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Of Pathogens and Empires: The Discourse of Public Health in Katherine Mayo's *The Isles of Fear-The Truth about the Philippine Islands* (1925)

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1920s, as the Philippines and India intensified their nationalist attempts at independence from the U.S. and British empires, an American woman journalist, Katherine Mayo, would publish two books hostile to the peoples' struggles by foregrounding the notion of race as proof why independence must not be granted to either population. In the guise of a "public health report," the two books relied on earlier scientific publications to stress the contagions and maladies and, thus, the imminent threat to the Anglo-Saxon world should the two colonies be granted autonomy.

The two books became known as the veritable artifacts of colonial discourse. *The Isles of Fear: The Truth about the Philippines* and *Mother India* were influential among colonial cadres. *The Isles of Fear* was reprinted four times between the years 1925 to 1927[1], while *Mother India* went through many reprints and various editions from the time it was released, and was translated into a total of thirteen languages that comprised of European and Indian languages as well[2]. They were endorsed as readings for governance, and soon became the basis for subsequent administrative acts designed to thwart the growing clamor for independence in the two colonies. However, as Philippines and India came under attack in Mayo's so called "investigative" writing, they also inadvertently served as colonial specimens that revealed the anxieties of inter-imperial relations[3] between the then upstart American empire and the alleged "floundering" British empire. In the midst of this relation was the U.S. representation of itself as an exceptional empire whose interventionist mechanisms in sanitation, public health and education—all captured in the term "benevolence"—soon gained worldwide renowned. The labor of modernity gauged by the recuperation of the colonial body out of the darkness of superstition, death and disease thus pitted the results of the U.S. empire's mere two decades presence in the Philippine Islands against the century and a half British colonial rule in India[4].

Studies on Katherine Mayo's colonial writings necessarily yoked the *The Isles of Fear* and *Mother India* together. The mention of one would always evoke the other. Yet while an impressive scholarship has been built on *Mother India*, *The Isles of Fear* has remained in the former's exegetic shadow. A search for extensive critical studies on *The Isles of Fear* has lead to a few remarks and citations to the book within lengthier works focusing on aspects of

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1 Cited in Ma. Mercedes G. Planta's "Prerequisites to a Civilized Life: The American Colonial Public Health System in the Philippines." Unpublished Diss., National University of Singapore (2008), p. 156.

2 This paper is indebted to the archival work of Mrinalini Sinha, who has written extensively on *Mother India*, and whose works have been cited frequently by scholars of Katherine Mayo's colonial writings. Her recent work, which is relevant to my study, is *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire*, London: Duke University Press, 2006.

3 See Paul A. Kramer's "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910" in The Journal of American History, 88.4 (March 2002) 1315-1353.

4 For a detailed discussion, see Sinha's chapter entitled "Unpredictable Outcome" in *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire*, pp. 66-108.

Philippine-American colonial historiography.[5] Significant reviews on *The Isles of Fear*, on the one hand, written by American readers of the period, have been self-serving affirmations of Mayo's achievement in shedding light on the "Philippine question." Moreover, a comparative study of the two books has been attempted back in 1930[6] but while similarities are admittedly shared by the books, distinct problems nonetheless are laid out in the process. Hence, to collapse the two texts under the same analytical rubric would be a failure in reading the specificities of the colonies as they were governed by two empires.

This paper takes up on the lead to intervene in the literature by focusing extensively on *The Isles of Fear*. Its aim is to offer a discourse analysis that charts the thematic grids of the US public health regime in the Philippines. Specifically, this study examines how the trope of "the diseased Filipino body" and its variant form, as embodied in the *caciques,* were deployed to nullify the cause of the Philippine independence movement. It is hoped that by clarifying how these elements bear on each other, a better understanding of Mayo's declared "domestic" motivation—that of raising the awareness of the American public—could be inserted back into the larger imperial project that was meant to include a similar write up on China and Japan[7] with the overall goal of asserting Westernization as the antidote to the Oriental's "ignoble" living. Moreover, it is also to show how the notion of race as it is utilized in colonial discourse is a pliable tool as Mayo as shown in both her writings on Philippines and India. It may be seen as a "sliding scale"[8] where gradations do not quite signify as advancement but as mere gestures toward the impossibility of achieving Anglo-Saxon whiteness and the virtues embodied therein.

The four sections of this paper address the various aspects that may be productive in reading *The Isles of Fear*. The first section situates the book's production within the aftermath of the Democrats' defeat to the Republicans in the US presidential elections of 1920. It will shed light on how this event shaped the colonial politics as the new government resolved to disabuse the Filipinos of their aspiration for independence. The succeeding sections unpack the discursive strategies of *The Isles of Fear* as Mayo, enlisted to write on the conditions on the Islands, exploits the racialized discourse of public health. In so doing, colonial actors and their investment in the book's discursive design will be discussed as well.

RECLAIMING A LOST COLONY

Debates as to the question of "what should be done about the Philippines" was once again ignited when the power shifted from the Democrats to the Republicans in 1920. What was deemed a poor performance by the new regime was the Democrats devolving too much power (and all too soon) to the Filipino politicians through the Jones Bill of 1916. Sponsoring

[5] Examples of these are found in Mercedes G. Planta's "A Prerequisite to a Civilized Life: The American Colonial Public Health System in the Philippines, 1901 to 1907," Unpublished Diss., National University of Singapore (2008); Paul A. Kramer's *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*, Chapel Hill, NC: The University of California Press, 2006.

