The Puerto Rican Image in the Mainland Mind:

Education, Empire, and American Expectations of Puerto Rican Identity

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Introduction

Puerto Rico Onstage: Showcasing Insular Possessions at the World’s Fairs

Chicago’s 1893 Columbian Exposition marked the earliest performance of an American desire for an empire inspired by the nation’s European predecessors. Replete with naval processions of ships “from the caravels of Columbus to the swiftest and most powerful of steel-plated cruisers” and featuring a large central pool which stood as a metaphor for the journey to the New World, the 1893 exposition celebrated the quadricentennial anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s 1492 voyage and directly linked U.S. identity to a Spanish colonial heritage.¹ The subsequent fairs of 1901 and 1904 actualized the imperialist longings of 1893 by displaying exhibits representative of newly-acquired U.S. territories. According to Jorge Duany, the Buffalo and St. Louis fairs “combined educational, political, and commercial interests in a single project.”² These later expositions presented the human and natural resources of the U.S. territories acquired after the Spanish-American War, placing these possessions—including Puerto Rico—within a larger fair narrative of the progress of tropical lands under U.S. guidance.

According to anthropologist Jorge Duany, the first and latter halves of the 20th century differed in the construction of popular images of Puerto Rican identity.³ Whereas Duany asserts that the second half of the century saw the solidification of Puerto Rican imaging on largely Puerto Rican terms, the U.S. doctrine of Americanization dominated the first fifty years after the

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³ Duany, 39.
Spanish-American War, defined as the American colonial mission to instruct Puerto Ricans in self-government and democratic values in anticipation for some uncertain future form of economic and political sovereignty for the island. Following this framework of Americanization, the world’s fairs and Expositions Universelles displayed Puerto Rico not with a cultural interest in mind, but rather a dominantly economic one. At Buffalo’s 1901 Pan-American Exposition and the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, the United States advertised the island through its resources, industries, and exports—such as cigars, sugar, and coffee—in agricultural-themed pavilions. A July 1901 article in the Buffalo Commercial reports that male fairgoers were invited to sit and relax in a building “only for reception purposes” in the Puerto Rican pavilion, where “pretty senoritas served coffee to all visitors.” These early fairs represented Puerto Rico in terms of economic benefits in the eyes of American government officials and private entrepreneurs. Unlike the exhibits of other territorial possessions—namely, the Philippines—the appeal for colonial actors was not necessarily in the assimilation of “primitive” peoples, but rather the modernization of Puerto Rican industries by American investors.5

This emphasis on the economic potential of the island over displays of Puerto Rican culture and identity remained static throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Even at the 1931 Paris Exhibition, this economic rationale for U.S. intervention lingered, as the display of consumer goods produced by Puerto Rico and other island territories were foundational to a larger narrative of Puerto Rican progress under American tutelage.6 Central to this performance of colonial advancement were the U.S.-style educational policies enacted on the island, to which

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4 “Porto Rico’s Day,” Buffalo Commercial, July 25, 1901
5 Duany, 48.
the Puerto Rican pavilion payed special interest at the Buffalo Pan-American Exposition. According to an April 1901 article in the *Buffalo Enquirer*, “The exhibits of the schools will be shown with special pride as they illustrate better than anything else can the progress made in the island under American rule.”⁷ As the colonial government enacted U.S.-style educational practices on the island, imperial actors and popular media additionally educated the American public, through modes such as the world’s fairs, on Puerto Rican identity in ways which served U.S. colonial and economic aims.

While Puerto Rico, unlike Native American or Filipino exhibits, may have lacked an explicitly anthropological or cultural exhibit at the 1901 and 1904 expositions, an ethnological view towards newly-acquired territorial possessions still ran through the planning of these fairs. In 1899, the Government Board of the Pan-American Exhibition and the Smithsonian Special Committee on Outlying Possessions originally intended to display model villages for each of the insular possessions occupied by the U.S. after the Spanish-American War, including Puerto Rico, yet eventually chose instead to focus primarily on the Philippines for economic and ideological reasons.⁸ The significance of the Philippine War as an early stepping stone for American forays into overseas empire heralded the need for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition’s display of a 47 acre model Filipino village, the “largest anthropological exhibit ever assembled for a world’s fair,” in which Igorot tribespeople performed primitivity to a massive audience.⁹,¹⁰

Advertisements for the Philippine exposition publicized its sheer size (“40 Different Tribes…6 Philippine Villages…70,000 Exhibits…130 Buildings…725 Native Soldiers”) and proclaimed

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⁷ “Porto Rico’s Display at Exposition,” *Buffalo Enquirer*, April 24, 1901
⁸ Duany, 44.
⁹ Duany, 41.
¹⁰ Greenhalgh, 77.
that the exhibit was “the over-shadowing feature of the world’s fair…better than a trip through the Philippine Islands.” Absent from such advertising was the colloquial nickname of “Dogtown” given to the exhibit, as the fairgoers watched the village’s inhabitants cook and consume dog meat with particular horrified fascination.

Although excursions undertaken by the U.S. National Museum in the years immediately following the Spanish-American War revealed some interest in Puerto Rican culture beyond economic incentives for U.S. occupation, these trips were limited in scope to indigenous Puerto Rican history, eschewing any focus on the “modern” population of the island. Anthropologists like Dr. Jesse Walter Fewkes, who made research excursions to Cuba and Puerto Rico and published his findings in 1907’s *The Aborigines of Porto Rico and the Neighboring Islands*, primarily paid attention to the “aboriginal handicraft…and of habitations,” the “primitive” thatched-roof “dwellings” of which served as inspiration for the model Puerto Rican villages which never came to physical fruition at the world’s fairs.\(^1\),\(^2\)

The Smithsonian Museum’s 1903 “Report of the Bureau of Ethnology” published a summary of this research, placing Fewkes’ findings within a larger discussion of psychological “attempts to measure the aboriginal mind.”\(^3\) The report hailed that “ethnologic principles,” such as the ones on display at the St. Louis Filipino exposition, were the solution to “practical problems connected with immigration, Chinese exclusion, the occupation of Porto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippines, and the education of the colored race,” connecting a scientific language to the language of empire. A teleological narrative of the progress of race and civilization, the very

\(^2\) Puerto Rico was known officially as the Anglicized “Porto Rico” by the US government from the Treaty of Paris in 1898 until May 17, 1932, when the island was officially designated as “Puerto Rico.”
ideology on display at the 1893, 1901, and 1904 world’s fairs, is elucidated in the report’s following passage, which discusses attempts to measure an indigenous capacity for intelligence through a principle the author dubs the “ethnic law of Responsivity of Mind”:

The recognition of this principle serves also to explain and establish the sequence of stages in human development inferred from observations on many peoples (i.e., from savagery, through barbarism and civilization, up to enlightenment), since it shows that each transition was the product of cumulative experiences, long assimilated and applied through commonplace habits rather than through abstract reflection--for in all the lower stages of human development the mind borrows from the hand.14

This emphasis on the past and the primitive in characterizing the U.S.’s insular possessions plays into a teleological, ethnological narrative of civilization and Anglo-Saxon supremacy, as model Native American and Filipino villages performed unsophistication alongside displays of technological progress and exhibitions of U.S. military and colonial power, rendering tangible a narrative of progress “from savagery…up to enlightenment.” As exhibited at the world’s fairs, Puerto Rico remained somewhere in the middle of this spectrum, unfit for self-government yet decidedly “whiter” in population than the Filipino or Native American villages on display. Colonial images, narratives, and discourses at the fairs placed the Philippines and Puerto Rico in opposition due to a white supremacist hierarchy of race and civilization, yet both territories were still deemed unsuited for either full incorporation into the nation or independence in their own right.

In the following chapters, my research explores the intersections between education, empire, and Puerto Rican identity in the first decade of U.S. control of the island. As windows

onto these processes, I am engaging with the 1904 Harvard Summer School, created in order to educate Puerto Rican public school teachers in the English language and American pedagogical methods, and masculine adventure novels aimed at mainland American adolescents and set in Puerto Rico. In using these sources, I aim to demonstrate how education, so central to empire, was a two-pronged endeavor, one in which popular culture, mass media, and colonial actors “educated” the mainland public on Puerto Rican identity in ways echoing the concerted Americanization efforts to install U.S.-style education methods on the island.
Chapter One

“As the Twig is Bent the Tree Will Incline”: Puerto Rican Teachers at the 1904 Harvard Summer School

On August 15, 1904, Charles V. Fornes, acting mayor of New York City, addressed a group of 150 Puerto Rican public school teachers visiting Cornell University. Fornes’s welcome emphasized the importance of education as a great molder of morals and citizenship in the creation of young Americans. “‘As the twig is bent the tree will incline,’” announced Fornes, to paraphrase an old adage, “and the boy or girl who has been taught not only the fundamentals in a primary education, but has been grounded to the principles of morality and obedience to lawful authority, so essential to the formation of a good citizen, will not depart from them in his manhood.”15 Fornes’s outline of the function of education is as much a commentary on the methods of rearing obedient American boys and girls as it is a reflection of the paternalistic attitudes which drove the U.S. colonial occupation of Puerto Rico, a project to which education was central. In the Summer of 1904, as part of the U.S. empire’s mission in “Americanization,” 540 public school teachers from the island visited Harvard and Cornell Universities with the authorization of Congress, an army escort, and the blessing of President Theodore Roosevelt.16


16 According to Samuel McCune Lindsay, Puerto Rico’s Commissioner of Education, President Theodore Roosevelt was personally invested in the success of the Harvard and Cornell Summer Schools. Lindsay’s December 7, 1903, letter to Harvard president, Charles W. Eliot, reveals that Lindsay “laid” the prospect of the Puerto Rican Summer School “personally before President Roosevelt, who took a keen interest in the matter and promised to do all in his power to secure for us the use of the army transports in taking the teachers up and bringing them back.”
The 1904 Puerto Rican Summer School followed in the footsteps of an earlier, more expansive 1900 project during which 1200 Cuban teachers visited Harvard University. Harvard University had less at stake financially with the education of Puerto Rican teachers than this earlier 1900 summer school program, as visiting teachers were expected to contribute one month’s salary to the cost of the summer school. However, these costs were “defrayed” somewhat by philanthropic committees in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia which Harvard president Dr. Charles W. Eliot personally encouraged to compensate for expenses. The two summer schools had a similar colonial purpose, as is revealed by Puerto Rican Commissioner of Education Samuel McCune Lindsay in his correspondence with President Eliot:

As Porto Rico is now a part of our national domain, and we are endeavoring to establish American institutions permanently in this Island, it seems to me that there are excellent reasons why the advantages that we have already extended to the Cuban teachers should be offered in no less generous measure to the teachers of the public schools in Porto Rico.

