DRAWING DEFEAT: CARICATURING WAR, RACE, AND GENDER IN FIN DE SIGLO SPAIN

A Master’s Thesis Presented
By
JOEL C. WEBB

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS

May 2009

Department of History
DRAWING DEFEAT: CARICATURING WAR, RACE, AND GENDER IN *FIN DE SIGLO* SPAIN

A Thesis Presented
by
JOEL C. WEBB

Approved as to style and content by:

__________________________________________
Brian D. Bunk, Chair

__________________________________________
José Angel Hernández, Member

__________________________________________
Laura L. Lovett, Member

__________________________________________
Audrey L. Altstadt, Department Chair
History Department
DEDICATION

For Heejung: without your patience
I couldn’t have finished this, and without your love
I wouldn’t have cared to.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor and thesis chair, Dr. Brian D. Bunk, for all the time he spent reading drafts, providing guidance, and giving my work the thoughtful criticism it surely needed. Thanks are also due to Dr. José Hernández and Dr. Laura Lovett for helping me see this project through to the end.
ABSTRACT

DRAWING DEFEAT: CARICATURES OF WAR, RACE, AND GENDER IN FIN DE SIGLO SPAIN

May 2009

JOEL C. WEBB, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS
M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Brian D. Bunk

This project uses cartoons to examine a period in Spanish history when the forces of a developing Spanish national identity met with the challenges of war and decolonization. I argue that fear of an uncertain future combined with the disaster of a collapsing empire were projected onto the images of the enemy and are preserved in the many editorial cartoons of the age. By deconstructing the iconology in these cartoons, and by exploring the dialectic of otherness present in these images, I reconstruct the turn-of-the-century Spanish identity that emerged during a period of rapid transition.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I  PIGS AND PATRIOTS: THE MENACE OF MATERIALISM</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II RACIALIZING REBELLION: SPANISH CIVILIZATION, FOREIGN INSURGENCY</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III AMAZONS ON THE EDGE OF THE EMPIRE: DEFENDING SPAIN AND SPANISH WOMANHOOD</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LIST OF FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 (Rebel and Pig) <em>Gedeón</em> May 27, 1897</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 (Frolicking Pigs) <em>Madrid Cómico</em> April 16, 1898</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 (Butchered Pigs) <em>Gedeón</em> November 12, 1896</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 (Greedy Uncle Sam) <em>Gedeón</em> February 6, 1896</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 (Merchant Uncle Sam) <em>Blanco y Negro</em> June 11, 1898</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 (Beating Don Quixote) <em>La Campana de Gracia</em> August 13, 1898</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 (Lion Tearing Rebel Flag) <em>La Campana de Gracia</em> January 2, 1897</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 (General Linares Killing Pigs) <em>Blanco y Negro</em> July 2, 1898</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 (Colón y Cullón) <em>Gedeón</em> December 17, 1896</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 (Lion and Pigs) <em>Barcelona Cómica</em> April 18, 1896</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 (Uncle Sam and Buccaneer) <em>Blanco y Negro</em> May 21, 1898</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11 (El Único Fuerte de Los Yankees) <em>Madrid Cómico</em> June 11, 1898</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12 (Uncle Sam Magician) <em>Nuevo Mundo</em> June 29, 1898</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.13 (A Lion’s Transformation) <em>Madrid Cómico</em> May 2, 1898</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.14 (Two-faced Uncle Sam) <em>Blanco y Negro</em> June 4, 1898</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 (Rampaging Rebels) <em>Gedeón</em> January 16, 1896</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 (Rebel Faces) <em>La Campana de Gracia</em> January 1, 1898</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 (Uncle Sam Hand-in-hand With Rebels) <em>Blanco y Negro</em> May 14, 1898</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 (Filipino Kite) <em>Blanco y Negro</em> June 25, 1898</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 (Aguinaldo Monkey) <em>Blanco y Negro</em> June 18, 1898</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 (Aguinaldo Ragged) <em>Gedeón</em> June 23, 1898</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.7  (Visiting Insurrectionists)  *Blanco y Negro* May 7, 1898…………………. 56
2.8  (Weyler Sweeping up)  *Gedeón* February 17, 1896…………………………. 59
2.9  (Weyler Plowing over)  *La Campana de Gracia* January 30, 1897…………… 59
3.1  (American Amazon)  *Madrid Cómico* May 28, 1898…………………………. 65
3.2  (“El Repatriado”)  *Blanco y Negro* September 3, 1898…………………………. 70
3.3  (Spanish Nurse)  *Blanco y Negro* October 1, 1898……………………………. 70
3.4  (Spanish Woman at Church)  *Nuevo Mundo* May 18, 1898………………….. 72
3.5  (Spanish Women on the Shore)  *La Ilustración Nacional* May 20, 1898……….. 74
3.6  (Woman/Nation on the Shore)  *La Campana de Gracia* June 5, 1897……… 74
3.7  (American Amazon Holding Baby)  *Blanco y Negro* May 28, 1898………………. 76
3.8  (Spanish Woman Assaulted)  *Madrid Cómico* May 21 1898………………….. 80
3.9  (Modern Distractions)  *La Campana de Gracia* July 10, 1897……………….. 80
3.10 (Violent Women)  *La Campana de Gracia* March 19, 1898………………….. 81
3.11 (Distracting Revelry)  *La Campana de Gracia* march 6, 1897………………….. 81
C.1  (The Modern World Invades)  *Blanco y Negro* July 23 1898………………….. 86
INTRODUCTION

In 1897, the year before its capitulation to the overwhelming military power of the United States, two important events occurred in Spain: Antonio Cánovas del Castillo Vallejo’s career ended in assassination and Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo’s career began with the publication of his first novel, *Paz en la Guerra* (*Peace in War*). In a number of ways, the nearly simultaneous exit and entrance of these two giants of Spanish politics and culture symbolize the crossroads Spain approached at the end of the nineteenth century. Cánovas, the impressive engineer of Spain’s restored monarchy—to date the longest period of political stability in modern Spanish history—had been a dominating figure in Spanish politics throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. His powerful and conservative influence steadied the country through the trials of revolt and national emergence. Unamuno—writer, poet, philosopher and member of the still ill-defined Generation of ‘981—exercised mostly a cultural influence on Spanish history. As a critic of mindless ideological fidelity, he became an opponent of the forces of tradition and a passionate voice for the future. Cánovas, an unwavering champion of Spanish conservatism, died as he fought to preserve Spain’s past; Unamuno, of ambiguous political affiliation at best, lived to help construct Spain’s future.

At the start of his career, however, Unamuno was still wrestling with the powerful influence of Spain’s past. *Paz en la Guerra* is his fictionalized account of

---

1 In the most reductionist terms, The Generation of ’98 was a small group of Spanish writers who, with their plain style and firm rhetoric, rejected the existing educational and literary establishment of the Restoration period. While there is still some debate in this area, the major figures of movement were Joaquín Costa, Ángel Ganivet, Pío Baroja, Azorín, José Ortega y Gasset and Miguel de Unamuno. Donald Shaw’s *The Generation of 1898 in Spain* (London: E. Benn, 1975) is still one of the most widely cited and authoritative works on the group.
the Second Carlist War (1872-1876).\(^2\) The story centers around two families in
Bilbao: the Carlist family of Pedro Antonio Iturriondo and the Liberal family of don
Juan Arana. The latent tension between these two families and the ideas they
represent flames up through the course of the story as Spain again descends into war
over the throne. At first the war remains as unreal and fanciful as Pedro Antonio’s
tertulia conversations and late-night stories. Soon, however, the war turns
frighteningly real. Pedro Antonio is forced to close his shop and seek refuge in the
Vizcayan countryside. Juan Arana remains in Bilbao as Carlist forces besiege the city
and attempt to starve out its occupants. He watches in horror as commerce, his
panacea of worldly troubles, degenerates into the fluctuating market prices of dog, cat
and rat carcasses sold on the street for food. The families vent their frustrations
through generalizations and insults. “The only enemy is the priest and the villager,”
exclaimed the Liberals. In response, the Carlists declared the Liberals a “gang of
cynical and infamous speculators, shameless merchants, local tyrants, bribed police,
all of whom, like toads, had become swollen in the contaminated swamp of
expropriated Church property.”\(^3\)

\(^2\) Carlism is not as easy to define as some have supposed. Superficially, it was a political movement in
support of an alternative line of heirs to the Spanish throne. Ideologically, however, Carlism was a
militant brand of traditionalism. In its most extreme form, Carlists sought a return, through sheer force
of will, to the Spain of the seventeenth century—a place where the Spanish Catholic church was
strong, and Liberalism was an unknown idea. There were two major Carlist wars. The First Carlist war
(1833-1840) was fought in opposition to the crowning of Isabella II as Ferdinand VII’s heir. The
Second Carlist war, launched by Don Carlos Maria in 1872 and put down in 1876, was fought in
opposition to the short-lived appointment of an Italian prince as King of Spain. There are few good
books on Carlism, and none of them are in English. The most comprehensive account is Julio
Aróstequi, Jordi Canal and Eduardo González Calleja, eds. El Carlismo y las Guerras Carlistas:
Hechos, Hombres e Ideas (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2003).

\(^3\) Miguel de Unamuno, Peace in War, trans. Allen Lacy and Martin Nozick with Anthony Kerrigan,
This process of caricaturing the enemy culminated in war. Indeed, for the Carlists of the story war was necessary for the legitimate fulfillment of their hopes. Glory and tradition were bound together by the spilled blood of soldiers on the battlefield. “Let mere circumstances put Don Carlos and his ideals on the throne? A peaceful triumph? That would be a lie, a usurpation, a larceny! Without resistance and war, his triumph was irrational.”

Out of the muck of war—the necessary and legitimating action of Carlism—Unamuno recreates the stoic warrior priest, Santa Cruz. A man who takes few prisoners, demands compliance, and never tires; this gritty troglodyte was the personification of war and tradition. He was the manifested expression of Carlist desires as well as the “vessel of their frustrations.”

Ignacio, Pedro’s son, raised on the milk of his father’s war stories and stirred to fight for the Carlist cause, enlists in the Carlist militia. Yet war, he soon learns, is not at all like the glorious battles his father described. War is the whizzing of bullets, the explosions of cannon balls, the bloody fanaticism of Santa Cruz and other demagogue-like leaders. Unlike the stone-throwing mock wars of his childhood, the enemy never materializes but is always deadly. Enemy bullets seem to appear from nowhere just as he fires his shells into nothingness. Before his inglorious death, Ignacio had become hardened to the idea that war, like the enemy, is also an abstraction.

The Spain of Unamuno’s novel, like the Spain surrounding him as he wrote it, sat uncomfortably between opposing abstractions and symbolic Manichean confrontations—future against past, Liberals against Carlists, city against town,

---

industrial against pastoral, foreign against indigenous, progress against tradition. Each threatens the other with annihilation, and each side uses its counterpart to define itself. The countryside was all the more real because of the city; the Liberals were just that much more rational in relation to the Carlists; the past was a noble dream compared to the uncertainty of the future; the grasses more lush and the women more pure in the absence of the corrupting influence of railroads and merchants.

While the second Carlist war did eventually come to an end, the opposing symbolism it helped to cultivate persisted. In many ways the military confrontation was only a symptom of a larger struggle for a cohesive national identity. The seeming chaos of the nineteenth century—the loss of the colonies, the contested throne and Carlist wars, the turmoil of the sexenio, the failed republic—was part of the process of Spain's emergence as a modern nation. A clearly defined idea of the nation had not yet completely materialized by the time Spain was drawn into a war with the United States. Through the process of the war, however, the Spanish public came to associate the North American threat with the extant symbolic divisions within Spain. The persistent discomfort with burgeoning Liberalism merged with the threat of what Spaniards perceived to be perverted US materialism. So too did the frightening prospect of the loss of Cuba prompt a reevaluation of Spain’s colonial past.

In this thesis I propose that the war was popularly recognized not just as a battle over colonies or resources, but also as a conflict with an aggressive emerging modern world. The struggle between Spain and the US brought the contrast between the tawdriness of materialism and the elegance of traditional culture to the

---

surface. Nowhere is this more evident than in the cartoon images found in the illustrated magazines then popular in large Spanish cities. The various reoccurring symbols preserved in the political cartoons of the time reveal that the war with the US acted as a surrogate for an internal cultural conflict between the modern and the traditional.

It’s imperative, however, that I make it clear early on that while I’m identifying the tension between concepts like “tradition” and “progress” within Spain, I am not attempting to validate the previously-proposed notion that the history of modern Spain can be interpreted as a series of violent clashes between the respective proponents of these two ideas. Spain, like many countries, has had a long and complex relationship with both traditional and progressive ideas. It would be facile to attempt to reduce that complex relationship to an all-inclusive theory of perpetual instability. What I am proposing is that the persistently reoccurring images, tropes, and structures of iconology employed in Spanish editorial cartoons consistently promote an interpretation of modernity that is dangerous, violent, unfamiliar, and inherently unspanish.

The war—expressed in the imagery of cartoons as a struggle between culture and chaos, tradition and travesty—was uniquely suitable to the use of metaphors that reinforced this conflict. The US symbolized unearned wealth, crass industrialization, innovation for innovation’s sake and cowardly duplicity. Spain, on the other hand, represented the blessings of culture and empire built through centuries of experience, pristine idyllic countryside, tradition piled upon tradition, and proud legitimacy. Yet the printed symbolic conflicts between civilized and corrupt,
traditional and modern also reveal a profound sense of insecurity. The imagery itself, while touting the superiority of Spanish tradition, belies an ominous sense of tradition’s inevitable coming defeat at the hands of the modern world. In many cartoons there appears a clear sense of frustration, recognized weakness, and impending doom. Uncle Sam and his armies of pigs may be filthy and dishonest, but their pudgy health testifies to their strength and single-minded determination. In contrast, the Spaniard’s weapon is his own sense of pride and conviction—a formidable symbolic strength to be sure, but a soundly ineffective defense against mortars, machine guns and mountains of cash. A typical cartoon depicts the quintessential Spanish soldier or matador confronting the United States’ modern weapons of war not with a comparable display of force, but with a beaming smile, a proud chest or an insulting phrase uttered with a clear sense of moral superiority. In this situation, with power heavily weighted on the US side, Spanish defeat seems almost predestined.

*  *  *

Wars, historians insist, are fought over colonies, resources, capital and borders. And in many respects, this is quite true. Yet such reductionist conclusions obscure as much as they clarify. Lost in the minutia of practicality, causation and consequence are the immediate, contemporary, overly-emotional ways that everyday individuals understand war. Wars are powerful generators of pain and joy, suffering and satisfaction, loss and gain. The passion that inevitably accompanies imminent defeat or foreseeable victory can be either jarring or consoling to a nation’s sense of self. National wars, complex though they may be, are
typically understood in very reductionist and conceptual terms. This is to say that people tend to cling to the idea that wars are waged in defense of the very abstract and subjective notions of good verses evil, right against wrong, honesty over deceit, us verses them.

By drawing metaphors as tangible reality, cartoonists appeal to this natural tendency. Unlike prose, regardless of how powerful the language, cartoonists do much more than say the enemy is evil, they show their readers that he/she/it plainly is. Spanish cartoonists didn’t simply declare that rebels were violent; they showed their blood-stained swords, their sharp menacing teeth. These cartoons did more than explain that the US was greedy and covetous; they flooded the reader’s mind with images of star-spangled rampaging pigs and money-hoarding glutinous Uncle Sams. Spanish Cartoonists did more than warn that the nation was threatened by the forces of modernity; they colored the pages of magazines with weeping maidens, firebombed castles, torn flags, and parades of heavily armed invading soldiers.

For the historian, cartoons and other forms of constructed graphic imagery are especially useful in fleshing out these abstractions because they are naturally both prescriptive and descriptive. Cartoons invite and encourage the reader to acknowledge a particular assessment of the situation or the characters they describe. Yet the method is only effective because the cartoon utilizes a symbolic language packed with values and judgments that the reader already recognizes and accepts. In

---

6 E. H. Gombrich, “The Cartoonist’s Armoury,” Meditations on a Hobby Horse and other essays on the theory of art, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963, pp. 128-129; As Gombrich so poignantly explains, cartoons show us that “we can or cannot police the world, live under the shadow of the bomb, trim our sails to the winds of change, join hands with that group and steal a march on the other, the road ahead is arduous but the future, of course, is bright, if only we avoid the pitfalls, skirt the abyss, and stop that downward trend.”p.130.
the Spanish case, cartoons communicate intricate narratives and explanations about
the origins of the conflict, the state of the war, and the price of defeat. These
complex ideas, however, are conveyed through a system of readily identifiable and
easily communicable beliefs about everything from race and gender to chaos and
stability. While the prescriptive elements are impossible to avoid, it is the
descriptive qualities, the culturally accepted system of symbols and counter symbols,
that interests me most. Collectively these symbols constitute a window into the
popular cultural values and psychological needs of the time. For the late nineteenth-
century Madrileño, the specific normative value judgments cartoons relay are merely
a cultural bridge to the more complex prescriptive idea depicted in the cartoon. For
the twenty-first-century historian, those self same normative values provide access to
the contemporary cultural reactions to the war.