[6] See Dhirendran Nath Roy's *The Philippines and India* (Manila: Oriental Printing, 1930) as cited in Sinha's *Specters of Mother India*, p. 81.

[7] Sinha, p. 76.

[8] See Paul A. Kramer's *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*, The University of California Press (2006), pp. 25-27. "The Sliding Scale" is a short story written by John T. MacLeod and originally published in *Philippine Free Press*. Kramer refers to it to illustrate the problematic differentiation of race during the late 1800s.

the bill was Congressman William Atkinson Jones who failed to pass it earlier in 1912 due to "procedural bottlenecks."[9] Manuel Quezon and Sergio Osmena, on the one hand, continued to lobby for the bill while forging the most viable interpretation of independence for the Philippine situation. The Second Jones Bill, which stipulated an independence without a definite date, was finally passed into law by President Wilson on August 29, 1916. It was a victorious historical moment for the Philippine Islands as the bill lead to the dissolution of the Philippine Commission, whose members were mostly Americans.[10] More importantly, it gave way to a significant participation of Filipinos in local governance that was to define the initial step towards complete autonomy. This was, however, to the frustration and indignation of many American stakeholders in the Islands. Not long enough, racial tensions resulted in the resignation of many American officials.

With the Democrats' takeover, the Philippine question became an urgent issue that ensued in a rift between the executive and legislative views—a debate that recalled the tensions the very instance the Philippines became a territory for the U.S. Alfred W. McCoy, analyzing the trials of the period, describes how the Republican ascendancy vowed at once on "reclaiming their lost Philippine colony"[11] by discrediting the Democrat's liberal policies in governing the Philippine Islands.

Writing on the Republican Philippine Policy from 1921-1933, Gerald E. Wheeler recounts how the Republicans were bequeathed with the "atmosphere of expectancy"[12] due to the Jones Bill of 1916. Underlining the numerous lapses, blunders and the corruption that were attributed to the Wilson-Harrison tandem, who were blamed for "democratic laxness," the newly elected President Warren Harding consulted W. Cameron Forbes, the last Republican governor general in the Philippines, on what could be the most strategic approach to the Philippine question. Forbes urged President Harding to preserve the status quo in the Islands—proceed with the present American control, not to antagonize whatever political headway the Filipinos gained during Harrison's time and, lastly, to send a commission to the Islands to study its present conditions and draw up recommendations.[13]

The famous Wood-Forbes Commission soon was formed to go on a fact-finding trip that, according to Wheeler, was simply a way to legitimize "finding facts to support preconceptions"[14]. Considered to be the main culprit in the near collapse of the Philippine government was the liberal Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison who had received varying criticisms that not only included his malfeasances, political miscalculations, but also "allegations of sexual exploits" in which he was described as taking keen interest on young girls. All of these shortcomings were claimed to have effectively contributed to his being easily snarled in the manipulative workings of the Filipino politicians and compromising the entire tenor of the Jones Bill 1916.[15]

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[9] Discussion of this section relied on William F. Nimmo's *Stars and Stripes Across the Pacific: The United States, Japan and Asia/Pacific Region, 1895-1945* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001), p. 87-89.

[10] Nimmo, p. 88.

[11] Alfred W. McCoy's *Policing America's Empire: The United States, The Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), p. 269.

[12] Gerald E. Wheeler's "Republican Philippine Policy, 1921-1933," in *Pacific Historical Review*, 28.4 (November 1959), p. 378.

[13] Wheeler, p. 381-383.

[14] Wheeler, p. 379.

[15] McCoy, p. 271

The findings that came from the Commission reified earlier views that went against granting independence to the Filipinos. It instead portrayed the population as "happy and loyal but unclear in their understanding of the responsibilities of independence"[16]. The report was anchored on two presumptions: firstly, that the average Filipino was not keen at all about independence and; second, the possibility of the Philippines being taken over by Japan if the Americans were to let go of the archipelago.[17]

During the four months of his travels in the Philippines, Governor Leonard Wood was met with an incessant appeal to remedy the situation by taking on the highest position in the Islands. He took oath again on October 15, 1921 with the clear goal of restoring U.S. dominance in the archipelago. But faced with the tepid responses from American businessmen and unsettled by the notion that the domestic audience did not possess a good idea of the potential of the Philippines as a market, Wood solicited the aid of writers and publicists like Katherine Mayo[18] to write up on the conditions in the Philippines.

Why Mayo figured prominently as the best candidate to undertake the task could best be explained by her "solid imperial credentials." Mayo's early writing career, which already manifested a flair for the sensational, was shaped by her family's experience of living in Dutch Guiana (now Surinam) as they joined the bandwagon of gold rush. During their residence there, she began writing short stories and contributing articles on leprosy to *The Evening Post* that taken together already display "an essentialist reading of immutable racial and cultural differences between the settlers and the slaves."[19]

A study on the colonial discourse in Mayo's early writings reveals that they foreshadowed much of what she later accomplished in *The Isles of Fear* and *Mother India* in which the white colonizers are attributions of "goodness" while the colonized are their complete foil.[20] Mayo's later writings coalesced into the larger thematics of the perceived detrimental effects of foreign immigration into the U.S. They also rehearsed many of the arguments—such as the inability for self-rule of the colonized peoples—that were to be the conceit of the two controversial books. In this regard, David Spurr's groundbreaking work on colonial discourse and journalism may be productive in reading Mayo's work. Spurr substantiates a "metaphorical relation" between the writer and colonizer.[21] This relation capitalizes on the colonizers need to establish their "radical difference" in order to gain authority. With writing and colonization as acts of self-inscription, Spurr further defines "colonial discourse" as a seizing of space "within language that exists both as a series of historical instances and as a series of rhetorical functions."[22]

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16 Wheeler, p. 380.

