

ALBERT J. BEVERIDGE, "MARCH OF THE FLAG" (16 September 1898)

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Abstract: In tandem with the well-known "march of the flag" allegory, Beveridge posited "liberty" and "civilization" as central terms of the expansion debate after the Spanish-American War. This textual analysis explicates the relationship of the two concepts with Beveridge's central allegory, and elucidates the strategic gain for articulating connections between key moments and values in American history.

Key Words: imperialism, articulation, civilization, liberty, allegory, god term, Manifest Destiny

In studying imperialism or globalization from an American perspective, the turn of the twentieth century provides a useful starting point. Until that time, the nation was able to isolate itself from major overseas wars through geographic separation. Washington and Jefferson's warning against entangling alliances and the Monroe Doctrine's assertion of hemispheric self-determination provided strong rhetorical justification for a policy of non-interference.<sup>1</sup> This perspective changed after the Spanish-American War of the late 1890s, when the United States acquired the Philippines and other territories as permanent possessions in postwar negotiations. For the first time, the United States had the eminent capability to begin overseas expansion and rival European imperial powers. Albert Beveridge's "March of the Flag" not only delivered a rhetorically powerful argument for such an expansion project into the Philippines and beyond, but also placed this argument into the larger context of Manifest Destiny—the historic mission of Americans to spread liberty, civilization, and "God's kingdom on Earth." The call for such a policy of imperial conquest had great appeal in its era and carries insight for American foreign policy from that time forward.<sup>2</sup>

The speech is rhetorically significant as well. The march allegory has often been the critical focus of American public address students and scholars. The vivid image brings alive the themes of nationalist imperialism, making Beveridge's speech more memorable and meaningful. The forward progress of the flag gave the speech its organizing principle and its moral certitude. Rarely has one figural theme held such centrality for American political oratory as in the "March of the Flag" speech.

This analysis brings to the foreground the values and keywords of the era to better understand how the powerful march allegory functioned in the speech. Beveridge redefined several key terms of the speech both through connotative and denotative strategies. Specifically, "liberty" and "civilization" are linked to a continuous forward march. Meanwhile, Beveridge employed altered meanings of the terms that are specific to expansionist rhetoric while appearing consistent to a larger narrative. The power of Beveridge's speech flowed not only from the figurative language that scholars often identify as the major strength of the

speech, but also from the way Beveridge rooted both figurative and literal appeals to "liberty" and "civilization." Through the articulation of an American narrative grounded in the common values of his audience, Beveridge forged new meaning across the past, present, and future of American political culture.

### *The Speaker*

Many biographies of Albert Jeremiah Beveridge note first and foremost his ability as an orator. For example, Edgar D. Jones' 1937 work, *Lords of Speech*, begins a section on Beveridge with the epithet, "'Brilliant Beveridge'—a superbly 'made' Orator."<sup>3</sup> According to tradition, Beveridge began perfecting his speech skills early and diligently. Working with the plow on an Indiana farm at the age of fourteen, Beveridge drove his team into a corner of the fence, jumped onto a nearby stump, and began reciting a speech by General John Logan he had heard the night before.<sup>4</sup> In the late nineteenth century, oratory represented an art that could earn extra money for the speaker, provided a means to political power, and seemed at the heart of the democratic process.

The gains of oratory were particularly evident in the life of Senator Albert J. Beveridge. Beveridge was born on October 6, 1862, into a very poor family, working manual jobs throughout his childhood in Ohio and Illinois as a plow hand, railroad worker, and logger. During the winter months, Beveridge would study assiduously, eventually earning his way into college. At DePauw University, Beveridge won numerous prizes in oratory, scrupulously preparing speeches and committing them to memory. After hearing Robert Ingersoll give a local speech, Beveridge made personal appearance an important part of his public speaking, donning fine suits and spotless attire in each speaking situation. By winning competitions, Beveridge provided himself with the necessary income to continue his university education. He also gained influence in the Indiana Republican Party during this time for supporting strong candidates like Republican presidential candidate James G. Blaine.<sup>5</sup> After DePauw, Beveridge studied law and set up a practice in Indianapolis. Over the decade leading up to 1898, Beveridge became convinced of the need for U.S. expansion into Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean islands, and into coaling stations across the Pacific.<sup>6</sup> Through a fervent oratorical campaign, initiated with the "March of the Flag" speech that kicked off the state Republican campaign, Beveridge won a tight race to become a U.S. Senator from the state of Indiana in 1899.<sup>7</sup>

Upon his election to the Senate, Beveridge (then only thirty-six years of age) disregarded the traditional rule that new members should be "seen and not heard." A visit to the Philippines in 1899 and numerous speeches for permanent Philippine annexation on the Senate floor helped Beveridge gain a seat with the Committee on the Philippine Islands. Even those who usually agreed with Beveridge, including President William McKinley, soon became wary of his ambition and egotism. Upon arrival in the Senate, Beveridge began telling his colleagues of aspirations for the presidency in 1904. Charles Gates Dawes, then Controller of the Currency, wrote, "Beveridge is Presidential timber if he can restrain his intense energies and commanding talents and have the patience to exercise tact and discretion."<sup>8</sup> Arrogance and ambition became noticeable character flaws to many contemporaries who knew Beveridge.

