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Abstract

Cuba has been an object of U.S. fascination since the early nineteenth century and the acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase. When Cuba rose up in revolution against Spain, the United States purposefully portrayed the struggle to the American public as a situation necessitating a U.S. intervention. This involved the making of political cartoons and emotional appeals of war accounts from the perspective of an American journalist, Richard Harding Davis. Once the United States and Spain entered a war in 1898, the manipulation of the image of Cuba shifted to portray the question of U.S. acquisition and the imperial anxieties involved. These questions, promoted by the media, were then put into conjunction with “The White Man’s Burden,” thus shifting public opinion and resulting in the Platt Amendment in 1902, which gave Cuba independence inlaid with heavy U.S. economic ties. This paper argues that the United States, as an expansionist imperial power, used the media to gain public support for its expansion into Cuba, and as a result of this expansion, underwent a shift in imperial identity, which resulted in the Platt Amendment and a new form of imperial expansion.

Introduction

The Spanish-American War, also known as the Cuban War of Independence, was an event in 1898 that deeply marked the global political and economic stratospheres.¹ With the acquisition of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam, and Cuba, the United States gained territory with which to expand its imperial influence. Although Cuba was later declared independent in 1902 through the authority of the Platt

1 Introduction based on the global context provided by Peter H. Smith in his work *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World* and Louis A. Pérez in *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 96-164.

Amendment, the United States still received immense economic advantages in its relationship with the island nation and maintained the ability to exercise certain political sovereignty over it.² The interference of the United States in the conflict between Cuba and Spain demonstrates the “contest” between the growing imperial apparatus of the United States and the diminishing colonial power of Spain.³ The acquisition of Cuba had been a goal for the United States since the presidency of Thomas Jefferson, who brokered the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, essentially starting the ideology of Manifest Destiny.⁴ This interest in Cuba was interrupted by the Civil War, but was resumed by the time of the Ten Years’ War in Cuba and its aftermath.⁵

In order to gain agency over Cuba, the United States created tension with Spain by influencing American public opinion with imagery of the relationship between Cuba and Spain that would be most beneficial to their cause. The general portrayal of this conflict depicted Spain as an evil, abusive pirate, Cuba as an unwilling, beautiful female victim, and the United States as Uncle Sam, a hero in the disposition to rescue Cuba from all harm.⁶ These political cartoons were mass-produced through nationwide newspapers and were often accompanied by eyewitness accounts of the existing struggle between Cuban nationalists and the Spanish imperial structure.⁷ These eyewitness accounts were sent by journalist Richard Harding Davis in 1896, who was dispatched by William Randolph Hearst, who is known for the creation of “yellow journalism” or “imperial news,” which often involved “fabricat[ing] the news.”⁸ These accounts, along with the drawings sent with them, became a tool through which the United States could further manipulate a narrative advantageous to their goal of taking Cuba from Spain.⁹

After the United States acquired Cuba, along with other Spanish territories, a shift occurred in the political imagery, as Uncle Sam was no longer depicted rescuing

2 For excerpts of the Platt Amendment, see Appendix X.

3 Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985), 60-62.

4 Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 23-24.

5 Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 25-26.

6 John J. Johnson, *Latin America in Caricature* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1980), 81, 85.

7 Richard Harding Davis, *Cuba in War Time*, (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

8 Nirmal Trivedi, “Staging Unincorporated Power: Richard Harding Davis and the Critique of Imperial News.” *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 3, no. 2 (2011): 2.

9 Illustrations by Frederic Remington in *Cuba in War Time*.

a beautiful young woman but was now “burdened” with black children.¹⁰ This imagery indicates a change in attitude toward the acquisition of Cuba as race became a factor in the question of the annexation of the territory.¹¹ This further demonstrates the impact of propaganda on American public opinion, as along with these images came the influence of the poem “The White Man’s Burden,” which called for the United States to impose its “white” influence on other countries while at the same time maintaining a superiority complex by labeling these people as “others.”¹² As a result, when the United States gave Cuba its independence in 1902 with the Platt Amendment, the government made sure to conserve its position as the sole foreign influence on the island.¹³