17 Ibid.

18 Aside from Katherine Mayo, Wheeler also mentions Nicholas Roosevelt as one of the writers requested by Governor-General Leonard Wood to write about the Philippines. Roosevelt eventually wrote one of the most influential reviews of *The Isles of Fear* and was called to testify in 1930 before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs against a resolution on the granting of Philippine Independence (cited in Sinha, p. 77).

19 Christina A. Joseph and Anandam P. Kavoori, "Colonial Discourse and the Writings of Katherine Mayo" in *American Journalism*, 24.3 (2007), p. 59.

20 Joseph and Kavoori, p. 58.

21 David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. p. 7

22 Ibid.

What Mayo created from her journalistic effort was, according to historian Paul Kramer, a "damning imperial-indigenist indictment of Filipinization."[23] In over three hundred pages, Mayo depicts in essentialist fervor the incapacities of the Filipinos for self-governance. At the outset, she asserts that the Filipinos do not possess a unitary race but are comprised of warring tribes. A "fragmented" nature is at the core of the people's evolutionary impasse. Hence without the unifying race, spirit and vision, the common "tao"—the peasant population—will continue to be at the mercy of the *caciques*, the oligarchy. With no one to fight for their welfare and with the clamor for independence simply a lame excuse for the political warlords to entrench themselves in power, the *tao* will remain as the inchoate, diseased and disenfranchised masses they were since the Spanish colonial period.

Mayo's decision to focus on the public health policy as the book's argumentative centerpiece, after being enlisted by Governor-General Wood in the campaign against the Philippine nationalist movement, would not only indicate the increasing anxieties between the local political elite and its colonial mentors but, more precisely, underscore the growing disinterest of the US public to its Asia Pacific territory. Mayo's insistence on the book's "domestic" goal was thus a rhetorical maneuvering to arouse concern among the Americans over the imminent peril the Anglo-Saxon world faces with the granting of independence to a race whose bodies are carriers of diseases and maladies. With the theme suggested by friends at the Rockefeller Foundation,[24] which collaborated with imperial powers on the research and eradication of Asiatic diseases at the time, Mayo meant to foreground impressive achievements of the US colonial state's modernizing interventions in the area of public health while questioning the logic of independence at a time when the Filipinos were enjoying their good prospects under the US rule. In drawing up the "public health report," Mayo relied extensively on the writings of the key colonial builders like Dean Worcester, Leonard Wood and Victor G. Heiser. She quoted and effectively reiterated earlier writings on the Philippines that circulated racialized readings of the Islands.

The release of *The Isles of Fear* was an achievement that Governor-General Wood himself congratulated Mayo for.[25] The book created a furor among the Filipino community in the US who accused Mayo of gross misrepresentation of the Filipinos as "savages" and "uncivilized." All this was taking place as copies were being distributed around and sent to British colonial officials who were troubled with a similar difficulty in its Indian colony. Lionel Curtis, a British official and writer, was so impressed with Mayo's work that he provided the preface to the British edition of *The Isles of Fear*. The impressive support for the book was said to have caused the delay of the granting of independence to the Philippine Islands for another two decades—a feat that Mayo was soon to top with a far more controversial book on India.

The Anglo-American relation is hinted at in a review of the *The Isles of Fear* in *The North American Review* by Willis Fletcher Johnson who draws a clear parallelism between the "altruistic beneficence" of the British administration toward Egyptian Sudan and the U.S. toward the Philippines. He calls Mayo as an "expert investigator of recognized authority" and "not as an agent of other," and congratulates her on the "immeasurable monstrosity of the evil which (it) discloses" that was presented in a "fine combination of technical thoroughness,

[23] Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, p. 389.

[24] Sinha, p. 71.

[25] Sinha, p. 17-18.

literary and dramatic skill, and intensely vivid and vital appeal to human interest".[26] On the one hand, a write up in the *Philippines Free Press*[27], describes a "perturbing" Mayo as having successfully caused the controversy that drove a Princeton professor to calling her book "another divine revelation," that has set things ablaze like a wild prairie fire and set the Filipino community in the U.S. on a crusade against her. The article dismisses Mayo's book on the Philippines—that covers everything there is to be said disparagingly about the Islands and its people—as a "fantastic phantasmagoria."

Kramer makes an interesting point about the tone of the book. He deems it as having been written in a "ventriloquist" fashion with the Filipino peasants literally talking through Mayo's book with pleas of "want(ing) to stay with America." Yet, at another level, the ventriloquism is performed by no other than Mayo herself as she becomes the Republican mouthpiece which sensationalizes issues in order to thwart Philippine Independence. It is through this ventriloquist quality of *The Isles of Fear* that Mayo grounds the book's crucial "point of view"—that is, the "human point" with which she is keen on analyzing the Philippine situation—the subterfuge that reproduces the sentimentalist rhetoric of the US civilizing mission.

