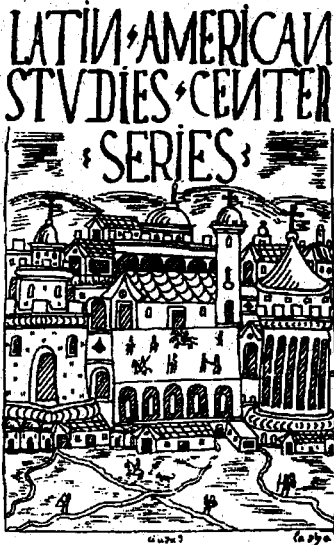


Peter Hulme
Rockefeller Humanities Resident Fellow
1993-1994

Rescuing Cuba:
Adventure and Masculinity in the 1890s



No. 11

University of Maryland at College Park

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Latin American Studies Center Series
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Latin American Studies Center
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Rescuing Cuba: Adventure and Masculinity in the 1890s

Introductory Note

During the year I spent at College Park my research on notions of indigenous ethnicity in the Caribbean kept leading me back to the turn of the century. It was then —1897 and 1901— that Frederick Albion Ober wrote his two remarkable novels that bring together the political conjuncture and the indigenous past; and it was then —1900 and 1901 are dates of key events— that the U.S. anthropological establishment began to take an interest in the native Caribbean.¹ Although it hadn't featured in my original plans, it seemed to me that I needed to gauge the significance of the Spanish-American-Cuban war for my research; and this lecture is the outcome of some initial probings into that moment. The lecture was undertaken principally as a way of trying to understand popular images of Cuba at the time of the war in order to give myself a background against which to read Frederick Ober's novels. Since it was conceived as a lecture, I have left it in that format, using the footnotes to provide support for the arguments and suggestions of directions in which these arguments might lead.

*

From the balcony of my apartment at the top end of Maple Avenue in Takoma Park, I can see the trees that line Sligo Creek. Half a mile to the east, about seventeen years after our eminent founder, Benjamin Franklin Gilbert, had established Takoma in 1883 as a healthy retreat from the smoke of the District, a Boston entrepreneur called Asa Wiswell built the

¹ Ober's novels are *Under the Cuban Flag* (1897) and *The Last of the Arawaks* (1901). The anthropological visits referred to were by J.W. Powell and W.H. Holmes, who in 1900 "repaired to Cuba and Jamaica for the purpose of tracing lines of cultural migration between the great continents of the Western Hemisphere" (Smithsonian Institution 1901: 59), and by Stewart Culin, who went looking for "wild Indians" in Cuba in 1901 (Culin 1902).

Glen Sligo Hotel in the area called Wildwood, with extensive grounds, pavilions, roof gardens, and a roller coaster (fig. 1).

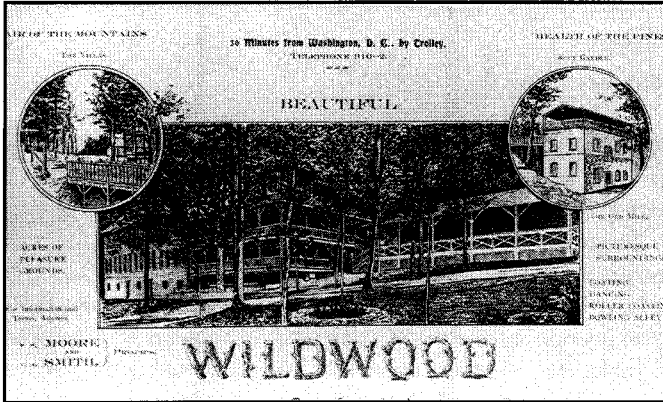


Fig. 1: Wildwood Hotel, c. 1898
 Courtesy of the Takoma Historical Society

In Sligo Creek, for the pleasure of his residents, he had built two artificial islands which they could cross to by rowboat or bridge. He called the islands Porto Rico and Cuba. Those people who couldn't afford to holiday in the resorts of the U.S.A.'s newest acquisitions could imagine themselves transported to the Caribbean on the edge of the new town of Takoma.² I'll come back to those artificial islands at the end of the lecture.

Over the course of the nineteenth century there were many versions of the 'proper' relationship that should pertain between the U.S.A. and the islands of the Caribbean, especially Cuba, which has, since Jefferson, held a privileged place in the imperialist imagination of its northern neighbor. Perhaps the most famous early articulation of a perceived relationship was the statement of John Quincy Adams in 1823:

² See Marsh and O'Boyle 1984; and *The Takoma Journal*, vol. XXIII, no. 20 (1950), Section B. I would like to acknowledge the help of Karen Fishman and the Takoma Historical Society.

... These islands [Cuba and Puerto Rico], from their local positions, are natural appendages to the North American continent; and one of them, Cuba, almost in sight in our shores, from a multitude of considerations has become an object of transcendent importance to the political and commercial interests of our Union... it is scarcely possible to resist the conviction that the annexation of Cuba to our federal republic will be indispensable to the continuance and integrity of the Union itself... There are laws of political as well as of physical gravitation; and if an apple, severed by the tempest from its native tree, can not choose but to fall to the ground, Cuba, forcibly disjoined from its unnatural connection with Spain and incapable of self-support, can gravitate only toward the North American Union, which, by the same law of nature, can not cast her off from its bosom (Adams 1917, VII: 372-3).

This image became one of the commonest ways of describing the U.S.A.'s reluctant imperialism: the fruit just kept falling into its lap (fig. 2). Rather more succinctly, though with an equally contentious sense of geography,

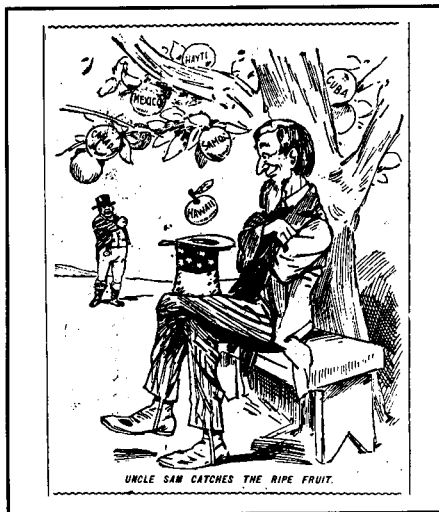


Fig. 2: "Uncle Sam catches the ripe fruit"
San Francisco Call, January 29, 1893

Daniel Webster reckoned that the importance of Cuba could be gauged from the fact that it was “placed in the mouth of the Mississippi” (quoted in Pérez 1990: 38).

In 1895 Henry Cabot Lodge, discussing his country's foreign policy, admitted that it was not “the policy of the United States to enter, as England has done, upon the general acquisition of distant possessions in all parts of the world.” But it was to be remembered that “there are outworks... which must neither be neglected nor abandoned.” Apparently there were quite a few of these outworks:

From the Rio Grande to the Arctic Ocean there should be but one flag and one country.... For the sake of our commercial supremacy in the Pacific we should control the Hawaiian Islands and maintain our influence in Samoa. England has studded the West Indies with strong places which are a standing menace to our Atlantic seaboard. We should have among those islands at least one strong naval station, and when the Nicaragua Canal is built the island of Cuba, still sparsely settled and of almost unbounded fertility, will become to us a necessity (“Our Blundering Foreign Policy,” *Forum*, March 1895; quoted in Merk 1963: 27).

