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America's Other Half: Slum Journalism and the War of 1898

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*A newspaper is a collection of half
Injustices
Which, bawled by boys from mile to mile,
Spreads its curious opinion
To a million merciful and sneering men,
While families cuddle the joys of the fireside
When spurred by tales of dire lone agony.*

—Stephen Crane, *War Is Kind* (1899)

On July 3, 1898, as General William Shafter's Fifth Army Corps massed outside Santiago de Cuba, the *New York World* gave its readers a detailed look at the eastern port city whose imminent capture by the U.S. would, all agreed, deal the final blow of the two-month-old war with Spain. The unattributed article, entitled "Santiago, Shafter's Goal, Brought Home to New York," attempted to educate American readers about the Cuban city by superimposing a map of Santiago de Cuba on a plan of downtown Manhattan. The image dominates the page; inset type highlights the locations of Santiago's notable attractions in relation to New York's geography and underscores the Cuban city's inferiority both in size and in the quality of its failing infrastructure: "St. Thomas Street corresponds to our 6th Avenue Shopping District," notes one of these captions, yet "is only 17 ft. wide—sidewalks on our avenues are wider." "Mosquitoes and flies swarm" and "huge fire flies are found" just south of an area corresponding to West 4th Street near the Hudson River. Just off the Plaza del Catedral—corresponding roughly to lower Chinatown and the edges of the financial district, still a site of working-class tenements and homeless encampments in 1898—we learn that "the drinking water is bad." It is so bad, in fact, that, as the article goes on to say, "it looks, smells and tastes a good deal worse than that occasionally served to Brooklynites."

Special contrasts in Buildings, Trade, Industries and Population.

POPULATION
 WAS 42,000
 IN 1880
 WAS 100,000
 IN 1898
 WAS 150,000
 IN 1900

FOUNDED 1574
INCORPORATED 1822
CAPITAL OF CHILE
SANTIAGO

THE IRREGULAR WATER FRONT OUTLINE IN THE PICTURE BELOW IS THAT OF MANHATTAN ISLAND. The city limits of Santiago were bounded by the long, narrow bay.

Compared to American Metropolis

MAMIE, WATER RAT.
 New York Girl of Ten Who Does Wonderful Swimming Feats.

BIKE, OR BALLET?
 Pauline Marr, Stage Student, Can't Dance and Cycle.

New York World, July 3, 1898. Shafter's army entered Santiago on a road marked to the upper left of the article, "Bike, or Ballet?"

The map includes statistics on Santiago's diminished wealth and its shrinking wartime population—just forty-two thousand at the time of the American invasion—alongside the paltry collection of its four-hundred-volume library (the grand New York Public Library, which the *World* championed in a populist fundraising campaign, was under construction in 1898). On either side of the double map are two contrasting images from New York. One article, "Mamie, Water Rat," juxtaposes the wharves of the two islands by depicting a typical girl of the New York tenements, perched in a diving posture at Manhattan's Battery pier: "Mamie is a little girl from the east side. Her 'sure nuff name,' as she herself expresses it, is Mary Rafferty. But she is known to all the habitués of the New York swimming baths as 'Mamie, the Water Rat.'" Mamie, as the short accompanying article informs us, has discovered in the free baths of the Battery a talent for swimming and a moral discipline lacking in the downtown urchins she otherwise resembles in body and speech. Opposite Mamie—and immediately adjacent to the road on which Shafter's men approached Santiago—is an illustration of one Pauline Marr, a bourgeois young woman from uptown Manhattan who practices bicycling and ballet dancing. Marr and Rafferty are from opposite ends of New York and its class system, but Santiago de Cuba and the politics of reform unite them.

As the Army marches to Santiago, this article suggests, it brings relief and modernity to the suffering city. The moral uplift of the tenement girl and the freedom (here limited to leisure and high art) of the bourgeois woman serve as stark contrasts to a Spanish regime whose cruelty was routinely sentimentalized in the U.S. press in terms of moral outrages against Cuban womanhood.² The purported freedom of American women, by contrast, serves as evidence of their nation's relative modernity. This article and the logic of its illustrations underscore, first, the intimacy of militarism and reform in late-nineteenth-century American representations of Cuba during a war when, as we are often told, the U.S. was becoming a "world power" relative to other nations perceived as less modern. The *New York World* ironically makes a visual analogy between Cuba and the slums—one in the heart of the great cities and the other just ninety miles from American shores, yet both of them foreign and unfamiliar like Irish Mary and her working-class vernacular. In the comparison, we can see how the backwardness of the tenement—with its routine social problems of disease, overcrowding, sanitation, lack of recreation and culture, and for many journalists its intense heat—is also graphically displaced onto urban Cuba.³ The 1898 War in Spain's three remaining colonies—Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines—was a crucial episode in the United States' political ascendancy in the Americas,⁴ when the nation was seizing the military and political authority to cast the Caribbean islands' uneven development and widespread poverty as peculiarly *Latin* characteristics. The war established the United States as a world power from the Caribbean to Asia. More specifically, I argue, the displacement onto Cuba of North America's own uneven urban development was part of the United States' ideological assumption of hemispheric dominance at the turn of century. Two years before the calendar turned to 1900, the war in Cuba and the Philippines was the beginning of what Henry Luce, the magazine publisher, would later call "the American Century"—the era in which the "triumphal purpose of freedom" would spread across the globe under the standard of the United States. If the twentieth century is that "American Century," then its origins lay on the battlefields of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippine Islands.⁵

As war loomed in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in 1897 and early 1898, a popular theme in American culture was the possibility of a nationally unifying campaign. The war brought "dudes" and young tycoons out of the Ivy League and into a collective national effort. Theodore Roosevelt led his Rough Riders in camp renditions of "Fair Harvard" while the *World* trumpeted the patriotism of Uncle Sam's "Gilded Youth" serving with plebeian volunteers.⁶ William F. Cody, the impresario known as "Buffalo Bill," claimed that thirty thousand Indian fighters were ready to fight in Cuba to avenge ancient Spanish cruelties in North America, an example of the war's nationalizing promise and its value as mass spectacle.⁷ Finally, the war with Spain would be the first major military mobilization since the Civil War, and northern and southern papers welcomed the restorative powers of a new war. Former Confederate generals led New Englanders into battle under the national flag.

Many black newspapers initially supported the war as an opportunity to improve race relations in the armed forces and in the nation at large.⁸ At the same time, Cuba also seemed to provide an opportunity for white racial revitalization as Reconstruction ended in the South. The most famous southern nationalist novel of the era, *The Leopard's Spots*, posed a question that generations of American expansionists had also asked: "Shall the future American be an Anglo-Saxon or a mulatto?"⁹ Amy Kaplan notes in *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* how that novel portrays the war with Spain as a revivifying racial adventure, serving as a "*deus ex machina* to unify white men in chivalrous rescue of white women from black men and of the white nation from black Reconstruction."¹⁰ Her account of Stephen Crane's wartime journalism for the *New York Journal* and the *New York World*, the country's two most important "yellow papers," likewise reads popular war culture as white-nationalist ideology. When Crane concludes in his account of the famous Battle of San Juan Hill outside Santiago de Cuba that "to put it shortly, both officers and privates have most lively contempt for the Cubans," Kaplan contends that the correspondent's previous accounts of class strife within the army are sublimated by a racialized "contempt" for the Cuban insurgent. In this way, writes Kaplan, 1898 war culture exploited a foreign conflict in order to ideologically repair domestic class tensions. This is a succinct account of the ways that imperialist jingoism trumped political dissent in a wartime nation.