The influence of propaganda on public opinion during the Spanish-American War and after is important to study as this media both garnered public support for the machinations of the American imperial structure and exposed its imperial intentions, which was to continue expanding territorially and economically into surrounding countries. This imperial expansion and acquisition of colonies and people was a continuation of the European tradition of colonization and occupation, incorporating it into the ideology of Manifest Destiny.¹⁴ How the United States portrayed the cause of Cuban independence in its media during the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the effect of its portrayal in the gaining of imperial ownership of that independence is a question that has been framed in many different contexts. My argument to this question is that the United States used the propagandist portrayal of Cuba before, during, and after the Spanish-American War in 1898 to gain public support for its expansionist machinations and the appropriation of the ownership of Cuban autonomy, reflecting the cultural fluctuations of imperial identity. I further postulate that after the Spanish-American War, the imperial structure of the United States went through a moment of identity crisis, as it struggled with the question of annexing Cuba. The publication of the poem “A White Man’s Burden” and the publication of certain post-war images demonstrate this shift of expansionist policy, based on the fluctuating imperial culture.

10 Johnson, *Latin America in Caricature*, 81, 85, 163, 169, 175, 217.

11 Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 26.

12 For the full poem, see Appendix IX.

13 See Appendix X, Article I, II, III.

14 Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 41-51.

Historiography

The literature surrounding the subject of Cuba and its relationship to the United States during 1898 is well studied by scholars, who have produced various approaches to analyzing it. The two approaches most relevant to my argument are the cultural-political approach and the racial analysis of the historical situation.¹⁵ The first approach refers to an intersection of culture and politics in the manipulation of the American public, which includes the production of media and its reception as a cultural interaction. The political nature to this approach refers to how U.S. policy toward Cuba impacted the creation of media and the effect of this media on the political gains of the United States. The second approach focuses on the racial aspect in the portrayal of Cuba in post Spanish-American War political cartoons, as Cuba became represented by a black child. I use this approach to analyze the impact of the poem “The White Man’s Burden” on the imperial identity crisis of the United States, and the ramifications of white supremacist media on the American public.

My third approach to this subject is to view the United States as an imperial power. While this approach underlies all analysis on the relationship between Cuba and the United States, I point it out as its own approach as I specifically analyze the imperial dynamics surrounding this situation and the imperial identity crisis that came after the acquisition of Cuba. Many scholars use this approach when looking at Cuba in 1898, as they look at the role of media within the imperial structure of power.¹⁶ I have also drawn on the approach of looking at the sexualization of images as a means to promote empire, especially when looking at the representation of Cuba as a woman.¹⁷

For my analysis, I have drawn heavily from the works of historian Louis A. Pérez, who largely uses the cultural political approach to the subject. In his monograph *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* and the chapter

15 For a cultural-political approach, see Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* and for a racial analytic approach, see Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World* and Gretchen Murphy, *Shadowing the White Man’s Burden: U.S. Imperialism and the Problem of the Color Line*.

16 For other scholars on American empire, see Simeon Man, *Soldiering Through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific*, Nirmal Trivedi, “Staging Unincorporated Power: Richard Harding Davis and the Critique of Imperial News,” and Gretchen Murphy, *Shadowing the White Man’s Burden: U.S. Imperialism and the Problem of the Color Line*.

17 For more on this subject, Anne McClintock, “Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising,” *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995).

“Sources of Possession” from the work *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture*, Pérez explores the way the image of Cuba has been construed by the United States and argues that it “acted on the formation of the American consciousness of nationhood.”¹⁸ While Pérez sought to cover the expansive history of the image of Cuba, I focus on the time range of 1896 to 1903. I also focus on the concept of “the formation of the American consciousness of nationhood” by focusing on the United States as an empire.¹⁹

Louis A. Pérez contributed more to this literature with his chapter “Sugar and Independence” from the collection *United States-Latin American Relations: 1850-1903*.²⁰ In this chapter, Pérez approaches the Spanish-American War through an economic lens to analyze why the United States set up an economic system of dependency. This is interesting to analyze with the chapter “Persistence of Patterns” from the work *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture*, as the chapter provides a more political, but still economic, analysis on the relationship between Cuba and Spain, with it ultimately leading up to the Spanish-American War.²¹ This chapter also analyzes the cultural effects that the initial relationship with the United States caused, as a foundation for further analysis of these long-term effects on Cuba in the twentieth century. Within my own analysis, I use this economic approach to contextualize the interest of American economic expansion into the territory while looking at the relationship between Spain and Cuba and how it was portrayed by American imperialistic media.

