

**©2012**

**Diana Bramham**

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

U.S. ARTISTS IMAGINING MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA AND CUBA, 1875-1910

By

DIANA BRAMHAM

A dissertation submitted to the  
Graduate School-New Brunswick  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Graduate Program in Art History  
written under the direction of  
Dr. Susan Sidlauskas  
and approved by

---

---

---

---

New Brunswick, New Jersey

October 2012

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

U.S. Artists Imagining Mexico, Central America and Cuba, 1875-1910

by DIANA BRAMHAM

Dissertation Director:  
Dr. Susan Sidlauskas

This dissertation investigates representations of Mexico, Central America and Cuba produced by U.S. artists from 1875 to 1910. As the United States strengthened its political and economic ties with its closest southern neighbors, a desire for visual knowledge of the people and places just south of the border grew. Paintings, photographs, films and illustrations by artists such as Eadweard Muybridge, Winslow Homer and William Henry Jackson introduced an unfamiliar U.S. public to the “Other” America. While some of these artists constructed a vision of Mexico, Central America and Cuba as picturesque places mired in the past and ripe for U.S. expansionist efforts, others portrayed these lands as sites of mounting tension that suggest anxiety surrounding the increasingly intimate relationship between the North and South. A careful analysis of these images, the contemporary responses to them and the socio-historical context in which they were created reveals another veiled subject—the United States and its struggle to define its own identity at a watershed moment in its history.

A study of the visual manifestation of the United States' relationship with Mexico, Central America and Cuba is at the forefront of recent scholarship that seeks to extend the scope of American art beyond geographic borders, embracing a more global, non-Euro-centrist perspective.

## Table of Contents

Abstract	p. ii
Table of Contents	p. iii
List of Illustrations	p. iv
Introduction	p. 1
Chapter One An Intimate and Tumultuous Relationship: The Americas in the Nineteenth Century	p. 20
Chapter Two Incidents of Travel in Central America and Mexico: Eadweard Muybridge's Southern Series	p. 41
Chapter Three The “Red Hot” Encounter: Winslow Homer in the “Eden of the Gulf”	p. 94
Chapter Four Picturing Empire: Winslow Homer's <i>Gulf Stream</i> and <i>Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba</i>	p. 140
Chapter Five Picturing the “Spain of 300 Years Ago”: Mexico in Photographs and Paintings	p. 185
Conclusion Into the Twentieth Century: Enduring Narratives	p. 214
Illustrations	p. 221
Bibliography	p. 282
Curriculum Vita	p. 301



## List of Illustrations

### Introduction

- Fig. A.1      Francisco Oller, *Portrait of President William McKinley*, 1898, oil on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.

### Chapter One

- Fig. 1.1      Joaquín Torres-García, “South America's Inverted Map,” *Círculo y cuadrado* (May 1, 1936).
- Fig. 1.2      Richard Caton Woodville, *War News from Mexico*, 1848, oil on canvas, 27 x 34 ¾ inches, National Academy of Design, New York.
- Fig. 1.3      “General Wool and Staff, Calle Real to South,” c.1847, daguerreotype. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
- Fig. 1.4      Richard Caton Woodville, *Old '76 and Young '48*, 1849, oil on canvas, 21 x 26 7/8 inches, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Fig. 1.5      Edouard Manet, *The Execution of Maximilian*, 1867, oil on canvas, 77 1/8 x 102 ¼ inches, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
- Fig. 1.6      Edouard Manet, *The Execution of Maximilian*, 1867-1868, oil on canvas, 76 x 111 13/16 inches, National Gallery, London.
- Fig. 1.7      Edouard Manet, *The Execution of Maximilian*, 1868-1869, oil on canvas, 99 3/16 x 118 7/8 inches, Kunsthalle, Mannheim.
- Fig. 1.8      Handbill for the exhibition of Manet's *The Execution of Maximilian*, 1879, 24 x 19 ½ inches, Kunsthalle Mannheim. Reproduced in John Elderfield, *Manet and the Execution of Maximilian* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2006).
- Fig. 1.9      John Singleton Copley, *Watson and the Shark*, 1778, oil on canvas, 72 ¼ x 90 3/8 inches, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
- Fig. 1.10      Samuel Hazard, “Fruit Seller,” published in Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*, 1871, Schomburg, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, New York Public Library, Image ID 1251601.

- Fig. 1.11 Samuel Hazard, “Negro Dancers,” published in Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*, 1871, Schomburg, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, New York Public Library, Image ID 1251609.
- Fig. 1.12 Samuel A. Cohner, c. 1863-1869, photograph. Digital Collection, Archivos Estatales, Ministerio de Culture, Gobierno de España.

## **Chapter Two**

- Fig. 2.1 Eadweard Muybridge, title page for *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*, 1876, albumen print. Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 2.2 Frederick Catherwood, “House of the Governor Uxmal,” as published in Catherwood's *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, New York: Barlett & Welford, 1844. New York Public Library.
- Fig. 2.3 Eadweard Muybridge, “Grizzly Giant,” 1867, stereograph. University of California at Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Lone Mountain College Collection of Stereographs by Eadweard Muybridge, 1867-1880.
- Fig. 2.4 Carleton Watkins, “Grizzly Giant,” 1865, photograph, 20 ½ x 16 inches. Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.
- Fig. 2.5 Frederick Catherwood, “Circular Building at Mayapán,” as published in John Lloyd Stephens' and Catherwood's *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, New York: Dover Publications, 1841. New York Public Library.
- Fig. 2.6 Frederick Catherwood, “Interior of Eastern Building, Monjas, Uxmal,” as published in John Lloyd Stephens' and Catherwood's *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, New York: Dover Publications, 1841. New York Public Library.
- Fig. 2.7 Frederick Catherwood, “Stele C at Copán,” as published in John Lloyd Stephens' and Catherwood's *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, New York: Dover Publications, 1841. New York Public Library.
- Fig. 2.8 Frederick Catherwood, “Stele C at Copán,” as published in Catherwood's *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, New York: Barlett & Welford, 1844. New York Public Library.
- Fig. 2.9 Eadweard Muybridge, “Church of San Miguel,” 1876, albumen print, from his album *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*. Museum of

Modern Art, New York, New York.

- Fig. 2.10 Eadweard Muybridge, “Church of San Miguel,” c. 1876, stereograph. University of California at Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Lone Mountain College Collection of Stereographs by Eadweard Muybridge 1867-1880.
- Fig. 2.11 Eadweard Muybridge, “Public Laundry, City of Guatemala,” 1876, albumen print, from the album: *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 2.12 Anonymous illustration for “A Trip to Central America,” *Scribner's Monthly* (March 1878).
- Fig. 2.13 Eadweard Muybridge, “Church of San Domingo,” c. 1876, magic lantern slide. Eadweard Muybridge Collection, Royal Kingston, Kingston upon Thames, England.
- Fig. 2.14 Eadweard Muybridge, “Lake Atitlán,” 1876, albumen print, from his album *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*. Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 2.15 Eadweard Muybridge, “Sierra Nevada Mountain Range,” c. 1876, stereograph. University of California at Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Lone Mountain College Collection of Stereographs by Eadweard Muybridge 1867-1880.
- Fig. 2.16 Albert Bierstadt, *Among the Sierra Nevada, California*, 1868, oil on canvas, 72 x 120 1/8 inches. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC.
- Fig. 2.17 Eadweard Muybridge “Lake Atitlán,” 1876, albumen print, from his album *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*. Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 2.18 Eadweard Muybridge, “Volcano Zuneil,” 1876, albumen print, from his album *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*. Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 2.19 Eadweard Muybridge, “Weeding and protecting the young coffee plant from the sun, Antigua,” 1876, albumen print, from his album *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*. Museum of Modern Art, New York,

New York.

- Fig. 2.20 Eadweard Muybridge, "Hacienda Serijiers," 1876, albumen print, from his album *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*. Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 2.21 Eadweard Muybridge, "Church of Las Monjas," c. 1876, stereograph. University of California at Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Lone Mountain College Collection of Stereographs by Eadweard Muybridge 1867-1880.
- Fig. 2.22 William Henry Fox Talbot, "The Tomb of Sir Walter Scott, in Dryburgh Abbey," 1844, salted paper print from paper negative, 6 5/8 x 7 1/6 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 2.23 J.M.W. Turner, "Tintern Abbey," 1794, watercolor on paper, 26 13/16 x 19 inches, British Museum, London.
- Fig. 2.24 Eadweard Muybridge, "Ancient sacrificial stone, Naranjo, Guatemala," c. 1876, stereograph. University of California at Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Lone Mountain College Collection of Stereographs by Eadweard Muybridge 1867-1880.

### **Chapter Three**

- Fig. 3.1 J. Keppler, untitled illustration for *Puck* (December 10, 1884).
- Fig. 3.2 Broadside for the Havana Lottery, 1857, Collection of Ephemera, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA.
- Fig. 3.3 Broadside for Chappell's Great Kinetoscope of the Island of Cuba, 1855, Collection of Ephemera, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, KY.
- Fig. 3.4 Broadside for Constant Guillou's lecture on the Island of Cuba, 1864, American Ephemera Collection, Library of Congress, Portfolio 158, Folder 29i.
- Fig. 3.5 Winslow Homer, *Morro Castle*, 1885, watercolor on paper. West Point Museum, West Point, New York.
- Fig. 3.6 Winslow Homer, *Morro Castle*, 1885, pencil and white chalk on paper, 5 x 8 inches. Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, New York.
- Fig. 3.7 Winslow Homer, *Morro Castle*, 1885, charcoal on paper, 14 x 18 inches. Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, New York.

- Fig. 3.8 Winslow Homer, *Santiago de Cuba*, 1885, watercolor on paper. West Point Museum, West Point, New York.
- Fig. 3.9 Winslow Homer, *Sponge Fishermen, Bahamas*, 1885, watercolor on paper. Karen A. and Kevin W. Kennedy Collection.
- Fig. 3.10 Childe Hassam, *Place Centrale and Fort Cabanas, Havana*, 1895, oil on canvas, 21 ¼ x 26 ¼ inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI.
- Fig. 3.11 Childe Hassam, *Havana*, 1895, oil on canvas, 36 x 31 inches. Private collection.
- Fig. 3.12 Winslow Homer, *Volante, Mountain Road, Cuba*, 1885, watercolor on paper. 13 x 20 inches. Private collection.
- Fig. 3.13 Winslow Homer, *A Wall, Nassau*, 1898, watercolor and graphite on paper, 14 7/8 x 21 3/8 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 3.14 Winslow Homer, *Palm Tree, Nassau*, 1898, watercolor and graphite on paper, 21 3/8 x 14 7/8 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 3.15 Frédéric Mialhe, published in *Album pintoresco de la isla de Cuba*, 1853, color lithograph, plate 12.
- Fig. 3.16 Winslow Homer, *Flower Garden and Bungalow, Bermuda*, 1899, watercolor and graphite on paper, 13 15/16 x 20 15/16 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 3.17 Winslow Homer, *A Garden in Nassau*, 1885, watercolor and graphite on paper, 14 ½ x 20 inches. Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago.
- Fig. 3.18 Winslow Homer, *The Bather*, 1899, watercolor and graphite on paper, 14 7/6 x 21 1/16 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Fig. 3.19 Winslow Homer, *View of a Street, Santiago de Cuba*, 1885, watercolor and graphite on paper, 10 x 19 inches. Westpoint Museum of Art, Westpoint, New York.
- Fig. 3.20 Winslow Homer, *Street Scene, Santiago de Cuba*, 1885, watercolor and graphite on paper, 11 x 17 inches. Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- Fig. 3.21 Diego Velázquez, *Lady with a Fan*, c. 1640, oil on canvas, 14 2/3 x 27 2/3 inches. Wallace Collection, London.

- Fig. 3.22 Queen Isabella II, c. 1868, photograph.
- Fig. 3.23 Winslow Homer, *Spanish Flag, Santiago de Cuba*, 1885, watercolor on paper, 12 ¼ x 16 ¼ inches. Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- Fig. 3.24 Winslow Homer, *The Veteran in a New Field*, 1865, oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 38 1/8 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.
- Fig. 3.25 Winslow Homer, *The Cock Fight*, 1885, transparent and opaque watercolor with traces of scraping over graphite on paper, 10 x 19 inches. Art Institute of Chicago.
- Fig. 3.26 Frédéric Mialhe, “Valla de Gallos,” color lithograph as published in *Album pintoresco de la isla de Cuba*, 1853.

#### **Chapter Four**

- Fig. 4.1 “The Cuban Melodrama,” *Puck* (June 3, 1896).
- Fig. 4.2 Winslow Homer, *Gulf Stream*, oil on canvas, 1899, 28 1/8 x 49 1/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Fig. 4.3 Winslow Homer, *Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba*, oil on canvas, 1901, 30 ½ x 50 ½ in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Fig. 4.4 Winslow Homer, *I Protest!/Putnam House/The Portland papers say that there will be a battery put on Prout's Neck, Me*, 1898, ink on paper, 8 7/8 x 5 9/16 in., Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME.
- Fig. 4.5 Frederic Remington, “Spaniards Search Women on American Steamers,” published in *New York Journal* (February 12, 1897).
- Fig. 4.6 Winslow Homer, drawing in a letter to Thomas B. Clarke, December 1900, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington.
- Fig. 4.7 Frederic Remington, “Watching the Big Search-Lights [sic] in Havana,” published in *Harper's Weekly* (May 14, 1898).
- Fig. 4.8 Winslow Homer, *Prisoners from the Front*, 1866, oil on canvas, 24 x 38 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Fig. 4.9 Winslow Homer, *The Derelict*, 1885, watercolor over pencil, 14 ½ x 20 15/16 in., Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY.
- Fig. 4.10 Winslow Homer, *Shark Fishing, Nassau Bar*, 1885, watercolor, 13 5/8 x 20

in., private collection.

- Fig. 4.11 Winslow Homer, *Study for Gulf Stream*, 1898, watercolor and chalk, 14 ½ x 10 1/16 in., Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, NY.
- Fig. 4.12 Winslow Homer, *The Fog Warning*, 1885, oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 48 1/2 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
- Fig. 4.13 Winslow Homer, *Undertow*, 1886, oil on canvas, 30 x 48 in., Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA.
- Fig. 4.14 Frames from Thomas Edison, *U.S. Infantry Supported by Rough Riders at El Caney, Cuba* 1899, Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 4.15 Single frame from Edward Amet, *Freedom of Cuba*, 1898, Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 4.16 Single frame from Thomas Edison, *Raising Old Glory over Morro Castle*, 1899, Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 4.17 “The Lowering of the Spanish Flag and the Raising of the American Flag at the Castillo de los Tres Reyes del Morro, January 1, 1899,” 1899, photograph, 6 1/3 x 8 1/3 in., private collection.
- Fig. 4.18 “Raising the American Flag on Morro Castle,” published in *Arizona Weekly Journal-Miner* (March 22, 1899).
- Fig. 4.19 Willard Metcalf, *Havana Harbor*, 1902, oil on canvas, 18 x 26 in., private collection.
- Fig. 4.20 Willard Metcalf, *Havana Cathedral*, 1902, oil on canvas, 26 x 29 inches, private collection.
- Fig. 4.21 Detroit Photographic Company, postcard, c. 1904, Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 4.22 Detroit Photographic Company, postcard, c. 1904, Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 4.23 Anonymous photograph published in “American Progress in Habana [sic],” photograph published in *National Geographic Magazine* (March 1902).
- Fig. 4.24 Anonymous photograph published in “American Progress in Habana [sic],” photograph published in *National Geographic Magazine* (March 1902).

## **Chapter Five**

- Fig. 5.1      Photographer unknown, *Heart of the Andes*, Frederic Edwin Church on exhibition at the Metropolitan Fair in aid of the Sanitary Commission in New York, April 1864.
- Fig. 5.2      Jackson Brothers, *Two Arapaho Men*, 1867, carte de visite, 4 x 2 in., Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.
- Fig. 5.3      William Henry Jackson, *Old Faithful*, c. 1871, stereograph, J. Paul Getty Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.
- Fig. 5.4      William Henry Jackson, *At the Mammoth Hot Springs, Gardiner River*, 1871, photograph, East Hampton Library, New York.
- Fig. 5.5      William Henry Jackson, *Mount of the Holy Cross*, 1873, photograph, 4 ¼ x 7 ¼ in., Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 5.6      Thomas Moran, *Mountain of the Holy Cross*, 1875, oil on canvas, 82 1/8 x 64 ¼ in., Autry Museum of Western Heritage, Los Angeles, CA.
- Fig. 5.7      Thomas Moran, *Grand Canyon of Yellowstone*, 1893-1901, oil on canvas, 96 ½ x 168 3/8 in., Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington.
- Fig. 5.8      Thomas Moran, *Grand Canyon, Chasm of the Colorado*, 1873-1873, oil on canvas, 84 3/8 x 144 ¾ in., Department of the Interior Museum, Washington.
- Fig. 5.9      William Henry Jackson, *Mexican Central Railway Train at Station*, c. 1884-1890, photograph, Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 5.10      Augustín Víctor Casasola, *Hombres bajan del vagón de primera clase del "FF. CC. De aguas potables"*, c. 1910, photograph, Casasola Archive for the Fototeca Nacional of the National Institute of Anthropology and History, Mexico City.
- Fig. 5.11      William Henry Jackson, *Aqueduct with Train Queretaro*, c. 1884-1890, lantern slide, Southern Methodist University, Digital Collections.
- Fig. 5.12      William Henry Jackson, *Mexico, Falls of Juanacatlán*, c. 1884-1900, photograph, 18 x 22 in., Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 5.13      William Henry Jackson, *Mexico, Falls of Juanacatlán*, c. 1884-1900, photomechanical print, photochrome, Library of Congress, Washington.



- Fig. 5.14 William Henry Jackson, *Niagara Falls from Prospect Point*, c. 1898, photograph, 8 x 10 in., Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 5.15 William Henry Jackson, *Niagara Falls from Prospect Point*, c. 1898, photomechanical print, photochrome, Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 5.16 William Henry Jackson, *View of Guanajuato*, c. 1884-1900, photograph, Library of Congress, Washington.
- Fig. 5.17 Frederic Edwin Church, *A View in Cuernavaca*, c. 1898-1900, oil on paper laid down on canvas, 9 ¼ x 12 ¼ in., Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT.
- Fig. 5.18 Frederic Edwin Church, *The Arch of Titus*, 1871, oil on canvas, 74 x 49 in., Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ.
- Fig. 5.19 Frederic Edwin Church, *The Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica*, 1867, oil on canvas, 48 5/16 x 84 5/8 in., Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT.
- Fig. 5.20 George Inness, *Palisades on the Hudson*, c. 1876, oil on canvas, 20 1/8 x 30 1/8 in., private collection.

## **Conclusion**

- Fig. 6.1 Edward Weston, *Frida Kahlo*, c. 1926, photograph, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison Wisconsin.
- Fig. 6.2 Edward Weston, *Tres Ollas (Oaxaca Pots)*, 1926, gelatin silver print, From the Private Collection of Margaret W. Weston, Carmel, California.
- Fig. 6.3 Edward Weston, *Pirámide del Sol, Teotihuacán*, 1923, gelatin silver print, 7 9/16 x 9 ½ in., San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.
- Fig. 6.4 Byron Wolfe, *Beneath the Roof of the Centro Artesanía*, 2010, digital inkjet print, 18 x 33 inches. Behind: Eadweard Muybridge, 1876, photograph of the same site.
- Fig. 6.5 Book cover for Carleton Beals' 1933 publication, *The Crime of Cuba* with Walker Evans' 1933 photograph of Havana street newsboys waiting for the paper.

## Introduction

In October 2006, the United States signed the Secure Fence Act and pledged to build a 652 mile physical barrier along the 2,000 mile border that it shares with Mexico.<sup>1</sup> Determined to distance itself from its southern neighbor after almost a century of tension since the eruption of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, the United States finally drew a literal line in the sand. This story of strained relations between the United States and Mexico is not unusual; indeed the whole of Latin America has endured hostility from the super power to its north throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. For more than five decades, Cuba has withstood a trade embargo, a travel ban and narrowly escaped a missile attack and all out war with the United States. In Central America, the twentieth century began with the United States wresting control of the Panama Canal from Colombia and waging the “Banana Wars”, a series of conflicts aimed at maintaining U.S. commercial interests in the profitable United Fruit Company. The century concluded there with the invasion of Panama and a myriad of U.S. military-backed coups intended to install pro-American leaders.<sup>2</sup>

The United States, however, did not always perceive Latin America as a burden best kept at a distance. Throughout the nineteenth century, the United States actively courted its southern neighbors which it then considered valuable assets. As a young nation eager to present itself as a New World power, the United States needed its southern neighbors in order to legitimize itself as a country of cultural, economic and military

---

<sup>1</sup> The Rio Grande, which forms a natural barrier between Mexico and the United States, obviates the need for a fence along the remaining 1,350 miles of border between the two countries.

<sup>2</sup> For a more complete history of modern Latin America see Thomas Skidmore and Peter Smith, *Modern Latin America*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

magnitude. With the southern republics on its side, the United States could stand up to its Old World foes and assume a preeminent place on the international stage.

### **Historical Context and Method**

While there was no part of the Americas that did not interest the United States in the nineteenth century, this dissertation focuses on those most coveted southern neighbors: Mexico, Central America and Cuba. These southern countries in closest proximity to the United States played a crucial role in constructing a new identity for the young nation. Just out of reach, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean were seized upon as an extension of the United States. Mexico and Central America, often portrayed as one indistinguishable country in politics, the press, literature and visual arts, provided the United States with both a cultural past in the form of pre-Columbian ruins and a promising economic future with a burgeoning railroad industry. In the Caribbean, England's colonial presence on islands like the Bahamas and Jamaica limited the United States' authority there. Disinclined to perturb its Old World ally, the United States instead turned its attention to Spain's colonies. Among Spain's possessions in the Caribbean, Cuba proved the most alluring island with its abundance of sugar cane and strategic location less than one hundred miles from the Florida Peninsula. Puerto Rico also prompted the advances of the United States as the island's most noted nineteenth-century artist Francisco Oller illustrated in his portrait of President William McKinley (fig. A.1). Oller's depiction of McKinley gripping a map of Puerto Rico leaves no doubt that the United States sought to control the island. While Puerto Rico captured the attention of U.S. politicians, it remained of less interest to U.S. artists who favored larger neighboring

Cuba.<sup>3</sup>

This study examines the period from 1875 to 1910 when the United States extended its warmest embrace to Mexico, Central America and Cuba. In Mexico, these were the years of the Porfiriato, the authoritarian rule of President Porfirio Díaz. The United States found an unwavering friend in Díaz; during his regime, Mexico incentivized U.S. entrepreneurs to settle south of the Rio Grande and to assume ownership of the railroad industry, deepening U.S. influence and authority throughout the country. Similarly in Central America, these years coincide with rising U.S. interest in and subsequently control of the region's lucrative mines as well as its coffee and banana plantations. In the case of Cuba, U.S. influence extended beyond economic dominance. After its victory in the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States became the governing body on the island, a position that it maintained intermittently throughout the first decade of the twentieth century.

This period from 1875 to 1910 is an epochal moment not only because of this increased interchange between the north and south, but also due to the shift that occurred in the United States' international status. By strengthening its ties with Mexico, Central America and Cuba, the United States subsequently transformed itself from a semi-peripheral society to a metropole state. With its ownership and control of the transportation industries and natural resources south of the border, the United States subordinated the south, creating an unequal and dependent relationship. In short, by standing on the backs of its southern neighbors, the United States increased its own international stature. President William McKinley summed up this new found position of

---

<sup>3</sup> Because of Puerto Rico's comparatively limited appearance in the work of nineteenth-century U.S. artists, the island is not the focus of further investigation in this dissertation.

authority that the United States possessed, by declaring after the conclusion of the Spanish-American War:

And so it has come to pass that in a few short months we have become a world power; and I know...with what respect the nations of the world now deal with the United States, and it is vastly different from the conditions I found when I was inaugurated.<sup>4</sup>

It is not a coincidence that as the political and economic destinies of the Americas became increasingly intertwined a steady stream of U.S. painters, photographers, illustrators and filmmakers traveled southward. A desire for visual knowledge of the people and places just south of the border grew as Mexico, Central America and Cuba continually appeared in the press and political rhetoric of the time. What did the people who had suddenly become the United States' "southern brethren"<sup>5</sup> look like and did they live in a tropical Eden as travel lore dating back to the time of Christopher Columbus had claimed? While the artists who sought to answer these questions were motivated by their own individual interests, their work ultimately originated from this sweeping national preoccupation with discovering Mexico, Central America and Cuba.

Among the many men who visually introduced an unfamiliar U.S. public to its closest southern neighbors from 1875 to 1910 were Winslow Homer, Childe Hassam, Frederic Edwin Church, Eadweard Muybridge, William Henry Jackson, Frederic Remington and Thomas Edison's film company. These disparate innovators, working in a variety of mediums, illustrate the visual breadth of the U.S. fascination with its southern neighbors. Available to a broad audience through gallery and museum exhibitions, magic

---

<sup>4</sup> President William McKinley in conversation with James Boyle and Charles G. Dawes, according to his private secretary George B. Cortelyou, diary entry, September 17, 1899, quoted in Charles Summer Olcott, *The Life of William McKinley*, vol. 2 (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916), 309.

<sup>5</sup> President James Monroe referred to Latin Americans as the United States' "southern brethren" in his seventh annual message to Congress on December 2, 1823. Quoted in David W. Dent, *The Legacy of the Monroe Doctrine* (Westport, CT & London: Greenwood Press, 1999), 380.

lantern shows, film screenings, stereoscopic cards and popular periodicals, their understudied body of work was critical in shaping popular conceptions of Mexico, Central America and Cuba at the time. And yet, history has remembered these men only for their contributions to imaging the United States. Their photographs and paintings of California's Sierra Nevada mountain range, Wyoming's Old Faithful or Maine's rocky coast are considered consummate examples of the nineteenth-century American landscape tradition. As this dissertation shows, however, their work extended beyond U.S. borders. Their paths farther afield open up new avenues for inquiry in American art.

This study follows those less explored routes, seeking to balance the breadth of visual material produced by a variety of travelers with specific case studies. Those works chosen for more focused attention are compelling not only for what they suggest about the south, but also for what they reveal about the north. Permeating these selected photographs and paintings is an embedded subtext that engages with the pressing discourse over the United States' shifting identity as described by President McKinley and so many others at the time. Within these images, the United States emerges as the unseen protagonist. While in some instances the country's presence is overt as in the photographs of the U.S. owned railroad lines and coffee plantations, in other works the imprint of the north on the south is far more subtle. In many examples, it is not the subject but the manner in which the image is constructed that suggests U.S. authority. Painters and photographers often employed a picturesque aesthetic when rendering Mexico, Central America and Cuba, thereby creating a vision of containment and control south of the border. My analysis of the picturesque in William Henry Jackson's and Eadweard Muybridge's photographs in particular is theoretically sympathetic to the work

of scholars such as Angela Miller, Krista Thompson, John Barrell and David Solkin who have all examined the moral implications of that aesthetic in landscape and genre scenes.<sup>6</sup>

While their studies form an important point of departure for my investigation, the objects themselves accompanied by primary research are the keystone of this dissertation. Whenever possible, the words of the artists, audience reception, newspapers, journals and travel accounts of the time are considered in order to better understand the images within their specific historical context. Probing these primary resources and images, however, does not lead to one neatly unified vision of an American continent. On the contrary, conflicting ideas about the southern neighbors and their relationship with the United States arise from this material. The people and places south of the border appear to be both mired in the past and speeding into the future. They are the United States' greatest strength as well as its portal to the demise of democracy. While the photographs of Jackson and Muybridge lend support to the idea of the United States as a New World power, Homer's paintings contradict such a notion. By looking at this eclectic assortment of images, I attempt to understand the complexity of the relationship between the north and south while avoiding predetermined conclusions based on like comparisons.

### **Contribution to the Field**

This is a narrative more often told with history books rather than images. Yet, the image can often offer a more nuanced understanding of a specific moment in history than

---

<sup>6</sup> See Angela Miller, *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Krista Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque* (Durham, NC & London: Duke University Press) 2006; John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); David Solkin, *Painting Out of the Ordinary: Modernity and the Art of Everyday Life in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

the didactic word. As the late nineteenth-century Cuban revolutionary leader José Martí wrote while living in exile in New York, “Perhaps a superiority of painting over literature is that it compels reflection, study, amelioration, and changes. The pen has wings, and travels too rapidly; the brush has weight, and does not fly so swiftly.”<sup>7</sup> This dissertation follows Martí's line of thinking by taking the image as its primary source of investigation. I contend that the rich visual material from 1875 to 1910 is as revelatory as the period's dramatic political events in exposing the United States' complex relationship with Mexico, Central America and Cuba.

This dissertation would not have come to fruition, however, without the numerous historically and politically-based studies that have mined the intricacies of the United States' relationship with Mexico, Central America and Cuba. Within this scholarship, Lars Schoultz's *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America*, a comprehensive examination of U.S. involvement south of the border from the period of Latin American independence up to the present day, served as a springboard for my own inquiry into how perceptions of the southern neighbors were shaped. Specifically with regard to Mexico, John Mason Hart's *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* was an invaluable introduction to the impact of the United States' presence in Mexico over the last 150 years. In the case of Cuba, Louis A. Pérez is an indispensable voice in the dense scholarship on relations between the U.S. and its most coveted Caribbean island. His many books, such as *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* helped hone my understanding of the history of colonialism and imperialism on the island. Thomas Schoonover's groundbreaking study,

---

<sup>7</sup> José Martí, “One of the Greatest Modern Painters: The Career and Works of the Spaniard, Eduardo Zamacois,” *The Sun* XLIX, 60 (October 30, 1881): 3.



*The United States in Central America, 1860-1911: Episodes of Social Imperialism and Imperial Rivalry in the World-System*, and his subsequent books, have done for Central America what Pérez's work has done for Cuba, and as such they form the foundation for my assessment of the region.<sup>8</sup>

In comparison to this historically- and politically-based scholarship on U.S.–Latin American relations, the art historical literature in this field is significantly more limited. It is only recently that the discipline of American art history has begun to shift its gaze beyond U.S. borders. This tendency towards internationalism, however, has almost exclusively privileged artistic dialogues with Europe. This Euro-centric approach has fostered a number of stimulating transnational exhibitions, conferences and books over the last decade. The National Gallery of London explored the magnetic pull of Paris, the West's cultural capital of the nineteenth century, for U.S. artists in the traveling exhibition *Americans in Paris, 1860-1900*. Less expected European cultural centers that drew droves of nineteenth-century U.S. artists have also been the topic of investigation. The National Academy Museum in New York examined Rome, Florence and Venice as inspiring communities for U.S. artists in the exhibition *Italia! Muse to American Artists, 1830-2005*. Under the direction of Amerikahaus with funding from the Terra Foundation, the conference and later book, *American Artists in Munich: Artistic Migration and Cultural Exchange Processes*, considered Germany's attraction for U.S. artists.<sup>9</sup> Most

---

<sup>8</sup> See Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Louis Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Thomas David Schoonover, *The United States in Central America, 1860-1911: Episodes of Social Imperialism and Imperial Rivalry in the World System* vol. 1, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> See Kathleen Adler, et. al., *Americans in Paris, 1860-1900*, (London: National Gallery London, 2006); National Academy Museum *Italia! Muse to American Artists 1830-2005*, 2006; Christian Fuhrmeister, ed.

recently, the compendium of essays in *Internationalizing the History of American Art* delved into the reception, criticism and display of primarily pre-1945 U.S. art in France, Germany and England.<sup>10</sup>

In the last few years, historians of American art have begun to look not only across the Atlantic, but below the Rio Grande as well. As Katherine Manthorne noted in her assessment of the state of American art history, “The notion of Paris as the center of the art world and the New York-Paris axis as the principal pathway of transatlantic exchange is being amended.”<sup>11</sup> My dissertation is at the forefront of this new trend in American art that embraces a more global perspective with a focus on Latin America.<sup>12</sup> A few pioneering studies laid the groundwork for this new direction in American art. Among them, Katherine Manthorne's *Tropical Renaissance: North American Artists Exploring Latin America 1839-1879* illuminated the significant role South America played in inspiring some of the United States' most celebrated artists. James Oles' exhibition *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination 1914-1947* for Yale University Art Gallery revealed the many ways that Mexico has been visually represented for a U.S. audience. Years later, Krista Thompson followed a similar model of inquiry by examining how former British colonies Jamaica and the Bahamas have been packaged as

---

et.al., *American Artists in Munich: Artistic Migration and Cultural Exchange Processes*, (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> While Euro-centric in focus, *Internationalizing the History of American Art* does include a chapter on Canadian perceptions of pre-1945 U.S. art and another on the exchange of post-1945 U.S. art in New York, Paris and São Paulo. Barbara Groseclose and Jochen Wierich eds., *Internationalizing the History of American Art* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Katherine Manthorne, “Remapping American Art,” *American Art*, vol. 22, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 112.

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the most egregious omission from the study of American art has been the Latino contribution. Scholar and collector Tomás Ybarra-Frausto has argued that Latino art history is an integral part of and not separate from American art history and should be studied as such. While distinct from the current study which considers U.S. artists of European descent interpreting their southern neighbors, rather than Latino artists exploring their own experience within the United States or their relationship to the country of their ethnic origin, Ybarra-Frausto's work remains relevant here as it proposes a more expansive narrative for American art. See Tomás Ybarra-Frausto “Imagining a More Expansive Narrative of American Art,” *American Art*, vol. 19, no. 3, (Fall 2005), 9-15.

a picturesque tropical paradise in *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*. Most recently, the Smithsonian American Art Museum's symposium *Encuentros: Artistic Exchange Between the U.S. and Latin America* and the College Art Association's *Ambas Américas* panel looked at the inter-hemispheric flow of artistic influence from the late nineteenth century to the present. Similarly, the exhibition *Constructive Spirit: Abstract Art in South and North America, 1920s-50s* at the Newark Museum added to the discussion on the artistic connections between the Americas within a specific period and genre of painting.<sup>13</sup>

This dissertation adds to this incipient dialogue in a variety of ways. Firstly, this study only examines pre-1945 U.S. art. If earlier scholarship in the field privileged nineteenth-century exchanges between Europe and the United States, the current more global conversation tends toward the later twentieth century. This dissertation tells the complex historical and political backstory to exhibitions like those held at the Newark Museum and Yale University Art Gallery.

For the scholarship that does consider the nineteenth century, none has explored the specific places and artists analyzed herein. This study offers a fresh perspective on the work of iconic U.S. artists not traditionally included in the discussion on transnational exchange. In addition to these “heavy-hitters” of art history, visual culture features prominently in these pages. While classical art history concerns itself with the fine “high” arts, illustrations, ephemera and films, all appear here in order to present a more

---

<sup>13</sup> See Katherine Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance: North American Artists Exploring Latin America 1839-1879*, (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989); James Oles et al., *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination: 1917-1947* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993); Thompson, see footnote 5; Smithsonian American Art Museum *Encuentros: Artistic Exchange Between the U.S. and Latin America*, Symposium, October 5-6, 2011; College Art Association, *Ambas Américas*. Panel, February 2012; Mary Kate O'Hare, et.al., *Constructive Spirit: Abstract Art in South and North America, 1920s-50s*, (Los Angeles: Pomegranate Press, Ltd., 2010).

comprehensive assessment of how the U.S. public visually learned of and understood its closest southern neighbors.

### **Terminology**

This dissertation is in the broadest sense a study of American art. While traditionally this nomenclature only refers to the work of artists from the United States, this dissertation encompasses more than just one country. The United States is the point of departure for studying the political, economic and cultural conditions in Mexico, Central America and Cuba from 1875-1910. As one of the central themes of this study is how the United States conceived of these southern neighbors, it is only appropriate, however, that the majority of the artists discussed herein are from the United States.<sup>14</sup> When work by artists from outside of the United States is considered, it is to delve deeper into understanding the conceptions formulated by those northern travelers.

Given that the artists from all of these countries can be called “American”, this term is not used to describe only those from the United States. Whenever possible, artists are referred to by their specific nationalities and “American” is used inclusively to denote those from both the northern and southern continents. The question of when or when not to use “American”, is not simply a twenty-first century matter of semantics. The writer, politician and member of one of Boston's most influential families, Richard Henry Dana Jr. struggled with this same issue while traveling in Cuba in 1859. As he explained in his popular travel account *To Cuba and Back*:

I must guard myself, by the way, while here, against using the words America and American, when I mean the United States and the people of

---

<sup>14</sup> Although Eadweard Muybridge, the focus of chapter two, was English, he resided in the United States for nearly thirty years and his work circulated extensively throughout his adopted country.

our Republic; for this is America also; and they here use the word America as including the entire continent and islands, and distinguish between Spanish and English America, the islands and the main.<sup>15</sup>

Nearly 150 years later, I encountered this same dilemma in Chile. After calling myself an “Americana”, I was rebuked by a Chilean friend and reminded that this was too vague of a term as she too, even in that southern most country, was also an “Americana.”

It could be said then that the twenty-first-century Chilean thus shares with the nineteenth-century Cuban a desire to see himself as American while the United States of the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries sees itself as the only America, as evidenced by my and Dana's shortsightedness. As the following study shows, there were numerous occasions during the nineteenth century when the southern republics embraced the advances of their northern neighbor, encouraging a kinship between the two Americas. Throughout the nineteenth century, the United States did not distance itself from the people and places beneath the Rio Grande; on the contrary, the country enthusiastically cultivated “ties of singular intimacy,” with its “southern brethren.”<sup>16</sup> However, this binding together of the continents did not result in a united pan-America. As Dana's words imply, the idea that “they” were part of “us” was difficult for most in the United States to accept. Instead, the United States adopted a paternalistic approach to its southern neighbors that over time fostered resentment, rebellion and even revolution south of the border.

Two centuries later, there remain two clearly divided Americas: the United States

---

<sup>15</sup>Richard Henry Dana Jr., *To Cuba and Back* (1859), in Alan Ryan ed., *The Reader's Companion to Cuba* (San Diego, New York & London: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1997), 20.

<sup>16</sup> President William McKinley in his State of the Union Address, December 5, 1899. Quoted in Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, IX.

and Latin America.<sup>17</sup> For the purposes of this study, Latin America is not used beyond this introduction as this term did not come into common parlance until the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> Instead, present day Latin America is referred to as either “Spanish America” or the “southern” or “Spanish republics”, in keeping with nineteenth century terminology. For the sake of literary variety, occasionally “tropical America” appears throughout the text as well. As all of the places discussed in this dissertation do in fact lie between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, it is geographically accurate to refer to them as tropical America.<sup>19</sup>

This dissertation also uses the antiquated appellation “Spanish-American War” as opposed to the now accepted “War of 1898”, to describe the conflict over Cuba between the United States and Spain at the turn of the century. By calling it the Spanish-American War, I draw attention to the fact that this conflict was essentially a stand-off between the Old and New Worlds with Cuba serving merely as the backdrop, an assertion that Homer's *Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba* (fig. 4.3) brilliantly encapsulates. As chapters three and four demonstrate, Spain and the United States were the central protagonists of the war, with the ultimate victor using the events in Cuba to construct a new identity for itself.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Canada is of course also part of the Americas. While Canada's relationship with Latin America and the United States merits further investigation, the country is omitted from this study in an effort to concentrate on the United States' relationship with its southern neighbors. For a discussion of Canada's relationship specifically with Cuba see Nathalie Bondil, “Regarding Cuban Art,” 16-21 in Nathalie Bondil ed. et al. *Cuba: Art and History from 1868 to Today* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2008). For Canadian perceptions of U.S. art see Marilyn McKay, “The Absolute Past: Your Version or Ours? Canadian Constructions of Pre-1945 American Art History,” 95-107 in Groseclose and Wierich, *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> While not commonly used until the twentieth century, the term Latin America was coined in the nineteenth century during the reign of Napoleon III in order to create a connection between his empire and the New World by emphasizing their shared languages. See: Peter Hulme, “Expanding the Caribbean,” in *Perspectives on the 'Other America,'* 29.