Although it is tempting to read this racialized Cuba as a kind of superstructural antidote for the internal conflicts of the Republic, the graphic identification of Santiago de Cuba and downtown Manhattan with which I began shows that even when New York's material dominance seemed assured, such representations of Cuba were themselves involved in a fraught dialectical contest with representations of the domestic, working-class immigrant—the "anarchy," as Kaplan calls it, was not only in the American "empire," but in its contradictory and often uncertain self-representation. Cuba had long occupied a dual position in the nineteenth-century American imagination, and even if the *World* identifies the island with the poverty of the tenement, this was not always so. For decades in the mid-nineteenth century, it was also widely thought to be a future state in the Union, linked to the U.S. not only by mutual interests but by the very "laws of political gravitation," as John Quincy Adams put it in 1823.¹¹ The campaign to annex Cuba as a slave state, which peaked in the expansionist decade after the Mexican War, attracted considerable support in the South and the North, among planters, bankers, proslavery Democrats and even free-soilers like Samuel Hueston, who in 1850 advocated Cuban annexation as a compromise measure that would reconcile the conflict between the slave and free states, thereby achieving the "permanent equilibrium of the Republic."¹² The island's wealth and imagined whiteness and Havana's perceived modernity appealed to many Americans, and U.S. capital and machinery had been powering the Spanish colony's railroads, gaslights, and sugar mills for decades before 1898. At the same time, however, Spanish Cuba was a racialized foreign body: its blackness and Catholicism

repelled American visitors as much as these cultural differences also attracted their interest. In other words, in the nineteenth century, Cuba was never entirely consigned to the “outside” of the United States, but occupied a liminal position of tenuous identification and familiarity. Even Theodore Roosevelt, who disparaged the people of the Philippines as “utterly unfit for self-government,” was careful to note that Cuba was by contrast “entitled ultimately to settle for itself whether it shall be an independent state or an integral portion of the mightiest of republics.”¹³ To Americans, Cuba was not a foreign colonial subject, at least not an unambiguous one. Nor was it a blank slate upon which Americans could inscribe their racial or national fantasies without complications.

Kaplan reads the accounts of the 1898 War, especially of African American soldiers, as stagings of a racial and national “anxiety”—that the war, instead of being a symbolic purging of the Civil War from the American psyche, would instead revive white fears of black uprising and imperial collapse.¹⁴ I argue, on the other hand, that journalistic representations of the war were far more dysfunctional. Journalistic representations of Cuba did not purge the “anxieties” of an aspirant empire so much as they staged the uncomfortable contradictions of a still-divided nation. Concentrating too much on the imperialist logic of U.S. portrayals of Cubans tends to naturalize their anxious performance of power and strength, especially at this pregnant moment before the Cold War ideology of development had frozen Latin America and the wider Third World in a state of perpetual belatedness. A reader might therefore miss the fact that the *World’s* comparison of Santiago to New York betrayed the knowledge that the comparison even needed to be made in the first place. Weren’t the width of “our streets” and the only-relative cleanliness of Brooklyn’s fetid water supply in fact aspects of a potential *rivalry* with the Cuban city?

This essay suggests that the Cuban warfront was understood and interpreted not only in terms of its imperial otherness, but in terms of its resemblance to the United States. Attorney General Richard Olney’s famous 1894 remark that the nation stood on the “ragged edge of anarchy” reflected a broad sentiment that the nation was in stark disequilibrium during the 1890s. The “Gay Nineties” were also a time of violent confrontations between labor and capital in the North and West and the collapse of Reconstruction in the South, while Henry James lamented the “abyss of inequality” in what he claimed were formerly peaceful relations between men and women.¹⁵ It was also a decade in which the “tenement problem” in Manhattan’s vast, overcrowded slums became a crucial issue in New York politics. At the end of the nineteenth century, reform and militarism were mutually reinforcing discourses; the title of Jacob Riis’s 1902 bestseller *The Battle with the Slum* reflected the tenor of the era. While urban reform was pursued with military discipline and organization—as a “war” on dirt, disease, and crime—the 1898 military invasion of Cuba was characterized as a humanitarian operation. Furthermore, the postwar American occupation of Cuba drew upon the expertise of urban reform administrators like sanitation engineer George Waring, who had organized paramilitary cleaning

brigades in the New York tenements, and Theodore Roosevelt, the reform-minded chief of the NYPD who went on to lead the “Rough Riders.” Writers like the Civil War novelist Stephen Crane, the journalist Henry Mawsom, and James W. Buel, an author of frontier tales, Arthurian legends, and “city-mysteries,” moved from chronicling slums to recording and reporting the war.¹⁶ Crane filed a dispatch that used one as an analogy for the other from the eastern Cuban town of Siboney, where U.S. forces landed on June 25, 1898, to mount the assault on Santiago de Cuba. Sounding a common note for American journalists in its portrayal of Cuban insurgents as famished, dull, and indifferent, Crane makes an additional, revelatory analogy:

The Cuban soldier, indeed, has turned into an absolutely emotionless character save when he is maddened by battle. We feed him and he expresses no joy. When you come to think of it, one follows the other naturally. If he had retained the emotional ability to make a fuss over nearly starving to death he would also have retained the emotional ability to faint with joy at sight of the festive canned beef, hard-tack and coffee. But he exists with the impenetrable indifference or ignorance of the greater part of the people in an ordinary slum.¹⁷

The contemptible figure of the Cuban here is not simply intervening as a *deus ex machina* to smooth over American racial and class anxieties; rather, Crane is foregrounding the image of American class conflict in order to make Cubans legible to his readers. In so doing, he projects the distressing and threatening “impenetrability” of the American slum-dweller onto a Cuban body. The popular claims about the American “redemption” of Cuba, understood as both a moral duty and a military mission, must be understood in the context of a growing debate around class conflict and the politics of reform in the United States, which derived much of its own rhetoric and its persuasive force from a similarly moral appeal and a rhetoric and practice of “war” against poverty and disease on behalf of an abject population. On the one hand, Cubans were made legible by certain tropes familiar to readers of reformist representations of the immigrant poor, particularly the tenement woman. However, unlike young Mary Rafferty—and most of the tenement characters in Crane’s own writing—the Cuban in Crane’s example cannot be addressed in a common language and cannot be incorporated, even provisionally, into a national family.

* * *

In 1882, the struggling *New York World* was purchased by Joseph Pulitzer, a Hungarian-born newspaper publisher from St. Louis. Taking the model of populist advocacy journalism and sensationalism of his *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Pulitzer’s New

York paper successfully combined a staff of business managers, editors, and reporters, a colloquial tone, and a pioneering use of illustration, color ink, advertising, and entertaining weekend supplements. The reorganization of the newspaper's division of labor, its populist tone, and its printed format distinguished what became known as the "new journalism"—often derisively called the "yellow press"—from the nineteenth century's patrician, editor-driven newspapers. The *World*, along with William Randolph Hearst's rival *New York Journal*, contained "serious" editorials and financial news along with private scandals and popular crusades. Pulitzer launched campaigns against tenement landlords and Standard Oil, and Hearst called for the paving of Fifth Avenue. Both papers also took up the crusade to "save" Cuba from Spanish dominion.

American journalists had been reporting the Cuban insurgency since it began in 1895, and the New York press dominated the scene. Reporters like the *New York Herald's* George Rea, the *World's* Sylvester Scovel, and the *Journal's* Richard Harding Davis and Grover Flint were the first of the war's celebrity correspondents; Scovel, for example, was briefly imprisoned by Spanish officials, an experience that did no harm to his professional reputation. The *World* sent the young war novelist Crane to Cuba in 1898 (after Pulitzer's paper fired him, Crane reported the Puerto Rican campaign for the *Journal*). In 1897, Davis echoed others in the American press by extolling the bravery and fighting spirit of the Cuban insurgents in his *Journal* dispatches and a book-length collection of those articles, *Cuba in War Time*, which urged American intervention. However, in the illustrated histories and series of book-length memoirs by correspondents that appeared after the war, reporters generally described Cubans as careless, disorganized, sullen, and ungrateful. Crane again characterized Cuban ingratitude by ironically mocking both the sentimental charity worker and the thoughtless indigent of the American slums: "Everybody knows that the kind of sympathetic charity which loves to be thanked is often grievously disappointed and wounded in tenement districts, where people often accept gifts as though their own property had turned up after a short absence. The Cubans accept our stores in something of this way."¹⁸

To other correspondents, Cubans were hardly more than indistinguishable shadows. The correspondent H. Irving Hancock recorded his initial impressions of Cubans purely in terms of their dress. They were outfitted, he wrote, "in a kind of ecru-colored linen, the raggedest uniforms conceivable. Of the straw hats that they wore, though it may sound like a bull, there is only one phrase that will do them justice, and that phrase is uniform nondescriptness."¹⁹ John C. Hammett, a *New York Journal* photographer, observed that Cubans were so nondescript they were almost invisible: they "so closely resemble the bark of a royal palm or the stump of an old tree in colour that it is impossible to recognize a native unless you are very close to him."²⁰ One of his photographs, "A Typical Cuban Soldier's Tent," from his 1899 volume of war photographs, typifies this version of the Cuban insurgent as a silent part of the landscape. In "Two Gentlemen of Cuba: The First Met," a picture from the

Leslie's Weekly correspondent and photographer Burr McIntosh, two dark-skinned men pose in a farm field besides the ruins of a wooden fence. Like Hamment's men in their tent, these two are photographed from a great enough distance to fit almost entirely inside the frame of the image; during the war, Cubans, especially men, were rarely photographed any closer. Like most photographs taken of Cubans during the war, these men's facial features are nearly indistinguishable in the high-contrast, daytime image, and their threadbare attire is emphasized by the derisively ironic caption.²¹ They are, of course, unnamed. Crane repeated the common charge that Cubans were indifferent to their own cause and paraphrases what he said were the common feelings of American troops: "They came down here expecting to fight side by side with an ally," Crane recounts, "but this ally has done little but stay in the rear and eat army rations, manifesting an indifference to the cause of Cuban liberty which could not be exceeded by some one who has never heard of it." He went on: "The American soldier, however, thinks of himself often as a disinterested benefactor, and he would like the Cubans to play up to the ideal now and then. His attitude is mighty human. He does not really want to be thanked, and yet the total absence of anything like gratitude makes him furious."²² Crane's characteristic irony here ambiguously suggests that the propaganda underlying the American campaign—as a war of humanitarian liberation—is itself a humbug that Cubans are failing to adequately play along with. Nevertheless, Cuban fighters appear in his dispatch much as they do in Hamment's and McIntosh's photographs: nondescript, indecipherable, and rendered in such high contrast that they become indistinguishable forms.