As colonial officials largely praised the Cuban Summer School, the Puerto Rico project, its spiritual successor, was a continuation of the U.S. pedagogical mission to assimilate newly-acquired territories in a period of expanding empire. The 1904 Puerto Rican experiment at Harvard was an exercise in English-language acquisition and simultaneous ideological instruction. While colonial actors like Samuel McCune Lindsey considered the Puerto Rican Summer School a success, correspondence from Harvard instructors at the end of the term and quotes from Puerto Rican teachers reveal complexities and setbacks unacknowledged by U.S. officials.

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17 Navarro, 81.
18 Samuel McCune Lindsay, Samuel McCune Lindsay to Dr. Charles W. Eliot, December 7, 1903. Letter. From the Harvard University Archives.
After the close of the Spanish-American War in August 1898, the U.S. government justified the imperial acquisition of Puerto Rico under the banner of Americanization: specifically, the goal of educating Puerto Ricans on self-governance and U.S.-style “democratic” values under the auspices of preparing those on the island for some uncertain future form of economic and political sovereignty. As historian Solsiree del Moral argues in *The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico, 1898 – 1952*, education was central to this project of Americanization. U.S. policymakers and colonial education officials responsible for the Puerto Rican Summer School program operated in the context of a pedagogical ideology informed by Americanization and established immediately after the acquisition of Puerto Rico as a territory.

Articles published soon after the Spanish-American War in the *Journal of Education* reveal dominantly-held beliefs as to the best pedagogical approach for the newly-acquired territory, offering a window onto the ideological context in which the Summer Schools can be situated. In an article entitled “Porto Rico” in a February 1899 issue, the author—credited as an anonymous “*London Times* correspondent”—advocates for the U.S. occupation of Puerto Rico in order to eradicate, through education and philanthropy, “semi-savagery” and “an ignorance of the densest kind.” The author further asserted that “until the character of the inhabitants has undergone a complete change as the result of educational development and association with the people who now become their countrymen,” a restructuring of the

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19 Del Moral, 28.
20 Here I would like to make clear that this particular brand of colonial thought, as it relates to education, did not originate with the annexation of Puerto Rico. The centrality of education to US empire extends back to similar pedagogical projects in Hawaii as well as the assimilationist trade schools for Native Americans and African Americans in the latter half of the 19th century. US imperial ideology can be traced back to “parent” European empires, primarily that of Great Britain.
21 Existing in some shape or form since the 1830s, the *Journal of Education* is the longest-extant pedagogical publication in the United States and would have been considered a significant authority on U.S. educational policy on the mainland and as well as in the newly-acquired territories.
government of Puerto Rico to provide for greater self-governance was impossible. Puerto Rican citizens would be held in a political grey area until deemed fully assimilated and possessed of patriotic sympathies. Assimilation and patriotism would serve as proof of Puerto Rican gratitude for their colonization and, apparently, recraft their current political unworthiness into the foundation of self-rule.

The editor of *The Journal of Education* in 1899 was influential educator and journalist Albert Edward Winship, who, in books like *Jukes Edwards: A Study in Education and Heredity* (1900), established education as necessary for the inculcation of patriotic values in the young as well as a tool—echoing neo-Lamarckian eugenicist thought and predominant pedagogical beliefs of the time—for the eradication of crime, disease, and social disorder. Belief in the power of education to mend societal ills and recondition “degenerates”—as well as the racial and national biases implicit in such ideology—underlies not only the *Journal of Education*’s position on the necessity of education in Puerto Rico, but additionally, the beliefs of the U.S. colonial officials involved with the 1904 Summer School.

After making a ten-day visit to the island—during which Commissioner Lindsay invited him to speak to teachers and students—educator and pedagogical theorist Charles De Garmo (who would later become a key player at the 1904 Cornell Summer School) offered his proposal for the education of Puerto Ricans. As is the case with the call to educate “semi-savage” Puerto

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23 Ibid.
24 *Jukes Edwards: A Study in Education and Heredity* was published by a company which produced textbooks and “standard helps for teachers,” indicating that Winship intended his pedagogical tract to be read by a wide educational audience. Winship firmly declares his position in the first chapter of *Jukes Edwards*, stating that: “Education is something more than going to school for a few weeks each year, is more than knowing how to read and write. It has to do with character, with industry, and with patriotism. Education tends to do away with vulgarity, pauperism, and crime, tends to prevent disease and disgrace, and helps to manliness, success and loyalty.” Emphasis my own. (Alfred E. Winship, *Jukes Edwards: A Study in Education and Heredity*, Philadelphia, PA: R.L. Myers & Company, page 7.)
Rican colonial subjects, De Garmo’s comments are rife with a “benign paternalism, racism, and bias,” a combination that historian José- Manuel Navarro characterizes as attitudes commonly held by the white educators of non-white colonial pupils. In comments De Garmo offered after his tour, he classified the Puerto Rican students he encountered as intellectually incapable of pursuing academically-rigorous subjects, instead stating that the “colored and Indian schools for industrial training”—such as the Carlisle, Tuskegee, and Hampton Institutes as well as Native American boarding schools—would be suitable educational models to be implemented on the island. De Garmo’s comments reflect the ways in which pedagogical prototypes moved throughout the broadening U.S. empire with only minor necessary adjustments made in line with “national interests and intentions.” According to Solsiree del Moral, pedagogical models in Hawaii as well as African American and Native American schools served as inspiration for other colonial projects, and these instructional plans were altered and “re-exported” to newly-acquired territories like Puerto Rico.

Correspondence between President Eliot and potential Harvard Summer School instructors reveals the ways in which Harvard University participated in this circulation of colonial educational models, as Eliot’s letters convey a concerted effort to hire individuals who had previous pedagogical experience in other newly-acquired territorial possessions. In applying to give speeches on the nature of U.S.-style pedagogy, Harvard alumnus David Gibbs offered his

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25 José- Manuel Navarro, Creating Tropical Yankees, 73.
26 Ibid.
27 Echoing De Garmo’s belief in basic education for colonial subjects, Lindsay does not insist on preparing the Puerto Rican teachers at the Harvard Summer School in any intellectually rigorous subjects. This is revealed in Lindsay’s December 7, 1903, letter to Eliot: “The instruction needed would be of the most elementary character, and chiefly in the subject matter and methods of teaching of the subjects taught in our elementary schools, especially English, arithmetic, geography, and United States History, and perhaps also in addition to this some instruction in the history of education, and nature work, drawing, and vocal music.”
28 Del Moral, 45.
29 Ibid.
experiences establishing the “first” Normal Schools in the Philippines under Superintendent Fred Atkinson as evidence of his qualifications. In his letter to President Eliot, Gibbs claims that the administration of classes “in the Philippines does not differ materially from that in Porto Rico,” a statement which reveals the uniformity of education’s role in the colonial mission during a time of massive imperial expansion for the United States. 30 A Harvard alumnus and student of geography, Gibbs penned a series of geographical textbooks for the school system of the Philippines, yet Gibbs insisted in his correspondence to Eliot that his primary interest lay in pedagogy, and not geography. Convinced, Eliot responded with an offer for Gibbs to give lectures “on the organization of American school systems, with suggestions as to desirable modifications in Porto Rico.”31

As the second Commissioner of Education for Puerto Rico, Samuel McCune Lindsay held a primary role in this adoption and repackaging of educational models for the island. Navarro describes Lindsay as “an enlightened colonialist” who advocated for the U.S. colonial project under the guise of improving Puerto Rican standards of living and encouraging economic prosperity.32, 33 Lindsay believed that it was the “imperative duty” of U.S. officials to expose the people of U.S. territories to American culture and ways of life in order to achieve alleged future economic success and social welfare.34 In his 1902 annual report to the Department of the Interior, Lindsay emphasized that the “future commercial prosperity [of the people of Puerto Rico] depends upon their adoption of the English language as the prevailing speech throughout

30 David Gibbs, David Gibbs to Dr. Charles W. Eliot, June 4, 1904. Letter. From Harvard University Archives, 31 Charles W. Eliot, Charles W. Eliot to David Gibbs, June 8, 1904. Letter. From Harvard University Archives. 32 Navarro, 84. 33 Although Lindsay was an advocate for English-only education for the sake of Puerto Rico’s economic future, the commissioner does not suggest this same linguistic exchange for the future prosperity of mainland students, likely due to the massive undertaking such a project would pose, but also due to implicit biases underlying the premise of English-as-primary-language education on the island. 34 Navarro, 84.
the island,” coloring the acquisition of English not as the forced imposition of U.S. culture on the people of Puerto Rico, but, rather, a tool necessary for economic improvement under the banner of U.S.-style capitalism. Lindsay maintained hope that the summer school program’s linguistic mission would be an even larger success than with the Cuban Summer School. In a June 24, 1904, letter from President Eliot to Professor William MacDonald, Eliot reveals that “the Porto Rican Commissioner maintains that these teachers know more English than the Cubans did.” It is with this ideology in mind that Lindsay first approached Charles W. Eliot about the possibility of a Puerto Rican Summer School at Harvard University.