Appendages, outworks, apples falling from trees. What we have here is the second phase of the policy of ‘manifest destiny.’ What could be presented as a patent *geographical* destiny—the move west and south to the shores of California and Florida—had been completed, as had the appropriation of northern Mexico. With Canada ruled out, at least temporarily, the idea of a manifest territorial destiny had to search the language for spatial metaphors that could naturalize the economic and strategic motives for the acquisition—or at least control—of parts of Central America and the Caribbean.³

The language proved remarkably resistant. “Appendages” and “outworks” are not, by definition, part of the thing itself. Adams's falling

³ The doctrine of Manifest Destiny had its Cuban connections from the start. John L. O'Sullivan, coiner of the phrase, was brother-in-law to the Cuban planter, Cristóbal Madán, who had set up as leader of the annexationist lobby in New York in 1845. O'Sullivan also lobbied for the purchase of Cuba (Thomas 1971: 210-11).

apple has to make the Spanish tree the *unnatural* connection, which is an odd way of regarding a source of sustenance and protection. After all, the apple leaves the tree only to rot on the ground, or to be eaten, not exactly the connotations Adams required. More successful as a way of naturalizing U.S. claims on Cuba, at least within popular writing, during the decade leading up to the war of 1898 was the language of chivalry. The U.S. self-image in popular fiction and journalism was that of a knight-errant coming to the rescue of a helpless maiden who was being brutalized by a fearful tyrant. Spatial language had its problems when attempting to place Cuba ‘within’ the natural bounds of the United States: the language of chivalry made the rescue of Cuba into a *moral* imperative. In the 1896 version of “The Cuban Melodrama” (fig. 3) “THE NOBLE HERO” is saying to the “HEAVY VILLAIN”: “Stand back, there, gol darn ye! —If you force this thing to a fifth act, remember that’s where I git in *my* work!”— an explicit threat of intervention couched in the language of melodrama.



Fig. 3: “The Cuban Melodrama”
C. Jay Taylor, *Puck*, 1896

In this lecture I want to look at two examples of the self-image of this knight-errant, both from 1897, the year before U.S. intervention in Cuba's war for independence. I'll introduce both heroes briefly before going into their stories in more detail. The first is Karl Decker (fig. 4), son of a Confederate colonel and a well-known journalist with the group of newspapers owned by William Randolph Hearst, who is sometimes regarded as almost single-handedly starting the war with Spain. Karl Decker was involved in what was presented as one of the greatest coups in the history of journalism when he rescued a beautiful Cuban maiden who had been held prisoner in Havana on the orders of the much reviled

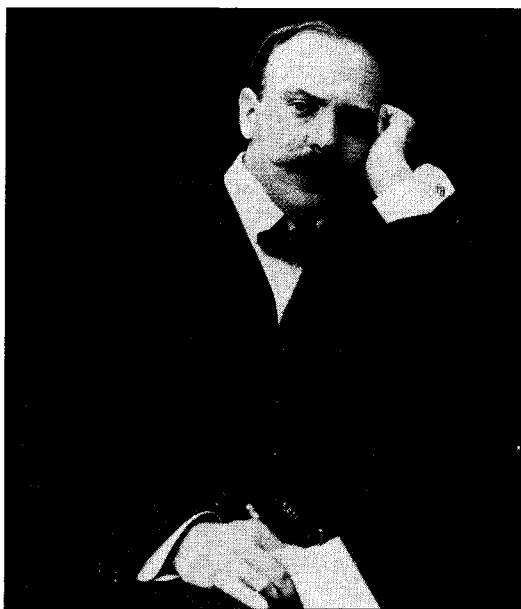


Fig. 4: Karl Decker, from Cosío 1898, 63

General Weyler, the man seen in most of the U.S. press as responsible for all the atrocities they reported —and even for the ones they invented.

The second hero is Robert Clay (fig. 5), protagonist of Richard Harding Davis's novel, *Soldiers of Fortune*, a best-seller published in book form early in 1897. Davis was also a journalist who sometimes worked for Hearst —his first assignment was a report on the Yale-Princeton football game for which he was paid \$500, usually said to be



Fig. 5: "He strode on up the stairs," from Richard Harding Davis, *Soldiers of Fortune* [1897] (1916: opp. 268)

the highest sum ever paid a journalist to that date for coverage of a single event of any kind. However, as a foreign correspondent, novelist, literary editor, and man-about-town Davis was also one of the most famous figures of his day, though quickly forgotten after his death. Davis first travelled in Cuba in 1886 and worked as a correspondent there during the war, both before and after the U.S. invasion, when he was closely associated with Theodore Roosevelt, to the extent of being seen as Roosevelt's personal publicist. *Soldiers of Fortune* is set in the fictional Latin American country of Olancho but its topography is clearly based on Cuba.⁴ Robert Clay is a mining engineer and mercenary.

At the beginning of 1897, just as *Soldiers of Fortune* was being published in book form, Richard Harding Davis was in Cuba again.

⁴ *Soldiers of Fortune* was written during 1895, published as a magazine serial in 1896, and as a book in early 1897.

Hearst had offered him \$3000 plus expenses for a month's reporting on the Cuban rebels and he'd travelled there with the artist Frederic Remington (Lubow 1992: 137). Hearst's *New York Journal*, eager for news, published a drawing of Davis on horseback loaded down with rifles and cartridges and said that he was "with the insurgents." In fact, unable to find a way of travelling to the east of the island, he was, like most of the other U.S. journalists, in the bar of the Hotel Inglaterra in Havana, drinking cocktails and picking up stories of atrocities fed him by insurgent sympathizers (Swanberg 1961: 111).

Davis and Remington didn't have much joy in Cuba. Indeed Remington quickly returned to New York, despite Hearst supposedly sending him the telegram which said: You supply the pictures and I'll supply the war. Davis probably wanted to salvage something dramatic and to live up to his burgeoning reputation as a reporter, and so on the way home he put together a long and eloquent plea for U.S. intervention in the war in Cuba, which was supported by a story he had heard on the boat taking him back to Florida, the *Olivette*. At dinner he'd sat next to Clemencia Arango, "a well bred, well educated young person who spoke three languages and dressed as you see girls dress on Fifth avenue after church on Sunday." Speaking to Señorita Arango, Davis learned that she was being expelled from Cuba for carrying dispatches between her brother's rebel forces in the field and the junta in Havana. Two friends were being expelled with her for similar offences. The Spanish authorities, fearing that they would take letters to New York with them, had had them searched at home on the morning of their departure, searched again at the Custom House and—in Davis's words—"fifteen minutes later, when the young ladies stood at last on the deck of an American vessel, with the American flag hanging from the stern, the Spanish officers followed them there and demanded that a cabin should be furnished them to which the girls might be taken, and they were again undressed and searched for the third time." Remington, safely back in New York, illustrated this story with an imaginative sketch (fig. 6) which followed the story headline: "Does Our Flag Shield Women?... Refined Young Women Stripped and Searched by Brutal Spaniards While Under Our Flag on the *Olivette*" (*New York Journal*, February 12, 1897).