"A Typical Cuban Soldier's Tent," from John C. Hamment's *Cannon and Camera* (1899).





“Two Gentlemen of Cuba—The First Met,” from Burr McIntosh’s *The Little I Saw of Cuba* (1899).

In 1896, Crane wrote a series of sketches on the downtown Manhattan neighborhood known as the Tenderloin for Hearst’s *New York Journal*. The sketches treat everyday life in the vice district, whose boundaries extended from 14th Street north to 42nd Street and from genteel Murray Hill west to Seventh Avenue. The heart of the Tenderloin was the 29th police precinct, which Buel described in 1883 in the terms of the wild frontier of mid-century, reflecting the fear that New York’s (and the nation’s) presumed modernity was still perilously incomplete: “California in the worst days of ‘49 to ‘56, was a sovereign millennium compared with the civilization of such places as Baxter, Water, and Bleecker Streets of Gotham, or in the district bounded by Fourteenth and Twenty-Second streets and Fourth and Seventh Avenues, known as the Twenty-Ninth precinct.”²³ The wave of reform in 1890s New York, however, began to address some of these signs of “backwardness,” and by the time Crane began his *Journal* series, the Tenderloin was already changing. After the election of a Republican mayor briefly displaced Tammany Hall Democrats in 1894, Theodore Roosevelt was appointed chief of the New York Police Department with a reform mandate. Roosevelt reorganized the department along paramilitary lines to combat corruption and political clientelism, its two most notorious problems under the

Tammany machine: under his leadership, the NYPD adopted the British military box-coat and U.S. Army leggings; instituted military discipline, rankings, and surprise inspections; standardized pistols and ammunition; and reorganized the detective bureau as an intelligence service.²⁴ Police reform was one of the most celebrated accomplishments of the reform movements in late-century New York. Yet if the Tenderloin was to be brought into equilibrium with the rest of the city, Crane suggests, it must also lose its historicity and uniqueness, as he observes in terms that are highly self-conscious but easily recognizable to twenty-first-century readers for their tone of bohemian lament. “To the man who tries to know the true things there is something hollow and mocking about this Tenderloin of to-day, as far as its outward garb is concerned,” Crane wrote. “The newer generation brought new clothes with them. The old Tenderloin is decked out. And wherever there are gorgeous lights, massive buildings, dress clothes and theatrical managers, there is very little nature, and it may be no wonder that the old spirit of the locality chooses to lurk in the darker places.”²⁵ Crane’s writing on the tenement districts, in line with the conventions of the genre, was interested particularly in the “darker” places, and in the two years before he left for Cuba many of Crane’s sketches treat with regret and bitter irony the pacification of downtown areas like the Tenderloin or Minetta Lane, the enclave of African American saloons in Greenwich Village.²⁶

One Tenderloin sketch from December 1894, “The Duel That Was Not Fought,” comically dramatizes the still-incendiary atmosphere of the partly pacified Tenderloin. The article treats a barroom conflict between an effete Cuban and an Irish Bowery b’hoy in a Sixth Avenue saloon, which thus becomes the site of Crane’s first writerly encounter with Cubans. The Irish Patsy’s use of a “careless and rather loud comment”—presumably a racial slur—angers “the Cuban,” who challenges Patsy to a sword duel that he eagerly accepts in spite of his total lack of swordsmanship. Patsy directs a confused mixture of racial insults at the Cuban, calling his “olive-skinned” antagonist “Yeh bloomin’ little black Dago.” Crane presents the Irishman’s ready eagerness to fight as a comical, plebeian example of a vigorous and aggrieved national temperament that rises to every aggressor’s challenge, no matter how unwinnable or absurd. “Git yer swords,” Patsy says in the downtown patois Crane loved to record. “Get ‘em quick! I’ll fight wi’ che! I’ll fight wid anything, too! See? I’ll fight yeh wid a knife an’ fork if yeh say so!”²⁷ Despite a pages-long exchange of escalating threats, the duel never takes place, and Patsy’s foolhardy courage is never tested. A policeman—one of Roosevelt’s new civil soldiers, he is recognized, Crane writes, by a “distinctly business air”—breaks up the dispute and carries the hotheaded Cuban, who has carelessly insulted him as well, away from the saloon. A potentially interesting international incident, therefore, is anticlimactically interrupted by efficient police work.

For Crane, the climax of this story would be provided in Cuba three years later. While his Tenderloin sketches in 1894 betray an ambivalent attitude towards the police and their domestication of the downtown underworld, the Cuban revolution

that began in 1895 created a new site for the literary inspiration that the police had chased out of the Tenderloin. Christopher Wilson suggests an ideological connection between Roosevelt’s strategy of police reform in New York and the imperial “police mission” of the 1898 War, calling the former “a blueprint not just for the NYPD, but for future Latin-American policy.”²⁸ The remainder of this essay will investigate what Wilson only suggests, that in the martial culture of the American 1890s, Latin America—and especially Cuba, for decades America’s familiar Latin synecdoche—began to replace the northern slum as the site not only of literary vitality, but of the cultural war the nation and its intellectuals were waging against disorder, dirt, and violence.

The War on the Slum and the Battle for Cuba

In an 1887 article in the Buenos Aires daily *La Nación*, the Cuban exile José Martí, a perceptive critic of turn-of-the-century American culture, gives a comical account of a newsman’s Brooklyn funeral, where the deceased is buried and eulogized by his competitors. Describing the scene at the cemetery, Martí writes, “Aca no se teme mucho a la muerte. El periodista sobre todo parece verla venir sin miedo: ¡tiene tanto el periodista de soldado!” [Here they don’t fear death much. The journalist, above all, seems to look upon it without any dread: The journalist has so much of the soldier within him!] When their passenger ferry returns to Battery Park, however, Martí notes an abrupt change in the tenor of the afternoon: “el valor, como espada que vuelve a la vaina, encajó en su ancho muelle” [valor, like a sword returned to its sheath, docked at its broad pier]. The guild parted ignominiously, Martí tells us, when the ferry docked—once on dry land, every mourner broke into a run in order to be the first to file a report on the funeral.²⁹

New York World, May 17, 1898.

The reporter becomes the story—in this cartoon even a pirate, normally the source of interesting tales, instead sits fascinated by the stories of Crane’s adventures.



Sketched by a staff artist of *The World* while the pirate was listening to an interesting story told by Stephen Crane.

