for Americans to think of Filipinos as a lower, less evolved race. Worcester’s caption reads, “Because of their strength and distorted feet, they climb trees with remarkable agility.” His caption communicates mixed connotations to his reader. He characterizes the feet of the climber as “distorted,” a negative connotation, but he goes onto say that his “distorted feet” allow him to climb trees with “remarkable agility,” a positive connotation. A Western reader may regard the subject of the photograph with a certain admiration, but she will also subscribe to the idea that advanced races cannot climb trees in this manner because they have progressed beyond this. The subject’s “remarkable agility” is proof of his primitive status.

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69 Rice, "His Name of Don Francisco Muro," 9.
70 Ibid.
72 Levine, "Naked Truths," 1.
74 Ibid.
In order to emphasize the notion that the feet of the Bontoc Igorots are “distorted,” Worcester includes a photograph of the feet of a Bontoc Igorot (Figure 6). The caption explains that the condition of the feet are the result of “constantly working up and down very steep hillsides” and that this is necessary because “the natives are just learning the use of agricultural implements, heretofore performing much of the labor with
their hands, feet, and points sticks.”75 Worcester highlights what he believes is a distinguishing feature of a primitive body type which is the result of primitive agriculture—farming without tools or with only very simple tools. By folding the idea of primitive bodies into the idea of a culture with very backward agricultural methods, the two notions cement each other in the mind of the reader.

Figure 6. Bontoc Igorot feet showing evidence of "primitive body type" from Head-Hunters of Northern Luzon.

FILIPINOS ARE TECHNICALLY BACKWARD

Worcester explains that the tribes of Northern Luzon are backward in their agricultural tools, but also in other technology. Here again, Worcester’s caption presents a mixed story. It reads, “The Negritos are the bow and arrow men of the Philippines. Many of them shoot arrows with great accuracy, and some of them have even been known to bring down birds on the wing.”76 He is very complimentary of the Negritos’

75 Ibid., 913.
76 Ibid., 844.
skill with a bow and arrow, but this tribute seems to highlight his wider point: they use backward instruments (Figure 7). He is in effect saying, “They have primitive technology and because they are primitive people, they use their technology very well.” When describing the Negrito tribe, Worcester quips, “They are wonderful woodsmen and display great skill in taking fish and game and in still-hunting their enemies, but here their proficiency ends. They are good at nothing else, and their intelligence is of an exceptionally low order.”

Figure 7. Negrito man shooting a bow and arrow from Head-Hunters of Northern Luzon.

Worcester also looks at how the various tribes build their houses. He includes a photograph of a typical Negrito home (Figure 8) and expresses disbelief on the dearth of items found in the home. He writes that there are a “few coconut shells, an occasional earthen pot, usually broken; fish lines equipped with stone sinkers and with bone or steel hooks, an occasional small casting net; and a few bits of bark cloth; bows of Palma

77 Ibid., 841–47.
brava; arrows with heads of Palmas brava, bamboo, or more rarely, of steel; a few rude bolos; scraps of cheap cotton cloth and nothing more!"78

Figure 8. Typical Negrito home from *Head-Hunters of Northern Luzon*.

FILIPINOS ARE CULTURALLY INFERIOR

Worcester goes into great detail about the culture of the people of Northern Luzon. He mentions music and dance briefly, but focuses particular attention on clothing and hair styles and other bodily adornments. Here, as always, he is careful to remind his readers of the inferior nature of the colonialized subjects. He introduces the clothing traditions of the Ilongots with the following commentary: “The women embroider remarkably well, considering the low stage of civilization to which they have attained, and both men and women display great ingenuity and skill in the fashioning of elaborately constructed ornamental work, using small beads of various colors, hair from the manes of tails of

78 Ibid., 841.
That said, Worcester’s descriptions of native clothing reveal sophisticated and elaborate styles. The best example of this is a man that Worcester describes as a “Kalinga Dandy” (Figure 9). Worcester describes this man’s clothing in great detail providing the reader with explanations of what each piece of clothing is made out of and how valuable the beads, tassles, and armlets are in the culture. Another photograph shows how elaborate men’s hair ornaments were in some tribes.

Figure 9. A "Kalinga Dandy" from Head-Hunters of Northern Luzon.

Ibid., 857–58.
FILIPINOS ARE SAVAGES AND ENGAGE IN MONSTROUS PRACTICES

Throughout this article, Worcester returns repeatedly to the head-hunting practices of the tribes in Northern Luzon. In order to maximize the shock value of this practice in his readers, Worcester includes photographs of headless bodies, skulls used as decorations, and traditions surrounding head-hunting (Figure 10). The caption reads, “An unlucky Ifugao head-hunter who lost his own head and thereby brought disgrace upon his family and village.”80 Another image shows a man who apparently is a head-hunter as evidenced by the skulls decorating his house (Figure 11). In describing the head-hunting practices of the Ilongot, Worcester writes that they “almost invariably attack from ambush . . . cut off the heads of their victims, sometimes tossing them about and playing with them and again carrying them for some little distance only to throw them away.”81

Figure 10. A headless male body tied to a stick, from Head-hunters of Northern Luzon.