In the work *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World*, scholar Peter H. Smith analyzes the international politics surrounding the relationship between the United States and Latin American countries. To approach the conflict of the Spanish-American War and its impact on the relationship between the United States and Cuba, I have used the monograph to gain contextual

18 Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008) and from *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 280-325.

19 Louis A. Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 280-325.

20 Louis A. Pérez “Cuba: Sugar and Independence” from the collection edited by Thomas M. Leonard, *United States-Latin American Relations, 1850-1903* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1999), 35-57.

21 Louis A. Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 96-164.

information on the imperial implications of the economic imposition of the United States on Cuba.²² Smith argues that the Platt Amendment, which solidified the economic relationship between Cuba and the United States and recognized the independence of Cuba, did not include the admittance of Cuba into the Union in part because of the issue of race; Smith asserts that “the whole question of Cuba became embroiled in domestic sectional controversy, at the North objected to the prospect of admitting a new slave state,” as this argument led up to the Civil War and the temporary holding off of American interest.²³

Scholar Gretchen Murphy also takes a racial approach by focusing on the poem “The White Man’s Burden” in her monograph *Shadowing the White Man’s Burden: U.S. Imperialism and the Problem of the Color Line*. Murphy uses a racial analysis to demonstrate the effect of the poem on the image of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War.²⁴ Murphy also takes into consideration American imperialism when analyzing its relationship with the Philippines. This work has allowed me to analyze the poem “The White Man’s Burden” in conjunction with the postwar political cartoons of Cuba, as Murphy focuses her work on the effect of this poem on the imaging of the Philippines in the United States.

To gain context on the account *Cuba in War Time* by Richard Harding Davis, I have selected two articles with different approaches. The first article, “The Spanish-American War as a Bourgeois Testing Ground: Richard Harding Davis, Frank Norris and Stephen Crane” by David Kramer draws comparisons between the work of three journalists and analyzes how their accounts of the Spanish-Cuban conflict appealed to upper-class Americans for their support of an American intervention.²⁵ I use this social class approach with the work of Richard Harding Davis as it affected the way in which class was depicted in these political cartoons, especially in the contrast of American wealth and Cuban poverty.²⁶ The second article “Staging Unincorporated

22 Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-23.

23 Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 26.

24 Gretchen Murphy, *Shadowing the White Man’s Burden: U.S. Imperialism and the Problem of the Color Line* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010).

25 David Kramer, “The Spanish-American War as a Bourgeois Testing Ground: Richard Harding Davis, Frank Norris and Stephen Crane.” *War, Literature, and the Arts: An International Journal of the Humanities*, 27 (2015).

26 See John J. Johnson, *Latin America in Caricature* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1980), 81, 85, 217, 89, and 93.

Power: Richard Harding Davis and the Critique of Imperial News” by Nirmal Trivedi is an analysis solely on the work of Richard Harding Davis in conjunction with the role of media under the American imperialist structure.²⁷ This is important to the analysis I am conducting as I am examining the way the media was used by the American imperialist structure to sway public opinion to its decisions.

I have also read the work of scholars who analyze other modern imperialist structures to use as comparative cases to the American imperialist structure of intrusion. The monograph *Soldiering Through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing of Empire* by Simeon Man is the most compelling comparison as Man is investigating the role of the U.S. military in the treatment of Filipinos, a group of people brought under the American empire in 1898.²⁸ Man also analyzes this subject using a racial approach, which is a compelling comparison in terms of “model minorities.”²⁹ The monograph *Torture and the Twilight of Empire* by Marnia Lazreg also contains another comparative case, especially in her analysis of women and rape, as she examines the symbology of rape in imperial war.³⁰ Using this approach, I will be examining images of Cuba as a woman, and the implied sexual violence between the representations of the colonial Spain and the imperial United States.³¹

Within the literature that I am using to analyze my primary sources, I will also be drawing from the work of Elaine Scarry in *The Body in Pain* to analyze the conflict between the United States and Spain as a competition over the rights to Cuba.³² Although Scarry focuses her work on torture, this idea is applicable to the study of the two empires as Cuba was portrayed as a collective body representing the populations that lived on the island. There is also an objectification of these populations, as their collective image was taken and twisted to serve the American imperial structure and was heavily scrutinized as a way of nationhood building.³³

27 Nirmal Trivedi, “Staging Unincorporated Power: Richard Harding Davis and the Critique of Imperial News.” *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 3, no. 2 (2011).