Lawrence Streicher drew a clear distinction between what he held to be two
different types of caricature. “Political caricature” ridiculed or exposed persons or
entities involved in power struggles; “social caricature,” less well defined, operates
on issues outside of the power struggles of groups or individuals. For many
cartoons this division is appropriate. The famous 1890 Punch cartoon of the Kaiser
watching Bismarck disembark from the ship of government, a notable example, is
entirely political. As a metaphor it conveys no social elements—it does not
prescribe, describe nor ridicule social behavior or custom. As W. A. Coupe
remarks, “it neither debunks them nor builds them up; it simply offers a polite

7 Lawrence H. Streicher, “On a Theory of Political Caricature,” *Comparative Studies in Society and
History* 9, No. 4 (1967): 432.
allegory on a given political situation." In the present assessment, this theoretical division is neither helpful nor valid. The wartime cartoons of this period seem to merge these two types. In Streicher’s estimation, the themes evaluated and the opinions prescribed in these Spanish cartoons are inherently political. Yet, the soapbox they stand on, if you will, is a wholly social construction. It’s built with symbols and categories that relay specific ideas about how the world works and how other nations, defined through reductionist national characteristics, operate in that world.

This form of interpretation conforms to Erwin Panofsky’s celebrated third level of pictorial interpretation. For it’s with the “intrinsic meaning” of these cartoons and sketches, “those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion—qualified by one personality and condensed into one work,” that I am most interested in. These images are informed by the culture in which they were produced just as they, in turn, informed that culture. Not unlike any Renaissance painting, these pieces of nineteenth-century disposable culture contain symbolic value that could be the product of either purposeful artistic engineering or something “unknown to the artist

---


9 Erwin Panofsky, Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History, Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957, 28-31. Panofsky describes the first level of interpretation as the “primary or natural subject matter,” the rocks, trees and people in all their factual and expressional detail. The second level of interpretation is the more complex association of culture with artistic motif—recognizing that a painting of the Last Supper is more than “an excited dinner party.”
himself [that] may even emphatically differ from what he consciously intended to express.”

By deconstructing cartoons that describe the enemy as characteristically anti-Spanish I propose to identify what nineteenth-century Spaniards recognized as the ideal Spanish nation, the ideal Spanish empire. This is to say that encoded in the image of a duplicitous Uncle Sam or a treasure-belching pig is the ideal of fairness and piety. And implied in the images of violent illegitimate rebellion is a strong statement about stable Spanish colonial legitimacy. Take for example a May 27, 1897 Gedeón cartoon (Figure I.1). The cartoon depicts an unlikely marriage: the bridegroom, a jovial lumbering black Cuban; the bride, a portly, squinting star-stamped pig. But for the drawn veil and ring of holly, the round pig is entirely naked. The Cuban—barefoot, holding a bag of US dollars, and sporting a tweed hat

---

10 Panofsky, Meaning in the Visual Arts, 31. Because the term “iconology” tends to convey different meanings depending on the critic who employs the term, I have intentionally avoided using it. What I have describe above, however, is what Panofsky means by the term “iconology.”
and a long smile—walks arm in arm with the large grotesque pig. Just as the pig is a common metaphor for shameless greed and commercialism, the Cuban, black and apelike, represents the illegitimacy of rebellion. The bag of money he holds demonstrates that his fidelity has been bought. And the title, “Matrimonio Morganático,” explaining that Cuba is entering into an unequal relationship, tells the reader that this solitary bag constitutes the full extent of his payment.

The cartoon contains no natural metaphors—no bright spark of white shining upon the dark secrecy of black, no choirs of angels, no horned Devils. The image is entirely a social construction. Clearly, it’s a statement about the essence of US imperialism and the essence of rebellion. Yet, because the artist constructed it to represent the inversion of Spanish empire, it also speaks to Spain, Spaniards, and Spanish identity. With Cuba occupying the lower position in this “morganatic” relationship, Cubans are thus destined to remain a perpetual outsider in the empire the US is making. The US, the cartoonist insists, is not offering what Spain has gladly given: cultural brotherhood, linguistic unity, legal parity. The cartoon, then, should be understood as an allegory about the perversion of empire. If the US Empire is based on unequal trade ties and colonial subservience, Spanish empire embraces the colony as an extension of the metropole. If a marriage to US Empire is a marriage to materialism, Spain represents the wholesome spirit that rejects it. If the marriage

11 E.H. Gombrich describes a natural metaphor as “metaphors which are so widespread that one may call them universal.” These metaphors would include such things as light and dark, beauty and ugliness. p.138.

12 This does not mean that, as social construction, it doesn’t contain several political statements. The 41 and 14 tattooed across the pig’s belly is an explicit reminder of the US Senate’s vote for the Morgan Cuban Resolution of May 20, 1897. The resolution declared that a “condition of public war exists between the Government of Spain and the government proclaimed [Cuba].” New York Times, “To Recognize Cuba,” May 21, 1897.
of pig to rebel seems unnatural, the cultural relationship between Spain and Cuba is normal, stable, consistent, timeless. It is to this system of metaphorical binary opposition, and to how this process informs Spanish national identity, that this thesis primarily speaks.
CHAPTER I

PIGS AND PATRIOTS: THE MENACE OF MATERIALISM

“Son Españoles los que no pueden ser otra cosa.”

-Antonio Cánovas del Castillo

The restored monarchy (1875-1923) ushered in a prolonged period of political stability in Spain. The brainchild of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, it was his reluctant answer to the disastrous republican experiment and the preceding interim rule of General Juan Prim. Cánovas designed the system to replace the periodic military rebellions against corrupt governments and party leaders. Through the utility of sham elections, Caciquismo (political bossism), and a host of complicit politicians, one party could be rotated out of power and replaced by the other in a routine, methodical way. Once the current economic and social problems of the nation were heaped upon the shoulders of the outgoing party, the new reigning party maintained a semblance of authority and competence as the government of the former opposition. In essence, the two-party system acted as a controlled substitute for the golpes, pronunciamientos, and revolutions of the previous era.

While this rotation between Liberals and Liberal-Conservatives proved effective in dealing with the problems inherent in a process of destabilizing military

---

1 Quoted in Gerald Brenan, The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Civil War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 4; “Spaniards are those who can’t be anything else.”

coup, it concealed, rather imperfectly, the very real tension between progressive and traditional positions. Spain’s late nineteenth century was a time of rapid uncomfortable social change punctuated by Carlist uprisings, colonial revolts, failed colonial adventures, economic convulsions and the emergence of a large vociferous press. The establishment of the restored monarchy hadn’t supplanted these spasms; rather, by merely covering them with the illusion of Liberal stability, it exacerbated the passions of the frustrated traditionalists. The picture of Spain before the introduction of Liberalism—the imaginary serene world of peasants and padres, church and crown that rarely existed outside the minds of devoted Carlists—continued to hold hope for a return to Spanish greatness at home and abroad. Cánovas himself was well aware of the powerful hold tradition had on his contemporaries. Drawing from the influence of Burkean and French-conservative thought, the constitution he proposed in 1876 appealed to the strong currents of traditionalism through the recognition of religion as the basis for civil society. Furthermore, he expected the institutions of the new constitution to conform to what he saw as Spain’s unique “internal constitution”—the sharing of power between the naturally opposing institutions of King and Court. In this way Cánovas believed he

3 Spain witnessed two Carlist wars in the nineteenth century: the first from 1833-1840, the second from 1872-1876. Originally an armed attempt to place Carlos V on the throne after the death of Ferdinand VII, it gained popular momentum as a war of tradition against the powers of Liberal perversion.

4 The period following the revolution of 1868 witnessed a massive rise in the production of print media in Spain. According to Henry Schulte, between October and December of 1868 “ninety new periodicals were founded in Madrid alone, one a day.” The Spanish Press 1470-1966: Print, Power and Politics (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), 205.

5 Comellas, El Sistema, 28-30.
had successfully wedded tradition to the imperfect application of Liberal democracy.\textsuperscript{6}

Thus, Spain at the turn of the century—a traditional country governed by the false image of a Liberal democracy and informed by a typically progressively Liberal press\textsuperscript{7}—was a country of contradictions in transition. The government claimed legitimacy through democracy, but institutionalized sham elections. The constitution hailed religion as its essence, but sought secularization in ways similar to the rest of Europe. The political press criticized the institution of \textit{Caciquismo}, but continued to represent the interests of the ruling parties. The growing cities espoused the ideal of Liberalism, but the rural masses continued to recoil from the modern soullessness they believed it would bring.

Intentionally or not, cartoonists projected Spain’s own internal tension between tradition and modernity onto the international stage. To a large degree, then, the patterns and symbolic relationships encoded into wartime cartoons represent an effort to resolve the very real problem of defining the nation and the empire. Yet this process involved much more than simply sketching the features of an idealized Spain. Since the war in Cuba was a colonial war, and both the US and Spain recognized themselves as empires, cartoonists constructed an image of Spanish empire that was necessarily non-US. Cartoonists thus defined the nation and the empire through a process of graphic binary opposition. Spain was civilization because the US was barbarism; Spain was the legitimate government of Cuba because


\textsuperscript{7} In the “Golden Age of Spanish journalism,” the period of burgeoning growth encouraged by the 1883 press law, the press became “the most important vehicle for the transmission of liberal ideology.” David Ortiz, Jr., \textit{Paper Liberals: Press and Politics in Restoration Spain} (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000).
the US was a usurper; Spain was cultured and pious because the US was neither. Yet, the process of defining the nation in these terms exposed strong feelings of anxiety over the war and the future. In many of the drawn situations, the three pillars of Spanish identity—civilization, culture and legitimacy—seem an insufficient defense against the vulgar power of the opposition. What is culture against unlimited wealth? What is legitimacy against iron and steel? What are the bonds of linguistic brotherhood when confronted by the violence of war? Indeed, these feelings of anxiety appear to manifest themselves into a state of national confusion and inconsistency—the purportedly Liberal press ridiculed the US for being successfully Liberal; defenders of Spanish empire lambasted the United States’ imperial ambitions. This combination of anxiety and hypocrisy demonstrates that, at least in the embedded iconography of wartime cartoons, the US was merely a symbol of a much larger threat to Spain—the threat of a material-obsessed modern world.

The burgeoning US, as the epitome of vulgar materialism and innovation, symbolized the threat of a future of commercialism and limitless capitalist exploitation. The proud standard bearer of modernization, the United States seemed the physical manifestation of all that jeopardized traditional Spain: glorified modernity, unabashed materialism, shameless duplicity. Its growing power threatened godlessness and depravity. Additionally, for those Spaniards struggling to maintain the last vestiges of the empire, the North American behemoth, with its clear advantage in resources and capital, constituted a perpetual uncomfortable challenge to Spanish control of Cuba. That by 1898 the US came to represent a military threat as well only served to emphasize this extant dichotomy of ideals.
Through the imagery of editorial cartoons, the war of bullets, blood and battlefields merged seamlessly with the internal struggle in Spain between the modern and the traditional. Consequently, the imagery of editorial cartoons drew Manichean divisions between the two opponents. Spain was steeped in tradition; the US was awash with novelty. Spain was proud and firm; the US was wily and deceitful. Spain stood on centuries of history and convention; the US hid behind mountains of cash. To confront the US was not only to confront all that Spain abhorred, it was to confront the modern world itself.

Through the medium of editorial cartoons, the representations of opposing nations and values faced one another within an arrangement of symbols and counter symbols. Consistent with its assigned role, metaphors for the US demonstrated fleetingness and cowardliness, an absence of culture and a preponderance of corrupting wealth. Animal metaphors exhibiting these national traits were especially common. A fatted pig, the nearly ubiquitous symbol for the US in editorial wartime cartoons, was an image that focused Spanish contempt. Illustrated magazines and newspapers decorated the borders of political cartoons with silhouettes of marching pigs; figures of healthy pigs were stamped over American flags; iron-clad pigs sailed from Tampa toward Cuba; large upright pigs emblazoned with stars and stripes accosted women on the streets; tall threatening pigs wore three-piece suits and stovepipe hats; artistic pigs whispered into the ears of poets composing odes to war; congresses of pigs wrote laws and passed judgment; American leaders arrogantly built pyramids from the carcasses of bleeding pigs as testaments to their vanity. In one cartoon, a group of gleeful pigs, purportedly representing those
lobbying in support of US intervention in Cuba, even danced around a large sack of money as though delirious with insatiable greed. In another, a herd of pigs running wildly in all directions trampled over Don Quixote and Sancho—the powerful and popular metaphor for Spain and Spanish empire.8

Figure 1.1 Madrid Cómico April 16, 1898

As a symbol of US imperial ambitions, pigs were the perfect antagonistic device. Filthy, vulgar and greedy, pigs were everything Spaniards rejected, and everything US Empire represented.9 As a persistently reoccurring feature of Spanish cartoons they reinforced the association between burgeoning US empire and insatiable aggrandizement. Like American greed and Liberalism gone wild, pigs consumed ravenously. Unchecked they eat everything within reach. Commonly reveling in their own excrement, pigs exemplified an absence of morals, tradition, decency, loyalty, and shame. They were incessantly hungry, barbarous, belligerent,

8 Blanco y Negro, February 19, 1898 and March 12, 1898; Madrid Cómico, March 28, 1896 and April 16, 1898; Nuevo Mundo, June 1, 1898; Gedeón, February 24, 1898 and March 11, 1897; Barcelona Cómica, June 13, 1896; La Campana de Gracia, June 11, 1898 and August 13, 1898.

9 James Hall, Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art (London: J. Murray, 1974) identifies pigs as a common symbol for greed, lust and sloth going back to the Middle Ages. The pig in art “is an attribute of Lust personified and is trodden, vanquished, under the feet of chastity.” 247.
irreverent and everywhere. To the Spaniards reading these cartoons, the image of the pig was also an unmistakable image of food. Cartoons evoked this connection by depicting pigs either hanging in butcher shops or branded with the American star. Also, popularly recognized as a dull animal, the image of the pig represented mental weakness—pigs think with their stomachs not with their heads. The power of their voracious appetite was thus offset by their absence of intelligence. Pigs, it seemed, were led by the basest desire to feed, defecate and reproduce.

By contrast, Spaniards were mental beings—cultured, with refined tastes, a long history, and a sense of accomplishment. For these reasons, the empire they represented and projected was stable and consistent. Criticism of the enemy, heaping ridicule on the pig, was the surest way to emphasize the positive qualities inherent in an idealized Spain. This is to say that by way of the condemnation of certain abhorrent characteristics of the threatening US-spawned empire, cartoonists were constructing and glorifying ideal Spanish qualities. If warship-like pigs, clad in iron and bellowing smoke, were industrial and corrupted, Spain was pastoral and pure; if pigs were over-sexed and offensive, Spaniards were demure and respectful; if pigs were frantic and chaotic, Spanish rule was orderly and stable. Thus, Spanish morality was the countervailing force to perverse US ambitions.

Yet despite all that was abhorrent about the greedy pig there was no avoiding the fact that the pigs were also healthy and numerous, and, therefore, threatening. As elements of cartoon scenes, they almost never appeared alone; rather, they typically gathered in menacing packs; they conspired in evil congregations. Nor did cartoons ever show pigs as sickly or unhealthy. Pigs were the embodiment of both
the gluttonous desire to amass wealth as well as the embodiment of that wealth itself—the greed and the gold. Without fail, caricatured pigs were fat with riches, stuffed with money. Often, cartoons presented these symbols of US power as existing alongside depictions of a defeated US in ways that seem to ignore the obvious contradiction. One example, a cartoon in the short graphic weekly Gedeón depicts a rather gruesome scene whereby Gedeón (the cartoon image personification of the magazine) has butchered two pigs and now stands proudly between them holding a knife marked *hierro.* (Figure 1.2) The pigs hang by their hind legs with their abdomens torn open and mouths gaped wide as blood drips over their lifeless carcasses and into the buckets hanging beneath them. Like the knife, the buckets are marked with labels: one *oro*, the other *plata.*  

![Carnicería](image)

Figure 1.2 *Gedeón* November 12, 1896 Figure 1.3 *Gedeón* February 6, 1896

Yet notwithstanding the obvious indication that the pigs (and thus the American treasure.

---

10 *Gedeón* November 12, 1896; The caption below reads, “Gracias á Dios! Ya sabemos cuál es de los dos.”
threat) have been rendered harmless within the cartoon, there remains more than a hint of US power in the scene. As Spaniard’s surely understood, wars are waged with money, the more the better. Without it there can be no success, no victory, no glory. Facing an enemy from whose very wounds bleed wealth could not have been a very settling prospect for Spaniards on the verge of war.