After abandoning expansionist policies due to growing public opposition and unsuccessful occupation in the Philippines, Beveridge led the Progressives in the Senate on domestic issues. Following publication of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, Beveridge authored the bill that enforced meat inspections and introduced another for creating restrictions on child labor.<sup>9</sup> Beveridge renegotiated his expansionist ideology to the changing times. Alongside Henry Cabot Lodge, Beveridge opposed Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations, which in their eyes would weaken U.S. sovereignty and power.<sup>10</sup> Although he maintained his views of white superiority, he fought the Ku Klux Klan and violent white supremacy at home. Beveridge often sided with big business in political debates, though he fought with Progressives for the federal government's role in preventing corporate wrongdoing.

Due to the sometimes inconsistent nature of his political beliefs, factions emerging within the Republican Party, and a pretentious personality, the Senator's electorate found little reason to return him to office in 1910.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, Beveridge lost his bid for the Indiana governor's seat in 1912 and the Senate position in 1914. Beveridge turned to writing, producing the four-volume *Life and Times of John Marshall*, one of the greatest political biographies of the early twentieth century. Running once again for a Senate seat in 1922, Beveridge met defeat and began work on a biography of Abraham Lincoln and a small handbook on public speaking. On April 27, 1927, Beveridge died suddenly of a heart attack before finishing the Lincoln biography.<sup>12</sup> Despite the political losses later in life, oratory brought Beveridge a lucrative career as a lawyer, fame and power as a respected politician, and even prestige in his later life through the publications inspired by and aided through Beveridge's oratorical ability.

### Context

Like many wars, the Spanish-American War and its consequences were products of accident and miscalculation. According to most historians, America's initial goals in the war were humanitarian—to support Cubans fighting for home rule against the imperial Spanish navy.<sup>13</sup> Yet historians also believe the war effort reflected the nation's desire to show off the nation's enhanced naval capabilities or to obtain commercial benefits. On April 11, 1898, President McKinley sent his war message to Congress, proposing to free Cuba from the oppression of Spanish imperialist powers. The president himself disclaimed any ambitions of territorial gain, and the Teller Amendment, enacted on April 11, 1898, foreswore annexation of Cuba. After all, the nation was recovering nicely from financial woes of the decade, and territorial conquest by European powers had resulted in constant military excursions. Beveridge, on the other hand, had no doubt that the war was the act of Providence and told friends that, "It may be that we will not annex the Philippines, Hawaii and Cuba: but *events* will annex them."<sup>14</sup> Congress approved the annexation of Hawaii, and Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders won the battle of San Juan Hill; the battle of Santiago demolished the Spanish navy; and Admiral George Dewey's victory in the Philippines secured the Pacific for the United States.

As the war came to a close in 1899, it was clear that the United States would gain the Philippines as a territorial acquisition from imperial Spain.<sup>15</sup> As European powers were vying for land in China, many Americans saw the Philippines not only as a gain in itself, but also as a gateway to all of the Far East. Filipinos, on the other hand, saw the Spanish-American War as a

chance finally to attain self-rule. Under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo, the citizens of the Philippines prepared to fight for their independence if it was not granted by the United States. Commodore George Dewey, leader of the American naval forces in the Pacific, confided to Aguinaldo that the United States had no interest in long-term territorial acquisitions and thereby forestalled Filipino resistance for the immediate time.<sup>16</sup>

Leaders at home, however, maintained their imperial ambitions. In a letter to Charles Gates Dawes, Albert Beveridge wrote, "I would rather take part in organizing our colonial system than to do anything else on this earth. I would rather map out and advocate the imperial policy of the Republic than to have been the leading statesman of the late war. It means more for humanity, more for our country and a larger place in history."<sup>17</sup> Although he had never held political office and was quite young, Beveridge eyed the vacant Senate position in Indiana. As Senate elections were still decided by state legislatures, Beveridge could reach most of his audience in important political meetings. Hoping to take advantage of his oratorical skill, Beveridge sought an invitation to deliver the keynote address that August at Tomlinson Hall in Indianapolis —the site of the Republican State Convention. Senator Charles W. Fairbanks, the state's top Republican officer, insisted on the honor for himself, however. Bitter and disappointed, Beveridge consented to give the opening address for the Republican campaign on September 16, 1898 instead. Although he was given this lesser speaking role, it is Beveridge's speech that stands out from the period a century later.

Beveridge biographer Claude Bowers recalls the scene of the speech from his childhood in Indianapolis:

The stage-setting was worthy of a master. Two hundred members of the Marion Club, with torches and red lights, and preceded by a band, marched to the Beveridge home, where the orator was conducted to a carriage immediately behind the band, and with much shouting, waving of torches, burning of red fire, the procession moved to the hall. Long before it had been packed to its capacity, to the highest gallery, and hundreds were standing in the aisles. When Beveridge was introduced, the crowd roared for two minutes.<sup>18</sup>

Bowers continues by narrating the speech, demonstrating the intermittent cheering, applause, and laughter from the audience as Beveridge worked through the speech. After a huge standing ovation at the conclusion of the speech, Bowers describes that, "Even the enemies of imperialism were thrilled to the fervor of the delivery, the militant march of the rhetoric, and went away sadly lamenting that in the excitement they, too, had cheered."<sup>19</sup>

### *Interpretation of the Speech*

Albert Beveridge's "March of the Flag," an ultimate U.S. statement of expansionism, combined societal claims of Manifest Destiny, Social Darwinism, evangelism, commercial ambition, and American patriotism. To structure such a multifaceted speech and make it persuasive, Beveridge rooted his arguments in the themes of liberty and civilization, completed through the allegory of the marching flag.

