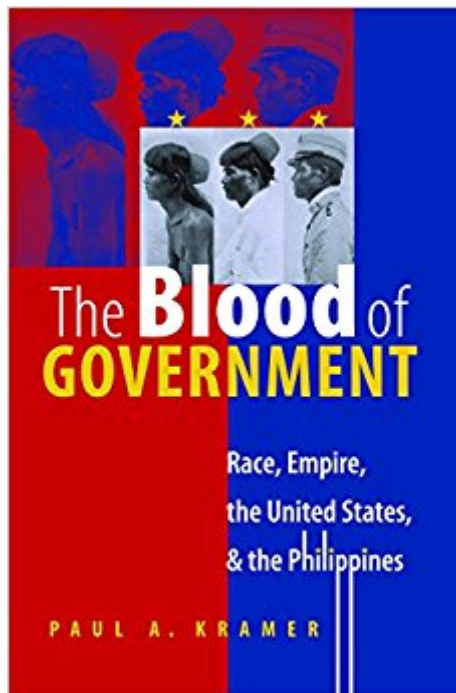




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The Blood Of Government: Race, Empire, The United States, And The Philippines



Synopsis

In 1899 the United States, having announced its arrival as a world power during the Spanish-Cuban-American War, inaugurated a brutal war of imperial conquest against the Philippine Republic. Over the next five decades, U.S. imperialists justified their colonial empire by crafting novel racial ideologies adapted to new realities of collaboration and anticolonial resistance. In this pathbreaking, transnational study, Paul A. Kramer reveals how racial politics served U.S. empire, and how empire-building in turn transformed ideas of race and nation in both the United States and the Philippines. Kramer argues that Philippine-American colonial history was characterized by struggles over sovereignty and recognition. In the wake of a racial-extremist war, U.S. colonialists, in dialogue with Filipino elites, divided the Philippine population into "civilized" Christians and "savage" animists and Muslims. The former were subjected to a calibrated colonialism that gradually extended them self-government as they demonstrated their "capacities." The latter were governed first by Americans, then by Christian Filipinos who had proven themselves worthy of shouldering the "white man's burden." Ultimately, however, this racial vision of imperial nation-building collided with U.S. nativist efforts to insulate the United States from its colonies, even at the cost of Philippine independence. Kramer provides an innovative account of the global transformations of race and the centrality of empire to twentieth-century U.S. and Philippine histories.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An important work not only to the field of Philippine-American studies, but also to the studies of race and imperialism in general.--Journal of American StudiesCompelling. . . . The author shows

impressive command of . . . the sources in the United States and the Philippines, ranging from personal papers, newspapers, and military civilian archives. . . . Highly recommend[ed].--CENTRO Journal

The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines is richly illustrated, clearly written, and full of vivid conceptualized terms. . . . The skillful way in which Kramer interweaves cultural, social, military, and political narratives makes his book a standard-setter in international history. It is a must-read for historians interested in imperial culture, racial formation, comparative empires, and nationalism, as well as those with area-studies interests in Philippine and US history.--International History Review

The Blood of Government is a very important work. . . . It [approaches] its subject in a fresh and provocative way.--American Historical Review

A formidable assessment of the intertwined nature of race and U.S. imperialism.--Journal of Southern History

A useful and often original analysis of a very interesting and highly complex period of colonial history.--Register of the Kentucky Historical Society

In The Blood of Government, Paul Kramer makes a compelling argument about the deep ties that bind imperial with domestic U.S. history on the one hand, and U.S. colonialism with Filipino nationalism on the other. Lucidly written and empirically grounded, Kramer's book draws on both classic and more recent scholarship on the gendering and racialization of the modern state, applying these to a place that has often been bypassed by historians of comparative colonialism and nationalism. A much needed and innovative intervention into the scholarship on the American empire and the Philippine nation-state, it also marks a critical addition to the growing literature on the history of America's current imperial moment.--Vicente L. Rafael, University of Washington

A very significant contribution to the study of American imperialism. . . . A book that will define and influence the way the next generation of scholars will look at the American empire in the Philippines and Asia. . . . An impressive book that is both highly specific and broadly suggestive. It presents a thorough and thoughtful study of the imperial relationship between the United States and the Philippines. . . . A solid contribution toward building a new historiography of U.S. empire.--H-Diplo Roundtable Review

Kramer has pulled. . . many skeins together under one cover for more general audiences. Recommended.--Choice

Blood of Government does valuable work in laying out the intricacies of racial (re)formations in the service of and against colonialism. . . . This book has much to offer those interested in Philippine-American relations as well as postcolonial studies, and, surprisingly, given its length, leaves one wishing for more.--Journal of American History