The process whereby Spain came to represent the virtuous opposite of the US necessarily divested images of Spain from material wealth. So too was it difficult to divorce the few symbols of the US from the mountains of wealth they had come to represent. Indeed, this wealth constituted the soulless essence of modernity and its most immediate representative, the United States. Not unlike the ubiquitous pig, the greedy, marauding Uncle Sam of wartime cartoons exemplified materialism and stood as a constant reminder of the logical outcome of unchained Liberalism. Typically presented as a tycoon, merchant, or peddler, his many duties included stealing, counting, holding, offering, resting upon or hiding behind bulging bags of money. Where he stands, coins spill out at his feet; where he sits, bags of treasure lie strewn about the floor.11 These cartoons tell readers that he’s deceitful and uncouth; that he excels at graft and bribery; that he’s a dishonest broker, a ruthless competitor, and a merciless victor. Symbolically bound to commercialism, he personifies the wave of unscrupulous modernization and money worshiping that threatened to crash over the nation and wash away Spanish tradition.

In one Gedeón cartoon, the artist has made this threat, and the manifest contrast with Spanish ideals, the core of his scene. (Figure 1.3) In it, Uncle Sam—

---

11 *Nuevo Mundo*, May 4, 1898; *Barcelona Cómic*, March 28 and April 18, 1896; *Blanco y Negro*, June 11 and September 17, 1898; *Gedeón*, February 6, 1896 and March 16, 1898.
chubby, disproportionate, over-dressed and insecure—sits upon a crate of his own goods. His right hand holds a rolled-up document (likely a piece of recent US legislation having to do with the Cuban issue), his left hand is draped over a container labeled “sugar syndicate,” his back rests against a package of Chicago meat, and at his feet spill hundreds of thousands of dollars in coins. Facing him is the proud lion, his paw protecting a burning Cuba, and his hostile attention directed at his opponent. In contrast to the ostentatious Uncle Sam, he’s not surrounded by stocks of goods and piles of coins; strength, pride and national fidelity are his weapons.\textsuperscript{12} In another cartoon scene, Uncle Sam stands upon a tower built entirely with bags of money. Yet while it appears strong and solid, there is no substance underneath, no core of integrity or conviction. It’s money through and through—Liberalism absent tradition, wealth without worth.\textsuperscript{13}

Figure 1.4  
\textit{Blanco y Negro June 11, 1898}

A different cartoon, this one presenting Uncle Sam as a street vendor, demonstrates the amorality of his kind of money worshipping. (Figure 1.4) As he stands near his display, a large-nosed, sharp clawed, grotesque-looking Uncle Sam

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Gedeón}, February 6, 1896.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Madrid Cómico}, June 11, 1898.
smiles and gestures toward his goods. The boxes, marked “la verguenza, el decoro, la dignidad, el patriotismo, la nobleza” (shame, honor, dignity, patriotism, nobility), have been stacked neatly on a table behind him. The sign on the display table proclaims “todo se vende” (all is for sale). Yet in this case, it’s the nation itself that’s sold. To the right, in an additional cartoon bubble, stoops US president McKinley dangling a large bloody knife in one hand and holding up a platter in the other. Upon the platter, McKinley’s gory offering, sits Uncle Sam’s severed head. The cartoonist’s point is emphatic; in a world of capitalism-gone-wild, all things, even the most sacred, have their price.

Metaphors for Spain and Spanish power were hardly as monotonous as the consistently reappearing groups of pigs and Uncle Sams symbolizing the United States. Spanish imagery came in the form of proud Lions (a traditional symbol of Spanish regality), maidens, matadors, castles and a host of other forms. The sheer variety of symbolic representations of Spain and Spanish interests added nuance and complexity to the Spanish cause. The types of symbols—lions for pride and tradition, maidens for purity, and matadors for virility and martial spirit—were traditional and reassuring. So too did these symbols of Spanish might and Spanish glory emphasize the sharp differences between Spain and its enemies. Money, power, and extravagance were immediate but fleeting and valueless. Spain’s worth—mined from centuries of history, tempered by defeat, sacrifice and eventual salvation—was strong and eternal. Popular national symbols like Don Quijote were

---

14 That cartoon images of Uncle Sam are consistently drawn with large hooked noses hardly seems a coincidence. While I could find nothing explicitly making this connection, cartoonists appear to be at least hinting at the relationship between Jewish stereotypes and Uncle Sam.
perfect vehicles for the dissemination of these powerful themes. Not only was he indicative of a long Spanish literary tradition, Cervantes’s bumbling yet well-intentioned knight exemplified Spain’s noble intentions in the New World while tacitly acknowledging the failures. Cartoons that evoked his kind, loyal heart made the treachery of the rebelling colonists more acute. Castles, often old and in the background of cartoons, were another important reminder of the rich history of Spain. On the surface, like depictions of lions, castles were associated with the kingdom of Castile, which was in turn associated with the empire. As features of cartoon iconology, however, they symbolized much more. The remnants of ages past, they represented a foundation of tested institutions and history. They were built to stand the test of time, not to appeal to the expediency of the moment. Americans built with money, Spain built with tradition.

Figure 1.5 La Campana de Gracia August 13, 1898
Figure 1.6 (center) La Campana de Gracia January 2, 1897
Figure 1.7 (right) Blanco y Negro July 2, 1898

15 The use of Don Quixote as a metaphor for Spain was especially common during this time. Before 1898, Don Quixote was often the noble counterfoil to Robinson Crusoe, Spanish empire vs. Anglo-Saxon empire. After the disaster, writers of the Generation of ’98 often used Don Quixote as a model for Spain’s new post-imperial role. Christopher Arredondo, Quixotism: The Imaginative Denial of Spain’s Loss of Empire. New York: State University of New York Press, 2005.

16 Some great examples of this imagery are in Don Quijote, September 11, 1896; Madrid Cómico, May 2, 1896 and June 11, 1898; Nuevo Mundo, May 1, 1898; Blanco y Negro, May 14, June 4, September 3, and October 1, 1898; Gedeón, June 9, 1898.
These Spanish metaphors were byproducts of the popularly-understood bonds between Spain and its colonies: language, culture, religion, and history. It was these bonds, not the tenuous connections of contracts and trade routes, which constituted the legitimate basis for Spanish control of Cuba. Whereas the US sought only bloody acquisition of new markets and territories, Spain, many Spanish and Latin American Pan-hispanists contended, had built a lasting civilization. Moreover, through the process of colonization, Spain had recreated itself in the colonies. For some Pan-hispanists, it was race that united the Hispanic nation; for others, language was the central point of identification. Yet, regardless of how they measured it, the colonies had clearly taken on new importance in a country rife with a powerful sense of national awareness. As historian Christopher Schmidt-Nowara makes clear, “. . . empire shaped the very contours of the nation's 'imagined community' in the nineteenth century.”

17 Cánovas del Castillo, for whom the nation and the empire were of paramount importance, contended that it was language that was the true cohesive essence of a nation. For this reason, nations could exist, as he believed Spain did, even when its constituent parts were separated by oceans. “Y lo general y de ordinario cierto es esto: que las naciones habitan un territorio común, aunque bien puedan tener apartadas colonias, o carecer, como la hebraica, de propio suelo mucho ha: que las naciones, o tienen raza propia originaria, o la constituyen, a la larga, no de otro modo que en la corteza terrestre hay rocas primitivas y sedimentarias; que lo más natural en las naciones es tener comunidad de idioma,” Discurso Sobre la Nación, 1882, 69.

18 But for their few remaining Antillean possessions, Spain had lost their holdings in the western hemisphere nearly three quarters of a century earlier. This loss, immense though it was, did not trigger the sense of impending doom and disaster that the 1898 loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines caused. In the 1820s most Spaniards viewed the colonies as distant royal possessions, and the wars over them as distant civil entanglements. Yet, it was this massive loss that effected a reevaluation of Spain's empire. In the years between the loss of South America and the 1898 war, Spaniards had directed an inordinate amount of attention towards the maintenance of the remaining colonies. In the minds of nineteenth-century Spaniards, the few remaining colonies were integral components of the Spanish nation.

how it was justified, the colonies were part of Spain just as were Cataloña, Galicia, and Andalusia.

Spanish historians, generating great numbers of histories in the nineteenth century, helped to popularize this idea. Largely a response to the typical Anglo-American produced histories that emphasized the "Black Legend," these new histories explained how Spanish civilization had defeated and supplanted the defective cultures of earlier peoples as they conquered the New World. These histories propounded a narrative of Spanish colonial exceptionalism predicated on the centrality of Spain’s civilizing efforts in the New World. They advocated the idea that Spanish settlers brought the gifts of Catholicism and culture to backward Native Americans just as they continued to do for the Cubans. Where other colonial powers had displaced natives, Spain had embraced them; where other empires had exploited the indigenous population, Spain had itself sacrificed to civilize them. Spain had made a genuine and noble effort to unite colony and metropole with the unbreakable ties of culture. Parvenu imperialists like the US, however, were

---

20 In Spain, the late nineteenth century was an era of great historiographical productivity. Before this time, Spain had been content to view their role in the New World as simply the light of civilization—a position they believed needed little elaboration. However, in declining to clarify their role in the Americas Spain had allowed historians, like the American hispanist William Prescott, to craft their own bleak interpretation of Spain in the colonies. Prescott’s image of Spain as dark, politically despotic, blindly Catholic, and barbarously cruel to its colonies was common in the Anglo-Saxon world. Carolyn Boyd, Historia Patria: Politics, History, and National Identity in Spain, 1875-1975, (Princeton, 1997), 85-86. Richard L. Kagan, Prescott's Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain in The American Historical Review, 101(2) 1996, pp. 423-446.

21 Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, The Conquest of History: Spanish Colonialism and National Histories in the Nineteenth Century, (Pittsburgh, 2006), 34. Historical figures in Spanish American could also be tricky for Spanish historians. Histories that emphasized the ‘Black Legend’ drew heavily from Bartolomé de Las Casas own works. Yet nineteenth-century Spanish historians sought to reclaim Las Casas as an example of Spanish colonials embracing the natives in America. Schmidt-Nowara’s La España Ultramarina and The Conquest of History, as well as Carolyn Boyd's Historia Patria show the many different uses for Bartolomé de Las Casas.
interested only in the search for new markets. They cared only about furthering their abusive materialist adventures.

To emphasize this difference, cartoons sometimes juxtaposed symbols of Spanish empire and the dissemination of civilization with symbols of American empire and the spread of materialism. One cartoon, printed in the December 17, 1896 issue of *Gedeón* (notably a full year and a half before US military intervention in Cuba) demonstrates, through dramatic graphic imagery, the convergence and contrast of these two ideas of empire. The cartoon, entitled “Colón y Cullón” (Columbus and the Pig), shows a statue of Columbus carrying the standard of Castile and standing next to a small globe atop a decorated column.22 (Figure 1.8) At the base of the column, standing on its hind legs and wearing a top hat, is the fat pig.

---

22 The statue depicted in the cartoon is a likeness of the statue of Columbus atop the large heavily decorated pillar in the Plaza de Colón in Madrid. Erected in 1885 to commemorate the marriage of Alfonso XII to Maria Christina, it’s an excellent example of *restauración*-era attempts to officially sanction a new historical understanding of Spanish colonialism—one geared toward the elevation of Columbus to the detriment of the public memory of Pizarro and Cortés. The symbolic relationship between official Spanish attempts to encourage pan-Hispanic brotherhood and the statue in the cartoon would have been obvious to contemporary Spanish readers.
American pig. Columbus—venerable, pious, and accomplished—wears an expression of astonishment on his face. The pig—filthy, greedy and threatening—offers Columbus a document refuting the legitimacy of Spain’s relationship with Cuba. The contrast in symbolism couldn’t be stronger. It had been through the image of Columbus that late-nineteenth-century defenders of Spanish empire had been reconceptualizing the empire. The image of Columbus as the civilizer of the barbarians had supplanted references to bloody conquest.23 The vertical organization of the cartoon is an explicit expression of hierarchy. Columbus—a symbol of the civilizing force of empire, its purest expression in fact—occupies the top of cartoon. The American pig—an equally obvious symbol of the materialist power of empire, its basest expression—stands unnaturally, a poor imitation of a defining human characteristic, at the bottom of the picture. Spain’s historic relationship with its colonies is plain—it’s built on centuries of tradition, it’s as strong as the stone of the statue. The United States’ relationship with Cuba consists of a quasi-legal bureaucratic maneuver scrawled on a piece of crumpled paper and proffered by pigs.

Other drawn scenes, especially those where lions meet pigs, could appear much more confrontational. A typical scene from the cover of the April 18, 1896 edition of Barcelona Cómica shows a crowned lion guarding a bone marked Cuba from a pack of hungry pigs. (Figure 1.9) The crown, a symbol of tradition, empowers him with legitimacy. The pigs, though branded with the star of American empire, are illegitimate in comparison. Scattered, running in several different directions at once, and lacking any sense of organization, they symbolize chaos,

immediacy, and instability. Their movement is not prompted by caution, certainty or natural right; rather, they seem to emerge from nowhere, return to nothingness. They offer only the promise of insatiable consumption. In another cartoon, Uncle Sam, dressed in an apron and armed with a butcher’s knife, locks swords with a Spanish Buccaneer.\textsuperscript{24} (Figure 1.10) The pirate, sharply dressed in cape and feathered hat, points accusingly at his opponent. With his hand tightly grasping the engraved handle of his cutlass, he appears comfortable and certain. Uncle Sam, on the other hand, has a look of fear and indecision. Also, unlike his swashbuckling adversary, he seems weak and sickly. His mouth, gaped wide, holds a set of uneven gapped teeth. His nose is long, swollen and red on the tip. And his frayed hat is slightly cocked to one side revealing his balding head.

Yet again, despite the obvious reminders of Spanish superiority clearly evident in both cartoons, the US maintains the upper hand. The roving bands of pigs may be illegitimate, but they threaten to overwhelm the lion by brute force and superior numbers. So too is the sickly Uncle Sam unexpectedly maintaining an advantage.

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Blanco y Negro}, “Chispas de la Guerra,” May 21, 1898.
His teeth may be rotten, his hair may be falling out, and his expression may be one of shock and uncertainty; but his knife is both larger and drawn first. As the encoded symbolism in these cartoons seems to indicate, the real battle is a symbolic contest between civilization and materialism. By transforming the war from the clash of ships and steel to a conflict of values, Spanish proponents successfully ignore as irrelevant the likelihood of defeat. Civilization, Spanish readers likely understood, is always preferable to barbarism, culture always preferable to culturelessness. The mere contrast between the two implies a Spanish victory regardless of how the actual war is settled. In this way too these cartoons help Spaniards reconceptualize the war. The very real and practical concerns of colonies and colonials, borders and bullets become submerged under a sea of abstractions.

![Cartoon Image](image)

Figure 1.11 *Madrid Cómico* June 11, 1898.

A June 11th comic—after the start of hostilities but before the decisive defeat at Santiago Bay—is a typical example of how Spaniards perceived the conflict with the US as a battle between civilization and materialism. (Figure 1.11) To one side is a Spanish matador. His arms are folded in defiance; his chin is held high and proud. He's standing on and amongst large blocks with the names of several great battles scrawled across them. On the opposite side is Uncle Sam standing at the base of a
large tower built entirely of money. He appears distressed as his two out-stretched arms offer bags of money to the Spaniard. The crossed arms and straight posture of the Spaniard make it clear that his dignity is not for sale. The caption above reads, “El Único Fuerte de los Yankees” (the only strength of the Yankees). The clear message is that Spain's strength is rooted in pride, age, and past victories, while the US has only the fleeting comfort of gold for protection.25

Yet this cartoon makes a bold statement about the type of threat Spaniards faced. There are no weapons of war in the scene, no ships, no guns, no cannons, not even a sword; neither of the two characters are military men; nor does either character threaten the other with physical violence. That this cartoonist understood the threat from the US to be more than merely military seems clear. But what, then, is the threat? A close inspection of the cartoon reveals that the threat, once again, is cultural, it’s ideological, it’s modern. In the background to the right of the Spaniard is a large tower, the decaying remnants of a castle. While the Spanish flag still waves proudly from its summit, one side of the structure has clearly crumbled to the ground. Indeed, the blocks around and beneath the matador are the strewn-about pieces of the broken wall. Confronting the crumbling relics of past Spanish glories is the sound and flawlessly constructed American tower of wealth. Its bags of treasure are solid. There are no obvious structural defects. The fact that it rises out of the borders of the drawing demonstrates that its size, power and

25 The passage at the bottom reads, “Imbecil mercachifle que fias tu victoria en los montones de oro que supiste robar podrán quizá vencerme, más no manchar la gloria de San Quintin, Lepanto, Pavia y Trafalgar.” (The stupid merchant that ties his victory to mountains of gold that you know how to rob could possibly defeat me, but this can not remove the glory of San Quintin, Lepanto, Pavia, and Trafalgar.) Of the four Battles mentioned, it's interesting to note that at least one, Trafalgar, was a devastating defeat.
grandeur are such that the boundaries of the cartoon are unable to contain it. In the image, the cartoonist has pitted culture against consumption, wealth against worth. Strangely, however, the conflict seems heavily weighted in the US's favor. Spanish culture may be old and venerable; but American-style materialism seems destined to charge into the crumbling walls of the Spanish fort of history and tradition. All that stands in the way of wanton commercialism are the proud Spanish people, their belief in the glory of their past, and a healthy nationalism symbolized by the large waving flag. As this cartoon suggests, the war with the US was much more than a conflict over Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. In fact, the cartoon gives no indication that the struggle involves colonies at all. Nor is there any indication that the conflict with the US is a part of ongoing colonial rebellions. The narrative of symbols conveyed in this cartoon is an alarming one whereby Spanish culture and tradition are in danger of being violated by a modern culturlessness. Civilization itself was threatened by American capitalism transmitted by way of American belligerence.