The majority of Beveridge's speech worked through the concept of manifest destiny. This defining American ideology, which precedes even the first permanent settlement, gave life to political discourse throughout American history. Indeed, as early as 1616, colonial agents wrote (in Early Modern English), "What need wee then to feare, but to goe up at once as a peculiar people marked and chosen by the finger of God to possess it."<sup>20</sup> Puritans continued the tradition, adding that history was predetermined, and their settlement was the kingdom of heaven coming to earth, functioning as the "City on a Hill." This idea was then combined with the civic republican belief that the United States was the great experiment of liberal democracy for the benefit of all mankind. Thus by the time of the ratification of the Constitution, the United States was endowed with a mission to establish a nation set apart by God, which would ultimately spread its enlightened politics, economics, culture, and religion into the world. In his popular paper, *Morning News*, John O'Sullivan coined the phrase in 1845, proclaiming "the right of our *manifest destiny* to overspread and to possess the whole continent which providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated government."<sup>21</sup>

By the time of Beveridge's speech, even more far-reaching formulations of manifest destiny had surfaced. Josiah Strong, a Congregationalist minister, laid out a particularly convincing and popular framework in a book entitled *Our Country*.<sup>22</sup> In it he predicted that the United States, part of the Anglo-Saxon race, was destined to conduct the civilizing mission for the whole world. Much like our understanding of globalization today, Strong believed time was accelerating because of improved transportation and global commerce. Yet unlike current theories of globalization, Strong argued this acceleration would lead to the moment of "final competition" between the races—a tenet shared by Social Darwinists. Although the United States showed ominous signs of degeneracy to Minister Strong—rampant immigration, Catholicism, intemperance, Mormonism, wealth, socialism, urban expansion—he believed the nation could still Christianize and civilize the world.<sup>23</sup>

Manifest Destiny as an ideology affected Beveridge's argument in three crucial ways. First, it supports his notion of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority. Beveridge believed the widespread notion that his race was descended from the Teutons—a conquering race superior to others worldwide. The speech noted Beveridge's race as "the ruling race of the world"<sup>24</sup> (14). In the era of Jim Crow, lynching, Chinese exclusion, Native American relocation, and immigration restriction, white supremacy was no foreign concept. In addition, manifest destiny provided Beveridge with the argument that white Americans were God's "chosen people" (1, 29, 30). Since the Israelites had rejected the Gospel, American Christians believed themselves to be the inheritors of the sacred covenant. Therefore, these groups were assigned the sacred obligation to inculcate the "savages" with Christianity and civilization. With God on their side, Americans displaced natives and expanded across the continent in the name of "civilization." Now this same project would expand beyond geographic and ethnic borders, and it must do so if the nation retained its Christian mission in the world.<sup>25</sup>

Second, Manifest Destiny backed Beveridge's argument for expansion as an essential part of God's covenant. Although the term "destiny" carries with it a predetermined finality, Manifest Destiny was seen as a deal—one that could be broken with eternal consequences. Beveridge therefore labeled opponents of imperialism as "infidels to the gospel" (15). If opponents won and the project of expansion was not followed, European powers would gain the territories God had specifically assigned to American protection. As if this were not enough,

Beveridge also added that the continuation of American isolationist policies was inherently selfish:

Have we no mission to perform—no duty to discharge to our fellow-man? Has the Almighty Father endowed us with gifts beyond our deserts, and marked us as the people of His peculiar favor, merely to rot in our own selfishness, as men and nations must who take cowardice for their companion and self for their Deity... (2)

In this way, Beveridge also believed his generation could preserve the spirit of the American fathers who had tamed the wilderness.

Finally, Manifest Destiny provided Beveridge a more ethical and provocative reason to engage in imperial actions against other countries beyond the rationale of commercial supremacy. Beveridge characterized the Spanish-American War as, "the most holy ever waged by one nation against another; a war for civilization; a war for a permanent peace; a war which, under God, although we knew it not in the beginning, has swung open to the Republic the portals of the commerce of the world" (6). American citizens believed God had also blessed the nation by its separation from the rest of the world's problems, particularly the European turmoil of the previous centuries. In this way, the rich and vast "Kingdom of God" could be built distant from the secular and revolutionary tendencies of modern Europe. After the Civil War, many citizens viewed the United States in the final stages of this project; the eradication of slavery meant the United States was closer than ever to God's will.<sup>26</sup> By the late 1800s, as post-war economic issues began to subside at home, intervention in world affairs meant that America could attain the riches promised throughout the centuries to God's chosen people. However, a tradition of supposed U.S. isolation, humanitarian concerns over expansionist policy, and even anti-Asian racism still proved to be significant barriers for expansionists.<sup>27</sup> To overcome such obstacles, Beveridge puts his oratorical power to use in a series of vivid rhetorical images, built on the watchwords and slogans of expansionism.

### Articulating the March

From the very beginning of the speech, Beveridge connected the past and present through the forward march of the American flag—a common theme for expansionists. Months before Beveridge's speech, expansionist Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts noted, "As one of the great nations of the world, the United States must not fall out of the line of march."<sup>28</sup> Five years prior to "The March of the Flag," Beveridge warned a group of businessmen that European powers "seize island and archipelago and new territory everywhere to make monopolies for their markets and fortresses for their flags," while the United States remained "without a single naval rendezvous in any sea."<sup>29</sup> Yet in September of 1898, Beveridge took the symbol of the flag and the march metaphor as the cohesive theme and climax of his address.

Stuart Hall puts forth the concept of articulation which helps illuminate Beveridge's argument.<sup>30</sup> For Hall, articulation makes connections by fusing disparate events, people, ideas, or social movements. Articulation goes beyond analogy, making connections based on

reshaping previous conceptions of reality rather than merely pointing out similarities and differences. Articulating the purpose of expansionism through a mythic, grandiose history of Manifest Destiny, Beveridge saturated his cause with meaning.