28 Simeon Man, *Soldiering Through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2018).

29 Simeon Man, *Soldiering Through Empire*, 12 and 137.

30 Marnia Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

31 See Appendix I and II for the best examples.

32 Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985).

33 Approaches similar to Peter H. Smith in *Talons of the Eagle* and Louis A. Pérez in his extensive literature.

Along with this, I will also draw from the work of Anne McClintock in the monograph *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, as I will analyze the sexual nature of the imperial contest between Spain and the United States, and how it was communicated through the symbol of the ocean.³⁴

Argument

To support my argument, I have chosen eight political cartoons, the collection of news accounts titled *Cuba in War Time* by Richard Harding Davis, and the poem “The White Man’s Burden” by Rudyard Kipling to explore how the manipulated image of Cuba affected the United States as an imperial power. I have divided these sources into time periods, before the Spanish-American War, after the war from 1898 to 1902, and after the passing of the Platt Amendment in 1902. I have placed at least two political cartoons in each time period to track the shifts in imagery based on the other primary sources: *Cuba in War Time* affecting the imagery before the war and “The White Man’s Burden” having an impact after the war.

In 1896, Richard Harding Davis, a journalist, was sent to Cuba to report on the situation between the Spanish military and the Cuban nationalists. In the collection *Cuba in War Time*, Davis presents individual reports as chapters along with illustrations by Frederic Remington, who was also sent as a correspondent.³⁵ These reports and images impacted the view of Cuba and Spain in the United States, as these accounts created an implicit call to action to the American public to support U.S. intervention in Cuba. This effect is seen in the account “The Fate of the Pacificos” in which Davis recounts the forced movement of peaceful “country” Cubans by Spanish General Weyler to the cities, as a means “to prevent the pacificos from giving help to the insurgents.”³⁶ Davis concluded this account with an appeal to the audience as,

It is a situation which charity might help to better, but in any event it is a condition which deserves the most serious consideration from men of common sense and judgement...nor put aside as a necessary evil of war.³⁷

34 Anne McClintock, “Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising,” *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995), 220.

35 Davis, *Cuba in War Time*.

36 Davis, *Cuba in War Time*, 41-55.

37 Davis, 55.

The political cartoon, “The Cuban Melodrama” (see Appendix I) published on June 3, 1896, displays the impact of Richard Harding Davis on the image of the situation, as the drama from these accounts are displayed as a show, with Spain as the villain, the United States as the hero, and Cuba as a female victim begging for help from the United States. The image speaks clearly as a call for the United States to intervene and become the defender of Cuba against the villainous Spain. As scholar Elaine Scarry describes war:

war too—as is quietly registered in the language of theatres of battle, international dialogues, scenarios, and stages—has within it a large element of the symbolic and is ultimately...based on a simple and startling blend of the real and the fictional.³⁸

The United States and Spain are further made oppositional by their contrasting colors, Spain being depicted in dark clothes and the United States clothed in light. Spain and the United States, two imperial powers engaged in contest over Cuba, are also portrayed as economic equals, as both stand in powerful stances and have shoes on, while Cuba, portrayed as below both, is on her knees and barefoot. The image also subliminally promotes the idea of annexing Cuba into the United States by portraying the star of the flag of Cuba right under the stars of the United States, which happen to be on the pants of Uncle Sam; this imagery implies a sexual aspect to this acquisition, as the flag of Cuba is portrayed as over her genital area and the implication is this star will be added to the pants of the United States. This aspect is one of territorial and gendered ownership, as Marnia Lazreg observes that “penetrating a region was thus symbolically synonymous with rape.”³⁹

Another prewar political cartoon, titled “Spain’s ‘Sense of Justice,’” (see Appendix II) was published in 1898, leading up to the war, as it depicts the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine in the background. The image focuses on the portrayal of Spain as a villainous pirate, holding a sword to his left, with which he has just slaughtered the female Cuba, and a torch on his right, with which he has just caused the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine. The personified Spain stands tall, straddling the female Cuba, whose corpse is extremely skinny, an indication of poverty and starvation, which

38 Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 62.