Figure 1:12 Nuevo Mundo June 29, 1898
Figure 1:13 (right) Madrid Cómico May 2, 1896; I’ve removed several frames from this very long cartoon to show only the first and last two frames.
Cartoons demonstrated in graphic form and through easily recognizable symbols and counter symbols exactly what Spaniards could expect from an American victory. A small poorly-drawn *Nuevo Mundo* cartoon claimed to show how the “Yankee ideal” will overturn civilization and unleash materialism. (Figure 1.12) The cartoon, divided into three frames, presents Uncle Sam as a magician and Cuba as the unsuspecting volunteer standing in a barrel. The caption below the first frame describes the volunteer as “a civilized person.” In the second frame both man and barrel are draped with an American flag. In the final frame, Uncle Sam stands holding the flag and proudly presenting a pig set in the space left vacant by the now absent “civilized” man.\(^{26}\) Consistent with the common use of pigs in other wartime cartoons, this pig represents greed and mindless consumption. It’s the defining characteristic of the modern empire—empire fueled and supported by materialism. Civilization, the object of Spanish colonialism, has been supplanted by consumerism, the object of US intervention. The ties of language, culture, and history that Spain believed bound the colonies to the metropolis were threatened by an advancing and menacing pseudo-culture of enterprise.

But, as this cartoon indicates, civilization was not threatened by a superior system of organization and belief; rather, because the American materialist behemoth was aware of its own inferiority, it had to rely on a process of trickery and sly dealings. As in the cartoon, the US could only effect the cultural degeneration it desired through misinformation and graft perpetrated upon an unsuspecting victim. Other cartoons threatened this same process of incremental degeneration. A May 2, 1896 *Madrid Cómico* cartoon shows how the proud Spanish civilization could be

\(^{26}\) *Nuevo Mundo*, June 9, 1898.
transformed into a nightmare if Spain failed to respond appropriately to the rebellion in Cuba. (Figure 1.13) In the first of the eight cells making up this long two-page cartoon, sits a proud roaring lion over a caption that reads “éste es un león oyendo los primeros rumores de beligerancia” (this is a lion upon hearing the first rumors of war). Through each of the following seven cells the lion undergoes a process of degenerative transformation effected by a systematic refusal to combat the rebellion with an appropriate show of force. It morphs from a lion to a dog, then to a cat and a seal, to a lamb and a boar, and, finally, into a pig. Without vigilance, this cartoon explains, civilization can be lost; without strength, weakness will reign; and without tradition, depravity creeps in.

Figure 1.14 Blanco y Negro June 4, 1898

As cartoons that merged the concepts of Liberalism, modernity and Americanization showed, to be possessed by rabid commercialism was to be entirely unmoored from tradition and sanctity. Spanish cartoonists drew American intervention in Cuba as the logical extension of an absence of morals, culture or convention. As a country infected with ethical depravity, the US could only be expected to act duplicitously. In one full page cartoon, American motivations are

reduced to their basest and most hypocritical essentials. (Figure 1.14) The cartoon, divided into two columns of four frames, attempts to expose US rhetoric surrounding intervention in Cuba as the hollow ranting of a shamelessly exploitative empire. The left hand column shows Uncle Sam lynching Southern blacks, ruthlessly slaughtering Indians, making inspirational nationalist speeches and proudly waving the American flag. The right hand column, appropriately labeled “reverso” presents him shaking the hands of black Cubans, supplying them with weapons, and deceptively sailing under the Spanish flag. The passage under the first two opposing frames explains how “without any compassion he lynchest thieves in his land. And in Cuba he offers his hand and treats him as a brother.”28 Thematically consistent with other cartoons presenting the US as a merchant, the Uncle Sam drawn here is crafty and ethically loose. His actions demonstrate a moral deficit because he lacks any core of tradition. Whereas Spaniards valued pride and unfaltering discipline, the modern obsession with commercialism converted patriotism and self-respect into commodities easily exchanged for advantages in war. The United States, hiding behind an artfully enacted sense of indignation, is corrupt, commercial, industrial, expansionist, and is now violating Spain as it has violated the native inhabitants of his own land. The implied contrast is instructive. If the US was despicable in its role as aggressor, Spain was noble to defend itself; where Uncle Sam was unapologetically cruel, Don Quixote was a paragon of virtue; when pigs ran wild and

28 “Medallas Yanquis,” Blanco y Negro, June 4, 1898; “Sin pizea de compassion lyncha en su tierra al ladrón. Y en Cuba le da la mano y le trata como á hermano.” [original emphasis]. Despite the cartoonist’s obvious intention to depict the application of US domestic policy as atrocious, his poor estimation of black men seems to have gotten the better of him. By maintaining that the lynched black man was a thief, the cartoon’s pronouncement is only that the “justice” was harsh, not that the man was innocent. This could also be tacit recognition, if not justification, for the harsh policies of General Weyler in Cuba.
loose, lions reined them in. This imagery, these symbols, metaphors and other elements of Spanish wartime cartoons defined Spanishness in opposition to the powerful currents of liberalization and modernization. More than this, Spanishness conceived of in this way represented the solitary and sometimes sacrificing bulwark to these movements.

More subtle still is the significance of Uncle Sam’s abuse of the native and African populations of the United States. Clearly, the artist is accusing the US of hypocrisy; he is exploiting the gap between US rhetoric toward Cuba and US practices at home. But there is a deeper suggestion buried in these images. The suggestion is not simply that Spain’s abuse of Africans in Cuba is less severe. Nor is the artist merely intimating that Spain is at least honest about its spotty treatment of subject peoples. Rather, the cartoon implies that Spain has an entirely different relationship with its darker-skinned subjects. The history of Spanish colonialism, at least the interpretation officially elevated at the time, was profoundly different in application from the Anglo-Saxon version. Whereas US Empire had successfully driven out indigenous groups, Spanish Empire had embraced them. Where North American colonizers had divided groups along racial lines, Spanish civilizers had promoted mixture. The use of race was thus a critical component of Restauración-era attempts to re-imagine Spanish empire.
“Spanish legislation abhors and despises the distinction between a dominant and dominated race. The benevolent and noble motherland recognizes only Spaniards.”

-Fernando Blumentritt

The January 16, 1896 cartoon cover of the short illustrated weekly, Gedeón, is a scene of obvious violence and mayhem. (Figure 2.1) In the background, flames and smoke rise from the burning houses to color the sky above a threatening red. So that it’s clear to the reader that the scene is meant to be in Cuba, the artist has drawn withering palm trees jutting out from the plumes of fiery smoke and bent over the houses. In the foreground between the houses, a throng of rebel soldiers on horseback parade and stumble toward the center of town; too numerous to count, the soldiers’ hats and weapons wind into the distance as a welter of blur and sharp lines, the faint figures of swords and bayonets. On the ground below, the stomping hooves of the galloping horses have beaten up clouds of dust from the road, thus giving the

---

impression that the rampaging soldiers are floating through town on a billowy trail of filth and muck.

Without exception, every soldier is unmistakably ethnically African. Their caricatured faces have been drawn crudely to emphasize their ethnicity and difference—deep black with not a hint of texture or subtlety, oversized pearly white gaping teeth between thick pink lips bent into clown-like smiles, and wide frenzied eyes denoting a frightening mixture of madness and ecstasy. The rebel flag rising out of their number and into the center of the background leaves no doubt in the reader’s mind that these freakish, wild-eyed lunatics represent the face of the insurrection in Cuba. If this cartoon says anything at all, it relays the perception that this face—a face of madness, violence, terror and destruction—is unquestionably black.

Compared with other caricatures of rebel forces and rebel terror, this particular cartoon is relatively unexceptional. Similar images appeared in all manner of publication throughout the three years of revolt and war. The recourse to present the Cuban rebellion as extemporized, savage, and, most importantly, thoroughly black was particularly strong in the work of Spanish cartoonists. Equally strong, was the tendency of these same cartoonists to depict Filipinos as freakish, half-monkey savages. Like scenes from a minstrel show, cartoon caricatures of rebellion presented Cuban and Filipino insurrectionists clothed in rags or awkwardly dressed in military garb; their faces show either madness and merriment or stupidity and uncertainty; they typically carry bombs, torches, gasoline cans, rifles and machetes—the symbols and implements of violence and disorder. Yet there is much
more behind these images than mere scorn, ridicule and derision. This reoccurring juxtaposition of black faces and insurrection in Spanish cartoons reveals that the image of race played a large role in framing the enemy, the nation, and the empire.

Cartoon imagery and iconography did this in three distinct yet related ways. First, the image of either a dark African Cuban or a Yellow dome-hat Filipino was an unmistakable mark of foreignness. Nineteenth-century Spanish intellectuals interested in the national dynamics between colony and metropole stressed the importance of cultural and racial amalgamation in both Spain and the Spanish territories abroad. These intellectuals and dilettantish historians claimed that just as Spain—in its unique location at the crossroads of Europe and Africa—had emerged from the blending of types, so too were the colonies products of further mixing. Mixture, therefore, came to represent the primary characteristic of Spanishness. The logical corollary to this formula, and one thoroughly exploited if not developed by cartoonists, was that racial purity denoted foreignness. Second, the image of a pure race, whether African or Filipino, confirmed that the figures represented were outside the civilizing influence of Spain. Nineteenth-century Spaniards recognized Spain as the spiritual conduit between the colonies (both existing and former) and European civilization—the heritage of Greece, Rome and the Catholic Church. Since being

---


both civilized and outside of its cultural influence was simply irreconcilable, these uncivilized rebels could only signify barbarism and chaos. And, third, because the rebellion these caricatures symbolized was both foreign and chaotic, it was inherently illegitimate. In contrast, Spanish attempts to quell the revolts and restore order were legitimate exercises of force exerted in defense of the nation and its peoples.

The *Gedeón* cover described above demonstrates all three of these features. The scene of destruction at the hands of black rebels is at once both chaotic and illegitimate. Chaotic, because the throng of motley soldiers seems more interested in destruction than resolving a legitimate grievance; illegitimate, because their black faces and maniacal smiles evince none of the civilizing influence Spanish intellectuals believed four centuries of colonialism had bequeathed to the colonies. What’s more, the cartoon’s design brings a colonial insurrection to the heart of the metropole. With the drawing the cartoonist has created the illusion that the black insurrectionists are surging threateningly forward out of the boundaries of the cartoon, toward the viewer, and to places unknown. The scene of colonial chaos thus spills over into the reader’s lap. In this way, the cartoon impresses upon the reader the idea that he’s an element in the struggle, if not a victim of the rebellion himself. It
also reminds the reader that Cuba is part of the Spanish nation. The blackness of the rebels—in effect their foreignness—confirms the Spanishness of those fighting to defeat them.

The notion that Spain and its former colonies were united in racial amalgamation and cultural assimilation was a common and accepted theme in late nineteenth-century Spanish colonial discourse. Largely a product of the combined trauma brought about by the early nineteenth-century loss of empire and the burgeoning influence of the United States in the former colonies, the tendency to see the world as an arrangement of competing races was particularly strong in turn-of-the-century Spain. Descriptions of racial characteristics and historical explanations of why one should expect this race to remain perpetually at odds with that one abound in magazines devoted to Spanish and American interests. With an eye on history, Spanish intellectuals crafted the idea of Spanish colonial exceptionalism predicated on the concept of racial amalgamation. Intellectuals searched for ways to build on the cultural, linguistic and religious links between Spain and the former colonies in ways that could help to establish more permanent bonds between them. Also, in the sobering wake of the treaty of Oregon and the Mexican American war, Spaniards were encouraged to find ways to strengthen their claim to the remaining colonial possessions in the New World. Because these pan-Hispanic movements gained momentum at a time roughly contemporaneous with emerging nationalist movements in Spain, nationalism was used to define the empire and the empire was used to define the nation. Having an empire for the purpose of spreading civilization and religious brotherhood around the world became part of what it meant
to be a Spaniard in the second half of the nineteenth century. Early pan-Hispanists like Francisco Muñoz del Monte and José María Samper (from Santo Domingo and Columbia respectively) were already writing about the effects and political usefulness of racial amalgamation in the New World as far back as the early 1850s. They recounted how Spain’s efforts at colonization in the New World—the diffusion of Castilian, Catholicism, and European customs—had disseminated Latin civilization to the peoples there. Because this was undeniable, they argued, both Spaniards and the peoples of the former colonies should recognize the cultural, religious and linguistic links between them as commercially useful and spiritually positive. They should celebrate the fact that the ethnically diverse, yet Spanish-speaking peoples of these former New World colonies, like their cultural brethren in the metropole, were the modern beneficiaries of the Roman heritage. In the words of the Dominican-born Muñoz del Monte, the people of the New World had inherited:

la hermosa lengua de Cervantes y del Taso, el génio artístico de la Italia, las elevadas inspiraciones del espíritu francés, las heróicas tradiciones del carácter español, todas esas nobles derivaciones de la Roma gentil, todas esas creaciones prodigiosas de la Roma cristiana.4

While Muñoz del Monte conceded that there was great diversity among the population in Latin America, he believed that there remained a natural union between America and Spain as evidenced by “los múltiples lazos de la sangre y del idioma, de la religión y de las costumbres, de los hábitos domésticos y de los precedents

4 *La America: Crónica Hispano-Americana*, Madrid, May 8, 1857, 2; “the beautiful language of Cervantes and of Taso, the artistic genius of Italy, the lofty inspirations of the French spirit, the heroic traditions of the Spanish character, all the noble derivations of the gentile Roman, all the prodigious inventions of Christian Rome.”
Muñoz del Monte’s main concern, however, was practical and political. He, like many of his contemporaries, recognized the threat that modern Anglo-Saxon menace to the north (the US) posed. He expected the various Latin American republics themselves to recognize that they all shared a culture, a language, a religion, and a legal system that originated from their relationship with Spain. In this way they could unify and draw on their superior civilization to stop the “growing wave of absorption and assimilation that is the dominant idea in the colossal republic of Washington.”

José Samper, while he objected to Muñoz del Monte’s division of the entire western world into Germanic and Latin races, was much more explicit about the extent and importance of racial amalgamation in the New World. Indeed, he contended that all the world’s peoples were racial mongrels. That the peoples of the New World were no different was plainly evident.

---

5 *La América: Crónica Hispano-Americana*, Madrid, April 8, 1857, 1; “the many ties of blood and of language, of religion and of custom, of domestic habits and of historical precedents.”

6 Spanish journalists and intellectuals saw both the treaty of Oregon and the conquest of California as evidence of the danger from the north. An article printed in the April 24, 1857 edition of *La América* outlines the twenty four “bases para la union de los estados americanos.” And it identifies the “proyectos ambiciosos de conquista de la raza anglo-sajona” as the primary reason for proposing to establish the union.


8 Samper, José María, “La Question de las Razas,” *La América: Crónica Hispano-Americana*, November 8, 1858; Samper believed that all of humanity was so racially mixed that the term race no longer had any meaning. What united groups of people, and what some falsely construed as race, was in fact civilization. “Interrogemos brevemente á la historia y á la etnografía, y ellas nos dirán que lo que divide á la especiehumana no es una cuestion de razas, sino una cuestion de civilización . . .” [original emphasis] Van Aken also discusses this point in *Pan-Hispanism*, 1959, 76-78.
As Samper saw it, racial intermingling had succeeded in combining the distinctive virtues of these three groups—Europeans, Africans and Native Americans—into the form of the modern Latin American. Racial mixture, at least in the manner in which it emerged in the New World, was a clear strength for the populations of the current and former colonies.