<sup>19</sup> While the Tropic of Cancer runs through the middle of Mexico, all of the places discussed herein lie beneath that latitude.

<sup>20</sup> I am not the first to notice the significance of Cuba's omission from the term Spanish-American War.

## Chapter Summaries

Chapter one, entitled “An Intimate and Tumultuous Relationship: The Americas in the Nineteenth Century”, lays the groundwork for the dissertation by examining those critical events and policies that shaped the United States' relationship with Mexico, Central America and Cuba in the years leading up to my period of focus. Rather than a sweeping historical overview, I select key moments that are the foundation for understanding what transpired between the north and the south from 1875 to 1910. I begin in 1823 with the Monroe Doctrine, a definitive text that determined the United States' interactions with its southern neighbors throughout the nineteenth century. I conclude with the United States' role in the expulsion of French archduke Ferdinand Maximilian from Mexico and the annexation movements in Cuba. Along the way, I analyze a few paintings and photographs that enhance the telling of this historical narrative.

Chapter two, “Incidents of Travel in Central America and Mexico: Eadweard Muybridge's Southern Series,” borrows the first part of its title from the pioneering travel accounts of John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood. Seminal figures in the history of Mayan exploration by the West, Stephens and Catherwood created a national sensation in 1841 with the illustrated publication of their archeological findings in Central America and the Yucatán. Their work inspired and influenced subsequent travelers to the area, including Eadweard Muybridge, the focus of chapter two.

Within weeks of his exoneration for the murder of his wife's lover, Muybridge ventured south of the border to virtually untouched photographic terrain in Mexico and

---

Louis A. Pérez Jr.'s *The War of 1898* and Paul T. McCartney *Power and Progress: American National Identity, the War of 1898 and the Rise of American Imperialism* as well as many other works have addressed the political implications of the term.

Central America. What followed was a year-long southern sojourn in 1875 that resulted in more than one hundred photographs that circulated in the United States in the form of stereographs, magic lantern slides and albums of albumen prints. These images wielded great influence over viewers' conceptions of their "southern brethren" who remained largely unknown in the United States outside of Stephens and Catherwood's work. Indeed, in the words of one commentator, Muybridge's photographs were believed to be so accurate that they were described as the next best thing to actually being in those distant lands.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the historical significance of this series, these images are generally considered biographically. Most frequently, they are regarded as an anomaly in Muybridge's career, spurred by dramatic personal events, that allowed for catharsis and his eventual return to important photographic inquiry. I argue that on the contrary, Muybridge, shrewd businessman that he was, made a calculated decision to travel to Mexico and Central America at a time when an intimate and tumultuous relationship was developing between the United States and its closest southern neighbors. Through his lens, Muybridge carefully constructed a picturesque vision of the "southern brethren" as inhabitants of a land not only geographically but also temporally distant from the United States. This visual conception is a striking departure from Muybridge's earlier photographs of the western United States in which the land appears as a sublime panoramic expanse. I explore the ideological implications of Muybridge's decision to render the West as sublime but the South as picturesque during a period of increasing U.S. expansionism.

---

<sup>21</sup> The *San Francisco Bulletin* said of Muybridge's southern series, "Next to an actual visit to these countries, these images will be the most satisfactory." Quoted in Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West*, (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 2003), 267.



Moving chronologically, chapter three begins in 1885 in Cuba where Winslow Homer spent a brief but pivotal period painting the island's inhabitants and city streets. The title of the chapter, “The 'Red Hot' Encounter: Winslow Homer in the 'Eden of the Gulf’” refers to the disparity between what was expected of Cuba, long considered an “Eden of the Gulf” and the reality on the island, which Homer described as a “red hot” place roiling in a sea of instability. I argue that for Homer, an artist deeply engaged with the pressing political issues of his day, Cuba's allure lay in this turmoil and not, as scholars have assumed, in its reputation as a warm weather winter escape. My close examination of several of Homer's Caribbean watercolors, coupled with contemporary newspaper accounts and the artist's letters, tease out the differences between his Cuban images and those of the Bahamas and Bermuda. While scholarship has traditionally regarded these Caribbean watercolors as a uniform whole, I uncover the tension lurking in the Cuban scenes that contrasts sharply with the *joie de vivre* found in Homer's depictions of the Bahamas and Bermuda. Much like my analysis of Muybridge's photographs, my assessment of Homer's Cuban watercolors addresses more than a single artist's conceptions of the southern neighbors. I show how Homer's seemingly apolitical images are part of the larger national debate over Old versus New World power south of the border.

Although Homer stayed in Cuba for only a month in the winter of 1885, the island continued to occupy his thoughts for over a decade. That brief southern sojourn resulted in not only dozens of watercolors but also, what I consider to be pendants of the Spanish-American War, his *Gulf Stream* (fig. 4.2) and *Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba* (fig. 4.3). These two enigmatic paintings are the focus of chapter four.

The gray skies and subtle depictions of tension on the island seen in Homer's 1885 watercolors erupted into tempest-tossed seas and the explicit expression of conflict in these later two oils. In the years that had followed Homer's time in Cuba, preoccupation over the island had intensified in the United States. Spain's continued presence there derided U.S. strength in the Americas, thwarted commerce and violated the Monroe Doctrine. As the century drew to a close, the stand-off between the Old and New Worlds reached a climax in the press and cinema where readers and viewers were bombarded with accounts of Spanish oppression and Cuban suffering. In contrast to these shrill, bombastic depictions of war that portrayed the United States as the gallant savior, Spain as the evil villain and Cuba as the damsel in distress, Homer offered these two brooding paintings that call on the viewer to reflect on the consequences of the fall of empire. I argue that together *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba* emasculate the heroic image of the United States as promulgated by President William McKinley, newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst, artist Frederic Remington and the Edison film company.

The chapter concludes by examining paintings and photographs by artists who arrived in Cuba after Homer in the first decade of the twentieth century. With the threat of the Old World eliminated after the Spanish-American War, U.S. artists returned to visualizing the island as the Eden of the Gulf. Photographs by the Detroit Photographic Company and paintings by Willard Metcalf pictured Cuba as a pastel-colored pleasure paradise, complete with radiant sunshine, calm waters and European-inspired cafes that beckoned to wealthy northern travelers. This dramatic change in pictorial representation immediately following the Spanish-American War illuminates the significant role that

politics played in influencing artists' depictions of the island. By concentrating on politics, rather than economics as addressed in chapter two, chapters three and four thus address another facet of the visual manifestation of the United States' entangled relationship with its southern neighbors.

Chapter five, entitled “Picturing the 'Spain of 300 Years Ago': Mexico in Photographs and Paintings” picks up where chapter two left off by examining the next phase in the United States' relationship with its closest southern neighbor. Critical among the group of U.S. image-makers in Mexico was the photographer William Henry Jackson. Better known for his sublime images of the western United States, Jackson traveled extensively throughout Mexico photographing the growing railroad industry throughout the 1880s and 1890s. Jackson's work for his patron the Mexican Central Railway was later widely distributed by the Detroit Photographic Company. Much like his predecessor Eadweard Muybridge, Jackson portrayed the south as a picturesque land still defined by its past rather than its future.

Jackson's portrait of the south resonates with the Mexican paintings of Hudson River School artist Frederic Edwin Church. Having traveled extensively throughout Latin America in his younger years, Church chose Mexico as his destination of choice late in life, visiting the country fourteen times from 1880 to 1899. Despite Church's familiarity with Mexico, his paintings reflect the romantic imaginings of an artist and only distantly relate to reality. I investigate how Church sought to visually preserve Mexico as an unchanging picturesque place and how this vision was maintained long after his death by the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art which exhibited his *A View in Cuernavaca* beginning in 1915.

By examining these border crossings by a broad range of artists from 1875 to 1910, this dissertation reframes how internationalism in American art is conceptualized geographically and historically and uncovers the richness of an interchange between countries recently divided by that much-politicized line in the sand.

## Chapter 1

### **An Intimate and Tumultuous Relationship: The Americas in the Nineteenth Century**

The assertion of the Americans that the whole continent must become theirs, whose realization the celebrated Monroe theory strove to ensure against any interposition of the European powers, appears, in fact merely to express a law of nature, which must be accomplished sooner or later.

—“A Real American,” *Bentley’s Miscellany*, 1862

Almost immediately following the independence of the majority of Spain’s colonies in the 1820s, the new American republics became the object of U.S. political, economic and cultural desires.<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a concise history of the fraught relationship that developed between the United States, Mexico, Central America and Cuba in the aftermath of this wave of independence. Far from a complete chronicle of the complex events that transpired between the “Colossus of the North” and its closest southern neighbors, this chapter examines certain defining moments that illuminate the socio-historical conditions later encountered by the artists discussed in this dissertation.<sup>2</sup> This historical narrative is complemented by a few selected paintings, photographs and illustrations that visually express the increasing exchange between the Americas from the 1820s up until 1875, the year that begins the period of focus of this dissertation.

On September 15, 1821, Mexico, which then also included most of Central America and large portions of the western United States, officially gained its freedom

---

<sup>1</sup> By 1829, Mexico (which included most of present day Central America), Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Uruguay and Paraguay had all gained independence from Spain while Brazil had gained freedom from Portugal. In the Americas, only Cuba and Puerto Rico remained part of Spain after this date.

<sup>2</sup> The “Colossus of the North” became a popular term for the United States after the country’s victory in the Mexican-American War in 1848.

from Spain.<sup>3</sup> Yet the ensuing years of political instability left the nation vulnerable to intervention from the new power to the north. Two years after Mexican independence, United States President James Monroe staked his country's claim on the Americas in his seventh annual address to Congress on December 2, 1823. Monroe announced that "the American continents, by the free and independent condition, which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power."<sup>4</sup> He called for a unified America spread across two continents despite the many differences in language, religion, race and culture. Any form of aggression directed at the "southern brethren," as Monroe referred to the nascent American republics, would be considered an attack against the United States:

We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those [European] powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to *our* peace and safety... *We could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing* [the former Spanish colonies], or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power *in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.*<sup>5</sup>

The ideas espoused by Monroe in this speech, now known as the Monroe Doctrine, became the guiding principles in the United States' relationship with its southern neighbors in the nineteenth century. Monroe advocated a paternalistic pan-Americanism with all of the countries of North and South America united against the European powers, but with the United States always holding absolute authority. The Monroe Doctrine also engendered a belief in Manifest Destiny, the assumed divine right to territorial expansion.

---

<sup>3</sup> In 1821, Mexico was composed of present day: Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and parts of Colorado, Texas and Florida.

<sup>4</sup> President James Monroe's seventh annual message to Congress, December 2, 1823. Reprinted in David W. Dent, *The Legacy of the Monroe Doctrine* (Westport, CT & London: Greenwood Press, 1999), 379.

<sup>5</sup> Emphasis added. *Ibid.*, 380.

Manifest Destiny provided a justification for the aggressive acts of occupation and domination by the United States in western and southern lands outside of its borders. More than a century after Monroe's proclamation, the southern continent's presumed subordination remained (and many would say remains) an enduring belief in the North, as suggested by Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres-García's drawing *South America's Inverted Map* from 1936 (fig. 1.1).<sup>6</sup> In this image, Torres-García literally turned the world up-side-down, allowing South America to finally look down on North America. While a humorous gesture, Torres-García's map alludes to the North's perception of its authority over the South first voiced by Monroe in 1823.

The representation of the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny by artists archaeologists and adventurers traveling in Mexico, Central America and Cuba reached a climax in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Eadweard Muybridge, Winslow Homer, William Henry Jackson and Frederic Remington are just a few of the well-known artists from the United States who ventured south of the border to capture the southern neighbors with paint, pen and camera during this period. By examining the work of these artists in the following chapters as well as that of their predecessors here, we will see how these men visually constructed more intimate relations between the United States and its closest southern neighbors at a time when entangling political and economic alliances were being forged there as well.

---

<sup>6</sup> An important teacher and theorist as well as an artist, Torres-García was one of the first vociferous voices to call for an autonomous Latin American art movement. In 1935, he published his first manifesto entitled *The School of the South* in which he declared, "Our North is our South", an idea that *South America's Inverted Map* clearly illustrates. With this statement and the accompanying image (fig. 1.1), Torres-García encouraged Latin American artists to look toward their own traditions rather than those of Europe. While Torres-García was specifically referring to Europe in *South America's Inverted Map*, the implications of his work remain relevant to Latin America's relationship to the United States. At its essence, *South America's Inverted Map* is about repositioning Latin America so that the region no longer appeared subordinate, a common assumption at the time in both Europe and the United States.

### **History of a Relationship: The United States, Mexico and Central America**

The United States' "benevolent" role as protector of its "southern brethren," as expressed in the Monroe Doctrine, soon changed to that of conqueror with the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. After defeating Mexico, the United States forced the country to cede all of present-day California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and parts of Colorado, Texas and Florida. Coverage of the war was pervasive, as U.S. artist Richard Caton Woodville's 1848 painting *War News from Mexico* (fig. 1.2) illustrates. At the center of Woodville's composition is a newspaper held up by an astonished man, his mouth open and eyes bulging as he reads the shocking report. Indeed, the point of focus in the painting is not the central figure, but the newspaper itself: the gentlemen in the background strain to read over the central figure's shoulder while the man seated at right leads the viewer's eye directly toward the paper with his gesturing right hand. Even the peripheral members of the group, those not on the porch of the American Hotel, the black man and child and the woman peaking out from the window, listen to the report from the newspaper. The painting implies that everyone, even the marginalized members of society, both blacks and women, were made aware of the events of the Mexican-American War. Exhibited publicly in 1849 at the American Art-Union,<sup>7</sup> *War News from Mexico* demonstrates that Mexico had entered the collective U.S. consciousness by the mid-nineteenth century.

In addition to the press, daguerreotypists also played a role, albeit a limited one, in informing the public of the Mexican-American War. Notably, the daguerreotypes from

---

<sup>7</sup> Frances Pohl, *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 189.



this conflict constitute the first photographs ever produced of war.<sup>8</sup> With photography still in its infancy, the men who ventured to the Mexican frontier with cameras in hand faced many technical limitations. As these first cameras necessitated extremely long exposure times, daguerreotypists could only capture the conventions of war such as formal portraits of military officers or posed views of occupied towns. These staid images (fig. 1.3) failed to pique the public's interest, however, as men and women in the United States had come to expect the tantalizingly dramatic war narratives told in the press,<sup>9</sup> as Woodville's painting illustrates.

Ironically, fervor for the Mexican-American War began to wane as the United States solidified its victory. Woodville's *Old '76 And Young '48* (fig. 1.4) executed in 1849, just a year after *War News from Mexico*, suggests this shift in opinion. Although compositionally very similar, these two Woodville works show a distinct difference in mood with the excitement depicted in the earlier image replaced by a staid somberness in the later painting. In *Old '76 And Young '48*, Woodville once again presents a group of figures, this time in the sitting room of a wealthy home, listening intently to the events from the southern border, told, not second-hand through the reports from the newspaper, but by a soldier returned from the front. The young man sits with his left hand in a sling while gesturing enthusiastically with his right, regaling his family with war stories. The young soldier's narrative holds the attention of the middle-aged man and woman, presumably his parents, the young girl, the three servants peering in through a back door and even the dog at his side. Despite their concentration, not one of the figures joins in

---

<sup>8</sup> Martha Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 19. Other early photographs of war include those produced by Roger Fenton in Crimea in 1855. While perhaps better-known than the daguerreotypes of the Mexican-American War, Fenton's photographs were not produced until a full seven years later.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 20.

the young man's excitement; on the contrary, their faces reveal concern. Gravely looking away from the young man is Old '76, the Revolutionary War veteran, who sits in his throne-like chair resting on his cane. Well versed in the tragedies of war, the elderly gentleman seems to question the heroics of the young man's tale. The solemn mood, registered on the faces of all those who listen in the room, perhaps reflects the nation's ambivalent attitude toward the results of the war. The United States' victory in 1848 was not unanimously celebrated; indeed many Americans voiced outright concern.

Abolitionists feared the new Mexican territories would become slave holding states while their opponents worried that the country's new dark-skinned citizens would "contaminate" the U.S. population.<sup>10</sup> Woodville's painting, rather than glorifying the triumphs of war, expresses the uneasiness associated with the United States' expanded territory and its absorption of its "southern brethren."

Apprehension soon changed to joy for many Americans, however, as one newly obtained province literally turned the nation into a gold mine. The discovery of gold in California in 1849, the year following the close of the war, led many in the United States to embrace their growing country while only exacerbating Mexico's humiliation. The resulting gold rush led Americans not only west but south as well. Forty-niners looking for the quickest route to California journeyed to the Isthmus of Panama where they could take a steamship to the Atlantic side, travel by land across the narrow Isthmus and then board another steamship bound for the Pacific coast, thus bypassing the more arduous journey by land across the entire United States. By 1854, this southern phenomenon had become so apparent that U.S. diplomat Ephraim George Squier commented:

Not among the least of the results which have followed upon the

---

<sup>10</sup> Pohl, 188.

acquisition of California, and the discovery of its golden treasures, is the tropical direction which has incidentally been given to the American enterprise. Regions before unknown, or but vaguely known through the wild tales of buccaneers...these strange regions have now become familiar alike to the dwellers on the arid shores of New England and on the banks of the turbid Mississippi.<sup>11</sup>

By mid-century, tropical America had become familiar, even as it remained “strange”, to the thousands of northern adventurers hoping to strike it rich in California.

Along with the flood of forty-niners, came the first wave of U.S. capital ventures to the lands south of the Rio Grande. Cornelius Vanderbilt, for example, created a new transit route through Nicaragua from the Atlantic side town of San Juan del Norte to the Bay of Fonseca on the Pacific coast. Vanderbilt improved channels and docks and built roads, eventually creating a land passage that allowed travelers to reach the Pacific or Atlantic Oceans in less time than the more traditional Panamanian route. Not to be outdone by Vanderbilt, William H. Aspinwall, founder of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company with service from Panama to San Francisco (to be discussed at greater length in chapter two with regard to Eadweard Muybridge’s southern sojourn), became one of the wealthiest men in the Americas by completing the Panama Railroad in 1855 with passage from ocean to ocean in just a few hours.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, new modes of travel through Panama became the topic of frequent discussion in the press. As early as 1859, *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* relayed, “Every body [sic] ought to know what the Panama Railroad is, and where it is...Every body [sic] may have had either a neighbor or

---

<sup>11</sup> Ephraim George Squier, “San Juan de Nicaragua,” *Harper’s Monthly* 10 (December 1854): 50. Quoted in Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance*, 42-43.

<sup>12</sup> Manthorne, 47.

a friend, and perhaps dozens of them, who have traveled over that road.”<sup>13</sup> Published in a generalist’s journal, with wide circulation throughout the United States, this article attests that by mid-century the majority of the magazine’s readers were familiar with Panama through either first or second hand accounts.

The desire to build an inter-oceanic canal to increase international trade also furthered U.S. interests in its southern neighbors. By the 1850s, the United States already had determined that it would build a canal through Central America, of which it would be sole proprietor. After more than a half century of plans with four proposed routes: two through Panama, one through Nicaragua and one through Mexico, the Panama Canal was finally completed in 1914. The continued debates surrounding the location and construction of the canal drew U.S. attention south even after the gold rush years.

Along with the economic incentives that brought U.S. citizens to Central America and Mexico in the nineteenth century, opportunities for political gain furthered the southern migration as well. The first wave of filibustering in Central America began in the 1850s with the notorious expeditions of William Walker. Walker commanded a small group of U.S. adventurers into Nicaragua, which was then embroiled in civil war. After forming a political alliance with the Nicaraguan Liberals, Walker used his own army to gain control of the country and maintain a revolutionary government there from 1855-1857. Walker’s bellicose ventures earned him recognition and enabled him to convince hundreds of southern U.S. slave owners to settle in Nicaragua with promises of land in a slave republic.<sup>14</sup> Eventually driven out of Nicaragua in 1857, Walker returned to Honduras in 1860 with the intention of forcefully creating and governing a Central

---

<sup>13</sup> Oran, “Tropical Journeyings,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 18 (January 1859): 146.

<sup>14</sup> Lester D. Langley & Thomas Schoonover, *The Banana Men: American Mercenaries and Entrepreneurs in Central America, 1880-1930* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1995), 6.

American empire.<sup>15</sup> Killed almost immediately upon his arrival in Honduras, Walker's death made news not only in the United States but in England as well, where the London journal *Bentley's Miscellany* reported, "The man whose life-history forms the subject of this paper appeared for a while predestined to change the destinies of Central America. William Walker, the filibuster, however, met his death, and the central provinces of America have for the present fallen back into their old hopeless and stagnant condition."<sup>16</sup> According to the author, William Walker, "A Real American", as the title of the article proclaims, was the hope of Central America; without him, the region barely could exist. William Walker's exploits, however, are just one example of the broader aspirations of the United States at the time. Indeed, this British author declared that it was not only the United States' desire, but also the country's destiny to control the whole of the Americas:

The assertion of the Americans that the whole continent must become theirs, whose realization the celebrated Monroe theory strove to ensure against any interposition of the European powers, appears, in fact merely to express a law of nature, which must be accomplished sooner or later.<sup>17</sup>

Despite this author's imperial assertions, U.S. hegemony over the Americas was tested on numerous occasions. Central Americans and Mexicans resisted the economic and political invasions by their northern neighbor both militarily and ideologically throughout the nineteenth century. In addition to Mexicans and Central Americans, Europeans also threatened U.S. influence in the region. Ironically, at the time that *Bentley's Miscellany* published its obituary on Walker in which it announced the United States' predestined supreme control over the Americas, France already occupied Mexico.

---

<sup>15</sup> For a full account of William Walker's expeditions in Central America see William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua* (New York: S.H. Goetzel & Co. 1860).

<sup>16</sup> "A Real American," *Bentley's Miscellany*, 51 (1862): 210.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

As men like William Walker sought to stake their claim in Central America, the United States fought to eradicate European powers from “their” lands in Mexico as well.

Knowing that the United States, preoccupied in civil war, would not invoke the Monroe Doctrine, France quietly established an overseas empire in Mexico beginning in 1862. While unpaid debts were used to justify France’s actions, it was clear from the beginning that obtaining a new French colony while simultaneously containing American authority were the real motivating factors. Just as the U.S. government envisioned an America joined together against Old World dominance, some Europeans also advocated a similar strategy. French resident of Mexico Mathieu de Fossey clearly articulated this message in his 1857 publication *Le Mexique*, a popular reference work for European diplomats.<sup>18</sup> De Fossey asserted that England and France should ally to support Mexico against the United States as they had supported Turkey against Russia.<sup>19</sup> France’s reign in Mexico, however, was short lived; in 1867, just three years after Napoleon III persuaded Ferdinand Maximilian to become France’s emperor of Mexico, the former archduke of Austria was executed.

Maximilian’s demise was the result of France’s abandonment and Mexican military strength accompanied by surreptitious U.S. intervention. As the Civil War drew to a close, the United States’ interests shifted further south once again. Aware of France’s presence in their own backyard, many expressed a desire to assist Mexico, thereby vanquishing the European power, as observed in the following quotation:

A railroad from Point Isabel to Brownsville and from Matamoros...to Monterrey would turn the whole of the supply of the rich and fertile country into American hands...The northeastern states of Mexico,

---

<sup>18</sup> John Elderfield, *Manet and the Execution of Maximilian* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2006), 35.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

encouraged by our sympathy, would put forth new efforts and...would throe off the yoke of the [French] invaders and reassert their ancient liberties. With the rebellion [of the Confederacy] vanquished, the Union reestablished, never again to be assailed, and Mexico once more a free and vigorous republic, what power or combination of powers would dare stop the western course of Empire?<sup>20</sup>

The author of this quotation summarizes the foundation of the United States' relationship with Mexico: by supporting Mexico, the United States would bolster its own economic and political power. It is this strategy of opportunism, rather than neighborly altruism, that led the United States to covertly supply Mexico with money, men and arms to fight the French. Beginning in 1865, leading financiers such as William Aspinwall began buying federal Mexican bonds with guarantees of land south of the Rio Grande in the event of default.<sup>21</sup> The Mexican government then used the funds obtained from the sale of bonds to pay for weapons and military supplies, often purchased directly from U.S. manufacturers. In addition, U.S. Army General Lew Wallace organized groups of Civil War veterans to fight alongside Mexican troops. After the expulsion of the French, all of these officers sought compensation from Mexico by applying for land concessions.<sup>22</sup> Thus, it seems a desire for more land south of the border prompted the involvement of both U.S. soldiers and financiers in Mexico.

Edouard Manet immortalized France's demise in Mexico in five compositions all entitled *The Execution of the Emperor Maximilian* from 1867 to 1869.<sup>23</sup> In each variation, Manet shows French Emperor Maximilian together with two of his generals in front of a

---

<sup>20</sup> John Austin Stevens, *The Valley of the Rio Grande, Its Topography and Resources* (New York: William C. Bryant, 1864), 21 & 32. Quoted in Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, 9-10.

<sup>21</sup> For a detailed account of the United States' involvement in financing Mexico's war with France, see Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, 2002.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>23</sup> Manet created three large paintings, only two of which are complete, along with one small painted study and one lithograph of this subject.

firing squad while spectators peer over a wall. Manet's first interpretation of the event is the most abstract, with Maximilian and his men dissolving into a cloud of gunpowder (fig. 1.5). The firing squad is a mass of dark bodies wearing sombreros, a detail Manet no doubt intended to identify the executioners as Mexicans. In the two later paintings, Manet lightened the complexions of his executioners and replaced their hats and uniforms with ones more typical of the French military (figs. 1.6 & 1.7). This transformation, scholars have noted, seems to indict the French, rather than the Mexicans, in Maximilian's death.<sup>24</sup>

Manet's *Executions* were never shown in France during his lifetime; the artist's candid depictions of his nation's humiliating defeat were perhaps too much to bear for its citizens. Notably, Manet exhibited one painting from the series in New York at the Clarendon Hotel in 1879 and at the Studio Building in Boston in 1880 (figs. 1.7 & 1.8).<sup>25</sup> Viewed in an American context, Manet's image of death and defeat translates into a victorious history painting. After all, the execution of Maximilian represented the overthrow of the Old World by the New World. Although exhibited more than ten years after the event, the painting must have roused pan-American sentiments, especially in New York, where vociferous rallies had been held,<sup>26</sup> condemning the French invasion. Given the United States' active role in supplying Mexico with money, men and arms to

---

<sup>24</sup> Elderfield, 85. Abandoned by the French government once it became clear that his authority was compromised, Maximilian surrendered to the more powerful army of Mexico's deposed president Benito Juárez.

<sup>25</sup> Manet's friend the struggling opera singer Emilie Ambre apparently convinced the artist to give her the painting in order to exhibit it in the United States where she was traveling to perform as Carmen in the eponymous opera. Until then, it had remained in his studio. With her professional career waning in Europe, Ambre may have thought that her association with the by then well-known artist would ingratiate her with her new audience abroad. Manet was likely easily persuaded, however, as he held a great admiration for the American public, stating, "That democracy of the United States is amazing! It produces men who not only have the qualities of our old French culture, but who have an instinct for what is modern. They have a feel for it...Where the devil did they get it?...In the future they will stagger the Old World." See Beth Archer Brombert, *Edouard Manet: Rebel in a Frock Coat* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 378. Despite Manet's belief in the discerning taste of the U.S. public, the painting, according to Brombert, did not elicit notable critical attention.

<sup>26</sup> Elderfield, 57.



expel the French, it is plausible that the anonymous members of the firing squad may have been interpreted as U.S. soldiers in New York and Boston. The painting selected for exhibition was not the early image showing ruffian Mexicans as executioners, but rather the final composition with the whiter soldiers, men who could have easily been construed as U.S. citizens.

In this painting, however, it is not only the firing squad that undergoes an ethnic transformation; significantly, Maximilian, the former archduke of Austria, becomes Mexican. Wearing a sombrero and holding the hands of his two darker skinned generals, who were in fact Mexican, Maximilian appears to have renounced his European identity. Manet's *Executions* thus seem to call history into question. On July 1, 1867, in Querétaro, Mexico, who was firing on whom? Was Mexico firing on France? Was France firing on France? Was the United States firing on France? Or, was the United States firing on Mexico? If the final composition raises the last two questions, then Manet illustrated the triumph of the Monroe Doctrine: the United States' expulsion of European powers from the Americas and its simultaneous domination over its southern brethren.

In the succeeding years, the United States expanded its economic and political influence in Mexico and Central America. These efforts were aided in large part by Mexico's dictatorial president Porfirio Díaz. During his reign from 1876-1911, Díaz opened his country to U.S. investors who funded aggressive building campaigns in railroad and mining development, communication systems and the privatization of agriculture. While Díaz's policies improved infrastructure, they also led to what became known as "the peaceful conquest" of Mexico by the United States.<sup>27</sup> Central America suffered a similar fate as its coffee, fruit and transportation industries came under the

---

<sup>27</sup> The origins and significance of this term are discussed at greater length in chapter two.

ownership of U.S. entrepreneurs at the end of the nineteenth century. As Mexico and Central America became inextricably bound to the United States, the educated U.S. public became increasingly interested in its southern neighbors. The work of Eadweard Muybridge, Frederic Edwin Church and William Henry Jackson, in collaboration with the Detroit Publishing Company, discussed in the following chapters, fulfilled this northern desire to visually know Mexico and Central America.

### **Cuba and the Caribbean**

The United States' interest in the Americas, however, did not stop at the borders of Mexico and Central America. The Caribbean, and in particular Cuba and Puerto Rico, were the object of U.S. desires as well. Spain's continued control over Cuba and Puerto Rico, even after the independence of the South and Central American republics and Mexico, ridiculed the authority of the Monroe Doctrine. Just as France's occupation of neighboring Mexico had ignited a pan-American fervor in the United States, Spain's presence in the Caribbean also roused cries for the eradication of the Old World from New World terrain. As in the case of Mexico, however, the United States' ardent southern brotherly love for the Caribbean was far from altruistic. With regard to Cuba, John Quincy Adams declared the island to be "of transcendent importance to the commercial and political interests of our Union."<sup>28</sup> Following this sentiment years later, the *New York Daily Times* reported:

Our readers have undoubtedly made themselves familiar, through the public journals, with the history and result of the late invasion of Cuba... There has been a good deal of sympathy throughout the United States with the project of revolutionizing Cuba. The island is large, rich,

---

<sup>28</sup> Worthington Chauncey Ford ed. *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, vol. 7 (New York: Macmillan, 1913-1917), 372. Quoted in Schoultz, 125.

and of undeveloped resources. Americans naturally think that it is not well taken care of now; and they crave the task of cultivating its soil, governing its people and pocketing its rich returns.<sup>29</sup>

With candid prose, this writer explains that Cuba's true appeal is its economic promise.

While Spain's banishment from the island would signal the political might of the New World over the Old, the immediate benefit would be the rich returns that the United States could reap. By comparison, Spain's occupation of Puerto Rico, a smaller island with limited resources, troubled the United States much less. Not until the turn of the century with the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, did the United States turn its attention towards Puerto Rico, and it did so only then as a supplement to the grand prize of Cuba.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Cuba was the target of numerous annexation attempts by the United States. The invasion referred to in the above quotation from the *New York Daily Times*, for example, was a failed effort by the U.S. in August 1851 to capture the island by force from Spain. Three years earlier, the United States had tried for a peaceful annexation of Cuba, offering Spain \$100 million for the island. Spain declined the bid and the United States upped its price to \$130 million in 1854. Once again, however, Spain rejected the proposition; almost half a century would pass before the United States could wrest control of the island from its Old World foe in the Spanish-American War.

Despite a litany of attempts by the United States to obtain the island, Cuba remained just out of reach throughout the nineteenth century. After the purchase of Spanish Florida in 1819, Cuba, less than one hundred miles from this new coast, appeared as the next logical acquisition of the rapidly expanding United States. Thomas

---

<sup>29</sup> "Cuba," *New York Daily Times*, (September 18, 1851): 2.

Jefferson expressed the advantages of obtaining Cuba in 1823:

I candidly confess that I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of states. The control of which, with Florida Point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico, and the countries of the Isthmus bordering on it, as well as all of those whose waters flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well-being.<sup>30</sup>

Jefferson's dream of acquiring this gateway to the Gulf and the Isthmus, however, was not to be. The United States of course spread west not south; the next addition to the "system of states" came in the form of the huge tract of land seized from Mexico in 1848 after its defeat in the Mexican-American War.

Although unable to officially gain control of Cuba, the United States still wielded a great deal of influence on the island despite Spain's best efforts to monitor its rebellious Caribbean colony. As early as the mid-eighteenth century, when the United States was itself still a colony, trade between Cuba and New England flourished. In 1778, one of the period's most respected artists, John Singleton Copley, painted what was then the most notorious moment in Cuban mercantile history (fig. 1.9). Copley's *Watson and the Shark* depicts the sensational, yet true, story of the 1749 shark attack of the young Brooke Watson. Although only fourteen at the time, Watson had by then been traveling regularly to Cuba from Boston. Orphaned at an early age, Watson came under the charge of an entrepreneurial relative in Boston, who regularly sent the youth on mercantile trips to the West Indies.<sup>31</sup> Despite a harrowing incident that ended with Watson losing his right foot to a large white shark in Havana Harbor, the boy went on to follow in the family business, becoming a prominent figure in the West Indian trade industry.

---

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Joseph Smith, *The United States and Latin America: A History of American Diplomacy, 1776-2000* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 30.

<sup>31</sup> Albert Boime, "Blacks in Shark-Infested Waters: Visual Encodings of Racism in Copley and Homer," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art*, 3 (Winter 1989): 24.

First exhibited in London, *Watson and the Shark* presented a dramatic portrait of Cuba as a dangerous land surrounded by waters infested with man-eating sharks. This painting also, however, tells the story of the relationship developing between the Spanish and British colonies. In an effort to avoid the heavy taxes and trade restrictions imposed on them by their Mother Countries, Cuba and the thirteen colonies went into the smuggling business together. Cuba supplied New England's voracious appetite for sugar and molasses and in return, the island surreptitiously received boatloads of slaves, brought from Africa by way of the Middle Passage.<sup>32</sup> Given the pervasiveness of these trading practices at the time, it is highly likely that Watson participated in this illicit exchange between Cuba and Boston.<sup>33</sup>

By the time Copley painted this event in 1778, however, trade relations between Cuba and New England had drastically changed. Spain granted the former thirteen colonies legal access to its Cuban ports shortly after they had gained independence from Britain. Such openness was short lived, however; in just a few years Spanish authorities re-imposed heavy restrictions on its colonies, effectively ending legal trade with all countries except Spain.<sup>34</sup> Yet, commerce between the United States and Cuba proved stronger than the stifling hand of Spain. Despite Spain's strident efforts, by the mid-nineteenth century, the United States had become Cuba's single most important trading partner.<sup>35</sup> Upon visiting the island in 1859, the writer Anthony Trollope noted, "The trade of the country is falling into the hands of the Americans from the States. Havana will

---

<sup>32</sup> New England merchants purchasing sugar and molasses from Cuba hardly ever went straight to the island during this period; more often than not, they followed a triangular route known as the Middle Passage. Most ships leaving from New England went first to western Africa where they exchanged commodities for slaves. From there, they often sailed to Cuba where the slaves were sold for sugar and molasses before returning to New England.

<sup>33</sup> Boime, 25.

<sup>34</sup> Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

soon become as much American as New Orleans. It requires but little of prophecy to foretell that the Spanish rule will not be long obeyed by such people.”<sup>36</sup>

As Spain’s control over trade on the island weakened, so too did its influence on other aspects of Cuban life as well. Meanwhile, the United States’ presence in Cuba only grew stronger as Trollope had observed. Merchant ships from the United States that docked in Havana Harbor brought not only commodities and slaves but North American culture and pastimes as well. By the 1870s, baseball had replaced bullfighting as the island’s most popular sport.<sup>37</sup> This shift away from a Spanish sport and towards one developed in the United States is a cultural manifestation of the political and economic changes already occurring on the island.

More than just a stop-over point for merchant ships, Cuba, by the latter half of the nineteenth century, had also become home to a large population of U.S. citizens. After the defeat of the Confederacy in the Civil War, a wave of immigrants from the southern United States arrived on the island. There, the former plantation owners could continue their way of life, as slavery remained legal in Cuba until 1886. This migration route went in the reverse direction as well: as former U.S. slave owners ventured south, many wealthy Cubans went north in search of better education opportunities. Spain’s neglect of the Cuban education system over the years had left the island with severely inadequate primary schools and almost nonexistent instruction in secondary and higher education. Hoping to improve the lives of their children, those families that could afford the tuition, often sent their boys to schools abroad. Notably, Spain, despite its shared language with Cuba, was not the education destination of choice for most families. More often than not,

---

<sup>36</sup> Anthony Trollope, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, (Leipzig Bernhard Tauchnitz: 1860), 114-115.

<sup>37</sup> Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, 71.

the Creole elite sent their children to schools in the United States. While there, the majority of these young men developed a bond with their northern neighbor, leading them to either stay on in the United States after completing their studies or to return to their homeland with newly adopted ideas and customs that eventually became absorbed into the fabric of Cuban life.<sup>38</sup> What began as a movement to improve the education of Cuba's youth eventually became a powerful catalyst for transforming society. The journalist John S. Thrasher noted the impact of the island's U.S. educated youth in 1851, when he stated:

Resemblance [between Cuba and the United States] has been increased by the proximity and frequency of intercourse between the two countries, by an identity of social institutions and aspirations, and by the large number of Cuban youth educated there...The ideas and manner of thought with which they return to the island, are more American than Spanish, and these are continually extended by their influence and their example.<sup>39</sup>

Foremost among the "ideas and manner of thought" that these young men brought back with them was a desire for annexation to the United States. Years of failed colonial policies had left most Cubans dissatisfied with Spanish rule but simultaneously uncertain of their own independence. Union with the United States seemed to offer strong leadership without repressive governance. Momentum for secession and annexation began to build, eventually culminating in 1868 with a rebellion that initiated the Ten Years War. The rebel Cuban leaders declared their ultimate goal to be independence from Spain and annexation to their northern neighbor.

In the United States, however, the prospect of a new Caribbean territory met with a similar ambivalence to that which had pervaded the nation after the Mexican-American

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 69-70.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Louis Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality and Culture*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 67.

War. Cuba was a Spanish-speaking island with the majority of its population of either African or mixed race origins. Fears of “polluting” the predominantly Anglo-Saxon race in the United States surfaced, leading many to embrace the idea of a Cuban colony but not Cuban statehood. Such concerns became irrelevant, however, in 1878 with the conclusion of the Ten Years War whereby Cuba remained a colony of the Old World rather than the New.

The question of who would govern Cuba and in what capacity persisted throughout the rest of the century. Before the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, this discussion transpired predominantly in the U.S. press rather than in the arts. Only a limited number of U.S. artists ventured to the island or thought to picture it before 1898, and those who did primarily produced prints of everyday life that circulated in illustrated books. Samuel Hazard’s popular 1871 publication *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*, for example, provided its U.S. readership with a guided tour of the island accompanied by the author’s own prints. Hazard’s genre scenes portrayed Cuba as a land of exotic abundance (fig. 1.10) populated by hedonistic dark-skinned inhabitants (fig. 1.11), conceptions popularized by previous and subsequent authors as well, as will be further explored in chapter three.