This commendable transnational history should serve as a welcome invitation to both Americans and Filipinos to scale each other's boondocks, so that in

these 'remote areas' of misunderstanding, which have caused many wounds in the past, lasting healing may finally take place.--Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era Moves easily--and often brilliantly--across geographic and disciplinary boundaries to probe the dynamics of racial formation in the context of the U.S. Empire. . . . A truly transnational study of empire in which forces in the metropole and colony carry equally explanatory weight. . . . Sure to be a touchstone of transnational history for years to come.--Journal of American Ethnic History At every stage of Kramer's analysis, the reader is made aware of the Filipino side of the story of U.S.-Philippine relations. . . . Kramer delves deeply into the Filipino past in order to reconstruct how they (in particular, their elites, ilustrados, and the revolutionaries, the Katipunan) viewed themselves when they encountered Americans.--Akira Iriye, Harvard University The Blood of Government is a groundbreaking study of the complex history of American colonial rule in the Philippines. Kramer reinterprets the concept and practice of race as a rich and complex framework for political and cultural inquiry into the history of imperialism. He demonstrates persuasively how colonial relations were not a one-way imposition of power from metropolis to periphery, but consisted of genuine contacts and interactions, forged by violence, conflict, collision, and collaboration.--Amy Kaplan, author of The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture

Paul Kramer earned his BA at Johns Hopkins and his Ph.D. at Princeton under Daniel Rodgers. Currently Dr. Kramer teaches courses at both the graduate and undergraduate level at Vanderbilt University. Kramer argues that in order to understand how empire makes race and how race helps to shape empire. Furthermore, his thesis is that "it was not simply that difference made empire possible: empire remade difference in the process." (3) The work revolves around six themes: firstly the status of the Philippines as a "twice-colonized country" and the central role of the Spanish colonial period in understanding the period of American colonialism. (28) A second theme in race-making is the Philippine-American War as "the foundational moment of twentieth-century Philippine-American history." (28) The third theme is the role Filipino "cs played in creating the colonial state. (29) Fourth is "the tension between metropolitan and colonial perspectives on empire." (30) Fifth is dialogue between colonial administrators and Filipino political leaders about control and representation and sixth is the "intersection of the politics of colonialism, nationalism and migration." (30-31) The narrative begins, as Kramer says, not in Washington or Manila but in Madrid in 1887 at the grand Philippine Exposition. Interestingly the author mentions

how racial difference was, on the one hand, based on geography (where one was born) and on the other hand with *“blood mixture.”* A third line of difference was based on belonging (or not belonging) to Hispanic Catholic civilization. Chapter two deals with the Philippine-American war as a race war: *“one in which imperial soldiers came to understand indigenous combatants and noncombatants in racial terms, one in which race played a key role in bounding and inbounding the means of colonial violence, and in which those means were justified along racial lines.”* (89) While chapter three looks at the issue of *“collaboration and the racial state,”* chapter four deals with the messages sent out by the St. Louis World’s Fair. Kramer notes that the Philippine exhibit at the fair *“did convey hegemonic messages about race, capitalism, and U.S. national superiority.”* (230) Chapter five deals with the *“politics of nation building”* and how the American colonial masters *“insisted that only they had the power to build and recognize a true Philippine nation.”* (288) Finally chapter six deals with the *“Philippine invasion”* of the US specifically but, broadly, the idea of America turning its face westward to the Orient. In doing so, this chapter mentions important events in US racial history such as the Chinese exclusion and the exclusion of Japanese students from San Francisco schools early in the 20th century. (349) Kramer’s sources, as one would expect in a book that contains over 500 pages, are extensive. The bibliography is approximately twenty pages and forty-three pages of footnotes. Not only did the author spend time at the National Archives and the Smithsonian Institution, but he also used the Newberry Library, the US Military History Institute and the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. The author also spent time at the Balaguer Library in Spain and the Lopez Memorial Museum in Manila. Finally he made extensive use of newspapers and periodicals, government documents and other non-governmental primary sources, as well as a vast array of secondary literature. The historiographical significance of this work in US history is how the author sheds new light on an often overlooked war and aspect of US imperialism, and he is doing so using a transnational lens. As many works have done over the last decade or so, Kramer also notes that not only did the metropole effect the colony, but the colony effected the metropole as well. I have no quibbles with this work. While much of it might be known to specialists, this work truly sheds light on Philippine-American history and the role race plays in the construction of Empire. As such it will be very useful to those attempting to teach a college level survey course on US history who wish to discuss American imperialism in the late 19th and early 20th century. The narrative itself is easy to follow and written with a clear voice. The only problem is the size of the work might throw off some

readers, but once they start reading they will find those worries are unfounded. It is easy to read thanks to the narrative style and will keep you engaged to the end.

Brilliant documentation of the U.S. racial politics in the 1880's and the 1980's. From Jim Crow to the Dawes Act to Chinese exclusion Act. A companion book should be James Bradley, "The Imperial Cruise, a Secret History of Empire and War". Read more of Teddy Roosevelt's imperialist ventures...Teddy Roosevelt in the Century Magazine: We should annex Hawaii immediately. It was a crime against the United States, it was a crime against white civilization, not to annex it two years and a half ago..." p.162 Another book would be "The Forbidden Book, The Philippine -American War in Political Cartoons" by Abe Ignacio, Enrique de laCruz, Jorge Emmanuel and Helen Toribio.

