

PrÃ©cis 1

Countries, United States



Précis 1 Fighting for American Manhood Kristin Hoganson has a very interesting idea, which she defends very well with a lot of evidence. Hoganson argues that gender politics played a major role in forcing America into the Spanish American and Philippine wars. She makes many great points throughout her book, *Fighting for American Manhood*, which perfectly back up her main argument. Hoganson believes that the majority of America felt a need to be masculine. They could not back down from a fight. America, as a whole, was too proud of a nation. These views that the public, and many politicians, expressed led to McKinley declaring war and fighting back for the Maine explosion. McKinley wanted to avoid going to war but the Jingoists were too large a group and eventually McKinley had no choice. They argued that allowing the Maine explosion to happen without punishment would make a joke out of America. We had to fight to show our authority. America needed to show that it was an honorable nation that would not back down, that it would come together and take action. People did not just say that America needs to show off its manhood, they were even attacking McKinley's manhood. Hoganson's best evidence for her argument is in the political cartoons that she includes throughout the book. They show the views of the people at the time. An example would be the one where Uncle Sam is holding McKinley up and telling him all he needs is a backbone. All of these cartoons help back up Hoganson's thesis. These were drawn by people who experienced first hand what America was going through. As for the Philippine –American war, Hoganson shows very well how manliness came into play. First of all, our war with the Spanish is what originally got us involved with the Philippines. Hoganson argues that Americans viewed the

Philippine people as unmanly. This allowed them to say it was right for the United States to control them. Americans said they were "lacking the manly character seen as necessary for self-government" (Hoganson, 134). In the eyes of most Americans, they were only savages. Hoganson also says that we viewed them as children. We had to do the manly and paternal thing, which was to care for them until they matured. Hoganson shows how many used the same child argument but flipped towards America. They said that if we cannot care for another nation, then we are immature and child-like. We had to show our dominance by becoming more imperialistic. America "had grown strong, it was ready to take on the manly role of governing dependents" (Hoganson, 157). When putting all this together, Hoganson wants to show just how important a role manhood has had in our history. Kristen Hoganson does a good job of providing plenty of evidence to support her claims. However, one fault is that she does not really explore the other side of her claim. She should explain counter arguments and try to refute them. Her use of political cartoons was the best aspect of the book. Overall, her book was persuading and convincing and opened my eyes to an idea I never thought of before.