A number of U.S. photographers also traveled to Cuba at mid-century, but unlike their counterparts in Mexico who arrived to cover the war, these men worked primarily as portraitists for the local elite.<sup>40</sup> George Washington Halsey opened the first commercial

---

<sup>40</sup> Although the Ten Years War could have brought U.S. photographers to Cuba, Spain prohibited foreigners from documenting the event. As Cuban photographer Rufino del Valle Valdés has explained, “A group of Spanish photographers authorized by the colonial authorities had the sole rights to capture graphic evidence of the conflict. Their work was published in two albums *Álbum Histórico Fotográfico de la Guerra*...and *El Álbum de la Paz, occurencias de la campaña de Cuba durante el Tratado de Paz*.” Rufino del Valle Valdés “Photography and Reportage in the Early Twentieth Century (1895-1930)” in Bondil, *Cuba Art and History from 1868 to Today*, 28.



photographic studio in Havana as early as 1841.<sup>41</sup> Halsey's business must have been a success, as similar studios established by U.S. photographers appeared in that city in the following decades. Samuel A. Cohner, for example, operated a studio in Havana from 1863-1869 where he produced studio portraits for a Cuban clientele (fig. 1.12). Images like those by Cohner and Halsey, however, most likely did not circulate in the United States.

The Spanish-American War, however, brought a deluge of images of Cuba to the United States. Winslow Homer, Childe Hassam, Frederic Remington and Thomas Edison are just a few of the men who pictured the island immediately before, during and after the war. Two of the following chapters explore this portentous moment in the United States' relationship with Cuba, its most coveted Caribbean neighbor, through the work of these men. Notably, this decisive period coincides with the years in which the United States strengthened its ties with Mexico and Central America as well. Together, the collective paintings, photographs and illustrations examined herein, whether of Cuba, Mexico or Central America, from different perspectives and for different reasons, attest to the rising desire in the United States to construct an American identity through what amounted to a colonization of the southern republics, a practice guided by the principles of the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny. Much like Torres-García's drawing (fig. 1.1), this dissertation thus inverts the mapping of American art by illustrating what the North took from the South in an effort to establish itself as a New World power.

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 2

### **Incidents of Travel in Central America and Mexico: Eadweard Muybridge's Southern Series**

From his oval portrait on the title page of his 1876 album of photographs of Mexico and Central America, Eadweard Muybridge presides over a seemingly haphazard photomontage of palm trees, thatched huts, coastal waters, semi-nude dark-skinned workers, and crumbling churches (fig. 2.1). In this authoritative portrait, Muybridge appears pensive, dignified and refined, and not as the tormented, irascible figure history would have us remember him as. This careful crafting of his personal image mimics the title page itself with its deliberate arrangement of photographs that conveys the impression of a place that is at once exotic and unruly as well as cultivated and controlled. Beneath his signed portrait, Muybridge placed his calling card, drawing further attention to his role as author of the album's narrative.

While the story told in the pages that follow is distinctly Muybridge's own, evidence suggests that viewers accepted these photographs as fact rather than one individual's interpretation. Indeed, as one viewer commented on the series, "Next to an actual visit to these countries, these images will be the most satisfactory."<sup>1</sup> The albums, along with the accompanying stereographs and magic lantern slides from Muybridge's year-long southern sojourn in 1875, form one of the earliest and largest collections of photographs of Mexico and Central America. Given the rarity of photographs from south of the border during this time, this body of work played a crucial role in defining tropical America for its U.S. audience.

---

<sup>1</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, May 18, 1878. Quoted in Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 2003), 267.

Before Muybridge's photographs of Mexico and Central America, illustrated travel accounts were the primary source of information on the region available in the United States. Principal among this genre were the books of amateur archaeologists John Lloyd Stephens and Frederic Catherwood. First published in the 1840s, Stephens' and Catherwood's embellished tales and detailed engravings of mysterious ruins and strange inhabitants of unruly wildernesses (fig. 2.2) captivated a wide readership in the United States and ignited widespread interest in the people and places south of the Rio Grande. Consequently, their work became the definitive source of information for anyone venturing south later in the century.<sup>2</sup>

Muybridge's southern series retold Stephens' and Catherwood's tales from the seemingly more credible and convincing perspective of the camera. Like the enterprising duo before him, Muybridge cast Mexico and Central America in a bygone era replete with dilapidated ruins emerging from dark dense forests. Yet, Muybridge's work diverges from Stephens' and Catherwood's in that it addresses the new period of increased U.S. economic expansionism in tropical America. Thus, unlike Stephens and Catherwood, Muybridge also presented the region as a land of future promise, fulfilling the expectations of viewers seeking their fortunes south of the border. Through his lens, Muybridge translated Mexico and Central America into landscapes, contained and controlled by a picturesque aesthetic, that oscillate between the past and future.

Previous studies of these images have cast Muybridge in a passive role as the

---

<sup>2</sup> To give just one example of the accepted authority of Stephens' and Catherwood's work, Muybridge's contemporary, the English photographer and archeologist Alfred Maudslay professed in his influential 1902 publication of his five-volume tome on Mayan ruins, *Biologia Centrali-Americana*, "Stephens and Catherwood were the pioneers in this work, and their very accurate and beautifully illustrated works will remain of the greatest value to the student of American Archeology." Alfred Percival Maudslay, *Biologia Centrali-Americana*, vol. 1 (London: R.H. Porter, 1902), 3.

recorder rather than the creator of his subject, an idea which the artist himself refutes from his authoritative position on the meticulous title page of his album. Photographs, despite their ostensible accuracy, are of course never mere illustrations of reality but active participants in constructing their subjects. In the case of the southern series, a close reading of Muybridge's photographs reveals less about the people and places they picture and more about the U.S. audience's expectations of its "southern brethren" in the late-nineteenth century. Muybridge's series thus serves not as a window for simply gazing at the past, but as a portal for seeing how photographs constructed a vision of Mexico and Central America for U.S. audiences at a significant moment in intra-American relations.

### **Crossings**

Critical discussions of Eadweard Muybridge's work most often focus on his "instantaneous" motion studies first made public in 1878. After years of experimentation, Muybridge captured in photographs what the naked eye could not—the split second movements of a horse at full gallop. Muybridge's first collotype of the horse *Occident* proved definitively that all four of the animal's legs were off the ground at a specific point in its galloping stride. This image spawned numerous investigations by artists and scientists alike, all of whom questioned the veracity of visual perception. Furthermore, Muybridge's later invention of the zoopraxiscope inspired other innovators of the day, such as Thomas Edison, to explore ways of projecting moving images, eventually leading to modern cinema.<sup>3</sup> Although Muybridge worked as a prolific and successful

---

<sup>3</sup> In February 1888, Muybridge visited Thomas Edison at his laboratory in West Orange, NJ to suggest that they work together to combine the zoopraxiscope with Edison's phonograph. While this partnership never came to fruition, this meeting was most likely the catalyst for Edison's interest and later developments in motion pictures. For a more complete discussion of this auspicious moment in the history of film see:

photographer for more than a decade before these technical advances, the artist's later career has overshadowed his earlier contributions.

Biographers, on the other hand, have fixated on Muybridge's personal history rather than his photographs when considering his younger years.<sup>4</sup> The dramatic events of Muybridge's life do provide ample fodder for such an analysis. In 1860, Muybridge survived a tragic stagecoach crash while traveling across the United States. The head trauma he endured from the accident may have caused irreparable damage to his brain, resulting in symptoms for which Muybridge would become infamous: emotional outbursts, inappropriate social behavior, risk taking and loss of inhibition.<sup>5</sup> Muybridge's mercurial temperament erupted in October 1874 when he shot and killed his wife's lover. Although the crime was a premeditated murder, a jury acquitted Muybridge, finding his actions justified in preserving his honor. Within weeks of his exoneration, Muybridge was on a ship headed for Central America and Mexico, where he remained for the better part of a year. A few months into his journey, Muybridge's wife died, relieving him of the burden of alimony. Shortly thereafter, Muybridge had his son, whom he believed to be the offspring of his wife's lover, placed in an orphanage.

Such details convey the impression of a man ruled by his emotions. These life experiences, according to one recent study, informed the way in which Muybridge

---

Charles Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon: Edwin S. Porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) as well as Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen until 1907*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990).

<sup>4</sup> See for example: Brian Clegg, *The Man Who Stopped Time: The Illuminating Story of Eadweard Muybridge: Pioneer Photographer, Father of the Motion Picture, Murderer* (Washington D.C.: Joseph Henry Press, 2007); Robert Haas, *Muybridge: Man in Motion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Gordon Hendricks, *Eadweard Muybridge: The Father of the Motion Picture* (New York: Viking Press, 1975); Solnit, *River of Shadows*, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> For a more complete description of how this incident may have affected Muybridge's personality see: Arthur P. Shimamura, "Muybridge in Motion: Travels in Art, Psychology, and Neurology," *History of Photography*, 26 no. 4 (Winter 2002): 341-350.

pictured Mexico and Central America. In describing Muybridge's southern series, one scholar asserted that “Some of these photographs have an elegiac quality, as though Muybridge hoped that by peering into the deep past he would be able to transcend his own recent suffering.”<sup>6</sup> This interpretation defines the southern series as an emotional or personal response by the photographer to his subject. Yet, Muybridge was more the shrewd businessman acutely aware of his times than he was the sentimental artist.

Shortly after arriving in the United States in 1867, Muybridge opened his own photographic studio in San Francisco. The subjects he photographed during these early years—the giant sequoia trees and plunging waterfalls of Yosemite Valley, the new railroad lines and Native American Indians—reflect his awareness of the U.S. public’s fascination with the wild yet developing western frontier. Working tirelessly to promote his photographs, Muybridge issued brochures that offered his images for sale in various forms and sizes, from the nineteenth century’s popular stereocards, that created the effect of a three dimensional image when viewed through a stereoscope, to mounted prints priced well “within the reach of those having only moderate resources.”<sup>7</sup> He noted the important artists and connoisseurs who had already subscribed to his Yosemite Valley series and appealed to patriotic sentiments, calling his images “marvelous examples to which photography can attain in the delineation of sublime and beautiful scenery, as

---

<sup>6</sup> Philip Brookman, “Helios: Edweard Muybridge in a Time of Change,” in Philip Brookman, et. al., *Helios: Edweard Muybridge in a Time of Change* (Washington DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art, in association with Steidl, 2010), 71.

<sup>7</sup> Much of the primary material cited in this chapter, including the above quotation, is taken from an archival album of clippings that Muybridge put together during his lifetime. The album includes brochures that he produced as well as contemporary press clippings that review his work. Commonly referred to as the Kingston Scrapbook, the original album is in the Central Library, Kingston-Upon-Thames, England. A photocopy version, of the Kingston Scrapbook is also available at Illinois State University, Milner Library, Special Collections and Rare Books. The above citation is taken from an unpaginated brochure in this photocopied version of the Kingston Scrapbook.

exemplified in our wonderful valley.”<sup>8</sup> Like many photographers of the time, Muybridge attempted to package himself as the image-maker of the “great American” landscape, bringing to the public affordable card-sized views of the nation’s natural treasures.

Among Muybridge’s western subjects was the Grizzly Giant in the Mariposa Grove in the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. Made famous by the photographer Carleton Watkins in 1865, the Grizzly Giant, believed to be the largest and oldest tree in the United States at the time, stood two hundred sixty-one feet tall with a ninety-four foot circumference.<sup>9</sup> Muybridge’s stereograph of the Grizzly Giant from 1867 (fig. 2.3) shares many similarities with at least one of Watkins’ mammoth prints from two years earlier (fig. 2.4). Both images show the sequoia from the same angle and approximately the same distance, which emphasizes the characteristic markings of the tree’s gnarled trunk as well as its tremendous size. Stretching beyond the picture plane, the Grizzly Giant dwarfs the man at center in Watkins’ print as well as the couple on the left in Muybridge’s stereograph. As Watkins was widely regarded as the preeminent California landscape photographer at the time, it is hardly surprising that Muybridge appears to have modeled his sequoias after the works of his contemporary. Muybridge’s photographs of the great trees, however, never reached the stature of those of Watkins; Muybridge would have to venture farther afield than California before he was to make a name for himself.

While Watkins remained in the continental United States, Muybridge journeyed north to still more unfamiliar terrain. *The San Francisco Bulletin* reported in October 1868 that “Watkins lately photographed the mountain and river scenery of Oregon and

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. While quite a self-aggrandizing statement, it should be noted that Muybridge first promoted his photographs under the pseudonym Helios. In this statement, it would have thus appeared as if Muybridge was endorsing not his own work but that of Helios, once again demonstrating his business acumen.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Hutchinson, “They Might Be Giants: Carleton Watkins, Galen Clark, and the Big Tree,” *October* 109 (Summer 2004): 47. Dimensions noted on Muybridge’s stereograph.

Washington; and now Muybridge brings us Alaska.”<sup>10</sup> Perhaps not to be overshadowed by Watkins, Muybridge traveled to Alaska in 1867, becoming one of the first photographers to arrive in the new territory, then recently acquired by the United States from Russia. Muybridge documented Alaska’s commercial and strategic military potential for General Halleck, in command of the U.S. Military Division of the Pacific.<sup>11</sup> In addition to serving a national purpose, the images from this voyage garnered Muybridge a modicum of financial success and recognition. Four years after his return from Alaska, Muybridge continued to offer these photographs for sale and newspapers applauded them for “giving a far better idea of the aspects of the country than a volume of reading material.”<sup>12</sup> By capturing the country’s newest possession, Muybridge once again attempted to cast himself as a great American photographer able to express what words could not. Given Muybridge’s penchant for photographing the expanding U.S. borders, it is no wonder that his attention eventually migrated south of the Rio Grande to the nation’s next seemingly uncharted frontier.

Muybridge’s year-long journey through Central America and Mexico, beginning on February 27, 1875, is generally characterized as an escape from his ruined domestic life and potential professional demise after the murder of his wife’s lover.<sup>13</sup> One of Muybridge’s first biographers, Robert Haas, for example, stated:

During the long, depressing weeks of custody in the Napa jail, Muybridge formed a plan for an extended photographic tour of Central America and

---

<sup>10</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin* October 9, 1868. Quoted in Solnit, 262.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Haas, *Muybridge: Man in Motion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 19.

<sup>12</sup> Kingston Scrapbook, unpaginated. *Alaska Herald*, July 9, 1872.

<sup>13</sup> While there is no consensus in the literature, scholars assume Muybridge’s date of departure was either February 19 or February 27, 1875. This author believes the correct date of departure was the 27<sup>th</sup> as all ships from San Francisco to Panama were delayed on the 19<sup>th</sup> perhaps due to a massacre near Acapulco, Mexico, one of the stops along the Pacific Mail’s route. The next ship for Panama left on February 27, giving Muybridge enough time to arrive in Panama by mid-March when the *Panama Star* reported his arrival. I thank Dr. Robert Chandler, Senior Research Historian, Wells Fargo Bank, for this information.



across the Isthmus of Panama. Upon his release, friends encouraged the plan as a way to resolve his domestic situation.<sup>14</sup>

Although Muybridge's departure was quite timely, it appears that the planning for this trip began months before his incarceration. In an interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle* in December 1874, Muybridge explained that before the murder in October he was attempting to organize his voyage south:

I had been negotiating with the Pacific Mail Steamship Company for a trip down the coast on one of their steamers to photograph the coast. I had my arrangements completed, and expected to go in a short time, but the agent of the company delayed from time to time and I did not get away as I expected to.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the voyage south does not seem to be the rash decision of a desperate man. On the contrary, Muybridge carefully planned his journey, suggesting his belief in its importance for his career. The organization and execution of such a trip was no small task. According to the English adventurer and writer John Boddam-Wetham, who also trekked through Central America and Mexico on virtually the same route as Muybridge in 1875, the expedition was exceedingly difficult. As Boddam-Wetham recorded in his published travel account, "Something under a week is the usual time taken from port to the city [Guatemala City], a distance of barely thirty leagues, i.e. ninety miles."<sup>16</sup> This painstakingly slow pace resulted from the irregularities of the road, as Boddam-Wetham described, "At one moment our wagon was up to the axle in deep ruts, at the next jolting over great rocks and stumps of trees. Still, in spite of heat, dust and dislocation, there was a great charm in the novelty of the scene."<sup>17</sup> For a photographer, hauling bulky cameras,

---

<sup>14</sup> Haas, 79. Muybridge's lawyer apparently advised him not to accept posted bail and thus he remained in prison in the weeks leading up to the trial.

<sup>15</sup> "The Fatal Amour," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 21, 1874): 3.

<sup>16</sup> John Boddam-Wetham, *Across Central America* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1877), 12.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

boxes of fragile glass plate negatives, and developing equipment, such a journey must have been all the more challenging.

Muybridge's willingness to undertake this demanding expedition may have been prompted by a commission from the Pacific Mail Steamship Company.<sup>18</sup> The Pacific Mail enjoyed a lucrative near-monopoly over cross-country travel in the United States for both people and freight before the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. By 1875, however, the company was in dire financial straits, as the new railroad obviated the need for Pacific Mail's ocean routes from San Francisco to Panama and from Panama to New York. With its business plummeting, the Pacific Mail searched for ways to increase the number of passengers to its southern destinations.<sup>19</sup> The company seized upon the booming coffee industry in Central America, particularly Guatemala, as an opportunity to entice entrepreneurs to travel to the region aboard its ships. Pacific Mail may have considered photographs an important tool in promoting a positive image of prosperous coffee plantations that would in turn boost business. Muybridge's experience documenting Alaska's commercial potential made him an ideal candidate for such a commission.

Yet, in the interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle* in December of 1874, there is the suggestion that Muybridge proposed the expedition to Pacific Mail. In fact, it may be that Muybridge ventured south on his own without an official contract. After his return from Central America and Mexico, Muybridge apparently threatened to sue Pacific

---

<sup>18</sup> The majority of the literature on Muybridge assumes that the photographer's trip south was a commissioned assignment for Pacific Mail intended to present enticing images of the coffee industry in order to spark the interest of speculative investors.

<sup>19</sup> The Pacific Mail's rapid decline in business led the company to lobby Congress for federal subsidies, which were granted and then revoked after an investigation revealed rampant bribery of government officials. In the winter of 1875, just as Muybridge was leaving on his supposedly Pacific Mail sponsored trip, scathing editorials and cartoons began circulating in the press criticizing the company's dubious practices.

Mail for not remunerating him for his expenses and photographs. Muybridge eventually dropped the lawsuit, however, as he was unable to prove that he produced his work under a contract with the company.<sup>20</sup> While it remains ambiguous as to whether or not Muybridge actually procured a contract or the Pacific Mail reneged on its agreement, what is clear is that the company was not Muybridge's only intended audience.

By reproducing his photographs in the form of affordable stereographic cards and thrilling magic lantern slide shows, Muybridge made his work available to more than just the wealthy entrepreneurs that Pacific Mail hoped to target. No doubt aware of the interest in Mexico and Central America generated by earlier writers and illustrators in the region, Muybridge, astute businessman that he was, capitalized on the public's curiosity. Drawing upon the work of others who preceded him in tropical America, Muybridge furthered the already well-established myth that the United States' southern neighbors existed in a land mired in the past. Rather than examining Muybridge's series as an anomaly in the photographer's professional life spurred by dramatic personal events and supported by sponsorship from the Pacific Mail, these images are first considered here as part of a trajectory of work by artists traveling south of the border. My discussion analyzes how Muybridge's photographs added to this rich visual history and how his picturesque perspective south of the border became particularly resonant in an expansionist age.

### **The Origins of Muybridge's Voyage**

Muybridge's journey of 1875 is part of the legacy of the Prussian explorer

---

<sup>20</sup> According to Gordon Hendricks, a notation on the verso of the title page of Muybridge's 1876 album in the collection of the Iris & B Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University by the former director states, "He attempted to coerce the Pacific Mail S.S. Co. to buy the book from him on the basis of a reported contract...he threatened suit but the proof was too conclusive." Hendricks, 90.

Alexander von Humboldt. Humboldt traveled extensively throughout the Spanish colonies from 1799 to 1804 and later wrote voluminously on his observations from this time abroad. Hailed by many during his lifetime as a latter day Christopher Columbus with his “rediscovery” of the American continent, Humboldt played a crucial role in defining the New World for his European readership. Indeed, post-colonial scholar Mary Louise Pratt has described Humboldt as “the single most influential interlocutor in the process of reimagining and redefinition that coincided with Spanish America’s independence from Spain.”<sup>21</sup>

In his illustrated book *Political Essays on the Kingdom of New Spain*, Humboldt portrayed Mexico, then a colony of Spain, as a land with a rich past and promising future but without a viable present.<sup>22</sup> This dense text offers detailed accounts of Mexico’s pre-Columbian history as well as its future mining potential, yet only tangentially considers contemporary society. Humboldt based his conceptions of Mexico on his year of study there in 1803 where he spent the majority of his time isolated from the outside world, researching in libraries and discussing history and geography with academics. Despite Humboldt’s selective analysis, his extrapolations were enormously influential. To give just one example, his descriptions of development prospects in Mexico produced a British investment boom there in silver mining. When the boom quickly went bust, investors blamed Humboldt for exaggeration.<sup>23</sup> The silver mining mishap, however, did little to discredit the Prussian’s vaunted reputation; in the years that followed, Humboldt’s

---

<sup>21</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), 112.

<sup>22</sup> The original text was first published in French as *Essai politique sur le royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne avec un atlas physique et géographique* in 1811; its popularity led to an English translation by the publisher, Longman of London later that same year.

<sup>23</sup> Pratt, 131.

characterization of Mexico as both past and future continued to reverberate in the work of later nineteenth-century northern explorers.<sup>24</sup>

Given Humboldt's renown in Europe, it is entirely plausible that Muybridge's introduction to Mexico came years before he ever ventured south, while still living in England before 1855, or upon his return to London in 1860 until 1866. If not first encountered in England, Muybridge's exposure to Humboldtian ideas may have come second-hand through the popular publications of the U.S. travel writer and amateur archeologist John Lloyd Stephens and his cohort, architect and illustrator Frederick Catherwood. While Humboldt achieved far less recognition in the United States, where the cost of printing his thirty-volume illustrated texts prohibited widespread circulation, his writings were influential among U.S. adventurers already interested in the tropics. Stephens' and Catherwood's first book, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* [sic], for example, pays homage to the prominent Prussian explorer, declaring in the introduction, "the first new light thrown upon this subject as regards Mexico was by the great Humboldt."<sup>25</sup> Published in 1841, *Incidents of Travel* details the lively events of Stephens' and Catherwood's expedition in Mexico and Central America. More adventure story than a Humboldtian pedantic, academic tome, *Incidents of Travel* brought a colorful glimpse of tropical America to households throughout the United States. The book became an immediate best-seller with 20,000 copies sold in just three months.<sup>26</sup> Among its many complimentary reviews, Edgar Allan Poe said of *Incidents of*

---

<sup>24</sup> For a more in-depth examination of how Humboldt conceptualized Mexico see Andrew Sluyter, "Humboldt's Mexican Texts and Landscapes," *The Geographical Review* 96 no. 3 (July 2006): 361-386.

<sup>25</sup> John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and the Yucatan* [sic], vol. 1 (New York: Harper's Brothers, 1858 [orig. pub. 1841]), 98.

<sup>26</sup> Karl Ackerman, "Introduction" in John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993 [orig. 1841]), 6.

*Travel*, “No one can deny [Stephens’] personal merits as a traveler, his enthusiasms, boldness, acuteness, courage in danger—perseverance under difficulty. His narration is also exceedingly pleasant, frank, unembarrassed and direct without pretensions or attempt at effect.”<sup>27</sup> Stephens’ conversational tone, coupled with Catherwood’s finely detailed steel engravings, created a portal for the average American into a captivating and unfamiliar world or, as another reviewer observed, “Mr. Stephens...takes us by the hand and leads us into the midst of the ruins themselves.”<sup>28</sup> By creating a transporting tale with low production costs, well within the means of the middle-class reading public,<sup>29</sup> Stephens and Catherwood captured what Humboldt could not: popular American appeal. The success of *Incidents of Travel* led to another sojourn in Mexico for the pair and two more books: *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* [sic] published in 1843 and the much more elaborate, large format *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* [sic] from 1844, featuring twenty-five color plates and text solely by Catherwood.

Like the Prussian predecessor they greatly admired, Stephens and Catherwood presented Mexico and Central America as a lost civilization, brimming with peculiar relics but devoid of a thriving contemporary society. In all three of their publications, the local population appears infrequently in Catherwood’s images. When men and women are present, they usually serve as a mere framing device, providing a sense of scale for the ruins, the main subject of the compositions. The detail with which Catherwood copied

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 8. One wonders how Edgar Allen Poe, or the majority of U.S. citizens for that matter, having never been to Central America, Chiapas or the Yucatán, would know whether or not Stephens and Catherwood were creating an “effect” for the sake of a good story and profitable book sales.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander V. Blake, *The New York Review* 9 (1841): 225.

<sup>29</sup> Tripp Evans, *Romancing the Maya: Mexican Antiquity in the American Imagination, 1820-1915* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004), 45.

the monuments and temples contrasts with these anonymous and interchangeable figures.<sup>30</sup> In the engraving labeled *Circular Building at Mayapán* (fig. 2.5), Catherwood captures the particularities of the ruin with the crack at center and the specific varieties of vegetation that grow from the sides and dome of the structure. By contrast, he depicts the men at the base of this building with no distinguishing features. Dark-skinned and wearing only long sleeved shirts and wide-brimmed hats, these figures are a generic representation of the native, appearing peripherally throughout Catherwood's work, changing only slightly in dress. In another engraving labeled *Interior of eastern building, Monjas, Uxmal* (fig. 2.6), an anonymous, scantily clad man stands hunched in the doorframe of a crumbling ruin, providing a clear sense of the height of the triangulated stone ceiling. Just outside the left doorway, Catherwood has placed another non-descript figure, who serves as a marker of scale for the elaborate building seen in the distance. Conversely, Catherwood showed an endless fascination for probing the intricacies of the ruins. Indeed, no two ruins look the same throughout the explorers' three generously illustrated volumes, with even the same site appearing completely different depending on Catherwood's artistic interpretation. In the engraving labeled *Stele C at Copán* (fig. 2.7), Catherwood lavished all of his characteristic attention to detail on the fallen monument, capturing the human-like face and complex inscriptions on the stone. This same subject appears almost unrecognizable, however, in *Views of Ancient Monuments* (fig. 2.8). In the latter image, the broken idol, as Catherwood titled the fallen structure, lies in a pool of water as if it were struck down by a bolt of lightening, the only source of illumination in the otherwise dark and impenetrable forest. Alongside the tumbled relic, a wild animal

---

<sup>30</sup> Contemporary scholars still regard Catherwood's work as accurately illustrating the glyphs inscribed on the stone monuments even if the settings in which these ruins appear are often highly romanticized. See Tripp Evans, *Ibid* and Ackerman, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatán*.

crouches, the only inhabitant in this secluded world. These theatrical additions in *Views of Ancient Monuments* heighten the drama of the text while simultaneously shrouding Mexico and Central America in a mysterious past.

Years later, Muybridge constructed a similar narrative in photographs. In many instances, Muybridge's images could serve as the photographic companion to both volumes of *Incidents of Travel*. Indeed, his photographs were used to illustrate a 1993 reprinting of *Incidents of Travel in Central America*.<sup>31</sup> Muybridge also found many of the sites throughout the region that had captured the attention of Stephens and Catherwood to be compelling photographic subjects. Lake Atitlán, for example, Guatemala's large, majestic lake surrounded by soaring volcanoes, features prominently in the *Incidents of Travel* series as well as Muybridge's photographs. Stephens gushed over the beauty of the lake, exclaiming, "We came out upon the lofty table of land bordering the Lake Atitan [sic]. In general I have forborne attempting to give any idea of the magnificent scenery amid which we were traveling, but here forbearance would be a sin."<sup>32</sup> Stephens' words were necessary as Catherwood's illustrations were reserved only for the ruins, not the landscapes they encountered. For all of the dedicated readers of Stephens' and Catherwood's work wondering what a traveler could find beyond the ruins in Central America and Mexico, Muybridge's numerous photographs of Lake Atitlán would have provided the answer.

In addition to their shared interest in specific sites, Stephens, Catherwood and Muybridge all posited the same picture of Mexico and Central America as a land mired in the past where contemporary men and women appear as props alongside crumbling ruins.

---

<sup>31</sup> Ackerman, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*.

<sup>32</sup> Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America*, vol. 1, 316.



Muybridge's stereograph and albumen print of the Church of San Miguel (figs. 2.9 & 2.10) exemplify this conception. In these images, the abandoned and roofless church of San Miguel, overrun by invasive plants, stands perched on a desolate hill. The barely visible dark-skinned figures on the steps (fig. 2.9) and in the archway of the church (fig. 2.10) appear diminutive and inconsequential in comparison with the formidable church rising above them. Much like the indigenous men who populate Catherwood's illustrations, the seated woman and standing naked child beside her remain anonymous in Muybridge's photograph, as if they were included merely to provide a sense of scale.

Similarly, in a magic lantern slide of the Church of San Domingo (fig. 2.11), barely-visible, dark-skinned men, women and children appear in the interior of the devastated edifice. The drastic difference in scale between the church and the figures creates a greater degree of drama not seen in the images of San Miguel. Photographed from a low vantage point, San Domingo takes on monumental proportions; the central arch looms overhead, enveloping the composition, and dwarfing the figures below. As an abandoned church, San Domingo likely had few visitors, suggesting that Muybridge deliberately brought these people to this cavernous space as props for his photograph. By deliberately removing these individuals from their contemporary contexts and placing them within this skeletal relic, Muybridge cast them in a bygone era. Almost fading into their surroundings, they appear as apparitions, hovering between the past and present and once again, playing only a supporting role for the central protagonist of the church, much like the figures in Catherwood's illustrations.

Ironically, Muybridge, Stephens, Catherwood and even Humboldt all arrived south of the border with explicit instructions to document the current state of affairs in

Mexico and Central America. Muybridge, as discussed earlier, traveled abroad ostensibly to promote the ailing Pacific Mail Steamship Company. Yet, his numerous photographs of San Miguel, San Domingo and other abandoned churches reveal his resolute fixation on constructing an image of a land and its people that belonged to the past. Likewise, Stephens and Catherwood neglected their responsibilities as U.S. diplomats in Central America and instead dedicated themselves to their personal interests: uncovering America's cultural history.<sup>33</sup> The two men claimed the ruins they encountered south of the border as the United States' own in an effort to present the young nation as a cultural competitor with Europe. By declaring the sites south of the Rio Grande to be "American," the enterprising duo produced a cultural heritage for the United States equivalent, they asserted, to that of Egypt, Greece or Italy. Throughout their texts, Stephens and Catherwood compare the sites they explored with those found in the Old World. As Catherwood wrote in *Views of Ancient Monuments*:

Like the same art amongst the ancient Egyptians, [painting] was applied for purposes of architectural decoration. In the blending of various colours, [the Mayans] had attained a step beyond the practices of that nation [Egypt], approaching more nearly to the less severe style of art found in the frescoes of Pompeii and Herculaneum.<sup>34</sup>

The pair even went so far as to attempt to purchase these "American Pompeiis" and "Herculaneums". In *Incidents of Travel in Central America*, Stephens boasts of buying

---

<sup>33</sup> Stephens was appointed U.S. Representative to the Central American Federation and assigned with the task of finding the region's primary seat of power, establishing formal diplomatic relations with the United States and securing the ratification of a trade agreement with the new government, duties which he seems not to have actually pursued, see Evans 49. By 1823, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica had separated from Mexico to form the Central American Confederation of Nations but by 1838 the federation dissolved into civil war. The majority of nations that today compose Central America did not establish independence until after 1848 at the end of that civil war. At the time of Stephens' and Catherwood's publication, however, Central America was still conceived of in the United States as one country despite the breakdown of the Confederation. For this reason, Stephens, in his foreword to *Incidents of Travel*, refers to Central America as a country, as do the book's many reviewers.

<sup>34</sup> Catherwood, 5.

the entire site of Copán for fifty dollars. He reports that he solidified the deal by donning a diplomatic coat with a profusion of large eagle buttons; it was the buttons, he quips, that convinced the owner to sell the site.<sup>35</sup> Whether fact or fiction, the message of this account is clear—Central America was no match for the powerful United States symbolized by the eagles.

Although not officially authorized to purchase archeological sites on behalf of the United States, Stephens evidently saw such an act as a patriotic duty in winning the culture war with Europe. As he proclaimed in *Incidents of Travel in Central America*:

The casts of the Parthenon are regarded as precious memorials in the British Museum, and casts of Copán would be the same in New York... Very soon their existence would become known and their value appreciated, and the friends of science and the arts in Europe would get possession of them. They belonged of right to us... I resolved that ours they would be.<sup>36</sup>

Stephens' and Catherwood's unsuccessful attempt to entomb Copán in New York illustrates the larger national desire to define Central America and Mexico as the cultural past of the Americas in order to strengthen the United States' own pedigree.

At the same time as the *Incidents of Travel* series, William H. Prescott published his enormously successful book *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, which advanced a similar historicizing portrait of the lands south of the Rio Grande. Prescott, a blind academician who relied on the research of his assistants, wrote from memory and had never been to Mexico, presented his work as rigorous scholarship although he often indulged in colorful narration. With his vivid tales of abundant riches and harrowing human sacrifice, Prescott created a tantalizing image of Mexico that captivated a wide

---

<sup>35</sup> Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America*, vol. 1, 127.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 115-116.

readership.<sup>37</sup> Catherwood further disseminated Prescott's dramatic accounts by excerpting sections of his book for inclusion in *Views of Ancient Monuments*. In his introduction, Catherwood included the following description from *History of the Conquest of Mexico*:

They led him to the sacrificial stone...On this the prisoner was stretched. Five priests secured his head and limbs, while the sixth, clad in a scarlet mantle, emblematic of his bloody office, dexterously opened the breast of the wretched victim with a sharp razor of itzli...and inserting his hand in the wound, tore out the palpitating heart.<sup>38</sup>

Following this gruesome account, Catherwood concludes, "We thus see the dreadful purposes to which these edifices were applied."<sup>39</sup> By selecting this particular passage as the definitive explanation for the purpose of the monuments in *Views of Ancient Monuments*, Catherwood not only grossly oversimplifies his subject, he conflates history and myth as well. Prescott's descriptions are derived from the suspect reports from the Spanish Conquistadores of the Aztecs, whereas Catherwood's images are of Mayan ruins. For Catherwood, and thus for his readers, all Mesoamerican civilizations were the same; they were a brutal bellicose society as described by their colonizers, retold by Prescott and then visually represented by the British architect and illustrator.<sup>40</sup>

Prescott's as well as Stephens' and Catherwood's books maintained their

---

<sup>37</sup> Prescott's work influenced the representation of Mexico by visual artists as well. Thomas Crawford's marble sculpture *Mexican Girl Dying* of 1848 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is believed to be inspired by *History of the Conquest of Mexico*. Crawford's work presents a sensuous depiction of death; a semi-nude woman wearing a feather headdress and skirt lies splayed across the ground. With her head thrown back and her eyes closed, she clutches at her breast with one hand while holding a crucifix in the other. The work clearly references the conversion of Mexico's native population to Christianity by the Spanish conquistadors, a central theme of Prescott's text. Given this precedent, it is not unlikely that Prescott's influence extended to other artists such as Muybridge as well.

<sup>38</sup> Catherwood, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Although recent scholarship has proved that Mayans practiced human sacrifice, evidence suggests that these rituals were not performed on the same massive scale of those of the Aztecs. Furthermore, Prescott's and subsequently Catherwood's attention to this topic distorts understanding of what were much more complex civilizations.

popularity decades after their public debuts with *Incidents of Travel*, republished in 1858 and 1871 (just four years before Muybridge's departure), and *History of the Conquest of Mexico* republished in 1873 and again in 1883. Even into the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries, new editions of these works have continued to appear, attesting to their enduring readership. Not surprisingly, the success of Stephens' and Catherwood's series and Prescott's historical epic inspired like-minded adventurers to travel to Mexico and Central America in subsequent decades.

### **The Next Generation of "Perfect Illusionists"**

Developments in photography allowed these later explorers to show the region in a way in which it had never been seen. In *Incidents of Travel in Central America*, Stephens had lamented the limitations of the artist's hand in accurately revealing the true treasures of Central America and Mexico. As he said of Catherwood's struggles to render that which they saw before them:

The designs were so intricate and complicated that he had great difficulty in drawing. He had made several attempts, both with the camera lucida and without, but failed to satisfy himself or even me, who was less severe in criticism. The 'idol' seemed to defy his art.<sup>41</sup>

Such a statement implies the need for a new art form that would allow for the "accurate and faithful representations"<sup>42</sup> that Catherwood had unsuccessfully sought to create in his work.

Photography, according to early enthusiasts of the new medium, provided the means for capturing just what Stephens described. Oliver Wendell Holmes, inventor of

---

<sup>41</sup> Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America*, vol. 1, 120.

<sup>42</sup> Throughout the texts, Stephens reminds his readers that their work is both accurate and faithful, as he asserts in *Incidents of Travel in Central America*, "I have now given engravings of all the most interesting monuments of Copán, and I repeat, they are accurate and faithful representations." *Ibid.*, 166.

the most common form of the stereoscope in the 1860s, extolled the triumph of photography in comparison to images produced by the hand of the artist in his influential essay “The Stereoscope and the Stereograph,” first published in 1859. Holmes declared, “The very things which an artist would leave out, or render imperfectly, the photograph takes infinite care with, and so makes its illusions perfect.”<sup>43</sup> While an idealized notion of photography, posited by a man who had much to gain from the sale of his new invention, this description exemplifies the kind of promise that this still developing medium seemed to offer.

By Holmes’ day, “wet-plate” negatives aided in the production of these “perfect illusions.” First developed in the 1850s, and the universal method for making negatives up until 1880, the wet-plate improved image clarity and allowed for increased reproduction, thus resulting in the wider dissemination of one’s work. Moreover, wet-plate negatives decreased exposure time, freeing photographers from the laborious and staid daguerreotype studio portraits.

Désiré Charnay, one of the earliest photographers to use the wet-plate negative in Mexico, followed quite literally in Stephens’ and Catherwood’s footsteps, capturing many of the same sites the pair had previously illustrated, but this time with the ostensible precision of the camera. A Frenchman who settled in the United States as a young man, Charnay first traveled south of the border in 1857 after procuring a diplomatic position from France’s Ministry of Public Instruction. In 1862, Charnay published forty-seven of his photographs from this trip in an album entitled *Cités et ruines américaines*. Although Charnay hoped to achieve Stephens’ and Catherwood’s wide readership, the expense of

---

<sup>43</sup> Oliver Wendell Holmes, “The Stereoscope and the Stereograph,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 3 (June 1859): 738-748. Quoted in Charles Harrison, ed., *Art in Theory 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 670.

printing his individual photographic plates proved prohibitively expensive.<sup>44</sup> *Cités et ruines américaines* was not printed in English until after the success of his second trip and later publication *The Ancient Cities of the New World* (1887), containing more economical photogravure illustrations.<sup>45</sup> Thus, Charnay's images, along with his controversial writings on Mexico as America's ancestral homeland, were not widely known in the United States until the close of the nineteenth century. Similarly, images of Mesoamerican ruins by fellow Frenchman turned U.S. citizen Augustus Le Plongeon also did not reach the United States until the 1880s despite the archeologist's presence in Mexico beginning in 1873.<sup>46</sup>

Charnay and Le Plongeon are frequently cited as the two earliest and most influential photographers of tropical America. While the two men were among the first photographers working in the region, their images did not shape the public's impressions of Mexico and Central America until years after their return. Thus, despite the previous ventures of the daguerreotypists during the Mexican-American War (as discussed in the previous chapter), and the explorations of the archeologists Charnay and Le Plongeon, Muybridge entered virtually untouched photographic terrain in 1875. Yet, given the popularity of Prescott's and Stephens' and Catherwood's work in the United States, Mexico and Central America had already become synonymous with the past for those in the North by the time of Muybridge's arrival there. Perhaps hoping to achieve the same level of recognition and financial reward as Prescott, Stephens and Catherwood, Muybridge produced a vivid narration in photographs, providing the "perfect illusions"

---

<sup>44</sup> Evans, 109.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Le Plongeon published two illustrated books on Mesoamerica in the United States during the 1880s. In 1896, he published *Queen Mío and the Egyptian Sphinx*, which included photographs from his expedition in Mexico.

for the myths already entrenched in the U.S. imagination.