39 Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire*, 155.

also comes from an account from Davis, as “[their] skin drawn so tightly over their little bodies that the bones showed through as plainly as the rings under a glove.”⁴⁰ The smoke coming from the torch that Spain carries lets out the names of Spanish military figures Pizarro, Cortes, Velasquez, Alva, and Weyler; they refer to conquistadores Francisco Pizarro, Hernán Cortés, and Diego Velasquez, a colonial captain, Fernando Álvarez, Duke of Alva, and Valeriano Weyler, a Spanish general during the Spanish-American War.⁴¹ The presence of these names denote figures of the Black Legend, calling back to cruelty and injustice, creating a historical torch which Spain in 1898 was said to have passed on in its administration in Cuba. The position which the personified Spain is depicted to have over the female Cuba also contains a sexual connotation, as Spain straddles her body in ownership.⁴²

These prewar images carry three common tropes which are found in the stories of Richard Harding Davis: the villainy of Spain, the poverty and victimhood of Cuba, and the call of intervention from the United States. Both political cartoons depict Spain as a dark-clothed villain, complete with large pirate hats and exaggerated facial features, meant to look unattractive. This goes along with the description of the Spaniards by Davis, as he blames the destruction of the island on Spanish General Weyler:

After he had obtained complete control of the cities
he decided to lay waste the country and starve the
revolutionists into submission.⁴³

In both images, Cuba is shown to be a female victim, never standing and constantly subservient to the imperial powers that battle over her. Cuba was also portrayed as a white-skinned woman, with long dark hair, especially in “The Cuban Melodrama,” as it is meant to construe Cuba as an attractive woman. In both images, the poverty of Cuba is alluded to with the absence of shoes and her overall depicted body, as the latter image portrays Cuba as a starving woman. This comes from the information that Davis provided in his stories, as he describes this second revolution as being fought by “pueblo” or the “plain people.”⁴⁴ The call for intervention by the United States is

40 Davis, *Cuba in War Time*, 53.

41 For more on Valeriano Weyler, see Richard Harding Davis, *Cuba in War Time*.

42 For more on rape in the imperial apparatus, see Marnia Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire*, 155-169.

43 Davis, *Cuba in War Time*, 20.

44 Davis, *Cuba in War Time*, 11.

present in both political cartoons, as the first explicitly shows Uncle Sam in defense of Cuba while the second only shows the injustices that must be combated. The call for action in “Spain’s ‘Sense of Justice’” comes from the pose that Spain is in, as if inviting the United States to oppose his tyranny over Cuba, as he is proud of what he has done.

During and immediately after the Spanish-American War, a shift in the attitude toward Cuba is evident in the political cartoons of the time period. Since the conflict against Spain had been resolved, there was no longer a need for the personification of Spain in these images, and all that was left were some allusions to Cuba being free from Spanish bondage.⁴⁵ In some images, Cuba was still portrayed as an attractive woman like in prewar cartoons, but with some accentuated indications of youthfulness. In other images, the construction of Cuba represents a dramatic change, as images began to use black children to represent the country. This change in image reflects the imperial crisis that the United States faced, as it struggled with the question of admitting Cuba as a state or giving it independence. The political cartoons represent the discourse over that decision and show the movement the United States wanted to take as an empire toward a more economic sphere of power than an ideological empire based on Manifest Destiny.

The political cartoon “Uncle Sam’s New Class in the Art of Self-Government” (see Appendix III) was published on August 27, 1898, immediately after the Spanish-American War ended. This image shows the immediate shift in the representation of Cuba, as Uncle Sam takes the position of teacher, and Cuba as two unruly, black children in the classroom. Cuba no longer has a singular representation of itself, but is split into two representatives, a Cuban ex-patriot and a guerrilla, which was the name used by Richard Harding Davis for the Spanish loyalists.⁴⁶ This represents the anxiety that the United States had over the leftover conflict that Cuba had, as these two groups still existed. While the two figures fight with each other, the leader of the classroom, Uncle Sam, has placed another dark-skinned child, named Aguinaldo, in the back of the classroom as punishment. This figure represents Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of Filipino independence against Spain and the United States.⁴⁷ By being placed in the back of the classroom, Aguinaldo is set up as an example of what would happen if the divided forces in Cuba would revolt against the United States. The

45 Johnson, *Latin America in Caricature*, 89 (see Appendix V).

46 Davis, *Cuba in War Time*.

47 For more information on Aguinaldo, see <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/aguinaldo.html>.

figure to the left of the bickering children represents the Cuban general Máximo Gómez, who retired from service after the war and refused political involvement in the establishment of the Cuban government.⁴⁸ This figure, along with the serene female figures of Hawaii and Puerto Rico, were meant to be “model minorities” or good examples to the bickering children of Cuba.⁴⁹ Hawaii and Puerto Rico are also dualistic, as the figure of Hawaii is dark-skinned and barefoot while Puerto Rico is white-skinned and has shoes, denoting that whatever the economic status or race, this is how governments under the United States should comport themselves.