LOCATING *THE ISLES OF FEARS*

In the conventions of colonial travel writings, prefaces to women's travel narratives often include disclaimers which limit the expectations of readers to any truth or approximations that could be demanded from the writing. While travel may afford the sights and sounds, the first-hand accounts of witnessing to which authorial voice is largely imputed, the feminine register suffuses the descriptions with sentiment and awe.[28] It may also express an apologetic undertone that the account is unreliable in so far as the production of "facts" is concerned, for what is largely at work is a mere recollection of moments when the senses were engaged. The ensuing observations hence become testimonies to the 'personal' and the 'intimate'.

Mayo's *The Isles of Fear* rejects any such cautionary welcome. Although the mode and claim for which she wrote it brackets it from the domain of women's travel writings, its underlying discursive motivations necessarily adapts the genre's conventions. Her journey to the archipelago assumes the privileged position of the "authorial witness," steep in ethnographic data through which she argues for the centrality of knowledge. She poses herself as someone of the perfect fit for the role. Her reason for travelling to the Philippines is distinguished not simply for pleasure, nor out of curiosity, but one that will provide the facts, and thus the "light" needed by the American public to weigh the options relating to the issue of Philippine Independence. Her singling herself out as capable of the task to personally take a look at the existing conditions, which she asserts is everyone else's obligation, "but that very few of us can do," confers upon her the stature of a mobile, able, independent-minded woman.

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[26] Willis Fletcher Johnson's "Problems of Government" in *The North American Review*, 221.826 (March 1925), p. 561.

[27] *Philippines Free Press*, Vol. XIX, January 17, 1925

[28] See Mary Louise Pratt's "Travel Narrative and Imperialist vision" in *Understanding Narrative*, editors James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz. (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press), 1994; Shirley Foster and Sara Mills, eds. *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing*, (New York: Manchester University Press), 2002.

Mayo's initial tone is uncompromising. She quickly addresses the point of "why and how it is written." Compared to the other colonial women's writings, Mayo's *The Isles of Fear* undertakes an altruistic and herculean task aimed at reversing the growing clamor for Philippine Independence—which was to be the promise and natural outcome of—after more than two decades of American tutelage. The "sensation of unrest" that Mayo claims is caused by certain "voices of emissaries" is one she asserts as America's responsibility and is solely in its hands to decide on. Resonant with the larger Republican discourse that the average American person is unaware of its colonial territory in the Asia Pacific and, thus, of the commercial and naval advantages for the country, revving up the publicity would advance the cause of denying autonomy to the Islands.

In her introduction, Mayo's use of the word "report" to those Filipinos inclined to provide her information lends credence to her goal and writing, and affirms the very profession by which she has built a name for. Her emphasis on her having travelled free of any encumbrances or alliances—a statement that she repeatedly makes in her prefaces to other works as well—while foregrounding her "experience in field investigation" sets the book's objective tone:

> Finally, I want you to know that I come here as ignorant concerning you as the most uninformed person now in America; that I have no pre-possessions, no friendships, no alliances that can in any way influence my judgment; that I come wholly without connections with any cause or organization, without commitment to any publication or party, and entirely at my own expense, as a volunteer, whose one hope is to do a bit of work that will serve both sides of the water. For the question is one question—a question of light on duty, toward the common good. (Mayo, Chap. 1)

Mayo begins her book by citing statistical data to illustrate the dynamic trade activities taking place in the archipelago, and locates this vis-à-vis Dutch, British territories and the "hungry Japan" to hint at other imperial interests. Although Mayo cites the Philippines' strategic and commercial advantages to the U.S., she considers these as secondary to her concerns. While building the exclusively "human point"—the nature and condition of the native people of the Philippine Islands that she wants delineated in her "report" on the archipelago—she begins to lay down the groundwork for her racialized tirades against the Filipinos and, hence, build the conclusion against the granting of Philippine Independence.

> What do you mean when you speak of the people of the Philippine Islands? Do you think of them as a political body? A social body? A distinct race? Do you think of them as a minor nation, represented by delegates to Washington? (Chap. 1)

The answer Mayo gives is stark. And, here marks her categorical invitation to the readers to "admit that there is no such thing as a Filipino race."

What unfolds is a discursive meandering into the two crucial issues which Mayo asserts as constituting any serious attempt at judging the Filipinos' ability to evolve into self-governing subjects: the public health issue and the cacique system. Although these two issues may point to different tangents in colonial governance, Mayo rhetorically collapses them in the same argumentative continuum inhering from a racial incapacity for progress. The public health and cacique issues, which illustrate Mayo's "human point," are reformulated as two sides of

the population—the servile and sickly Christian Malays and the despotic and educated hybrid oligarchs. They are the two main actors in Mayo's overdrawn colonial drama.

But as can be argued, Mayo's original intent of drawing up a "public health report" on the archipelago, in the same way she did for *Mother India,* not only establishes the cornerstone of her imperial credentials but, more importantly, underscores the apparatus by which the efficacy of empires as a modernizing force were assessed on the international stage. To control the colony was to control its inhabitants' bodies. The transformation of an uncivilized native population to a self-governing one could only succeed if the regimen of keeping the indigenous body free of contagious and fatal diseases is ensured.