Cánovas del Castillo, in his discussion on race, went a step further. In his 1882 lecture, *Discurso sobre la nación*, Cánovas merged the ideas of race and nation into a single transhistorical concept. Appalled by Ernest Renan’s contention that nations and nationalism are cultural, humanly contrived inventions that have a definitive beginning and, necessarily, a definitive end, Cánovas held that “the links of nationality that hold and maintain nations are by nature indissoluble.” Race, as significant as a common language, was especially important.

---

9 José M. Samper, “La Question de las Razas,” *La America*, Madrid, November 8, 1858, 2; “From the crossing of all these cosmopolitan families, more or less deep and persistent, a great dissolute tribe has arisen who unites heroism and the generous spirituality of the southern European, the physical vigor of the African and the sedentary spirit of the native, the primitive possessor of the land.”


11 Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, *Discurso sobre la nación*, 1882, 105; “el vínculo de nacionalidad que sujeta y conserva las naciones es por su naturaleza indissoluble.”

12 Cánovas, *Discurso*, 82; “The spirit of nationality and that of race are joined now and are complete. And nation or nationality, and race, constitute, by all this, concepts and words that, although are not new inventions, today have a new importance in the society of people that had not been suspected before.”
Yet, for him, race did not necessarily define the territorial limits of the nation; nor did he believe that races remained constant and eternal. While most people, he argued, recognize that there have been many races in history, “like the Latin, the Teutonic or Germanic, and the Slav,” these characteristic divisions are more a product of moral conditioning than of biological predisposition. Groups of races, despite centuries of division, when united in common language, culture and religion, could form nations of their own. Therefore, when Cánovas referred to the Hispanic race, he implied mainly a cultural distinction, the product of a civilizing Spanish Empire.

The importance of the above quotes notwithstanding, I am not suggesting that modern Hispanists are in agreement about the popularity of these ideas of racial fusion; though there are several historians that have recently argued for this view. Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, for one, is adamant that late nineteenth-century pan-hispanists and other champions of Spanish empire recognized the links between Spain and (especially the Antillean) colonies in racial terms. Incorporating Joshua Goode’s work on the racial ideas of nineteenth and twentieth-century Spanish anthropologists, and demonstrating through the fascinating personalities of Víctor Balaguer and Antonio María Fabié, Schmidt-Nowara argues that concepts of

13 Cánovas, Discurso, 80-83; “como la latina, la teutónica o germánica y la eslava.”

14 Cánovas, Discurso, 75; “Pues está originado y fundado, a no dudar, en la afección o simpatía íntima, en los innatos y perseverantes sentimientos de amor, de piedad, de orgullo, que toda nación bien constituida experimenta hacia aquellos hombres o agrupaciones humanas que, por el origen, por el idioma, por antiguos recuerdos históricos, se encuentran en parentesco con ella, y moralmente están con ella en comunión constant, aunque hayan vivido muchos siglos aparte y en asociación con gente de diferente raza, lengua y tradiciones antiguas. Si en algunos hombres o pueblos, no obstante el origen, la raza, las tradiciones y los primeros recuerdos históricos, falta por acaso la afección dicha, quiere eso decir que podrán muy bien constituir una verdadera nación, independiente y distinta de todas, hasta de aquella con quien tengan más próximo parentesco.”
miscegenation were consciously used to explain Spanish empire.\textsuperscript{15} Antonio Feros has made a similar, and equally convincing claim. Interpreting Maldonado Macanaz and Cánovas del Castillo’s ideas on race and empire as representative of the common late-nineteenth-century Spanish understanding of empire, he demonstrates how these ideas influenced conservatives and liberals alike.\textsuperscript{16}

These are by no means the only interpretations of turn of the century racial ideas in Spain. D. J. O’Connor, through the examination of visual representations, print media accounts and popular plays of time, argues that Spaniards clearly recognized several competing races in the colonies. She demonstrates that, at least popularly, Spaniards recognized that mulattoes, whites and blacks were separate groups, with different customs and cultures, who were typically unwilling to intermarry. Contrary to Schmidt-Nowara and Antonio Feros’ notion of mixture as an ideal, O’Connor finds evidence to support her claim that mulattoes were “ambiguous” characters whose allegiance was always uncertain.\textsuperscript{17}

I don’t claim to favor either of these theories to the detriment of the others; rather, I see these conflicting interpretations of Spanish conceptions of race as further evidence in support my claim that the idea of what it meant to be Spanish (racially and nationally) was imperfectly formed at the turn of the century. There were, in fact, many ways to conceptualize Spanishness. All, however, seemed to recognize empire as an important, if not vital, ingredient. At the heart of Cánovas’,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Schmidt-Nowara, \textit{The Conquest of History}, 34-43.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Feros, “Spain and America,” 113-120.
\item \textsuperscript{17} D. J. O’Connor, \textit{Representations of the Cuban and Philippine Insurrections on the Spanish Stage, 1887-1898} (Tempe, Arizona: Bilingual Press, 2001), 45-60.
\end{itemize}
Macanaz’s, Samper’s and Muñoz del Monte’s arguments was the need to rescue the image of Spanish colonialism from the denigration of foreign historians. They developed crude generalizations about the faculties Latin races possess to assimilate other races through conquest in an effort to combat the irritating persistence of the “black legend.” Racial amalgamation, linguistic harmony, and religious unity, these writers argued, were all testaments to the benevolent success of Spanish Empire. The then burgeoning North American Empire, existing, they explained or implied, for the sole purpose of market and territorial expansion, was barbarous and exploitative by comparison. From its conception, Anglo-Germanic colonizers had displaced, oppressed, segregated, and exterminated colonized peoples in the interest of racial purity. Spanish colonizers embraced, civilized, and intermingled with indigenous groups in the interest of a better, more Catholic, more Spanish world. What emerged from this civilizing mission was a variegated national consciousness, marked by racial ambiguity, united in language and traditions, and transcending oceanic boundaries.

18 This was hardly a new problem for Spanish intellectuals. Even in the eighteenth century educated Spaniards were quite conscious of the fact that enlightened intellectuals in other European countries looked upon Spain as something of a backwater, a decadent relic built on the blood of Native Americans and the victims of the inquisition. Consider that Almodóvar’s *Historia Política de los Establecimientos Ultramarinos de las Naciones Europeas* (1780s) was largely a response to the many unflattering works on Spanish policy such as the works of Abbé Raynal and William Robertson’s *History of America* (1777). Consistent with the popular anti-Spanish tradition, Voltaire also famously stated that “there is nothing interesting in Spain except the Don Quixote,” Quoted in Alfonso de Salvio, “Voltaire and Spain,” *Hispania* 7, No. 3 (1924): 157-164; More recently, Richard L. Kagan has written an interesting account of a similar North American trend in “Prescott’s Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain.” *The American Historical Review* 101, No. 2 (1996): 423-446.

19 Joaquin Maldonado Macanaz, *Principios Generales del Arte de la Colonizacion* (Madrid: Manuel Tello, 1873), 106-107; “La raza anglo-sajona . . . no se asimila las razas indígenas, ni absorbe fácilmente las de origen europeo, y extermina, oprime ó transige, según la resistencia que halla. Por el contrario, los pueblos latinos . . . poseen una gran facultad de asimilación, y son más aptas que aquella para conservar y civilizar las razas inferiores.”
Unassimilated Africans or Filipinos were not a part of this cultural and racial brotherhood. And Spanish cartoonists, employing artistic techniques that emphasized popular racist stereotypes of Africans and Asians, simplified this somewhat complex colonial discourse into graphic scenes and metaphors that resonated with a popular audience. By drawing the colonial insurrectionists as clearly racially African or Filipino, cartoonists placed them outside the nation. Indeed, the more overtly racially distinct these cartoon characters appeared, the more foreign they were. Caricaturists drew black Cubans with long, inflated lips pasted over ape-like faces with wide curious eyes. They drew Filipinos with a sickly yellow complexion, with broad faces, flat noses, thin mustaches, and narrow scheming eyes. These rebels typically walked barefoot, were half-dressed in rags, and displayed monstrous beaming smiles. These cartoons told readers that the rebels weren't traitors to king, country and culture; they were foreigners, either incapable or unwilling to be a part of the nation. A cartoon character’s dark or yellow skin confirmed their foreignness; their traditional costume, or the unnatural way they mixed western and indigenous dress symbolized a rejection of the Spanish

Figure 2.3 *Blanco y Negro* May 14, 1898
overtures of civilization; and the weapons they carried, obvious implements of
violence and disorder, demonstrate their willingness to aggressively turn back the
process of assimilation and acculturation instituted under Spanish colonialism.

These weapons—bloody machetes, swords and knives, dynamite, rifles,
gasoline cans, and flaming torches—strengthened the perceived and exploited
connections between racial outsiders and violent colonial upheaval. The cartoons
seem to blend the essence of the Cuban or Filipino rebel with their weapons; the
always bloody swords and flaming torches appear as extensions of the rebels.
Whether walking, talking or just lazily lounging around, the caricatured images of
rebels explicitly highlighted the relationship between rebellion and violence—bloody,
murderous, chaotic, unspanish violence. It’s their violence, not their intelligence,
cunning or wit, which defines them. Without weapons, caricatures of rebels appear
impotent, indolent and uncertain. They hold their hands up to the US for alms and
armaments; they wail their limbs about or dance crazily; or they lie strewn about the
ground dead or impaled upon the end of a sword.

To be sure, African ex-slaves and other black Cubans were keenly aware of
the independence movement in Cuba and participated in it alongside Cubans of all
types and colors. But the popular notion that race was an indicator of defective

20 In a Jan. 25, 1896 Madrid Cómico cartoon, two black rebels stand having a conversation. Because
neither hold weapons, their hands seem to hang uncertainly. To further accentuate their clumsy
stupidity, the artist has drawn them bent-legged, stooped and with lazy eyes.

21 “Manduco Me Fulmen!,” Gedeón, March 12, 1896; the passage below reads “Tio! Páseme usté el
rio!”; “Medallas Yanquis,” Blanco y Negro, June 4, 1898; Barcelona Cómica, February 1, 1896.
Other cartoonists, emphasizing the idea that the rebels were exchanging the salvation of civilization
for the immediacy of wealth, drew bags of money or legal documents in their rebel characters
nationalism or of a rebellious inclination resonated strongly in Spain. This tendency was so strong, in fact, that cartoon characterizations of Antonio Maceo, a celebrated and clearly mulatto insurrectionist general in both Cuban wars for independence, were nearly always dark black. By plastering pictures of this dark Maceo on boxes of chocolate and sketching him in cartoons as the unsurprisingly typical black Cuban rebel, his image helped to reinforce the popularly-held view that insurrection in Cuba was thoroughly black. Indeed, his caricatured image had been so firmly attached to the insurrection in this way that news of his death in 1896 spawned false reports about the end of the war. For example, the December 10 issue of Diario de Zaragoza declared that “with Maceo dead, the insurrection is dead also.” In response to this and other similar reports, public excitement in Zaragoza and Valencia spilled out into the streets in a spontaneous demonstration of patriotic emotion.

In the Philippines, however, the issues of race, history, nationality, and colonial ties were much more complex. The colonization of the Philippines fit

---

22 D. J. O’Connor explores this trend in further detail through an examination of how and why rebel depictions in contemporary popular Spanish theater were so often colored. It was, in fact, so common for insurrectionists to be represented as colored that she concludes Spaniards tended to understand the rebellion in Cuba as essentially a race war. *Representations*, 45-50. Also, Louis A. Perez, “Cuba Between Empires, 1898-1899.” *The Pacific Historical Review* 48, No. 4 (1979): 485-486.


24 Quoted in Sebastian Balfour, *The End of the Spanish Empire 1898-1923*, (Oxford, 1997) 95. Nor was the idea that race was the central issue in the war merely a peninsular phenomenon; reports of racial violence and cartoons showing black Cubans as the source of rebellion and disorder resonated in Cuba as well. Both Máximo Gómez and José Martí, authors of Cuba’s 1895 declaration of independence, recognized this and attempted to counter the effects. In the Manifesto, they plead for both black and white Cubans to work together to bring victory against Spain and economic prosperity to Cuba. They speak specifically of “los componentes heterogéneos de la nación cubana.” And they condemn the “la tacha de amenaza de la raza negra con que se quisiese inicamente levantar, por los beneficiarios del régimen de España, el miedo a la revolución.” *Manifiesto de Montecristi*, March 25, 1895.
rather imperfectly into the narrative of racial mixture so commonly used to justify Spain's right to Cuba and Puerto Rico. The population in the Philippines had remained largely indigenous through centuries of Spanish rule. There had been no large-scale population decline upon the introduction of Europeans in the archipelago. Nor had there been much immigration from Europe or Africa.25 The commercial ties between Spain and the Philippines, however, had grown by leaps and bounds over the nineteenth century. Spanish exports to the Philippines had increased from 6 percent in 1840 to 54.2 percent in 1896.26 It seemed apparent that either the Spanish attempt at civilizing—cultural and racial assimilation—had failed or that Spanish imperial motivations in the Philippines weren't as exceptional as the supporters of Spanish empire liked to claim.

The narrative that supporters of empire helped to develop around this apparent inconsistency argued that dramatic racial difference had precluded the swift assimilation of the Filipinos. Unlike in the Antilles, where Spaniards confidently contended that the colonial dissemination of civilization had been successful, Filipinos had not absorbed European civilization because they were a far inferior race. This seemingly logical deduction assured Spaniards that the failure of civilizing efforts was not indicative of a defective system but of a defective race. The nineteenth-century historian and Philippine colonial bureaucrat W. E. Retana, venting his frustration over what he perceived to be a persistent rejection of Spanish civilizing overtures, exclaimed of the common Filipino, “you could call him stupid;


and you can be sure that he understands nothing.”\textsuperscript{27} Yet despite Retana’s harsh words, this did not mean that Filipinos were incapable of adopting civilized ways. Rather, it simply implied that since Filipinos began on the road to civilization at a more regressed state, Spaniards should not expect them to have reached the level of civilization achieved in other areas of the empire in the same span of time. Whereas the process of recreating Spain in the colonies had been successful in Cuba and Puerto Rico, in the Philippines the arduous work continued unfinished.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{blanco_y_negro_june_25_1898}
\caption{Blanco y Negro June 25, 1898}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{blanco_y_negro_june_18_1898}
\caption{Blanco y Negro June 18, 1898}
\end{figure}

The Filipino rebellion was a farce, Spanish cartoons told readers. As was the case in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the natives' racial purity was a mark of Spanishlessness, a sign that they had emerged from outside Spain’s civilizing


\textsuperscript{28} These writers conveniently overlooked the fact that most, if not all, of the original inhabitants of the Antilles had been wiped out.
embrace. And by showing the insurrectionists to be foreign, the resultant insurrection became foreign as well. To this effect, cartoons depicted Filipinos with large oblong heads, flat noses and thin slits for eyes. Their dome-like hats became the symbol of an unassimilated Filipino. Racial distinction, therefore, went hand in hand with backwardness. The insurrection could not be legitimate because the insurrectionists were simply not culturally or racially advanced enough to understand what it meant to rebel. Their expression of Filipino national identity, their demands for representation, and their use of violence in support of it weren’t deliberate or premeditated; they were merely going through the motions, demonstrating a travesty of a genuine desire for independence.

Cartoons, by depicting Filipinos as monkeys that only imitated real human ambition, reminded readers in Spain that indigenous Filipinos were far removed from modern European man. Cartoonists drew them with long dangling tails, large hind legs, and clawed feet; with their swords, nationalist books, and documents of independence, they climbed trees and hung from the branches. When dressed, they wore either the rags of a Filipino vagabond, loose awkwardly-fitting western clothes or a combination of both. Images of Emilio Aguinaldo, recognized in Spain as a notorious Filipino revolutionary general, typically showed him mockingly dressed in tailed coats and sashes, decked out in medals and epaulets, and wearing a

---

29 This notion of Filipinos as talking monkeys was common in Spanish print media. In an 1896 *El Imparcial* article, the journalist relays: “The news from the Philippines brought to us by the steamship Isla de Panay reveals the state of exaltation in which some monkeys from that archipelago find themselves. It seems that in their desire to imitate their brother simians in Cuba, they have taken up arms to the cry of “Death to men! Long live free monkeys in a free jungle!” Quoted in O’Connor, *Representations*, 97.
The medals and crowns, European symbols of legitimacy in war and governance, mock his campaign as illegitimate. His western clothes, sometimes pulled over his own native rags, demonstrated that he had never completely accepted the doses of civilization proffered by Spain; the rhetoric of his rebellion, like the clothes he uncomfortably wore, was mere ape-like mimicry. Likewise, the apparent chaos and destruction in the Philippines, the theme of these cartoons implied, was simply a parody of insurrection, a poor imitation of the real thing.