He began this process at the outset of the speech, outlining three distinct aspects of the progress of Manifest Destiny. First, Beveridge evoked the central concept of Manifest Destiny through the sacred narrative of the land. "Fellow-citizens," called Beveridge, "It is a noble land that God has given us; a land that can feed and clothe the world; a land whose coast lines would inclose half the countries of Europe; a land set like a sentinel between the two imperial oceans of the globe; a greater England with a nobler destiny" (1). The mythical land personified by Beveridge stands rich beyond imagination, looms larger than the European imagination can fathom, and is endowed with a destiny beyond prior comprehension. The United States not only outshined the greatness of Great Britain, then the largest empire on the planet, but also had a divine mission granted by God. In this way, Beveridge articulated the spatial area of the United States through the broader idea of Manifest Destiny.

The second sentence of his introduction focuses on the sacred narrative of the people. Beveridge exclaimed, "It is a mighty people that He has planted on this soil; a people sprung from the most masterful blood of history; a people perpetually revitalized by the virile workingfolk of all the earth; a people imperial by virtue of their power, by right of their institutions, by authority of their heaven-directed purposes, the propagandists and not the misers of liberty" (1). Through a transition linking the soil of the United States to its people, Beveridge produced a series of metaphors linking the United States to its racial heritage, its ethos of work, its masculine attributes, and its imperial destiny. Beveridge outlined attributes that gave the Anglo-American race its undeniable superiority—masculine power, liberal democratic institutions, and the mission to spread liberty. Beveridge thus articulated a conception of Americans as a collective body, unified throughout history. Not only did Americans reproduce Manifest Destiny in their ideals and politics, but also in their everyday jobs and through the act of procreation.

Beveridge forged his final and most powerful articulation in a great American history, creating linkages between disparate aspects of history separated by time. "It is a glorious history our God has bestowed upon his chosen people," said Beveridge,

a history whose keynote was struck by Liberty Bell; a history heroic with faith in our mission and our future; a history of statesmen, who flung the boundaries of the Republic out into unexplored lands and savage wildernesses; a history of soldiers, who carried the flag across blazing deserts and through the ranks of hostile mountains, even to the gates of sunset; a history of a multiplying people, who overrun a continent in half a century; a history divinely logical, in the process of whose tremendous reasoning we find ourselves to-day. (1)

Beveridge truncated a hundred years of American history into a beautiful and "divinely logical" myth, embodied in biblical allusions to prophets, martyrs, and natural landscapes.

Beveridge's story also resonates with Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis" from the same era.<sup>31</sup> Both connect an evolutionary progression of history in the forward expansion of America's borders into the "unexplored lands and savage wilderness" (1) necessary for the

continued expansion of freedom, with Beveridge answering the dilemma through a call for imperial expansion. In all three sections of the introduction, Beveridge used the present-tense verb "is" to connect historic images of America's past, its people, and its land with the present situation of annexation. In this way, Americans were not just deciding whether or not to follow a policy of the past, as presented by Beveridge, but whether to live up to their present identity, derived from shared experience.

At the heart of the speech, Beveridge connected his cause to the forefathers' work in expanding national territory, exclaiming, "We do but what our fathers did—but pitch the tents of liberty farther westward, farther southward; we only continue the march of the flag" (14). Repeating the "march of the flag" metaphor, Beveridge emphasized the continuity of expansion throughout American history. Through this proud common heritage, Beveridge connected his appeal for overseas expansion with the ongoing continental expansion that has taken place for over a century, especially evoking the heroic presidents and generals who made such expansion possible. If Americans halted this forward progress of the mythic march, they would turn their backs not only centuries of American history, but also on the heroic men who led the march. As in the military, to break off from the soldiers' march is to become a coward and a deserter to the cause, only to be mocked and shamed by friends and family. By halting the forward progress, the United States would become a shameful place in which to live, turning its back to God, His mission to the United States, the heroic men of the past, and the nation's central virtue of liberty. The flag, which must be carried by the forward marching soldier, Beveridge's reasoning suggested, created the iconic representation of all these assets, making the message all the more vivid and memorable for the audience. The flag, supported by the American soldier, would carry the virtues, religion, market economy, and republican government of the United States around the world to the poor and oppressed under the banner of "civilization."

Whereas the United States had sometimes welcomed the huddled masses to its shores, and was forced to do so at a growing rate during this period of rapid economic growth, Beveridge encouraged the nation to now seek foreigners in their geographic destinations, thus saving the United States from the overcrowding of "inferior" races. Beveridge, in his conclusion, thus stated, "We cannot fly from our world duties; it is ours to execute the purpose of a fate that has driven us to be greater than our small intentions" (30). If the audience accepted the articulated connection between past and present situations, they were bound to the course of imperialism put forth by Beveridge—lest they be the first Americans to "doubt their mission, question fate, prove apostate to the spirit of their race, and halt the ceaseless march of free institutions?" (12). Temporal continuity thus became the core of persuasive appeals in Beveridge's speech, with several distinct American values brought out as central to such continuity.

### Liberty and Civilization as Key Terms

Americans have always believed liberty to be their most sacred and absolute natural right. Terms such as liberty serve as linguistic centers for political power structures and decision-making processes.<sup>32</sup> However, these terms are not static in meaning and alter depending on historical and linguistic context (that is, how they are defined over time and in their specific usage vis-à-vis other ideas and expressions). Moreover, general terms such as



liberty are especially susceptible to a wide range of meanings, since individual beliefs and experiences play such a major role in how each person defines the term. Studying these meanings closely illuminates the differences of culture and ethics embodied in speech and their relation to other worldviews.