"THE GREAT PHYSICIAN" AND THE FILIPINO BODY POLITIC

The rhetorical drive of Mayo's expose on the Philippine Islands owes to her interminable representation of the colonized terrain as metonymic of the recuperation of a squalid and disease-infested archipelago into a vibrant, healthy, and modern territory through the colonial state's civilizing regime. At the helm of all these endeavors was Dr. Victor G. Heiser, the Director of Health in the Philippine Islands from 1905 to 1915, who came to the Philippines as chief quarantine officer.[29] He later became the Director of Health who was well-known to have possessed a predisposition for "military authority"[30] which he believed was the only way he could get his work accomplished efficiently.

To profess the role of Heiser in building public health and legitimizing its benefits, Mayo begins by cataloguing the wretched state of the archipelago in the section "A Great Physician."

> When we took over the Philippines, the task of sanitation confronting us was so enormous as to seem impossible. Smallpox was carrying off a regular annual toll of 40,000 persons. Asiatic cholera came in frequent and devastating waves. Infantile mortality—due chiefly to beriberi, which meant malnutrition, and to tetanus, which meant dirty handling at birth, reached 773.4 per thousand. Beriberi among adults killed its multitudes each year. The city water of Manila was poisonously contaminated and nowhere else in all the Islands was there a reservoir, a pipe-line or an artesian will. In the city cemeteries, four or five bodies were often crowded into a single grave, only to be tossed out a few months later to lie exposed in heaps in the open air. The City of Manila, with a population of over 200,000 persons, had no sewage system whatever and lay encircled by a moat among a network of canals, all of which were filled with half-stagnant house sewage constantly stirred about by cargo craft in passage.
>
> No food law obtained and the vilest sort of food products were shipped into the country and consumed there. Dysentery carried off its annual thousands. Leprosy existed everywhere and spread unchecked. For some million wild people living in a primitive state no effective attempt had even been made to furnish medical relief. (Chap. XVI)

[29] Planta, p. 98.

[30] Planta, p. 99.

The description emphasizes the extent to which the American colonial state has to labor to infuse life back into the territory. Resurrecting this archipelagic graveyard also affirms the scientific goldmine the US was able to exploit as it carved a niche in the burgeoning field of tropical medicine during the period. Disease, death and contagion proposed various categories of study that demanded experimentation, surveillance, testing, controlling subjects, implementation of new practices that formed the colonial "sanitary regime." Foremost, it meant to identify, name and eradicate pathogens that attacked and fed on the Filipino body.

Writing on the beginnings of American colonial public health policy in the Philippines, Anderson Warwick depicts how the islands had been fashioned into one "huge laboratory"[31] with makeshift laboratories operating even before Emilio Aguinaldo's arrest in 1901[32]. Although the archipelago virtually became a "laboratory for investigation and a rich ground for field trials," the initial scientific interest was not significantly a concern for the native ecology. It addressed the welfare of the "white man in the tropics." The crux of the matter was how best the Americans could acclimatize to the conditions in the Islands if they were to fully exploit the economic and political possibilities inherent in the territory. Racial degeneration was thus at the forefront of the scientific debate that inquired into the menace the American physiology faces in a tropical climate, and the ways by which these can be contravened.

The trajectories in scientific investigation shifted, however, as new findings affirmed that it was not so much the climate or surroundings that endangered the American body, but the Filipino body which through rigorous scientific investigation was proven to be the "vessel for native fauna"[33]. With the colonized body reformulated as carriers of diseases and a menace (more than the actual environment), devising control systems to lessen its contact with the American body was viewed as imperative.

With the attention veering away from studies of environmental conditions to the "new contagionist tropical medicine,"[34] the colonial governance soon stepped up its efforts to install mechanisms of quarantine and sanitation on the native population. Implementation of this took concrete forms through surveillance and segregation. Soon, the battle with disease became America's greatest colonial campaign that proved to a great degree the colonizers' racial resistance and, therefore, the Anglo-Saxon body's superiority[35]. During this greatest microbial interest, the Filipino body, according to Warwick, became "completely vulnerable and indefensible"[36]—and entrenched deeply racial notions of governance into the mundane lives of the colonizers and the colonized.

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[31] Warwick Anderson, "Where Every Prospect Pleases and Only Man is vile": Laboratory Medicine as Colonial Discourse in Critical Inquiry, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Spring 1992), p. 516. Other works of Anderson on colonial medicine in the Philippines are "Excremental Colonialism: Public Health and the Poetics of Pollution" in *Critical Inquiry*, 21.3 (Spring 1995), 640-669; "Going Through the Motions: American Public Health and Colonial Mimicry'" in *American Literary History*, Vol. 14.4 (Winter 2002), 686-719; and, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines*, (Durham: Duke University Press), 2006.

[32] Ibid, 507.

[33] Ibid, 503.

[34] Ibid, 515.

[35] Ibid, 516.

[36] Ibid, 510.