As the subjects of war-time cartoons, black Cubans or Filipinos were typically not shown as agents of insurrection in their own right; they required the support of powerful, fairer-skinned, and, more importantly, wealthier nations. Yet neither of the two rebellions receives mere support. Often, the rebels appear as only the instruments of violence; they are both influenced and controlled by their American

---

30 *Blanco y Negro*, January 15, 1898; The artist here has drawn a copy of Pedro Alejandro Paterno’s *Sampaticas* under the foot of the monkey-like Aguinaldo. The book, a collection of Filipino nationalist poems, was written in Castilian. This may be the artist’s subtle way of insisting that even Filipino nationalism must necessarily be expressed through Spanish agency; *Gedeón*, June 23, 1898, in this cartoon he wears his crown over his native dome hat. In this way the cartoonist mocks him as both ignorantly native and undeservedly pretentious.
supporters. Whether Uncle Sam or a recognizable American military figure, it’s clearly they, and not the rebels, who encourage and direct the insurrection. A May 14 cartoon in the illustrated weekly, *Blanco y Negro*, shows a sinister-looking Uncle Sam walking arm in arm with both a bomb-carrying black Cuban insurrectionist and a torch-wielding Filipino. (Figure 2.3) In the accepted style, the two rebels are barefoot and heavily armed; their heads are made large, and their facial features are vulgar and exaggerated. Though, despite their numerous weapons and threatening gestures, they are clearly not acting independently. The artist, by presenting Uncle Sam as the central figure, smiling menacingly and knowingly toward the reader, shows that the United States is the true agent of insurrection; the rebels are mere puppets. The caption underneath, a common Spanish proverb warning of certain types of friendships and associations, declares “Dime con quién andas, y te diré quién eres” (Tell me with whom you walk, and I'll tell you who you are).

As a foreign agent itself, US involvement in the rebellions in both Cuba and the Philippines reinforced the idea that the insurrectionists were foreign agitators. Just as their race and their costume intimates that they’re ethnically and culturally foreign, the controlling influence of the United States seems to confirm it. In another *Blanco y Negro* cartoon, the cartoonist has drawn Admiral George Dewey, the victorious leader at the battle of Manila Bay, flying a kite in the islands. (Figure 2.5) The actual kite, however, is a Filipino insurrectionist. The Kite-like Filipino, mockingly dressed in awkward-fitting military garb complete with boots, brass buttons, an officer’s sword, and tasseled naval shoulder boards, floats helplessly in mid-air. With his stern face, flaming torch, and drawn sword, the Filipino is a
symbol of the bloody insurrection. But it’s Dewey who holds the string, Dewey who flies the kite, Dewey who directs the insurrection.31

![Image of cartoon showing Cuba and the US separated by a narrow channel of water. On the Cuban side, under a large Spanish flag, stands “el soldado de Cuba” (the Cuban soldier). On the US side, with the urban sprawl of Washington, D.C. in the background, squats Uncle Sam. He is balancing three armed and rioting black Cubans on a large paddle as he sends them over to Cuba. Next to him is a basket filled with more “insurrectos visitos” (visiting insurrectionists) and draped with the American flag.]

Figure 2.7 Blanco y Negro May 7, 1898

The clear implication is that the US is not merely a supporter or even just a participant; it's directing the rebellion itself. In this way Spain relieves itself of any accountability for colonial mismanagement. Better still, showing external forces directing the rebellion helps to further delegitimize the indigenous struggle for independence. What was in fact a colonial uprising against Spanish rule and in support of domestic nationalist claims, cartoons have transformed into the insidious product of a competing colonial power. In at least one drawing this implication is made explicit. The cartoon shows Cuba and the US separated by a narrow channel of water. On the Cuban side, under a large Spanish flag, stands “el soldado de Cuba” (the Cuban soldier). (Figure 2.7) On the US side, with the urban sprawl of Washington, D.C. in the background, squats Uncle Sam. He is balancing three armed and rioting black Cubans on a large paddle as he sends them over to Cuba. Next to him is a basket filled with more “insurrectos visitos” (visiting insurrectionists) and draped with the American flag. The obvious contrast couldn't

31 Blanco y Negro, June 18, 1898, “Con su protección han roto los diques á la barbarie, y á donde llegará el daño díos solamente lo sabe.”
be stronger. Cuba, with its palm trees and empty spaces, is pastoral and pure; the US, with the towering capitol rotunda and projecting smokestacks, is industrialized and contaminated. The Spanish flag flies boldly over the island; the American flag lies low to conceal the insurrectionists. The Cuban soldier stands proud and erect; Uncle Sam squats low and cautiously.

These “real” Cubans, the cartoonist shows us, are marked by their race. Indeed, ideas surrounding race and nation abound in this cartoon. The antagonists—Uncle Sam, a glaringly white crotchety old man, and the groups of dark black insurrectionists he has sent to effect chaos in Cuba—are identifiably Caucasian and African respectively. They represent a form of Empire that divides along racial lines, that rejects assimilation and the dissemination of civilization. The hero, purposely not the leader of an armed fleet or even a celebrated general, is a dark-skinned Cuban soldier. The large Spanish flag over his head reminds readers that he is the true representative of Cuba. In other cartoons, the racially-mixed Cuban soldier is the proud protector and standard bearer of the Spanish nation. Jeered by crowds or withstanding the machinations of competing colonial powers, he exists as a product of the civilizing fecundity of Spanish Empire; he’s empowered through racial amalgamation.

---

32 His exact racial make up may be unclear; but that the cartoonist intended him to be recognizably mixed seems plain. Depictions of Spanish soldiers fighting in Cuba were commonly represented as racially ambiguous—drawn with dull, rounded features and shaded skin. Some good examples are in Gedeón, February 17 and December 31, 1896 as well as Blanco y Negro May 2, 1896.

33 The racially-mixed soldier could also represent steadfastness in the face of political instability. The cover of the February 17, 1896 issue of Gedeón appears to ridicule the patriotic lip service of Spaniards at home. The cover depicts a crestfallen dark-skinned Cuban soldier dancing on a stage amongst the fallen bodies of other soldiers and before a crowd of cheering (or jeering) Spaniards. Mocking the audience’s hollow patriotism, the stage is decorated with banners exclaiming “viva el ejército,” “viva España.” On another Gedeón cover, December 31, 1896, a brown-skinned soldier
The insurrectionists, on the other hand, are simply pawns in a larger struggle. Their small size shows them to be physically and effectively insignificant. Moved into position by the US, they lack both agency and self-direction. Moreover, by relegating the insurgents to this position, the artist has managed to reframe the entire war. The insurrectionists are not merely racially distinct; they aren't even Cuban. In this way, both the cause of independence and the insurrectionists themselves become US exports, the products and victims of American machinations. The “Cuban soldier,” not the Spanish soldier, becomes the bulwark to US expansionism. Spain, save its symbolic presence in the large waving flag, is amazingly absent. Cuba's conflict is not with Spain, the cartoon implies; Cubans are, in fact, defending their island in Spain's honor. As Uncle Sam exports insurrection to the island, the Cuban soldier opens his arms in a sarcastic welcoming gesture and cries “ven tú, cobarde” (come on you coward). He's not looking at the coming insurrectionists. His eyes are fixed on Uncle Sam as if to accuse the US directly. The “true” battle is between the aggressive colonizing US and the proud loyal Cubans.

These common symbolic messages—conflicts rearranged, encoded threats, coming cultural destruction—reflect anxieties particular to fin de siglo Spain. North American cartoons of the same period, even those that expressed clear frustration if not apprehension over the problems of managing an empire, tended to infantilize colonial subjects and darker-skinned neighbors. Filipino, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and most other Latin American nations, when personified in cartoons, were drawn as recalcitrant school children, crying babies, tantrum throwing toddlers, impressionable adolescent girls, and dirty watermelon-holding street kids. Their weapons were stands firmly holding the Spanish flag as foreign hands change the year from 1896 to 1897.
often either toys or harmless children’s possessions: wooden swords, pop-guns, baby bottles. And their various revolutions, rebellions, wars and other seemingly violent disturbances were portrayed as more of a pesky annoyance than a real threat to American authority. Typically, these cartoons depicted an exasperated Uncle Sam hauling an unruly child out behind the wood shed for a whipping, giving sick children their medicine or a misbehaving student a sharp tongue lashing. For Americans, these images evoked feelings of confidence and superiority, racial or otherwise. Children were to be dealt with, they had to be corrected, punished or rewarded according to the propriety or impropriety they demonstrate; children never threaten, they never take control. In these cartoons, scenes of violence notwithstanding, Uncle Sam is always firmly in control of the situation. His frustration arises from a tired sense of duty, not because he ever contemplates defeat.

Figure 2.8 Gedeón February 17, 1896
Figure 2.9 (right) La Campana de Gracia January 30, 1897

These American cartoonists organized their representations of insurrection with a conscious nod to popular paternalist feelings at home. Spanish cartoons of

---

colonial rebellion, however, contain none of this. The rebels Spanish cartoonists
drew were foreigners—nationally, culturally and racially. Having never been a part
of the community they sought to destroy, they weren’t to be brought back into the
fold; they weren’t to be shown the light of civilization; they weren’t to be scolded,
punished, whipped or humiliated. Foreign rebels who contributed only chaos and
destruction had to be smashed, beaten, obliterated, destroyed, exterminated.
Cartoons showing Spanish generals quashing rebellion, like the February 17, 1896
Gedeón drawing commemorating the early success of General Valeriano Weyler’s
brutal new campaign, are violent scenes of complete destruction. (Figure 2.8)
Hands, feet, limbs and heads are scattered into the air from the powerful explosion of
a shell launched from a nearby ship. The few rebel figures that survive the
explosion intact run wildly in several directions; they step on and over the bodies of
the dead and wounded as they frantically try to get away. Another cartoon of
Weyler’s campaign in Cuba, this one from La Campana de Gracia, was designed
similarly.35 (Figure 2.9) In this scene a larger than life Weyler plows through rows
of black Cuban rebels, pulling them under his horse-drawn machine and grinding
them to bits.

Also, unlike comparable American cartoons, Spanish scenes fused ridicule
with warnings of imminent danger. True, these cartoons did commonly depict rebels
in miniaturized form, as bumbling buffoons, or as instruments of violent
incompetence in need of foreign support; but the rebels they presented were always
adults. Children, it’s understood, may sometimes be annoying; they may act

35 “Lo Plan de ‘N Veyler—La barredera,” La Campana De Gracia, January 30, 1897.
impetuously and recklessly, but they lack both the intellectual maturity and the physical capacity to be dangerous. Adults, however, whether clever or foolish, can be quite dangerous, even deadly. As their drawings demonstrate, Spanish cartoonists recognized that the colonial rebellions were more than mere annoyances. The atrocities of black rebels in Cuba loomed large in their work. Violent scenes of death and destruction showed black rebels robbing corpses on the battlefield, lighting houses on fire, and threatening the violation of Cuban women.36

These scenes of threatening terror and destruction, of hordes of dark menacing races clamoring to undermine Spain, of blood-splattered walls, fields and swords, aren’t particularly pleasant or hopeful scenes. As with the struggle to ward off materialism, the outlook for success in the wars against rebellion seemed bleak. The Gedeón cartoon of General Weyler’s new harsh campaign hints at this sense of unease. At first glance the cartoon seems to report a promising conclusion of hostilities—a towering broom-wielding Weyler sweeping away the messy remains of broken rebels and their disarticulated limbs. A very black Maceo lies dying near the center of the action; a cowardly Máximo Gomez limps away from the fight. A closer inspection, however, reveals a much more anxious situation. For it’s from the grassy mound of a gravesite that the rebel bodies are swept. And engraved upon the headstone, near the edge of the cartoon, covered in shadow, subtly drawn, and partially hidden by Weyler’s imposing leg, is the national coat of arms of the Bourbon Restoration.

As these scenes of death and destruction plainly show, cleansing the colonies

---

of rebels and foreigners was a decidedly manly affair. Unless depicted as objects of violation, women are rarely included in these scenes. One should not deduce from their general absence, however, that women somehow didn’t figure into the popular and complex understanding of the war. For that is simply not the case. In fact, ideas about women and womanhood figure prominently in the graphic language used to define the enemy, the war, and the nation. Consistent with the image of US Empire as part of an encroaching modern world, the fears of emancipated women manifested into fantastic depictions of gun-toting, battle hungry Amazons waiting to pounce on Cuba and infect Spanish civilization with their brand of modernism.
CHAPTER III

AMAZONS ON THE EDGE OF THE EMPIRE: DEFENDING SPAIN AND SPANISH WOMANHOOD

“Este modernismo filosófico feminino yankee es de lo más cómico y divertido que puede imaginarse en el proceso de las aberraciones de la fantasía humana.”

-Ricardo Becerro de Bengoa

Buried near the center of the June 4, 1898 edition of the illustrated weekly Madrid Cómico is an anonymously written article recounting a fantastic tale of an equally fantastic American woman. Entitled Amazonas Yanquis (Yankee Amazons), it describes the curious and bizarre story of a woman—propelled by an environment of belligerence and encouraged by a culture of greed—who will stop at nothing to fulfill her bloody fantasies. In the article the author describes how this woman “has given . . . 5,000 pounds sterling on the condition that [women soldiers] have to be the first to disembark in Cuba.” He explains how she was beaten by her drunken stepfather as a child, how she enjoyed picking fights with boys as an adolescent, and how she swore to make war against men. Now that the US was at war against Spain she wants to bring her hatred of men to the front, the article explains. Careful in his choice of words, the writer takes some pains to convey that she is not fighting for any cause but her own. She’s not righting any wrong, avenging any slight nor championing any idealistic crusade. The author makes it perfectly clear that she is not fighting “for love of country, nor in defense

1 “Por Ambos Mundos, Narraciones Cosmopolitas,” La Ilustración Española y Americana, May 30, 1898; “This modern yankee feminist philosophy is something more comical and entertaining than could be imagined in the process of aberrations of human fantasy.”

2 Madrid Cómico, 4 June, 1898 #796, p.411.

3 “Miss Elena Whart ha entregado, al ingresar en el cuerpo de amazonas, 5,000 libras esterlinas, con la condición de que ellas han de ser las primeras en desembarcar en Cuba.”
of it, nor for *humanity*, nor for Cuban independence. She's going to fight . . . to rid the world of countless hundreds of men.”

The journalist has crafted a story that demonstrates how this woman, Miss Elena Whart, is a product of her environment—in this case an environment of violence and disorder. More specifically, however, it is a story of poor parenting. The writer implies that her shameful, horrifying tendencies are the misbegotten product of not just one bad father, but two. The first, her brutish, drunken stepfather, is clearly an abject failure. Drunk and abusive, he has neglected his responsibility as familial patriarch. He conveys his authority not in the calm, understanding, all-knowing patriarchal way idealized in Spanish fiction, but through an alcohol induced haze of violence and rage. Without the guiding hand that should have been his, Miss Whart runs wild and oversteps every bound. She possesses none of the demure, pious characteristics expected of a nineteenth-century young lady. Instead, she seems to reject her femininity. Rather than distancing herself from common forms of filthy boyish revelry, she fights, beats and challenges their masculinity.

Yet it’s through the agency of the second father—her national patriarch (The United States, Uncle Sam, *La Patria*)—that her visceral hatred for men metastasizes into a rabid desire to kill. This father, in the journalist’s opinion, has also neglected his patriarchal responsibility. In fact, the article is organized in a way that encourages

---

4 “No va á pelear por amor á su patria, ni en defensa de ella, ni por *humanidad*, ni por la independencia de Cuba, va á pelea con la sola ilusión, y con el objeto de contribuir á medida de sus fuerzas, á hacer desaparecer unos cuantos cientos de hombres del mundo.” [original emphasis]

5 Despite the long description of Miss Elena Whart’s in *Nuevo Mundo*, I could find no evidence to support either her existence or any of the claims made by the journalist. It’s quite possible that there was no such woman. Yet the tone of the article indicates that the author clearly believed there was. It’s my personal opinion that this woman is something of a phantom, the culmination of rumor and fear. And in this way, the possibility that she never existed seems to support my argument that Spain felt (irrationally) threatened by an advancing menace of modernization.
readers to recognize the problems of the stepfather and those of the national father as one and the same. Like the drunken brutishness of her stepfather, the American Empire, drunk on its own power and wealth, is equally violent. In the absence of a patriarch’s protective guiding hand, the daughter feels compelled to fight. And, in the absence of a strong national culture, the daughters of the nation express themselves through violence. They are the products of American greed, American culturelessness, American empire, and American modernity. Through the story of Miss Whart, the article draws a colorful image of the United States as a land where millions of individuals and millions of individual aspirations are united only by their selfish desire for self-gratification. As the article explains, Miss Whart hasn’t been encouraged to fight “for love of country, nor in defense of it.” The sole purpose of her mission is for personal satisfaction.