Yet, Muybridge's "perfect illusions" still needed to be carefully constructed; as convincing as this new medium was, there remained what Martin Berger has described as a "fragility to photographic fictions".<sup>47</sup> Despite the assumption of many modern scholars, nineteenth-century viewers of photography were in fact aware of the subjectivity of the camera.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, in 1858, Carleton Watkins had had to defend the accuracy of his photographs of the West in court, demonstrating his audience's understanding that the photographic image was not simply an objective representation of reality. Watkins' work eventually came to be accepted as "true", however, because, as Berger argues, his photographs reinforced his viewers' beliefs about the subjects pictured.<sup>49</sup> Muybridge was able to achieve credibility for his southern series for the same reason: by supporting, rather than departing from, the conceptions established by Humboldt, Stephens, Catherwood and Prescott, Muybridge produced a persuasive portrait of Mexico and Central America as a land mired in the past and ripe for economic conquest.

### Muybridge's Southern Series

Muybridge returned from his southern journey with hundreds of glass plate negatives, which he then printed in various potentially profitable forms. He produced several photographic albums, all entitled *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama; and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*. Each contain between sixty and one hundred forty-three albumen prints (approximately 5 ¼ x 9

---

<sup>47</sup> Martin Berger, *Site Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 44.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>49</sup> See Ibid, "Landscape Photography and the White Gaze," 42-79.



¼ inches).<sup>50</sup> Organized by subject, the albums open with images of ruined churches, followed by volcanic and lake landscapes, village scenes and finally coffee plantations. These albums were distributed to business associates and individuals who had helped Muybridge during his difficult trial. Among them were: his defense attorney F.E. Johnston; the widow of his second defense attorney Wirt Pendegast; Leland Stanford, then governor of California, for whom Muybridge was already working to develop his motion studies; and the President of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company.

Muybridge also offered his photographs for sale as a portfolio of one hundred twenty prints (at approximately 6 x 8 inches), for one hundred dollars in gold.<sup>51</sup> A sampling of these prints won Muybridge a gold medal at the Eleventh Industrial Exhibition in San Francisco in 1876. There the jury proclaimed:

These last productions [his Central America and Mexico series] of his camera surpass all his previous efforts, and their examination renders it difficult to believe, that with our present knowledge and taste, photography can make much further progress towards absolute perfection.<sup>52</sup>

The San Francisco jury no doubt defined photographic “perfection” as images that exhibited not only outstanding technical clarity but exceptional verisimilitude as well. As Holmes and other proponents of photography at the time avowed, the strength of the new medium lay in its ability to accurately capture reality in a way that the painter’s hand could not. According to the ex-patriot newspaper *Panama Star*, Muybridge’s photographs wielded great influence for just that reason. As the newspaper declared:

We can therefore congratulate all Central Americans, that in Mr.

---

<sup>50</sup> There were between eight and eleven of these albums produced; there is no consensus in the literature as to the exact number.

<sup>51</sup> Kingston Scrapbook, brochure, unpaginated.

<sup>52</sup> Kingston Scrapbook, clipping, unpaginated, labeled: “Report of Jurors, Eleventh Industrial Exhibition, San Francisco 1876.”

Muybridge they have an artist who will do for their interesting section of America what has never been so well done for it before, either by pen or pencil, in making its beauties known especially to those who will never see them otherwise.<sup>53</sup>

Through Muybridge's southern series, that which was once only familiar through the imprecise methods of the pen and pencil suddenly became known and defined through the seemingly superior medium of the photograph.

In addition to his albums and portfolio of prints, Muybridge's images of "absolute perfection", as the San Francisco jury described them, reached a much broader audience through the more affordable formats of the stereograph and magic lantern slide. In San Francisco and Philadelphia, Muybridge dazzled audiences at photographic societies with magic lantern shows, projecting scenes of Central America and Mexico up to twenty square feet.<sup>54</sup> As exciting as these spectacles were in the days before cinema, not to mention the added finesse that Muybridge, the gifted salesman, must have indulged in, magic lantern shows were considered more than mere popular entertainment in the 1870s. While the magic lantern was first used for narrated projections of "phantasmagora", in which ghosts appeared to rise from the dead, by the 1850s, the device began appearing in university classrooms.<sup>55</sup> Interest in magic lanterns was widespread enough in Philadelphia to warrant the publication of a journal devoted to the new apparatus

---

<sup>53</sup> Kingston Scrapbook, clipping labeled *Panama Star*, May 1875.

<sup>54</sup> Kingston Scrapbook, clipping, unpaginated: "The action of the horse. In various gaits, and at different rates of speed, illustrated with sixty illuminated photographs. The size of life. These will be accompanied each evening with a series of illuminated views, each about 20 feet square illustrating Central America, Panama and the Pacific Coast."

<sup>55</sup> Popularized in England in the 1830s with the invention of limelight (a powerful light source created when oxygen and hydrogen ignite), early magic lantern shows most often projected ghosts rising from the dead, thus the "magic" in the lantern. The first magic lantern arrived in the United States in 1846, imported to Philadelphia by the brothers Frederick and William Langenheim. By 1849, the brothers were making their own photographic slides and projecting their work for public audiences and university students shortly thereafter. See Howard B. Leighton, "The Lantern Slide and Art History," *History of Photography*, 8.2 (April-June 1984): 107-118.

beginning in 1874. The first volume quoted important scientists of the day who had all declared their support for the lantern as a valuable teaching instrument. Among them was Sir David Brewster, the inventor of the kaleidoscope, who asserted, “The Magic Lantern which for a long time was used only as an instrument for amusing children and astonishing the ignorant, has recently been fitted up for the better purpose of conveying scientific instruction, and it is now universally used by popular lectures on Astronomy.”<sup>56</sup> The lantern’s uses extended beyond the instruction of astronomy, however, as the same volume made clear:

Some idea of the value of Photography, associated with the Magic Lantern as an educational instrument, may be gathered from the fact, that as the camera has now penetrated to almost every habitable part of the globe, the physical peculiarities of every country, together with lifelike portraits of their inhabitants, and the form and arrangement of their dwellings, may be obtained in miniature, and reproduced as large as life.<sup>57</sup>

From astronomy to art history<sup>58</sup> to “lifelike” portrayals of the distant reaches of the globe, the magic lantern was no longer a conduit for fantasy but for fact for audiences in the 1870s. In particular, shows directed at learned audiences, such as the photographic societies Muybridge targeted, as opposed to the general public, served to edify rather than entertain. Within this context, Muybridge’s projections of the southern series, beginning in 1876, would have functioned, in the words of the writer for *Magic Lantern*, as “an educational instrument”, informing photographic societies in Philadelphia and San Francisco of the “peculiarities” of Mexico and Central America.

Descriptions of Muybridge’s magic lantern shows demonstrate that his viewers

---

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Marcus Aurelius Root, “The Magic Lantern,” *Magic Lantern*, 1.1 (1874): 9.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>58</sup> Volume one of *Magic Lantern* discusses the importance of being able to project images of works by painters and sculptors from around the world, thus greatly contributing to the then nascent discipline of art history.

accepted the southern series as fact rather than fiction. At a projection in San Francisco in 1878, a local reporter noted:

This evening E.J. Muybridge will give a second exhibition of illuminated photographs of the Mexican Coast, Central America and the Isthmus of Panama, at the rooms of the Art Association and elsewhere. They are enlarged by the magic lantern to about sixteen feet square and are very striking representations of some of the most notable scenery. Next to an actual visit to these countries, these images will be the most satisfactory.<sup>59</sup>

For this reporter, Muybridge's magic lantern shows overcame the "fragility of photographic fictions", creating scenes that replaced first hand visual experience. Rather than challenging the accuracy of his photographs, as in the case of Watkins' images of the West, viewers of Muybridge's southern series accepted his work as a reliable portrait of reality.

Muybridge's stereographs also offered viewers a "most satisfactory" experience, albeit on an intimate scale. The all-encompassing nature of the stereoscope allowed for one's complete immersion into the three-dimensional world of the image itself, an impossibility in works seen at a distance such as illustrations, paintings or even magic lantern projections. Oliver Wendell Holmes described the power of the stereograph in relation to painting's limitations. "The first effect of looking at a good photograph through the stereoscope is a surprise such as no painting ever produced. The mind feels its way into the very depths of the picture."<sup>60</sup> While Stephens' narration took "[the reader] by the hand and led us into the midst of the ruins", Muybridge's stereoscopes held the potential to amplify the intensity of that experience. According to Holmes, Charles Wheatstone and other inventors of stereoscopes, the new device simulated, rather than

---

<sup>59</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, May 18, 1878. Quoted in Solnit, 267.

<sup>60</sup> Holmes, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph," quoted in Harrison, *Art in Theory*, 670.

represented, the actual presence of a physical object or scene.<sup>61</sup> In their view, the stereoscope allowed for the perceived equivalence of image and object.<sup>62</sup> Wheatstone in particular heralded the stereoscopic image as a means of supplanting actual objects or scenes:

These stereoscopic photographs are so true to nature and so lifelike in their portrayal of material things, that after viewing such a picture and recognizing in it some object like a house, for instance, we get the impression, when we actually do see the object, that we have already seen it before and are more or less familiar with it. In cases of this kind, the actual view of the thing itself does not add anything new or more accurate to the previous appreciation we got from the picture.<sup>63</sup>

Such a description attests that the stereoscope was a powerful tool in constructing reality; once a viewer had looked through its lens, nothing, not even the object itself, could change his/her conception of the pictured image. Although not everyone who peered through the stereoscope may have so readily accepted the conflation of reality and image as Wheatstone contended, the optical device did offer an evocative new way of seeing that influenced the viewer's understanding of the subject. Given the potential authority of the stereoscope, how Muybridge used this captivating instrument to depict Mexico and Central America thus becomes a question of great import.

From stereographs to magic lantern slides, Muybridge's southern series was accessible to a variety of viewers, and not just the limited few who received copies of his album. Indeed, the southern series may have reached its broadest audience through a medium over which Muybridge had little control: the illustrated journal. In November 1878, *Scribner's Monthly* published the article "A Trip to Central America", detailing

---

<sup>61</sup> Jonathan Crary, "Techniques of the Observer," *October* 45 (Summer 1988): 28.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Charles Wheatstone, "Contributions to the Physiology of Vision," *Journal of the Royal Institution*, 1 (1830): 101-117. Quoted in Crary, 29.

author Ellsworth Westervelt's travels south of the border. Accompanying the article were engravings adapted from Muybridge's photographs. Although the captions to the published images do not credit Muybridge, and in fact many of the engravings are signed by the illustrators, Westervelt concluded his article by stating, "I cannot close without acknowledging my indebtedness to Mr. Muybridge, of San Francisco, for offering me the use of his justly celebrated photographs to assist in illustrating this article."<sup>64</sup> Westervelt's praise demonstrates that Muybridge's southern series was not only well-known, indeed "celebrated", but also that these photographs had become the standard for picturing the region.

While Muybridge clearly consented to the use of his work in *Scribner's*, it is uncertain if the photographer played a role in selecting or altering the published images. Significantly, many of the *Scribner's* illustrations are adaptations of Muybridge's photographs, with figures often added to the original deserted image. To Muybridge's austere photograph of a public laundry (figs. 2.11), the illustrator inserted a female figure in the foreground as well as two additional women to the background (fig. 2.12). While the laundress in the foreground functions as a type—the attractive native woman—more than an individual, she still quite literally brings the image to life. Unlike Muybridge's photograph, wherein the empty structure appears as a relic from a bygone era, the illustration, with the figures and laundry basket at right, suggests a working laundry visited by a contemporary community.

Muybridge's vision of Central America as a land mired in the past did not entirely support Westervelt's narration that included descriptions of his encounters with contemporary men and women as well as current politics. There is, therefore, no direct

---

<sup>64</sup> Ellsworth Westervelt, "A Trip to Central America," *Scribner's Monthly*, 15 (March 1878): 623.

discussion, apart from Westervelt's concluding remarks, of the images in relation to the text. While the southern series may have been “celebrated” by 1878, *Scribner's* evidently found the images in need of embellishment in telling the story of Westervelt's Central American experience. Without an alternative, Muybridge's work became the point of departure for *Scribner's* illustrators despite the inconsistencies between the text and the photographs. Just as Muybridge edited his work to construct a particular conception of place, so the *Scribner's* illustrators altered the southern series to depict Westervelt's travels. Thus, once again, how Muybridge pictured the region becomes a question of great import given that his work formed the foundation for these later images that circulated in the popular press.

### **“The Most Picturesque Places”**

One of the most striking characteristics throughout the southern series is Muybridge's compositional rendering of the land and the people as picturesque objects. The term picturesque originated in Muybridge's native England in the eighteenth century where it was first used to describe the rustic, free-form gardens becoming increasingly popular there. The English picturesque garden, with its overgrown plants and twisting pathways, contrasted sharply with the formal, rigid geometry of the traditional French garden.<sup>65</sup> By the late-eighteenth century, British writers, philosophers and artists had also adopted the term to characterize a landscape scene considered neither wholly beautiful nor sublime. While the beautiful landscape exhibited ideal proportions, and the sublime one invoked a feeling of awe or reverence in the viewer, the picturesque scene lay

---

<sup>65</sup> For a thorough examination of theory and the picturesque garden see John Dixon Hunt, *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

somewhere in between the two. Unlike the sublime, the picturesque intrigued but did not overwhelm the viewer; unlike the beautiful, the picturesque embraced a self-conscious disorderliness.

Perhaps the greatest proponents of the British picturesque aesthetic were the amateur artist and writer William Gilpin and his contemporary, the theorist Uvedale Price. Gilpin's 1782 publication *Observations on the River Wye* and Price's *An Essay on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* from 1794 detail pictorial rules by which artists could transform any landscape into the picturesque. Both Gilpin and Price emphasized the importance of roughness, irregularity and decay in picturesque images. In distinguishing the picturesque from the beautiful, Price described the former as:

A scene that exhibits the varied, and strongly marked effects of broken ground; of sudden projections, and deep hollows; of old twisted trees, with furrowed bark; of water tumbling in a deep-worn channel over rocks and rude stones, and half lost among shaggy roots, decaying stumps and withered fern.<sup>66</sup>

For Gilpin, the picturesque needed to conform to a particular formula, central to which was the use of natural "side screens", such as trees or mountains, to frame the image, literally making it like a picture. In addition, he encouraged a horizontal composition with a winding path or river that would draw the viewer into the enclosed scene.

While the picturesque in the visual arts began as a pictorial formula, some scholars have asserted that there are political implications embedded in an aesthetic that seeks to contain and control its subject. As Ann Bermingham argues in her study of British landscape painting, "the picturesque vision represents an ideological as well as

---

<sup>66</sup> Uvedale Price in *A Letter to H. Repton*, 1795. Quoted in James Ackerman, "The Photographic Picturesque," *Artibus et Histoire*, 24 no. 48 (2003): 82.



aesthetic commitment.”<sup>67</sup> Bermingham contends that in early nineteenth-century Britain the picturesque image justified the objectification of the agrarian worker and his subsequent exploitation by the landowner.

John Barrell puts forth a similar argument in his discussion of John Constable’s paintings of farmworkers in early nineteenth-century England. Barrell asserts that by making the farmworker inconspicuous and a subordinate to the land itself, Constable concealed the underlying social divisions and rising tensions that actually defined rural England at the time.<sup>68</sup> Barrell’s interpretation that by merging man with nature Constable created pictorial harmony out of actual discord is relevant to Muybridge’s depictions of Mexico and Central America. In his slide of San Domingo (fig. 2.13), in which the figures appear to dissolve into their surroundings, much like the barely visible men in Constable’s paintings, Muybridge presents an ode to a pre-industrialized past. He eliminates any references to the present that might suggest the actual struggles of these peasant men and women and instead constructs a rugged but contained view that evokes the picturesque.

Although the picturesque is most frequently associated with depictions of the land, the term also applies to figures themselves. As David Solkin illustrates in his analysis of early nineteenth-century British genre paintings, the picturesque figure was a popular trope that appealed to sophisticated viewers. Solkin notes that the loutish urban boys that people the work of William Collins, David Wilkie and their contemporaries embody the characteristics of the picturesque as described by Uvedale Price. With their rough and irregular features, Solkin asserts that these boys call to mind Price’s comments

---

<sup>67</sup> Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 66.

<sup>68</sup> Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, 1980.

that “among our own species, beggars, gypsies, and all such rough tattered figures as are merely picturesque, bear a close analogy, in all the qualities that make them so, to old hovels and mills, to the wild forest horse, and other objects of the same kind.”<sup>69</sup> Solkin goes on to argue that within the confined and constructed space of painting these coarse figures that may offend the polite viewer in real life become pleasing and even endearing. Critical to creating a charming rather than threatening scene of urban poverty was the artist’s ability to place the picturesque figure at a distance in both time and space from the sophisticated viewer.<sup>70</sup> This pictorial practice resonates in Muybridge’s work as well in which his weathered figures appear relegated to the past (figs. 2.9 & 2.13), positing the conception that Mexico and Central America existed at a safe distance in both time and space from the refined northern viewer.

While the picturesque first took root in England, recent studies have expanded their geographic focus to examine how the aesthetic functioned in the British West Indies.<sup>71</sup> Krista Thompson considers the picturesque in the Bahamas and Jamaica, asserting that the aesthetic informed social and national identities, class relations and even the physical environments of those islands. Muybridge’s photographs demonstrate that the picturesque gaze extended beyond England’s colonies to the United States’ coveted southern neighbors, Mexico and Central America. His vision of the South was itself the result of the popularization of the picturesque in the literary and visual arts in the United States. Within the “unclaimed” territories of the western United States in the

---

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in David Solkin, *Painting Out of the Ordinary*, 2008, 106.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>71</sup> Recent studies exploring how the British transformed their colonies into a vision of the picturesque include: Jeffrey Auerbach, “The Picturesque and the Homogenization of Empire,” *British Art Journal* 5 no. 1 (2004): 47-54; Eleanor Hight and Gary Sampson, *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place* (London: Routledge 2002); Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*, 2006.

nineteenth century, the picturesque operated as a forceful expression of the period's pervasive ideological commitment to expansionism. Literary scholar Dennis Berthold suggests that the frequency with which nineteenth-century American writers converted the West into the picturesque demonstrates their belief in just such a principle. According to Berthold:

The picturesque, in short, provided Americans with a congenial, respectable, eminently civilized standpoint from which to study and enjoy wilderness...the picturesque added a controlling aesthetic vision—a wilderness—subduing “eye”—to help organize, shape and even half-create a native landscape compatible with the civilization that was encroaching on the rugged forests and mountains of the western borders.<sup>72</sup>

By wrestling the Wild West into an image of subdued civility, the picturesque vision in literature offered a powerful endorsement of Manifest Destiny that stressed the importance of containing and controlling the frontier. This “ideological commitment”, to quote Bermingham, perhaps explains the popularity of the picturesque in the United States where, by the 1840s, the aesthetic had “peculiarly wide currency and acceptance in American writing” as illustrated in the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Harriet Beecher Stowe and many others.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, by the time of Muybridge's journey south, the term had become common parlance, as publications such as the 1876 centennial gift book *Picturesque America; or the Land We Live In* demonstrate.<sup>74</sup>

The picturesque pervaded painting in the United States as well. According to art

---

<sup>72</sup> Dennis Berthold, “Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Huntly and the Origins of the American Picturesque,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 41 no.1 (January 1984): 69.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>74</sup> Edited by William Cullen Bryant, *Picturesque America* featured engravings and descriptions of such places of interest as Niagara Falls and Mount Desert Island as well as more westerly locales like Yosemite Valley and San Francisco. The period also produced a profusion of picturesque pocket guides of the northeastern United States such as the anonymous *Picturesque Pocket Companion and Visitor's Guide to Mount Auburn*, Jacques Milbert's *The Picturesque Itinerary of the Hudson River* and M.G. van Rensselaer's *Picturesque New York* to name just a few.

and literary scholar John Conron, the picturesque was America's first aesthetic, finding expression in painting, sculpture, photography, architecture and landscape design as well as literature.<sup>75</sup> Conron contends that during its hey-day, from 1830 to 1880, the American picturesque, with its multifarious manifestations, was a much more complex and wide reaching aesthetic than its English counterpart. As early as 1836, Thomas Cole articulated the national importance of the picturesque alongside the beautiful and the sublime in his now famous, "Essay on American Scenery." Cole begins by denouncing his fellow countrymen who cannot find the sublime, beautiful and picturesque on American soil:

There are those who through ignorance or prejudice strive to maintain that American scenery possesses little that is interesting or truly beautiful—that it is rude without picturesqueness, and monotonous without sublimity—that being destitute of those vestiges of antiquity, whose associations so strongly affect the mind, it may not be compared with European scenery... Let such persons shut themselves up in their narrow shell of prejudice—I hope they are few—and the community increasingly in intelligence, will know better how to appreciate the treasures of their own country.<sup>76</sup>

In this vehement defense of American scenery, Cole reveals that Gilpin's and Price's theories of the beautiful, picturesque and sublime had clearly taken root in the United States. Moreover, he makes one's ignorance of these aesthetics on American soil, or failure to represent them in art, an unpatriotic gesture and an endorsement of European superiority.

According to Angela Miller, the picturesque in Cole's paintings also allowed for the artist to control that which seemed insurmountable. Much like Berthold's explanation of how the aesthetic functioned in American literature, Miller also finds in the work of

---

<sup>75</sup> Conron asserts that "the influence of the picturesque is everywhere evident in nineteenth-century Euro-American culture" and that this pervasiveness is what makes it America's first definable aesthetic. John Conron, *American Picturesque* (College Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2000), xvii.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," *American Monthly Magazine* 1 (January, 1836): 1-12. Quoted in Harrison, *Art in Theory*, 136.

Cole a “moral picturesque” that allowed for “the pictorial expression of social containment.”<sup>77</sup> Cole’s harmonious depictions of forests and mountains transformed the wild landscape into a place of order and consistency, which, Miller contends, metaphorically represented the national desire for stability during a time of rapid economic and social change.

Along with the picturesque, the sublime also served an important ideological purpose in the visual arts of the period. In addition to Cole’s own work, painters like Asher B. Durand, Thomas Moran and later Frederic Edwin Church and Albert Bierstadt as well as photographers such as Carleton Watkins and Timothy O’Sullivan transformed the western United States into the sublime with their frequent depictions of diminutive men set against a backdrop of transcendent valleys, soaring forests or precipitous cliffs. Like these artists, Muybridge also sought to present California’s landscape as sublime rather than picturesque. His *Grizzly Giant* (fig. 2.3), for example, while an “old twisted tree with furrowed bark,” as Uvedale Price described the picturesque, stretches beyond the borders of the photograph, unable to be contained, civilized or subdued by man’s camera, much like the sublime work of his foremost competitor Carleton Watkins (fig. 2.4). Not only in their composition, but in his promotion of these California photographs as well, Muybridge called attention to the sublime quality of his work. As was previously noted, he proclaimed in a brochure advertising his Yosemite series that his images were “the most marvelous examples to which photography can attain in the delineation of sublime and beautiful scenery, as exemplified in our wonderful valley.”<sup>78</sup>

By contrast, “picturesque” was the term Muybridge chose to characterize his

---

<sup>77</sup> Miller, *The Empire of the Eye*, 1993, 10-11.

<sup>78</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin* October 9, 1868. Quoted in Solnit, 262.

Central American and Mexican scenes in his promotional brochure for that series.

Muybridge announced that during his time in the south he had “assembled a collection of photographs for sale of the most notable buildings and the most picturesque places.”<sup>79</sup>

Picturesque was also the word the ex-patriot newspaper *Panama Star* selected to describe Muybridge’s work in Central America. In May 1875, *Panama Star* declared that

Muybridge had “made a large collection of negatives of all the buildings, old castles and *picturesque* spots to be found in this part of the Isthmus.”<sup>80</sup> Again, in November of that

same year, *Panama Star* commented on the southern series: “Mr. Muybridge, the

celebrated photographic artist from California, is still busy with his characteristic activity in search of the *picturesque* and the beautiful.”<sup>81</sup> In presenting California as sublime, but

Mexico and Central America as picturesque, Muybridge had to work to conceal the many topographic similarities between the regions at the time. The places Muybridge reached in California, Mexico and Central America were all largely undeveloped and unpopulated landscapes, riddled with rising mountains, tranquil lakes and open valleys. By masking these commonalities, Muybridge created two distinct landscapes grounded in particular ideologies: California the insurmountable and Mexico/Central America the subdued.

In his numerous photographs of Lake Atitlán in Guatemala, Muybridge contained the rugged natural landscape in thoughtfully crafted compositions. The care with which Muybridge constructed these images is evident in figure 2.14. The clouds, not quite convincingly hovering above the volcanoes in the distance, are the result of Muybridge’s manipulation. Beginning in 1869, after experimenting with different techniques of illuminating the details of both the land and sky in the same image, Muybridge created an

---

<sup>79</sup> Kingston Scrapbook, brochure, unpaginated, dated October 1875.

<sup>80</sup> Emphasis added. Kingston Scrapbook, clipping, unpaginated, labeled *Panama Star*, May 1875.

<sup>81</sup> Emphasis added. Kingston Scrapbook, clipping, unpaginated, labeled *Panama Star*, November, 1875.

archive of cloud negatives from which these clouds may likely be drawn.<sup>82</sup> With this cloud archive, Muybridge could superimpose one negative on top of another, allowing for a more complete image of land and sky, which would otherwise require different exposure times. After creating these composite works, Muybridge (like many photographers) would further dodge and burn his prints to heighten their level of detail. Along with these celestial manipulations, details in the foreground reveal the hand of the artist both literally in the form of Muybridge's scrawled signature in the lower-right corner of the image and more abstractly in the portrayal of the landscape and man's place within it.

The overall effect of the photograph is banal; Muybridge presents an impressive but practical landscape used for transport and commerce rather than the lofty contemplation of nature and man's place within it. On the right, a road snakes into the background tread upon by five men loaded with heavy packs most likely containing the photographer's bulky equipment. While facing forward, these men remain unidentified; like the figures appearing in Catherwood's illustrations, they provide a sense of scale. Alongside these human beasts of burden, another anonymous man wearing a sombrero sits, oblivious to the majestic scene behind him while another man stands looking in the direction of Lake Atitlán. While the upright man could conform to the trope of the *rückenfigur*, who appears in sublime Romantic paintings with his back to the viewer in awe of the natural landscape before him, his proximity to the seated man instead suggests that he is about to engage in dialogue rather than silent reverence.

---

<sup>82</sup> According to Rebecca Solnit, Muybridge also reported in the *Philadelphia Photographer* in May 1869 that he had developed a camera with a spring operated shutter that allowed for two different exposure times. Solnit, 49. Muybridge's photographs of Central America and Mexico, however, appear to be the result of printing from two negatives.

In marked contrast to this photograph are Muybridge's interpretations of the Californian landscape; these latter images elicit veneration from both the viewer and the figures depicted therein. In a stereograph of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range (fig. 2.15), for example, a man appears completely absorbed by the scene before them. Unlike Lake Atitlán, his landscape is one reserved for the higher purpose of contemplation, not the mundane activities of transport. Photographed close-up from a low vantage point, Muybridge depicts a quiet, intimate moment for this man immersed in the immensity of nature. By looking through a stereoscope, the viewer could also partake in what seems a transcendent experience. Notably, the view ends abruptly with the edge of the stereograph interrupting what seems to be an infinite mountain range extending beyond the picture plane. The image is devoid of side screens and thus defined limits as well; unbound, the photograph gives way to the uncontrollability of the sublime.

Muybridge was not alone in his sublime portrayal of the Sierra Nevadas. Albert Bierstadt's *Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains, California* from the following year is an even more rapturous ode to the land (fig. 2.16). With its imposing mountains and dramatic lighting, Bierstadt's ten-by-six foot work offered viewers a similarly all-encompassing experience in paint. And, as was previously noted, Muybridge's contemporary competitor Carleton Watkins made a name for himself with his sublime depictions of the western United States. That Muybridge chose to depart from this tradition in both painting and photography of rendering the land as sublime is significant.

In figure 2.14, Muybridge does not convey the volcanoes bordering Lake Atitlán with the same monumentality as he did the Sierra Nevada mountains, despite both sites



reaching to approximately the same height.<sup>83</sup> The emphasis is on the horizontality rather than the verticality of the volcano as it stretches into the center of the lake. Indeed, the entire composition projects horizontality as opposed to Muybridge's sublime images of the vertically soaring Grizzly Giant. The volcano functions as a framing device for containing the panorama, despite its extension beyond the border of the print. The scraggly tree facing the volcano serves as the opposing topographic side screen, completing the scene's enclosure. Neither beautiful nor sublime, the gnarled tree suggests irregularity, roughness and even decay, the qualities heralded by Gilpin and Price as hallmarks of the picturesque. Likewise, the uneven, descending road leading the viewer into the scene serves as another trope of the picturesque.

Many of Muybridge's southern landscapes follow a similar format with vast valleys hemmed in on either side by natural elements. In another photograph (fig. 2.17) from the southern series, two men sit snugly between a low hill that grazes the back of the figure at left and a steeper mountain that almost reaches his companion on the right. While the man on the left turns his head to the side, ignoring the striking vista, the other appears engrossed in the natural world before him, evoking a figure in a sublime landscape. Yet, once again, the rugged tree, haphazard rocks, constricting slopes and overall horizontal composition construct a picturesque scene.

Whether or not Muybridge intended for his picturesque vision to signify an

---

<sup>83</sup> The highest point in the Sierra Nevada Mountain range, Mount Whitney, reaches over 14,000 feet. The rest of the peaks, however, range from 12,000 to 13,000 feet in Yosemite Valley and 7,000 to 9,000 feet in the main crest. "Geographic Sketch of the Yosemite Region and the Sierra Nevada," U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 160, accessed from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/geology/publications/pp/160/sec1b.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/geology/publications/pp/160/sec1b.htm). In comparison, the highest volcano surrounding Lake Atitlán, Tajumulco, reaches just under 14,000 feet, just shy of Mount Whitney's peak. The average height of the peaks of the volcano complex surrounding Lake Atitlán is approximately 11,500 feet, making them comparable to the mountains of the Sierra Nevada. J.W. Vallance et al., "Volcano Hazards at Fuego and Acatenango, Guatemala," U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2001. <http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/Volcanoes/Guatemala>.

ideological commitment, his aesthetic decision becomes laden with meaning given the tenor of the times with the United States gaining political and commercial influence south of the border and Mexico and Central America becoming increasingly like colonies to the powerful nation to their north.

As early as 1869, U.S. Minister to Mexico William Rosecrans had called for the “peaceful conquest” of Mexico by means of a complete economic take-over.<sup>84</sup> Within a few years, U.S. Minister to Central America George McWillie Williamson campaigned for a similar “peaceful conquest” of the lands under his purview as well. Williamson encouraged policies that would tie Central America more closely to the U.S. political economy, as the region appeared as a promising market for the overproduction of goods that had contributed to the 1873 depression in the United States.<sup>85</sup> Within such a context, the picturesque, with its ability to contain and control its subject, becomes the visual vocabulary of “peaceful conquest”. Indeed, such an aesthetic begs the question, as Linda Nochlin has asked, “Can one’s equals ever be viewed as “picturesque”?”<sup>86</sup> By rendering the West as sublime but Central America and Mexico as picturesque, Muybridge suggests an answer to Nochlin’s rhetorical question.

In Muybridge’s photographs of coffee plantations from the series, the ideological

---

<sup>84</sup> Gilbert G. González, *Culture of Empire: American Writers, Mexico and Mexican Immigration, 1880-1930* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004), 17. In the ensuing decades, “peaceful conquest” became the catch phrase used to describe the United States’ imperial economic vision in Mexico. An 1887 *New York Times* article relayed Mexico’s resentment of its “peaceful conquest” in a quotation taken from the Mexican newspaper the *Nacional*: “Each of these concessions is one link more which ties us to that ‘peaceful conquest,’ as it is termed by American journalists. The business men and financiers who come from the United States, and to whom our Government officials give concessions, will create American interests, will make themselves the owners of great manufacturing, mining, railways, and agricultural enterprises...In that day we shall no longer be Mexicans; we shall be slaves in our own lands.” “A Mexican Bugbear,” *New York Times* (July 21, 1887): 4.

<sup>85</sup> Schoonover, *The United States in Central America, 1860-1911*, 1991, 46.

<sup>86</sup> Linda Nochlin, “Courbet, Oller, and a Sense of Place: The Regional, the Provincial and the Picturesque in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Art,” in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1989), 31.

implications of the picturesque become even more strident despite a disregard for the pictorial formula of the aesthetic. In these images, man tames and maintains wild tropical forests, converting them into orderly, productive plantations. In a photograph labeled *Volcan Zuneil* (fig. 2.18), an impressive volcano rises in the background, but it is the drying platform for coffee in the foreground that takes visual precedence. While dense foliage, the signifier of the tropics, thrives in the background and right side of the image, it is man's presence and his ability to domesticate this natural terrain that is emphasized. Photographed on the periphery of a plantation, the print shows development encroaching on the natural world. Many of Muybridge's other photographs, however, illustrate the complete domination of wilderness, as exemplified in an image of workers weeding young coffee plants under protective covering (fig. 2.19). Again, a prominent mountain rises in the distance while the foreground is reserved for the bent over workers carefully tending to crops. Apart from the mountain, Muybridge transforms the entire landscape into neat rows sustained by obedient workers and presided over by one upright man wearing a mask. Here, even the vegetation in the background is domesticated as the uniform height of the trees suggests a full-grown coffee crop rather than wild foliage. Stretching unencumbered beyond the borders of the photograph, Muybridge's coffee plantations contrast with his non-agrarian landscapes frequently confined by their natural "side screens". Such framing devices are hardly necessary in Muybridge's plantation landscapes already contained and controlled by cultivation.

Muybridge's photograph of *Hacienda Serijiers* (fig. 2.20) best expresses this visual practice of taming the terrain. In this image, men, women and children wearing Western clothing are enjoying a stroll on the grounds of a well-manicured plantation

home. Any sign of wild nature is omitted from this tranquil scene; the only vegetation is a trimmed lawn and rows of small to medium trees. At the center of the balanced composition is the plantation house, a sizable building with two spacious verandas that would presumably appear as an adequate dwelling for any foreigner looking to settle in Guatemala. The image conveys the message to Muybridge's white viewers in the North that in addition to such a pleasant home, any new entrepreneur to the region would also enjoy the company of these respectable and refined people. In contrast to the rumpled and stained clothing of the barefoot coffee workers throughout Muybridge's work, these figures wear tailored suits, high leather boots and pristine white dresses to signify their civility. Within this world of light-skinned, well-dressed gentry, one woman with a darker complexion appears. Seated on a platform for drying coffee, she is the signifier here of "native" America. All of the other signs from Muybridge's usual repertoire—unruly wilderness, formidable volcanoes and unkempt workers—are omitted. Rather than picturing a place of difference, Muybridge removes all representations of local culture, save one barely visible woman seated at the periphery, and presents his audience back home with a familiar scene of Western leisure. Muybridge's coffee plantation scenes are the images from his series that clearly exemplify the interests of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. They appear as the consummate example of what Mary Louise Pratt defines as *disponibilité*: lands not only available to, but seeming to exist solely for, foreign developers.<sup>87</sup> While Muybridge may not have single-handedly spurred a foreign investment boom in Central America, as Humboldt had in Mexico earlier in the century, his portrait of a land easily transformed into an extension of the United States, complete with plantation homes, manicured landscapes and well-dressed men and women,

---

<sup>87</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 112.

provided a compelling argument for increasing such practices already underway, as exemplified by Hacienda Serijiers.

During the 1870s, Guatemala experienced an explosion in the coffee industry that quickly led to a precarious monoculture economy. From 1870 to 1880, Guatemala nearly tripled its exportation of coffee from 53,000 tons in 1870 to 146,000 tons in 1880.<sup>88</sup> For a country with limited international trade before 1870, the rapid growth of “black gold” profoundly altered its economy. Rather than creating widespread wealth, however, the coffee boom resulted in a monoculture economy controlled by a handful of foreign individuals and corporations. Before the 1880s, during the period of Muybridge’s journey, these foreigners were primarily from the United States.<sup>89</sup> Entrepreneurs like William Nelson, for example, the commercial agent for the Pacific Mail, owned and managed Las Nubes plantation, frequently pictured in Muybridge’s photographs. Indeed, the Pacific Mail enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the industry controlling not only the production but also the shipment of the crop to California ports. Under the authority of Pacific Mail and its competitors, Guatemala’s reliance on the United States only increased; by 1883, the country’s foreign trade was more dependent on the U.S. market than on any other Latin American nation.<sup>90</sup> Boddham-Wetham remarked on the prominent presence of foreign investors in the region while on his travels in 1875:

It must not be inferred from the outward signs that there is little trade, for business affairs are mostly in the hands of foreigners or their sons, and I am inclined to think they find their trades very lucrative. It has been the custom with those interested to run down the chances of commercial gain in this country, but the fact is that those who are embarked in trade do not desire to court competition by informing the world of the fortunes they are

---

<sup>88</sup> Bradford Burns, *Eadweard Muybridge in Guatemala 1875: The Photographer as Social Recorder*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 16.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

making in Central America.<sup>91</sup>

Muybridge's photographs of coffee plantations reveal just that; they supplied his audience back home with visual evidence of the fortunes to be made south of the border in lands easily transformed into outposts of U.S. social civility and restraint as pictured at Hacienda Serijiers.

### **Staging History: Constructing the Past in the Land of Future Fortunes**

Alongside his images of productive coffee plantations, Muybridge also portrayed Mexico and Central America as antiquated relics, disintegrating in the present without the hope of a prosperous future. For every image of a thriving coffee plantation, Muybridge photographed a building ravaged by time and neglect, yielding to the advances of unruly nature. In the stereograph of the Church of Las Monjas (fig. 2.21), for example, the skeletal structure of what was once a sacred place stands crumbling in an overgrown tangle of trees. The open archways draw the eye into the interior, revealing a space exposed to the sky and inhabited only by wild grasses and vines. Viewed through a stereoscope, the receding arches would beckon the spectator into that vanishing space of history, heightening the encounter with this land south of the border.

Like the image of the Church of Las Monjas, the stereograph and albumen print of the Church of San Miguel (fig. 2.9, 2.10), as well as the magic lantern slide of San Domingo (fig. 2.13), corroborate the by then pervasive myth that Mexico and Central America were mired in the past. While still standing with their walls intact, San Miguel and San Domingo succumb to nature's onslaught. The diminutive figures in both

---

<sup>91</sup>Boddam-Wetham, 27.

photographs, who could animate the scene, instead appear motionless as if frozen in time alongside these deteriorating churches. These are not the active workers of the coffee plantations, but rather ghostly beings almost completely absorbed by their surroundings, implying that they inhabit the past rather than the present. Rising above these diminutive figures, the Churches of San Miguel and San Domingo become formidable ruins, embodying an illustrious history and a decrepit present.