The following two days the *Journal* reported the massive indignation of various politicians and reflected on the position under international law of the Spaniards boarding a U.S. ship. Meanwhile the *New York World*, the *Journal's* chief rival, had interviewed Señorita Arango on the quay at



Fig. 6: “Spaniards search women on American steamers,”
drawn by Frederic Remington, *New York Journal*, February 12, 1897

Tampa and discovered that she *had* been searched, but by a woman, and with no men present in the room. The *World* accused Davis of falsifying the story, under the snappy headline: “The Unclothed Women Searched by Men was an Invention of a New York Newspaper.” Another newspaper called the story the “most monstrous falsehood that has yet appeared even in the new journalism.”⁵ Davis took the unprecedented step of writing to the *World* to disassociate himself from Remington’s “imaginary picture” and to claim that he’d never said the women were searched by men.⁶

⁵ *New York World*, 17 February 1897; *Commercial Advertiser*, 15 February 1897.

⁶ For Davis’s letter of explanation to the *New York World*, see Rea 1897: 231-2. The original article is more ambiguous than Davis suggests. When he reprinted the article in his collection *Cuba in Wartime*, Davis made it clear that the women had been searched by a female detective: “After ordering them to leave the island on a certain day they sent

The story of the *Olivette* was a fiasco but it didn't stop Hearst looking for other stories that would encapsulate what he thought the relationship ought to be between Spain, Cuba, and the United States. His opportunity came when he heard about a young Cuban woman who had supposedly been imprisoned in the Recojidas gaol in Havana after resisting the attentions of a Spanish officer whom she had petitioned for the release of her father, a political prisoner on the Isle of Pines. Evangelina Cisneros (fig. 7), as she was known to the newspapers, became in the U.S.A. the very symbol of Cuba: "The unspeakable fate to which Weyler has doomed an innocent girl whose only crime is that she defended her honor against a beast in uniform has sent a shudder of horror through the American people" said the *Journal* (August 19). That "beast in uniform" "held her father's life and liberty in his hands, and demanded of her the sacrifice of all a true woman holds dear as the price of her father's safety" (August 30).⁷

Evangelina was described, in various *Journal* articles over the next month or so, as "young, beautiful, cultured, guilty of no crime save that of having in her veins the best blood in Cuba" (August 17); "black-eyed, sweet-faced... wondrous Cuban beauty" (August 17, September 9); "a girl of sensational beauty and great refinement....," possessing "excellence of character, high social position, refinement and exceeding beauty... Everything about her shows the lady of fine breeding" (August 18). In short, "There was in her manner an indescribable aristocracy" (October 14).

detectives to the houses of each on the morning of that day and had them undressed and searched by a female detective to discover if they were carrying letters to the Junta at Key West or Tampa. They were searched thoroughly, even to the length of taking off their shoes and stockings. Later, when the young ladies stood at last on the deck of an American vessel, with the American flag hanging from the stern, the Spanish officers followed them there, and demanded that a cabin should be furnished them to which the girls might be taken, and they were again undressed and searched by this woman for the second time.

For the benefit of people with unruly imaginations, of whom there seem to be a larger proportion in this country than I had supposed, I will state again that the search of these women was conducted by women and not by men, as I was reported to have said, and as I did not say in my original report of the incident" (Davis 1897: 121-22).

On the famous stories of 1897, especially the *Olivette* and Evangelina Cisneros, see Abbot 1974, Brown 1967, Creelman 1901, Lubow 1992, Millis 1931, Milton 1989, Olivares 0000: 16-23, Rea 1897, Swanberg 1961, and Wisan 1965.

⁷ Her real name was Evangelina Betancourt Cosío y Cisneros but the *Journal* wanted to emphasize her relationship—niece, according to the *Journal*, distant, according to the *World* (September 2)—with Salvador Betancourt Cisneros, Marqués de Santa Lucía, and at that time President of the rebel government. The Betancourt part of the name signals descent from the Norman knight who was responsible for the first European settlement of the Canary Islands (and the massacre of the native Canarians, although that isn't usually part of the story of descent).



Fig. 7: Evangelina Cosío y Cisneros,
from Cosío 1898: frontispiece

The conditions in the Recojidas prison, also frequently called indescribable, were described at length, as were the even worse conditions in the prison at Ceuta where the *Journal* speculated Evangelina might be sent. The paper proceeded to organise petitions for her release, got prominent U.S. women such as Julia Ward Howe and President McKinley's mother to write to the Queen of Spain and to the Pope, all to no avail. The Spanish authorities in Cuba were mystified by all the attention this young woman was getting and, as the U.S. Consul said, were hardly likely to release her until the fuss died down.⁸ Suddenly, on October 10, the *Journal* announced that she was free and quoted one Charles Duval as saying: "I have broken the bars of Recojidas and have set free the beautiful captive of the monster Weyler, restoring her to her friends and relatives and doing by strength, skill and strategy what could not be accomplished by petition and urgent request of the Pope." Two

⁸ Fitzhugh Lee, the U.S. consul in Havana, thought the case exaggerated and said so when he arrived in New York on 8 September: "She would have been pardoned long ago if it had not been for the hubbub created by American newspapers. I do not believe the Spanish government ever for one moment intended to send her to the penal colony in Africa or elsewhere. I believe her name is on the roll for pardon. That she was implicated in the insurrection on the Isle of Pines, there can be no question. She herself, in a note to me, acknowledged that fact, and stated she was betrayed by an accomplice named Arias" (quoted in Swanberg 1961: 124).

days later it was revealed that Charles Duval was none other than Karl Decker, the *Journal's* own reporter, who had been sent to Havana on this special mission which he'd accomplished with spectacular success, with some help from two unnamed Havana residents, sawing through Evangelina's prison bars, spiring her across rooftops into a safe house, and finally smuggling her on board ship dressed as a sailor. Her rescue was, said the *Journal*, with its habitual understatement, "without a parallel since Mary Queen of Scots" (October 11) —not, on reflection, the happiest of parallels to draw.

Evangelina arrived in New York on October 13 (fig. 8). The *Journal* reported how, on coming into the bay, she caught sight of Bartholdi's



Fig. 8: "Evangelina Cisneros reaches the land of the free,"
New York Journal, October 14, 1897

statue: "Ah, I know that," she said, "It is liberty, and here I am. God preserve my rescuers" (October 14). She expressed an immediate desire to become a U.S. citizen and the requisite papers were produced within twenty-four hours — which still stands as a record for U.S. Immigration. Decker arrived the following day (fig. 9). Julian Hawthorne, son of Nathaniel and himself a novelist as well as Hearst reporter, described him: "This was Karl Decker, who had rescued Evangelina Cisneros. This was the hero of the most romantic and daring episode of modern times; here he was, the Prince of the Fairytale, disguised as an ordinary, every-day tourist, modest and a little embarrassed, but palpably glad to be home again in his own country and among his own people. Here he was, safe and sound, and — victorious!" (October 15). The next day there was a reception at Delmonico's followed by a rally in Madison Square attended by 100,000 people: "In the memory of men the scene of last night has no parallel." Evangelina and Karl stood hand in hand: "Karl Decker, tall, stalwart, even ferocious looking, with his six feet two of brawn and muscle, formed a fitting foil to her spirituelle loveliness" (October 17).