I sent it to the Bacolod Public Library, Bacolod City, Negros. Philippines.

Kramer offers a carefully crafted, well-researched interpretation of a history to which many are oblivious. It is likely too dense for the casual reader, but those with a serious interest in U.S. history will find it more than worthwhile.

Paul Kramer's book is an ambitious but flawed work. The failings here are not due to inadequate research or a lack of scholarly ability. His research is impressive and his scholarship, at least insofar as his language is concerned, is undeniable. But this book is seriously compromised by its author's decision to interpret his data to reach a conclusion not adequately supported by the evidence. A critical reading of "The Blood of Government" shows that many of Kramer's otherwise valid points are hampered by what seems to be his heavily biased personal agenda. Kramer's thesis is that from its inception, the American experience in the Philippines (meaning the entire period of annexation and colonization following the end of the war with Spain in 1898) was marked by officially mandated and socially accepted racism, and that this racism colored nearly every aspect of American interaction with the Filipino population. If he were to leave it at that, Kramer would be on firm footing; any close reading of U.S. involvement in the Philippines shows that American attitudes toward Filipinos were often marked by a casually chauvinistic sense of racial and cultural superiority. It is an established fact that such attitudes have been all too common in much of American history. However, Kramer overstates his point, spending pages upon pages belaboring a claim to which he adds nothing new by way of evidentiary support.

If a historian is thorough in his research (and Kramer is certainly thorough), then the evidence can be permitted to speak for itself, and thereby support the argument. Kramer contends that American attitudes and policies toward the Philippines and Filipinos were inherently racist. Since race is part of the subtitle of his book, it is to be expected that he would mount a vigorous argument in defense of that position. But after several chapters his discourse comes so close to diatribe that his argument begins to lose a measure of its veracity. Also, he levels sweeping accusations that he fails to adequately defend, at least not to the standard one would expect of a professional historian. Kramer repeatedly claims that American policy in the Philippines was a brutal regime of racially motivated "exterminism," a phrase he is fond of employing repeatedly without ever marshalling sufficient facts to support its use. The disparate cases he refers to (in a rather disconnected and scattered style) are not universal enough to defend his argument for "exterminism." On this point, as on others, he is unconvincing, in spite of the weighty mass of verbiage he expends in the effort. This matter of words, and Kramer's choice of particular words, is one of the greatest problems with his book. Kramer sprinkles his text with phrases such as "extremist racism," "brutal manifestations of racialization," and, "for U.S. commanders, winning the war would mean fomenting and attempting to direct race war," but the facts he presents to support those claims are insufficient. He stoops to highly sensational language, describing incidents of civil unrest in California in 1930 as a "five-day race war." No civil event lasting five days, racial or otherwise, can accurately be described as a war, certainly not by anyone who has actually experienced war. Kramer could call it many things – riot, mob violence, even pogrom – and be much more faithful to the truth of the matter than he is when he calls every act of racially motivated prejudice, violent or otherwise, a "war." Some of his claims are simply ludicrous: "One of the chief sources of rising American animus against Filipinos [prior to the outbreak of war] was a crisis of martial masculinity." Kramer's argument here seems to be that since there was no one to fight after the Spanish capitulated, the American army decided to fight Filipinos just to have something to write home about. His contention that the rank and file of U.S. forces was largely ignorant and culturally insensitive toward Filipinos is accurate enough, but his assertion that this was the primary *casus belli* is dubious, at best. Another glaring flaw in Kramer's book is what he omits. Kramer leaves out crucial details of this story, with the result that a reader for whom this is the only exposure to the history of

U.S.-Philippines relations is likely to come away with some serious misconceptions. For example, he makes frequent references to Jose Rizal, a leading figure among Filipino nationalists. Kramer refers to Rizal several times as *“martyr”* (which is exactly how Rizal is venerated in the Philippines), but he places his reference to Rizal’s martyrdom in a paragraph dealing with American imperialism, giving the impression that Rizal was executed by Americans, rather than that he was shot by the Spanish, as actually happened. One thing that Kramer does well is the way in which he draws on Filipino sources. These sources are too often under-utilized by American historians, and Kramer does an excellent job of examining his subject through Filipino eyes. Unfortunately, not even the use of these sources is enough to make the case for his thesis that American administration of the Philippines was *“exterminist racism.”* He states a position too narrow to encompass the countering facts, and selectively interprets the evidence to justify arguments that he does not adequately support. In spite of the fact that this book won several awards, I find it seriously flawed in its structure and style, and many of its arguments inadequately supported.

Poorly written book that selectively highlights some parts of Western history and marginalizes non-Western ones. The book is supposed to create an emotional reaction rather than objectively inform readers about the past events.

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