As ruins, San Miguel, San Domingo and Las Monjas exemplify the characteristics of irregularity and decay inherent to the picturesque. In presenting them as such, Muybridge reached back to the origins of photography itself when William Henry Fox Talbot first captured the crumbling edifices of Lacock and Dryburgh Abbeys as calotypes. Talbot's 1844 print of Sir Walter Scott's tomb (fig. 2.22) shows time's assault on this ultimate monument to decay. Years earlier, Gilpin himself had identified the dilapidated abbey as the definitive signifier of the picturesque. Tintern Abbey in Montmouthshire, South Wales, roofless and overrun by vegetation, became the subject of many of Gilpin's written and J.M.W. Turner's early illustrated odes to the picturesque (fig. 2.23). Perhaps familiar with Turner's work from his native England, Muybridge's slide of San Domingo (fig. 2.13) appears much like his predecessor's depictions of Tintern Abbey with its soaring archways and open nave surrendering to the ravages of nature. San Domingo's gaping arch forms a pair of impenetrable "side screens" even more imposing than those found in Muybridge's landscape scenes. The "side screens" here also become like theater curtains opening onto the stage of the nave. This *mise-en-scène* environment is itself characteristic of the picturesque as the aesthetic demands an artificial rendering of space

and narrative that creates, as some have said, a drama of composition.<sup>92</sup>

By photographing his subject at close range, Muybridge placed himself—and subsequently his viewers—within the midst of San Domingo’s ruins, creating a virtual travel experience of which Stephens and Catherwood could only have dreamed. In the case of a magic lantern slide, enlarged to sixteen or twenty feet square, the sensation of being transported to San Domingo must have been all encompassing. In this slide of San Domingo, along with others like it, Muybridge crafted a carefully orchestrated spectacle in which contemporary men and women performed the past on the stage of a ruined church, fulfilling the expectations of a distant audience.

By presenting Mexico and Central America as a civilization in the midst of decay, Muybridge offered validation for the kinds of economic conquests he photographed in his images of coffee plantations. Societies pictured as unfit to maintain themselves were ripe for colonization, as Humboldt had suggested years earlier in his *Political Essays on the Kingdom of New Spain*. For those unable to purchase a parcel of tropical America for commercial exploits, stereographs like the Churches of Las Monjas, San Miguel and San Domingo allowed for acquisition by proxy at a fraction of the cost. It provided the viewer with an opportunity to virtually possess those otherwise inaccessible people and places.<sup>93</sup> Just below the Rio Grande, and out of reach for the majority of the U.S. public, Mexico and Central America became contained within the middle-class parlor of the North through Muybridge’s stereographs.

---

<sup>92</sup> I use artificial here not in the sense of fake but rather in its fuller meaning, signifying made by man and not occurring naturally. In *American Picturesque*, John Conron refers to the picturesque as a “drama of composition” in response to Martin Price’s statement that the picturesque is “a drama more than a composition.” Conron, 7.

<sup>93</sup> Similarly, in Muybridge’s homeland, the British began translating their colonies into stereographs in the 1850s. For a fuller discussion of the stereograph as visual commodity with regard to England and its colonies in the nineteenth century see Peter Osborne, *Traveling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000).



For all of the Stephens and Catherwood readers who had enjoyed the excitement of travel south of the border from the comfort of home, Muybridge's stereographs offered something even better: the complete visual immersion within, as well as ownership of, those distant lands. Yet, the images of ruins that Muybridge brought to audiences in the North differ from those made famous by Stephens and Catherwood in one very important aspect. Despite traversing a similar route to the one followed by his predecessors, Muybridge, save one exception, never photographed the many pre-Columbian sites found throughout the region. In fact, Muybridge never strayed far from the coffee plantations and port cities where the entrepreneurs recently arrived from the United States were making their homes. In Guatemala, he traveled along the southern coast, never venturing north to well-known archeological sites like Copán, just over the border in Honduras or even to Huehuetenango,<sup>94</sup> less than fifty miles from the city of Quezaltenango, where he stayed long enough to take numerous photographs. Given Boddham-Wetham's description of the difficulties of travel in the region, however, even a short trip north may have been too much for Muybridge to endure—especially considering the bulky, fragile equipment he carried. Perhaps in an effort to minimize the hardships of the road and maximize the marketability of his work to the Pacific Mail, Muybridge followed the path already blazed by new money. However, the Pacific Mail and the investors to whom they appealed were not Muybridge's only target audience. In order to attract the attention of the broader public, Muybridge needed to capture those popular places that had piqued the interest of Stephens' and Catherwood's readers.

Muybridge's answer to Stephens' and Catherwood's mysterious pre-Columbian

---

<sup>94</sup> Considering Muybridge's quest to picture the past, it is all the more ironic that he did not visit Huehuetenango, which translates from the indigenous language, Nahuatl to: place of the ancients or place of the ancestors.

ruins was the colonial church. By departing from the work of his predecessors, Muybridge distinguished his photographs and lessened his travel burden. The question arises, however, was Muybridge's choice of subject simply a matter of convenience or were there ideological implications embedded within his decision? Was Muybridge unwilling or unable to travel the extra miles to actual archeological sites? Or, was he deliberately picturing colonialism's past south of the border by photographing its most resonant symbol? Within the context of Central America and Mexico, the church of course stands as a monument to the imposition of Christianity on the local population by the Spanish empire. Whether intentional or not, Muybridge's images thus entered into the continuing debate over Europe's presence in the New World. When viewed as a whole, Muybridge's southern series could, therefore, be read as an evolving narrative of conquest. From crumbling European colonialism to the dynamic expansion of the U.S. coffee plantations, Mexico and Central America passed from one controlling power to the next in keeping with the objectives of the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny.

Of all Muybridge's images of Central America and Mexico, only one features an actual pre-Columbian ruin (fig. 2.24). Rather than the intricate temples and stele depicted by Catherwood, Muybridge photographed a simple stone with a circular hole, which he reproduced as a stereograph as well as an albumen print. In perhaps the most contrived image from Muybridge's series, a dark-skinned man looks directly at the viewer through the perfectly round hole in the sloping boulder. Under the print in the album version of this image, Muybridge wrote, "Ancient Sacrificial Stone, Naranjo, Guatemala." The strategic framing of the man's head by the hole in the stone thus takes on greater significance, recalling the bloody rituals detailed by Prescott. Once again, the indigenous

man evokes a dark and mysterious past rather than a contemporary culture.

Found in Naranjo, an archeological site near Guatemala City, the stone was more likely used to mark the solstices and equinoxes as the area was an important center of Mayan astronomical activity.<sup>95</sup> Although Muybridge would not have known of the true purpose of the Naranjo monuments, his decision to name the rock a sacrificial stone illustrates the creative imaginings of the artist. *Ancient Sacrificial Stone* is the consummate example of Muybridge's ability to construct the illusion of truth from fiction in his images of Mexico and Central America. As *Ancient Sacrificial Stone* attests, his pictures were fabrications, assembled from that which he saw before him and the accounts of those who preceded him, all of which he arranged to fit ingrained conceptions in the North.

### **The Significance of the Southern Series**

Despite their wide distribution, the southern series photographs have been relegated to relative obscurity today and disregarded as inconsequential within Muybridge studies and the history of photography as a whole. One of the few sources to analyze Muybridge's pictures from this series in-depth is E. Bradford Burns' book *Eadweard Muybridge in Guatemala 1875: The Photographer as Social Recorder*, published in 1986.<sup>96</sup> Burns asserts that these images are rare historical documents of a nation on the brink of change, serving as a window into a vanished past. He notes,

---

<sup>95</sup> Burns, 33.

<sup>96</sup> In addition to Burns' work, the Smithsonian American Art Museum held an exhibition in 2007 that featured sixty photographs from the southern series. Only a small pamphlet, however, was produced for the show. More recently, the contemporary photographer Byron Wolfe, addressed in the conclusion, is producing a photomontage based on Muybridge's journey. With regard to traditional scholarship, Elizabeth Hutchinson delivered a paper in 2009 that discussed issues of gender in Muybridge's photographs of Guatemalan laundresses. As the theme of gender is outside of the scope of this project, Hutchinson's ideas are not considered further here.

“Subtly but convincingly recording the transition, [Muybridge’s] photographs are unique documents of visual insight. They illustrate Guatemala on the verge of economic and social change.”<sup>97</sup> In this statement, Burns characterizes Muybridge’s work as a process of recording, just as the title of his book suggests. By describing Muybridge as a recorder, Burns assigns the artist a passive role in the formulation of these images. Muybridge, however, was not simply a recorder but an active agent in constructing a picturesque vision of tropical America. Furthermore, while these images may document changes occurring within Guatemala, they also illuminate the economic, political and cultural desires of the United States with regard to Mexico and Central America as a whole.

Moreover, Muybridge’s time south was a professional turning point for him; there he began work on his motion studies, a discovery that would alter the history of photography. Yet, the southern series is more often described, as one recent Muybridge biographer asserted, as a period in the photographer’s life that “might not have contributed anything to the furtherance of the Muybridge legend or to his scientific and technical achievements, but it seems to have been cathartic.”<sup>98</sup> The journey, occurring at such a critical moment in Muybridge’s life, certainly was liberating. Indeed, the trip absolved him of his past, as it seems no public mention was made of his trial after 1876. Muybridge returned to a new life in the United States with a fresh body of work, no family to support and the incipient plans for a novel invention in photography. However, the artist’s southern experience was not only cathartic, but also crucial for his later motion studies. Immediately following Muybridge’s announcement of his achievements in capturing a horse in motion, California newspapers detailed the genesis of his

---

<sup>97</sup> Burns, 2.

<sup>98</sup> Clegg, 109.

significant discovery. In August of 1877, the *San Francisco Call* reported:

Mr. Leland Stanford requested Mr. Muybridge to experiment with his camera on Occident. Before going to Central America on a professional tour, the photographer did not believe the feat possible, but some very rapid work in the Southern country led him to regard it as a worthy trial.<sup>99</sup>

The *San Francisco Bulletin* went even further, detailing the specifics of how Muybridge developed his motion studies work while in Central America and Mexico:

Three years ago Mr. Muybridge was commissioned by Mr. Stanford to photograph his favorite horse while trotting at full speed to determine the animal's gait it was at that time considered by Mr. Muybridge a hopeless undertaking, and he thus expressed himself. During a visit subsequently made to Central America *in the interest of the Government*, he had occasion to make a series of experiments in photographing scenes on shore from the deck of a rolling vessel. These experiments resulted in the construction of an apparatus and the preparation of chemicals so as to permit the photographing in outline of a rapidly moving body.<sup>100</sup>

Evidently, Muybridge's southern sojourn was not merely an escape but an integral period in advancing the photographer's groundbreaking technical discoveries.

While history has found a place for Muybridge within the story of photography's technological advancements, his work must also be situated within the larger framework of intra-American relations at the end of the nineteenth century. Muybridge's images of the West and South (in)formed his public's conceptions of both those lands and the people who inhabited them. Influenced by the popular photographs of California's forests, mountains and valleys by Carleton Watkins, Muybridge's West became a sublime landscape, invoking awe and reverence in the viewer. Without photographic precedents to rely on south of the border, Muybridge looked to the work of writers and illustrators, most notably Stephens and Catherwood, for guidance. Muybridge's southern series

---

<sup>99</sup> Kingston Scrapbook, clipping, unpaginated, labeled *San Francisco Call*, August, 1877. Quoted in Haas, 95.

<sup>100</sup> Emphasis added. Kingston Scrapbook, clipping, unpaginated, labeled *San Francisco Bulletin*, August 3, 1877. Quoted in Haas, 95.

continued their tradition of representing Mexico and Central America as relics of the past, albeit set in a new era of economic expansionism, best expressed through a picturesque aesthetic.

Through his controlling, picturesque lens, Muybridge foretold the future of the “Other” America, then emerging as the locus of U.S. entrepreneurial and political ventures. In the following decades, the United States completed its “peaceful conquest” of its closest southern neighbors with the construction of the Panama Canal at the Isthmus, the monopolization of the coffee industry in Guatemala, and the control of the railroad industry in Mexico. Thus, the incorrect statement by the writer for the *San Francisco Bulletin* that Muybridge’s trip south was made “in the interest of the government”, becomes a harbinger of truth. By picturing Central America and Mexico as Janus-faced, simultaneously looking to both the past and future, while ignoring the present, Muybridge created a body of work that justified the southern progress of Manifest Destiny. In the ensuing years, this photographic narrative would be retold but revised by the artists who arrived after Muybridge.

### Chapter 3

#### The “Red Hot” Encounter: Winslow Homer in the “Eden of the Gulf”

##### Offering the “Welcoming Hand” to the “Tropic Land”: The United States and the Southern Republics at the time of Homer’s Caribbean Travels

The summer before Winslow Homer left for Cuba in February of 1885, *The New York Times* reported, “The sale of the island to the United States or to Mexico is a general topic of conversation.”<sup>1</sup> The U.S. press had done much to make the turbulent state of affairs in Cuba the timely talk of its readership. Throughout the first half of 1884, journalists had peppered the papers with grim accounts of the rising tensions between Spain and its Caribbean colony. Headlines announced: “Bloodshed in Cuba”, “AFFAIRS IN CUBA: THE SITUATION UNSETTLED BY REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS” and “UNHAPPY CUBA: The Revolution There Impending and the Trouble which it May Cause the United States.”<sup>2</sup> By the summer, the United States’ intervention on the island became all but certain as *The New York Times* mused over the possible northern sources of dynamite supplied to the Cuban rebels.<sup>3</sup> Although the United States had twice before unsuccessfully attempted to purchase Cuba from Spain, annexation appeared nearly inevitable in 1884.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> “Bad State of Affairs in Cuba,” *The New York Times* (June 4, 1884): 4.

<sup>2</sup> “Bloodshed in Cuba,” *The New York Times* (January 1884): 1; “Affairs in Cuba: The Situation Unsettled by Revolutionary Movements,” *The New York Times* (April 12, 1884): 3; “UNHAPPY CUBA: The Revolution There Impending and the Trouble which it May Cause the United States,” *Boston Daily Globe*, (April 18, 1884): 4.

<sup>3</sup> “The Sale of Dynamite: Nobody Will Admit Having Supplied Cuban Rebels,” *The New York Times* (July 25, 1884): 8.

<sup>4</sup> In 1848 and 1854, the United States sought to purchase the island from Spain, see chapter 1 for a fuller account of the coveting of Cuba.

Simultaneously, calls for the colonization of Mexico drew U.S. attention southward as well. As travel journalist Solomon Bulkley Griffin proclaimed at the time, “Something of what India is to England, Mexico could be and ought to be to the United States.”<sup>5</sup> Although Mexico maintained its independence from the United States, many northern entrepreneurs took possession of large portions of land, railroads and mines south of the border, from 1876-1911 during the presidency of Porfirio Díaz.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, next-door in Central America, the booming coffee industry rapidly came under U.S. ownership during this same period. Coupled with the construction of the Panama Canal, the United States gained an indelible foothold south of the border with control over all seafaring traffic in the Americas by 1914.<sup>7</sup> As westward expansion in the continental United States had by then reached its natural conclusion, the northern eye of Manifest Destiny turned its gaze toward the seemingly uncharted frontiers of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

Political rhetoric surrounding the country’s relationship with its southern neighbors softened the insidious tone of the Solomon Bulkley Griffins of the day. In December 1884, *Puck* magazine included the platforms on inter-American affairs from the Republican and Democratic parties in a cartoon for The World’s International Cotton Centennial Exposition in New Orleans (fig. 3.1). Both parties favored a strengthening of

---

<sup>5</sup> Solomon Bulkley Griffin, *Mexico Today* (1886). Quoted in Gilbert González, *Culture of Empire: American Writers, Mexico and Mexican Immigration 1880-1930* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004), 15.

<sup>6</sup> A friend to the Yankee but foe to his own countrymen, Porfirio Díaz opened Mexico up to foreign investors. During the Porfiriato, as his term in office is known, federal U.S. capitol built railroads, mines and telegraph systems while private investors such as William Randolph Hearst obtained vast tracts of Mexican land. Díaz’s push for “progress”, however, came at a price. The Porfiriato is best remembered today not for its economic achievements but for its neglect and violation of human rights.

<sup>7</sup> More than a half-century would pass before the planning and construction of the Panama Canal was completed in 1914. For a fuller discussion of this unprecedented building project in the Americas see chapter 1.



alliances; the Democrats announced, “We favor an American continental policy based upon more intimate commercial and political relations with the fifteen sister republics of North, Central and South America, but entangling alliances with none.” Republicans also sought “more intimate relations” bolstered by the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, as they stated, “Foreign nations shall refrain from meddling in American affairs”. In the cartoon, the southern republics, represented as fashionable young women, line up to take the hands of a dapper Uncle Sam and a congenial Lady Liberty wearing a Phrygian cap. Beneath the image, the caption reads in part, “Wise sister, blessed be thy welcoming hand, Stretched to the Republics of the tropic land!” Significantly, among all of these lovely maidens, Lady Cuba is the only republic to proposition the reader directly. As if to signal her prominence within the group, she alone gazes at the reader while smiling coyly from behind her opened fan.

### **Re-reading Homer’s Cuban Watercolors**

In this climate of strident southern latitudinal longing, Homer traveled regularly to the Caribbean from 1884 to 1909. The watercolors he produced from his time in the Bahamas, and then later Bermuda and the Florida Keys, depict all of the traditional tropes of the tropics; these light-filled images brim with brightly colored flowers and regal palm trees, shimmering nude torsos of local inhabitants and quiet blue waters. Homer’s watercolors of Cuba, however, defy these romantic expectations and instead picture a shadowy, mysterious and even foreboding place. Heavy gray skies, murky hues and, most notably, Spanish forts, flags and fans define Homer’s Cuba. Despite these marked distinctions in island representation, scholars have treated Homer’s Caribbean

watercolors as a group, as if his images of Cuba were interchangeable with those of the Bahamas or Bermuda.<sup>8</sup> This chapter probes Homer's idiosyncratic rendering of Cuba; it considers why he departed from already established notions of the tropics and what his images reveal about the shifting identity of that hotly contested island and the encroaching power to its north in the years leading up to the Spanish-American War. Strengthening my interpretation of Homer's Cuban watercolors as images deeply engaged with their times is my assessment of Childe Hassam's paintings of Havana from 1895. Ten years after Homer, Hassam employed a similar strategy to that of the elder artist, puncturing his seemingly charming tourist views with references to the Old World's presence in the Americas. By firmly situating the works of both artists within their specific historical contexts, this chapter illuminates how the "more intimate relations" between the American republics sought in the political and commercial arenas were visually constructed as well.

### **"The Quintessential American Artist"**

Homer's entire *oeuvre* suggests an artist acutely aware of his time, and in particular, his nation's quest for self-definition. Throughout Homer's lifetime (1836-1910), intellectuals sought to delineate those characteristics that distinguished the art of the United States from that of Europe. As early as 1836, landscape painter Thomas Cole asserted that his nation's vast natural wilderness was its greatest strength and defining

---

<sup>8</sup> See for example: Nicolai Cikovsky, *Winslow Homer Watercolors* (New York: Universe, 2009); Randall Griffin, *Winslow Homer: An American Vision* (London: Phaidon, 2006); Elizabeth Johns, *Winslow Homer: The Nature of Observation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Miles Unger, *The Watercolors of Winslow Homer* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001); Patti Hannaway, *Winslow Homer in the Tropics* (Richmond, VA: Westover Pub. Co., 1973); Philip Beam, *Winslow Homer at Prout's Neck* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966).

feature. In his “Essay on American Scenery”, Cole proclaimed, “The most distinctive, and perhaps the most impressive, characteristic of American scenery is its wildness. It is the most distinctive because in civilized Europe the primitive features of scenery have long since been destroyed or modified.”<sup>9</sup> Cole’s reverent interpretations of Niagara Falls, the Catskills and other forests and mountains throughout the northeastern United States won him much praise as *America’s* artist. By mid-century, Cole’s work had inspired a number of like-minded artists who devoted themselves to rendering the pristine landscapes of the United States. The majestic, sweeping panoramas produced by Cole’s successors, such as Asher B. Durand, Jasper Cropsey and Frederic Edwin Church, captured what seemed the essence of a national art.

By the time Homer reached adulthood, however, the work of these artists, often referred to as the Hudson River School, had become largely passé, and no coherent movement or group of artists had sufficiently filled the position for an exemplary, autochthonous art form. While photographers such as Carleton Watkins, Timothy O’Sullivan and Eadweard Muybridge captured the western United States with a similar dedication to the land as the painters of the Hudson River School, many still questioned the camera’s place within the realm of fine art. Moreover, as these photographers were often working for hire on expeditionary survey projects throughout the West, their contemporaries were not apt to consider them the next generation of great American artists.

The many men and women who flocked to Paris for artistic training in the latter half of the century only exacerbated the problem of defining an American art. As celebrated American artists such as John Singer Sargent, James Abbott McNeill Whistler

---

<sup>9</sup> Cole, “Essay on American Scenery,” 1836, in Harrison, *Art in Theory, 1815-1900*, 137.

and Mary Cassatt settled in Europe where they painted the upper-middle class and their environs, a homegrown form of artistic expression seemed even more doubtful. Henry James summed up the state of affairs in American art by declaring in 1887, “When to-day we look for ‘American art’ we find it mainly in Paris.”<sup>10</sup>

Winslow Homer came of age amid this perceived paucity of iconic American artists.<sup>11</sup> Homer’s illustrations, watercolors and oils of bucolic life in New England, tired soldiers of the Civil War and most notably, rugged seamen of the Maine coast, breathed new life into the American landscape tradition. Indeed, many critics of his day sought to cast Homer as the foremost figure of American art.<sup>12</sup> Frederick Morton declared in 1902, “Winslow Homer is unquestionably the most strictly national painter America has produced, and for that very reason he is one of the greatest, if not the greatest.”<sup>13</sup> What Morton found so exceptional in Homer’s art was his dedication to depicting those subjects that Cole had championed decades earlier. As Morton explained, “[Homer’s] landscapes are redolent of the primeval forests of the New World.”<sup>14</sup>

In addition to Homer’s enthusiasm for native themes, the artist’s style of painting, and even his persona, seemed to capture the supposedly indigenous ideal of the rugged individualist. Compared with the soft, “feminine” style of the Aestheticists, Homer’s

---

<sup>10</sup> Henry James, “John Singer Sargent,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 75 (October 1887). Quoted in Kathleen Adler, “‘We’ll Always Have Paris’: Paris as Training Ground and Proving Ground,” *Americans in Paris 1860-1900*, exh. cat. (London: Rothschild, 2006), 11.

<sup>11</sup> Alongside Homer, Thomas Eakins is often discussed as one of the period’s quintessential American artists. Eakins’ masculine subjects, coupled with his blunt, precise style of painting, seem to embody a distinctly American aesthetic. Moreover, like Homer, Eakins spent the majority of his life working in the United States. As Elizabeth Johns discusses in her seminal book, *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life*, (1983), however, Eakins’ somewhat checkered career and shocking behavior, tarnished his reputation and prevented him from becoming the ideal American painter during his day.

<sup>12</sup> This nineteenth-century desire to portray Homer as “America’s” artist was explored most recently in the 2001 exhibition *Winslow Homer and the Critics: Forging a National Art of the 1870s*, organized by the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

<sup>13</sup> Frederick W. Morton, “The Art of Winslow Homer: Twelve Illustrations,” *Brush and Pencil*, 10 no. 1 (April, 1902): 40.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

brushwork appeared raw, bold and masculine. As Christian Brinton, one of the most vocal and renowned advocates for an authentic and distinct American art declared, Homer's work possessed "a heritage of virile, sturdy Americanism."<sup>15</sup> "The exact antithesis", Frederick Morton noted, of Whistler's refined style.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, rather than ingratiating himself within European high society, Homer sequestered himself into a life of virtual isolation on the harsh coast of Maine beginning in 1883.<sup>17</sup> Such traits have led even contemporary critics to call Homer "the quintessential American artist."<sup>18</sup>

Yet most recent scholarship pertaining to Homer, and the discipline of American art history as a whole, has attempted to move away from the nineteenth-century search for a national aesthetic. Although Homer's *oeuvre* primarily contains genre scenes and landscapes distinct to the United States, his time in Paris and in particular Cullercoats, England have been reexamined as critical periods in his artistic development. This trend toward internationalizing American art, and Homer's work specifically, however, has tended to focus on Europe and neglected a more global perspective. Only in the twenty-first century have an increasing number of historians of American art begun to look beyond Europe; this examination of Homer's Cuban work is thus at the forefront of this new scholarship.<sup>19</sup> Homer's Cuban watercolors offer an opportunity to further explore the

---

<sup>15</sup> Christian Brinton, "Winslow Homer," *Scribner's Magazine* 49 (January 1911): 9. As quoted in: Randall C. Griffin, *Homer, Eakins and Anshutz: The Search for American Identity in the Gilded Age*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2004), 92.

<sup>16</sup> Morton, "The Art of Winslow Homer," 42. As quoted in: *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Homer's life of seclusion was in fact not quite as severe as the artist liked to suggest. Elizabeth Johns explores Homer's more social side in Elizabeth Johns, *Winslow Homer: The Nature of Observation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> Ken Chowder, "Winslow Homer: The Quintessential American Artist," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 26 (October 1995): 116-118.

<sup>19</sup> While this tendency towards a global perspective in American art history is a relatively recent occurrence, notably, beginning in the 1980s, a number of scholars first probed this uncharted territory. Important pioneering works that explored the artistic intersections of the United States and Latin America include Katherine Manthorne's *Tropical Renaissance* and Albert Boime's article for the *Smithsonian* "Blacks in Shark-Infested Waters: Visual Encodings of Racism in Copley and Homer."

international thrust of American art while simultaneously redefining what it means to be the quintessential “American” artist. Together, these images constitute a rebuttal to the persistent idea quoted earlier by Henry James: “When to-day we look for ‘American art’ we find it mainly in Paris.”

### **An American Artist’s Introduction to the “Eden of the Gulf”**

After a brief apprenticeship at the lithographic firm of J.H. Bufford in Boston, Homer began what was to become a prolific and much-lauded career as a freelance illustrator for popular weekly and monthly journals. From 1857-1859, Homer published his first images of rural and urban life in New England in the Boston weekly, *Ballou’s Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*. Just three years prior to Homer’s employment with *Ballou’s*, the owner of the journal, Maturin Murray Ballou, published *History of Cuba, or Notes of a Traveller in the Tropics Being a Political, Historical, and Statistical Account of the Island from Its First Discovery to Present Time*. One of the first books on the island published in the United States, *History of Cuba*, according to preeminent Cuba scholar Louis Pérez, was one of the most influential travel accounts of its time.<sup>20</sup>

Accompanying Ballou’s lively text were illustrations of daily life in Cuba, most likely produced by the French lithographer Frédéric Mialhe. Although not often acknowledged for his work, Mialhe was one of the first artists to depict Cuba for a wide international audience.<sup>21</sup> After living in Cuba for many years, Mialhe published a series

---

<sup>20</sup> Widely regarded as one of the most important scholars in developing the field of Cuban studies, Louis Pérez, has written over fifteen books that address relations between Cuba and the United States. Pérez notes the significance of Ballou’s *History of Cuba* for mid-nineteenth-century U.S. readers in *Impressions of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century, the Travel Diary of Joseph Dimock*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 147.

<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, it seems Mialhe may have originally intended to picture Cuba through photographs rather than prints. Before 1841, Mialhe applied to open a commercial photographic studio in Havana but was

of his lithographs of landscapes and daily life on the island that were sold as an album on a subscription basis from 1839-1841. Entitled *Isla de Cuba Pintoresca*, Mialhe's album was a financial disaster as it was prohibitively expensive to produce and only marketed to the Cuban elite. Shortly after its debut, however, the prints in *Isla de Cuba* became of interest to publishers in Europe and the United States looking to illustrate the burgeoning boom in travel literature on the island. By the end of the century, Mialhe's images, in either their original form or in imitation, appeared in over 120 publications throughout the world.<sup>22</sup> Ballou's *History of Cuba*, with its grand tour of the island and its customs, includes many images almost identical to those found in *Isla de Cuba*, although Mialhe is never credited for what are most likely his contributions.

With *History of Cuba*, Ballou established himself as an expert on the island; five years later, his work still garnered enough attention for him to lecture on the subject in Boston. Ballou's talks were apparently publicized in broadsides, as one from 1859 announces, "This evening, a lecture will be delivered in the Freeman Place Chapel, Beacon Street, by M.M. Ballou, on the island of Cuba."<sup>23</sup> Interest in Cuba was apparently great enough for the organizers of the lecture to charge the robust ticket price of twenty-five cents per person.<sup>24</sup> During his talk, Ballou most likely entertained his audience with flowery descriptions of the exotic fruits and verdant foliage found in the "Eden of the Gulf", as he called the island in *History of Cuba*. Never one to refrain from expressing his personal views, Ballou also probably conveyed a sense of urgency needed to transform

---

turned down because the entrepreneur George Washington Halsey already operated a photography business in the city. Apparently, one portrait photographer was thought to be enough for Havana in 1840. For a further discussion of this topic, see Bondil, ed. *Cuba: Art and History from 1868 to Today*, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Emilio Cueto, *Mialhe's Colonial Cuba: The Print's that Shaped the World's View of Cuba*, (Miami: Historical Association of Southern Florida, 1994), 6.

<sup>23</sup> American Antiquarian Society, Collection of American Broadsides and Ephemera, BDSDS.1859.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

that “land of enchantment” into a place of production. Ballou’s audience was presumably part of what the author considered the “enterprising race”, entrusted with the task of controlling the island and its slothful inhabitants.<sup>25</sup> As Ballou asserted in *History of Cuba*:

On treading the fertile soil, and on beholding the clustering fruits offered on all sides, the delicious oranges, the perfumed pine-apples [sic], the luscious bananas, the cooling cocoanuts [sic], and other fruits for which our language has no name, we are struck with the thought of how much Providence, and how little man, has done for this Eden of the Gulf. We long to see it peopled by men who can appreciate the gifts of nature...Cuba is indeed a land of enchantment, where nature is beautiful, and where mere existence is a luxury, but it requires the infusion of a sterner, more self-denying and enterprising race to fully test its capabilities, and to astonish the world with its productiveness.<sup>26</sup>

In 1885, the year Homer ventured to Cuba, Ballou published a second book on the island, *Due South: or Cuba Past and Present*. By this time, Ballou was well-known as a frenetic globe-trotter, having published the year before *Due West: or Round the World in Ten Months*. Ballou’s second book on Cuba considers many of the same topics as his first; the author gushes over the island’s natural beauty and in particular its fertile fruits and foliage. *Due South*, however, strikes a more forceful tone when discussing the fate of the island’s political sovereignty. Ballou states candidly, “That the island naturally belongs to this country is a fact so plain as to have been conceded by all authorities.”<sup>27</sup> Given that the *New York Times* relayed that the sale of Cuba to the United States had by then become, “a general topic of conversation”, Ballou’s assertion probably disquieted few readers.

---

<sup>25</sup> A bold and imperialist claim by any standards, Ballou’s call for the “enterprising race” to control Cuba appears even more outrageous when considering that the majority of his audience as well as his wider readership had most likely never even been to the island.

<sup>26</sup> Maturin Murray Ballou, *History of Cuba, or Notes of a Traveller in the Tropics Being a Political, Historical, and Statistical Account of the Island from Its First Discovery to Present Time* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Company, 1854), 127.

<sup>27</sup> Maturin Murray Ballou, *Due South: Or Cuba Past and Present* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1885), 311.



While it cannot be argued with certainty that Homer's first encounter with Cuba came through the illustrated writings and lectures of his employer, given Ballou's position as an authority on the island by 1854, it is entirely plausible that the elder man's work initially sparked the young artist's interest. If not from Ballou, Homer's introduction to Cuba may have come from a variety of other employers and acquaintances. After leaving *Ballou's* in 1859, Homer became an illustrator for *Harper's Weekly*, where he firmly established himself as one of the period's foremost commercial artists. In addition to *Harper's*, Homer also illustrated the works of various poets including William Cullen Bryant, a man with strong ties to Spanish America.<sup>28</sup> In 1827, Bryant published an English translation of the poem "En una tempestad: Al huracán" by the Cuban ex-patriot, José María Heredia. Reprinted for the next several decades throughout the United States, Bryant's translation had broad appeal as the poem expressed nationalist concerns during a period defined by increasing hostility toward the Old World and a rising spirit of pan-Americanism. Even south of the border in Mexico, "The Hurricane", as Bryant's translation was known, received attention; the northern poet's English version was reproduced in broadside in Mexico City upon his visit there in 1872.<sup>29</sup> After the success of "The Hurricane," Bryant traveled to Cuba in 1849 and in 1855 he published his observations of the island in *Letters of a Traveller, or Notes of Things Seen in Europe and America*. Readers of New York's *Evening Post*, however, would have first encountered Bryant's musings on Cuba in 1849 when his letters were

---

<sup>28</sup> Homer created a series of drawings that were reproduced as engravings for Bryant's *The Story of the Fountain*, published in 1872 and *The Song of the Sower*, published in 1881.

<sup>29</sup> While the distribution of "The Hurricane" was no doubt meant as an honor to Bryant, the poem also had particular resonance in Mexico where the nation's fight against the French intervention in 1867 was compared to Cuba's continued resistance to Spain implied in the verse. For a further exploration of this subject see Kirsten Silva Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton and Oxford: The Princeton University Press, 2002).

originally published in that paper. Like Ballou, Bryant was enamored of Cuba's rich vegetation but he also offered a more probing account of everyday life on the island. Bryant's letters consider the moral issues of the popular sport of cockfighting, Spain's oppression of its colonial subjects and the island's subsequent mistreatment of its large slave population.

In addition to Ballou's and Bryant's books, *To Cuba and Back: A Vacation Voyage*, written by Homer's childhood neighbor, Richard Henry Dana Jr., was another of the period's seminal primary sources on the island. First published in 1859, *To Cuba and Back* remained constantly in print until the second decade of the twentieth century.<sup>30</sup> Readers throughout the decades apparently delighted in Dana's captivating tales of the island's masked balls, street spectacles and bullfights. As one of the period's definitive travel guides to the island, Homer would likely have read *To Cuba and Back*, before venturing south in 1885; the artist's childhood connection to Dana makes this assumption even more plausible. In 1842, Homer's family moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, settling in a home next door to the well-respected family of Richard Henry Dana, Sr. Twenty-one years Winslow Homer's senior, the eldest son of the family and future author, Dana Jr., may not have spent much time with the young boy next door. However, in 1850, Dana Jr. and his wife moved into the home of his aunt, the widow of the writer Washington Allston, located right next to the Homer household. Fourteen at the time, Homer may have been interested in the adventurous Dana Jr., who had by then made a name for himself both as an author of the widely acclaimed *Two Years Before the Mast*, detailing his travel experiences in what was then Mexico, and also as a founder of the anti-slavery Free Soil Party. Nine years later, after moving to New York, away from

---

<sup>30</sup> Pérez, *Impressions of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century, the Travel Diary of Joseph Dimock*, 148.

Cambridge and the Dana family, Homer may have happened upon the new publication by his former neighbor, beginning another chapter in the young artist's development.

In addition to these three principal books on Cuba, all of which Homer shared a personal connection with, there is no shortage of earlier illustrated texts and travel accounts of the island. The first recorded description of Cuba by a foreigner dates to the fifteenth century; landing upon the island on October 28, 1492, Christopher Columbus declared it to be "the most beautiful that eyes have ever seen."<sup>31</sup> He was struck by the exuberant vegetation, which he found "as abundant as in April and May in Andalusia."<sup>32</sup> Another esteemed traveler to the island, Alexander von Humboldt, also delighted in the land's natural riches, writing, "The island of Cuba presents on every hand a most varied and agreeable country from its undulating character, its ever-springing verdure, and the variety of its vegetable formations."<sup>33</sup> Humboldt arrived in Cuba in 1804 at the end of his four-year expedition traversing South America and Mexico. Although the Prussian explorer spent just a few weeks in Cuba, on a stop-over on his way from Mexico to the United States, his time on the island left an indelible impression. Once returned home, Humboldt wrote *Political Essay on the Island of Cuba*, in which he devoted significant space to addressing such controversial topics as slavery and race relations. Published first in French and then in Spanish, the text was eventually translated into English and printed in New York in 1856, a year that coincides with the proliferation of books on Cuba such as those by Ballou, Bryant and Dana. The English translation, however, excluded Humboldt's chapter that argued for abolition on the island, a conspicuous omission that

---

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Aviva Chomsky ed., et al. *The Cuba Reader*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003) trans. J.M. Cohen, "Christopher Columbus 'Discovers' Cuba," 11.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Alexander von Humboldt, *Political Essay on the Island of Cuba*, originally published Derby & Jackson, NY, 1856. Rpt.: Negro Universities Press, A Division of Greenwood Publishing Corp. NY, 1969, 141.

enraged the aging Prussian author.<sup>34</sup> In the antebellum United States, what was absent from Humboldt's text may have garnered more attention than what was present. Given the frequency with which Homer depicted African Americans and strained race relations, one can imagine his curiosity in a book that was meant to address abolition on an island where slavery was still legal upon his visit there in 1885.

In addition to the preponderance of books on Cuba from the 1850s, popular journals also brought the island to the south to readers in the north. *Harper's* published a lengthy article on Cuba in 1853 in which the author, identified only as "An Artist", wrote rapturously about nature's extravagance there. "The fields were covered with growing and ripening pine-apples and luscious bananas; and in every nook gorgeous flowers, such as we of the chilly North cherish in hot-houses, were springing into life and beauty."<sup>35</sup> Concluding his paean to nature, the author attests, "Nothing arrests the attention of a stranger in Cuba more forcibly than the wealth of its vegetation, exhibiting an almost endless variety of trees, shrubs and flowers."<sup>36</sup> The island's famed floral abandon also brought the naturalist John Muir there in 1868. Muir found "Our 'American South'", as he referred to Cuba, "full of exceedingly showy and interesting plants...flourishing in armed safety in the hot and humid wild gardens."<sup>37</sup> Clearly, for the northern explorer and his readers, by mid-century Cuba was synonymous with verdant tropical wilderness.

Most early travelers to Cuba, however, came in search of monetary riches rather than floral opulence. As the above-mentioned author from *Harper's* declared, "avaricious

---

<sup>34</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 141.

<sup>35</sup> An Artist, "Three Weeks in Cuba," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 6 (January 1853): 164.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 166.

<sup>37</sup> John Muir, "Havana," rpt. in Alan Ryan, ed. *The Reader's Companion to Cuba*, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997), 55-56.

men in search of sudden wealth in the virgin bosom of the Western World”<sup>38</sup> ventured to the island with “Gold, pearls and spices and other luxuries of courts and feudal households, being the chief objects sought.”<sup>39</sup> Humboldt also commented on the promise of gold caches in Cuba; he noted that the reserves of the precious metal had been greatly depleted in recent years but that the “supposition of ancient riches is not unlikely.”<sup>40</sup>

Cuba’s reputation as a land laden with promises of wealth lingered later into the nineteenth century with the popularity of the Havana Lottery. With a grand prize of \$100,000, the Havana Lottery was the nineteenth century’s equivalent to striking it rich in gold, pearls or spices sought by the first explorers. Held in Cuba, but open to residents in the United States, the Havana Lottery was advertised in broadsides printed in English with results published in the *Charleston Courier* of South Carolina (fig. 3.2). In an effort to spur participation in the lottery, one broadside included accounts of the previous year’s winners. A published excerpt from the *Charleston Courier*, on October 2, 1856, relayed:

One of the greatest dandies in Paris now is a New Orleans negro; he may be seen at the Chatteau [sic] des Fleurs and Mabilie, or on the Boulevard des Italiens, tricked out in a bright blue coat with brass buttons, flaming waistcoat, pied pantaloons, patent leather boots, and a great deal of jewelry, and evidently enjoying the stares he excites. He is said to have been a cab driver in New Orleans, and to have inherited his fortune from the Havana Lottery.<sup>41</sup>

With such tantalizing tales of virtual rags to riches, by way of the Havana Lottery, Cuba emerged as a place of discovery, wealth and self-transformation at mid-century. This exultant mythology has persisted, leading even twentieth-century scholars to indulge in rapturous accounts of the island’s opulence. With almost giddy abandon, Patti Hannaway

---

<sup>38</sup> An Artist, “Three Weeks in Cuba,” 161.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Humboldt, 131.