Martí's mocking use of the metaphor of the reporter as soldier plays on popular caricatures of the huckstering, hustling newspaper reporter in both the U.S. and Latin America, but the analogy is particularly appropriate for the culture of American police and war journalism at the time. Wartime Cuba, in particular, became a site where male intellectuals like Crane, Davis, and others could realize heroic exploits of newsgathering that were themselves newsworthy, dangerous, and even adventurous.³⁰ Similarly, one of the principal characteristics of slum reporting in the late 1880s and 1890s was the explicit or implicit theme of battle. Progressive literature on the slum, like Roosevelt's policy innovations, viewed reform itself as a war against an especially determined enemy. In Riis's 1902 *The Battle with the Slum*, the author reflected on what he considered an extraordinary decade of progress since the 1890 publication of his classic *How the Other Half Lives*. In the later book, Riis reserves particular praise for police chief Roosevelt (coincidentally, an updated version of *The Battle with the Slum* was published under the alternate title, *The Ten Years' War*, but any reference to the 1868–1878 Cuban war of independence was surely unintentional). Riis wrote of the slum as a battlefield for civilization in which “we win or we perish,” and he described his own research in curiously military terms.³¹ In his autobiography, for example, he called his first forays to the slums “raiding parties.” Riis also made pioneering use of German flash powder, a highly combustible compound that made it possible to take photographs indoors and in low-light conditions. He describes his first experiences with the powder in highly suggestive terms: “It was not too much to say that our party carried terror wherever it went. . . . The flashlight of those days was contained in cartridges fired from a revolver. The spectacle of half a dozen strange men invading a house in the midnight hour armed with big pistols which they shot off recklessly was hardly reassuring, however sugary our speech, and it was not to be wondered at if the tenants bolted through the windows and down fire-escapes wherever we went.”³²



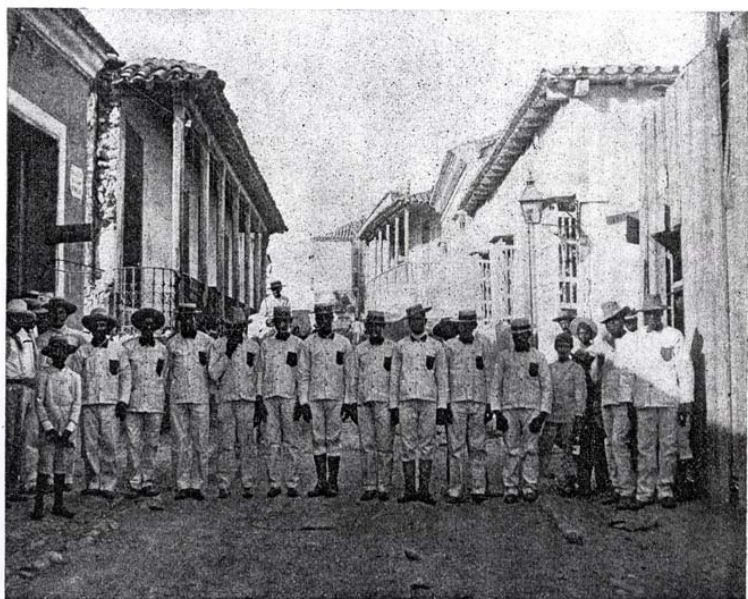
White Wings on Review
(Thomas A. Edison, Inc., 1903).

New York's White Wings
march in formation down
Fifth Avenue in April 1903.

In addition to praising Roosevelt's accomplishments in police reform, *The Battle with the Slum* devotes the most attention to a now-obscure Civil War veteran and sanitation engineer named Colonel George Waring, whose portrait graced the book's frontispiece when it was republished as *The Ten Years' War*. Waring, an agronomist and former Army officer from Rhode Island, was appointed chief of the Department of Sanitation under New York's Republican reform administration and organized the city street-cleaning brigade that became known as the "White Wings" for their striking, all-white uniforms. The street cleaners cut a prominent profile in the downtown streets, as an Edison film of a 1903 parade of White Wings shows. The men march down Fifth Avenue in formation, five across, with each group accompanied by a uniformed policeman; the cleaners themselves are dressed in their white uniforms with matching constabulary helmets. In the Edison film, the organized procession is followed by a cavalry of drivers leading the horse-drawn carts the Wings employed to haul away garbage and ashes.³³ Waring was appointed by President McKinley to direct the sanitation efforts in occupied Cuba, where yellow fever and cholera threatened American troops. Disease and sanitation were cited as primary obstacles to the American occupation and (to a lesser degree) to the future Cuban republic, and Waring took his methods from New York to Santiago and Havana.³⁴ A brigade of "White Wings" was organized in Santiago, with straw *guajiro* hats replacing the New Yorkers' helmets, and plans were developed to repair the city's sewage system and to dredge Havana's sheltered harbor, whose depths were feared to be a source of a potentially worldwide epidemic, given the port's heavy traffic. Unless something is done, Waring wrote in his report to the President, "commerce will carry the terror and the terrible scourge of yellow fever to our shores, until we rise again in a war of humanity, and at all costs wipe out an enemy with which no military valour can cope."³⁵

J. W. Buel and Henry Mawsom's *Leslie's Official History of the Spanish-American War* (1899).

A squad of Cuban "White Wings" photographed in Santiago de Cuba. The New Yorkers' constabulary helmets have been replaced by broad-brimmed Cuban straw hats.



THE "WHITE WINGS" OF SANTIAGO. THE STREET-CLEANERS ARE ORGANIZED UNDER THE NEW YORK SYSTEM OF THE LATE COLONEL WARING.

Ironically, Waring died of yellow fever in Havana. He was eulogized by Riis as a hero of the battle with the slum, and he was hailed by obituary writers as a “martyr in a great cause” in Cuba.³⁶ The Colonel’s posthumous report from Cuba painted a rather bleak picture of overcrowding in Havana, where the bulk of American attention shifted after the capture and occupation of Santiago:

The surroundings and customs of domestic life are disgusting almost beyond belief. Sixteen thousand houses, out of a total of less than 20,000, are but one story high and at least 90 per cent of the population live in these—averaging say 11 to each house. . . . According to the general—almost the universal—plan, the front rooms are used as parlours or reception rooms. Beyond them is a court, on which open the dining-rooms and sleeping-rooms. Beyond these, on another court, are—I might say is—the ‘kitchen, stable, and privy, practically all in one.’³⁷

This multipurposed, improvised domestic spatial organization was typical of working-class housing in New York, and Riis had written in similar terms about domestic life in tenement apartments, where work and home mingled indiscriminately in dangerously overcrowded spaces.³⁸ In Havana, however, it is “almost universal”; the Cuban capital is like one big tenement.

For Waring, Havana was not exceptional in this regard, but surprisingly his point of comparison was not New York, where he had made his reputation, but the Dickensian England of generations past:

Havana is no dirtier than many another city has been. In England, in the olden time, the earthen floors were strewn with rushes. When these became sodden with filth, fresh rushes were thrown over the old ones, and these in turn were buried, until the foul accumulation was several feet deep. . . . These conditions remained until repeated visits of the great sanitary teachers—the plague, the black death, the cholera, and other pestilences, which devastated cities and swept whole villages out of existence—had taught their hard lessons.

Waring thus extracts Havana from a history that the United States shares, and places it in the past of Euro-American civilization—and, even more abstractly, in a literary “olden time” of industrial England. Such assertively literary conventions for describing the tenement emerged even in the highly standardized and supposedly unrheterical context of an official government report, where they were used to reify the material facts of dirt and overcrowding; by making sanitation literary, Waring

makes it “abstract” and removes it from the American present. Where American intervention in Cuba’s war had been justified by political sympathies with the revolution, the American occupation and later political domination of the island were conducted through the nonpolitical discourse of developmentalism, in which Cuba’s present was comparable to the United States’ past. Before, many Americans had viewed Cuba in terms of shared interests, such as slavery, sugar, or republicanism, or an imagined geopolitical threat, like slaves, the Confederacy, or Britain. In 1898, however, the U.S. government disavowed any material interests in Cuba and dismissed American similarities with the island. With the ongoing reform in American cities, the social problems once associated with the northern slum were addressed in Santiago and Havana in the moral terms of American “redemption.” “Before the American era,” proclaimed one of the many postwar illustrated almanacs below a photograph entitled “Laying drain pipes in Santiago,” “there was no such thing as underground drainage in Santiago, and all such work was a revelation to the inhabitants.”³⁹ After the “revelations” achieved in Santiago, Colonel Waring looked forward to casting out the “curse” of the capital: “Havana can be freed from her curse,” he wrote. “The price of her freedom is about \$10,000,000. Can the United States afford to redeem her? For once humanity, patriotism, and self-interest should be unanimous and their answer should be, Yes!”⁴⁰



“General View of the Poorer Sections of Santiago,” from José de Olívares’s *Our Islands and Their People as Seen with Camera and Pencil* (1899), a richly illustrated two-volume introduction to Hawai’i, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Cuba.

The caption notes that this photograph was taken a few weeks after the U.S. invasion, “but since then the paving of the streets with asphalt and other marked improvements by the American authorities have transformed the place into a clean and beautiful modern city.”



“Laying Drain Pipes in Santiago,” from Olívares’s *Our Islands and Their Peoples* (1899).