These racial notions were embedded in the implementation of public health practices and, later on unsettled as the process of Filipinization began to gain momentum in the Islands. In his widely quoted memoir, *An American Doctor's Odyssey*, Heiser narrates the herculean task he faced in the nascent years of public health building so that the Filipinos "might reach from the Hell that was to the Heaven that might be."[37] Despite his book being designed as a personal chronicle, conventions of scientific writing emerge to narrate histories of diseases, and the impact of controlling epidemics under the most onerous of circumstances, whose outcome later on was hailed as a feat—the sterling model of public health and tropical medicine in the Far East. Yet, Heiser's descriptions were annotated with racial underpinnings that constructed the indigenous body as the prodigious site of maladies. It was for this that he literally entitled the chapter documenting his arrival in the archipelago as "Washing Up the Orient" which justified the need to "invade the rights of homes, commerce, and parliaments."[38]

As Mayo lends a critical voice to Heiser's achievements midway her book by culling from his earlier medical reports, she becomes more insistent in arguing for the adverse effects of Harrison's democratic leadership. Undoubtedly at the international level, Heiser's work at the Bureau of Health had given tremendous prestige to the US. Writing in 1906, Heiser 'celebrated' the attention US had earned over Britain for its work on tropical medicine in the Philippines which he termed as a "monument to American ambition and progressiveness."[39] In a recent study on the colonial public health system in the Philippines, Ma. Mercedes Planta cites a note written in 1909 to Heiser from Dr. Fullerborn of the Hamburg School of Tropical Medicine expressing his gratitude while saying that "we, the Germans, and all other nations having colonies in the far east, will have to take lessons from the Manila sanitary authorities in dealing with the evils that beset us."[40]

Recognitions of Heiser's work from other imperial powers abound and would usually come from medical practitioners who learned from Heiser's simple and efficacious ways. In *Prosthetic Gods: Travel, Representation and Colonial Governance*, Robert Dixon attests to Heiser's fame in a description of how John Elkington, working on the malaria problem in Brisbane, personally visited Heiser in Manila in 1912 to learn of the approaches by which Heiser controlled the breeding of mosquitoes through "simple but well applied measures." This was seen as another triumph for Heiser whose particular work was seen as the "heroic story of science and sanitation in the service of imperialism"[41].

Mayo proceeds to contrast the glory of those years to the seven destructive years that the Filipinos were given quasi-autonomy. According to Mayo, the once efficacious systems established by the US colonial state degenerated in no time due to the caciques' selfish motives. At this point, she makes a clear relation between the Filipinos' autonomy, death, and threat to the larger community:

> The result was: first, the payment, by the Filipinos themselves, of a fearful toll levied in coin of human lives; and, second, a mortal threat not only to America, but to the whole world of humanity. (Chap. XIV)

[37] Victor G. Heiser, *An American Doctor's Odyssey*, p. 151

[38] Ibid. 151.

[39] Sinha, p. 75

[40] Planta, p. 99.

[41] Robert Dixon, *Prosthetic Gods: Travel, Representation and Colonial Governance*, p. 35.

Mayo's recourse, echoing Heiser again, was to fuel once more the discourse of the Filipino body as carriers of disease against which the American and the wider community should protect itself. Such rhetoric not only negates the cause for Independence but reconstructs anew the Filipinos as deluding himself of possessing skills for self-governance—a quality of a thinking, modern subject. He is, by all intents and purposes, as Mayo ragingly describes, a danger to himself and to the world.

The "lower stratum" of the indigenous body—the sphere that provided much of the sheer material obsessively scrutinized by the colonial sanitarians and indicted for grossly infecting the environment—would never be allowed to evolve along the more abstract, mental trajectory that the colonial rulers envisioned as the ultimate end of the civilizing mission. Its self-rule has to be perpetually deferred in order to contain its threats. It would remain, as Heiser's resistance to the Filipinization movement would prove, as the languid flesh of the Other.

Asha Nadkarni builds a similar argument in her examination of Mayo's *Mother India,* whose intended design of a public health report morphed into a virulent attack on Hinduism. Nadkarni investigates the constructions of the icon of Mother India and how these are coupled to issues of disease and the self-government deployed by Mayo. According to Nadkarni, "what makes (her) polemic so persuasive, is that Indians are unfit for self-rule because primitive and debased Hindu sexual practices destroy the bodies of India's women and deplete the bodies of India's men."[42] And, with an overwhelming number of children and women suffering from sexual diseases, Mayo challenges the moral stance of those wanting to be free of British rule.

In the same vein, the "Philippine question" as Mayo indefatigably argues throughout *The Isles of Fear* was not for the Filipinos to decide. With no unifying racial quality, the widest base of the population will continue on living in the dismal state, as of the first time when the Americans came, while the class of educated Filipinos, the hybrid, and the ones eager to rule the islands is in reality indifferent to the suffering of the native masses. For Mayo, if the Filipinos will to independence is taken to be a product of virtue then that could only amount to a mimicry[43] of the authentic Anglo-Saxon virtue—an assertion that undeniably belongs to Heiser.

This relation of the self-serving, indifferent cacique and the diseased indigenous population is amplified on occasions when Mayo evaluates the Filipinos' progress in the civilizing mission as tentative, immature, and superficial.

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[42] Asha Nadkarni, "'World-Menace": National Reproduction and Public Health in Katherine Mayo's Mother India" in American Quarterly, 60.3 (September 2008), p. 806. Other works that directly touch on Mayo's feminist ideology in *Mother India* are Liz Wilson's "Who is Authorized to Speak? Katherine Mayo and the Politics of Imperial Feminism in British India" in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 25 (1997), 139-151; "Feminism, Imperialism and Orientalism: The Challenge of the 'Indian Woman'" in *Women's History Review*, 7.4 (1998) 495-520; Cantherine Candy's "The Inscrutable Irish-Indian Feminist Management of Anglo-American Hegemony, 1917-1947" in *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 2.1 (2001), pp. 1-19.