For Americans, liberty has arguably served as the chief term around which all other political values and principles gain their meaning from the time of the Declaration of Independence forward. Yet the meaning of even this central term is not fixed. It becomes altered to some extent with each association. For example, in Daniel Webster's "Liberty and Union, now and forever one and inseparable," the orator linked liberty and union as principles that defined the nation.<sup>33</sup> In this instance, positive liberty was restricted for citizens who believed nullification and secession could be necessary measures against federal tyranny. After the Civil War, Lincoln's call for liberty and equality at Gettysburg emerged as the dominant association of the era as freed slaves and women fought for their political rights. Many citizens of this era simultaneously felt their liberty restricted as previously disenfranchised groups entered the public sphere—no longer were Southerners "free" to own slaves, for example. As the century drew to a close and the Reconstruction era came to an end, the nation turned increasingly away from the rhetorical goal of equality to the economic concerns of Beveridge's era.

In this tradition, Beveridge connected liberty and civilization as defining values of the expansionists. Yet in Beveridge's usage, the fundamental definition of liberty appeared not only transformed from earlier conceptions but also seemingly contained inherent contradictions. How can the United States bring liberty, usually defined as the immunity from the arbitrary exercise of authority, to the territories it conquers for economic gain? In his explanation of this dilemma, Beveridge stated:

The opposition tells us that we ought not to govern a people without their consent. I answer, the rule of liberty that all just government derives its authority from the consent of the governed, applies only to those who are capable of self-government. We govern the Indians without their consent; we govern our territories without their consent; we govern our children without their consent. I answer, would not the natives of the Philippines prefer the just, humane, civilizing government of this Republic to the savage, bloody rule of pillage and extortion from which we have rescued them? (13)

Using simple repetition in his sentence structure to veil the diversity of his examples, Beveridge equated the territories, the "Indians," and the nation's children as in need of domination. By utilizing the pervasive racism of his era, Beveridge reasoned that liberty could not be given to those who cannot govern themselves. Yet if Beveridge believed the Filipinos incapable of this sort of liberty, why did he make the expansion of this principle a key theme of his address?

One remedy to this paradox would be a temporal appeal—as the Filipino people became more "civilized," they could either rule themselves or consent to be governed by the United States. However, Beveridge strongly articulated, "We cannot retreat from any soil where Providence has unfurled our banner; it is ours to save that soil for liberty and civilization" (30). His later Senate speeches would resound with the claim that "The Philippines are ours

forever!"<sup>34</sup> If so, the resolution of the paradox would depend on the Filipinos' eventual consent to be ruled as U.S. citizens, and thus achieve eventual liberty through (pressured) self-determination. Yet the Filipino movement for self-rule was evident, and their chances for obtaining the rights of citizenship were slim. Although the sheer physical separation from the continental United States would be one problem, race played a much larger factor. In *Race over Empire*, Eric Love repeatedly shows that Americans were opposed to incorporating any non-white areas into statehood.<sup>35</sup> For example, acquisitions during the Mexican War of 1848 revealed that the United States could secure large parts of northern Mexico. However, it was clear through debates and public opinion at the time that Americans enjoyed being a predominantly white country, and therefore rejected the acquisition of territory held today by Mexico. Any territories that were not amenable to a future white-majority population were excluded from consideration. On the other hand, Texas, an independent republic governed by white men, could be incorporated directly into statehood. Race played an important role in imperial conquest, and it did so not solely on the side of the expansionists, but also for those opposed to taking up "the white man's burden" in the realms of cultural politics and economics.

To achieve resolution for this central paradox in "March of the Flag," a new definition of liberty must emerge. Later, in his first Senate speech, Beveridge elaborated:

For what is liberty? The liberty of a people means law. First of all, it is a common rule of action, applying equally to all within its limits. Liberty means protection of property and life without price, free speech without intimidation, justice without purchase or delay, government without favor or favorites.<sup>36</sup>

Beveridge here defined liberty, which traditionally encompasses both personal freedom and political sovereignty, as the protection under the rule of law. Yet even this definition of liberty demands a great deal of restraint and diligence on the part of the U.S. government if it planned to acquire the Philippines. It needed to ensure private property rights in a land without Western private property laws, democratic institutions to make free speech possible for all Filipino citizens, a fair and speedy court system, and an unbiased government which treats whites and Filipinos fair and equally. It is hard to believe Beveridge intended as much from the other aspects of his speech, which encouraged control of an inferior race and economic exploitation by the United States.

If the speaker left a number of inconsistencies between his definition of liberty and his other statements on the issue, it seems that a more accurate definition of liberty for Beveridge was "the capacity to follow the will of God." By following God's path shown to Beveridge through American history, the United States could achieve its supreme goal without adhering to previous definitions of liberty. Only in this way could imperialism be equated with the enforcement of "liberty" overseas. Thus, agency for the audience was constrained to following or opposing God's plan as defined by Beveridge. Through this shift, Beveridge subtly changed the battleground of expansionism from practical and ethical policy concerns to the interpretation of God's will. If Beveridge's opponents were to argue on the same grounds, they would have to show that God would prefer the United States to limit territorial expansion in order to continue its moral progress at home. If Beveridge on the other hand was true to God's purpose, the United States could expand liberty around the globe by conquering lands as

territories and bringing them "civilization," the other key term of Beveridge's "March of the Flag" oration.