Lindsay reveals throughout his letters to President Eliot that the goal of the summer program was the Americanization of Puerto Rican public school teachers and, by extension, their students across the island. In a letter after the return of the teachers to Puerto Rico in August 1904, Lindsay remarks on the immediate visible evidence of the program’s success in instilling American values and sympathies:

It may be some satisfaction for you to know that the Harvard pin and Harvard colors are still worn with pride by many of our teachers and are now to be found in all parts of the Island; and it is certainly a satisfaction to everyone to feel that there are now five hundred Porto Ricans more thoroughly Americanized than ever before and almost without exception they have been heard to say that there were many things they had been told about the United States which they could

35 Navarro, 70.
36 In other writings Lindsay undercuts the doctrine of English as a primary and universal language on the island by stating that speaking Spanish in the home would be allowed and expected, but that English should be the language of business and education; Navarro, 70–71.
37 Proficiency in the English language was a requirement of Puerto Rican teachers, as is revealed by Lindsay’s December 7, 1903, letter to Eliot: “About two-thirds of our teachers could profit by instruction conducted in the English language, as they have been required to pass an examination in English once a year during the past two years as a condition for holding their teacher’s certificate.”
scarcely believe, but now that they have seen with their own eyes they are eager to teach to others. 38

Now exposed to U.S. pedagogical methods, Lindsay reports that the returned teachers were prepared to instill colonial sympathies and U.S. patriotism in their students, declaring the Summer School a visible success in terms of encouraging patriotism and national affinity. Lindsay’s letter echoes similar reports on the end result of the Cuban Summer School, and the two programs, as the sides of the same colonial coin, are often spoken of in tandem in President Eliot’s correspondence. In a December 15, 1903, letter from E. B. Wilcox, the former Special Inspector of public schools in Cuba, Wilcox states that the Cuban Summer School had a similar effect on its participants:

I found that they [Cuban teachers], without exception, entertained a warm regard and feeling of cordial friendship toward the great country that they had seen and the splendid hospitality that they had received…The contrast which I noticed in the schools of those who went North and of those who did not was so marked that I often remarked to my interpreter that I could tell immediately upon entering a school room whether the teacher had taken the trip North or not.39

By emphasizing the contrast between schools with summer school-educated teachers and those without, Wilcox describes the program as though it had left an indelible mark upon its participants. Written to Eliot during the initial planning stages of the Puerto Rican project, Wilcox’s letter reveals an eagerness to replicate a program which colonial and education officials already believed to be successful in encouraging pro-American sympathies and U.S.-style pedagogical methods with teachers and students on the island.

38 Samuel McCune Lindsay, Samuel McCune Lindsay to Charles W. Eliot, August 1904. Letter. From Harvard University Archives.
The design of the 1904 Harvard Summer School reflects Commissioner Lindsay’s doctrine of English-only education in Puerto Rico, as the program’s curriculum emphasized English language acquisition as a primary goal. Upon their arrival in Cambridge, the Puerto Rican teachers were separated into three separate classes—elementary, intermediate, and advanced—based on their command of English. Discovering twelve pupils who were especially “backward,” Harvard administrators created a new, fourth-tier class specifically for their instruction.40 The list of textbooks used in the program reinforce this English focus, revealing that the majority of texts taught in the elementary and intermediate sections were English-Spanish language primers.41 English language textbooks were supplemented in the higher-level classes with literature, including Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*, short stories by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Daniel Defoe’s classic novel *Robinson Crusoe*. Detailing the protagonist’s encounters with “savages” and cannibalistic tribes on an isolated Caribbean island, *Robinson Crusoe* can be read as an allegory for British imperialism as well as the United States’ “civilizing” mission in its territorial possessions, of which the summer school programs were one facet.

For one of the intermediate classes, taught by Antonio Capotosto and consisting of twenty-two male pupils, only one text was used in instruction: Henry Beebee Carrington’s *Beacon Lights of Patriotism: or, Historic Incentives to Virtue and Good Citizenship* (1894). An officer for the Union during the American Civil War and a commander during Red Cloud’s War, Carrington’s other works included military histories such as *Battles of the American Revolution*,

41 These primers include Alejandro Ybarra’s *A Practical Method for Learning Spanish* (1898), *The Mother Tongue: An Elementary English Grammar Series* (1900) by George Lyman Kittredge and Sarah Louise Arnold, and *El idioma inglés: sistema completo para su aprendizaje en tres libros* (1902) by Peter H. Goldsmith.
1775-81 (1876) and tracts like *The Indian Question* (1884). A repackaging of a speech given by Carrington to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1875, *The Indian Question* characterizes Native Americans as the “victims of white man’s avarice” and encourages their assimilation, stating “the Indian can be civilized and Christianized when placed upon the same plane as the white man and under like protection and responsibility.”

Carrington admits the “unjust” nature of U.S. Indian policy, but plays the role of enlightened imperialist by suggesting that Native Americans can and should be assimilated into white man’s society—similar to the ideologies which drove the U.S. education of Puerto Ricans.

“Dedicated to American youth,” *Beacon Lights of Patriotism* focuses on examples of “heroes” throughout Western history, and includes writings from American founding fathers, classical philosophers, Bible verses, and literary giants. Carrington wrote with the goal of instilling patriotic, Christian values in his young readership, as can be seen in one of Carrington’s own poems published within the anthology entitled “The Three ‘W’s—Watch, Work, Wait,” which instructs young men to work diligently and with Christian patience. The book’s intent to encourage the worship of patriot figures is not understated, as *Beacon Lights of Patriotism* opens with a frontispiece depicting four different portraits of George Washington surrounded by the names of the men whose writings are included in the anthology. A note beneath the illustration states that, “The pre-eminence of Washington suggests that his likeness, taken at different dates, be made central among ‘Beacon Lights.”

Carrington’s text additionally contained an index of “hard words” which, according to Carrington’s preface, would

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43 Carrington, *Beacon lights of Patriotism; or, Historic incentives to virtue and good citizenship. In prose and verse with notes. Dedicated to American youth*, Boston, MA: Silver, Burdette, and Co. (1894), 290.
be useful for the purposes of young Americans. The inclusion of this expansive dictionary of sorts—including definitions and a pronunciation guide—demonstrates that Beacon Lights could function as a guide not only in the English language but also as an ideological primer.

In his end-of-program report to President Eliot, Capotosto rationalized his selection of Beacon Lights of Patriotism as an educational text by stating its “appeal” to “grown up educated men” as well as the text’s inclusion of useful indices. Capotosto claims that the book’s biographical index—which describes “America’s most famous patriots”—and list of vocabulary words “might be of assistance to the teachers back home.”45 The contents of Beacon Lights encapsulate the aims of the Harvard Summer School and larger colonial pedagogical goals, as Carrington supplies with reader with English vocabulary in conjunction with readings from American “patriots.” With this text, Puerto Rican teachers could inculcate English language skills in their students alongside colonial boosterism packaged as mythologized historical lessons of triumph.

In his report, Capotosto explains that one class exercise was the committing to memory of selected poems from Beacon Lights, including Sir Walter Scott’s “Love of Country,” George P. Morris’s “Woodman Spare that Tree,” and Hoffman von Fallersleben’s “My Fatherland.” The final stanza of “My Fatherland” aptly summarizes the poem’s nationalistic intent:

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45 Capotosto’s full rationale for selecting Beacon Lights is as follows: “This book was selected by me after careful consideration for the following reasons: it appeals more directly than any other reader known to me to grown up educated men; it contains selections from the writings and orations of America’s most famous patriots and statements, and selections being otherwise practically inaccessible to the majority of the Porto Rican teachers, it has a short biographical index of the authors referred to, which index, I think will be extremely useful to those who live away from a larger center of population, and who, therefore, lack the facilities offered by a public library; lastly, it contains a vocabulary and pronunciation of proper names and special words, which might be of assistance to the teachers at home.” (Antonio Capotosto, Antonio Capotosto to Charles W. Eliot, August 8, 1904. Letter. From the Harvard University Archives.)
Faithful love my death enduring,
Pledge I thee with heart and hand,
All my being, all my having,
Owe I to thee, My Fatherland.46

In the context of the Harvard Summer School, Fallersleben’s poem overtly encourages national allegiance to the United States, to the extreme point of pledging one’s life and “all [their] being,” as though indebted to the U.S. colonial government. Scott’s “Love of Country” echoes a similar—and vaguely threatening—blind adoration for one’s “native land,” and sings that the unpatriotic “wretch” will live a life without glory and die “unwept, unhonored, and unsung.”47 Although it reads at first like a proto-environmentalist poem, “Woodman Spare that Tree” can also be read with U.S. colonialism in mind. In the poem, the speaker addresses a “woodman” who is attempting to chop down the tree of the speaker’s forefathers. Morris writes that the “glory and renown” of the old oak “are spread o’er land and sea,” suggesting an allegory for the expansion of U.S. imperial power on a global scale. Watching over the tree of one’s ancestors, when considered alongside the selections from Fallersleben and Scott, takes on the connotation of tending to one’s growing “Fatherland.” While Capotosto wrote in his report to President Eliot that the teachers memorized these poems as part of an English exercise, the nationalistic content of these works—and of Beacon Lights of Patriotism as a whole—demonstrates the Harvard Summer School’s dual function of instilling U.S. sympathies while encouraging English language retention.