[43] See Anderson Warwick's "Going Through the Motions: American Public Health and Colonial 'Mimicry.'" *American Literary History*, 14.4 (Winter 2002), 686-719.

"VULTURES IN THE SKY"

The cacique[44] is Mayo's extended metaphor of the yet diseased state of the Philippine Islands, one that gnaws at the very fiber of the archipelago's spirit and future. The one who suffers the caciques' allegedly corruptive and venal qualities is exemplified by Mayo in the image of the *tao*—her book's visual centerpiece. It shows an old man, barefoot, his arms limp at his side, with his shoulders stoop, and his right hand holding on to his iconic peasant hat. What is constructed is an image of defeat and subservience—the characteristics of the "tao" who found in the Americans their savior.

Mayo assigns the political unit of the archipelago to this "little cacique"—a *mestizo*, a Spanish hybrid, and who are degrees above the tao in color, bearing and education. Yet although power may reside in this political group, Mayo, with her assertion of the absence of a unifying race among the Filipinos, exploits the traditional animosity and mistrust each group harbors against each other. The mountain people ("Igorots"), the Moros of Southern Philippines ("Mohammedans")—so called the "highlanders"—and the Christian Filipinos—the "lowlanders"[45]—are made irreconcilable for the sheer geographic divide that had been the deterrent to the Spanish colonizers in subjugating the entire Philippines. But the Malay Christian lowlanders—identified as "Filipino proper" and the population that had extremely suffered at the hands of the Spanish colonizers—are the ones severely beaten by the ills afflicting the Islands, as this lengthy description would attest:

> No sanitation exists, and the invariable pig, although ultimately eaten, is maintained to serve for the nonexistent closet. No other provision is made either for sewage disposal or for the pig's support. He is always starving….In every way piteous and embarrassing, he is the adjunct of every home.
>
> There may be a new-fangled artesian well in the barrio. But even if there is, many are the ancient uses of a little drainage-ditch beside the highway. Here, within a space of fifty yards, I have seen women laundering garments, women washing dishes, women scrubbing meat for the pot, a man washing a dog, a pig nuzzling, and several naked youngsters kicking up the mud, while other dipped drinking water in earthen vessels for household use.
>
> Tenants of the cacique for the most part, and tillers of his soil, the people work fairly steadily, considering the facts that all are undernourished, that over eighty per cent have worms and their economic outlook is dull. (Chap. II)

These images of the iconic starving pig, clogged sewage system, and the communal earthen vessel all become fertile site for infestation that tethers the Filipino body to a drudging material base. But these images serve as well an important discursive crutch to Mayo's indictment of the caciques that are not viewed for the political leaders that they can be. Neither are they recognized for their gradual advancement of the cause of Philippine Independence, nor are they seen as the very critical support to the building of the US colonial

[44] For an extensive discussion of the cacique system and its evolution, see Paul D. Hutchcroft's "Colonial Masters, National Politicos, and Provincial Lords: Central Authority and Local Autonomy in the American Philippines, 1900-1913" in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 59.2 (May 2000), 277-306.

[45] See Paul Barclay's "They Have for the Coast Dwellers a Traditional Hatred": Governing Igorots in Northern Luzon and Central Taiwan" in *The American Colonial State in the Philippines: Global Perspectives*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003.

state in the Philippines but as the insatiable, immature and underhanded novices in the political arena who have overstepped their mentor's generosity. This despite the fact, that according to critic Epifanio San Juan in his book *After Postcolonialism*, the Filipinos have remained defiant of American colonial rule given the intermittent guerilla uprisings that involved much of the intelligentsia[46].

Paul Teeds, in a study on Mayo's rhetorical strategies in *Mother India*, observes how she rejects any parallelism between the American Revolution and the Independence movements in Philippines and India through a racially exclusive reading of the former. By invoking it as inherent to Anglo-Saxon virtue, Mayo, according to Teeds, asserts that "Filipino leaders were not modern American revolutionaries, but rather corrupt and oppressive bullies who brutalized and defrauded "the Malay mass" of landless tenant farmers.[47] In Mayo's rhetoric, Emilio Aguinaldo, Manuel Quezon and Sergio Osmena are all one in their selfish motive of demanding autonomy for the archipelago.

The case of the tao as continually oppressed by the local *caciques*—who are "individualist(s) by all counts and purposes"—strengthens Mayo's case for the policing and rehabilitating presence of the "conscientious" Americans. To survive life as a farmer, the tao becomes buried in debt all his life due to the practice of usury by the caciques that cheat them of their fair share. The indebtedness bears heavily on the entire family with the wife and daughter at times ending up as servants at the landlord's house to pay off the debts. With the threat of lifelong toil, the tao becomes easy pawns to political maneuverings as their financial debts are considered "partially" paid off with the electoral vote. Solace to the inescapable hardships of the *tao* is the authentic concern of the Americans who are described by Mayo in their sublime best. They are imbued with nearly ethereal qualities that are to the comfort of the taos, whose "docile ignorance" are wielded by the caciques as their strength.