Another postwar political cartoon titled “John Bull: It’s really most extraordinary what training will do. Why, only the other day I thought that man unable to support himself” (see Appendix V) was published in 1898 with the acquisition of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam. John Bull is the political personification of England, akin to how Uncle Sam personifies the United States, and in this cartoon, John Bull voices the admiration that the crowd surrounding Uncle Sam has for the central figure. The crowd is made up of men dressed in military uniforms, some labelled as European powers, like Russia or Austria. The central figure, Uncle Sam stands performatively on a platform with the title banner “Army and Navy,” holding five figures meant to represent black children. These figures represent the new acquisitions to the United States empire, as each holds an American flag with the name of their territories: bottom left to right being Philippines, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Cuba, and Guam. The bottom right figure that represents Guam carries the name “Ladrone” as Guam was once associated with the “Ladrones Islands” which later became the “Mariana Islands.”⁵⁰ This imperial image represents the United States as a strong force supported by its military, showing off the acquisition of these new territories, while Cuba is represented as a black child being shown off to the world as an imperial victory. This image also communicates the movement toward the representation of Cuba as a burden, although the United States maintains its strength in this image as it is shown to control Cuba with one hand.

While the shift in the representation of Cuba was abrupt after the conclusion of the Spanish-American War with the question of annexation, other political cartoons

48 For more information on Gómez, see <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/gomez.html>.

49 For more on “model minorities” in the U.S. empire, see Simeon Man, *Soldiering Through Empire*, 12 and 137.

50 For general information about this change, see <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mariana-Islands>.

maintained the image of Cuba as a woman. Published in 1901, before the passing of the Platt Amendment, “Miss Cuba Receives an Invitation” (see Appendix V) depicts Cuba as a newly freed woman being invited by “Miss Columbia” or the representation of Washington D.C. to join the Union as the forty-sixth state. This image indicates a shift in the representation of the United States, as instead of Uncle Sam, Miss Columbia is being used, an indication of sexual propriety in this new relationship; however, the two beings are not presented as equals, as Cuba is still barefoot and poor while the United States remains seated on a throne of power and dressed regally. The ability of Cuba to stand as a woman indicates a shift in political position, despite the elevation of the United States in the image.

Four years after the Spanish-American War, the United States passed the Platt Amendment of 1902, giving Cuba its independence. The decision came after much deliberation but was ultimately decided by the factor of race.⁵¹ While Cuba was given its independence, the United States still maintained economic benefits with the island, as it was “Something of a substitute of Cuban sovereignty into an extension of the U.S. national system” indicating a shift of imperialism, from the land-holding ideology of Manifest Destiny, to an empire based on economic influence and control maintained by the U.S. military.⁵² This decision was preceded by the publication of “The White Man’s Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands” (see Appendix IX), a poem by the British Rudyard Kipling, which called for the United States to:

Send forth the best ye breed—
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captive’s need;⁵³

This poem molds the identity of the territorial acquisitions from a possible new state to that of a needy captive. This language also connotes that of slavery, as the white man is called to serve captives, differentiating the white man as free and the imperial captive as a nation below them. The imperial captives are also characterized as,

Your new caught sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.⁵⁴

51 Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 26.

52 Pérez, “Cuba: Sugar and Independence,” *United States-Latin American Relations, 1850-1903*, 53.

53 See Appendix IX, lines 2-4.

54 See Appendix IX, lines 7-8.

This characterization, while already present in previous political cartoons in the representation of Cuba as a black child, became more exaggerated after the publication of “The White Man’s Burden” in 1899 and the passing of the Platt Amendment in 1902.