Figure 3.1 Madrid Cómico May 28, 1898

What, then, could this strange story, ostensibly about a woman but actually about men, possibly mean? For one, it serves as a cautionary tale about the danger of male and national negligence. Without care and attention, without the firm guiding hand of the
family patriarch, without the solid edifying hold of tradition, women could be led astray by the bright, deceptive lights of modernity. The lure of the modern world and the false promise of modern temptations lurked around every corner. Spanish men had to remain defensive and vigilant in the face of these dangers, lest the ideal Spanish woman of their imaginations degenerate into a gun-toting, raucous-causing, warring Amazon. Also, by couching female participation in war as a grievous affront to propriety it reinforces the acceptable through the derision of the unacceptable. Miss Elena Whart, the journalist’s story tells us, violates cultural normalcy in two profound ways. First, her willingness, indeed her doggedness, to participate in combat constitutes a disruption of the traditional sex-based divisions effected by the mobilization for war. Men—filthy, bloodied and mangled—operate on the edge of the empire as stalwart protectors of the patria. Women—pure, clean and wholesome—exist as objects in need of protection. Attending to their homely duties they embody all that’s worth defending. By disturbing this division, the image of Miss Whart and other Amazons project chaos and uncertainty. Second, her violent desires appear to contradict the accepted bourgeois image of femininity as naturally passive. Her thirst for blood, manly blood, is an uncomfortable image that flouts convention. For nineteenth-century bourgeois society her courage is unnerving, her bellicosity intolerable.

Through caricature and ridicule, the image of the fighting Amazon became a tool that strengthened orthodoxy. Her wild-eyed truculence and the violation of tradition reinforce the accepted gendered divisions. Miss Whart desires to fight on the front lines and to kill men, she makes bold demands, she flaunts her wealth. These actions and motivations, the journalist implies, are most assuredly not feminine. By demonstrating
these characteristics she reveals herself to be contemptible, her measures unnatural, her motivations deranged. The article invites its readers to recognize that Spanish women don’t act like this; they don’t have bloody fratricidal cravings; they don’t lust for combat. Spanish women respect the sacred boundary between front line and home front, between violence and homeliness, between men and women. American women don’t.

Kristin Hoganson, in her work on the idea of American manhood and the Spanish American war, argues that the enthusiasm with which American men went off to fight in Cuba and the Philippines was a product of the feeling that a growing effeminacy was taking root at home. She insists that the combined effects of the depression in the 1890s, the softening effects of urbanization, and the vanishing frontier had convinced young American men to seek adventure and potent stimulation overseas. For the American proponents of war, US empire building was, therefore, a masculinizing enterprise. Empire, and the wars that would bring it about, would reinvigorate young American men, stir the nation’s interest in faraway places, and stimulate the country’s manly appetite for conquest. In this way, the expansion of empire had a restorative, balancing effect. The exercise of courage and violence on a foreign battlefield would help to re-establish the gender equilibrium at home—taking on more masculine responsibilities would sharpen the gender difference, making women more feminine and men more masculine.

For Spaniards, as the common cartoon scenes of idealized Spanish women and brutish American Amazons make clear, just the opposite appeared to be occurring. The unrestrained violence and each for his/her own mentality of American empire weren’t

---

sharpening sexual difference; quite the contrary, they were blurring the difference. Divisions between men and women were being sacrificed to a culture that encouraged modernity at all cost. Whereas Americans believed they were undergoing a feminization of society, Spaniards feared the modern world was effecting a masculinization of femininity. Like men, American women were racing to the front to fight, kill and be killed; cartoon images of rifle-toting, battle-ready American Amazons guarded camp on campaign; they exhibited an unrestrained man-like sexual appetite; they neglected their children, ignored their gender and defied all tradition. Like the crass commercialism of the US, the emergence of “mujeres independientes” was a symptom of the vulgar breaches with tradition that the modern world promised to deepen.7

Historically, the word “Amazon” has a long pedigree as a symbol of unnaturalness, disorder and impropriety. The word conjured up a host of colorful and instructive images for western Europeans. In Greek myth Amazons were the one-breasted superwomen of the Scythian steppe. Periodically in pitched battle with Greeks, they had fought as allies of the city of Troy, had warred with Athens, been defeated by Theseus, Heracles and Achilles. In art, amazons symbolized inversion and disorder. Contravening all convention, her very existence ridiculed propriety. These warrior women straddle the line between male and female; within themselves they combine the erotic and the belligerent. As in Claude Deruet’s early seventeenth-century painting, *Triumph of the Amazons*, images of these women simultaneously projected all that was alluringly feminine and all that was combatively masculine. Riding upon their galloping steeds—their loose, delicate gowns revealing bare breasts and legs—they represent the apex of female beauty. Yet the many erect pikes they wield hints at the phallic; and the

---

7 “Las Amazonas Yanquis,” 411.
act of thrusting these pikes and swords through men in battle makes the suggestion explicit.

The Amazons of myth, however, were not conceived of as a mere cultural deformity; like any symbol of inversion, it was in the act of their destruction that they fulfilled their true mission. This is to say that the ritual defeat of the Amazons constituted a corrective procedure. Male victory in war—the physical act of driving women from the field of battle—confirmed masculine superiority, sanctified the battlefield as part of the male sphere and reinforced the idea that aggression and femininity were incompatible. Over their dead bodies, order was restored to the world. As Abby Kleinbaum explains, “the image of a struggle against Amazons has remained a vital motif. Whether they have been envisioned as a threat to the classical polis or to the Christian soul, or a challenge to the right order of civilization, the seemingly incorrigible Amazons must be opposed and overcome as a fresh contest in every age.”

The American Amazons of these Spanish wartime cartoons continue and amend this tradition. Consistent with the long-established role of Amazons as an unnatural aberration whose defeat restores order from ambiguity, the American Amazon was an image of inappropriateness designed to reinforce propriety. Yet, more than a representation of the timeless restorative struggle, these amazons are a symptom of a much larger threat. Women like Miss Whart were the frightening aberrations of a rapidly modernizing world. Their twisted sense of righteousness and their warped aspirations are enabled by a modern world that flaunts tradition. Spanish cartoonists seized on this

---

connection. By drawing American women as shamelessly belligerent and hopelessly modern they emphasized the relationship between modernizing cause and Amazonian effect.

![Figure 3.2 Blanco y Negro September 3, 1898](image)

Figure 3.3 (right) *Blanco y Negro* October 1, 1898

Depictions of women in Spanish wartime cartoons were typically of two types: the pious Spanish lady and the independent, militant Amazon. For Spanish readership, these types represented the two logical outcomes of two very different cultural systems. The traditional Catholic culture in Spain produced demure, proper Spanish women—women revolted by violence, war and greed. Spanish women, when drawn at all, were conservatively dressed in dark dresses and lace mantillas. They supported the war effort by attending church, giving money to the cause, and seeing sailors off from Spanish ports. On the other side of the Atlantic, the hypermodern culturelessness of the US produced women who defied proper convention to compete with men in sport and war. Women in “those countries” wore military dress, carried guns and went on campaign to fight and kill men. Miss Elena Whart, the bitter, man-hating warrior woman product of a derelict
patriarchy, was clearly of the latter group. And this group, some in the Spanish press insisted, was as large as it was threatening. The article describes her as just “one of the cases of independent women raised in those countries.”

For turn of the century Spaniards, the proper Spanish woman was a symbol of hearth and home front. During times of war, her womanly domesticity personified the ideal of home—a temporal setting of timelessness and tradition. Cartoons and other graphic imagery that depicted Spanish women encouraged and reinforced this ideal. They blended womanliness with homeliness both figuratively and literally by drawing Spanish women safely enclosed within churches and houses. Mothers stood at their doorways receiving returning soldiers or attended mass to place her contribution in the collection plate. Home, Church and womanliness merged together in these cartoons as a place recognizable as the nation. Manuel Alcazar’s painting, “El Repatriado,” printed in a September 1898 issue of *Blanco y Negro*—appropriately placed amongst several articles about returning soldiers—underscores this relationship. (Figure 3.2) The reproduced painting, depicting a returning soldier being received by his family under a courtyard trellis, reinforces the proper divisions effected by war. Home is the center of the scene. Its open doors, vine entangled trellis and open courtyard would have been familiar to Spanish readers. The mother, emerging from the house to receive and embrace her son, is just as much a part of this arraignment as the mud walls and curtained doors. She was an extension of home just as home was an extension of the nation. The returning soldier, still in his uniform, boots and carrying a backpack, falls into his mother’s arms as he reaches the front door. In this way the scene emphasizes the

---

9 Las Amazonas Yanquis, *Madrid Cómic*, 4 June, 1898, p. 411; “es uno de los casos de mujeres independientes que por aquellos países se crian.” [original emphasis]
divergent yet complementary roles Spanish men and women were expected to play. The soldier, covered in the filth of war, is returning to the home his mother has kept. As she reaches for him, her face assures him that she has maintained the home as a place of stability and comfort. He represents worldliness and virility; she homeliness and femininity.

This concept of home extended into the church as well. Spanish Catholicism was an important symbol of home and the familiar. When combined with the reassuring image of the pious Spanish woman, religious symbolism was especially powerful. A drawing in the May 12, 1898 issue of Nuevo Mundo demonstrates how artists combined the comforting images of Church and home to construct an ideal Spanish woman. (Figure 3.4) Drawn inside the church—covered by its arches and enclosed by its walls—the woman in this sketch projects an image of security and domesticity. Over her right shoulder stands the proud lion holding the Spanish shield and guarding the crown. The church banister, hiding and protecting her body, divides the drawing into two parts; one part, the closed, familiarity of the church interior, the other, the dangerous worldliness of
war and men. Demonstrating the proper feminine contribution to war, she drops her money into the collection plate. In this way, surrounded by the symbols and accoutrements of altar and throne, she is not only protected by tradition; she’s a part of it, a fixture of domesticity and ritual.

So too do her clothes continue the theme of the comforting, security of home. Her mantilla, itself a historic symbol of piety and feminine vulnerability, covers both her head and her chest. Wrapped around her body, it conceals her figure as well as her sexuality by enveloping her bosom in a protective embrace. Her long-sleeved, dark dress completes the picture. Its dull, black coolness strikes a somber tone and projects a feeling of melancholy and mourning. A few pesetas in the collection plate, along with a healthy dose of grief constitute her contributions to the cause.

Properly demonstrated grief was especially important part of appropriately expressed femininity. Press-generated cartoons and sketches of Spanish women were often overtly sorrowful. They display frowning faces and looks of anguish, their heads are resting or crying into their hands. Standing alone to stare forlornly out to sea or wandering tearfully along the beaches, grieving widows were common subjects of illustrated magazines at the height of the war with the US. That the shore is the typical setting of these scenes of grief is instructive. Standing on the shore of the nation parallels standing in the doorway of the home. And like being at home, being on the shore and looking out to sea reinforces the traditional divisions of war—men go off to fight, women stay home to grieve. Groups of women crying on the beach, such as in the sketch in one 1898 edition of *La Ilustracion Nacional*, idealized the grieving mother and widow as the proper image of domesticity. (Figure 3.5) In this sketch, the wife, sitting next to her
mother or mother in law, appropriately wipes her tears with her apron. The very article of clothing that she wears to prepare the meal and clean the home now serves to absorb her painful tears.

Figure 3.5 *La Ilustración Nacional* May 20, 1898
Figure 3.6 (right) *La Campana de Gracia* June 5, 1897

Not all war time images of the proper Spanish woman were so docile, however. Some depictions of women could be downright aggressive. In one *Nuevo Mundo* cartoon, drawn around the border of a sheet of music for a song appropriately titled “Malditos Yankees” (Bad Little Yankees), the artist has drawn a Spanish woman physically driving back the enemy. Standing next to two male figures, one throwing rocks the other squirting water from a cannon, she lifts her broom to send the pigs, capitalists, pots and pans tumbling from the wall and down the edge of the song sheet. At first glance, this image would seem to challenge the traditionally accepted passive role women played in supporting the war. Upon closer inspection, however, the image appears perfectly consistent. While her aggression is unmistakable, and her patriotism enthusiastic, her weapon, unlike the rocks and water cannons of her male partners, is a broom. An
unambiguous symbol of domesticity, the broom tempers her aggressive posture. In this context it mitigates her act of violence, makes it womanly and appropriate. Belligerence notwithstanding, the woman’s action echoes her traditional role as keeper of the house, keeper of the nation. Through the use of a broom, her connection to the home is made firm. As if chasing out a pest or sweeping dirt from the home, using a broom in this way reinforces the conflation of woman and domesticity.

American women, or at least the cantankerous Amazon, represented the inversion of this ideal. Where the Spanish matriarch was passive and reserved, the modern American woman was violent and unrestrained. Where American women were transient and unpredictable, proper Spanish women were stable, secure, and consistent. The cover art from the May 28 issue of *Madrid Cómico* captures this image perfectly. (Figure 3.1) It shows a cartoon drawing of the dreaded Amazon—a militant, independent women—stationed in an army encampment in Cuba. Quite unlike representations of Spanish women, she’s outside and exposed to the elements. Save the small pitched tents far in the background, there are in fact no structures in the picture at all. In striking contrast to the composed assured look of Spanish women, she appears confused and out of place. Leaning on her rifle with her right hand resting on her hip, she stands uncomfortably staring off into the vast distance. In this pose, she embodies the inversion of the grieving widow or waiting wife. For those women, their lonely, tearful pondering of an empty horizon was deliberate and purposeful. Their grieving exemplified womanly behavior as it affirmed the appropriateness of a woman’s domestic role. The Amazon’s look, in contrast, is hollow; it affirms no custom, it exemplifies no behavior. Her clothes—military, sharp, and meaningful—mimic a resoluteness her unsmiling face lacks. Having
traded the home for the battlefield, the nation for the front, she has lost that core of femininity. Anchored to no tradition, set adrift in a sea of modernity, a victim of her own ambition, she’s left with only confusion. In this way the scene projects an image of uncertainty, instability and absurdity.

In another cartoon, as if to compound the ludicrousness, an Amazon makes her soldierly patrols with a child in her arms.\(^\text{10}\) (Figure 3.7) Like other depictions of these rumored American Amazons, her legs are exposed by the baggy pantaloons; she’s dressed in a military outfit of stars, stripes, feathers and bows; and she’s armed—in this instance armed with a bayoneted rifle and a sidearm. Again, like other similar scenes, she’s outside and exposed. Her expression, mouth agape, eyes fighting sleep—is one of exasperation. The artist seems to be inviting his readers to recognize the ridiculous hilarity of it all. The cartoon is designed in such a way as to encourage readers to ask, “Armed and with a child? Babysitting one’s way through a military campaign? It can’t

\(^{10}\) “Chispas De La Guerra,” *Blanco y Negro*, May 28, 1898.
be!” The incongruity—a woman in uniform, armed, living in a military camp, outside on patrol, exposed to every wild beast and thunderstorm—would seem unsustainable.

Exposed in this way, depictions of American Amazons hinted at the erotic. More than just objects of ridicule, contempt and mockery, journalists and cartoonists conflated a rejection of traditional gender roles with hyper sexuality—military conquest conceptualized through sexual conquest. The cartoon Amazon, unlike her Spanish contemporaries, is sexualized through loud and decorative clothes. Embroidered designs, brass buttons, stars, short pantaloons and dark revealing stockings draw attention to her figure. A wide striped belt tied tight around her waist to lift her bust and overstate her hips completes the effect by exaggerating her features and exposing her sexuality.

Writers contributed to the over-sexualizing of these fighting women through their use of suggestive phrases and licentious hyperbole. One caption, as if anticipating an orgy on the battlefield, tells of “blonds and brunettes, with bold faces and cute feet.” Noting that they were “all generous women,” the writer tempts his readers with salacious imagery of sexual promiscuity. He then provocatively asks if these women “will resist our unparalleled pieces of artillery?” A flagrantly phallic reference—large, smoking, instruments of destruction, discharging hot lead and iron for the purpose of penetrating city walls, prying open fortifications and subduing the enemy—“artillery” was a less than subtle allusion to a man’s penis. The allusion, however, was perfectly consistent with the author’s intent. The women were exposed, open and receptive to the advances of men, the writer continues; “dicen siempre ¡yes!” (they always say yes!).

11 Ricardo de la Vega, “Las Amazonas de Mac-Kinley,” Madrid Cómico, May 28, 1898; “Las habrá rubias y morenas, de rostro audaz y lindos pies, y todas hembras generosas . . .”

12 “Las Amazonas de Mac-Kinley,” Madrid Cómico, May 28, 1898; “Las habrá rubias y morenas, de rostro
Other articles reporting on the rumors of bands of Amazons clamoring to fight in Cuba continued this trend of mingling sexually suggestively language with ridicule. For these journalists and their readers the women were curious and fascinating aberrations of American modernism. Writers commented on the possibility of a “squadron of Amazons coming to fight us” as if it were a delightful prospect. “Wouldn’t it be great if it happened?” one writer mockingly asks. No doubt assuming that these women would be receptive to sweet temptations of all sorts, he insists that soldiers stationed in Cuba “load their Mausers with chocolates.”