### Civilization: The God Term of Imperialist Rhetoric

Civilization stood as the defining term of imperialist rhetoric in the United States, carrying all the arguments for expansion: Christianity, technology, democratic government, Anglo-Saxon ideas of social protocol, and economic success through capitalism. Beveridge's speech focused primarily on the latter quality of economic civilization, as the others needed less explicit moral justification in his era. Yet the opposition *could* dispute the real economic gains for America, as well as the moral questions of economic exploitation created by European colonizers. Beveridge needed to embed the march of the flag not solely in an economic project of "civilization," but in an economic plan of "civilization" with much deeper values at stake.

Many U.S. citizens in Beveridge's time believed the economic problems of the mid-1890s came from a lack of markets for American goods. Theodore Roosevelt and Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, one of the most popular writers of that time, embraced America's rise to world power. They believed the U.S. navy was vital to continued power and the "civilizing" effects of economic prosperity and military ambition.<sup>37</sup> During the 1880s the United States had begun to build a stronger navy, motivated mostly by the need to protect its economic interests overseas. According to Mahan and Roosevelt, this new military power could be used for more than just economic benefits. With the model of Great Britain in mind, the United States could secure itself against economic decline and revolutionary upheaval by becoming a world leader in every sense of the word—economically, militarily, morally, and symbolically. A shining naval fleet was fundamental to such power.<sup>38</sup>

The United States, which Beveridge described as a "glorious young manhood," must then capitalize on its situation in gaining the Philippine territory and begin a colonial trade system with its newly acquired partners (18). Much like Theodore Roosevelt's famous speech, "The Strenuous Life," Beveridge's speech tied imperial destiny to masculinity, making isolation look weak and cowardly. Beveridge moved to describe the lands of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines (using feminine prepositions, as tradition would have it) as virgin land ready for the taking by the "manhood" that is the American people (18). By couching his economic claims in sexual metaphors, Beveridge explained the economic reward for individual Americans—more jobs, more businesses, more natural resources, and a reduction in income gaps that existed in the turn-of-the-century United States.

Beveridge pushed the point further, asserting that the Democratic Party supported greedy international powers such as England or Germany who would take the Philippines if the United States did not. By shifting the calculus of values, Beveridge made his audience believe failure to acquire the Philippines would not only result in great economic loss for the United States, but also for the Filipino people, who would soon be conquered by a less benign imperial power. In fact, as Beveridge's speech warned the audience, a vote for the opposition would reject all the work of the nation's forefathers, repudiate the soldiers who fought valiantly in the Spanish-American War, and oppose God's sacred covenant to his chosen people. Beveridge showed himself to be not only a gifted orator, but also an excruciatingly savvy politician in his fight for expanding "civilization." A vote for the opposition meant a vote against everything for

which America seemed to stand—enlightened civilization, liberty defined through divine will, and the articulated narrative of the forward moving flag that heralded these key values.

### *The Legacy of the "March of the Flag"*

The immediate effects of the speech were visible and widespread. The crowd applauded and cheered wildly, both during his "march of the flag" narrative and at the end of his speech.<sup>39</sup> Claude Bowers reports the scene as "a remarkable ovation. Never had Indianapolis been more stirred by campaign oratory; never more startled by the novelty of new ideas. Its pride of race, its imagination, had been touched to the utmost. And never was Beveridge to be in finer fettle."<sup>40</sup> The *Indianapolis Journal* published the speech the next day, and the Republican state committee disseminated three hundred thousand reprints throughout the Midwest as campaign fliers.<sup>41</sup> The feedback Beveridge received motivated him to give speeches on the topic of expansion policy at all of his campaign stops, even taking the position to Washington, D.C. as his central platform.

Yet the speech also had occasional critics. A young Democrat in the audience described the speech as "a great string of sophistries and inconsistencies covered by Rhetoric."<sup>42</sup> In addition, soon after Beveridge's rise to the Senate, critiques of imperialism began to accumulate, from some Democrats, religious groups, intellectuals, and German Americans;<sup>43</sup> the foreign policy posited by the speech eventually met dismal failure. The Philippines remained a U.S. territorial possession; however, the bloodshed that soon ravaged the territory shifted national focus to withdrawal as soon as was feasible for regional stability. The formal end of conflict on July 4, 1902, saw 7,000 Americans dead or wounded, while roughly 20,000 Filipino soldiers lost their lives in the struggle. Far more devastating, hundreds of thousands of Filipino civilians lost their lives due to disease, war-related injuries, and famine from agricultural devastation. Even when popular opinion had become decidedly anti-expansionist, Beveridge continued his battle in the Senate to advance the imperialist cause.<sup>44</sup> By 1906, Beveridge found little support at all for the expansion project and began blending his beliefs into mainstream Progressivism.<sup>45</sup>

American isolation policy increasingly gave away, but not at as Beveridge had put forth in his speech. The United States slowly relinquished the idea of a new world empire akin to the British Empire, but events unfolding in Europe during the early twentieth century permanently altered the nation's global status. Both World War I and World War II made way for increasing U.S. dominance in international decision-making and leadership, especially through vehicles such as the League of Nations and later the United Nations. Conflict in Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia, Somalia, Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq, and many other missions around the world continually call the United States to question its militaristic role in the world.

Economic and cultural globalization also creates a greater place for U.S. involvement in world affairs. The movement of transnational capital and labor increasingly brings pressure on the United States to manage its role as economic superpower in trade relations and its voice in institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization (WTO). The "March of the Flag" as imperialist rhetoric continues not through expansionism *per se*, but through the rhetorical strategies enacted to maintain the hegemonic role of the United States in international affairs. Many citizens today, including the nation's leaders, cite

providential destiny as a great factor in U.S. dominance.<sup>46</sup> This idea is inscribed forever in the nation's seal: *Annuit coeptis; Novus ordo seclorum*, or "He has blessed this undertaking; a new order for the ages."