<sup>41</sup> American Antiquarian Society, Collection of American Broadsides and Ephemera, BDSDS.1857.

described Homer as “a treasure hunter who had unearthed a rich cache in the West Indies”<sup>42</sup> in her exhibition catalogue on the artist’s Caribbean watercolors.

Cuba was also great entertainment in the nineteenth century. In 1855, for example, an enormous painting of Havana, presumably by the artist Alonzo Chappel, went on a whirlwind tour of the United States. Billed as “THE BEST ENTERTAINMENT IN THE COUNTRY”, Chappel’s painting, which featured “THE MOST MAGNIFICENT PANORAMA IN THE WORLD”, reached a large audience (fig. 3.3). One broadside, advertising the exhibition of the work, attests that 250,000 people in Boston had seen the panorama while it was on view there for two hundred nights.<sup>43</sup> Given some of the audacious claims made on the broadside, among them that the painting was composed of 3,300 square feet of canvas and purchased for the enormous sum of \$55,000, such assertions of audience size may be more hyperbole than fact. Regardless, many Bostonians, perhaps Homer among them, must have seen this work as a myriad of newspapers reported on this exceptional viewing experience.<sup>44</sup> The *Daily Commonwealth* announced, “It is a fact. The best entertainment that has visited our city for years is the great painting of Cuba now at Armory Hall.”<sup>45</sup> Notably, the papers, as well as the broadside itself, devoted more space to discussing the panorama as entertainment than to what the artist actually depicted. Adding to this what truly must have been an astounding spectacle for the nineteenth-century viewer was a musical performance by what the broadside describes as the “celebrated” Signore Morrillo. Entitled “Lilliputian Family”, Morrillo’s “grand vocal and instrumental concert” presumably had no connection to Cuba

---

<sup>42</sup>Patti Hannaway, *Winslow Homer in the Tropics* (Richmond, VA: Westover, Pub. Co., 1973), 84.

<sup>43</sup>Kentucky Historical Society, broadside. Reference url: <http://kydgi.ky.gov:2005/u?/RB,202>.

<sup>44</sup> The year Chappel’s work went on view in Boston Homer had begun his apprenticeship in the city with J.H. Bufford’s lithographic firm.

<sup>45</sup> Kentucky Historical Society, broadside (reverse), Reference url: <http://kydgi.ky.gov:2005/u?/RB,203>

but was likely included as part of the event to boost ticket sales. With tickets “only fifty cents” and “half price for children and servants”, this outlandish spectacle probably attracted more than the wealthiest members of society.<sup>46</sup>

Cuba was also the subject of more subdued “parlor entertainment” (fig. 3.4). In 1864, Constant Guillou, remembered as, “a most devoted and industrious amateur, who did much, very much, to encourage the disciples of our art [photography] from its earliest days”<sup>47</sup>, gave an illustrated lecture on Cuba in Philadelphia. Held on May 17, Guillou’s lecture was to benefit The Great Central Fair, one of the city’s largest fundraising efforts organized “to promote the health, comfort and efficiency of the army of the Union.”<sup>48</sup> The largest of the more than two dozen sanitary fairs organized in various northern cities from 1863-1865, the Great Central Fair included displays of manufactured goods and military souvenirs as well as artworks.<sup>49</sup> As the Great Central Fair did not open to the public until June 7, 1864, Guillou’s lecture was most likely a preamble to the larger event.<sup>50</sup> For the then hefty ticket price of one dollar, attendees of Guillou’s lecture could support the upcoming fair and learn about Cuba through “photographic views taken from nature in the harbor and City of Havana, upon plantations &c., and presented through the unrivalled medium of the stereopticon.”<sup>51</sup> Guillou’s lecture most likely offered a wealthy

---

<sup>46</sup> Although certainly not an insignificant amount of money in 1855, fifty to twenty-five cents was notably less than what other comparable forms of entertainment pertaining to Cuba cost at the time such as fig. 3.5.

<sup>47</sup> Edward L. Wilson, ed. *Photographic Mosaics: An Annual Record of Photographic Progress* (Philadelphia: Bennerman & Wilson Publishers 1873), 21.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Elizabeth Milroy, “Avenue of Dreams” in William Blair and William Pencak ed., *Making and Remaking Pennsylvania’s Civil War*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2001), 30.

<sup>49</sup> Milroy, 23. Winslow Homer was among the many artists represented at the Great Central Fair. His decision to submit the painting *Playing Old Soldier*, which depicts a young Union soldier feigning illness in order to avoid his duties seems an odd choice for an exhibition meant to honor and support those in service.

<sup>50</sup> This was apparently not uncommon, as it seems every able-bodied Philadelphian offered his/her services in support of the fair. Everything from magic shows and gymnastics performances to productions of Shakespeare’s “The Merchant of Venice” were held to benefit the fair.

<sup>51</sup> By contrast, entrance to the Great Central Fair itself was only fifty cents. Library of Congress, Printed Ephemera Collection, Portfolio 158, Folder 29i.

audience a more intimate and informative introduction to Cuba than that found at Chappel's more modestly priced popular extravaganza.

From the theatrical to the parlor view, images of Cuba made their way into the visual lexicon of the North by the mid-nineteenth century. As was the case with Muybridge in Mexico and Central America, Cuba was hardly a blank slate in the U.S. imagination by the time of Homer's arrival there in 1885. Given Homer's relationship with at least three of the authoritative writers on Cuba at the time, the adventurous artist was well versed in the pervasive conceptions of the island as an "Eden of the Gulf", brimming with floral abundance and extravagant riches. Homer's watercolors of the island, however, told a different narrative from the one put forth by the Ballous of his day. Unlike Muybridge, who furthered the myths already entrenched in his audience's understanding of Mexico and Central America, Homer offered a more nuanced view of Cuba that reveals his awareness of the tension wrought by the Old World's presence in the New World.

### **Motivations for Traveling South**

Homer reached this by then legendary island by way of an assignment for *Century Illustrated Magazine* during the winter of 1884 and 1885. As has been duly noted, it is surprising that Homer took on such an assignment, given that ten years prior he had renounced working as a commercial illustrator.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps the allure of a warm winter escape, away from the frigid coast of Maine, where he was by then living full time, was enough to woo him south to work on a commission basis. Or, perhaps, as Patti Hannaway

---

<sup>52</sup> Arnold Skolnick ed., *The Watercolors of Winslow Homer*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001), 125. Homer did work intermittently, however, as a commercial illustrator up until 1887.



claimed, Homer headed to the Caribbean to elude jury duty, an obligation he seems to have particularly loathed.<sup>53</sup> Yet, such theories do not explain why he ventured specifically to Cuba. After all, *Century* sent Homer on assignment only to the Bahamas; he struck out for Cuba on his own.

While in the Bahamas, Homer produced a series of watercolors that were later translated into engravings to accompany the *Century* article “A Midwinter Resort” written by William C. Church. However, Homer’s images of bushy palms, lyrical flower-sellers and robust conch divers probably did little to convince the reader that the Bahamas were in fact a splendid midwinter resort. The author found almost nothing but fault with the islands, professing, “It is evident that the empire of the Bahamas was not one to be coveted then, and it is not much to be desired now.”<sup>54</sup> Perhaps in an effort to find the more desirable tropics, Homer ventured to Cuba.

By then, Havana had become a midwinter playground for wealthy, adventurous tourists from the north. Before Homer’s arrival there, Cuba had already received such high profile travelers as William H. Vanderbilt. In 1883, Vanderbilt vacationed on the island with his family. Before sailing south, he explained to *The Atlanta Constitution*, “I am going to Cuba for recreation and nothing else. I do not know exactly how long we shall be away, or beyond Havana how far we shall go. I am going for neither business nor health, but simply a pleasure trip.”<sup>55</sup> Cuba may have beckoned to Homer for similar reasons: a place of solace away from his professional duties in the Bahamas. Or, more practically, Cuba may have offered Homer a respite from his cantankerous aging father

---

<sup>53</sup> Hannaway, 75.

<sup>54</sup> William C. Church “A Midwinter Resort” *Century Illustrated Magazine* 33 (February 1887): 499.

<sup>55</sup> “Vanderbilt’s Trip,” *The Atlanta Constitution* (January 5, 1883): 5.

with whom he had traveled to the Bahamas.<sup>56</sup>

While such explanations seem plausible, they do not take into consideration the changing identity of the island in 1884, the year Cuba's romantic reputation as a land of enchantment, bursting with verdant foliage and undiscovered wealth was tarnished by reports of civil unrest. On November 25, 1884, *The New York Times* announced that trouble appeared imminent; Cuban insurgents waited in neighboring St. Thomas, their insurrection expected in early December,<sup>57</sup> exactly the time that Homer arrived in the Caribbean. While the insurrection resulted in only a brief flurry of fighting, the many U.S. news reports from earlier in the year that chronicled the bloody skirmishes between the insurgents and the military authority had already captured attention in the North. As tension between the Old and New Worlds escalated, the story of the Cuban "David" versus the Spanish "Goliath" found an empathetic ear in the United States, where colonists had once suffered under Britain's yoke.

If Homer were looking for a carefree jaunt to a hedonistic land, another Caribbean island would have been the wiser choice that year as the "Eden of the Gulf" withered under political strife. On the contrary, it seems, Homer went to Cuba in search of discord rather than pleasure, unlike Vanderbilt before him. For an artist who had made a name for himself picturing the Civil War, African Americans and man's struggle against the sea, an island, inundated by rising tides of turmoil over sovereignty and slavery, would have been an enticing destination. Presumably, Homer pondered these turbulent waters before embarking for Havana just two months after arriving in the Bahamas.

---

<sup>56</sup> Johns, 127.

<sup>57</sup> "To Invade Cuba", *New York Times* (November 25, 1884): 5.

### The “Red Hot” Encounter

Shortly after reaching Cuba, Homer wrote to his brother Charles, “Here I am fixed for a month having taken tickets for NY on the 8<sup>th</sup>, leaving 27<sup>th</sup> of March—this is a red hot place full of soldiers. They have condemned six men to be shot for landing with arms.”<sup>58</sup> Clearly, by the time Homer reached Cuba, there was more than the usual “wealth of vegetation” that “arrested the attention of a stranger” on the island, as the author of the 1853 *Harper’s* article had relayed. Immediately, Homer confronted the unrest between the insurgents and Spanish authorities; yet, he remained unfazed and even inspired by the menacing threat as he wrote to Charles in the same letter, “I expect some fine things—it is certainly the richest field for an artist that I have seen.”<sup>59</sup> Considering that by this time Homer already had seen Paris, the English coast, the Bahamas and large portions of the United States, this statement is one of great consequence. Thus, it is surprising that Homer left the island after less than two months, never to return; yet, he visited the Bahamas throughout the rest of his life. The physical discomfort Homer suffered while in Cuba may have tempered the artist’s initial excitement. As he bemoaned to Charles, “Lucky Father did not go with me. No breakfast until 11, very bad smells, no drains, brick tiles and scorpions for floor & so hot that you must change your clothes every afternoon.”<sup>60</sup> While the Cuba of 1885 may have been too rustic for the rugged individualist, the island continued to occupy his imagination in the decades that followed, as I will explore in the next chapter.

What Homer found “rich” about the island was not its luxurious flora nor promise

---

<sup>58</sup> Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Collections: Letters (Homer): Winslow Homer Letter to Charles S. Homer Jr., 1885.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

of wealth. Indeed, aside from a few sketches of palm trees, Homer did not depict Cuba's famed foliage. Rather, he pictured genre scenes, a subject for which he was already well known, scenes that conveyed the immediacy of life on the island to the northern viewer. The nearly twenty watercolors Homer produced of Cuba include images of still blue harbors, crooked streets, aging military forts, fashionable women and the conclusion of a cockfight. As is characteristic of Homer's work, on a first reading, these watercolors appear to be straightforward vignettes of everyday life. On closer inspection, however, they reveal a darker, more complicated meaning that is suggestive of the period's pressing political concerns.

Never one to engage in polemics, Homer embedded politics within the most unlikely of places—wheat fields, seascapes and domestic interiors. In Cuba, this penchant for encoding his images with meaning manifested itself in the form of Spanish forts, flags, fans and cockfights. Rendered in surprisingly dull tones and appearing beneath ubiquitous gray skies, these subtle signs refer to the threatening tension Homer encountered on the island. Alongside Homer's vibrant watercolors of the Bahamas from the same Caribbean journey, these dark images of Cuba appear even more foreboding. Such a stark contrast demonstrates that Homer conceptualized the two islands differently; the Bahamas persisted as a carefree mid-winter resort while Cuba emerged as the site of contention between the Old and New Worlds.

### **Picturing Discord: Spanish Forts, Flags, Fans and Cockfights**

Homer traveled by steamer from the Bahamas to the popular port of entry in the city of Santiago de Cuba. One of Cuba's crucial commercial hubs, Santiago was also a

hotbed of political activity at the time. The Morro Castle, a military fortress in the city built by the Spanish in the seventeenth century, was used, by the time of Homer's arrival, as a prison for Cuban insurgents. Upon entering that same harbor just a year earlier,

Marturin Murray Ballou commented in *Due South: Cuba Past and Present*:

As we steamed past [the Morro] that sunny afternoon, stimulated by the novelty of everything about us, a crowd of pallid sorrowful faces appeared at the grated windows, watching us listlessly. Two days later five of them, who were condemned patriots, were led out upon those ramparts and shot, their bodies falling into the sea.<sup>61</sup>

While Homer's watercolor of the Morro (fig. 3.5) does not illustrate this brutality, the artist's decision to paint such a site was in itself a political act. The direct representation of a scene like the one described by Ballou would have been uncharacteristic of the artist who preferred to obliquely allude to politics in seemingly benign images of everyday life. Because Homer's watercolor and drawings of the Morro (figs. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7) show no obvious signs of unrest, however, they have been interpreted as straightforward architectural studies. Examining these works in retrospect, the artist's first biographer William Howe Downes assumed that this is precisely how Homer's viewers perceived these images of Morro Castle and the island in general. Downes asserted that Cuba would have had few associations for the average American in 1886 given that the Spanish-American War was still twelve years away:

The Americans who looked with casual curiosity at these scenes were far from foreseeing that Santiago de Cuba was to become in twelve short years from that time the objective of an American army invasion, and that, off the tortuous entrance to this noble harbor, in sight of the Morro Castle, was to be fought the short, sharp, and decisive naval combat which was destined to free Cuba forever from the domination of Spain and put an end to all Spanish power on this side of the Atlantic.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> M.M. Ballou, *Due South: Cuba Past and Present*, 33.

<sup>62</sup> William Howe Downes, *The Life and Works of Winslow Homer* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), 131-132.

The United States' involvement with Cuba, however, began years before the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. Given the frequency with which *The New York Times* and the *Boston Daily Globe* reported on the entangling events between Cuba and the United States from 1884-1885,<sup>63</sup> it is in fact hard to believe, as Downes states, that Homer's viewers "were far from foreseeing" what was to unfold at the Morro and in Santiago de Cuba. Indeed, just days before Homer opened an exhibition in New York of his watercolors of Cuba and the Bahamas, reports of a new filibustering expedition dispatched from that city to Havana circulated in the press.<sup>64</sup> Not only in the Northeast, but in other parts of the country as well, readers learned that "The Spanish masters of Cuba maintain an iron rule. Every man, it is said, who expresses sentiment not strictly loyal to the Spanish authority is arrested and imprisoned. Conspiracy is punished by dungeon, confinement or death."<sup>65</sup> Far from being an idyllic tropical paradise, Cuba had become synonymous with political turmoil by the time Homer exhibited his images of the island. In such a climate of unrest, Homer's rendering of an antiquated Spanish military fort, known for executions of Cuban prisoners, would have evoked these recent events and in turn fueled a pan-American fervor.

The Morro's political resonance makes Homer's visual reticence in his depictions of the site all the more jarring. In his watercolor (fig. 3.5), the Morro's stage-like platform appears empty and abandoned. As in so many of Homer's works, one is left to fill in the

---

<sup>63</sup> See for example footnotes 1-3.

<sup>64</sup> "A report of a filibustering expedition from Key West is given this morning, and also some ominous hints from New York. These are very tangible forebodings, and by-and-by, no doubt, a pronuncimientto will be issued, and the other accessories of a revolution will present themselves." "Hints of a New Rebellion in Cuba are receiving Cautious Circulation," *The Galveston Daily News*, (Dec. 4, 1885): 4; col. C. Homer's exhibition opened four days after this announcement at the gallery Gustav Reichard in New York.

<sup>65</sup> "Iron Rule in Cuba," *Milwaukee Sentinel* (March 1, 1885): F11.

details of what had passed and what is yet to come. In the absence of any one specific narrative, the viewer can envision the roles enacted on the Morro's barren stage throughout its history as a Spanish military stronghold and an execution site, as described by Ballou, in the nadir of the Old World's dominance in the Americas. Years later, Homer returned to these drawings and watercolor and provided an elusive narrative of those events he had refrained from picturing at the Morro. These 1885 images of the Morro formed the basis of Homer's explicitly political painting, *Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba* (fig. 4.3), which I will discuss at greater length in the following chapter. With *Searchlight*, Homer made clear that the Morro stood as a symbol of the tension between the Old and New Worlds.

In addition to the Morro, Homer also subtly referred to the escalating Cuban conflict in 1885 with his watercolor of Santiago Harbor (fig. 3.8). In this panoramic view, Homer once again seems to present a simple depiction of the city's prominent cathedral and mountainous backdrop. At right, the hillside appears a bluish green, perhaps covered in the island's legendary vegetation, yet, not a single palm nor distinguishable plant confirms this supposition. Rendered in muted tones, this harbor contrasts with Homer's waterfront view of Nassau from the same year, which includes towering palms and vibrant patches of turquoise sea and sky (fig. 3.9). One of the few scholars to acknowledge the difference between Homer's images of the Bahamas and those of Cuba, Martha Tedeschi notes, "In contrast to the free, confident brushwork of his Nassau watercolors, these [Cuban] works are finicky in handling and more neutral in color. Brick reds, gray blues and mustard yellows make up the artist's Cuban palette, and heavy gray

skies often hang over the scenes, conjuring a tangible sense of humidity.”<sup>66</sup> More than a suggestion of humidity, the gray sky in this image foretells of the proverbial coming storm brought on here by the passing ship with its flying red and yellow flag. Homer’s inclusion of this barely visible flag inserts this seemingly benign image into the clamorous discussion in the press over Spain’s occupation of Cuba.

Ten years later, the American Impressionist Childe Hassam employed a similar strategy in his paintings of the island. Punctuating (and puncturing) Hassam’s seemingly charming tourist views of Havana from his travels there in 1895 are fluttering Spanish flags that rise above brightly painted, sun-dappled buildings. Hassam’s *Place Centrale and Fort Cabanas, Havana* (fig. 3.10) and *Havana* (fig. 3.11) continue the visual dialogue on Cuba’s political status begun by Homer in the previous decade. Indeed, Hassam may have familiarized himself with Cuba’s struggle through Homer’s 1885 watercolors. At the time that Homer exhibited his Caribbean work, Hassam was a rising star in the American art scene. The younger artist would go on to attract the attention of Homer’s first biographer William Howe Downes, and to exhibit at such venues as Doll & Richards, where the elder artist had first shown his Caribbean images. An ambitious individual, intent on professional advancement, Hassam would have undoubtedly followed Homer’s esteemed career. Homer’s Caribbean exhibitions in Boston may have attracted Hassam’s attention where the latter artist was also living and beginning to experiment with watercolors. While visiting Cuba years later, Hassam may have remembered his predecessor’s unconventional images of the island.

In the years that had elapsed between Homer’s time on the island and Hassam’s

---

<sup>66</sup> Martha Tedeschi, “Memoranda of Travel: The Tropics,” in *Watercolors by Winslow Homer: The Color of Light* ed. Martha Tedeschi et al. (Chicago: Chicago Art Institute, 2008), 172.



arrival there on the eve of Cuba's Second War for Independence, the Cuban question had gained in its urgency.<sup>67</sup> The island's dissatisfaction with its Mother Country had only intensified; the heavy tariffs on both imports and exports to and from the United States enraged Cuba's mercantile elite while the large émigré communities in New York and Florida became increasingly vehement in their calls for both Cuban annexation and independence.

Leading this fight from exile was José Martí, a passionate writer for Cuban independence who had settled in New York in 1881. From 1881, until his death in Cuba's Second War for Independence in 1895, Martí played a pivotal role in informing the world of Cuba's struggle.<sup>68</sup> As early as 1893, Martí publicly professed that a rebellion and the island's subsequent freedom were imminent. As the *New York Times* relayed in November of that year, "José Martí, the leader of the revolutionary party, remarked that before long there would be another star in the galaxy of American republics."<sup>69</sup> Martí's prophecy was not to come to pass until years later, however; in the interim years of the 1890s before the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, news of the island persisted in the press as a place of escalating turmoil.

Hassam's decision to travel to this turbulent territory demonstrates his interest, much like Homer's, in picturing the critical issues of his time. Three years before arriving in Cuba, Hassam had professed, "I believe the man who will go down in posterity is the

---

<sup>67</sup> Hassam arrived in Havana for a month's stay in February 1895 as a guest of his friend Frank Robinson, an entrepreneur who sold U.S. coal to Cuba. Warren Adelson, *Childe Hassam: Impressionist* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1999), 154.

<sup>68</sup> Martí's writings appeared in newspapers throughout the Americas from the *New York Sun*, where he was a regular contributor, to Mexico's *El Partido Liberal* to Argentina's *La Nación*. After his exile from Cuba in 1870, Martí lived in Spain, Mexico, Venezuela, Guatemala and finally the United States. Wherever he went, Martí advocated for Cuban independence. Today, he is considered not only a national hero, but also one of Latin America's most celebrated liberators and intellectuals.

<sup>69</sup> "Still Yearning for Liberty," *New York Times* (November 12, 1893): 3.

man who paints his own time and the scenes of every-day life around him.”<sup>70</sup> In an age when the United States was determined to define its strength by the expulsion of Europe from the Americas, nothing defined the period more precisely than the unsteady state of affairs in Cuba.

Despite Hassam’s avowed interest in the tenor of his times, his work often appears as little more than studies in light and color. Like his Impressionist contemporaries in Europe, Hassam seemed to paint scenes of little gravity. Yet, beneath their sun-dappled, pastel-colored surfaces, the artist’s images often address the concerns and conflicts of his day. Elizabeth Broun astutely argues this point in an essay on the artist; Hassam’s images of Cuba figure prominently in her discussion as a key indicator of the artist’s commitment to depicting critical contemporary issues. Broun asserts that “*Havana* and *Place Centrale* and *Fort Cabanas*, *Havana*, carry more political meaning than is at first evident in their creamy, colorful surfaces.”<sup>71</sup> Hassam’s inclusion of Spanish flags and forts within his sunny Havana scenes, Broun contends, demonstrates the artist’s engagement with the concerns of his time.<sup>72</sup>

Beyond the afternoon strollers and verdant trees in the foreground of *Place Centrale*, appears Fort Cabanas. An eighteenth-century military prison and barracks used

---

<sup>70</sup> A.E. Ives, “Talks with Artists: Mr. Childe Hassam on Painting Street Scenes,” *Art Amateur* 27 (October 1892): 116.

<sup>71</sup> Elizabeth Broun, “Childe Hassam’s America,” *American Art* 13.3 (Fall 1999): 40.

<sup>72</sup> Broun also points to the perspectival shift in Hassam’s Cuban paintings as a visual expression of the period’s quest for territorial expansion. In Cuba, she notes, Hassam abandoned his street-level view for a bird’s eye perspective. According to Broun, “[Hassam’s] elevated gaze scans space in a way that suggests, both visually and metaphorically, a larger view...He created a visual vocabulary to match the expansionist era of territorial domination.” Broun, 41. While perhaps an overstatement, other elements in the painting, such as the Spanish flag, do suggest that Hassam reflected on, at least the threat to, U.S. expansionism. Notably, the opposite argument could also be made; by rendering Cuba as an expansive land, Hassam presented the island as a place unable to be contained by the political powers then vying for its control. As I argued in the previous chapter, Muybridge’s picturesque treatment of Mexico and Central America portrayed the region as visually able to be contained and controlled, making it thus prime for U.S. expansionist efforts.

by the Spanish to hold Cuban insurgents, Fort Cabanas functioned much like Morro Castle in Santiago de Cuba. Flying above this fort is the Spanish flag, signaling Europe's presence in the Americas and situating this work within the period's pressing debate over Cuba's sovereignty. Although not the central motif in the composition, the flag, set off by an expanse of turquoise sky, rises above the city of Havana, a symbol of Spain's authority in the land. The Spanish flag reappears in duplicate in Hassam's *Havana* (fig. 3.11). Rather than a distant marker, the flags in *Havana* are strident red and yellow banners with one placed precisely at center.

Flags would eventually become a recurrent motif in Hassam's later work. World War I inspired a series of paintings by Hassam that featured American, French and British flags. Noted for their "stirring patriotic imagery",<sup>73</sup> these later works originate from the Cuban paintings where Hassam introduced the flag as an emblem of reverse nationalism. Years later, Hassam explained the flag's significance in his Cuban works, "I saw the Spanish flag flying in my picture in the Detroit Museum [*Place Centrale and Fort Cabanas, Havana*], and it was in other things that I painted at that time. It was the last time the Spanish flag flew in the Eastern Hemisphere over a Spanish possession. And when you think of it—they had nearly all of it at one time. It is significant."<sup>74</sup> Although not quite the last time the Spanish flag flew in the Eastern Hemisphere, these images do picture Havana in the waning years of European colonialism there. Within weeks of Hassam's departure from the island, the Second War for Independence had erupted, ushering in the ultimate demise of Spanish authority in the New World.

---

<sup>73</sup> Barbara Weinberg, et al. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 216.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Broun, 40. Childe Hassam, interview by Dewitt Lockman, Feb. 2, 1927, Archives of American Art, 503.

Unlike Hassam, Homer was much more reticent when it came to explaining meaning in his work. Years after his 1885 watercolors, he offered no direct explanation as to his intention in painting the Spanish flags and forts in Cuba. As Elizabeth Broun has argued, however, an artist's decision to picture Spain's presence in Cuba becomes politically significant when considered within the tenor of the times. For an artist like Homer, who by the time of his arrival in Havana, was already recognized for his taciturn, yet politically resonant images, the representation of Spanish forts and flags in Cuba can hardly be considered a neutral choice of subject.

In addition to these flags and forts, the heavy gray skies that often hang over Homer's Cuba suggest the coming political storm as well. In *Volante, Mountain Road Cuba* (fig. 3.12), the clouds and prominent mountains share the same subdued grayish purple hue. On the sloping hill at right, two palm trees blow in the rising storm's forceful wind, a rare display of movement in Homer's usually stagnant Cuban watercolors. By contrast, while the majority of Homer's images from the Bahamas depict sunny scenes replete with what Muir would call "exceedingly showy plants" (fig. 3.13), those that do portend an encroaching storm appear almost as studies in movement with at least one swath of bright color (fig. 3.14). In *Volante*, however, there is only a monotonous murkiness and a heavy stillness that envelops the horse-drawn carriage. The *volante* is also encompassed by the hillside at right, which forms an almost perfect isosceles triangle that could only exist in art. This unnatural wedge pushes down on the carriage, creating a sense of compression and constriction in the landscape that adds an element of tension. As in so many of the artist's works, Homer heightens this pervasive unease by leaving the viewer to wonder if the passengers will arrive at their destination before the storm

breaks and they are stranded on that isolated road.

The *volante*, which translates to “flying” in English, had captured the attention of many visitors to the island before Homer as well. Dana, for example, declared in *To Cuba and Back*, “What strange vehicles these volantes are! A pair of very long, limber shafts, at one end of which is a pair of huge wheels, and the other end a horse...an open chaise body resting on the shafts...and on the horse is a negro, in large postilion boots, long spurs and a bright jacket.”<sup>75</sup> More than just a means of transportation, a *volante* was a sign of privilege and a popular subject in nineteenth-century Cuban genre scenes. Generally, depictions of the *volante*, such as those by Micheal (fig. 3.15), included stylish, light-skinned women pulled by a stately horse and finely dressed, dark-skinned rider. Anthony Trollope also wrote of this distinctive carriage upon his visit to the island in 1859, “The glory of the Paseo consists in its volantes. As one boasts that one has swum in a gondola, so will one boast of having sat in a volante. It is the pride of Cuban girls to appear on the Paseo in these carriages on the afternoons of holidays and Sundays.”<sup>76</sup> Homer’s watercolor, however, conveys none of the pomp of the *volante*; rather than a promenade on the grand Paseo, here the carriage crosses a deserted mountain road. Instead of elegantly clad passengers and rider, the figures are a faint afterthought to their surroundings, a strange portrayal considering the artist’s penchant for depicting feminine fashion. Homer would have had ample opportunity to observe the *volante* in all of its splendor within the city, given its popularity there as described by earlier travelers. His decision to instead present this fixture of nineteenth-century Cuban bourgeois life in an isolated and overcast landscape, suggests an allegorical interpretation of an imminent

---

<sup>75</sup> Dana, *To Cuba and Back*, 23-24.

<sup>76</sup> Anthony Trollope, “Havana” 1859 in *The Reader’s Companion to Cuba*, ed. Ryan, 43.

threat, especially when considered alongside Homer's other images of the island.

*Volante, Mountain Road Cuba* is also striking for, what Lloyd Goodrich termed, the "subdued sumptuousness"<sup>77</sup> of Homer's Cuban images. With this description, Goodrich attempted to pinpoint the difference between Homer's Cuban and Bahamian work. As he stated, Homer's Cuban paintings "lacked the gaiety of his Nassau watercolors, seeming more the work of a tourist, somewhat daunted by this ancient civilization as he had not been by the primitive life of the Bahamas."<sup>78</sup> Years later, Goodrich's characterization of Cuba as an "ancient civilization" and the Bahamas as "primitive" appears biased and confused. While Goodrich's explanation leaves something to be desired, his observance of Homer's distinction in island representation remains significant. Like Martha Tedeschi, Goodrich noted that this "subdued sumptuousness" resulted from Homer's use of muddled or dull tones in Cuba. Even in his watercolors of the island in which the sun does appear, there is not the same blinding light and riot of brilliant hues that Homer obviously relished painting in the Bahamas and later Bermuda and the Florida Keys (fig. 3.16 & 3.17). *Volante, Mountain Road Cuba* and the Cuban watercolors in general are not those that led William Howe Downes to proclaim "that [Homer] revealed to the North for the first time what color of the tropics really is like."<sup>79</sup> For Downes, the "color of the tropics" was what Homer found in Nassau, tones that "vie with the rainbow, the peacock's plumage, the diamond and the flowers of the field."<sup>80</sup> This chromatic distinction between the two islands is not, as Goodrich suggested, the effect of Homer's rendering "an ancient civilization" verses a "primitive" one. Rather,

---

<sup>77</sup> Lloyd Goodrich, *Winslow Homer* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1944), 90.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> William Howe Downes, *The Life and Works of Winslow Homer* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1911), 128.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

with this change in palette, Homer could express two contrasting conditions: the “colors of the tropics” convey a gaiety of life in the Bahamas while the dark hues in Cuba create an ominous atmosphere, suggestive of the brewing conflict there.

The representation of the human figure is also notably different in Homer's Bahamian and Cuban watercolors. As in the majority of Homer's images, the figures in his Bahamian work play an active prominent role (fig. 3.18). Almost all robust, dark-skinned men, they are defined as individuals and usually the focus of the composition. In the majority of Homer's Cuban watercolors, however, the figure is conspicuously absent. This lack of a human presence denies a narrative and draws attention to the landscape of Cuba itself. By emptying Santiago's streets (fig. 3.19) and surroundings (fig. 3.12) of people, Homer constructed a place in which life appears not to unfold, as in the case of the Bahamian watercolors, but to stand still. In Homer's Cuba, there is a sense of waiting for something to happen on that deserted street or mountain path, a sensation which must have been palpable to the artist as he moved about the island then on the brink of chaos.

In contrast to Homer's brawny Bahamian men, the figures that do appear in Homer's Cuban watercolors are invariably women, who are rendered as interchangeable types. The famed beauty and elegance of Cuban women may have led Homer to depict these lovely ladies. By the time of Homer's arrival, many travelers to Cuba had extolled the beauty of Havana's women; the Spanish Princess Eulalia de Borbón, for example, professed that she had “always heard of the beauty, elegance and above all sweetness, of the habaneras lauded, but the reality surpassed anything she could have imagined.”<sup>81</sup> While clearly a familiar subject, the beauty of Cuban women is not revealed in Homer's

---

<sup>81</sup> Eulalia de Borbón, *Memorias de Doña Eulalia de Borbón, Infanta de España* (Barcelona: Editorial Juventud, 1958), 90-91.

watercolors. Instead, his maidens remain anonymous and barely defined.

In *Street Scene, Santiago de Cuba* (fig. 3.20), the closest Homer came to presenting the island as the northern ideal of the tropics with its streaming sunshine and abundance of color, a well-appointed woman walks, protected from the glaring sun by her red parasol and long white dress with black trim. A few steps ahead of her, another more brazen woman walks fully exposed to the sun's acute rays. The sunlit woman seems the exotic doppelganger to the figure obscured by fashionable attire at right; her red head wrap replaces her counterpart's parasol, while her simpler white and black dress leaves her dark arms exposed. Most notably, however, a monkey balances on the woman's arm as she stands unabashedly with her hand resting on her hip that juts out to the side. The focal point of the composition, the monkey woman very clearly locates this scene at a distance from Homer's audience in the northeastern United States. Faceless, these women appear as types rather than individuals, one embodying the tropics and the other the temperate zone. By juxtaposing these two figures, one that exudes a bold exoticism and the other a demure decorum more in keeping with the standards of his viewers, Homer alludes to the diverse complexity of Cuban society. Yet, more pointedly, the women present a dual image of Cuba as a place both familiar and foreign to those in the United States, an impression simultaneously cultivated by the press and popular travel accounts.

Overlooking the street stands another barely visible woman on a balcony on the left. While this figure appears as little more than a transparent apparition, her red and black fan is an opaque presence. Echoing the colors of the women on the street, the fan visually connects this shadowy lady with the representations of exoticism and decorum below. In addition, the fan also serves as a marker of colonialism. Although not of



Spanish origin, the folding fan is commonly associated with the Iberian Peninsula. First brought from China to Portugal in the sixteenth century, the folding fan quickly became an indispensable accessory for any woman of means in Spain, France and England. Spain's renowned court painter Diego Velázquez illustrated the fan's prominence in seventeenth-century European fashion in his portrait *Lady with a Fan* (fig. 3.21). Velázquez's elegantly dressed, unidentified sitter gazes at the viewer while holding a conspicuous, open fan. In this image, Velázquez suggests the true purpose of the fan; more than a practical object for cooling oneself, the fan played an integral role in the ritual of courtship. The opening, closing and fluttering of a woman's fan was an intricate language meant to entice, stymie or provoke a suitor.

By the eighteenth century, the fan entered into the stereotype of Spanish dress,<sup>82</sup> a custom that continued well into the nineteenth century with Queen Isabella II who seldom appeared without this adornment (fig. 3.22). The fan's popularity spread to Spain's colonies in the New World where in the humid Caribbean it served as both fashionable and flirtatious accessory as well as cooling aid. Homer's inclusion of this by then established symbol of Spain in *Street Scene, Santiago de Cuba* thus appears as a subtle reference to the island's occupation by its colonial power.

This understated allusion becomes explicit in Homer's *Spanish Flag, Santiago de Cuba* (fig. 3.23). In this watercolor, three mysterious women stand on a balcony with open fans that partially obscure their dark faces. Once again, Homer employs the same color schema, wrapping these women in long white dresses with black trim while replacing the red parasol and head wrap found in *Street Scene, Santiago de Cuba* with

---

<sup>82</sup> Zahira Veliz, "Signs of Identity in *Lady with a Fan* by Diego Velázquez: Costume and Likeness Reconsidered," *Art Bulletin* 86:1 (March 2004): 82.

scarlet fans. Like the photograph of Queen Isabella II, these women appear on a balcony, a simultaneously interior and exterior space that allows for public display. Cuban balcony women such as Homer's captivated the attention of many northern visitors to the island.<sup>83</sup>

One writer for the *Boston Daily Globe* described these ladies as a kind of spectacle:

Every Cuban city resolves itself into a beauty show every afternoon. When the hot sun's rays slant so as to fill the streets with shade, the pretty girls, dressed in their thin, light hued costumes, pose themselves in picturesque attitudes in the windows, and enjoy looking out upon the street scenes, and being looked at in return...On these broad sills the pretty, big-orbed, languid beauties set themselves in tailor fashion.<sup>84</sup>

On view on the balcony, flaunting their fashionable splendor, Homer's women could be the embodiment of the languid beauty described by this writer. With their marred black faces and shapeless forms, however, these women threaten more than they entice. Even with the aid of what ought to be the alluring fan, these women remain a menacing presence.

By the time of Homer's arrival in Cuba, the fan was ubiquitous, as the same writer for the *Boston Daily Globe* relayed:

Cuban girls have got flirting down to a science. A New York girl is clumsy at it beside one of these maidens. The Cuban girl must have her fan with her or she won't engage in the telegraphic combat. Without a fan flirting is raw and clumsy. With one it is artistic, electric and, instead of requiring boldness, is heightened by a suggestion of modesty.<sup>85</sup>

The flirtatious Cuban maiden described by this author seems an accurate portrayal of the woman illustrated in *Puck* magazine (fig. 3.1) from later that same year. She shares nothing in common with Homer's fanned figures on the balcony, however, who convey a

---

<sup>83</sup>Even into the twentieth century, women on the balcony in Cuba remained a popular subject for northern artists. Walker Evans, for example, photographed numerous women behind iron balustrades while in Havana in 1933.

<sup>84</sup>"Cuba's Beautiful Women," *Boston Daily Globe*, (June 29, 1884): 9.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

sense of the unease then pervasive on the island. Rather than an instrument of seduction, the fan once again functions here as a sign of Spain and the rising tension wrought by the colonial power's presence in Cuba.

Strengthening the association of these women with Spain are their traditional dark veils or *mantillas* obscuring their faces. Like the fan, the *mantilla*, a lace shawl worn over the head and shoulders, became popular in Spain in the seventeenth century and remained in fashion throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>86</sup> In *Lady with a Fan* (fig. 3.21), Velázquez's seventeenth-century sitter wears a simple black *mantilla* while the nineteenth-century photograph of Isabella II (fig. 3.22) shows the queen draped in a more elaborate white example. In Homer's watercolor, the *mantillas* mask the faces of these women, creating mysterious and even sinister seeming figures. Hovering in front of the gaping black hole of a window, these imprecise forms appear unfinished, yet Homer's prominent signature and date suggests that he conceived of this watercolor as a completed image. In this supposedly rough and spontaneous work, Homer presents not a seductive portrait of balcony beauties in a tropical paradise but rather a disturbing and even ominous image distinct from his Bahamian watercolors.