Although Capotosto was the only instructor to use Beacon Lights of Patriotism, this method of committing nationalistic poems and songs to memory was common in other classes.

46 Carrington, Beacon Lights, 104.
47 Beacon Lights, 106.
In Lillian Estelle Clark’s final report, for instance, the instructor revealed that a major project for her class of twenty-eight intermediate female teachers was the memorization of the first stanzas of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” This slight difference in curriculum reveals that, while the classes had the same end goals in mind, the aims and attitudes of Harvard instructors very much affected the experiences of participating Puerto Rican teachers, as it was entirely up to these actors to shape and individualize coursework. Gender biases also affected curriculum, as the visiting teachers were separated into classes on the basis of sex in addition to their level of English.

Such differences can be clearly seen in the types of discussion questions asked in various classes. Capotosto, for instance, used discussion questions in his intermediate class of thirty-seven men such as: “Is universal suffrage desirable?,” “Should Porto Rico become a state in the Union?,” and “How are the poor, the insane, and the criminal cared for in the United States?” These mental exercises seem more relevant to Capotosto’s students than those suggested in classes of women at the same level of language proficiency, as in Elizabeth Forbes’s higher level advanced class of thirty-eight. In Forbes’s class, composition and discussion assignments included such juvenile prompts as “My Favorite Book,” and “One of My Pets.” Other topics in Forbes’s class, such as “The Pro’s and Con’s of Living on an Island,” “San Juan Contrasted with Cambridge,” and “The Typical Porto Rican as Opposed to the Typical American,” seem to hint at rhetoric justifying U.S. colonial intervention in Puerto Rico (or, at the very least, American superiority).

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While Commissioner Lindsay and Dr. Charles De Garmo declared, respectively, that the Puerto Rican and Cuban Summer Schools were an immediate visible success in terms of Americanization, reflections written by the instructors of the Harvard Summer School offer more contradictory feedback. While many instructors, especially those of the intermediate or advanced levels, generally expressed improvement in English language proficiency and hope at the prospect of the return of teachers to Puerto Rico, few offered entirely positive reviews. Peter H. Goldsmith’s report on the progress of his advanced class of twenty-two male teachers reveals that a lack of compulsory attendance and the absence of any tangible certification for completion of the program meant that many Puerto Rican teachers were unmotivated to attend classes.49 Roll sheets across the spectrum of English-language proficiency reveal rampant absenteeism, with some students missing every class offered. This widespread lack of attendance—perhaps caused by a lack of interest in the material taught, or perhaps due to the absence of any tangible certification at the course’s end—casts into doubt the blanket statements made by Commissioner Samuel McCune Lindsay at the program’s close which deemed the Puerto Rican Summer School a clear success.

In her final report, Forbes stated that “about fifty percent” of her class was “most appreciative, diligent, and quick to learn,” whereas “twelve percent were indolent and completely indifferent.” The remaining students performed satisfactorily, although were apparently “surprised to find that work was expected of them.”50 Forbes, also an instructor for the Cuban Summer School, compares the character of the Puerto Rican class to her Cuban pupils,

50 It would not be difficult to believe that an educated adult would be surprised when assigned a prompt entitled “My Favorite Picture.”
stating that “the best of them excelled my Cuban class in personal cleanliness, mental vigor, and endurance.” 51 By commending her students on their hygiene and enthusiasm, Forbes seems to suggest that Puerto Ricans are more suited to be assimilated into U.S. empire. Forbes’s emphasis on hygiene further reflects the intertwined legacies of public health and colonialism, especially in the case of Puerto Rico. In Negotiating Empire, Solsiree del Moral states that an emphasis on hygiene was at the heart of education on the island, as teachers instructed pupils in sanitation practices as part of a larger effort to “‘whiten’ the Puerto Rican national body.” 52

Thus, Forbes’ concern with “hygiene” reflects pre-existing colonial discourses relating to race, leading one to wonder about the racial makeup of visiting Puerto Rican teachers. According to a June 1904 telegram from Samuel McCune Lindsay sent in advance of the teachers’ arrival in Boston, Lindsay identified that 19 of the 224 of the male teachers and 20 of the 157 female teachers in attendance were black. White Puerto Rican teachers had the ability to choose between attending the summer schools at Harvard or Cornell, their black compatriots had no decision in the matter and were assigned to the two universities on a quota basis. 53

Instructor Mary T. Loughlin directly references the racial composition of her class in her final report. Addressing significant class-wide rates of absenteeism, Loughlin declares that these absences were caused by some inherent inability or unwillingness to learn. Loughlin described that in her elementary class of sixteen women:

The attendance was far from satisfactory, and most of the absentees made no attempt to do the work they had missed…. Few showed a desire to profit by opportunities to learn or practice English outside of the classroom; and in the classroom a good deal of carelessness and habitual inaccuracy was shown. I noticed, as other teachers did, that some students were dull, even where

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52 del Moral, 22.
English was not concerned; and that the proportion of good workers (regardless of natural facility) seemed to be greater among the negroes and people of negro blood.\(^{54}\)

Here, Loughlin is one of the few teachers to emphasize the racially integrated nature of the visiting group of Puerto Rican teachers. While Loughlin at first seems to be employing racialized rhetoric to explain her “proportion of good workers,” she additionally reveals the racial and class divide present in the 1904 class of Puerto Rican teachers. Students of Afro-Caribbean descent likely had to work harder than their white compatriots in order to overcome obstacles of racial bias and prove themselves worthy of their inclusion in the program. In her letter, Loughlin implies that white students, likely of a different class, didn’t have as much at stake and could thusly afford not to attend class or complete assignments. One Puerto Rican teacher at the program’s close hinted at a significant class divide between summer school participants, stating that: “I know there are in the expedition many teachers that do not belong to the good families of our country, and some of them have been taught in different methods…they do not know the ways to behave themselves in company.”\(^{55}\)

Although many visiting teachers had extensive prior experience with the English language and were easily sorted into advanced classes, Pitcher claims in the *Boston Evening Transcript* that “these teachers who have been with us were not the cream of English-speaking Porto Ricans or of the highest attainments in their country. As one of the men told me, the best teachers did not accept the invitation of the department. This invitation was given wholesale to the native teachers; those accepting were not required to pass a special examination.”\(^{56}\) Due to the program’s availability to “anyone willing to devote a month’s salary for the chance of six

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\(^{55}\) Pitcher, *Boston Evening Transcript*.

\(^{56}\) Ibid.
weeks at Harvard,” visiting teachers were likely from a range of class backgrounds, levels of pedagogical experience, and English proficiency.57

Feedback from Puerto Rican teachers at the program’s close also indicates that, contrary to the belief of officials like Samuel McCune Lindsay, the summer school’s primary goal of English-language acquisition did not fully come to fruition. In this same August 1904 article, summer school instructor A.L. Pitcher included excerpts from the compositions and criticisms written by his class of Puerto Rican students. Pitcher himself expressed doubt at the scant duration of a five-week program, and admitted that “skepticism naturally arises from the thought that the whole expedition may have cost more money than the results warrant.”58 Many of the anonymous Puerto Rican teachers quoted in the article pointed out fundamental issues with the structure of the summer school. As one teacher reported:

When the Department of Education of Puerto Rico sent us the first circular letter telling us of the project of coming to the United States in this summer, I believed that each of us would live in a house of [an] American family where we were obliged to speak English almost all the day; but it has not been so, and several teachers are living in a single house where there are neither one American (as it is in my own) and they left everybody alone, doing what they want without introducing us [to] some of the families that live in the city, so that we could be in relation with the people and so be obliged to talk English.59

Pitcher suggested—and several reports of Puerto Rican teachers corroborated—that the real success of the program was not a marked increase in English language competency, but rather the exposure of teachers to “new sights, new experiences and the glamor of foreign travel, so that the participation in a trip to the States was of manifold design.”60 The program’s intent to

57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
inculcate American sympathies in teachers is here framed as a significant success, just as Samuel McCune Lindsay characterized the visiting teachers “thoroughly Americanized” after the program’s close.⁶¹ Puerto Rican teachers seemed sufficiently dazzled by the sights of Cambridge and their excursions to museums and public schools throughout Boston, and almost unanimously refer to America in their compositions as a “great country.”⁶², ⁶³ Many teachers mentioned the impact of the sights of Boston and Cambridge in their compositions, as the following anonymous author demonstrates:

I have spent in Cambridge the best days of my life. I have seen in this city and in Boston such things, that perhaps I will not see again. I have admired everything, particularly the large and beautiful buildings, the great theatres and parks, the great stir of the people and the ways of earning everybody his life. I have gained, indeed, very much with the trip to this country…I have found in Cambridge and in Boston many people pleasant and very good, though there is bad people also. About Harvard University I must tell, that it is, in my opinion, one of the best universities in the world, or perhaps, the best…In this university a man can become a true man, both in the moral sense and in the intellectual.⁶⁴

The language in the final sentence of the passage echoes dominant pedagogical theories shared by prominent educators at the time and additionally present in George I. Aldrich’s lecture on the American pedagogical system to the Puerto Rican summer school class. In his notes for the lecture, Aldrich jotted down that the two most “prominent elements in the American ideal of education” were:

1. The educated man gets from life a large measure of rational satisfaction.
2. He renders a large measure of service to the community in which he serves.⁶⁵

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⁶¹ Samuel McCune Lindsay, Samuel McCune Lindsay to Charles W. Eliot, August 1904. Letter. From Harvard University Archives.
⁶² Pitcher, Boston Evening Transcript.
⁶³ Navarro, 81.
⁶⁴ Pitcher, Boston Evening Transcript. (Emphasis my own.)
⁶⁵ Harvard Materials, Aldrich, “Four Illustrated Lectures on the American Public School System.”
Perhaps, then, the summer school did somewhat successfully inculcate U.S. pedagogical methods in Puerto Rican pupils, as the teacher’s composition shared by Fitcher echoes the sentiments which Aldrich espoused in his August 1904 lecture. Although this anonymous teacher does offer some vague criticism in the form of a few “bad people” in Cambridge and Boston, the content of his composition raises the question of how much teachers felt that they could truly express their opinions of the Harvard Summer School or the United States, or whether they felt expected to embody the image of a grateful colonial pupil. Although an important window onto the voices of Puerto Rican teachers, this article still fails to provide a complete picture of the visiting group, and is instead limited in scope to Pitcher’s intermediate class of 25 male teachers.