Fig. 9: "Karl Decker ("Charles Duval"), who rescued Miss Cisneros, is here" New York Journal, October 15, 1897

Evangelina was then sent off to Washington to meet the President with another crowd of 100,000 people, she did a tour of the country rallying support for Cuba, and was then swiftly forgotten. The *Journal* brought out a small book in which she and Decker told their own stories, the whole thing introduced and embellished by Hawthorne, who could not be accused of underplaying his material:

The New Journalism has achieved many wonders; but nothing so wonderful as when its chief representative, the *New York Journal*, conceived the idea of freeing an imprisoned maiden from a cruel tyrant, and carried the conception into successful realization through the agency of Mr. Karl Decker. No adventure of modern times has so appealed to the imagination of the world; had the knight of La Mancha not been a Spaniard, and had the achievement been less splendidly practical, we might call it Quixotic. Possibly even the Spaniards themselves, when they have begun to forget that the Pearl of the Antilles ever belonged to them, and when they remember their own romantic and heroic exploits in the days of the Cid, may bring themselves to admit that the story of Karl Decker and Evangelina Cisneros can fitly take its place beside the most brilliant and moving of their ancient chronicles of daring.

Having rubbed salt into the wound, Hawthorne elaborates:

... The desirable component elements are all present. A tropic island, embosomed in azure seas off the coast of the Spanish Main; a cruel war, waged by the minions of despotism against the spirit of patriotism and liberty; a beautiful maiden, risking all for her country, captured, insulted, persecuted, and cast into a loathsome dungeon. None could be more innocent, constant and adorable than she; none more wicked, detestable and craven than her enemies. All is right and lovable on the one side, all ugly and hateful on the other. As in the old Romances, there is no uncertainty as to which way our sympathies should turn.

And finally, the description of the hero, Karl Decker:

You might pass him in the street without noticing that he was anything more than tall and good-looking; but a man must be a great deal besides that before he can perform such a feat as that which stands to Karl Decker's credit. He must be a man from every point of view.

He is, in fact, a young American of the best and oldest strain, with the Constitution in his backbone and the Declaration of Independence in his eyes. In spite of his quietness and modesty, his face shows boldness to the verge of rashness, and perhaps a little beyond that verge, upon occasion; but tempered with an abiding sense of humor and sterling common-sense and sanity. Beyond his frank and simple bearing was conveyed the impression that here was one who could keep his own counsel: could hide a purpose in the depths of his soul, as a torpedo is hidden in the sea, and explode it at the proper moment in the vitals of his adversary. He had imagination to conceive, ingenuity to plan, coolness and resolution to carry out, and then —best of all— that wonderful power of belief in the possibility of the impossible which is the final cause of most of the memorable exploits of men (In Cosío 1897: 17-19, 23-4).

It's perhaps unnecessary to underline that this is intended to be read as a national self-image, a portrait of the U.S.A. in its young manhood, before it has yet exploded any torpedoes in the vitals of any adversaries, but at a moment when it is beginning to realize that it is capable of doing so. U.S. nationhood, disembodied from the manifest destiny of continental expansion redefines itself through an identification with the prowess of the individual male body.

As with all acts of great heroism, there have been spoilsports who have later suggested that this particular story was rather more complicated than its presentation at the time. The Spanish line all along was that Evangelina had lured the Spanish colonel to her room where he was held hostage by other rebels in a bold attempt to free the prisoners on the island. A teenager using her sexual wiles in this way could no doubt be seen as equally heroic, but this is not the sort of heroism the *Journal* was interested in: the heroine had to be passive and wait to be rescued by the hero. It was also later revealed by one of Hearst's editors that Evangelina's

release had been paid for but that the elaborate rescue plan had been drawn up to protect the guards and to furnish a good story.⁹

This was Karl Decker's fifteen minutes of fame, lauded as a chivalric hero by a third-rate novelist. The second example comes from fiction and produces a much more rounded character. Historical romances were popular during the 1890s as a way, so Amy Kaplan argues, of creating "fanciful realms on which to project contemporary desires for unlimited global expansion" (1990: 661). *Soldiers of Fortune* creates such realms but is contemporary in setting. Robert Clay, the hero of Richard Harding Davis's novel, is an engineer from the west and the first description we are given of him is through the eyes of a woman at a New York dinner party who is intrigued by his appearance:

He was a tall, broad-shouldered youth, with a handsome face, tanned and dyed, either by the sun or by exposure to the wind, to a deep ruddy brown, which contrasted strangely with his yellow hair and mustache and with the pallor of the other faces about him. He was a stranger apparently to every one present, and his bearing suggested, in consequence, that ease of manner which comes to a person who is not only sure of himself, but who has no knowledge of the claims and pretensions to social distinction of those about him. His most attractive feature was his eyes, which seemed to observe all that was going on, not only what was on the surface, and that not rudely or covertly but with the frank, quick, look of the trained observer... [S]he wondered how any one who had lived the rough life of the West could still retain the look, when in formal clothes, of one who was in the habit of doing informal things in them (Davis 1916: 9).¹⁰

⁹ "Money bought her way out of prison, but to exonerate the guards, as well as to furnish newspaper material, an elaborate plan of rescue was worked out, including the rental of a house next door to the prison, and the bridging of the chasm between by a plank across which the youthful heroine was spirited to liberty" (Abbot 1974: 215-6).

¹⁰ Reggie King—whom this woman finally has to settle for—weighs in with some praise of civil engineers: "They were doing better work than soldiers because soldiers destroy things, and these chaps were creating, and making the way straight. They had no banners either, nor brass bands. They fought mountains and rivers, and they were attacked on every side by fever and the lack of food and severe exposure. They had to sit down around a

Clay is working for the Valencia Mining Company owned by a Mr. Langham, a wealthy U.S. entrepreneur. Valencia is the capital of Olancho, "one of those little republics down there" (26). Clay—an appropriate enough name for a mining engineer—had discovered the ore by himself, had informed Langham, worked out the political details, and rescued the railroad building after the first engineer in charge had failed. In his first letter to Langham he writes: "I saw great masses of red hematite lying exposed on the side of the mountain, only waiting a pick and shovel, and at one place there were five thousand tons in plain sight. I should call the stuff first-class Bessemer ore, running about sixty-three per cent metallic iron. The people know it is there, but have no knowledge of its value, and are too lazy to ever work it themselves" (30).¹¹ He repeats the point later to Mendoza, the rebellious villain of the book: "The mines have always been there, before this Government came in, before the Spaniards were here, before there was any government at all, but there was not the capital to open them up, I suppose, or—and it needed a certain energy to begin the attack" (52).¹²

The setting for *Soldiers of Fortune* is very closely modelled on the development of the U.S. mining interests on the south coast of Cuba. Around 1880 a business associate, steamboat owner Alfred Earnshaw, mentioned to Luther Bent, general manager of the Pennsylvania Steel Company, that his agents were hearing rumours of important ore deposits

campfire at night and calculate whether they were going to tunnel a mountain, or turn the bed of a river or bridge it. And they knew all the time that whatever they decided to do out there in the wilderness meant thousands of dollars to the stockholders somewhere up in God's country, who would some day hold them to account for them" (12-13). Engineers were, in other words, appropriate heroes for the new imperial frontiers.