By the time Homer painted this subject, at least one journalist had already likened Cuba's ubiquitous balcony women to the island's own political plight. For the same writer of the *Boston Daily Globe*, these women were the physical embodiment of Spanish oppression, as they appeared imprisoned behind their iron balustrades:

These windows are protected by a light screen or fencing of ornamental iron work... This is not to keep the girls prisoners, though it produces that impression and makes them all seem like women in jail... Yet the women

---

<sup>86</sup> Although mantillas are no longer a common component of a Spanish woman's ensemble, they are still frequently worn on special occasions and holidays, a testament to their enduring association with national identity.

are prisoners locked up by the stern law of a custom dating back for centuries in sleepy and conservative old Spain... The true friend of Cuba comes away likening that land to one of the maidens there—a fair creature imprisoned behind the bars of misrule and shortsighted policy.<sup>87</sup>

Were these women then for Homer the representation of an oppressed Cuba, controlled by the authoritative hand of Spain? Or, with their fans, *mantillas* and menacing appearance, are these figures a manifestation of Spain itself? Ambiguities such as these abound in Homer's oeuvre. Is the solitary man in *A Veteran in the New Field* (fig. 3.24), for example, a harbinger of renewal after the devastation of the Civil War or is he death's Grim Reaper? Like so many of Homer's works, *Spanish Flag, Santiago de Cuba* confronts pressing political concerns without succumbing to polemics.

Although the identity of the women on the balcony remains veiled, the inclusion of the large yellow and red flag at left leaves no doubt that Homer intended this image to strike a political chord. Blocking out all but a sliver of Homer's recurrent gray Cuban sky, the flag appears as a strident declaration. While barely visible on the passing ship in *Santiago de Cuba* (fig. 3.8), the Spanish flag here takes visual precedence, announcing the island's occupation by foreign authority.

Surprisingly, many scholars have asserted that Homer's later work is decidedly personal and non-political. Elizabeth Johns, for example, has argued that Homer's work should be regarded as an expression of the aging artist's "interior journey."<sup>88</sup> Others have stated more directly that "If Homer's art up until 1879 forms a social history of America, his late work is almost the opposite: it is a highly personal vision."<sup>89</sup> Homer's Cuban watercolors, however, and in particular *Spanish Flag, Santiago de Cuba* disprove such an

---

<sup>87</sup> "Cuba's Beautiful Women," 9.

<sup>88</sup> Johns, 133.

<sup>89</sup> Chowder, 117.

assumption. Even after 1879, Homer continued to paint the social history of the United States; it was simply not confined to the nation's literal geographic borders. Although perhaps forgotten today, for Homer and those of his time, Cuba and its accompanying southern neighbors were a part of America's destiny. As John Muir had made clear, Cuba was "our American south", a sentiment underscored by the events on the island reported on in the press. At a time when declarations were made in the U.S. to "Let crushed Cuba arise!"<sup>90</sup>, Homer's depiction of the Old World on New World terrain shows the aging artist acutely attuned to and engaged with the concerns of his time.

Within this context of brooding unease over Spain's occupation of Cuba, Homer's watercolor *The Cock Fight* (fig. 3.25) reads as an allegory of political rivalry. A popular Spanish pastime brought to Cuba under colonization, cock fighting, like the *volante*, often appeared in nineteenth-century illustrations of genre scenes of the island. In *Isla de Cuba Pintoresca*, Mialhe depicted the sport in one of his vignettes exploring common aspects of Cuban life (fig. 3.26). In Mialhe's image, two men with eager birds stand at the center of a ring surrounded by onlookers who anxiously await the entertainment. As an illustration of daily life in Cuba, Mialhe recreated the spectacle for his readership with careful attention to detail; he captured both the setting and pervasive sense of excitement that accompanied the prelude to the event. By contrast, Homer's watercolor is a somber portrayal of the conclusion of a fight. Set against a bare wall, one cock stands upright above the body of his just felled foe as feathers and drops of blood settle to the floor. In keeping with his Cuban palette, Homer rendered the roosters in deep tones of crimson and cobalt rather than the brighter hues he reserved for the Bahamas. Moreover, he added

---

<sup>90</sup> Gerrit Smith, "Let Crushed Cuba Arise! Substance of the Speech of Gerrit Smith in Syracuse, July 4, 1873", Library of Congress, Printed Ephemera Collection, Portfolio 128, Folder 26.

opaque watercolors, creating a denser, heavier image that best expresses the gravity of his subject.<sup>91</sup> *The Cock Fight* also reveals signs of scraping,<sup>92</sup> indicating that Homer laboriously reworked this seemingly minimalist image.

Despite this attention to detail, *The Cock Fight* remains ambiguous. Unlike Mialhe's genre scene that captures the thrill of the anticipated event, Homer instead chose to convey the startling stillness after the drama of the fight. He transformed the depiction of a popular past time into a meditation on his favored themes: an animal's struggle and the cycle of life and death.<sup>93</sup> Once again, Homer presents an unexpected depiction of Cuba and one that refuses to conform to the tropes of the tropics as defined by Humboldt, Ballou, Muir and the many other travelers who preceded him on the island. What should have been an island of lush vegetation, sunny skies, alluring women on balconies and festive cockfights instead becomes with Homer's brush a bleak site of conflict that alludes to current events. Tellingly, a young cock has killed an older bird; Homer's careful rendering of the birds' elaborate plumage makes this clear. The dead rooster displays conspicuously full and elongated tail feathers distinct to older birds, while the winning rooster shows off an erect but much shorter fan of tail feathers found on younger birds.<sup>94</sup> This battle between young and old, in a sport of Spanish origin, perhaps suggests

---

<sup>91</sup> Martha Tedeschi notes Homer's unusual technique in *The Cock Fight*: "When painting sun-drenched Caribbean locales, Homer strove to maximize the transparency of his colors against the white paper. He shifted this practice, however, to paint *The Cock Fight*, incorporating opaque watercolors into the work as needed. Unlike his opaque watercolors of the early 1870s, here Homer did not mix zinc white with transparent pigments in order to render them opaque. Instead, he worked with opaque pigments themselves... The relative thickness and stiffness of these colors allowed him to deliver them in precise strokes as he sought to replicate the look of individual feathers." Tedeschi, 178.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 179.

<sup>93</sup> Homer returned repeatedly to the subject of life and death and man or animal's struggle in the natural world throughout his career. *The Cock Fight* in some respects seems a precursor to Homer's late *Right Left*, an oil painting of two ducks, which shows one rising and the other falling after having been shot by a hunter. In both *The Cock Fight* and *Right Left*, Homer addresses the precariousness of life and the permanence of death through his depictions of the two sets of birds.

<sup>94</sup> Tedeschi, 172.

the struggle unfolding in Cuba's political arena between the Old and New Worlds. The vanquishing of the old by the young here portends the end of Spanish rule in the Americas, an ending that Homer could not have foreseen but one which he, like many in the United States, may have desired. Like much of Homer's work, the political implications of *The Cock Fight* remain understated. Yet, thirteen years later, with the eruption of the Spanish-American War, Homer's references to political tension on the island would become explicit in *Searchlight* as well as *Gulf Stream* (fig. 4.2). The subject of the next chapter, these two later oil paintings mark the culmination of Homer's exploration of the standoff between the Old and New Worlds first begun in his Cuban watercolors of 1885.

### **Perception in the United States**

After returning North, Homer showed a large number of his watercolors from the Bahamas and Cuba together at Gustav Reichard in New York in December 1885 and Doll & Richards in Boston in February 1886. Although not all of the reviews were positive, the critics agreed that Homer had rendered his subject with great accuracy. *The Boston Evening Transcript* relayed that "they bear on the surface plainest evidence that they are absolutely faithful."<sup>95</sup> One of the period's most renowned art critics Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer wrote that Homer's "southern sketches" were "true and not make-believe."<sup>96</sup> Having already established his reputation as, what Kenyon Cox would later call, a "burning devotee to the actual"<sup>97</sup>, Homer seemed to recreate the "real" Caribbean

---

<sup>95</sup> "Winslow Homer at Doll & Richard's," *Boston Evening Transcript*, (Feb. 25, 1886): 6.

<sup>96</sup> M.G. Van Rensselaer, "Pictures of the Season in New York," *The American Architect and Building News* (February 20, 1886): 89.

<sup>97</sup> Kenyon Cox, "The Art of Winslow Homer," *Scribner's Magazine* 56 (Sept. 1914): 378.

for his viewers in the United States. The emphasis on accuracy by these critics is reminiscent of the language used to describe Muybridge's photographs of Mexico and Central America. The ostensible truth of Muybridge's work led one critic to proclaim, "Next to an actual visit to these countries, these images will be the most satisfactory."<sup>98</sup> Like Muybridge's photographs, Homer's watercolors appeared to have that same fidelity to their subject that transported the viewer to the tropics. Upon seeing Homer's exhibition, another critic professed, "They are almost startling in their sense of actual presence but they act as a strong stimulus to the imagination. The spectator passes rapidly from one tropical experience to another...these sketches seem to be not so much pictures as tangible realizations."<sup>99</sup> More than images of a place, these watercolors became for this critic a replacement for being in the tropics, just as Muybridge's photographs had become a substitute for the actual journey south.

Moreover, both the sketch, as Van Rensselaer referred to Homer's watercolors, and the photograph seemed to capture their subjects on the spot in a single moment. Another reviewer of Homer's Caribbean exhibition commented, "The artist has seized instantaneously, as it were, a pulsating impression of his various subjects."<sup>100</sup> This notion of capturing the fleeting moment is one often associated with Impressionist painting as well. While Homer did in fact paint *en plein air* in Cuba,<sup>101</sup> his watercolors were no less meticulously crafted than Monet's precise imprecision or Muybridge's carefully composed photographs. As *The Cock Fight* reveals, with its additions of opaque

---

<sup>98</sup> Kingston Scrapbook, unpaginated, labeled: *San Francisco Bulletin*, May 18, 1878.

<sup>99</sup> Archives of American Art, Roll 2932, *New York Star*, n.d.

<sup>100</sup> Archives of American Art, Roll 2932, "Winslow Homer's Pictures at Doll & Richards" *New York Star*, n.d.

<sup>101</sup> In a letter to Charles, Homer detailed the difficulties of working in a land unaccustomed to outdoor artists, "The first day sketching I was ordered to move until the crowds dispersed. Now I have a pass from the Mayor 'forbidding all agents to interfere with me when following my profession.'" Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Collections: Letters (Homer): Winslow Homer Letter to Charles S. Homer Jr., 1885.



watercolors and patches of scraping, Homer laboriously constructed a contrived spontaneity. Like the particular placing and re-placing of cloud negatives in Muybridge's photographs of Mexico and Central America, Homer's southern sketches document the deliberate making of the spontaneous image.

This quality in Homer's work allowed him to picture the Caribbean in a way in which it had yet to be seen. Unlike Mialhe's staid prints or Samuel Cohner's formal photographic portraits (fig. 1.12), Homer rendered the islands in colorful fleeting moments that appeared "true and not make believe." The perceived "truth" of Homer's style no doubt lent a sincerity to the "truth" of his subject. By capturing Cuba with the immediacy of the "sketch", Homer created a "tangible realization" of what had up until then been only an abstraction in the press—Spain was a palpable presence on the United States' most coveted Caribbean island.

Although Van Rensselaer never specifically referred to Spain in her review, she paid particular attention to Homer's subject. As she noted:

It seems strange that we have had to wait so long for some one to sail his artistic bark into these southern seas, which offer, comparatively close to home, all those attractions American artists have gone so far to find: which offer not only light and color in their highest potency, but vegetable forms and architectural items, and, moreover, human types which could not well be made more felicitous for him who loves the picturesque as a theme for pictorial treatment.<sup>102</sup>

Van Rensselaer presents Homer as the first artist from the United States to venture to the Caribbean. At a time when U.S. artists flocked to Europe, Van Rensselaer's remark is in fact not far from the truth. As critics in the United States sought, almost desperately, to define an American art, Van Rensselaer's statement comes as an admonishment to all those who neglected to explore their own backyard. Her praise for Homer's subject thus

---

<sup>102</sup> M.G. Van Rensselaer, 89.

situates this exhibition within the then heated debate over Old versus New World cultural hegemony. Van Rensselaer's review indirectly asks: why travel to Europe when the Americas provide all of the artistic inspiration one could desire? Implicit in her statement is the suggestion that by staying "comparatively close to home", Homer furthered the development of "American" art, raising the country's standing in the culture war with Europe.

What is absent from Van Rensselaer's assessment is any distinction between the Cuban and Bahamian watercolors. Like contemporary critics, Van Rensselaer considered the images as a group, (perhaps not surprising given that they were exhibited together) and described them as "picturesque" rather than political. Van Rensselaer's choice of the word "picturesque" demonstrates how that term had changed in significance in the ten years since Muybridge's photographs of Mexico and Central America. Homer's scenes of the Caribbean, for example, do not follow the Gilpian pictorial formula for the picturesque in art. There are no natural "side screens" framing the image making it "like a picture", nor are there twisting paths or streams leading the eye into an enclosed space. By the time Homer exhibited these images, the picturesque had largely become a vernacular term, connoting a quaint or charming scene, but not one necessarily constrained by a formal rigor. The ideological implications of the picturesque persisted, however, even with the abandonment of the pictorial formula. As quaint or charming, the picturesque suggests a space that is small or manageable, rather than one that is vast or overwhelming that would denote the sublime. When considered within the context of what appeared to be the imminent annexation of Cuba, the characterization of the Caribbean as picturesque takes on a pernicious significance. Like Muybridge's

photographs of Mexico and Central America, Van Rensselaer's reading of Homer's images perhaps reveals a northern desire to see the South as picturesque, and thereby able to be contained or controlled. Van Rensselaer's review that at first seems to miss the political import of Homer's images, thus participates in the pressing dialogue on intra-American relations.

Notably, however, another critic of this exhibition found Homer's work to be anything but "picturesque." Contrary to Van Rensselaer, this reviewer saw the Caribbean as an inferior choice of subject when compared with Europe:

If the pictures shown quite lack the pictorial and personal interest of last year's exhibition, why, that is the fault of the material, not of the painter. Doubtless there was little chance here for Mr. Homer to make those fascinating and sympathetic studies, full of grave and simple feeling, that mark his chiefest [sic] individuality, and therefore he has quite subordinated himself in the present instance, and his new work is simply a collection of remarkable notes of actual bits of pretty ugly scenery.<sup>103</sup>

The previous year's exhibition referred to by the critic was Homer's show of watercolors from Cullercoats, England. Thus, the writer pits a European subject against an American one, describing the latter as severely lacking in "pictorial and personal interest." With striking condescension, the critic blames the subject, rather than the artist for what he perceives as the poor quality of the images. Clearly, for this reviewer, American art would not find its redemption south of the border.

Homer's exhibition elicited extreme views; what one critic considered a picturesque and laudatory subject, another deemed "ugly" and beneath the abilities of the artist. Extrapolating what the public thought of Homer's subject based on such contradictory opinions becomes difficult to ascertain. A close examination of the images, however, reveals what Homer thought of his subject: the Bahamas were a bastion of

---

<sup>103</sup> "Winslow Homer at Doll & Richard's," *Boston Evening Transcript*, (Feb. 25, 1886): 6.

resplendent foliage, scintillating waters and frolicking dark-skinned inhabitants while Cuba was a land of hovering gray skies, ominous looking women and Spanish occupation. Such a stark contrast between Caribbean islands that shared many of the same geographic characteristics suggests that Homer was attempting to convey more than just what he saw. Instead, Homer chose to portray the United States' relationship with its most coveted Caribbean neighbor, which remained under the control of the Spanish. Homer's deliberate depiction of Spain's presence in Cuba makes these watercolors the next phase, after the Civil War images, in the artist's lifelong commitment to picturing the pressing political concerns of his time.

More than a decade before the Spanish-American War, Homer exposed Europe's infringement on the New World, in violation of the Monroe Doctrine, through his idiosyncratic portraits of Cuba. He gave visual expression to that which politicians, the press and the public had debated throughout the century: would Cuba remain just out of reach, a Spanish colony within the Americas and an affront to the United States' power? Or, would the United States manage to seize control of the lucrative island? These questions, first raised in his Cuban watercolors, continued to occupy Homer's thoughts over the next decade and eventually resulted in his explicit depiction of conflict in the later two oil paintings, *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba*, the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 4

### **Picturing Empire: Winslow Homer's *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba***

In the years that followed Homer's time in Cuba, preoccupation over the island only intensified in the United States. Spain's continued presence on this most coveted Caribbean island derided U.S. strength in the Americas, thwarted commerce and violated the Monroe Doctrine. As the century drew to a close, this stand-off between the Old and New Worlds reached a climax in the press where readers were bombarded with accounts of Spanish oppression and Cuban suffering. Increasingly, not only journalists, but illustrators as well played a key role in narrating what C. Jay Taylor, a cartoonist for *Puck* magazine, referred to as, the "Cuban Melodrama."

On June 3, 1896, *Puck* featured Taylor's satirical account of the triangulated affair between the United States, Spain and Cuba on its cover (fig. 4.1). Having already pictured the United States' relationship with its southern neighbors in its center spread for the December 10, 1884 issue (fig. 3.1), *Puck* focused its attention on Cuba and moved the island to its cover in 1896. Taylor's cover shows a Cuba radically transformed from her 1884 incarnation as an elegantly dressed, flirtatious woman. In the later image, Cuba appears desperate as she kneels barefoot on the ground while clutching at the torso of her gallant savior, the United States. Presented as the Noble Hero of this scene, as the caption attests, the U.S. exudes an unrestrained haughtiness, as he stands upright with his nose lifted into the air. His right hand is clenched into a fist while he rests his left on the head of submissive Cuba. Notably, the U.S. takes center stage, while Spain, the Heavy Villain who lurks in the background, seems poised to exit the scene. As caricature, *Puck* pokes

fun at the period's entrenched conceptions: Spain the scoundrel with malevolent intentions and the United States, the supreme masculine protector of Cuba, the fawning female unable to fend for herself.<sup>1</sup>

Taylor was just one of the many artists of the period, including illustrators, painters, photographers and even filmmakers who pictured the "Cuban Melodrama." Indeed, the years leading up to and following the Spanish-American War of 1898 brought a deluge of images of the island to the United States. Like Taylor, the majority of these artists depicted a weak, feminine and even desperate Cuba, a persona made even more pathetic alongside their heroic, virile representations of the United States. Such images of the powerful and the powerless parallel the period's political rhetoric which sought to cast the United States in the leading role of a new world order. Victory in the Spanish-American War offered the United States an opportunity to construct a new identity for itself as a nation of unrivaled political and economic strength worthy of global admiration.<sup>2</sup> President William McKinley seized the moment after the close of the war to publicly declare, "And so it has come to pass that in a few short months we have become a world power; and I know...with what respect the nations of the world now deal with the United States, and it is vastly different from the conditions I found when I was

---

<sup>1</sup> Like *Puck*, today *The New Yorker* serves as a similar barometer of the times as its cover images often offer commentary and critique on the pressing issues of the day. Like C. Jay Taylor, illustrator Barry Blitt mocked pervasive, pernicious conceptions with his cover image for the July 21, 2008 issue of *The New Yorker*, which featured a Muslim-dressed Barack Obama accompanied by a gun-toting Michelle Obama in the Oval Office of the White House. Blitt and *The New Yorker* defended the controversial cover claiming that the intent was to "satirize the use of scare tactics and misinformation in the Presidential election to derail Barack Obama's campaign." Taylor's melodrama, with its exaggerated caricatures, suggests a similar irony. However, as the case was leveled against *The New Yorker* and Blitt, interpretation comes down to audience; what one sees as satire another sees as reinforcement of ingrained prejudice. Likewise, Taylor's cartoon may have simultaneously ridiculed and contributed to the widespread belief in the United States' presumed supremacy over subservient Cuba.

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed account of how the United States used the events of the Spanish-American War to construct a new identity for itself see, for example, McCartney, *Power and Progress*, 2006 and Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 1998.

inaugurated.”<sup>3</sup>

Not all of the artists who depicted Cuba at the end of the century, however, used the island as a foil for fashioning the United States into a world power. Winslow Homer, for example, returned to the subject of Cuba in 1899, and just as he had in 1885, he contradicted the conventions of the time in portraying the island. Homer’s response to the Spanish-American War came in the form of two enigmatic oil paintings, *Gulf Stream* (fig. 4.2) and *Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba* [here after referred to as *Searchlight*] (fig. 4.3). Together, these works emasculate the heroic image of the United States as promulgated by President William McKinley, newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst, artist Frederic Remington and many other illustrators, photographers and filmmakers of the time. In contrast to their shrill, bombastic images of war circulating in the press, movie theaters and middle-class parlors, Homer offered these two brooding paintings that call on the viewer to reflect on the fall of empire.

The work that Homer had begun in 1885 that foretold of the coming storm in Cuba between the Old and New Worlds culminates in *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight*. By 1899, the gray skies and subtle depictions of tension on the island in the 1885 watercolors had erupted into tempest-tossed seas and the explicit expression of conflict. In the aftermath of war, Homer presented not the calm after the storm, but an even darker and more ominous portrait of imperial power. This chapter thus not only revisits the specific subject of Winslow Homer and Cuba; it also further examines the broader theme of how the portrayal of the southern republics by U.S. artists entered into the tense debate over Old versus New World power. *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight* functioned as agents of this

---

<sup>3</sup> President William McKinley in conversation with James Boyle and Charles G. Dawes, according to his private secretary George B. Cortelyou, diary entry, September 17, 1899, quoted in Olcott, *The Life of William McKinley*, 1916, 309.

debate and attest to Homer's sustained interest late in life in the pressing political concerns of his day.<sup>4</sup>

### **Staging the Cuban Melodrama in the Press: The *New York Journal* and the Fomenting of War**

Homer never returned to Cuba after his initial visit to the island in 1885. When in need of a warm weather winter escape from the frigid coast of Maine, he ventured to the Florida Keys, primarily to fish but sometimes to paint, or to Bermuda or the Bahamas where his watercolors reveal him reveling in the islands' sun and vivid colors. As was discussed in the previous chapter, for Homer, Cuba was distinct from the rest of the Caribbean, defined by its brewing political turmoil rather than its glistening beaches and floral exuberance. The eruption of Cuba's Second War for Independence in 1895 and the Spanish-American War in 1898 no doubt dissuaded the aging artist from returning to the island that he had already found to be a "red hot place full of soldiers"<sup>5</sup> upon his visit there in 1885. Yet, for a painter deeply concerned with the political issues of his day, the unsteady state of affairs in Cuba continued to occupy his imagination even with the distance of time and space.

An 1898 drawing from Homer's sketchbook demonstrates the artist's sustained

---

<sup>4</sup> This latter point contradicts the assertions made by various scholars regarding Homer's late work. In discussing Homer's work from the later period of his career when the artist lived in relative isolation in Prout's Neck, Maine, Randall Griffin posited that, "For the first time, he painted mainly subjects that mattered to him personally. Insulated from contemporary life, his pictures ignore the changes that were sweeping the nation." Randall Griffin, *Winslow Homer: An American Vision* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2006), 127. Similarly, Nicolai Cikovsky and Elizabeth Johns interpret *Gulf Stream* biographically. Both maintain that the painting is disconnected from current events and that Homer intended the work as a meditation on his own mortality after the recent deaths of both his father and mother. See Nicolai Cikovsky, "Winslow Homer Around 1900," in *Winslow Homer: A Symposium, Studies in the History of Art*, Vol. 26, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers, (Washington, DC: University Press of New England, Hanover and London, 1990); Johns, *Winslow Homer: The Nature of Observation*, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Collections: Letters (Homer): Winslow Homer Letter to Charles S. Homer Jr., 1885.



interest in the turbulent events on the island (fig. 4.4). In the image, a woman leans out of a window over a canon labeled, U.S. battery and announces, “I protest!” as a ship steams by on the horizon. Below the scene, Homer has written, “The Portland papers say there will be a battery put on Prout’s Neck, ME.” The sketch illustrates that the Cuban Melodrama had made its way from the Caribbean to Maine where Homer mulled over the tense excitement from his secluded home in Prout’s Neck. In addition to the Portland papers, Homer’s father, with whom the artist lived at the time, seems to have provided constant commentary on the Cuban situation. Philip Beam writes that during the summer of 1898 Homer’s father and an elderly neighbor “telegraphed daily to the War Department that the Spanish fleet had just been sighted off the coast of Maine; and they continued to send their messages up until the day the fleet was sunk in Santiago Harbor.”<sup>6</sup> Such overly zealous vigilante tactics must have been the topic of much conversation in the Homer household.

Although the Spanish fleet never threatened the distant shores of Maine (perhaps to Homer’s father’s disappointment), news reports asserted that an attack on the United States’ moral values was already underway. Public rhetoric defined Spain as an antiquated, less-enlightened society that threatened the American way of life, dedicated to upholding the virtues of democracy and Protestantism. As one writer of the time plainly stated:

In the great march of civilization of Europe and America, Spain has sullenly and uniformly remained in the rear guard, advancing only under compulsion, and retarding, rather than helping, that onward march toward the goal of perfection which Christianity and civilization have ever before them.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Philip C. Beam, *Winslow Homer at Prout’s Neck* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), 44.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Henry Butler, *The Voice of the Nation, the President is Right: A Series of Papers on Our Past and Present Relations with Spain* (New York: George Munro’s Sons, 1898), 54, quoted in McCarthy, 94.

The news sources most responsible for fomenting animosity towards Spain and patronizing sympathy towards Cuba were William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*. Engaged in a battle of their own to obtain the largest readership, Hearst and Pulitzer published sensationalized accounts of the events in Cuba that were described as "yellow journalism."<sup>8</sup> The many correspondents in Cuba working for these papers told of incidents on the island that reinforced the same stereotypes that *Puck* simultaneously satirized. The *New York Journal*'s Cuban correspondent Frederic Remington, for example, wrote in inflammatory prose:

The acts of the terrible savages, or irregular troops called "guerillas" employed by the Spaniards, pass all understanding by civilized man. The American Indian was never guilty of the monstrous crimes that they commit. Their treatment of women is unspeakable, and as for the men captured by them alive, the blood curdles in my veins as I think of the atrocity, of the cruelty, practiced on these helpless victims.<sup>9</sup>

While statements such as these primed the United States for conflict with Spain, Remington's images played an even more important role in representing the events unfolding in Cuba. For a newspaper with a predominantly unsophisticated readership, including many immigrants learning English through its pages,<sup>10</sup> Remington's illustrations for the *Journal* became the definitive voice of the struggle for power between the Old and New Worlds in the Caribbean. One of Remington's most incendiary drawings of the Cuban Melodrama appeared in the *Journal* on February 12, 1897, alongside an article with the heading: "Does Our Flag Protect Women? Indignities

---

<sup>8</sup> *The New York Press*, a lesser known contemporary newspaper than the *Journal* or the *World*, first coined the phrase "yellow journalism" in 1897. The *Press* abhorred the unscrupulous and incendiary tactics the *Journal* and the *World* employed to obtain the largest readership. The *Press* declared these tactics examples of "Yellow Kid Journalism," referring to the cartoon the "Yellow Kid," which appeared in competing versions in both leading newspapers. The phrase was later shortened to simply "Yellow Journalism."

<sup>9</sup> Frederic Remington, "Spanish Guerillas Bringing 'Pacificos' into Camp," *New York Journal* (January 24, 1897): 1.

<sup>10</sup> Schoultz, 130.

Practiced by Spanish Officials on Board American Vessels. Refined Young Women Stripped and Searched by Brutal Spaniards While Under Our Flag on the *Olivette*.”

Remington’s image (fig. 4.5) depicts the story of a Cuban woman who was supposedly strip-searched by Spanish men while aboard the U.S. ship the *Olivette*.<sup>11</sup> The incident, however, proved to be only a half truth as the *Journal*’s rival the *New York World* demonstrated days later when it printed its interview with Clemencia Arango, one of the women aboard the *Olivette*, who stated that she was searched in private by a matron. The veracity of Remington’s drawing was of little importance to the *Journal*, however, which sought to expand its readership with tantalizing accounts of the mounting tension on the island.<sup>12</sup> Rather than a document of current events, the *Olivette* illustration shows Remington adhering to Hearst’s candid instructions, “You furnish the images, I’ll furnish the war.”<sup>13</sup> Sent in a telegram to Remington while the artist was in Cuba, this now infamous statement affirms the power of the press, as has been widely noted, and Hearst’s authority in particular, in galvanizing the Spanish-American War.<sup>14</sup> The telegram also, however, expresses the extent to which Remington’s images were complicit in orchestrating Hearst’s vision. Remington’s imaginative interpretation of the *Olivette* episode had all of the conventional components of the Cuban Melodrama. Cuba appeared

---

<sup>11</sup> Before the *Olivette* left Havana Harbor, Spanish authorities boarded the ship and demanded a strip search of passengers, believing that some of the Cuban women aboard were carrying clandestine messages to the rebels residing in Key West.

<sup>12</sup> And expand it did. Lars Schoultz writes that the *Journal*’s circulation rose from 30,000 in 1895 to 400,000 in 1897; and after the U.S. battleship *Maine* sunk in Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898, the *Journal* became the first newspaper to sell a million copies in a single day. Schoultz, 132-133.

<sup>13</sup> As relayed in James Creelman, *On the Great Highway: The Wanderings and Adventures of a Special Correspondent* (Boston: Lothrop Publishing, 1901), 177.

<sup>14</sup> Professor of Communications W. Joseph Campbell asserts that the infamous Hearst-Remington telegram first mentioned by Creelman is most likely an anecdotal myth. While this pithy statement may be a fallacy, the authority Hearst and Remington held over shaping public opinion of Cuba is indisputable. See W. Joseph Campbell “Not likely sent: The Remington-Hearst ‘Telegrams,’” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 405-422.

as a vulnerable, victimized young woman while Spain, represented by the three leering men, became the evil perpetrator. The *Journal*, in turn, implored the United States to rise to the occasion as Cuba's gallant savior, as the accompanying article made clear with its title, "Does Our Flag Protect Women?" By reinforcing these prescribed roles for Cuba, Spain and the United States, Remington's illustration "furnished" Hearst's warmongering intentions.

Another bogus incident within months of the *Olivette* episode further solidified these contrived gendered personas of villain, victim and savior. The embellished story of the imprisonment of the Cuban woman Evangelina Cosío Cisneros allowed the United States to appear once again as the noble liberator. Described as "a white face, young, pure, and beautiful," resembling "the Madonna of an old master,"<sup>15</sup> Evangelina was the ultimate embodiment of the Cuban damsel in distress. As "a white face", Evangelina also appealed more to a U.S. public uncomfortable with aiding an island with a largely dark-skinned population. Incarcerated in one of Havana's notoriously wretched prisons by the Spanish after resisting the attentions of an officer whom she had petitioned for the release of her father, a political prisoner, Evangelina was purportedly freed by the heroic efforts of Hearst himself who claimed that his newspaper had single-handedly arranged for her rescue. Like the story of the *Olivette*, the Cisneros affair was a gross exaggeration, with the young woman most likely permitted to leave prison and not furtively rescued in the middle of the night.<sup>16</sup> Once again, however, Hearst transformed a rather lackluster tale into an engrossing melodrama that unfolded in the days after Evangelina's release across

---

<sup>15</sup> George Clarke Musgrave, *Under Three Flags in Cuba: A Personal Account of the Cuban Insurrection and Spanish-American War* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1899), 93, quoted in Louis Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination*, 78.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

375 full columns in the *Journal*.<sup>17</sup> The *Journal* described Karl Decker, the newspaper's correspondent responsible for “saving” Evangelina as “tall, stalwart, even ferocious looking, with his six feet two of brawn and muscle,” a man who “formed a fitting foil to her [Evangelina's] spirituelle [sic] loveliness”<sup>18</sup> These descriptions of hyper-masculinity and femininity affirmed the gendered roles of hero and victim that defined the story of the United States and Cuba, symbolized by the *Journal* and Evangelina.

Upon her arrival in the United States, Evangelina received a celebratory welcome with a parade held in her honor in New York and an invitation to meet President McKinley. Capitalizing on this fanfare, Evangelina co-wrote a book detailing the events of her life that included illustrations by Remington.<sup>19</sup> Remington's participation in this project shows the artist's dedication to “furnishing images” of events, either true or imaginary, that provoked public outrage and brought the nation to the brink of war.

The *Story of Evangelina Cisneros* opens with the words of co-author Julie Hawthorne who immediately establishes the gendered roles of Cuba, Spain and the United States. Hawthorne writes, “It was a national demand that this young girl be saved from the infamies of Spanish prison life. The *Journal* has done its part. Miss Cisneros is now the ward of the American people.”<sup>20</sup> Once again, the United States, the hero of this tale, represented by the brawny Karl Decker, saves feminine Cuba from the clutches of Spanish tyranny. Yet, even after Cuba is “freed”, the roles of hero, villain and victim remain fixed; the island persists as a dependent woman only this time bound to a different

---

<sup>17</sup> Schoultz, 132.

<sup>18</sup> “The People's Welcome to Evangelina Cisneros,” *New York Journal*, October 18, 1897, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Remington's images for the *Story of Evangelina Cisneros* consist primarily of sketches of key figures such as Evangelina, Karl Decker, the *New York Journal* correspondent and “rescuer”, and Spanish prison guards. These illustrations support the defined gendered roles of hero, villain and victim as presented in the text.

<sup>20</sup> Julian Hawthorne et al. *The Story of Evangelina Cisneros, Told by Herself* (New York: Continental Publishing Co. 1898), 7.

authority.

The titillating tales of the *Olivette* and Evangelina, coupled with Remington's evocative illustrations, created a groundswell of rancor towards Spain that was exacerbated by a series of incidents in 1898 that ultimately led to military action in Cuba. On February 9, 1898, the *New York Journal* ran the incendiary headline, "Worst Insult to the United States in History!"<sup>21</sup>, above its publication of a private letter, written by the Spanish minister to Washington, which defamed President McKinley. Six days later, the U.S. battleship *Maine* mysteriously exploded in Havana Harbor, killing 266 men on board. The sinking of the *Maine* ignited a frenzy of news coverage that often relied more on hearsay than firm facts. The *New York Journal* shouted from the printed page, "Sunk by Torpedo or Mine, They Say!" The "they" was a suspect report from a "Key West merchant, who heard a Spanish official boast the Maine would be blown up."<sup>22</sup> While the results of an extensive investigation revealed that the explosion was not likely to have been caused by a Spanish attack, fervor for finding an evil culprit was so intense that a reluctant McKinley declared war on his Old World foe within months of the tragedy.

### **Reassessing Cuba: *Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba***

The events of the Spanish-American War, told in the press and no doubt recounted by his father, not only led Homer to return to the subject of Cuba but to reassess the island's role in the struggle for power between the Old and New Worlds, which he had first addressed in his 1885 watercolors. *Searchlight* (fig. 4.3) is Homer's most explicit engagement with this theme. Rather than continuing the Hearst-Remington tradition of

---

<sup>21</sup> McCarthy, 97.

<sup>22</sup> "Sunk by Torpedo or Mine, They Say," *New York Journal*, February 17, 1898 quoted in Chomsky, 133.

presenting the U.S. as hero, Spain as villain and Cuba as victim, Homer revised the Cuban Melodrama by blurring these defined gendered roles in his work.

Painted from the cold comfort of his Prout's Neck studio in 1901, *Searchlight* is based on the drawings of Morro Castle (figs. 3.6 & 3.7) that Homer had made sixteen years earlier. The oil painting is thus a montage of direct observation and fanciful imaginings, most likely inspired by the torrent of news reports covering the war. Homer's depiction of the searchlight suggests the artist's reading of contemporary accounts that praised this new technological advancement. In an age when electricity was still a relatively new phenomenon, the searchlight appeared as an innovative and even futuristic marvel that marked the country's transition into the next century.<sup>23</sup> In addition to being a symbol of futuristic progress, the searchlight also played a vital military role in the Spanish-American War. Commander-in-Chief of the North Atlantic Squadron, Rear-Admiral William T. Sampson, credited the searchlight with defeating the Spanish fleet in Cuba. In an article for *Century Illustrated Magazine*, the admiral concluded his assessment of the U.S. naval strategy at Santiago Harbor by stating, "It was a very narrow channel, and after we began to use the search-lights their chances of getting out without our knowledge were very small."<sup>24</sup> Appearing in 1899, in the same journal that had previously published Homer's first images of the Bahamas, this article may very well have piqued the artist's interest. Sampson's article provided a first person narrative to the war that Homer himself had not witnessed. Mixed in with Sampson's detailed ruminations on successful naval strategies are descriptive accounts of Cuba under the authoritative rays of the searchlight, which present an almost romantic portrait of battle.

---

<sup>23</sup> Randall Griffin, *Winslow Homer: An American Vision* (New York & London: Phaidon, 2006), 207.

<sup>24</sup> Rear-Admiral William T. Sampson, "The Atlantic Fleet in the Spanish War," *Century Illustrated Magazine* 57, no. 6 (April 1899): 913.

Sampson writes, “The scene on a moderately dark night was a very impressive one, the path of the search-light having a certain massiveness, and the slopes and crown of the Morro cliff being lighted up with the brilliancy of silver.”<sup>25</sup> *Searchlight* shares many affinities with Sampson’s account; Homer presents a moderately dark night illuminated by the moon but much more forcefully by what is indeed a massive beam of man-made light. In the foreground, Morro Castle, bathed in a grayish-silver light, looms over the harbor but remains dwarfed by the prominent searchlight.

What is distinct from Sampson’s description, however, is the vantage point of the painting. While Sampson and his men gazed upon the Morro from their position in the harbor, Homer’s viewer sees the harbor from the interior of the old fort. A 1901 sketch (fig. 4.6) in a letter to his friend and patron Thomas B. Clarke shows that Homer considered the entirety of the harbor but deliberately selected the point of view from the Morro. Homer thus inverts Sampson’s recount of the war, choosing instead to depict a scene from the Spanish perspective. By positioning the viewer on the side of the entrapped Spanish,<sup>26</sup> Homer transforms the searchlight into a threat to rather than a triumph of military might.

Homer’s searchlight thus differs not only from the one described by Sampson, but also from those depicted by other artists at the time. Frederic Remington, for example, produced a visual paean to the searchlight in an illustration for *Harper’s* (fig. 4.7). On assignment in Cuba covering the war, Remington observed five U.S. naval men standing on the deck of a battleship watching the powerful beams of two searchlights over Havana Harbor. In the image, the compelling night sky spectacle has captured the full attention of

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Randall Griffin, *Homer, Eakins and Anshutz: The Search for American Identity in the Gilded Age* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2004), 126.



the men who appear engrossed in a reverential silence for the searchlights. These deferential onlookers undoubtedly understand the searchlights as beacons of both U.S. strength and future progress. Remington's image is therefore precisely the heroic homage to the rise of U.S. power that Homer's work is not.