When “reform” became militarized as an administrative and political instrument of the state, it became easily exportable as an object of imperial military expansion. The militarization of the police and the public works brigades promoted them as impartial instruments of the public good and democratic governance, and the soldierly posture of the newspaper correspondent in suffering Cuba gave a narrative form to the military ethic of reform. Just as the paramilitary policing of the slum was for Riis primarily concerned with securing the rights of citizenship for the poor, the correspondent in Cuba often saw his role in similar terms. As the war with the slum yielded to an imperial adventure on foreign soil—in some cases, new wars with Cuban slums—the tasks of policing the internal other and organizing the disordered spaces of the tenement were similarly transferred abroad. And when the war with the slum went to Cuba, Stephen Crane followed it.

Mulberry Street and Daiquirí

The third war for Cuban independence began in April 1895,⁴¹ when a small force including Martí, President of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, and Máximo Gómez, Commander-in-Chief of the rebel army, landed at La Playita in rural eastern Cuba.

Under the leadership of Gómez, the general Calixto García, and another veteran of Cuba's first independence war, Antonio Maceo, the numerically inferior *independentistas* succeeded in spreading the guerilla conflict from the remote eastern districts throughout the island. By February 1896, the "ever-faithful isle" was in a state of total war, as the new Spanish Captain General, Valeriano Weyler—known to American newspaper readers simply as "the Butcher"—instituted a radical policy of "reconcentración" of the rural population, a measure intended to disrupt the guerilla campaign and demoralize its supporters. The forced evacuation of villages into concentration camps, along with the destruction of crops and cattle, caused massive suffering, but despite this repression and the deaths of both Martí and Maceo, by the first of 1898 the colonial forces were on the defensive. When Weyler's major offensive failed to weaken the insurgency, he was recalled in late 1897 and a subsequent Spanish proposal of Cuban "autonomy" within the Empire was rejected utterly by the revolutionaries and denounced as a betrayal by Cuba's remaining loyalists. Many historians now agree that the revolutionary forces were on their way to likely victory; while the U.S. intervention in April 1898 considerably hastened Spain's capitulation, the decisive damage to Spain's military and political position in Cuba had already been done.⁴² On April 20, 1898, two months after the explosion of the U.S. warship *Maine* in Havana Harbor, President William McKinley signed a joint resolution that committed the United States to war with Spain, but specifically did not recognize the Cuban republic-in-arms. To placate Cuban opposition and congressional critics, the resolution included a compromise measure, known as the Teller amendment, which disclaimed all territorial designs on the island by the U.S. government.⁴³

From the beginning, then, U.S. intervention in the war was framed as a humanitarian gesture from republican America to a sister nation. The reports of American correspondents in the field, however, belied much of this prewar sympathy for Cubans and their insurgency. The American war against Spain began in earnest in the first week in May, when the Pacific fleet of Commodore George Dewey began its assault on Manila Bay in the Philippine Islands. On June 22, the American Expeditionary Force landed on the beach at Daiquirí, near the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba, where they met no resistance from Spanish forces, thanks to Cuban harassment of nearby Spanish units and the revolutionaries' occupation of the beach and nearby village. Yet the Cuban role in supporting the landing was barely acknowledged by American correspondents and military officials at the time, each of whom created an impression of passive, even entirely absent, locals. Admiral Sampson, commander of the American squadron that landed that day, pronounced the absence of Spanish resistance at Daiquirí "a mystery" in a later article on the event.⁴⁴ Hancock in his memoir wrote that, after the American soldiers waded ashore, "as if by magic, Cubans now appeared on the beach," where they passively watched U.S. soldiers fight the surf.⁴⁵ While photographs taken by correspondents were widely published after the war, the difficulty of developing film in the field and

the great distance to Cuba meant that the first images of the war were sketches drawn in New York “from descriptions” given by correspondents, as the captions read. The difference between the way the *World* imagined Cuban soldiers before and after the invasion could hardly have been more stark. In a May illustration, they embrace the Americans like old friends on the beach, but on June 24, once the war had begun, the *World* depicted the Daiquirí landing with a drawing of grateful, ragged women and children emerging from “caves” near the beach. This image is stylized and allegorical—a woman, representing Liberty and suffering Cuban nationhood, leads her forsaken, wide-eyed companions in a melodramatic gesture of welcome.

The cover of the *New York World's Sunday* magazine, May 15, 1898, a full month before the Daiquirí landing.

The caption reads, “Landing U.S. Marines in Cuba. Greeted on shore by the insurgent troops gathered to protect them from Spanish attack.” Notice how dramatically this prewar representation of the upright, uniformed, and light-skinned Cuban insurgent differs from the post-invasion account (opposite).



The highly speculative nature of these images meant that they reflected the prevailing editorial sentiment about the war and its purposes, and in their visual style they resembled popular representations of the urban poor. The fallen woman and the prostitute, along with her upright moral foil, remained fixtures of urban chronicles all the way up until the 1890s, in dime fictions and melodramas like Alice Wellington Rollins’s *Uncle Tom’s Tenement*, which relocated Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel to the Bowery of 1888, and Edward Townsend’s 1895 *Daughter of the*

Tenements, in which Italian immigrants scrupulously shield their daughter from the temptations of the Bowery. She also emerged in self-conscious critiques of the slum romance, like Crane's *Maggie, a Girl of the Streets*, which aimed to avoid what its author called "preaching."⁴⁶ She appeared in the "charity writing" of Protestant reformers like Thomas de Witt Talmage, who preached in *The Night Sides of City Life* and *The Masque Torn Off* against the vanity of the "woman of pleasure" and praised the humble poverty of the "voices of the street."⁴⁷ Buel, in *Mysteries and Miseries of America's Great Cities*, viewed the slum as a place primarily distinguished by the disgrace of womanly virtue. Riis, too, was attuned to the slum environment's degradation of domestic peace: Riis wrote, "Back of the shop with its wary, grinding toil—the home in the tenement, of which it was said in a report of the State Labor Bureau: 'Decency and womanly reserve cannot be maintained there—what wonder so many fall away from virtue?'"⁴⁸ While Riis's and Crane's general rejections of the moral accounting of earlier writers on the slum and their studied attention to ethnographic detail marked a departure in American writing about the urban poor, both writers also worked within a long tradition of chronicling urban degradation with the body of the slum woman, especially the mother and the prostitute.⁴⁹

New York World, June 24, 1898, reimagines the Cuban welcome at the coastal town of Daiquiri.



The *New York Journal's* sensational story of one Cuban woman's escape from a Spanish prison in 1897 fit squarely into this tradition, and in fact constituted a kind of international escalation of the contemporary domestic war on prostitution. For American readers of the popular press, the riveting story of the imprisonment and escape of Evangelina Cosío y Cisneros was the single most important event of the Cuban insurgency other than the *Maine* explosion. Cosío (newspapers always incorrectly used her maternal surname, Cisneros) was charged with seducing a Spanish colonel to lure him into an insurgent trap. In her American-published, English-language autobiography, *The Story of Evangelina Cisneros, as Told by Herself*, she claimed that she had been sexually assaulted by Berriz, who was beaten by fellow Cubans who came to her aid.⁵⁰ The *Journal* described her plight this way: "This girl, delicate, refined, sensitive, unused to hardship, absolutely ignorant of vice, unconscious of the existence of such beings as crowd the cells of the Casa de Recojidas, is seized, thrust into the prison maintained for the vilest class of abandoned women of Havana, compelled to scrub floors and to sleep on bare boards with outcast negresses, and shattered in health until she is threatened with an early death."⁵¹ Although Cosío was herself of a prominent Puerto Príncipe family, her imprisonment was a familiar story for American readers: like so many heroines of the city mysteries, she was portrayed as a good, honest, sexually chaste woman, who was corrupted by men and circumstance and nearly condemned to a life of harlotry and abandonment.⁵² Julia Ward Howe, the New England educator, composer, and women's suffrage activist, asked "All Good Men and True Women" in an article in the *Journal*, "How can we think of this pure flower of maidenhood condemned to live with felons and outcasts . . . ?"⁵³ Cosío was broken out of prison by agents of the *Journal*, perhaps by simple bribery; the paper publicized its own account of its stout Virginian reporter's daring rescue raid, in which he sawed the iron bars off of her prison window and laid a plank into her cell from the roof of an adjacent house.⁵⁴ A novelized version of her case was serialized in the *Sunday Journal* for three months. Cosío toured the U.S. at the *Journal's* expense, sold out a reception at Madison Square Garden, and met President McKinley. Finally, Missouri's governor suggested that the *Journal* might as well just send five hundred reporters to free the whole island.⁵⁵