In the opinion of Commissioner Lindsay, the most notable event of the summer school came a week after the program’s close, during which participating teachers met with Dr. Roland Falkner, Lindsay’s successor as Puerto Rico’s Commissioner of Education, and President Theodore Roosevelt. Aware of the importance of the summer school in ensuring the future implementation of U.S. pedagogy and patriotic sympathies on the island, Roosevelt gravely informed the crowd of Puerto Rican teachers that, “as you here in this room and your colleagues do your work well or ill depends as to how the next generation of Porto Ricans shall do their work in the world.” Lindsay, his own educational policies bolstered by the president’s endorsement, emphasized the effect of Roosevelt’s words in his report to the U.S. Commissioner of Education:

The educational value of that one incident in the history of the expedition to a people learning their first lessons in democracy was so great and the immediate impression, which will not pass away, but will be transmitted to thousands of children in this newest section of the United States,

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66 Navarro, 82.
was so profound that, in my judgement, it alone was worth all of the effort and expense involved in the undertaking of this trip.67

With this sentiment in mind, Commissioner Lindsay released 540 Puerto Rican teachers, bedecked in scarves and pins from Harvard and Cornell and armed with their personal experiences of U.S. education, onto the island. Now presumed by U.S. officials to be newly energized agents of the Americanization mission, these Puerto Rican public school teachers brought their summer school experiences into the classroom, expected to ensure the longevity of this colonial pedagogical mission for generations of Puerto Rican children to come.

67 Ibid.
Chapter Two

Educating the Mainland Public: Imperial Boosterism and the Puerto Rican Image in Children’s Adventure Literature

As Martin Green states in his influential text *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, “adventure” acted as the “energizing myth of empire” in imperialistic literature. Imperialist adventure narratives instilled in their reader the energy and desire to “go out into the world and explore, conquer, and rule.” Following in the tradition of the imperialist British literature which Green examines, American children’s adventure stories published during and after the Spanish-American War presented the newly-acquired U.S. territories as sites of intrigue, adventure, and daring exploits beyond mainland confines. As this chapter will explore, these novels coached an audience consisting primarily of young, white, mainland men on their participatory role in the imperial imagination while simultaneously instilling expectations for Puerto Rican behavior and identity.

The masculine characters present in these examples of young adult literature act as surrogates for the “aggressively insurgent manhood” of the era which, as embodied by Rough Rider-in-Chief Theodore Roosevelt, matched a period of aggressive expansion in the scope of U.S. empire. Physical self-discipline, violent pursuits, and “fantasy and emotionalism” defined Rooseveltian masculinity, character traits codified by images of the Rough Rider and the “cowboy soldier.” These adventure novels lent young male readers the opportunity to

68 Green, xi.
69 Green, 3.
participate in imperial fantasies, “escape the confining bonds of civilization,” and participate in
the “imagined fraternity” of energetic manhood.\textsuperscript{71,72} This “unapologetically imperialist” flavor of
American masculinity is given literary form in the 1900 adventure novel \textit{Young Hunters in Porto Rico}, the nucleus of which is a ragtag group of young, Rooseveltian men.\textsuperscript{73}

Penned under the pseudonym Captain Ralph Bonehill, the novel opens with an encounter
between the members of the Gun and Sled Gang—a group of adventure-seeking, big-game-
hunting young men in possession of a yacht and a seemingly endless supply of capital—and an
English treasure hunter shipwrecked after a recent hurricane off of the Florida coast. The
Englishman tells the boys of his competition with a rival over a cache of treasure allegedly
located in Puerto Rico and invites the gang to accompany him on an expedition to the island to
find untold riches. In \textit{Young Hunters}, this passing of the torch from a weakened Englishman to a
group of young, active American men echoes the burgeoning U.S. empire staging longstanding
traditions of British imperialism. Additionally, this transfer from one imperial power to the next
is evidenced by the book’s own genre, as the form of the children’s adventure novel draws
inspiration from the tradition of English novelists who used adventure as a means to laud and
normalize empire. According to historian Brian Rouleau, the U.S. acquisition of territories after
the Spanish-American War indicated to the Stratemeyer Syndicate—the vast publishing empire
responsible for the Gun and Sled Gang series, among thousands of other children’s books—that
American children were primed for novels similar to those which had instilled “imperialistic
pride” in young British audiences.\textsuperscript{74} As stated by Peter Hugill, these early novels first taught an

\textsuperscript{71} Watts, 8.
\textsuperscript{72} Watts, 11.
\textsuperscript{73} Watts, 240.
audience of teenage boys that the young American empire “was a junior partner in the Anglo-Saxon compact” under the imperial tutelage of the British, and that by World War I these imperial adventures conveyed the narrative that the United States was now an “equal on the world stage” with the potential to eclipse a waning British Empire.75

As publisher of such successful and beloved children’s book series as *Nancy Drew* and the *Hardy Boys*, the Stratemeyer Syndicate’s mass-market children’s literature acts as a window onto the expansion of consumer culture at the dawn of the 20th century. During a period when industrialization saw the expansion of a middle class and the potential for expendable income, prolific author and publisher Edward Stratemeyer was one of the first magnates in the United States to realize the consumer power of young people. Stratemeyer first established his writing career through the publication of adventure stories in young men’s literary magazines before writing anywhere between 11-18 books under Horatio Alger’s name, foreshadowing the later system Stratemeyer used as a publishing magnate and the rugged Yankee determination of the Alger-esque characters in his novels.76 Stratemeyer’s career finally broke in 1898, when his editor suggested that one of his generic war novels be rewritten about Admiral George Dewey’s recent naval victory in the Philippines. *Dewey at Manila* launched Stratemeyer’s massively successful Spanish-American War-themed ‘Old Glory’ series, setting the stage for his later adventure stories and forming the Stratemeyer Syndicate’s foundation of “early imperial romances.”77

77 Hugill, 328.
With the breakthrough of these imperial adventure novels, the Stratemeyer Syndicate solidified. Like a master artist’s workshop, Stratemeyer gave freelance writers three-page outlines for novels while maintaining ultimate creative control, dictating character types and plots with step-by-step outlines.\(^7\) To obscure the reality of his syndicate’s vast monopoly and create the “illusion” of competition., Stratemeyer used pen names, such as Captain Ralph Bonehill in the case of *Young Hunters*.\(^7\) In order to obscure the Stratemeyer Syndicate’s monopolized grip on children’s literature, these hired authors relinquished their rights to the texts and swore to never reveal that they wrote under a pen name. Although Stratemeyer found further success in the 1910s with the *Tom Swift* series, selling millions of books to American children, educators, teachers, and school librarians opposed his books and deemed them “trash” with little of substance to challenge young readers.\(^8\) Established in 1908, the Boy Scouts of America made a concerted effort to publish low cost, BSA-endorsed classics in response to Stratemeyer’s immense success with teenage boys. In opposition to cheap, mass-market series like *Tom Swift* and the *Rover Boys*, BSA reprinted books such as Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild* and Jules Verne’s *20,000 Leagues Under the Seas*, determining these classic novels to be equal parts entertaining and enriching.\(^8\) However, Stratemeyer’s outspoken critics did little to impede the syndicate’s sales or the future longevity of series such as *Nancy Drew*.

Like Horatio Alger’s stories of success and upward mobility through the determination, honest character, and hard work of impoverished young men, Stratemeyer’s series similarly sought to instill certain values in a young readership with moralizing tales. Literary scholar Ken

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\(^7\) Donelson, 23 – 24.
\(^7\) Hugill, 328.
\(^8\) Donelson, 39.
\(^8\) Donelson, 34.
Donelson formulated that the Stratemeyer Syndicate’s novels specifically imparted eight main lessons to its young readership: a Protestant work ethic; the Godliness of proper manly pursuits and a warning against vice; Yankee determination; the value of athleticism and education; the benefits of being outdoors; the lack of a gray area between the opposed forces of Good and Evil; respect for authority; and America’s status as a land of opportunity.\textsuperscript{82} However, historian Peter Hugill adds one more point to Donelson’s blueprint, and asserts that another ubiquitous moral aspect to Stratemeyer’s novels is the underlying assumption of “America’s moral right to world power.”\textsuperscript{83} Where traditional classroom settings may have failed to impart overt lessons in imperial manhood, Stratemeyer’s massively successful moralizing tales for teenage boys did plenty to pick up the slack.