The political cartoon titled “Cuba: ‘Yo’ watch me chile, mebbe yo’ hab a chance yo’s’e’f some day” (see Appendix VI) published in 1902 depicts Cuba as an infantilized, black man addressing himself to a shorter black man who represents the Philippines. The cartoon depicts Cuba in the action of holding a cigar releasing smoke that carries the word “independence” on it, meaning that the advice he is giving to the Philippines figure is meant as political advice. This represents the shift in American imperial identity, as the United States promoted a new form of imperial acquisition that involved the ownership of political status without the commitment of annexing a territory.

Another post Platt Amendment political cartoon, titled “Abandoned” (see Appendix VII) and published in 1902, depicts Cuba as a beautiful, sleeping young woman abandoned on a beach by two figures, Congress and the Beet Sugar Industry. These two male figures are depicted as obese figures dressed in fine clothing with almost comedic expressions on their faces. This Ariadne-type situation expresses the worries of “Many individuals who followed developments in the Caribbean,”⁵⁵ as they did not know how Cuba would do on its own. This demonstrates the effect of prewar imagery and the accounts of Richard Harding Davis on the American public, as many still felt a responsibility toward Cuba. This also shows the response some had to the shift in imperial identity, as the figures representing the United States bid farewell to Cuba as a woman and as an acquisition to the Union as an official state. While this cartoon is mostly a critique, the representation of Cuba as a woman has changed from that of poverty-stricken and barefoot to a richly dressed woman with shoes on. The flag of Cuba has also changed position, as it is no longer a small addition to the outfit of Cuba, but now is large enough to cover both the female body and the beach. The depiction of a transformed, more prosperous Cuba next to the beach recalls the fixation on colonial transformation through interaction with an empire, often depicted on nineteenth century soap ads.⁵⁶

55 Johnson, *Latin America in Caricature*, 92-93.

56 McClintock, “Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising,” *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, 220.

Another political cartoon, titled “Uncle Sam’s Burden” (see Appendix VIII) and published in 1903 after the passing of the Platt Amendment, depicts Uncle Sam carrying three black children labeled as the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. The exhausted Uncle Sam is being beckoned by a fourth black child labeled as the “American Negro” who tells Uncle Sam to “Lift me up too; I was here first.”⁵⁷ This image, alluding to “The White Man’s Burden,” communicates that while Cuba was considered independent, it was still perceived as a burden on the United States, as the imperial apparatus created an economic and social relationship that did not require the official annexation of Cuba into the Union.

Conclusion

The Spanish-American War in 1898 left a deep impression in the field of political cartoons. The images produced by the media expressed both the aims of the American imperial system and responses from the American public. While these publications acted as a conversation, other forms of media, like the news stories by Richard Harding Davis and the poem “The White Man’s Burden” by Rudyard Kipling, also affected the imperial identity of the United States, that found itself defined by the conversation between the public and the power.

Analyzing the passing of the Platt Amendment in 1902 is important in discourse over the shift in imperial identity, as the political independence of Cuba demonstrated that for the United States to expand its imperial influence, it did not have to annex a territory into the Union. This is further complicated by the attitudes of race that existed in American society, and how white supremacist attitudes, brought on by the widespread publication of “The White Man’s Burden,” affected the imperial identity of the United States.

⁵⁷ Johnson, *Latin America in Caricature*, 175.

Appendix I



24. The Cuban Melodrama
 THE NOBLE HERO (to the HEAVY VILLAIN): "Stand back, there, got darn ye!—If you force this thing to a fifth act, remember that's where I git in my work!"
 C. Jay Taylor, *Puck*, June 3, 1896.

Appendix II



26. Spain's "Sense of Justice"
 C. G. Bush, *New York World*, 1898.

Appendix III



87. Uncle Sam's New Class in the Art of Self-Government
 William Allan Rogers, *Harper's Weekly*, August 27, 1898.

Appendix IV



61. JOHN BULL: "It's really most extraordinary what training will do. Why, only the other day I thought that man unable to support himself."
 Fred Morgan, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1898.

Appendix V



Appendix VI



64. CUBA: "Yo' watch me, chile, mebbe yo' hab a chance yo've f some day."
Westerman[?], *Ohio State Journal* (Columbus), 1902.

Appendix VII



30. Abandoned
F.I. Richards, *New York Herald*, 1902.

Appendix VIII



67. Uncle Sam's Burden
AMERICAN NEWS: "Lift me up, too; I was here first."
Korn & Horn (Chicago), 1905.

Appendix IX

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captive's need;
To wait, in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new caught sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.

Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
And hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine,
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
(The end for others sought)
Watch sloth and heathen folly
Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden—
No iron rule of kings,
But toll of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go make them with your living
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden—
And reap his old reward—
The blame of those ye better
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humor
(Ah slowly!) toward the light: —
“Why brought ye us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?”

Take up the White Man's burden—
Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloke your weariness
By all ye will or whisper,
By all ye leave or do;
The silent sullen peoples
Shall weigh your God and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—
Have done with childish days—
“The highly-proffered laurel,
The easy ungrudged praise
Comes not to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years,
Cold edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgement of your peers.

—RUDYARD KIPLING

Appendix X

Relations with Cuba.¹

Concluded May 22, 1903; ratification advised by Senate March 22, 1904; ratified by the President June 25, 1904; ratification's exchanged July 1, 1904. Proclaimed July 2, 1904.

ARTICLES.

- I. Treaties with foreign powers.
- II. Public debts.
- III. Intervention to maintain independence.
- IV. Acts during military occupation.
- V. Sanitation of cities.
- VI. Island of Pines.
- VII. Coaling stations.
- VIII. Ratification.

Whereas the Congress of the United States of America, by an Act approved March 2, 1901, provided as follows:

Provided further, That in fulfillment of the declaration contained in the joint resolution approved April twentieth, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight, entitled, "For the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the Government of Spain relinquish its authority and government in the island of Cuba, and to withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters, and directing the President of the United States to use the land and naval forces of the United States to carry these resolutions into effect," the President is hereby authorized to "leave the, government and control of the island of Cuba to its people" so soon as a government shall have been established in said island under a constitution which, either as a part thereof or in an ordinance appended thereto, shall define the future relations of the United States with Cuba, substantially as follows:

"I. That the government of Cuba shall never enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers which will impair or tend to impair the independence of Cuba, nor in any manner authorize or permit any foreign power

or powers to obtain by colonization or for military or naval purposes or otherwise, lodgment in or control over any portion of said island.”

“II. That said government shall not assume or contract any public debt, to pay the interest upon which, and to make reasonable sinking fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which, the ordinary revenues of the island, after defraying the current expenses of government shall be inadequate.”

“III. That the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba.”
[...]

ARTICLE I

The Government of Cuba shall never enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers which will impair or tend to impair the independence of Cuba nor in any manner authorize or permit any foreign power or powers to obtain by colonization or for military or naval purposes, or otherwise, lodgment in or control over any portion of said island.

ARTICLE II.

The Government of Cuba shall not assume or contract any public debt to pay the interest upon which, and to make reasonable sinking-fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which, the ordinary revenues of the Island of Cuba, after defraying the current expenses of the Government, shall be inadequate.

ARTICLE III.

The Government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the Treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the Government of Cuba.

ARTICLE IV.

All acts of the United States in Cuba during its military occupancy thereof are ratified and validated, and all lawful rights acquired thereunder shall be maintained and protected.

ARTICLE V.

The Government of Cuba will execute, and, as far as necessary, extend the plans already devised, or other plans to be mutually agreed upon, for the sanitation of the cities of the island, to the end that a recurrence of epidemic and infectious diseases may be prevented, thereby assuring protection to the people and commerce of Cuba, as well as to the commerce of the Southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein.

ARTICLE VI.

The Island of Pines shall be omitted from the boundaries of Cuba and specified in the Constitution, the title thereto being left, to future adjustment by treaty.

ARTICLE VII.

To enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the Government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States, lands necessary for coaling or naval stations, at certain specified points, to be agreed upon with the President of the United States.

ARTICLE VIII.

The present Convention shall be ratified by each party in conformity with the respective Constitutions of the two countries, and the ratification's shall be exchanged in the City of Washington within eight months from this date.

In witness whereof, we the respective Plenipotentiaries, have signed the same in duplicate, in English and Spanish, and have affixed our respective seals at Havana, Cuba this twenty-second day of May, in the-year nineteen hundred and three.

H. G. Squiers. [Seal.]

Carlos De Zaldo. [SEAL.]

1 Reilly de Camara v. Brooke (209 U. S., 45); American Sugar Refining Co. V. United States (136 Fed. Rep., 508).

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