"In the person of Evangelina Cisneros," wrote Julian Hawthorne (son of Nathaniel) in the introduction to her memoir, "Cuba appeals to us."⁵⁶ Representing Cubans this way, in the explicitly sentimental (and erotic) terms of the morally upright, threatened heroine, who attracts Uncle Sam's attention and appeals for his aid, proved an effective representational strategy for eliciting American sympathy for the Cuban cause. The *Journal's* exploitation of Cosío and the *World's* image of the grateful Cuban welcome at Daiquirí likewise played on popular representational logics of the fallen woman and the chaste or reforming heroine. In the *World's* illustration of the Daiquirí landing, the Cuban woman—who is racially ambiguous in the drawing, and dressed in tattered rags—reaches out to her American deliverers in

a gesture of welcome and supplication, while prostrate children look on in astonishment. One of the characters of Buel's *Mysteries and Miseries of America's Great Cities* reaches out for salvation at a heavy wooden door emblazoned with a sign, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you," her eyes directed in a similar gaze of faithful expectation of her Christian deliverance. De Witt includes a similar image of dignified poverty "appealing" to a sympathetic reader in an illustration entitled "The Voice of the Street," in which a neatly dressed street sweeper raises her right arm in a welcoming salute that suggests her dignity amidst the squalor that her ragged clothing otherwise indicates. Representations of Cuban womanhood drew on an available American generic vocabulary of sympathy, feminine virtue, and sexual transgression amidst the dangers of the city, and a visual vocabulary of poverty, passivity, and supplication. Yet the American representation of Las Recojidas and Daiquirí also set up female oppression as a particular mark of Spanish, and Cuban, barbarism. To return to our initial example, how would the Pauline Marrs and Mary Raffertys of the world thrive in such a place, without American intervention?



WHAT SHALL HER PORTION BE ?

J. W. Buel's *Mysteries and Miseries of America's Great Cities* (1883).

A fallen woman seeks solace in a city mystery authored by J. W. Buel, who would later recount the 1898 War for *Leslie's Weekly* along with Henry Mawsom, another journalist who covered the tenement and the battlefield. Above the door a sign reads, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

A street sweeper from Thomas Talmage de Witt's *The Masque Torn Off* (1882).



One episode from Crane's writing dramatizes how the unevenness and inequality of American urban life was symbolically displaced onto Cuba in the coverage of the 1898 War. As we have seen, much of Crane's war reporting consisted of anecdotal episodes of combat and camp life. He frequently resorted to the symbolic and racial vocabulary of the slum to interpret the Cuban other—a literary strategy that both fixed Cubans as inscrutable and foreign, yet paradoxically did so in a form that rendered them familiar and recognizable. This unsteady contradiction emerged in one of Crane's dispatches from the warfront. As Crane and Sylvester Scovel, the *New York Journal* writer, climbed the mountains outside of Siboney with a Cuban guide, they arrived at an insurgent camp. After a "typical" scene of Cuban leisureliness—at dusk, scouts file in haphazardly to report to their captain, who is "lazily aswing" in his hammock—Crane reports the following encounter:

One barefooted negro private paused in his report from time to time to pluck various thistle and cactus spurs from his soles. Scovel asked him in Spanish: "Where are your shoes?"

The tattered soldier coolly replied in English: "I lose dem in the de woods."

We cheered.

“Why, hello there! Where did you come from?” To our questions he answered: “In New York. I leve dere Mulberry street. One—t’ree year. My name Joe Riley.”⁵⁷

This passage works as an uncanny return of the slum itself, in particular Mulberry Street, the most famous tenement address in New York besides the Bowery. In this scene, the implicit and often explicit racialization of the slum—“darkest New York,” it was often called—emerges ironically in the person of a black West Indian who can blend into either downtown Manhattan or insurgent Cuba. The two reporters initially delight at the pleasure of encountering a recognizable type in such remote surroundings. Journalists like Crane frequently expressed a kind of confusion and disorientation, not always unpleasurable, at the foreignness of the New York tenements—their linguistic strangeness, or the novel cultural forms of European or southern American migrants. Riley is an uncanny echo of this Mulberry Street in black Cuba, where he now seems strangely familiar to Crane and Scovel. Yet the moment of happy recognition that Joe Riley originally promised quickly passes, as Crane becomes perplexed by the West Indian’s Irish surname and then abandons the man’s story entirely. He abruptly ends this episode of his dispatch with an exasperated hyphen that interrupts this sentence: “I have heard of a tall Guatemalan savage who somehow accumulated the illustrious name of Duffy, but Riley—.”

The peculiarity of the encounter and Riley’s cheerful familiarity disturbs Crane’s otherwise self-referential narrative of two New York reporters traveling with disorganized Cuban insurgents while American soldiers do the hard fighting elsewhere. Formally, as well, Crane’s account of Riley disrupts his dispatch and leads to the inconclusive and irrelevant reflection on Irish nomenclature in Latin America. Crane reports Riley’s appearance without commentary; he seems to find the man simply uninterpretable, yet he still reports the story. In other texts of the 1898 War, like Cosio’s autobiography, Colonel Waring’s report, and much of Crane’s own reporting, the use of tropes and characters of the slum narrative displaces that example of impoverishment and urban underdevelopment onto the Cuban body politic, where it becomes a symptom of Latin backwardness, rather than part of a shared history. In the story of Joe Riley, on the other hand, we can see this sleight-of-hand breaking down under the weight of its own contradictions. Crane thus undercuts the blustering self-confidence of his and most other reporters’ accounts of the 1898 War, in which the thesis of American futurity and generosity and Latin belatedness and ingratitude dominated headlines and postwar recountings. Here, however, Jacob Riis’s “Other Half” and the Latin “Other America” blend confusingly into one another on the page.

* * *

In Cuba, backed up by an army of occupation and unable to communicate with his Cuban hosts, Crane's analogy of poverty and abjection became affixed to the constructed identity of Cubans as passive recipients of American benevolence, even when his ironic voice also undermined that comparison. Crane's dispatches from the Cuban front resemble his anecdotal, impressionistic method of chronicling the Tenderloin and the Bowery, a self-consciously "literary" mode of reporting that he and his friend Richard Harding Davis stubbornly defended against the "journalistic" impartiality increasingly demanded by their editors—a relatively new perspective in newsgathering that would not have allowed for the Joe Rileys of the 1898 War, for example. If for Progressive intellectuals the material of such irreducibly "literary" insight came from places of extremity and heroic action—such as the slum, the West, or the warfront—Crane's conflation of the two "frontier" spaces in this article places them on a similar level of abstraction. Thus abstracted, the Cuban war and the battle with the slum are removed from their immediate political or historical context, and they enter a realm of transhistorical myth—the eternal "storm" of human hardship, collective struggle, and unblinking masculine heroism. The U.S. invasion of Cuba borrowed some of the rhetoric and repertoire of Progressive reformism, justifying the invasion in terms of a moral responsibility to a passive, "suffering" people and claiming to export reform to the island. The disappointment that Crane and his colleagues felt in the Cuban insurgents they found at the front comes from the expectations of foreignness and deprivation that militant Progressivism encouraged in those who sought to know how the other half lived and died—and who felt secure in the knowledge that the other half indeed made a whole. Yet in Cuba, American correspondents could not communicate common ground with the insurgent population whose "impenetrability" seemed nearly unbreachable. During the war, the popular press, which had sought to stamp out or smooth over such gratuitous signs of backwardness as the slum or the corrupt policeman, confronted the Cuban other and found her inscrutable and remote in her poverty, cultural habits, race, and language. By contrast, the "unevenness" that Mary Rafferty symbolized could, in time, be reconciled with the progress of Pauline Karr.

But Cubans presented a graver problem. They were not only "backwards," but they did not speak a common language or, many correspondents found, share mutually comprehensible racial codes and mores. The war culture of 1898 thus forms a crucial episode in the creation of a Third World imaginary in the United States. Urban poverty and rural "backwardness" were North American problems, too—indeed, before they arrived in Cuba, Crane, Buel, and the artist Frederic Remington had made their careers representing the wilds of the city and the frontier. Cuba's poverty, moreover, was framed in print in terms familiar to American readers who knew the city mysteries and tenement stories of New York, where the uneven development of American cities was seen less in terms of a temporal or cultural gap—such as that between civilization and barbarism—and more in the affirmative terms of reform and reconciliation. Yet Cuban poverty and unevenness were framed

as an ontological cultural condition, rather than a contingent circumstance that might be repaired. The gap between modernity and underdevelopment, therefore, would in the twentieth century no longer lie within the borders of the United States—instead, it is what divided the U.S. from Latin America. Cuba, once so close to the United States as to be nearly a state in the union, now belonged to another time, indeed, almost another world.