80 Ibid., 898.
81 Ibid., 862-63.
Figure 11. A head-hunter's trophies from *Head-Hunters of Northern Luzon*.

Worcester also describes the ceremony that he says accompany the Kalinga head-hunting practices. A successful head-hunter returns to his village and is greeted with “war cries and shouts of joy.” All the warriors of the accompanying party dip a piece of bark in the, “blood oozing from the severed neck” and wipe the blood on their houses as a protection from the “vengeance of the friends of the decapitated enemy.” The skull

82 Ibid., 877.

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is scalped and the scalp is cut up into pieces and each member of the hunting party is given a piece as a “keepsake.” Basi is poured over the brain inside the remaining skull and the two are mixed together. Then members of the tribe taste this “horrible concoction” as the head is used as a “drinking cup.” Eventually, the head is boiled and cleaned and placed on a bed of flowers in a basket. The head-removal event is then reenacted for the entire tribe.83

The significance of head-hunting in Worcester’s article was that it showed the tribal people of the Philippines to be morally inferior to American colonializers. Race had long been linked to moral character in the Western mind.84 Even before European colonialism became wide-spread, non-White bodies were already “scripted and codified as morally . . . problematic.”85 Head-hunting narratives confirmed the link between race and morals, but reversed the relationship. They declared, in effect, that immoral behavior proved racial inferiority. The head-hunting behavior of the natives showed that not only were they “insensible to ethics, but also [negated]” basic human values.86 Of course, this assumed that the colonizing power was the only one who had the right to decide what was moral and what was not. Using that power, colonizers labeled the natives as “different, freakish, [and] animal-like” and immoral.87

PHOTOGRAPHY AS A MEANS OF POSSESSION

Lastly, we look at the photographs in Worcester’s collection not only as a way to justify colonial domination, but as a kind of domination in and of itself. Here, we look specifically at the pictures of women. To be fair to the author, I should note that photographs of men are far more prevalent than photographs of women, but of the roughly thirty-five women pictured in Worcester’s article, thirty are shown bare-breasted. Why? One may answer this inquiry with a statement that most of the women in the Northern Luzon area dressed themselves only from the waist down; Worcester was, therefore, only photographing the women the way they presented themselves to him. In fact, some would argue that an accurate representation of the Northern Luzon had to include bare-breasted women.

83 Ibid.
85 Ibid., 3.
86 Ibid., 8.
87 Ibid.
We cannot ignore, however, the meaning that was attached to the bare-breasts of native women by Worcester and his audience. Bare-breasts were proof of colonial domination. Scholar Nerissa S. Balce explains, “In colonial documents, savage breasts were signs of conquest.”

In the wider colonial project, “bare brown bosoms of indigenous women were markers of savagery, colonial desire, and a justification for Western imperial rule.” Put another way, the inferiority of the non-Westerner was “marked by female nakedness.” A dressed women suggested civilization; undressed women suggested “savagery.” Inevitably, land that had not yet been colonized by the West was “female,” “savage,” “innocent,” and “exotic,” not yet “penetrated” by the “male” colonizer. Therefore, a photograph of a naked or partially-naked native woman was evidence of the colonial conquest over native lands and people. The photographs “of native women . . . are artifacts of empire.”

As the colonializers, American men then enjoyed, through photography, what Edward Said called “the pleasure and the profits of empire” through “an imperial racial spectacle.” The Philippines were more than “a political possession,” they had become “a visual possession” to be “gazed at from the comfort of the American home.” Photographs of native women in circulation in the United States allowed for a kind of long-distance, colonial rape.

American colonialization of the Philippines was not without resistance. As historians well know, the Filipinos waged guerrilla warfare against American military occupation, but the Filipinas resisted through the “native scowl” or what Homi Bhabha calls “the threatened return of the look.” The native subject is forced by a colonizer to be photographed.

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89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., 90.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., 97.
94 Edward Said, *Orientalism* as quoted in ibid., 98.
95 Ibid., 97.
96 Ibid., 99.

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Patricia Hayes calls this “compulsory visibility.”\textsuperscript{100} The only way for the subject to resist is to adapt an unhappy pose and facial expression in the photograph.\textsuperscript{101}

A clear example of the “native scowl” appears in Worcester’s article. The photograph shows a Filipina looking directly at the camera (Figure 12). She narrows her eyes in contempt for Worcester. She does not smile; her lips are closed. Speaking of the “native scowl” in photographs of Algerian women, Karina Eilerass observed that their closed mouths conveyed a “resolve and a desire” to control their own image.\textsuperscript{102} We can see this in Figure 12 as well. In addition, the Filipina strikes a defensive and even confrontational pose by crossing her arms. Taken together, the subject’s stance communicates hostility and defiance.

Throughout his 1912 \textit{Geographic} article, Worcester consciously sought to control his photographic subjects. It is clear that he used setting, clothing, posing, composition, choice of photographic content, and choice of subject as a means of control. No doubt he used at least a few camera tricks available at that time such as lighting, depth of field, and cropping. Through his photography Worcester manipulated public opinion\textsuperscript{103} about America’s largest colonial possession, but once and while, his own subjects stole his power from him and became the authors of their own images.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{100} Patricia Hayes, “Introduction: Visual Genders,” \textit{Gender and History} 17(3), (November 2005), 521 as quoted in Levine, "Naked Truths."
\textsuperscript{102} Patricia Hayes, "Introduction: Visual Genders," \textit{Gender and History} 10, no. 3 (2005): 817.
\textsuperscript{103} Rice, "His Name of Don Francisco Muro," 50.
\textsuperscript{104} Eilerass, "Reframing the Colonial Gaze: Photography, Ownership, and Feminist Resistance," 808.
Figure 12. A Filipina demonstrates the "native scowl" from Head-hunters of Northern Luzon.

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Bibliography


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