In addition to the religious overtones in American political rhetoric today, liberty continues to serve as a guiding concept of the national political dialogue. After September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, President George W. Bush linked liberty and security as the nation's most important values.<sup>47</sup> Like Beveridge, the Bush administration shifted the fundamental meaning of liberty by tying it to another key term of the era. Precautions were taken to avoid breaches of security in transportation, international trade, immigration, mail, and even public safety. Much as in the past, liberty became altered and constrained by its attachment to other values. In the years following the terrorist attacks, many groups reacted in strong opposition to measures such as the U.S. Patriot Act to strengthen law enforcement regarding terrorism and government wire-tapping, all conducted under the banner of "national security."

Civilization, the god term of the expansionist era, finds much less verbal resonance with contemporary discourse. With high levels of movement across national borders and the decline of white supremacy in the United States, "civilization" as a rhetorical tool for imperial rhetoric has almost disappeared. Civilization, tied up in cultural values, race, economics, and almost every other feature of any given society, becomes to most people a clearly impossible project for expansion. Instead, the United States carries out similar actions in more discreet and justifiable discourses, such as free trade agreements, military action against repressive regimes, and human rights campaigns. The civilizing affects of Western society are still glorified as a means and an end for imperial projects, but with the positive attachments of humane and just action necessary for persuasive appeal today. Although it may be less useful to look for the term "civilization" as a rhetorical tool for expansion, the value underlies a great deal of current foreign policy and is helpful for understanding how these somewhat disparate calls for intervention and imperialism can be understood as a part of a larger transnational process for or against "civilization." Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis would be one attempt to use the term productively in this way.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to its political relevance, the "March of the Flag" oration reveals a great deal about the history of public communication over the last century as well. Given at the very end of an era before electronic media, the public speech was still one of the few ways to reach a wide audience, both in person and through newspaper publication and pamphlets. Further, the "March of the Flag" speech gives us a sense of the respect for oratory in the nineteenth century. The orator trained himself from early childhood throughout college, preparing for occasions to show off his talent as a polished orator and a virtuous citizen. Beveridge published an influential book on public speaking that professed these beliefs related to the field of public speaking. Heavily repulsed by rowdy shouting and name-calling at stump speeches heard in his childhood, Beveridge concentrated on the ethical and epistemological importance of rhetoric, as well as the need for decorum in clothing and style. In concluding his work, Beveridge comments, "So be as brief as you are simple, as plain as you are fair, and, content with a good job well done, stop when you are through."<sup>49</sup> To the reader today, it seems the author could learn much from his simple words. The full speech delivered in Indianapolis was quite long and blatantly unethical to the contemporary reader.

However, it is always important to locate public address in its particular context and realize its situated position in history. Before entertainment in radio, television, or motion pictures, public speech served even more important functions in society than it does today. It built community through collective emotionality, through the dissemination of knowledge, and through the elevation in political society of the orator. Similar to national political party conventions or a protest march today, speech situations often arose in this era as the pinnacle of a day filled with events. A rigorous and emotion-filled speech could have been the most appropriate response for Beveridge.

As for the "fair" and ethical claims of Beveridge's speech, it is hard to read the text today without questioning Beveridge's moral intentions. International exploitation, racial subordination, and a divine agenda under the rubric of "liberty" are less transparent today in normalized political discourse, although the possibility of such aims cannot be ruled out in contemporary circumstances. The context of the era given in this essay shows the currents of opinion—the historic development of the Manifest Destiny and Social Darwinist ideologies up to the 1890s and the economic and military competition of European imperial powers over the nineteenth century. For many of the people of Beveridge's era, his claims would seem ethical and, more importantly, progressive and divinely inspired. By discreetly altering the definition of liberty and connecting it with the ideal of "civilization," Beveridge grounded a forward moving march that Americans appeared bound to follow. To fall out of line with the march of imperialism meant to fall out from the chief values of the United States in 1898 and the narrative of the nation up to that point. Although persuasion and communication are not by their very nature unethical, they certainly contain the capacity for ill ends when not considered critically. By reviewing the principles and arguments of the past in such a way, by situating them in their historical context, and by continually gauging them against contemporary practice, speakers and audiences can approach a more ethical way to live in an increasingly interconnected world. If citizens, students, and orators alike take this process as a personal duty, Beveridge's hope for a more fair way of speaking and acting could become a reality. Only then might "March of the Flag" become a great speech in American history.

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#### Notes

1 The nation isolated itself from *most* international wars, however, the United States was by no means isolated from all international disputes up to this time. For more on the subject, see Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

2 This essay incorporates the dual definition of imperialism, both as the exercise of political authority over territories by a sovereign nation and as the exploitation of foreign entities. Thus, while direct territorial conquest or settlement is not normative today, imperialist rhetoric still exerts influence on the national and international level. Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* argued along these lines that capitalism necessarily induced imperialism in order to find new markets and resources across national borders. This tendency toward exploitation can also be found outside of Marxist discourse, including international trade theory and the philosophies of Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1958). When I specifically refer to the imperial military policies supported by Beveridge and others of the era, I use the terms "expansion" and "expansionist" to denote the specific mode of imperialism that explicitly supports territorial acquisition.

3 Edgar Dewitt Jones, *Lords of Speech: Portraits of Fifteen American Orators* (Chicago, IL: Willlett, Clark, and Company, 1937), 195.