The persistent dialectic in the history of U.S.-Cuban relations of imagined intimacy and fearful foreignness emerged once again in 1898 to structure American representations of revolutionary Cuba. 1898 marked the beginning of the end of American annexationist designs on Cuban territory, but it also signaled the beginning of the U.S. commercial empire in the Americas and the Pacific. From the dominant American point of view, Cuba's attachment to the United States would not be predicated purely on the common interests of the two nations' slaveholding and financial elites, or the mutual protection that the countries could provide against European encroachment, as had been the case earlier in the century. After 1898, the "intimacy" of Cuba in the U.S. took the terms of a paternalistic relationship between a powerful nation and its weaker neighbor. Therefore, after General Shafter's armies brought brooms and the blessings of independence to a grateful Cuba, they left an "underdeveloped" country in their wake.

Notes

All translations are my own.

¹ "Santiago, Shafter's Goal, Brought Home to New York," *New York World*, July 3, 1898.

² Marion Kendrick, "The Cuban Girl Martyr," *New York Journal*, August 17, 1897, is one of many examples. The "Girl Martyr" here is Evangelina Cosio y Cisneros, about whom more below.

³ Correspondents and soldiers complained about the effects of Cuban heat and humidity, which they considered tactical disadvantages for the American troops. Meanwhile, General Shafter, famously overweight and widely derided as a poor tactician, was often described as wilting in the Caribbean weather. For more on the link between Shafter's corpulence and incompetence, see Darien Elizabeth Andreu, *Sylvester H. Scovel, Journalist, and the Spanish-American War* (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2003); and Philip Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism, 1895–1902*, vol. II (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 351.

⁴ The American war against Spain in late 1898 has gone by multiple names in the U.S. The Spanish-American War has always had the greatest currency, but some have sought to restore the absent Cuban role in the conflict by renaming it "the Spanish-Cuban-American War." However, besides its cumbersome over-hyphenization, this gesture of inclusion excludes the Puerto Rican and Filipino phases of the conflict. Therefore, although my focus

lies exclusively on the Cuban theater of this war, in the interest of simplicity I prefer the War of 1898 or the 1898 War.

⁵ Henry Luce, “The American Century,” *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 2 (1999): 157–71. The article originally appeared in the February 17, 1941, issue of *Life* magazine. Luce wrote, “Throughout the 17th Century and the 18th Century and the 19th Century, this continent teemed with manifold projects and magnificent purposes. Above them all and weaving them all together into the most exciting flag of all the world and of all history was the triumphal purpose of freedom. It is in this spirit that all of us are called, each to his own measure of capacity, and each in the widest horizon of his vision, to create the first great American Century” (171).

⁶ See, for example, “John Jacob Astor, Richest Soldier in the U.S. Army / One day’s work he Performs / The Discomforts / The Experiences in Camp Life,” *World Sunday Magazine*, June 12, 1898); or Amy Phipps, daughter of Andrew Carnegie’s partner in U.S. Steel: “Beautiful Amy Phipps Leaves Family Wealth and Luxury to Become a Nurse in Cuba,” *World Sunday Magazine*, June 19, 1898.

⁷ *New York World*, April 3, 1898, cited in Joseph E. Wisan, *The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press, 1895–1898* (New York: Octagon, 1965), 435.

⁸ Willard B. Gatewood, “Smoked Yankees” and the Struggle for Empire: *Letters from Negro Soldiers, 1898–1902* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 13–14. Segregated black regiments saw action in Cuba and the Philippines, though quite often in rearguard labor units.

⁹ Thomas Dixon, Jr., *The Leopard’s Spots: A Romance of the White Man’s Burden, 1865–1900* (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1902), 159.

¹⁰ Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 121–22.

¹¹ John Quincy Adams to Hugh Nelson, April 28, 1823, cited in Robert F. Smith, ed., *What Happened in Cuba?: A Documentary History* (New York: Twayne, 1963), 27. Nelson was U.S. Minister to Spain.

¹² Samuel Hueston, *Cuba and the Cubans: Comprising a History of the Island of Cuba, Its Present Social, Political, and Domestic Condition; Also, Its Relation to England and the United States* (New York: Putnam, 1850), iii, 196.

¹³ Theodore Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life,” in *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906), 19. Likewise, anti-imperialist writers rarely criticized the war in Cuba. Instead, they concentrated their ire on the war in the Philippines, believing it an act of aggressive colonization, rather than a “humanitarian” mission.

¹⁴ “The threat of black soldiers in blue uniforms,” writes Kaplan, “like that of the ‘colored’ color barrier, lies in their direct representation of American nationhood in lands defined as inhabited by those unfit for self-government, those who cannot represent themselves, and who are thus in need of the discipline of the American Empire.” Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire*,

145. As we have seen, Cuba was not uniformly seen as “unfit for self-government” by American authorities.

¹⁵ Henry James, notebook entry, November 26, 1892, quoted in Larzer Ziff, *The American 1890s: Life and Times of a Lost Generation* (New York: Viking, 1966), 275.

¹⁶ See J. W. Buel, *Mysteries and Miseries of America's Great Cities, Embracing New York, Washington City, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, and New Orleans* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft, 1883); Henry Mawsom, “A Hot Wave Among the Poor,” *Harper's Weekly*, August 20, 1892; and Buel and Mawsom, eds., *Leslie's Official History of the Spanish-American War; a Pictorial and Descriptive Record of the Cuban Rebellion, the Causes That Involved the United States, and a Complete Narrative of Our Conflict with Spain on Land and Sea* (Washington: Marcus J. Wright, 1899).

¹⁷ Stephen Crane, “Hunger Has Made Cubans Fatalists,” *New York World*, July 12, 1898. The article is datelined June 27, 1898, while the landing was still underway.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ H. Irving Hancock, *What One Man Saw: Being the Personal Impressions of a War Correspondent in Cuba* (New York: Street and Smith, 1900), 31. Burr McIntosh, in *The Little I Saw of Cuba* (New York: F. Tennyson Neely, 1899), also excoriates Cubans as unprincipled scavengers who only appeared once the fighting was over.

²⁰ John C. Hamment, *Cannon and Camera: Sea and Land Battles of the Spanish American War in Cuba, Camp Life, and the Return of the Soldier* (New York: D. Appleton, 1898), 122–23.

²¹ McIntosh, *Little I Saw of Cuba*, 74, 63.

²² Stephen Crane, “Stephen Crane's Vivid Story of the Battle of San Juan,” *New York World*, July 14, 1898.

²³ Buel, *Mysteries and Miseries*, 41.

²⁴ Christopher Wilson, “Stephen Crane and the Police,” *American Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (1996), 273, 279.

²⁵ Stephen Crane, “The ‘Tenderloin’ as It Really Is,” *New York Journal*, October 25, 1896.

²⁶ Stephen Crane, “Stephen Crane and Minetta Lane, One of Gotham's Most Notorious Thoroughfares,” *Philadelphia Press*, December 20, 1896. Crane wrote the following of the local precinct captain: “Under Captain Groo, the present commander of the Fifteenth Precinct, the Lane has donned a complete new garb. Its denizens brag now of its peace precisely as they once bragged of its war.”

²⁷ Stephen Crane, “The Duel That Was Not Fought,” *New York Press*, December 9, 1894. In 1898, the sketch was republished as a short story in Crane, *The Open Boat and Other Stories* (New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1898).

²⁸ Wilson, “Stephen Crane,” 306.

²⁹ José Martí, “El monumento de la prensa: los periodistas de Nueva York,” in *Obras Completas*, vol. 11 (Havana: Editorial Nacional de Cuba, 1963–1973), 195–97. Originally published in *La Nación*, July 28, 1887.

³⁰ The cost of producing news in Cuba was regularly featured in the highly competitive *Journal and World*. In Richard Harding Davis, *Cuba in War Time* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000 [1898]), the famous *New York Journal* correspondent Davis connected the policemen working to pacify New York’s streets and the correspondent toiling in the battlefield abroad: “When you sit comfortably at your breakfast in New York, with a policeman at the corner, and read the despatches [sic] which these gentlemen write of Cuban victories and their interviews with self-important Cuban chiefs, you should remember what it cost them to supply you with that addition to your morning’s budget of news. Whether the result is worth the risk, or whether it is not paying too great a price, the greatest price of all, for too little, is not the question. The reckless bravery and the unselfishness of the correspondents in the field in Cuba to-day are beyond parallel” (117). Davis’s book featured illustrations by the noted western artist, Frederic Remington.

³¹ Jacob Riis, *The Battle with the Slum* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 7.