Mayo unsettles further the racial relations through the representations of the cacique as impervious to the diseased Filipino body. The claimed neglect of the lepers in the chapter "Unclean! Unclean!" is again prefaced by the observation of how the Filipinos are "probably more seriously afflicted with leprosy than are any other people in the world." (Chap. XIV) The lepers are described as once a sordid lot who roamed aimlessly in the barrios. But this was changed with the establishment of the Culion leper colony that soon became the refuge of the lepers. Through the use of the "chaulmoogra" oil, which was a worldwide discovery, Heiser had been able to replace the usual charity the lepers had been left to in the past with the work of science. The figures of Heiser and Wood visiting the leper colony were cast in Christ-like image, resurrecting the dead, and one of ultimate self-sacrifice with their continued exposure to the affliction.

In the chapter "Nameless and Afraid," Mayo poses a question that immediately links the issue of maladies with the "ability of the Filipinos to hold their own with other races less seriously handicapped"—"How," asked an eminent world-sanitarian, "can they stand the stress of modern civilization until they get their bodies into shape?" (106) The discourse forays into an analysis of the labor market in which the Filipino laborer is compensated better than his counterpart in Java, China or Japan. For Mayo this is due to the measures the American colonial state implemented in making the Philippine market competitive. Resonant

[46] Epifanio San Juan, *After Postcolonialism*, p. 200.

[47] Paul Teeds in "Race Against Memory: Katherine Mayo, Jabez Sunderland, and Indian Independence," in American Studies, 44.1-2 (Spring/Summer 2003), p. 42

with the pitch of argument deployed by Wood-Forbes Commission report, Mayo picks up on the "military aggression" of Japan to press on the value of protection the archipelago needs from the US. By highlighting both the economic potential of the Islands and its inability to protect itself when freed, Mayo plays up Japan's imperial ambition who would "quickly fight Filipinos as Chinese or Russians" because "there is no racial solidarity in the Orient."

To this end, Mayo extends her arguments by conjuring the virtues of what a healthy Anglo-Saxon body is supposed to represent for the Filipinos—something that the caciques will never be able to attain despite their class and education. The Filipinos are a vain people, caring only for pretense and affectation, and does not possess any true appreciation of the greatness of selfless acts such as what the Americans have been doing on behalf of the Filipinos. All is oratory. All is for personal gain. And although achievements in education have been noted, Mayo discounts these by pointing out how the people have been more concerned with the degree rather than with the essentials of learning.

> This sense of individualism—of separateness—this lack of fellowship and of responsibility, exists as a fundamental down to the original unit. Patriotism, to the great majority of the Filipinos, means, therefore, an effort for personal profit. Though he will not admit the truth of this statement, and perhaps has not analyzed his own mind so far, hid deeds furnish consistent proof. It is almost impossible for him to understand in his heart the possibility of any man's or any nation's acting on a disinterested motive. It is like trying to visualize a new primary colour; he has no grounds for a start.
>
> Education, to him, has ever meant just one thing: a means for escaping work—never a means to power for more and better work." (Chap. XIX)

Interestingly, Mayo's opinion echoes essentially that of Heiser's remark against "Oriental" trickery:[48]

> …a difficult time comprehending that anybody should want to do anything for him without expecting something in return; he was always looking for a concealed motive. Service without expectation of reward, in the Anglo-Saxon sense, was outside his cosmogony, and he regarded giving for the sake of giving as absurd.

The book continues with its emblematic dichotomy of virtue-vice in chapters such as "The Sheep and the Wolves," "Vultures in the Sky," "The Rottenest Thing," "The Prayer of the Living Dead," to build up into the second half of the book which simply reiterates the crux of Mayo's report on how the American colonial governance has transformed the war-torn, disease-infested archipelago into one of the most modern cities in the world in the brief two decades it has occupied the archipelago—summed up in the Great Anglo-Saxon Performance.

[48] Planta, p. 200.

CONCLUSION

In teaching Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*, Jyotsna Uppal has seen the opportunity to interrogate the assertion that the "representational form was never independent of material and ideological forms"[49]. By expanding the interpretative canvas to include questions about the power of representation and how they are imbricated in the specificities of historical conditions, a more productive and uncompromising stance can be achieved in reading colonial texts.

Mayo's *The Isles of Fear: The Truth about the Philippines* was hailed as a powerful instrument in restoring the role of the US colonial state in the Philippines. With evidence that it was used as a reference material during hearings at the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, and delaying the granting of Independence to the Philippine Islands for another two decades, there is no denying how its contents were accorded authority by readers. By viewing herself as an "objective" reporter and as an independent-minded, mobile woman unfettered by any political investment, Mayo can be seen, according to Spurr, as freeing herself "from larger patterns of interpretation and deriving authority from direct encounter with real events."[50] It is without doubt that this claim likewise proved to be a convincing selling point of Mayo's work.

Yet as seen in the recent scholarship on Mayo, her works were intimately linked in the attempts to position the nascent US empire in the global power constellation. The focus on "public health"—the image of the diseased native body brought back to life by the colonizer—served as the armature to other arguments that privileged a racially exclusive reading of the independent movements in the two colonies as workings of morally bankrupt political elites. By denying parallelisms between the American Revolution and the nationalist movement, Mayo saw only the impetuous "brown-skinned" mimics assailed by forces beyond his comprehension and who must remain under perennial tutelage for his own good.

[49] Jyotsna Uppal, "Teaching Across Borders: Katherine Mayo's Mother India" in *Radical History Review*, 91 (Winter 2005), p. 167.

[50] Spurr, p. 9.

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