¹¹ In Henry Bessemer's process, patented in 1855 and first operated in 1856, air was blown through molten pig iron from tuyeres set into the bottom of a pear-shaped vessel called a converter. Heat released by the oxidation of dissolved silicon, manganese, and carbon was enough to raise the temperature above the melting point of the refined metal (which rose as the carbon content was lowered) and thereby maintain it in the liquid state. Very soon Bessemer had tilting converters producing 5 tons in a heat of one hour, compared with four to six hours for 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of crucible steel and two hours for 250 kilograms of puddled iron. His innovation was initially made in the interests of solving problems in gun-making (Bessemer 1989: 135-7).

¹² Clay tells Mendoza to do his worst: "Try to break the concession; try it. It was made by one Government to a body of honest, decent business men, with a Government of their own back of them, and if you interfere with our conceded rights to work those mines, I'll have a man-of-war down here with white paint on her hull, and she'll blow you and your little republic back up there into the mountains" (61-2).

around Santiago, Cuba. Land to the east of Santiago had once been mined for copper and subsequently there had been sugar plantations in that area, but most had been abandoned by 1880. Bent dispatched his agent, Frederick Wood, to investigate. Young, but already one of the top mining engineers in the country, Wood made his way up the Río Juraguá and found what would prove to be 15 million tons of hematite rock of 62 per cent iron, making him an almost exact forerunner of his fictional counterpart, Robert Clay. Within six months he was back with engineers and plans for a railroad to carry the ore to Santiago. Mineral rights could be secured free of charge by filing an application since the land was jungle.

The Philadelphia business community had been involved with Cuba since the 1850s and, with the Cuban economy in difficulty, Spain was prepared to give tax breaks to get another important U.S. company involved on the island. To share the risk of the project Pennsylvania Steel enlisted Bethlehem Iron Company and together they formed the Juraguá Iron Company, Ltd., a 20-year limited partnership established under the laws of Pennsylvania (Reutter 1988: 27). Mining began in 1884. By 1898 the Juraguá Iron Company owned eleven of the seventeen mines in the region and was called “a powerful, progressive, and well-managed American corporation, which has done more to develop the mining industries of Cuba than all the other interests combined” (Clark 1898: 409). Its output averaged a quarter of a million tons in the ten years up to 1897. All told, the U.S. iron-mining companies in Cuba represented an investment of U.S. capital of about \$8,000,000, and in the fourteen years of operation prior to 1898 they had paid \$2,000,000 in import duties on iron ore into the U.S. treasury (Porter 1899: 323).¹³

Olancho is a very lightly fictionalized version of Cuba. When he was twenty-two, Davis, who was born in Philadelphia, visited the island in the company of an old friend of his who was President of the Bethlehem Iron Company.¹⁴ He saw how the ore was taken down on a narrow-gauge

¹³ The iron ore supplemented U.S. supplies; but the eastern half of Cuba also had extensive manganese deposits, an essential raw material in the manufacture of Bessemer steel, and for which U.S. demand greatly exceeded supply. The Cuban deposits were by some way the nearest available (Porter 1899: 323). On the U.S. mining industry in Cuba, see also Pérez 1982 and Iglesias 1975.

¹⁴ Davis never broke into to the ‘best’ circles in Philadelphia, but he was welcomed by the new millionaires of Bethlehem’s anthracite and steel industrialists (Lubow 1992: 374 n170).

railway across the river Juraguá to Siboney, where it was loaded onto trains running to the docks of Las Cruces in Santiago. This exact topography appears in *Soldiers of Fortune* (Lubow 1992: 28).¹⁵

Although in some ways an all-American hero, Robert Clay shares with Leatherstocking and other frontier predecessors a decided restlessness. It's very apparent, however, that by the 1890s the frontier has become global:

Clay's mind went back to the days when he was a boy, when his father was absent fighting for a lost cause; when his mother taught in a little schoolhouse under the shadow of Pike's Peak, and when Kit Carson was his hero. He thought of the poverty of those days —poverty so mean and hopeless that it was almost something to feel shame for; of the days that followed when, an orphan and without a home, he had sailed away from New Orleans to the Cape. How the mind of the mathematician, which he had inherited from the Boston schoolmistress, had been swayed by the spirit of the soldier, which he had inherited from his father [which gives us an individual allegory of Reconstruction], and which had led him from the mines of South Africa to little wars in Madagascar, Egypt, and Algiers. It had been a life as restless as the seaweed on a rock. But as he looked back to its poor beginnings and admitted to himself its later success,

¹⁵ See Davis 1918: 35-6; Foner 1972, II: 482. The film of *Soldiers of Fortune* was also shot in this area in 1913. The director was impressed at how little Davis had invented: "We visited the mines and the railroads, and everywhere found some superintendent of foreman or engineer who remembered Davis. He had guessed at nothing. Everywhere he had overlaid the facts with adventure and with beauty, but he had been on sure footing all the time" (Augustus Thomas, "Introduction" to Davis 1916: xiv). Cf. Irene Wright's visit to this scene early in the century: "We stretched our eyes towards Daiquirí and Siboney, where the American invaders landed in 1898. Commercial-minded that I am, I was more interested in the approximate situation of the iron mines of Juragua, —camp of another and more important American invasion. I desired to know just where it is that the land thrusts that closed fist into the sea which Richard Harding Davis's "Soldier of Fortune" was intent to make let go its riches at his will" (Wright 1910: 353).

he gave a sigh of content, and shaking off the mood stood up and paced the length of the veranda (99-100).¹⁶

Clay is in many ways the embodiment of the 'strenuous life' that Theodore Roosevelt was advocating at this time. He combines the effiteness of the gentleman, with his manners and poise, and the virility of the frontiersman redefined as engineer; he is both a cultured man who is rarely in New York because he prefers to spend his summers in Vienna and a mercenary with a long list of medals. In a telling scene it emerges that Clay has been awarded the Red Eagle of the German Emperor, the ribbon and cross of the Star of Olancho, some unspecified Spanish Order, the French Legion of Honor (for his efforts in Algeria), a medal and star for the Nile campaign under Wolseley, and something prestigious from the Sultan of Zanzibar:

"I travel because I have no home... There was a ranch in Colorado that I used to call home," said Clay, "but they've cut it up into town lots. I own a plot in the cemetery outside of the town, where my mother is buried, and I visit that whenever I am in the States, and that is the only piece of earth anywhere in the world that I have to go back to" (175).

A navy officer from a U.S. man-o'-war eventually sent down the coast after the troubles in Olancho are over, addresses Clay like this:

"Are you from the States?" he asked as they moved toward the man-of-war's men.

"I am, thank God. Why not?"

"I thought you were, but you saluted like an Englishman."

"I was an officer in the English army once in the Soudan, when they were short of officers... I have worn several uniforms since I was a boy," said Clay. "But never that of my own country" (345).

¹⁶ The portrayal of Clay as embodiment of the national virtues partakes of the process that Alexander Saxton has studied as what he calls "the *westernizing* of national identity" (1990: 337).

Clay is archetypally a U.S. hero, an embodiment of the new masculinity, but his own country—or at least its government—is slow to recognise the qualities he represents. It would be less slow when Roosevelt became President.