According to Stratemeyer’s own accounts of the sheer volume of his fan mail, his young audience felt encouraged to actively participate in his adventure narratives beyond the scope of the books themselves. In the preface to \textit{Young Hunters}, “Bonehill” asserts that this addition to the \textit{Gun and Sled Gang} series “has been written at the earnest solicitation of my [Stratemeyer’s/Bonehill’s] readers.”\textsuperscript{84} As Rouleau confirms, the Stratemeyer Syndicate received thousands upon thousands of fan letters from its young readers, providing a glimpse into the popularity and wide reach of the publishing house.\textsuperscript{85} The preface of \textit{Young Hunters} reflects this fact, and colors Stratemeyer Syndicate novels not as mere stories or commodities, but as a mutually participatory relationship between author and reader. This display of enthusiasm on the

\textsuperscript{82} Donelson, 41.
\textsuperscript{83} Hugill, 328.
\textsuperscript{84} Edward Stratemeyer (Captain Ralph Bonehill), \textit{Young Hunters in Porto Rico: or, The Search for a Lost Treasure} (Chicago, Illinois: M.A. Donohue & Co., 1900), iii-iv.
\textsuperscript{85} Rouleau, 507.
part of Stratemeyer’s readership demonstrates the ideological power of mass market children’s literature as a means for young readers to participate in the imperial imaginary.

Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The White Man’s Burden,” published in February 1899 in the *London Times* and *The New York Sun* in response to the potential American annexation of the Philippines, describes the persons within the newly-acquired U.S. territorial possessions as “Your new-caught sullen peoples, / Half devil and half child” who must be instructed by imperial actors in the ways of civilization. This rhetoric reflects the characterization of the “wily Caribs” who populate the Puerto Rico of *Young Hunters*. Even before the novel’s narrative begins, a plate included opposite the book’s title page confronts the reader with this conception of the Puerto Rican “type.” [Figure 1.]

This illustration juxtaposes a standing, white American man, sartorially reminiscent of the figure of the Rough Rider and an embodiment of Rooseveltian masculinity, with a kneeling, dark-skinned Puerto Rican man dressed in rags. Reinforcing the national, racial, and cultural hierarchy present within the novel’s narrative, the American man’s posture conveys virility and vigor, while the Puerto Rican man at his feet assumes a pose of entreaty and desperation. *Young Hunters*’ illustration reflects Rouleau’s assessment that the Stratemeyer Syndicate’s publications instilled “a sense of personal and national superiority in the project of American aggrandizement” in a young readership, as these two visually disparate

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86 Although Kipling describes Filipinos as savages who need tutoring in the ways of civilization by a colonial power, he also warns about the immense costs of such a mission. Senator Benjamin Tillman cites Kipling’s prophetic poem in an address to President McKinley cautioning against the expenses of annexation. However, Tillman’s concerns were largely ignored; the U.S. Senate still ratified the Treaty of Paris and the term “white man’s burden” became a phrase used to morally legitimize empire.

87 Stratemeyer, 110.

88 Although included in the original 1900 print of the book, these plates were omitted from the 1931 reprint of *Young Hunters in Porto Rico*.

89 The positioning of the Puerto Rican man in the book’s illustration is highly evocative of the image of the supplicant slave. A popular example of this visual rhetoric can been seen in John Greenleaf Whittier’s 1837 abolitionist illustration, “Am I Not a Man and a Brother?”
players act as surrogates for a presiding U.S. colonial government and the purported “need” for U.S. rule in Puerto Rico.⁹⁰

Though such images, U.S. actors used the banners of benevolence and cultural patronage to justify the invasion and occupation of Puerto Rico. Creating a fictionalized crisis, mass media during the Spanish-American War circulated descriptions of Puerto Ricans as the victims of “unsanitary conditions” and “extreme poverty” under Spanish rule.⁹¹ Such rhetoric validated the transfer of power from a Spanish empire to an American one and originated with discourses surrounding Cuban independence.⁹² Convinced of the necessity for invasion through contrived humanitarian need, the American imagination envisioned the Spanish-American War as “a lofty and selfless undertaking,” and headed to war “in a spirit of exalted purposefulness, confident in their mission of liberation.”⁹³

Yet the third figure hidden in the illustration’s shadowy background undercuts the immediate impression that Stratemeyer is echoing popular calls of occupation on the basis of humanitarianism. Behind both the heroic Yankee and the Puerto Rican man in the foreground, a nearly-illegible dark-skinned figure looms, depicted in a minstrel-esque caricature with grotesque, bulging eyes. The inclusion of this zombie-like figure lends an undertone of danger to the scene, as the American is not yet aware of this character’s presence. Considering that the majority of the Puerto Ricans represented within the narrative of Young Hunters in Porto Rico are characterized as savage, greedy, and duplicitous, any potential sympathy for the condition of

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⁹⁰ Rouleau, 510.
⁹² Secretary of the Interior Ethan A. Hitchcock’s 1900 description of living conditions on the island acts as an example of the type of language used to convey a humanitarian justification for imperial expansion: “Men, women, and children, swollen, bloated, diseased, and emaciated, with pinched and haggard features, appeared weighted with the sorrows of years, the remembrance of which throws its shadow over me even now.”
Figure 1. Flyleaf illustration in *Young Hunters in Porto Rico: or, The Search for a Lost Treasure* (Chicago, Illinois: M.A. Donahue & Co., 1900). Project Gutenberg.
the supplicant Puerto Rican man is eliminated by the addition of this ominous, racialized
caracter. Instead, the scene now reads as a trap, with the intended effect of eliciting the reader’s
concern for the plight of the heroic American youth caught between these two “uncivilized”
figures. Such a manufactured scene of Otherized danger and deception reflects concerted efforts
by news media to stoke public fears of a potential race war in Puerto Rico as justification for
increasing military presence on the island. A March 11, 1899 article in the *Atlanta Constitution*,
for instance, similarly paints Puerto Ricans as ready to “revolt,” citing a sensationalized tale of a
U.S. soldier murdered with a knife in the back as evidence for the inherent “treachery of the
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These discourses of native ingratitude first emerged with the American decision to reverse the promise of independence to Cuba almost immediately after the Spanish-American War. Expecting gratitude as a liberating force, indifference awaited U.S. troops upon their arrival in Cuba. Additionally, the American imagination did not anticipate the racial makeup of Cuban insurgents, “many of whom were men of color, weary and worn, way of the North American presence.”96 Theodore Roosevelt reminisced that Cuban troops were “almost all blacks and mulattos and were clothed in rags,” and Rough Riders bemoaned the “slovenly” and “ignorant” state of these “worst specimens of humanity.”97 Linguistic and cultural barriers in addition to preexisting racial prejudice solidified the image of the black insurgent in the American imagination as a sour, ignorant character. Building upon discourses established by American accounts of Afro-Cuban troops, the image of a dark specter lurking behind the back of a Rough Rider in *Young Hunters* extends white anxieties surrounding the figure of the ungrateful black insurgent.

The antagonistic relationship between the Gun and Sled Gang and Bonehill’s Puerto Rican characters throughout the novel reinforces the racial anxieties present in the book’s initial

95 "Porto Ricans are Ready to Revolt: Conditions on the Island are Anything but Satisfactory." *The Atlanta Constitution (1881-1945)*, (Mar 11, 1899).
96 Pérez, 94-95.
97 Ibid.
flyleaf illustration. One especially notable instance occurs after the gang’s Dick and Leander fall into a sinkhole while exploring the Puerto Rican jungle. Hearing these cries for help, two Puerto Rican men demand that they are paid ten dollars in exchange for fetching a rope after realizing that Dick and Leander are American. After reluctantly agreeing to the deal and escaping from the hole, one of the Puerto Rican men—identified as “Bumbum”—threatens Dick and Leander with violence when he feels that Dick has violated his honor:

"Now pay udder five dollars to Bumbum," grinned the leader of the pair.
"Is your name Bumbum?" demanded Dick.
"Yes, señor."
"All right, Bumbum, here is the money, and let me say that I think you about the meanest Porto Rican on the island."
"Bumbum must earn his living, señor."
"I don't call this earning a living. What do you do, as a general rule? Lie about to squeeze strangers?"
At this the Carib's face darkened. "No insult me, or you be sorry!" he cried, and made a movement as if to draw some weapon from his bosom.98, 99

The gang’s encounter with Bumbum is one of the more extensive interactions with a Puerto Rican character in the novel, yet every other occasion in Young Hunters between Puerto Ricans and the gang is equally as hostile. Whether named or unnamed, Stratemeyer’s racialized Puerto Rican caricatures are depicted as longing for the wealth which they assume the young American men to possess. Characters like Bumbum provides a classic example of the colonial subject engaging in mimicry. The novel’s American protagonists function as ideological ventriloquists,

98 If the Puerto Rican characters within Young Hunters speak English at all, it is usually in the childish, broken manner of Bumbum’s dialogue. The only non-Puerto Rican character who speaks in this way is Danny McGuirk, the gang’s Irish cook, who is depicted as weak and simple-minded, and is additionally excluded from the heroic, thoroughly “American” ranks of the Gun and Sled Gang.
99 Stratemeyer, 110.
transforming Puerto Rican characters into puppets who echo and reaffirm pre-existing American assumptions of their ignorance and laziness.

In addition to employing racist assumptions about the Puerto Rican character to justify American intervention, *Young Hunters* additionally offers an economic rationale for U.S. empire. Considering that the gang is on the island to search for hidden treasure, the novel presents two conflicting narratives: that the Puerto Ricans are impoverished, but that the island also possesses untold riches, with the underlying imperialist assumption being that Puerto Rican men, content to “lie about to squeeze strangers,” are too uncivilized to avail themselves of their own resources, necessitating the stepping in of U.S. actors to find the island’s “hidden treasure.” ¹⁰⁰ The novel’s hidden cache stands as a metaphor for the resources which, to the colonial mind, can be “properly” utilized to benefit U.S. capitalism.