Another, prepared to go far past subtle hints, claimed that “some of the North American amazons,” as they prepared for the coming invasion of Cuba, “had given birth the moment they went to mount a horse.”

Still another, writing in popular poetry, foretells that “if the war lasts a year, [the battalion of Amazons] will return as wet nurses.”

By crossing their prescribed gender role they became objects of sexual excitement as well as reminders of the danger of modern ideas. The Amazon’s over-sexed character—a symptom of the decadence that characterized the US and threatened Spain—acted as a foil to the wholesomeness of the patriotic Spanish wives and mothers. Pure Spanish women covered and concealed their sexuality; Amazons reveled in theirs.

José Fernández Bremon, “Crónica General,” *La Ilustración Española y Americana*, May 15, 1898, 278; “Mejor es el proyecto de la señorita yankee ó yanka . . . de formar un escuadrón de amazonas para combatirnos. ¿Qué sucedería en un encuentro tan agradable? Desde luego nuestros soldados cargarian el Mauser con bombones.”

Luis Taboada, “De Todo un Poco,” *Madrid Cómic*, June 4, 1898; “alguna de las amazonas norteamericanas que se disponían á invadir la isla de Cuba, han dado á luz en el momento de ir á montar á caballo.”

Manuel del Palacio, “Chispas de la Guerra,” *Blanco y Negro*, May 28, 1898; “Un batallón de amazonas á la Habana el Norte envía; si la Guerra dura un año, volverán de amas de cria.”
The ailment, the force that afflicted these Amazons and threatened to wash away Spanish tradition as it reduces the noble Spanish woman to the pitiable existence of an independent American woman, was modern in origin and feminist in expression. This feminine audacity, some argued, could spread like a virus—corrupting everything it touched. There was a “fever of feminism” raging in the United States; and women were particularly vulnerable to infection, insisted writer Ricardo Becerro. One shouldn’t fear an invasion of militant women, he assured his readers; “the yankees aren’t going to Cuba, nor to any place, as amazons.” The real threat will come from the popular and modern ideas of female emancipation. Inveighing against this socially corrosive feminist movement in the United States, he warned in an 1898 article that it was these ideas that were bound for Cuba and Spain. Predicting an almost apocalyptic scenario, he felt certain that nothing but disaster could result. Let loose in Spanish lands, these “comical” ideas would succeed in turning worlds upside-down; the men would be relegated to the house, the women sent out into the streets. “It’s certain that [the amazons] are going to invade the houses of all fellow men so as to reign, only and exclusively, through fellow women.”

Predictably, and as Becerro’s fears appear to confirm, cartoon imagery projected the message that only women were susceptible to the modern world’s deleterious effects. Images of Spain and its colonies symbolized through masculine imagery—the proud matador, the unmovable Cuban soldier—evinced courage and steadfastness in the face of

16 “Por Ambos Mundos, Narraciones Cosmopolitas,” La Ilustración Española y Americana, May 30, 1898; “. . . la fiebre del feminismo. . .” “Las yankees no irán á Cuba, ni á ninguna parte, en calidad de amazonas.” [original emphasis]

17 “Por Ambos Mundos, Narraciones Cosmopolitas,” La Ilustración Española y Americana, May 30, 1898; “Hace estragos en aquella tierra del disloque la fiebre del feminismo.” “es seguro que van a invader las casas de todos os prójimos para imperen en ellas, única y exclusivamente, las prójimas.”
daunting challenges. These images confirmed that the proper male role was one of defense. Grave consequences notwithstanding, men were to face the enemy, to avoid embarrassment, and to boldly embody ideal Spanish values through acts of bravery. Representations of women, by contrast, were often the subjects and objects of violation. Carried away by bands of colonial rebels, humiliated or whipped by Uncle Sam, threatened by pigs, assaulted by protestant clergy, vulnerable to attacks by monsters, stripped and taunted, women and womanhood were depicted as victims of the conflict, casualties of modernity. Images of men symbolized Spain’s strongest asset; images of women represented Spain’s most vulnerable link.

Figure 3.8 Madrid Cómico May 21, 1898
Figure 3.9 (right) La Campana de Gracia July 10, 1897

A May 21, 1898 Madrid Cómico cartoon demonstrates this well. Entitled “Puritanismo Yanki” (Yankee Puritanism), it shows a female Spanish musician indignantly resisting a tall gaunt man attempting to strip her of her guitar, her clothes, and her dignity. (Figure 3.8) In the background, a cowboy-like Uncle Sam sits, with his pistol and his bible, upon bags of money and amongst a herd of pigs watching the

---

18 Madrid Cómico, May 21, 1898; Gedeón, August 13, 1896; Blanco y Negro, February 19 and July 23, 1898; La Campana de Gracia, March 6, May 18, June 5 and July 10, 1897, July 2 and August 10, 1898.
spectacle before them. Behind them are the black zigzag streaks of power lines, an Indian dangling by his neck from the gallows, and an American flag waving in the wind. In general, it’s a rather frightening scene. With her enemies so dark, threatening and unforgiving, the woman is doomed to suffer abuse. The iconography, however, is easily recognizable. The cartoonist has craftily utilized nearly every common symbol of vulgar modernity—the corruption of modern industry and materialism symbolized by the power lines and pigs, the brutality of expansion embodied in the hanging Indian, the false religion of the dark preacher, and the armed Uncle Sam of American empire. Yet the combined caustic effects of these symbols are directed against Spanish womanhood.

As victims of abuse, representations of women in popular Spanish print media were incredibly versatile. They could be symbols of the Spanish nation, symbols of Spanish colonies, and symbols of Spanish womanhood simultaneously. A sketch of an assaulted woman captured the popular feeling of national violation and colonial defacement just as it portended female degradation. So too could the image of a grieving
widow represent a grieving nation. Often in wartime cartoons, images of women were the victims of male disregard. Like Miss Elena Whart’s drunken stepfather, Spanish men were shirking their responsibilities. The feminine horror that could result from male irresponsibility is dramatically expressed in a La Campana de Gracia cartoon. (Figure 3.10) In the center of the cartoon is the emaciated face of a starving woman, her eyes are hollow and sick, her skin is tautly wrapped around her cheekbones; across her teeth the artist has written the word “hunger.” Pouring out of her mouth is a throng of starving Spaniards with three raving women leading the way. Surrounding the gaunt face and rioting masses are four different personalities: a proud matador, a jolly monk, a sword-wielding pig and a violent Cuban rebel. Unlike the many more common serene scenes of passive Spanish femininity, these women have been reduced to displaying naked violence. Pamela Radcliff has perceptively pointed out that the gluttony of the monk and the proud indifference of the matador appear to enable this feminine violence. “The failure to respond to hungry women was tantamount to emasculation.” Considering that they are both looking away from the rioting women, this seems a perfectly adequate estimation of the cartoon. What she doesn’t include in her interpretation, however, is the importance of the two other figures: the pig and the rebel. While the two Spanish men look out, the

19 A great example of this is the cover drawing of the July 9 La Campana de Gracia. In the scene a woman kneels on the beach and cries over a rock as she looks out over the burning ships of the crumbling empire. Her black dress and veil are typical of other scenes of grieving widows and mothers crying on the beach. But this woman, as the crown indicates, is meant to represent the nation. Thus the cartoonist has blended the symbols of womanhood with the symbols of nationhood in a way that was both natural and acceptable to his readers.

20 “Quadros Vius,” La Campana de Gracia, March 19, 1898, 4.

other two figures face in. They don’t simply allow the violence, they encourage it, they promote it.

Another cartoon conveys a similar message. (Figure 3.11) A scene of joyous disorder and feasting, it includes well-known politicians like Práxedes Mateo Sagasta, head of the Liberal Party, and Cánovas del Castillo, leader of the Liberal-Conservatives, drinking and carousing with Uncle Sam and his happy pig. Around this colorful bacchanalia of Spanish figures are strewn empty bottles of Champagne and picked-apart chicken bones—the discarded remains of a large feast. Above this scene of pleasure and plenty hovers the shockingly thin figure of a crowned woman pointing to the bleeding words “Cuba” and “Filipinas.” The crowned woman, a common symbol in these cartoons, clearly represents Spain. It’s instructive that, like the cartoon mentioned above, being symbolized as a woman in this instances makes her victimhood more emphatic.

It was more than just male indifference that could turn Spanish women into violent mobs or helpless victims. The dangerous symptoms of a modernizing world were corrupting Spain from the inside out. As demonstrated in an 1897 cartoon, Spain was being corroded internally by the false idolatry of modern distractions. In the scene a distraught Spain, represented here again by a crowned woman, gestures with her hand toward a valley of skulls with the smoldering remains of Cuba and the Philippines in the background. (Figure 3.9) Behind her grins a plump monk, a symbol of clerical greed, waiting to profit from the destruction. Above her are the objects of distraction—bullfighting, bicycle races, fashion models decked out in flashy bourgeois clothes and umbrellas. These modern distractions, the cartoon explains, are shallow distractions.

22 “L’ Enterro de la Sardina,” La Campana de Gracia, March 6, 1897, 4.

23 “Espany y ‘Ls Espanyols,” La Campana de Gracia, July 10, 1897, 5.
More than this, as evidenced by the grinning pig looking down approvingly on the scene, these distractions were the modern byproducts of a practiced materialism. Again, unsurprisingly, it’s the woman that suffers. Spain in this instance, like in most other scenes that present Spain as the victim of modernization, is not represented as a proud soldier or any other male figure; as a victim Spain is typically conceived of as female.

Don Braulio, a fictional Carlist character in Unamuno’s *Paz en la Guerra*, complains at one point that “things are going badly.” “Village girls are wearing low shoes and linen blouses. . . These railroads and these damnable factories!”24 With this stuttering speech and disjointed dialogue Unamuno conveys the frustration in his character’s voice. The Carlists of Unamuno’s story are forced to watch helplessly as the world they thought they knew crumbles before them. Yet, it’s the associations that the very conservative Don Braulio makes which are most interesting. He recognizes factories, railroads and the emancipation of women as all being a part of one threatening force. Modernity, that hard to define but impossible to ignore force of coming destruction, united these three things in his mind. A similar process brought these ideas together on the pages of Spanish cartoons. Spanish empire was threatened by the United States, Spanish brotherhood was threatened by materialism, and Spanish womanhood was threatened by modernity. The Amazons of Spanish imagination may have existed on the edge of the empire, but the threat they represented was far too close to home.

---

CONCLUSION

By the end of July 1898, the prospects for Spanish victory in its war with the United States were bleak. Spain had lost the Battle of Manila Bay in May; US marines had landed on Cuban soil in early June; and in the following month Spain lost its entire Caribbean Squadron in the Battle of Santiago de Cuba. While the fighting continued, the Spanish press was beginning to realize and report that a defeat at the hands of the United States and, more importantly, the consequent loss of the colonies was imminent. An artist for the illustrated Spanish weekly *Blanco y Negro* vented his frustration by drawing a mock painting he satirically insisted was bound for the 1900 World Exposition in Paris. (Figure C.1) The print is a heart-wrenchingly melancholy work of destruction, disaster, depression and defeat. At its center is a large Spanish castle facing ultimate destruction from almost every side and in several forms. Large threatening cannons are armed, aimed and ready; from far off in the distance a fleet of ships fire a barrage of artillery shells into its crumbling walls; and throngs of soldiers carrying rifles and gasoline cans rush through every blasted crack. In the foreground are two frantic maidens—one marked Cuba, the other Philippines—being violently dragged away upon the backs of several dark, menacing figures. In the three short paragraphs below the sketch, the artist explains how he intends it to be a dramatic allegorical representation of the destruction of Spain and its empire. The destruction the drawing satirizes, he claims, is a masterpiece of the modern world. It is a “synthesis” of science, “mechanics,” “chemistry” and “metallurgy . . . put to the service of the genius of destruction.”¹

While the immediate enemy, the force of violence directed at Spain, is clearly

¹ “Un Cuadro de Historia,” *Blanco y Negro*, July 23, 1898; “La quimica, la mecánica, la metalurgia, toda la ciencia, en fin, puesta al servicio del genio de la destrucción.”
the United States, the artist assigns blame much more generally. It’s not simply the “yanqui” that is to blame, the artist contends; the entire modern world has contributed to the destruction of Spain “because all have put their hands to this end.” The “stupendous machines of war” have sown “death, destruction and annihilation in the name of progress.” And it’s progress, the blind, destructive march toward modernity, which has spelled Spain’s end.

Figure C.1 Blanco y Negro July 23, 1898

This austere depiction of the looming disaster is a reflection of much more than the frustrations of a single artist. The imagery he uses and the threats he identifies reveal how people in fin de siglo Spain popularly understood the conflict. Spain was a victim of modernity, American perfidy, and European disregard. The nation was beset on all sides by injustice and wickedness. Save for the two white-dressed maidens being assaulted on the periphery of the action, the sketch hardly hints at the contemporary colonial struggle at all. Without a careful attention to detail, one

2 “Un Cuadro de Historia”; “no de un yanqui, sino de todos, porque todos en él pusieron sus manos.”
could easily overlook the small figures of a Cuban and a Filipino. Apart from this, there is literally no indication that two successful independence movements were the origin of Spanish defeat.

The absence is telling, and the wording appropriate. As is evidenced by the consistently drawn symbolism that interpreted the struggle over the colonies as a battle between good and evil, Spaniards didn’t recognize the war in terms of colonies and empires. In fact, Spain’s enemies weren’t physical at all; they were ideological. These cartoons argued that in defending Spanish empire Spain was defending tradition, honor, truth, and values, from the onslaught of corruption, modernization, and progress. As the artist explains, the empire was in a pitched battle with the forces of a “quintessential progress that gives man no value.”

The constitution of the enemy is clear—defined by what it seeks to destroy: Spanish tradition, empire, cultural brotherhood, and feminine piety. What constitutes the victim, however, is more ambiguous. The artist of the sketch above defined Spain as the opposite of that which sought its destruction, the bulwark to these modern movements. For over a generation, pan-hispanist thinkers and other Spanish intellectuals had focused on the empire—its origins, maintenance, and significance—as being at the heart of what it meant to be Spanish. Yet, as I’ve attempted to argue in this thesis, national identity in fin de siglo Spain continued to be incompletely developed. In the nineteenth century, leaders like Cánovas del Castillo and writers like Unamuno continued to wrestle with the problem of Spanish identity during a time of rapid modernization, halting industrialization, uncomfortable cultural change, and disruptive decolonization. I believe that it’s precisely because they continued to struggle in their search for a concept of Spanishness that would justify

---

3 “Un Cuadro de Historia”; “Un progreso quintaesenciado que no da al hombre valor alguno.”
the empire and validate Spanish history that Cánovas’s *Discurso Sobre la Nación*, and
Muñoz del Monte’s *España y las Repúblicas Hispano-Americanas*—to name just
two—are disjointed, seemingly-unorganized expositions that often prattle on
sometimes incoherently. Their very disorganization preserves the uncertainty with
which these two authors stated their cases.

Spanish cartoons and other visual evidence from this short period
demonstrate more convincingly than any other type of information that this process
was taking place. Visual imagery and iconological structures project a fluidity of
meaning that printed sources can’t. Some ideas are simply not easily articulated.
Some complex concepts even lose their impact when spelled out in so many words.
Cartoons and pictures have the power to express ideas in a way that rings true even
when the ideas themselves are unsound. In this I’m reminded of those now famous
lines from Justice Potter Stewart. When attempting to define the term obscenity, and
finding that it was quite difficult to express in so many words, he merely replied, “I
know it when I see it.” I believe Spanish wartime cartoons provided something that
was very similar to what Justice Stewart described. In other words, while the
definition of Spanishness was not something easily scrawled on a page or printed in a
book, undeniably, Spaniards seemed to know it when they saw it.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Primary Materials**

**Periodicals, 1895-1898**

*Album Salon*

*La America*

*Barcelona Cómica*

*Blanco y Negro*

*La Campana de Gracia*

*La Dinastía*

*La España Moderna*

*Gedeón*

*La Ilustración Artística*

*La Ilustración Española y Americana*

*La Ilustración Hispano-Americana*

*La Ilustración Nacional*

*La Lidia*

*Madrid Cómico*

*Nuevo Mundo*

*The New York Times*

**Books and Documents**

Martí, José and Máximo Gómez. *Manifiesto de Montecristi*. 1895


**Secondary Sources**


92


Torre del Río, R. de la “La Prensa Madrileña y el discurso de Lord Salisbury sobre “las naciones moribundas” (Londres, Albert Hall 4 Mayo 1898); *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea*, no. 6 pp. 163-180.