The girl Clay eventually falls in love with is the tomboyish younger sister of the beautiful and sophisticated woman he initially pursued. Hope makes her first appearance working out football tactics on her father's billiard table (24), but what most impresses Clay is her energetic interest in the mines and her adventurous spirit.¹⁷ Clay's association with Cuba is emphasized when Hope asks about his father: " 'My father, Miss Hope,' he said, 'was a filibuster, and went out on the *Virginus* to help free Cuba, and was shot, against a stone wall. We never knew where he was buried' " (175); the reference is to the summary execution of fifty-three U.S. citizens in 1873 for running guns onto the south coast of Cuba, an incident that came close to causing an earlier war between Spain and the U.S.A. The filibusters were killed in Santiago, Davis's Valencia, close to where this fictional conversation takes place (see Bradford 1980).

'Oh, forgive me; I beg your pardon,' said Hope [after Clay's explanation]. There was such distress in her voice that Clay looked at her quickly and saw the tears in her eyes. She reached out her hand timidly, and touched for an instant his own rough, sunburnt fist, as it lay clinched on his knee. 'I am so sorry,' she said, 'so sorry.' For the first time in many years the tears came to Clay's eyes and blurred the moonlight and the scene before him, and he sat unmanned and silent before the simple touch of a young girl's sympathy (175-6).

¹⁷ Clay notices Alice's lack of interest in the mines: "Clay glanced at her doubtfully with a troubled look, and turned away his eyes to the busy scene below him. He was greatly hurt that she should have cared so little, and indignant at himself for being so unjust. Why should he expect a woman to find interest in that hive of noise and sweating energy? But even as he stood arguing with himself his eyes fell on a slight figure sitting erect and graceful on her pony's back, her white habit soiled and stained red with the ore of the mines, and green where it had crushed against the leaves. [Hope] was coming slowly up the trail with a bodyguard of half a dozen men crowding closely round her, telling her the difficulties of her work, and explaining their successes, and eager for a share of her quick sympathy" (137).

For all the bluff exterior and athleticism, the hero has a soft spot: Hope's tears and the memory of his father's futile death serve to 'unman' him for the one and only time in the novel. The victory he wins over Mendoza's forces is in one sense a vindication of his father, just as the U.S. victory Davis later reported on was in the same sense a vindication of the *Virginus*.

Within the language of romance the 'rescue' of an endangered maiden has generally meant, at least in the western tradition, that the rescuer has become entitled to the maiden, whether or not she was betrothed to him in the first place. In popular fiction and illustrations that sexual conjunction would in this context imply annexation. Not that it was ever spelled out in quite this way, but it would mean Cuba becoming another star on the U.S. flag, the forty-sixth wife in Uncle Sam's ample bed.¹⁸ That position had been openly argued for during the early part of the nineteenth century by those who thought that the acquisition of Cuba would prop up slavery, and of course the Cuban flag, with its hopeful star, was designed by the annexationist, Narciso López, who also came to a sticky end on the coast of Cuba. However, by the end of the century annexationist arguments —now much less common— were using a quite different imagery. In this 1901 cartoon (fig. 10), Miss Columbia is saying to her neighbor: "Won't you join the stars and is my forty-sixth?" The connotations are entirely pedagogic and neighborly, maternal rather than sexual.

These two colonial romances also veer sharply from the possible implications of their underlying romantic allegory. In *Soldiers of Fortune*, in fact, the question has been answered in advance. Alliance —the fictional Cub needs rescuing from itself and restoring to tranquillity, and U.S. economic interests need protecting. But the negotiations take place entirely within the ruling political class: hardly a single native woman appears in the novel, certainly none that are eligible to marry a U.S. hero. The U.S. hero will find his woman in Cuba, but she will be an

¹⁸ Ida Starr came pretty close to spelling it out: "Although aware that Uncle Sam was fully alive to the great dower that this island alliance would bring him, I must still believe that his choice was not a little influenced by the actual charms of Puerto Rico herself; that, however much he, a man of some years, might appear indifferent to the allurements of lovely women, he is still like the rest of his sex chivalrously bent upon fresh conquests. In this case let us rejoice that he has been so fortunate, and that so pretty a face has brought so much of real worth" (Starr 1904, I: 129-30).



Fig. 10: "Miss Cuba receives an invitation,"
Chicago Record-Herald, 1901

all-American girl, a 'new woman' —in the terminology of the time who has revealed her true qualities in the open spaces of the Caribbean, beyond the restrictions of metropolitan domesticity. Evangelina and Karl seemed a more likely couple, at least to Julian Hawthorne and others who were writing their story for the *New York Journal*. And eventually she did marry one of her rescuers. Not, however, Karl (who was already spoken for): she married the Cuban-American dentist, Carlos Carbonelle in May 1898, and after the war they returned and settled in Cuba (Brown 1967: 100). All this might seem appropriate. After liberation each side chooses their own: the implications of merger or reward contained in the language of romance are rejected. But what we really have encoded here, and what we need to understand properly the endings of these colonial romances is the issue of color: the discourse of chivalry gives way suddenly and dramatically to the discourse of race. Robert Clay with his Hope in New York, Evangelina with her dentist in Havana. That outcome foreshadows one of those startling shifts in public imagery that followed over the course of 1898. If, in popular perception, the U.S.A. had entered the war to 'liberate' Cuba, it quickly became apparent that a different kind of relationship was going to have to pertain.

The language of rescue could not survive the realities of military intervention. To put it simply, when the Fifth Army and the volunteer corps disembarked on the south coast of Cuba, they didn't find Evangelina

Cisneros waiting with open arms, they found Calixto García and his *guerrilleros*. The descriptions of the Cubans left by U.S. troops are deeply revealing of the disjunction between expectation and perception. There are, to begin with, odd but perhaps not altogether coincidental parallels between the U.S. landings in 1898 and that of Columbus just over four hundred years earlier. The main U.S. landings were at Daiquiri and Ciboney, both indigenous Caribbean words that would pass into the lexicon of U.S. English: “Daiquiri” first brought back by Admiral Lucius Johnson to the Army and Navy Club in Washington to name a potent cocktail supposedly invented in 1896 by an engineer called Jennings Cox working for the U.S. iron companies in Cuba; “Ciboney” —said by Las Casas to have been the name of the original inhabitants of Cuba and during the nineteenth century the term commonly applied to the whole native Cuban population— soon brought into U.S. anthropological discourse.¹⁹ Some of the U.S. descriptions of Cuban troops in 1898 are startlingly similar to Spanish descriptions of native Cubans in 1492. One soldier called the Cubans “cave-dwellers” —Ciboney means “people of the rocks” in the Arawak language; Stephen Crane called them “a collection of real tropic savages”; one sensitive soul claimed that his “innate modesty was somewhat shocked at a comparative nudity that did not seem to worry the native”; another complained more bluntly that the Cubans were happy to “go around half-naked,” echoing the dominant note in those early Spanish descriptions of the natives.²⁰ Indeed geologists working for the expanding interests of the U.S. Iron Companies reported back to Pennsylvania on their supposed discovery of “wild Indians” in the Sierra Maestra, a report which led directly to the first U.S. anthropological

¹⁹ On the creation of the cocktail, see Wolfe 1972: 178-9. The indigenous form was probably “Baiquiri” (Zayas y Alfonso 1931, I: 76-7), which is the spelling in some of the contemporary U.S. accounts of the landings, including that by Davis, who knew the coast well.