Throughout the novel, this alleged, inherent inability of the imagined Puerto Rican character is justified throughout the novel by racist, colonialist means. Usually nameless, Stratemeyer’s Puerto Rican caricatures are often distinguished only by racial types. Identified as Caribs, the Puerto Rican caricatures of *Young Hunters* possess a racial ambiguity which further separates them from the members of the Gun and Sled Gang. Whereas the gang are presented as unquestionably white, masculine, and nationalistic (as reinforced by lines of jingoistic dialogue such as "And what real, live American lad isn't patriotic?")¹⁰¹, Stratemeyer’s Puerto Ricans are racially nebulous and definite only in their position as the Other.¹⁰¹ Such a disdain for this racial

¹⁰⁰ Women—Puerto Rican or otherwise—are virtually nonexistent in the world of *Young Hunters*. Considering the images of Cuban and Puerto Rican “damsels” who, in political cartoons leading up to the Spanish-American War, provided a gendered justification for the U.S. military invasion of the two islands, it is interesting that Stratemeyer doesn’t additionally include this rationale in the Gun and Sled Gang’s micro-reenactment of the Spanish-American War. Instead, the novel staunchly remains a masculinist tale with an intended audience of young, white American men.

¹⁰¹ Stratemeyer, 38.
hybridity is demonstrated with a line from the chapter detailing the gang’s arrival in San Juan, which states: “Most of the colored men looked friendly enough, but here and there could be found fellows of mixed Carib blood—tall, ugly looking creatures.”

The legacy of the term “Carib” is relevant to Stratemeyer’s characterization of Puerto Ricans as inherently ignorant, duplicitous, and resistant to U.S. intervention. As first described by Christopher Columbus in his first letter to the monarchs of Spain in February 1493, Caribs were a group of indigenous peoples described as hostile to Columbus and defined as subhuman for their propensity (likely exaggerated in the European imaginary) for cannibalism. In this letter, Columbus establishes the Caribs “as villains who terrorized the innocent Arawaks and posed a significant impediment to European expansion.”

People of a monstrous description I saw none nor heard of any, except those of the island named Caris, which is the second on the course from Espanola to India; this island is inhabited by people who are regarded by their neighbors as exceedingly ferocious; they feed upon human flesh.

Columbus’s letter became the foundation for European conceptions of indigenous peoples for hundreds of years to come, establishing the dichotomy between the ferocious and the noble savage. The Carib reputation for anthropophagi became so synonymous as to be extended into a descriptive term, as Canibales, a variant of Caribes, is the origin of the word “cannibal.” In describing Puerto Ricans, Stratemeyer uses a term etymologically synonymous with savage anthropophagy.

102 Stratemeyer, 90.
103 Watson, 51.
104 Rafael Sanchez and Christopher Columbus, Letter of Christopher Columbus to Rafael Sanchez: Written on Board the Caravel While Returning from His First Voyage (United States: W.H. Lowdermilk Company, 1893), 11.
In *Young Hunters in Porto Rico*, Caribs, figures of racial anxiety, are made distinct from black Puerto Ricans, a racial type already familiar—and firmly subjugated in society—to the American mainland mind. When Dick expresses unease at being surrounded by those who are racially and culturally Other, Robert Menden, the English treasure hunter, attempts to soothe Dick’s worries while simultaneously revealing a rationale for U.S. imperialist intervention in Puerto Rico:

"These people have good cause to be ugly," put in Robert Menden. "Spain has robbed the natives for years by taxing them to death, and I understand that in many places the church has fallen into disrepute because the clergy do everything they can to get the money away from the sugar and plantation workers. It's really a sad state of affairs." ¹⁰⁶

Through Menden, a symbol of the English empire, Stratemeyer reveals that, while Puerto Ricans may “need” a civilizing force, simply any colonial actor will not do. Here, *Young Hunters* echoes the popular sentiment, expressed by U.S. mass media in addition to hawkish government officials, that the Spanish colonial regime was the root cause of poverty in Puerto Rico, and that the installation of a new U.S. imperial apparatus would be a necessary solution. In this passage, Menden is instructing his younger American counterparts on the Spanish Empire by echoing the Black Legend. First employed by Catholic Spain’s European Protestant rivals in the 16th century, British and Dutch colonial actors largely created the Black Legend in order to justify their own conquest of America. According to historian David J. Weber, the Black Legend extended into the 19th century, as Anglo Americans sought to “vindicate” the imperial expansion of their English forebears while justifying the takeover of once-Spanish dominated territory. ¹⁰⁷ No matter how repugnant the colonial actions of Britain or America may have been, the Black Legend,

¹⁰⁶ Stratemeyer, 90-91.
through a “unique complex of” Hispanophobic “pejoratives,” always characterized the Spanish Empire as worse and justified the actions of non-Spanish, non-Catholic imperial powers.108

Echoes of the Black Legend are additionally apparent in the young adult novel, *A Yankee Lad’s Pluck: How Bert Larkin Saved His Father's Ranch in the Island of Porto Rico*. Published by A.L. Burt in 1900, *A Yankee Lad’s Pluck* foreshadows the cheap series books which the company would later publish after its official expansion into the juvenile market in 1902 due to the massive success of the Stratemeyer Syndicate.109 The novel’s story begins similarly to the discovery of a shipwrecked Englishman in *Young Hunters*. Bert Larkin, a resourceful, impoverished, Horatio Alger-esque sixteen-year-old, unexpectedly finds adventure after discovering an unconscious U.S. soldier by the creek near Bert’s home. Bert, an apparent orphan after the death of his mother and the disappearance of his father, brings the soldier home, where he and his spinster aunt nurse the man back to health. The mysterious soldier reveals upon his return to consciousness that Bert’s father, now a captain stationed in Puerto Rico, sent him with an important message. Not only is Bert’s father alive, but he promises to will his son a vast fortune and plantation estate that a kindly Spanish Don recently and inexplicably granted him. The soldier invites Bert to the island to join his father and assist in the industrialization of their inherited “thousand-worker” plantation, whereupon the narrator explains: “Already the revenues of the plantation were enormous; and yet as nothing beside what Yankee enterprise and ingenuity could make them.”110 Taking over from Spanish rule, Bert and the captain now intend to

108 Ibid.
109 The Stratemeyer Syndicate likely found inspiration in *A Yankee Lad’s Pluck* for their later Boys of Pluck series. *A Yankee Lad’s Pluck* shares many incriminating similarities with these Stratemeyer novels. Not only do Stratemeyer’s titles, such as *Business Lad’s Pluck* (1906), follow the same formula, but the pennames are eerily similar; while William P. Chipman wrote *A Yankee Lad’s Pluck*, Stratemeyer published the Boys of Pluck series under the pseudonym Allan Chapman.
110 Chipman, 38.
redesign the island’s industries in the interest of U.S. capitalism, mechanizing the plantation’s labor process in a Taylorian/Fordian production model and thereby proving that neither the island’s native inhabitants nor the old Spanish empire would be capable of “maximizing” Puerto Rican resources or labor.

Bert’s journey to the island is a perilous undertaking, as unforeseen dangers and setbacks constantly delay his reunion with his long-lost father. On his journey from New York to Puerto Rico on the steamer *Alhambra*, Bert is separated from his father’s associates and marooned on a deserted island in the Caribbean after a violent storm. Here, Bert encounters two shipwrecked Cuban men, insurgents stranded while transporting arms and ammunition to Cuba.\(^{111}\) After three months of adventure in the vein of *Robinson Crusoe* or *The Swiss Family Robinson*, a team of sponge-divers finally rescues the stranded men. The sponge-divers inform them that the United States has declared war on Spain, and the unnamed insurgents, inspired by “the formal declaration of war…for the purpose of securing the liberty of Cuba,” declare “with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes” that they will head to New York immediately to “offer their services to the United States government.”\(^{112}\) This is another instance of colonial ventriloquism, as instead of doing the obvious, logical thing of joining fellow rebels only a few miles away, the Cubans instead offer their services to American strangers thousands of miles north. By characterizing these Cuban insurgents as ardent, patriotic supporters of the U.S. mission, Chipman here asserts that the U.S. rationale for the Spanish-American War was solely benevolent intervention on behalf of Cuban and Filipino resistance to Spanish rule.

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\(^{111}\) It’s also during these months on the island that Bert improves his Spanish, a skill which proves useful at several points later on in the novel. The boys of the Gun and Sled Gang, conversely, remain ignorant of Spanish, and Puerto Rican characters in the story instead speak broken English. However, Bert’s acquisition of the Spanish language becomes necessary for his own economic benefit in the narrative.

\(^{112}\) Chipman, 119.
Historicizing a fictional narrative, Bert arrives in Puerto Rico a day before the U.S. bombardment of San Juan. Bert and his father’s associates watch the naval attack on San Juan’s Spanish fortifications from afar as entertainment, encouraging the reader to also view the military attack as mere adventure. The awe-filled descriptions of American might demonstrate an aggrandizing view of the U.S. military, as Bert admires the “window-shaking..thirteen-inch guns of the Indiana.” Bert and his companions, willing voyeurs of the violent pursuits of war, embody a hawkish Rooseveltian manhood. Despite being secretly aware of the consequences of these militaristic actions, they remain somewhat blind to the realities of war, for “terrible as the sight was they enjoyed it. It was exciting and thrilling, though great devastation followed in the wake of every one of those great shells.” Such a scenario encourages Chipman’s young male readers to revel in the apparent glories of war without facing the consequences of this jingoistic “language of race, manliness, and civilization.” Bert’s personal rags-to-riches story allegorizes the larger context of the Spanish-American War, as while the U.S. military attacks the island’s Spanish fortifications, Bert’s narrative concludes with his outwitting of a deceptive Spaniard who lays false claim upon the plantation estate deeded to Bert’s father.