4 Jones, *Lords of Speech*, 197.

5 John Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge: American Nationalist* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1971), 13.

6 Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge*, 22.

7 At this time in Indiana, the state legislature, not the populace, elected its U.S. Senator to office. Charles F. Remy, "The Election of Beveridge to the Senate," *Indiana Magazine of History* 36 (June 1940): 123-135.

8 Charles G. Dawes, *A Journal of the McKinley Years* (Chicago, IL: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1950), 185.

9 Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge*, 102, 112-121.

10 James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

11 Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge*, 188.

12 Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge*, 320.

13 For example, Henry F. Graff, ed., "Introduction," *American Imperialism and the Philippine Insurrection: Testimony taken from Hearings on Affairs in the Philippine Islands before the Senate Committee on the Philippines* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1969), vii; Boot, *The Savage Wars*, 103.

14 Letter to George W. Perkins, 7 May 1898. Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge*, 28.

15 Boot, *The Savage Wars*, 105

16 Filipinos felt betrayed when U.S. forces continued to occupy the island nation in the years to come, eventually leading to the Philippine-American War from 1898 to 1913. See Stuart Creighton Miller, *"Benevolent Assimilation": The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982).

17 Beveridge to Charles G. Dawes, 25 April 1898. Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge*, 26.

18 Claude G. Bowers, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1932), 73.

19 Bowers, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era*, 76.

20 Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), xii.

21 John L. O'Sullivan, "The True Title," *Morning News* (27 Dec 1845), 1. For more, see Julius W. Pratt, "The Origin of 'Manifest Destiny,'" *The American Historical Review* 32 no. 4 (July 1927), 795-798.

22 Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (1885; reprint, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).

23 Strong, *Our Country*, 252-256.

24 Here and elsewhere passages from "March of the Flag" are cited parenthetically with reference to paragraph numbers in the text of the speech that accompanies this essay.

25 Again, Strong summarizes the arguments of the time best in his work, especially in the chapter on "The Anglo-Saxon and World Future," *Our Country*, 200-218.

26 Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*, 65.

27 Miller, "*Benevolent Assimilation*," 26.

28 Henry C. Lodge, "Our Blundering Foreign Policy," *The Forum* 19 (March 1895), 17.

29 Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge*, 23.

30 Stuart Hall, "The Rediscovery of 'Ideology': Return of the Repressed in Media Studies," *Culture, Society, and the Media*, ed. Gurevitch et al. (London: Methuen, 1982), 56-90.

31 Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1920).

32 As a technical word in rhetorical theory, an *ideograph* is a one-term summary of one aspect of a people's historical ideology. For more, see Michael Calvin McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (February 1980), 1-16.

33 Daniel Webster, "Webster-Hayne Debate on Foot's Resolution," in *American Rhetorical Discourse*, Third Edition, eds. Ronald F. Reid and James F. Klumpp (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2005), 370.

34 Albert Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy," *The Meaning of The Times and Other Speeches* (Indianapolis, IL: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1908), 59.

35 Eric T. L. Love, *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004), 6.

36 Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy," 78.

37 J. Michael Hogan, *The Panama Canal in American Politics: Domestic Advocacy and the Evolution of Policy* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 20-31.

38 See Alfred T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (1890; reprint, New York: Hill and Wang, 1957).

39 Braeman, *Albert J. Beveridge*, 27.

40 Bowers, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era*, 76.

41 Beveridge, "The March of the Flag," *The Meaning of The Times and Other Speeches*, 47.

42 Holman Hamilton and Gayle Thornbrough, ed., *Indianapolis in the "Gay Nineties": High School Diaries of Claude G. Bowers* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1964), 202.

43 Many German Americans believed imperial ambitions on the part of the United States were part of a larger scheme for war with their "Fatherland." Miller, "*Benevolent Assimilation*," 19.



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44 By the time of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, sentiment against the war in the Philippines was strong and the government sponsored an "ethnic Filipino village" to try and encourage a civilizing sentiment among Americans. Sharon Delmendo, *The Star-Entangled Banner: One Hundred Years of America in the Philippines* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 50-53. For more on international sentiment at the time during and following the Great War, see Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 48-69.

45 A. Cheree Carlson, "Albert J. Beveridge as Imperialist and Progressive: The Means Justify the End," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 52 (Winter 1988), 46.

46 President Bush's most famous address just after September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks warned, "The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them." He continued, "Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice—assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may He watch over the United States of America." Taken from "Freedom at War with Fear: Address to a Joint Session of Congress," United States Capitol Washington, D.C. *The White House*, 20 Sept 2001. Available at <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>>. Internet. Accessed on 12 Nov 2006.

47 One example comes from the speech President Bush gave on the one year anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, in which he stated, "We owe them, and their children, and our own, the most enduring monument we can build: a world of liberty and security made possible by the way America leads, and by the way Americans lead our lives." Given on Ellis Island in New York, NY. *The White House*, 11 Sept 2002. Available at <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020911-3.html#>>. Internet. Accessed on 12 Nov 2006.

48 The ideograph <civilization> is examined in this context in: Dana L. Cloud, "'To Veil the Threat of Terror': Afghan Women and the <Clash of Civilizations> in the Imagery of the U.S. war on Terrorism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (2004): 285-306. Samuel Huntington's thesis in international theory states that national disputes and wars will decline in the era of globalization, and conflict will largely be fought between the major civilizations of the world instead. Disparities and disagreements regarding world civilization will be the major issue in Huntington's opinion. See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22-49.

49 Albert Beveridge, *The Art of Public Speaking* (Los Angeles, CA: Nash Publishing, 1974); reprint of 1924 original.