The town of Ciboney takes the name of the group that were, according to Bartolomé de Las Casas, the aboriginal inhabitants of the island of Cuba. The whole story of the Ciboney is fraught with the complications that attend most early colonial toponymy and ethnography. However, because of the idea that these people were the original inhabitants, they featured in, and gave their name to, the literary movement of the mid-nineteenth century which sought to give a local dimension to poetic traditions: “Ciboneyismo” was a popular, if short-lived literary phenomenon in Cuba whose key writers were José Fornaris and Juan Cristóbal Nápoles Fajardo (cf. Schulman 1992).

²⁰ All quoted from Pérez 1983: 199.

investigation of Cuba, although no wild Indians were discovered, at least not of the kind that the anthropologists were looking for (Culin 1902).

As 'indios' of the supposedly 'gentle' variety (Arawak), the Cubans could to a degree be feminized, at least inasmuch as they did not have the manliness of their rescuers: "[i]n courage, in honesty, in capacity, and in all that goes to make true manhood,... American soldiers were immeasurably superior to Cubans," said George Kennan. But of course the Cubans weren't Indians —except for General Jesús Rabí, one of the rebel commanders, who is always described as a "full-blooded" Indian: "They are nearly all half-naked and a large proportion are of negro blood" reported the *New York Evening Post*. Winston Spencer Churchill saw volunteer service with the Spanish army and reported: "If the Revolution triumphs, Cuba will be a black Republic.... Their army, consisting to a large extent of coloured men, is an undisciplined rabble"; "[t]he Cuban soldiers were almost all blacks and mulattos," said Roosevelt.²¹

It was the universal opinion of the U.S. army that the Cubans didn't help in the fighting: "They were of another race and the greater part of them were unable to understand the steady nerve and the businesslike habits of their American rescuers"; "I have seen degradation in negro slaves but never have I seen such degradation as a Cuban exhibits in everything that means manhood"; General Samuel B.M. Young concluded

²¹ *New York Evening Post*, Roosevelt and Kennan quoted from Pérez 1983: 200, 200 and 204 respectively; Churchill from two 1896 newspapers articles quoted in Thomas 1971: 326. Churchill ended with an optimistic vision: "It may be that as the pages of history are turned brighter fortunes and better times will come to Cuba. It may be that future years will see the island as it would be now, had England never lost it —a Cuba free and prosperous, under just law and a patriotic administration, throwing open her ports to the commerce of the world, sending her ponies to Hurlingham and her cricketers to Lord's, exchanging the cigars of Havana for the cottons of Lancashire, and the sugars of Matanzas for the cutlery of Sheffield. At least let us hope so" (*The Daily Graphic*, January 13, 1896; Churchill 1992: 21-22).

On the issue of race during the U.S. invasion, see Dyer 1980: 100-1; Saxton 1990: 369-77; and Kaplan 1993 (with, for background, Gatewood 1975). The extent to which the 'color' of Cuba was a genuine surprise to the U.S. population in 1898 is a moot point. Cuban expatriates in the U.S.A. were often U.S.-educated, fluent in English, upper middle-class in manners, rich, and white. This gave some weight to the analogies with 1776 which they encouraged. To mention race at all was to lend credence to the Spanish story that this was a race war, an analysis that the Cubans in the U.S.A. and the sympathetic U.S. media strenuously denied. Furthermore, few U.S. correspondents knew much about the eastern zone, where the war was cruelest, where the insurgents consisted of proportionally more Afro-Cubans, where *independentista* sentiment was strongest —and where the Fifth Army Corps would disembark (see Pérez 1983: 198-9).

that the “insurgents are a lot of degenerates, absolutely devoid of honor or gratitude. They are no more capable of self-government than the savages of Africa”; the Cuban “is a treacherous, lying, cowardly, thieving, worthless, half-breed mongrel, born of a mongrel spawn of Europe, crossed upon the fetiches of darkest Africa and aboriginal America.”²² Richard Harding Davis is very clear-sighted about all this: after much political intrigue, the climactic scene of *Soldiers of Fortune* is the successful attack that Clay orchestrates on the Presidential palace, held by the unscrupulous Mendoza who has taken over in a coup from the former corrupt head of state. Mendoza is briefly described for the first time in the novel just before he's shot by one of Clay's fellow engineers: “He saw a tall man with a negro's face spring out of the first mass of soldiers and shout to them to follow him” (338-9). Two seconds later the black rebel is dead. In case there was any doubt, Kipling spelled it all out in February 1899 in the *New York Sun* and in *McClure's Magazine* in a poem he had first sent to his friend Teddy Roosevelt to strengthen his expansionist resolve, “The White Man's Burden”: “To wait in heavy harness, / On fluttered folk and wild— / Your new-caught sullen peoples, / Half devil and half child” (1899). The change was vertiginous: from “Cuba libre!” at the very moment of victory (fig. 11), a figure who looks very like



Fig. 11: “Cuba libre!,”
William Allan Rogers, *Harper's Weekly*, 1898

²² The first two quotations drawn from Pérez 1983: 201 and 204; Young quoted in Millis 1931: 362; and Parker 1898: 76.

Evangelina, to the white man's burden in whatever form: half-devil, half-child in one of the most grossly racist cartoons of the time (fig. 12), or the burden —much emphasized in subsequent U.S. discussions of Cuba— of



Fig. 12: Fred Morgan, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1898. **JOHN BULL:** “It’s really most extraordinary what training will do. Why, only the other day I thought that man unable to support himself”

introducing western standards of hygiene into a world that was still awaiting civilization (fig. 13).²³ If Cuba had been feminized in the lead-up to invasion, it was subsequently infantilized. As Stephen Crane put it in

²³ “Everything was dirty. Enterprising American soap manufacturers could have obtained splendid advertisements by cleaning the Cuban army —officers and men alike— and having pictures of ‘before and after’ used as illustrations” (Graham 1902: 258); “But as to his lordship, the proud male citizen of Cuba libre, you would utterly and bitterly insult him by the intimation that a man of his dignity ought ever to bathe, put on clean clothes, or even wash his hands” (Parker 1898: 77).



Fig. 13: “The white man’s burden,”
Harper’s Weekly, September 30, 1899

1899: “The Cubans will be given their independence —despite all cavilling and arguing— but they will be given it not until they have grown to manhood, so to speak” (1971: 226).