³² Jacob Riis, *The Making of An American* (New York: Macmillan, 1901), 174–75, 295.

³³ *White Wings on Review* (New York: Thomas A. Edison, Inc., 1903).

³⁴ For an informative if hagiographic account of the American sanitation project in occupied Cuba, see James H. Hitchman, “Unfinished Business: Public Works in Cuba, 1898–1902,” *The Americas* 31 (1975): 335–59. For a contemporary dissenting perspective from the Cuban nationalist elite, see Salvador Cisneros y Betancourt, *Appeal to the American People on Behalf of Cuba* (New York: Evening Post Job Printing House, 1900). Cisneros was a former President of the Cuban Republic under the occupation and the uncle of Evangelina. He became a vocal critic of the American occupation, arguing that the sanitation work was undertaken more for the protection of the American troops than for Cubans, who were (he claimed) widely immune to yellow fever. The polemic was also published on September 2, 1900, in the *New York Herald*.

³⁵ Robert Porter, *Industrial Cuba: Being a Study of Present Commercial and Industrial Conditions, with Suggestions as to the Opportunities Presented in the Island for American Capital, Enterprise, and Labor* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1899), 153, 156. Porter was the American “Special Commissioner” to Cuba and Puerto Rico, and the book contains an extracted version of Waring’s report, which was completed by his aide after the Colonel’s death.

³⁶ “Colonel Waring, Martyr,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 30, 1898. Riis wrote of Waring after his death, “His broom saved more lives in the crowded tenements than a squad of doctors. It did more: it swept the cobwebs out of our civic brain and conscience.” Riis, *Battle with the Slum*, 270–71.

³⁷ Porter, *Industrial Cuba*, 154–55. The quote is Waring’s; the report was drafted by an

assistant from the Colonel's notes after his death.

³⁸ For example, in his chapter on Bohemian cigar-makers, Riis observes no distinction between work space and domestic space in tenement apartments. Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 141–43.

³⁹ José de Olivares, *Our Islands and Their People as Seen with Camera and Pencil* (St. Louis: N. D. Thompson, 1899), 237.

⁴⁰ Porter, *Industrial Cuba*, 160.

⁴¹ Cuba had two major anticolonial revolts before 1895. The first war for independence, known as the Ten Years' War, began in 1868 and ended after great bloodshed with the surrender of most rebel forces in 1878. The second insurgency, known as the *Guerra chiquita* (the Little War), began in 1879 and was swiftly put down by the following year.

⁴² Perhaps the first significant revisionist history of the American intervention was that of the Cuban historian and social critic Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Cuba no debe su independencia a los Estados Unidos* [Cuba Does Not Owe Its Independence to the United States] (Havana: Sociedad Cubana de Estudios Históricos Internacionales, 1950). For English-language criticisms of the discourses of charity and gratitude in 1898, see Louis A. Pérez, "Incurring a Debt of Gratitude: 1898 and the Moral Sources of United States Hegemony in Cuba," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 356–98; and Pérez, *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

⁴³ "The Teller Amendment," 55th Cong., 2nd sess., *Congressional Record* 31, no. 4 (April 16, 1898): 3954. The Teller amendment also stated that "the people of the island of Cuba are, and of right ought to be, free and independent." As is well-known, the explosion of the U.S. warship *Maine* in Havana Harbor was a press sensation that provided an attractive pretext for war. Both the *Journal* and the *World*, among many others in the elite press, aggressively publicized the assumption (since disproven by the U.S. Navy) that the Spanish had sabotaged the ship. An amendment recognizing the Cuban republic was hotly debated but defeated by the President's allies.

⁴⁴ Foner, *Spanish-Cuban-American War*, 355; William T. Sampson, "The Atlantic Fleet in the Spanish War," *Century Magazine*, April 1899, quoted in Joseph Smith, *The Spanish-American War: Conflict in the Caribbean and the Pacific, 1895–1902* (London: Longman, 1994), 122. The military historian Smith makes no mention of the Cuban efforts to secure the landing spot and quotes Sampson without comment. Foner contends that the landing sites themselves had been proposed by General García, and he argues that Shafter insisted (over García's objections) that all available Cuban units be redeployed to protect the American landing. Foner, *Spanish-Cuban-American War*, 347–50.

⁴⁵ Hancock, *What One Man Saw*, 29. Crane contributed a similar account of Cuban apathy at the landing. "Crane Tells the Story of the Disembarkment," *New York World*, June 20, 1898.

⁴⁶ Robert Stallman, *Stephen Crane: A Biography* (New York: George Braziller, 1968), 73. "You

won't find any preaching in *Maggie*," Crane wrote to a friend.

⁴⁷ Thomas de Witt Talmage, *The Masque Torn Off* (Chicago: Fairbanks, Palmer, and Co., 1882), 160, 225.

⁴⁸ Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, 180. Riis also generously notes that "only in the rarest instances does she go astray." These quotes are taken from Chapter 20, which is called "The Working Girls of New York."

⁴⁹ Keith Gandal, *The Virtues of the Vicious: Jacob Riis, Stephen Crane, and the Spectacle of the Slum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 62. Frank Norris observed that *Maggie's* characters were "old acquaintances in the world of fiction." Norris, "Stephen Crane's Stories of Life in the Slums: *Maggie* and *George's Mother*," in Crane, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Thomas A. Gullason (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 151. Originally published in *The Wave*, July 4, 1896.

⁵⁰ Evangelina Betancourt Cosio y Cisneros, *The Story of Evangelina Cisneros Told by Herself*, intro. Julian Hawthorne (New York: Continental, 1898), 165. This book, produced by the *New York Journal*, contained a collection of writings on her capture and escape. Besides the narrative credited to Cosio herself, the volume included an introduction by Hawthorne, a chapter authored by Karl Decker, the Virginian credited with her rescue, and another unattributed introductory chapter entitled "The Women of America." An unattributed preface reads, "It was a national demand that this young girl be saved from the infamies of Spanish prison life. The *Journal* has done its part. Miss Cisneros is now the ward of the American people." However, proceeds would support Cosio, "so that this young Cuban girl should not be forced to ask charity even of her American friends" (i).

⁵¹ *New York Journal*, August 24, 1897.

⁵² *Maggie*, wrote Crane, "blossomed in a mud puddle" (Crane, *Maggie*, 49); as a child of the tenements, her great uniqueness was the degree to which she was initially uncorrupted by her environment. The 1889 novel *The Evil That Men Do* treats an honest country woman whose time in New York ends in temptation, capitulation, prostitution, and death. Edgar Fawcett, *The Evil That Men Do: A Novel* (New York: Belford, 1889).

⁵³ Julia Ward Howe, "To All Good Men and True Women," quoted in Cosio y Cisneros, *Story of Evangelina Cisneros*, 41. Howe's article was quoted, without further citation, in the chapter "The Women of America," which collected prominent women's appeals for Cosio's release.

⁵⁴ Joyce Milton, *The Yellow Kids: Foreign Correspondents in the Heyday of Yellow Journalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 199–200. The author offers the bribery explanation, referring to sources at the *Journal*, but omits any citation for the claim.

⁵⁵ Wisan, *Cuban Crisis*, 329–31. The *World* did not let its rival's scoop pass without comment. In an interview with the paper, the U.S. Consul-General to Spanish Cuba, Fitzhugh Lee, spoke of the *Journal's* exploitation of her case, claiming that Cosio was an insurgent who had conspired in an insurrection on the Isle of Pines, the penal island where her father was

incarcerated for sedition. Given her elite family's involvement in revolutionary politics, Lee's conclusion—that Cosío exploited the *Journal* herself to promote U.S. intervention—seems plausible. However, to my knowledge Cosío left no written material other than her highly sensationalized “autobiography,” so her “true” motives will remain a mystery.

⁵⁶ Julian Hawthorne, “Introduction,” in Cosío y Cisneros, *Story of Evangelina Cisneros*, 27.

⁵⁷ “Hunger has Made Cubans Fatalists,” *New York World*, July 12, 1898. This long article is divided into two parts, the first half of which details Crane's impressions of the Cuban insurgents, who he compared to the residents of “an ordinary slum.” The second half, from which this episode is taken, details Crane and Scovel's experience in the mountains and their dash to meet a *World* dispatch boat on the beach. The headline refers only to the first part, however, and R. W. Stallman and Edward R. Hagemann, the editors of Crane's war writings, suggest that the published article may consist of two separate dispatches combined later by editors into a single piece. Stephen Crane, *The War Dispatches of Stephen Crane*, ed. R. W. Stallman and E. R. Hagemann (New York: New York University Press, 1964), 164.

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