Bert’s fascination with the spectacle of war reflects the novel’s deeper interest in the picturesque. Even as Bert rides to his father’s plantation—where he hears that there’s been “trouble” due to fraught American-Spanish relations—he cannot help but remark upon “the immense ranches, the fine orchards of tropical fruits, the quaint houses, the great forests, [and] the picturesque people” of Puerto Rico. Chipman simultaneously situates Puerto Rico in

113 Chipman, 132.
114 Ibid.
115 Rouleau, 512.
116 Chipman, 126.
117 Chipman, 134.
opposition to the mainland, both as a site of lawlessness and adventure and a space of Otherized fascination and exoticism. While women are completely absent from the Gun and Sled Gang’s Puerto Rico, Chipman’s imagining includes Puerto Rican women within his interest in the picturesque and cultural/social types. For instance, the book describes Inez, the wife of Mr. Sparrow (a colleague of Bert’s father) as “a woman of singular beauty” possessing a “dark face [which] told that she was of either native or Spanish blood—perhaps a mixture.”118 Other works of the young man’s adventure genre, such as Gilson Willets’ 1898 novel *The Triumph of Yankee Doodle*, similarly employ a kind of literary costumbrismo, a 19th-century interest in predominately Hispanic customs, daily life, and social types.

Willets’ semi-historical account of the Spanish-American War, based upon his own experiences as a U.S. soldier, focuses primarily on the conquest of Cuba and the Philippines with only one chapter specifically devoted to his brief time in Puerto Rico. However, Willets uses this chapter to share a personal characterization of daily life in San Juan. Puerto Rican women are of particular interest to Willets, and he declares that the families of San Juan cloister the “pretty girls.” Inaccessible to American men, he compares them to Muslim women:

> Whatever freedom the future may bring to Porto Rico and to the women of San Juan, at present they are hedged about with the strongest chains of custom. They do not often venture out of doors unattended, and, like the Moorish women, they visit oftener the cemetery than the picnic ground.119

This comparison references 19th-century Orientalist discourses, previously used to justify French and British colonialism in North Africa and the Middle East, into conversation with Willets’

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118 Chipman, 137.

rationalization of U.S. intervention under the guise of improving the status of women—and, more saliently, granting American men access to Puerto Rican women. If, according to Edward Said, Orientalism is a “sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient,” and the Orient a place constructed by the European imaginary yet made real by “considerable material investment,” then Willets is transferring an Orientalist style of discourse to the context of the Spanish-American War. As the construction of the Orient served to subjugate a feminized Other for European colonial and economic means, Willets employs an eroticized fantasy to legitimize the U.S. imperial mission in Puerto Rico.

Willets further articulated his fascination with ethnic type, Puerto Rican women, and the picturesque in 1899’s *Photographic Views of Our New Possessions*, a book consisting of over 300 photographs of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines, many of which are taken by—and accompanied by captions written by—Willets himself. While the majority of the images center on scenic vistas and infrastructure (bridges are of particular interest), a few of the photographs of Puerto Rico focus on certain “types” in keeping with the tradition of *costumbrismo*. For instance, a group of plantation workers frontally face the viewer in a photograph entitled “Typical Native Farmers,” and the caption conveys an anthropological interest in its subjects, declaring that: “The farming class is about on par with the poor darkies down South, and varies much even in race and color, ranging from Spanish white trash to full-blooded Ethiopians.” Willets’ comparison of Puerto Rican farmers to African American sharecroppers links Puerto Ricans, unfamiliar to a mainland audience, to a well-known racial group and established system of subjugation.

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121 Said, 138.
Additionally, this comparison seeks to garner paternalistic sympathy for the “poor darkies” on the U.S. mainland and abroad, the little black and brown brothers newly taken in under the tutelage of the United States and the imperialist logic of the “white man’s burden.”

Broadening his sentiments in *The Triumph of Yankee Doodle*, Willets pays special attention to the figure of the Puerto Rican woman. Whereas other “types”—as in the case of the “typical” farmer—are shown in groups, Willets singles out the “Porto Rican Washerwoman” for eroticization. Photographing her as a lone, romanticized subject in soft focus, Willets invites the male gaze to fantasize on the imperial ownership of female colonial bodies. Couched between images of American-engineered infrastructure, the collectively eroticized, feminized Puerto Rican body stands “as a passive counterpart to the massive thrust of male technology.” The caption continues Willets’ interest in documenting racial types, as he describes “muscular half-breeds or colored women” as those employed in “open-air” laundries. This image of a squatting washerwoman, fully covered by a “gown which comes from the neck nearly to the ankles,” looking back at the viewer with an ambivalent expression is reminiscent of Orientalist *cartes-de-visite*, small, eroticized images of colonized women circulated in the 19th and 20th centuries by European men. Willets’ voyeuristic gaze is a continuation of what Anne McClintock categorizes as “a long tradition of male travel as an erotics of ravishment,” a legacy which can be traced back in the New World to Christopher Columbus’s conceptualization of the world as one “cosmic breast.”

*Photographic Views of Our New Possessions* enabled the American viewer to own a reproduction of the people and settings of these new territorial locales, encouraging the reader to

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124 McClintock, 22.
participate in an imperial imaginary on a personal scale. Children’s adventure novels afforded a young audience the same opportunity, and used the context of the Spanish-American War and a Puerto Rican setting to present the territory as a picturesque playground with promises of adventure and intrigue for a young, white, heterosexual male audience. This mass market literature inculcated patriotic values and instructed its readers in the ways of Rooseveltian manhood, grooming a younger generation to participate in U.S. empire.
Conclusion

“Las Casitas: An Urban Cultural Alternative” and Puerto Rican Culture on Display

Almost one hundred years after the Government Board of the Pan-American Exhibition and the Smithsonian Special Committee on Outlying Possessions, fueled by an anthropological fascination with indigenous architecture, envisioned a mock Puerto Rican village exhibit at the 1901 and 1904 World’s Fairs, the Smithsonian Museum capped off the century with the exhibit “Las Casitas: An Urban Cultural Alternative.” On display from February 1991 to March 1994, the exhibit consisted of the display of actual transplanted casitas, community centers for New York Puerto Rican neighborhoods and emblems of “vernacular architecture,” as if in an attempt to rectify the institution’s past in regard to the representation of Puerto Ricans and other U.S. territorial possessions. Although differentiated by “the presence of the casita peoples themselves” in the creation and opening of the exhibit, “Las Casitas” failed to fully shake the historical tensions between museum institutions and colonized peoples.125

Influenced by indigenous Puerto Rican architecture and the movable domiciles of working-class Puerto Ricans forced out by U.S. economic intervention on the island, casitas emerged as community and cultural centers for growing Puerto Rican neighborhoods in New York City, primarily those located in the South Bronx.126 Through the “temporary custodianship of neglected city property,” Puerto Ricans transformed symbols of urban decay and institutional neglect into thriving cultural hubs, sites of community gardens, celebrations, and music, which

126 Flores, 72.
were—and still are—under persistent threat of demolition by the city or gentrification by acquisitive developers. Casitas serve as examples of vernacular architecture, structures made without professional architectural experience and created through use of local, community materials and knowledge.

It is with this context of bureaucratic threats to the casitas of the South Bronx that the Smithsonian introduced their latest exhibit in a space purposefully intended for “experimental” approaches to museum curation. “Las Casitas: An Urban Cultural Alternative” displayed actual casitas from the South Bronx, a decision which Juan Flores dubbed “uncanny,” as the display fundamentally consisted of the transplant of a structure already heavily imbued by the contexts of migration and displacement to the alien territory of the exhibition space. While the central involvement of Nuyoricans—such as Betti-Sue Hertz, a member of the Bronx Council on the Arts—and a genuine casita party at the exhibit’s opening point towards the verisimilitude of “Las Casitas,” Juan Flores stated that the Smithsonian exhibit fundamentally presented,

the casita as sheer display, disengaged from any community-based needs and desires…. If not exactly a commodity, it has become an artifact, an object, and in any case no longer a process and ongoing expressive and representational practice.

In this way, “Las Casitas,” an exhibit with undoubtedly progressive intentions, ultimately failed to disentangle itself from the legacy of Puerto Rican imaging in American history. Architectural embodiments of self-expression, self-definition, and a shared cultural safe space away from “inhospitable and atomizing conditions” became co-opted by a dominant culture the

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128 Flores, 64.
129 Flores, 75 – 76.
moment that the Smithsonian displayed these casitas in an exhibition space.\textsuperscript{130} Flores makes this process clear, stating that “when the historical trajectory of casita life is brought to bear,…the other face of the validation and celebration of community culture by the dominant society is its repudiation and eventual suppression.”\textsuperscript{131}

The aftermath of “Las Casitas” demonstrates the longevity of the imperial imaginary and the legacies of Americanization in the collective American consciousness, the inheritance of which is inscribed in the foundations of preeminent educational institutions such as the Smithsonian Museum and Harvard University. The effects of imperial education, both on the island and the U.S. mainland, have resonances even in our own contemporary moment, as illustrated by Stratemeyer’s “fiction factory,” a mass-market mechanism which imparted moral lessons of white, American exceptionalism to generations of mainland children, even if under the seemingly benevolent guise of Nancy Drew or the Hardy Boys. Meanwhile, in the current moment, Puerto Rico, virtually ignored by U.S. policymakers or officials, remains a territory in political limbo under the jurisdiction of a nation which refuses to either acknowledge or rectify its imperial past, present, or future.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.
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