To sum up. The U.S. self-image in 1897, as the country rehearsed in its popular imagination the ‘rescue’ of Cuba that was to ensue within a few months, was of a man of quiet determination, technical skill, extraordinary daring, and good (that is old) American stock. There was, I’m suggesting, a tension within the narrative that put this self-image into action. ‘Rescue’ is a trope that operates within the romance mode, and both Clay and Decker —especially in Hawthorne’s description of the latter— are clearly produced as romance heroes. There is however an undertow which works against the romance mode in both cases, though not identically. Clay fulfills the expectations of the romance mode by finding his mate in the Caribbean, though she is not, as I noted before, a Caribbean mate. But the domesticity that follows marriage is perceived in

the novel as a mixed blessing, a loss as well as a gain, the end of the life of true adventure.²⁴ Decker —perhaps in this respect a more modern hero— has none of the restlessness that marks his fictional counterpart. His ‘adventure’ is a well-defined episode from which he returns to the arms of his betrothed in New York. For all the journalistic froth about Karl and Evangelina, the subtext of the newspaper story spells out clearly enough that Decker is grateful to be back in his *own* country and among his *own* people: as the literal embodiment of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence —in unspoken contrast to the flood of ‘strangers’ then entering the country (cf. Higham 1988)— he is never a likely candidate for marriage outside his community.²⁵ Both heroes have traditional attributes of skill and bravery and resourcefulness, but it’s interesting —especially in the light of the importance of metals to these stories— that Decker is attributed by Hawthorne with the qualities of a torpedo. Self-propelled torpedo technology was one of the areas in which U.S. military development was making most efforts to catch up to its European (especially British) counterparts at the turn of the century. But even the old-style static torpedoes (mines) offer a striking image of abrupt violence erupting from a calm exterior to inflict maximum damage; some way from Clay’s more knightly style of combat.²⁶

²⁴ MacWilliams gets to speak the uneasy farewell: “ ‘There were three of us,’ he said, ‘and one got shot, and one got married, and the third—? You will grow fat, Clay, and live on Fifth Avenue and wear a high silk hat, and some day when you’re sitting in your club you’ll read a paragraph in a newspaper with a queer Spanish date-line to it, and this will all come back to you, —this heat, and the palms, and the fever, and the days when you lived on plantains and we watched our trestles grow out across the canyons, and you’ll be willing to give your hand to sleep in a hammock again, and to feel the sweat running down your back, and you’ll want to chuck your gun up against your chin and shoot into a line of men, and the policemen won’t let you, and your wife won’t let you. That’s what you’re giving up. There it is. Take a good look at it. You’ll never see it again’ ” (348). So there is an anxiety that true masculine values can only flourish outside the restraints of conventional society.

²⁵ As a southerner, Decker is closer to the ideology of chivalry which was being favourably reassessed in the 1890s (Silber 1993: 159-96), and can also represent an Anglo-Saxonism less contaminated by outside influence, another important theme of the period: “The members of the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ race, it was said, held in common a certain set of characteristics which were biologically as well as culturally determined. These characteristics, which included such worthy attributes as industry, intelligence, adventurousness, and a talent for self-government, constituted a unique racial endowment which accounted in large part for the economic, political, and cultural successes of the English-speaking peoples” (Anderson 1981: 12).

²⁶ On the development of torpedo technology, see Gray 1991 and Friedman 1982.

The rescue of Evangelina was ultimately a comfortable fiction which hid the political complexity of what was actually being ‘rescued.’ Evangelina Cosío may well in her own way have been a genuine heroine of Cuba’s struggle for independence: her entrapment of the Spanish colonel was after all in the best traditions of guerrilla tactics. To turn her into a woman who needed rescuing was to turn on its head, as ideology does, the facts of Cuban resistance, the active and aggressive, if unorthodox, tactics of the guerrilla—which the U.S. army and its correspondents were so incapable of understanding. But that ideology was speaking, as ideology does, a kind of truth: there was something in Cuba that was genuinely passive and helpless and needed rescuing—the U.S. mining interests in the province of Santiago, the source of the iron-ore which, turned to steel in the great mills of Sparrows Point in Maryland and Bethlehem in Pennsylvania, would build the ships and the torpedos that the ships would carry to protect the commercial and strategic interests of the U.S.A. in the sea that was in the process of becoming the “American Mediterranean.” According to histories of the U.S. invasion of Cuba, the landing of the military forces on the south coast of the island was a haphazard affair, its sites decided only at the last minute.²⁷ That may be so. In which case it was only of symbolic interest that one part of the U.S. Army landed at Siboney, securing the interests of the Juraguá Iron Company, controlled from Pennsylvania, and the Fifth Army landed at Daiquirí securing the interests of the Spanish-American Mining Company, their main rival, controlled by John D. Rockefeller. What’s for sure is that both operations made a swift return to mining after the capitulation of Santiago.²⁸ Claims at Juraguá and Daiquirí were set to expire in 1903: General Wood extended them indefinitely and for good

²⁷ See, for example, Cosmas 1971, Trask 1981, Bradford 1983, and United States 1993.

²⁸ Reutter 1988: 73-4. I’m not suggesting that securing the operation of the Santiago iron mines was the motive for the invasion of Cuba. However, given that there is little consensus among historians about U.S. motives, and given that Daiquirí and Siboney were where the troops landed, and given that U.S. mining operations and the activities of their U.S. (mainly Philadelphia-based) owners have been paid little attention, this would at least seem an area worth further investigation. This is also the position put forward in the most recent study of the phenomenon, by Lisandro Pérez (1982) –with thanks to Louis A. Pérez, Jr. for the reference. The iron-mining of Santiago features prominently in Leonard Wood’s first report on insular affairs (U.S. Army 1899), and in Robert Porter’s specially commissioned report (1899), as it had in William J. Clark’s well-timed *Commercial Cuba: A Book for Business Men* (1898).

measure exempted all future mining claims from Cuban property taxes or mining royalties in an addendum that was not published with the original ruling (Reutter 1992: 76).²⁹ In that sense the virgin ore of the island was successfully rescued. Chivalry triumphed. National masculinity was affirmed and redefined.

One last image (fig. 14). At the end of the book that the Hearst newspapers produced on the story of Evangelina Cisneros, there is this stunning map showing the Statue of Liberty, no doubt protected by the U.S. navy, watching over the shores of Cuba, a mirror image, born of identical impulses to the Cuba and Puerto Rico with which I began, brought back in imagination and rebuilt in Sligo Creek. Those islands were destroyed in a flash flood in 1903, and in my imagination I see their pieces swept out into the Anacostia, down the Chesapeake Bay, along the coasts of the Carolinas and Florida, and back to the Caribbean, where they belong, and to where they will perhaps now be allowed to remain—to adapt an old phrase— *semper fidelis*, always faithful to their cultural geography, to their place in the Caribbean.

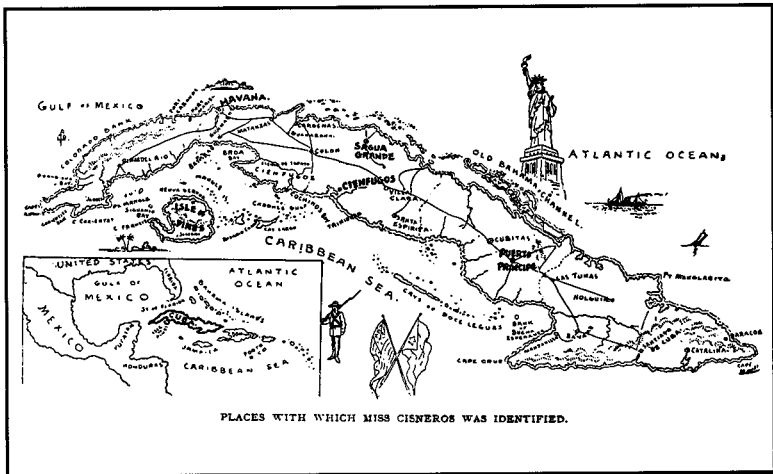


Fig. 14: “Places with which Miss Cisneros was identified,”
from Cosío 1898: 258

²⁹ Pennsylvania Steel immediately bought other undeveloped deposits, and in 1901 acquired the assets of the Spanish-American Iron Company.

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