In *Searchlight*, the dark, heavy shapes of the seventeenth-century Morro Castle in the foreground coupled with the perspective from the side of defeat undercut what should have been the power of the bright beam. Instead of grandeur, Homer manages a sobering portrait of war in a remarkably spare composition. In the starkest of terms, as Randall Griffin has noted, Homer pictures the protagonists of the war; Spain appears in the guise of Morro Castle while the United States emerges as the searchlight.<sup>27</sup> Tellingly, Cuba, the supposed subject of the war, is merely the backdrop for this stand-off between the Old and New Worlds. Indeed, apart from the title of the work, the only reference to the island appears in the form of the faint, almost ghostly, white palm trees on the distant bank on the right. In the foreground, Homer presents the Old World as an antiquated space that is quite literally in the dark while the New World appears as a modern, illuminated force. Such imagery suggests the rhetoric of the time, which cast Spain as a medieval, unenlightened society, a nation "asleep for three hundred years" that had "imprisoned [Cuba] behind the bars of misrule and shortsighted policy."<sup>28</sup>

*Searchlight*, however, never tips towards the kind of virulent jingoism that was popular in the United States after the war. While Homer distills the popular conceptions of the Old and New Worlds down to their most basic elements, he refrains from championing the United States' victory. Instead, Homer presents a somber account of a

---

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> J.G. McCullough, *The Spanish War: An Address Before the Reunion Society of Vermont Officers at Montpelier*, October 26, 1898, pamphlet, 5-6, quoted in McCarthy, 95.

defining moment in U.S. history, just as he had at the beginning of his career with *Prisoners from the Front* (fig. 4.8). In this early painting, Homer depicted the formal capitulation of the South to the North in the Civil War, which led ultimately to the reunification of the nation. Rather than rendering this momentous occasion with flag-waving patriotism, however, Homer detailed the wretchedness of the Confederate army, invoking sympathy for the vanquished from his northern viewers.

Years later, contemplating the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, Homer invoked the solemn tone and reticence of *Prisoners from the Front* with startlingly minimal forms. While Homer's work became increasingly spare in his final years, *Searchlight* is exceptional in its aggressive austerity. In place of the tired soldiers of the Civil War, Homer presents the state-of-the-art searchlight and obsolete Morro Castle. By emptying this scene of soldiers, Homer continued his revision of the genre of history painting. What began as his unconventional treatment of war in *Prisoners from the Front* becomes a radical vision in *Searchlight*. Rather than capturing the glories of battle or even the agony of defeat, Homer pictured the Spanish-American War as an almost abstract composition that privileges formal relationships over narrative. This primary concern with the placement of shapes in space is a practice more often associated with still life rather than history painting. Indeed, *Searchlight's* emphasis on objects and its absence of a storyline led one baffled critic to declare the work "a curious sort of still life."<sup>29</sup>

### **Emasculating History Painting**

Homer's engagement with the principles of still-life painting in *Searchlight* is not

---

<sup>29</sup> "Union League Pictures," *New York Evening Post*, January 11, 1902.

only curious, but also suggestive of ulterior motivations for the work. Traditionally, still-life painting ranked lowest in the academic hierarchy of genres in art. Conversely, history painting, or the *grande manière*, as the seventeenth-century French Academy first referred to the genre, occupied the apex of that hierarchy. As early as the eighteenth century, Sir Joshua Reynolds publicly articulated the humble position of the still life within the arts in his famous *Discourses* delivered to the British Royal Academy between 1769 to 1791. Reynolds called for “excellence in every part, and in every province of our art, from the highest style of history down to the resemblances of still life.”<sup>30</sup> He further underhandedly insulted the still-life painter by asserting, “Even the painter of still life, whose highest ambition is to give a minute representation of every part of those low objects which he sets before him, deserves praise in proportion to his attainment.”<sup>31</sup> According to Reynolds, still life was incapable of achieving anything beyond mimetic representation. History painting, on the other hand, concerned itself with moral or noble sentiments and therefore served the higher purpose of edifying the viewer. Moreover, history painting was technically challenging as well, requiring the artist to recreate the drama of an event in a multi-figure composition on a grand scale. By contrast, the still-life painter merely manipulated “low objects” and reproduced them on an intimate scale.

Over time, history painting and still life became divided by more than their differences in size and subject; the two genres split along gendered lines as well. While still life’s “low objects”, such as flowers, fruits, plates or goblets, occupy the traditionally feminine space of the domestic interior, history painting’s battles unfold in the masculine public sphere to which women had limited access. The restraints of academic artistic

---

<sup>30</sup> Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library Press, 1959), 198.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

training only further stifled a woman's ability to paint in the *grande manière*. Prohibited from working from live models, female artists made do with those "lowly" subjects deemed more appropriate to their sex, most notably still life, landscape or portraiture. By 1860, Sir Thomas Moore summed up the conflation of women with still life and men with the *grande manière*, when he stated bluntly:

In a word, let men busy themselves with all that has to do with great art. Let women occupy themselves with those kinds of art that they have always preferred...the painting of flowers, those prodigies of grace and freshness which alone can compete with the grace and freshness of women themselves.<sup>32</sup>

In *Searchlight*, Homer eschews the principles of the *grande manière* in favor of those more aligned with still life. Rather than directly depicting the events of war, he focused on the arrangement of the composition, creating an interplay of rounded and straight lines and horizontal and vertical bands.<sup>33</sup> Thus, what should be a heroic, masculine exultation of war instead becomes a quiet meditation on the placement of objects in space, a practice defined as feminine by academies and critics throughout the centuries. The objects that Homer calls on the viewer to contemplate, however, evoke clearly masculine associations of war, industrialization, power and control. Indeed, Nicolai Cikovsky has suggested that the canon protruding over the edge of the Morro is a phallic symbol that together with the "breast-like and vulvular forms" of the architecture at left creates an explicitly sexual image.<sup>34</sup> Whether or not Cikovsky's psychosexual

---

<sup>32</sup> Sir Thomas Moore, "Du rang des femmes dans l'art," *Gazette des beaux arts*, 1860 quoted in Norman Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting* (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), 178. It should be noted, however, that today the most revered still-life painters are in fact men, such as the Dutch seventeenth-century masters Pieter Claesz and Willem Kalf.

<sup>33</sup> This emphasis on composition over narrative led Philip Beam to describe *Searchlight* as "Almost Mondrian-like in its strong interplay of straight lines and right angles." Philip Beam, *Winslow Homer at Prout's Neck* (Boston: Little Brown, 1966), 220.

<sup>34</sup> Cikovsky writes, "In its form and function, the canon in *Searchlight* is like the pistol, a self-evident phallic symbol...when joined to the constellation of the breast-like and vulvular forms of the architecture of

interpretation has merit, the canon, as an instrument of war and destruction, is an undeniably masculine object. Yet, Homer renders these canons powerless, presenting them as relics from a bygone era. Without anyone to operate them, they sit idle as impotent machines abandoned in an eerily still night. Similarly, the gleaming searchlight, which could be a symbol of strength and virility, instead becomes a marker of vulnerability from the vantage point of the painting. With these obsolete objects and threatening beam, Homer calls attention to *Searchlight's* compromised masculinity. In doing so, he confronts the viewer with the themes of humility and mortality, commonly invoked in the *vanitas* tradition in still-life painting.

Popular in seventeenth-century Dutch still-lives, *vanitas* was the one vein of still-life painting of its time thought to possess a higher purpose than mere decorative illustration. Typically rendered with objects that mark the passage of time such as a skull or pocket watch, or more indirectly with an overturned glass, connoting the absence of someone who was once present, *vanitas* images call on the viewer to reflect on life's transience. In *Searchlight*, Homer's juxtaposition of the antiquated Morro with the modern searchlight also illustrates a passing of time. The empty Morro appears as a ruin, implying the presence of a civilization that has since disappeared and been replaced by a newer, brighter society represented by the searchlight. The work intimates that even that which appears permanent, such as empire, is *vanitas* and will not endure forever.

Painted in the war's aftermath, *Searchlight* calls on the viewer to consider the transience of empire, an issue of central concern to the U.S. public at the time. The fall of Spain allowed the United States to rise as a new imperial power. Immediately following

---

the guard house, it verges on becoming one of Picasso's erotic surrealist constructions." Cikovsky, et. al., *Winslow Homer* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, in association with Yale University Press, 1996), 379.

the Spanish-American War, the United States gained control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Hawaiian Islands and the Philippines, leading many to wonder if the rapidly expanding nation was not becoming too much like the empire it had just defeated. Moreover, many expressed anxieties, similar to those after the Mexican-American War, as to what the United States was in fact inheriting. In the case of Cuba, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz warned in *Harper's*:

The annexation of Cuba...would mean the incorporation in our political system of a country, with a population of over 1,500,000 souls, which is essentially uncongenial, if not positively hostile, to our political and social principles, ways of thinking, and habits; a country the climactic conditions of which are such that its principal laboring force...can never consist of people of Anglo-Saxon, or, more broadly speaking, of Germanic, blood; a country that is sure to breed interminable race antagonisms—an evil of which we already have more than enough; a country in every way unfitted for the building up of a democracy as we understand it.<sup>35</sup>

Three years after the close of war, Homer's work conveys the underlying uneasiness surrounding the nation's new identity as a world power. Fully aware of the timeliness of his painting, Homer wrote in letter to his dealer, "This is just the time to show [*Searchlight*] as the subject is now before the people."<sup>36</sup> This statement has been interpreted to refer to a specific event then unfolding in the press; the United States court of inquiry was trying to determine which U.S. admiral should be credited with the war's victory.<sup>37</sup> However, rather than referring to this particular case, Homer may have been speaking more broadly. The subject "before the people", was more than just the debate over an admiral's recognition; the U.S. public was then making sense of the nation's new

---

<sup>35</sup> Carl Schurz, "The Future of Cuba," *Harper's Weekly* 3, no. 26 (1898): 291.

<sup>36</sup> Homer to Knoedler, in a letter dated December 19, 1901, Archives of American Art, NY microfilm, Reel 59-5.

<sup>37</sup> See Griffin, *Winslow Homer: An American Vision*, Cikovsky "Winslow Homer Around 1900," and Natalie Spassky, *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art in association with Princeton University Press, 1985).

identity as a world power with authority over southern lands it was uncertain about possessing as Carl Schurz's candid remarks make clear. Homer allowed for the contemplation of this tension in *Searchlight* by evoking the tradition of *vanitas* rather than didactic history painting. In doing so, Homer sapped the masculine verve from the story of the United States' rise to power and retold the tale from a far more ambiguous perspective.

### **Alongside *Searchlight*, *Gulf Stream*: Homer's Pendant of the Spanish-American War**

Much of Homer's *oeuvre* comprises a dialogue between images, as later works are often informed or engendered by earlier ones.<sup>38</sup> *Searchlight* is no exception to this practice and gains greater import when considered alongside Homer's 1899 painting *Gulf Stream*.<sup>39</sup> Together, these two oils, which share a similar color palette and almost the exact same dimensions, form a striking pendant of the Spanish-American War.<sup>40</sup>

Although ostensibly depicting drastically different subjects, Homer clearly conceived of *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight* in relation to one another as he went so far as to instruct his dealer Michael Knoedler to exhibit the works alongside one another. In a letter from 1902, Homer wrote to Knoedler that the two paintings "would look well together—in some show."<sup>41</sup> Notably, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which acquired both *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight* in 1906, upheld Homer's request; the two works appeared side by

---

<sup>38</sup> With regard to this very idea, Bruce Robertson noted, "Thinking always in terms of the relationship between works, as well as the individual work, Homer invites us to consider groupings that may be separated by date of execution or size." *Reckoning with Winslow Homer: His Late Paintings and Their Influence* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 30.

<sup>39</sup> The same can be said of Homer's 1885 Cuban watercolors, which, as previously stated, appear less subtle and more overt in their expressions of political tension on the island when viewed in relation to *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight*.

<sup>40</sup> *Gulf Stream* measures 28 1/8 x 49 1/8 inches while *Searchlight* measures 30 1/2 by 50 1/2 inches.

<sup>41</sup> Homer to Knoedler, Scarborough Maine, January 24, 1902, Archives of American Art, NY microfilm reel, 59-5.

side in the American Paintings Galleries until those rooms were closed for renovation in 2008.<sup>42</sup>

Alongside *Gulf Stream*, *Searchlight* appears as an even darker and more brooding portrait of war. If the looming ruins of the Morro were not enough to lead viewers to contemplate the end of empire, surely the accompanying image of one man's impending death would suggest the theme of mortality on at least the individual level. Indeed, one of the most common interpretations of *Gulf Stream* is that it is a "grand meditation on death."<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Johns has argued that *Gulf Stream* is in fact Homer's reflection on his own death. Johns asserts that with his father recently deceased and his mother having passed away years earlier, Homer may have wondered if he would be the next member of his family to die.<sup>44</sup> Johns' biographical reading of *Gulf Stream* contributes to the pervasive conception that later in life Homer eschewed politics for personal exploration in his work, as was discussed in the previous chapter. *Gulf Stream*, in particular, has struck scholars as a deeply personal work. Nicolai Cikovsky declared *Gulf Stream* to be a work of "self-reflective intensity" as well as "Homer's most powerful yet poignantly self-expressive painting."<sup>45</sup> However, viewed as Homer intended, alongside his arguably most powerful and poignant *political* painting, *Gulf Stream* becomes "a grand meditation" on current events rather than the artist's personal life.

Like *Searchlight*, *Gulf Stream* appeared at the epochal moment in the United

---

<sup>42</sup> In January 2012, the Metropolitan opened its remodeled American Paintings Galleries. In the new installation, Homer's request for *Searchlight* and *Gulf Stream* to appear side by side goes ignored. *Gulf Stream* now receives pride of place, hung on its own separate wall framed by an entrance way. *Searchlight* hangs on an opposite wall in a diagonal line from *Gulf Stream*. Within the intimate room dedicated to Homer's works, the two paintings, of similar size and color tones, still seem to be in dialogue with one another despite the new distance between them.

<sup>43</sup> Cikovsky, 127.

<sup>44</sup> Johns, 156.

<sup>45</sup> Cikovsky, 127.



States' relationship with Cuba when the island became a possession of the North rather than an independent nation in the aftermath of war. As much as *Gulf Stream* responds to the present, as will be examined at greater length, the work also refers to the past, drawing from Homer's first excursion to the Bahamas in 1885. While on this trip, which also included his foray into Cuba, Homer painted two watercolors, *The Derelict* (fig. 4.9) and *Shark Fishing—Nassau Bar* (fig. 4.10) that became important studies for the later *Gulf Stream*. In *The Derelict*, a group of four sharks writhes in a virtually indistinguishable mass of pointed fins and white underbellies alongside a sinking unmanned boat. Homer concentrates on a single shark in *Shark Fishing—Nassau Bar*, depicting one large, white man-eater with an open mouth, twisting beside a boat containing two semi-nude black male figures. Although these two watercolors would seem to connect *Gulf Stream* to the Bahamas, where they were produced, another visual precedent ties the work to Cuba.

Scholars have suggested that in creating *Gulf Stream* Homer looked not only to his own work, but also to other artistic sources such as Théodore Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* and J.M.W. Turner's *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and the Dying*.<sup>46</sup> While plausible precedents, another more likely influence was John Singleton Copley's *Watson and the Shark* (fig. 1.8), a version of which hung in Boston's Museum of Fine

---

<sup>46</sup> See for example Griffin, *Homer, Eakins and Anshutz*, 2004; Spassky, *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 1985. Nicolai Cikovsky asserts that the 1876 sale of the collection of John Taylor Johnston spurred Homer's interest in these earlier images of sea disasters. One of the most important collectors of contemporary American and European art in the late nineteenth century, Johnston owned Turner's *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and the Dying*, Delacroix's *Dante and Virgil Crossing the Styx*, Homer's *Prisoners from the Front* as well as many other iconic works. The Johnston sale was a well publicized event with the collection realizing the astounding sum of \$328,000 in 1876. Cikovsky suggests that Homer's financial stake in the sale of *Prisoners from the Front* would have piqued the artist's curiosity in the entirety of the collection and perhaps years later continued to occupy his thoughts as he worked on *Gulf Stream*. See Nicolai Cikovsky, "Homer Around 1900," in "Winslow Homer: A Symposium," *Studies in the History of Art*: 26, National Gallery of Art Washington (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1990), 137.

Arts where Homer would likely have studied it.<sup>47</sup> Set in Havana Harbor, with Morro Castle appearing in the painting's upper right quadrant, *Watson and the Shark* pictures the dramatic moment before the maiming by shark of a young merchant from Boston. At the center of Copley's composition, an open-mouthed, jagged-toothed shark swims towards a flailing Watson. This frightening sea beast shares a striking resemblance with the dominant shark raising its head above the water in *Gulf Stream*. Copley's *Watson and the Shark*, however, served as more than a model for a hard to capture sea creature. The painting may have suggested to Homer the much broader theme of the United States' relationship with Cuba. As discussed earlier in chapter one, in addition to depicting a specific event, *Watson and the Shark* more generally refers to the expanding trade industry between Cuba and the United States. Homer's inclusion of prominent sugar cane stalks snaking out of the boat's hull places *Gulf Stream* within a similar discussion on the economic ties between the United States and Cuba.

In the more than one hundred years that had elapsed between *Watson and the Shark* and *Gulf Stream*, trade between the United States and Cuba had increased exponentially, due primarily to the North's insatiable demand for sugar. As early as 1884, Cuba's precious commodity and the voracious U.S. sweet tooth became fodder for satirical commentary in *Puck*. The journal quipped that the high price of sugar led U.S. suppliers to go to great lengths to provide for its saccharine-seeking customers:

Sugar from the golden canes of Cuba, turned out ready for consumption. Sugar, did we say? Well, not exactly. It looks like sugar, but it bears only a partial relationship to the genuine article. If you examine it carefully, you will arrive at the conclusion that that sugar has started the summer season

---

<sup>47</sup> Peter Wood, *Weathering the Storm: Inside Winslow Homer's Gulf Stream* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 77. In addition, Albert Boime called attention to the affinities between *Gulf Stream* and *Watson and the Shark* in Boime, "Blacks in Shark-Infested Waters: Visual Encodings of Racism in Copley and Homer," 19-47.

prematurely, and has collaborated with what is left of the beach at Coney Island. The sugar is full of sand, and the grocer who sold it to the consumer has long ere this discovered that sand is ever so much cheaper than sugar.<sup>48</sup>

While presumably a humorous falsehood, *Puck*'s account attests to both the strong association of sugar with Cuba and the high demand for the product in the United States. Indeed, by the late 1880s, Cuba exported nearly ninety-four percent of its total sugar production to the United States.<sup>49</sup> In 1894, trade peaked and the United States received one hundred million tons of sugar from Cuba, more than from any other nation in the world.<sup>50</sup> Although Cuba's Second War for Independence in 1895 and the Spanish-American War in 1898 caused sugar production to dip, the industry quickly rebounded in 1899. After the wars, however, Cuba lost much of its control over the sugar industry to the United States. For example, the Cuban-American Sugar Company, a U.S.-run, monolithic, entrepreneurial venture bought tens of thousands of acres on the island in 1899 to cultivate the crop. That same year, Milton Hershey built an enormous sugar plantation and factory in Cuba in order to supply his expanding Pennsylvania chocolate business with its key-sweetening ingredient.

Years after the Spanish-American War, some even pointed to this precious commodity as the motivating factor for the conflict. Social activist and anarchist Emma Goldman declared, "When we sobered up from our patriotic spree—it suddenly dawned on us that the cause of the Spanish-American War was the price of sugar."<sup>51</sup>

By the time Homer painted *Gulf Stream*, Cuba was clearly synonymous with

---

<sup>48</sup> "Cartoons and Comments," *Puck* (March 12, 1884): 18.

<sup>49</sup> Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, 61.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>51</sup> The Emma Goldman Papers, Berkeley Digital Library, <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Writings/Anarchism/patriotism.html>

sugar in the United States, and, at least in Goldman's estimation, with the Spanish-American War itself. Viewers would have unequivocally associated *Gulf Stream's* disproportionately large stalks of brightly painted cane with the island. Although seemingly a blunder in scale, Homer's elongated stalks resulted from careful consideration. An 1898 study for the work (fig. 4.11) shows that Homer initially conceived of the cane as an exaggerated and critical component of the composition. This "conspicuous representation," as Albert Boime has pointed out, "assumes a symbolic and metonymic connotation."<sup>52</sup> For Boime, Homer's sugar cane clearly refers to the history of slavery as the crop initiated the kidnapping of men and women from Africa for forced labor in the New World beginning in the sixteenth century. This connection between slavery and sugar literally manifests itself in the painting as the black man grasps a stalk of cane with his right hand. However, with slavery abolished in Cuba in 1886 and in the United States in 1865, the subject would not have been foremost on the minds of Homer's viewers. Rather, in the context of 1899, in the immediate aftermath of the Spanish-American War, the most urgent matter facing the public was the United States' relationship with Cuba. It is thus more likely that Homer's super-sized sugar cane would have conjured up notions of the current state of affairs on the island rather than the abolished institution of slavery. Such an assumption seems irrefutable with *Gulf Stream* viewed alongside the complementary *Searchlight*.

In addition to Cuba, Homer also makes a direct reference to the United States in *Gulf Stream*; across the stern of the battered sloop, a plaque reads "Anna Key West." For Homer, this minor detail was evidently an important aspect of the image as the artist reworked the lettering so that it appeared more visible after he initially showed the

---

<sup>52</sup> Boime, 43.

painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1900.<sup>53</sup> The words “Anna Key West” help clarify the work’s ambiguous narrative; originating from Florida, the vessel must be on a return trip from Cuba with its cargo of sugar cane. Like *Watson and the Shark*, *Gulf Stream* thus also becomes a tale of U.S. mercantilism in the Caribbean gone disastrously awry. As the *Anna* from Key West, Homer identifies this vessel, and by extension its lone sailor, as Peter Wood has noted, as American.<sup>54</sup> Homer’s penchant for rendering political conflict through metaphor, as seen in *Searchlight*, thus manifests itself in *Gulf Stream* in the form of the sugar cane and the battered boat with its prostrate passenger. Together on Homer’s stormy sea, sugar cane Cuba and the U.S. hand that holds it, seem “bound by ties of singular intimacy” as President McKinley declared in 1899 in reference to the relationship between the two nations.<sup>55</sup> In Homer’s revision of this maxim, however, Cuba and the United States share a doomed fate rather than a prosperous future as envisioned by McKinley. Surrounded by hungry sharks, a tumultuous ocean, a swirling waterspout and a sailboat too distant to come to the rescue, this tattered craft confronts a grim and unequivocal end. With the added detail of the dark wooden cross alongside the broken mast, Homer confirms the sailor’s imminent death.

At the center of this desperate scene, the sailor appears surprisingly relaxed as he lounges across the deck of the boat. Propped up on his left elbow, he seems to accept his gruesome fate as his face registers resignation rather than terror of the events that are about to befall him. This inaction angered a number of critics who attacked the figure for

---

<sup>53</sup> Spassky, 483.

<sup>54</sup> Wood, 43.

<sup>55</sup> President William McKinley in his State of the Union Address, December 5, 1899. Quoted in Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, IX.

his “sullen laziness” while “waiting apathetically”<sup>56</sup> for his death. That these critics interpreted the man’s acceptance of his fate as indolence rather than bravery in the face of fear speaks to their racist inclinations. One of the most pervasive and pernicious stereotypes of African Americans in the nineteenth century was that they were lazy. For certain critics, Homer’s reclining figure upheld this belief, allowing them to direct their disparagement toward the black man rather than the white artist. However, given Homer’s dignified depictions of African Americans throughout his career, it is unlikely that he intended the sailor in *Gulf Stream* to represent such a stereotype.

Still, the man’s complete inaction and lack of emotion is jarring considering his ghastly circumstances. Unlike Homer’s many other fisherman lost at sea, such as the figure in *Fog Warning* (fig. 4.12) who attempts to row himself towards the distant safety of the larger ship, the sailor in *Gulf Stream* appears to have surrendered to his grave misfortune. Of course, the protagonist of *Gulf Stream* faces the most abject situation of all of those encountered by Homer’s fishermen; even if this man managed to escape the circling sharks, surely the approaching squall or rising sea would eventually take his life. Yet, Homer’s decision to show the man prostrate rather than upright and proud as he confronts his inevitable end presents the figure as a victim rather than the hero commonly found in the artist’s seascapes. By portraying this man as a victim, Homer transforms him from an intrepid sailor into a figure not unlike a damsel in distress. Indeed, the man’s posture is more akin to those of the women rather than the men in Homer’s painting *Undertow* (fig. 4.13), to give just one specific example. What is perhaps most unsettling, however, is that this victim has very masculine physical attributes; his torso and biceps ripple with muscle while his feet and hands appear massive even for his robust frame. As

---

<sup>56</sup> Isabel Hoopes, “The Story of a Picture,” *Mentor* (August 1929): 34.

in the case of *Searchlight*, Homer simultaneously (and paradoxically) emphasizes and undermines the masculine qualities of his subject. Both *Searchlight*'s canons and *Gulf Stream*'s brawny figure evoke associations with strength, control and dominance. Homer, however, deliberately renders man and machine powerless, thereby depleting their masculinity.

According to Nicolai Cikovsky, the figure's masculinity is further called into question by the circling sharks. As with *Searchlight*, Cikovsky offers a psycho-sexual reading of *Gulf Stream*, calling the sharks, “castrating temptresses, their mouths particularly resembling the *vagina dentata*, the toothed sexual organ that so forcefully expressed the male fear of female aggression.”<sup>57</sup> While Cikovsky again perhaps indulges a bit too much in art historical interpretation, his description of the sharks does conjure an image of complete emasculation.

Arguably, it is not the sharks, nor the figure's supine position, which renders him powerless, but rather his identity as an African American. Away from Homer's perilous sea, this man would have fared only marginally better at home where blacks were perceived and treated as an inferior race. The 1890s were a particularly dismal time for African Americans as Jim Crow laws rescinded the limited freedoms that former slaves had achieved since the Civil War.<sup>58</sup> Thus, some scholars have speculated that Homer intended the work as a metaphor for the horrendous conditions endured by African Americans during this period.<sup>59</sup> However, set in the Gulf Stream, in the wake of the

---

<sup>57</sup> Cikovsky, *Winslow Homer*, 379.

<sup>58</sup> The most notorious example of the kind of discriminatory circumstances African Americans faced during this time is the Supreme Court's *Plessy vs. Ferguson* decision, which established “separate but equal” accommodations for blacks and whites. The ruling came in 1896, just three years before *Gulf Stream*, after what had already been years of violence and mistreatment of African Americans.

<sup>59</sup> See Boime and Wood.

Spanish-American War, the painting more directly addresses the turbulent intra-American storm. Indeed, the location of the work was paramount for Homer who stated, “The subject of the picture is comprised in *its title*,”<sup>60</sup> when asked to clarify his ambiguous narrative. Homer’s insistence that the meaning of his work resided in that notoriously tempestuous body of water dividing the American continents gives weight to the interpretation of *Gulf Stream* as a commentary on the tense state of affairs between Cuba and the United States after the war.

---

A return to peace in 1899 did not bring clarity and calm to Cuba’s relationship with the United States. Rather than gaining independence, the island remained in a state of dependence, governed by the U.S. Department of War until 1902. The United States’ continued controlling presence after the war not only in Cuba, but also in Puerto Rico, Hawaii and the Philippines, aroused concerns at home about the rise of U.S. imperialism abroad. In the presidential election of 1900, the Democrats campaigned against the perils of the growing U.S. empire, stating, “We assert that no nation can long endure half republic and half empire, and we warn the American people that imperialism abroad will lead quickly to despotism at home.”<sup>61</sup> Such fears had also led to the formation of the Anti-Imperialist League in 1899. The League became a powerful force in the fight against U.S. expansionism, promoting its views in pamphlets of which it distributed over a million copies.<sup>62</sup> Many of the League’s prominent members also wrote independently

---

<sup>60</sup> Homer’s emphasis. Homer to Knoedler, February 17, 1902, Archives of American Art, NY microfilm reel, 59-5.

<sup>61</sup> Kirk H. Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson, *National Party Platforms, 1840-1964* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 113, quoted in Schoultz, 146.

<sup>62</sup> Ted Gottfried, *The Fight for Peace: A History of Antiwar Movements in America* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-First Century Books, 2006), 53.



on the evils of empire. League member Mark Twain, for example, declared almost apocalyptically, “We have debauched America’s honor and blackened her face before the world.”<sup>63</sup> At the dawn of the new century, a great rift developed in U.S. society. For some, the war had transformed the nation into a New World power worthy of international respect, as President McKinley had avowed. While for others, like Twain, the war created a colossus of ignominy as the United States renounced the morals on which it was founded and embraced the imperialist intentions of those it had just defeated. In 1899, in the midst of this volatile political debate, Homer’s depiction of a tumultuous Gulf Stream with its allusions to Cuba and the United States entered into the fray.

And yet, as is characteristic of Homer, his political allegory remains carefully veiled. While sugar cane is a conventional synecdoche for Cuba, Homer’s use of an African American man as a symbol of the United States is highly unusual, particularly in an age when the nation most often appeared in the guise of a gallant Uncle Sam or virile young soldier. Homer’s radical representation of the United States allowed for a complete undoing of the period’s pervasive conceptions of nationhood. As a prostrate black man, Homer’s sailor is a disempowered embodiment of the United States, calling into question the persistent rhetoric that sought to cast the nation as a New World empire.

Critics described *Gulf Stream*’s lack of heroism as an aberration within Homer’s *oeuvre*. Lloyd Goodrich noted that *Gulf Stream* was “less heroic and more realistic” than Homer’s earlier images of men in the midst of crises,<sup>64</sup> perhaps best exemplified by *Undertow* or *Fog Warning*. Similarly, William Howe Downes said of the painting, “Here

---

<sup>63</sup> Mark Twain, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness,” *North American Review* 172 (February 1901): 174.

<sup>64</sup> Lloyd Goodrich, *Winslow Homer*, exh. cat. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (New York: Macmillan Co., 1944), 161.

are no heroics, no rhetoric, no explanatory passages to detract from the bald and fateful presentation of cruel fact.”<sup>65</sup> Setting aside all of the polemics and rhetoric espoused by McKinley, Hearst and their minions, Homer depicted the cruel facts of the dangers of empire that reverberated two years later in its companion, *Searchlight*.

### Countering Homer's View: The Spanish-American War in Film

The anti-heroism of *Searchlight* and *Gulf Stream* confused viewers accustomed to virile images of a triumphant United States. *Gulf Stream* left viewers completely flummoxed and Homer was asked to provide an explanation of his subject.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, one reviewer of *Searchlight* could not articulate exactly what it was about the painting, but noted that “possibly it is the close range at which the masses in the foreground are shown, possibly it is the baldness of the lines in this part of the design, but certainly there is something which repels.”<sup>67</sup> This uneasiness perhaps arose from what was absent rather than what was present in Homer's work. *Searchlight*'s lack of flag-waving patriotism would have repelled viewers who had come to expect Remington's heroic, masculine images commonly found in the *New York Journal* or the triumphant narratives told in the “visual newspaper.”<sup>68</sup>

Not surprisingly, the “visual newspaper”, or motion picture, one of the period's most persuasive propagators of unbridled nationalism, was controlled in large part by

---

<sup>65</sup> William Howe Downes, *The Life and Works of Winslow Homer* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 133

<sup>66</sup> After perplexed patrons at Knoedlers requested a response from the artist explaining *Gulf Stream*'s subject, Homer replied in a letter to his dealer, “I regret very much that I have painted a picture that requires any description.” He went on to insist that “The subject of the painting is comprised *in its title* [Homer's emphasis]”, as noted in footnote 57, Homer to Knoedler, February 17, 1902, Archives of American Art, NY microfilm reel, 59-5.

<sup>67</sup> “Art Exhibitions: American Pictures at the Union League Club,” *New York Daily Tribune* (January 11, 1902): 7.

<sup>68</sup> I am borrowing this expression from film scholar Charles Musser.

William Randolph Hearst. The Spanish-American War brought exponential growth to a struggling nascent film industry as men and women throughout the country clamored to see the life-like portrayals of the conflict projected onto a large screen. Due to the many technical limitations of the new medium, the majority of the films from the war depict preparations for battle or reenactments of famous events produced in the United States. Despite the narrow breadth of their subjects and their short duration, the films of the Spanish-American War often excited audiences into a frenzy. Movie theaters, previously ailing before the war due to small audience size, sprang up throughout the northeast, where they served as important centers for amusement and demonstrations of patriotic fervor as well. In April 1898, the *New York Journal* reported, “at Proctor’s Theater last night enthusiastic crowds cheered...as they watched the War-graph throw upon the giant screen the pictures which the Journal’s correspondents had secured of the scenes attending the prosecution of the war in Cuba.”<sup>69</sup> Aware of the spell these new moving history paintings held over the public, Hearst collaborated with Thomas Edison’s film company to capitalize on the potentially lucrative medium.<sup>70</sup> Hearst paid for William Paley, the Edison Company’s cameraman, to travel to Cuba where he was to shoot footage of the war, which would then be shown to eager audiences at Proctor’s Theater and other venues.

Despite the support of Hearst and Edison, Paley’s time in Cuba was brief due to

---

<sup>69</sup> “Journal Pictures of War Cheered,” *New York Journal* (April 26, 1898): 13, quoted in Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon*, 129.

<sup>70</sup> The two largest film companies at the time were Edison Manufacturing Company and the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company. Although other smaller companies existed, Edison and Biograph shot the most footage of the Spanish-American War. Much like Hearst and Pulitzer, the two film companies were also engaged in a battle to obtain the largest audience. At the time of the war, Edison and Biograph were actually embroiled in a lawsuit as Edison sued the latter for copyright infringement.

the insurmountable hardships he encountered while filming on site.<sup>71</sup> He returned home and filmed the events he was unable to capture in Cuba from the comfort of the New Jersey woods.<sup>72</sup> Paley's *U.S. Infantry Supported by Rough Riders at El Caney* (fig. 4.14), for example, features a group of ruffian soldiers fighting their way through a wooded setting in West Orange, New Jersey meant to simulate a hill in Santiago de Cuba where Spanish troops lost a pivotal battle. The film shows a line of foot soldiers waving an enormous American flag followed by a cavalry of reckless men, presumably the infamous Rough Riders, who fire aimlessly into the air. Presented as actual footage from the war, Paley's *U.S. Infantry* would have convinced viewers that they were seeing scenes from Cuba rather than an animated tableau performed in West Orange, New Jersey.<sup>73</sup> Perceived as a visual document of the war, *U.S. Infantry* would have wielded great influence over its audience. Projected onto the large screen, Paley's portrayal of the United States as an unstoppable force capable of banishing the Old World from the Americas would have appeared as an irrefutable truth.

Yet, Paley's film was a careful construction that mimicked the warmongering sentiments of its patron, the *New York Journal*. Hearst's proclivity for editing and revising the events of the war told in the press also extended to his auxiliary commercial venture into film. Far from having free artistic license, Paley would have been instructed to stage a scene that played to the patriotism of ticket buyers. *U.S. Infantry* thus expresses the same image of the nation that the *Journal* sought to project. In the days leading up to

---

<sup>71</sup> After the wagon carrying his equipment broke down, a rainstorm destroyed his camera and made him deathly ill, Paley returned to New York with the limited footage he could salvage from his trip.

<sup>72</sup> Many of Paley's wartime films are reenactments performed by the New Jersey National Guard at Thomas Edison's Studio in West Orange, New Jersey.

<sup>73</sup> For a discussion of deception in Spanish-American War films see: Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 256.

the war, the *Journal*, agitating for conflict with Spain, professed, “A war would show first of all, what sort of stuff this country is made out of, and what kind of men it has produced in the last thirty years.”<sup>74</sup> Much like Paley’s film, notably absent from this statement is any reference to Cuba; the focus is instead on the United States. The *Journal* called for war with Spain because it would benefit the United States, offering an opportunity to fashion a new national identity based on masculine fortitude. Paley’s film of fearless Rough Riders provided the visual evidence needed to solidify that image.

In addition to Paley’s supposed eyewitness accounts of battle, cinema-goers could also see allegorical films that presented a similar U.S.-centric, masculine portrayal of the war. In Edward Amet’s *Freedom of Cuba* (fig. 4.15), for example, Uncle Sam and a supporting Lady Liberty together play the role of the United States. The tall, dapper Uncle Sam holds an oversized rifle with a long bayonet that attests to his military strength. Gazing up at her gallant companion while simultaneously clinging to his arm, Lady Liberty appears as the submissive wife who serves to augment her husband’s stature. Running toward this couple is a small child who has dropped a Cuban flag in order to take Lady Liberty’s outstretched hand. Amet thus portrays Cuba and the United States as a familial unit with a clearly defined hierarchy. Infantile Cuba must answer to her parents and will only be embraced if she gives up her identity represented by the falling flag. Although not personified as the aggressive Rough Rider featured in Paley’s work, the United States still appears as the authoritative focus of the film, thereby indulging the patriotic fervor of its audience.

Even after the war, the “visual newspaper” continued to inform cinema-goers in the North of the current events on the island. The Edison Company’s *Raising Old Glory*

---

<sup>74</sup> *New York Journal* (March 14, 1898), quoted in Charles Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon*, 127.

over *Morro Castle* (fig. 4.16) reenacted the moment that possession of Cuba was transferred from Spain to the United States. Although Cuban independence was the supposed motivation for the war, the island quickly became a spoil of U.S. victory. The lowering of the Spanish flag and the raising of the American flag over Morro Castle best symbolized the war for what it was: a stand-off between the Old and New Worlds with Cuba serving merely as the backdrop. Images of this event circulated widely in the United States. Photographers captured the changing of the flags while illustrators copied these images for reproduction in the press (figs. 4.17 & 4.18). The accompanying newspaper texts most often heralded the United States' triumph over Spain, but rarely mentioned Cuba. As one article announced, "Old Glory was hoisted over Morro Castle at Havana...its graceful folds floated over the once Spanish stronghold where for centuries had flaunted the red and yellow banner of Spain as symbol of tyranny and a menace to civilization."<sup>75</sup> Capitalizing on the currency of this pivotal event, the Edison Company restaged this transfer of power from its studio in New York in front of an obviously painted Morro Castle. In *Raising Old Glory*, Cuba once again appears merely as the backdrop for the drama unfolding between the protagonists, represented as flags, in the foreground. As film, *Raising Old Glory* captured the literal flag waving patriotism that photographs and illustrations of the event could only suggest.

With films like *Raising Old Glory* defining the war for the U.S. public, it is no wonder that Homer's morose *Searchlight* and *Gulf Stream* repelled viewers. In its essence, *Raising Old Glory* is a celebration of the Monroe Doctrine as it documents the expulsion of Europe and the expansion of the United States into the Americas.

*Searchlight*, although depicted from what had by then become the familiar setting of

---

<sup>75</sup> "Raising the American Flag on Morro Castle" *Arizona Weekly Journal-Miner* (March 22, 1899): 2.

Morro Castle, followed a different script, substituting flag waving patriotism with an uncomfortable emptiness. Viewers accustomed to the raucous movie theater were instead confronted by a contemplative painting that undermined the propaganda of the Hearst-Edison film ventures. That Homer rendered *Searchlight* using certain cinematic conventions makes his story of defeat all the more disconcerting. *Searchlight's* dramatic contrasts of light and dark evoke the stark oppositions of light and shadow found in films of the period.<sup>76</sup> Even more pointedly, *Searchlight's* bright beam suggests a film projector, casting a narrative onto the night sky. That story, however, appears beyond the canvas/screen, leaving Homer's viewers to fill in the details based on what is visible in the foreground, namely the last remnants of an expiring empire. Such affinities between *Searchlight* and film, while subtle, hardly seem coincidental; borrowing from the persuasive new medium allowed Homer to compellingly and poignantly tell the inverse of film's triumphant narrative of the Spanish-American war.

*Searchlight's* dark pendant, *Gulf Stream*, similarly subverts the story of the Hearst-Edison films. Rather than Edison's fearless Rough Riders, *Gulf Stream* presents a helpless black figure stranded in the stormy inter-American waters. Hardly the masculine image that the *Journal* and the visual newspaper sought to project, the work presents the Monroe Doctrine as a tragedy, a shocking and baffling proposition for the time. Side by

---

<sup>76</sup> This similarity led Katherine Manthorne to suggest that Homer's paintings and the period's pervasive popular films of the Spanish-American War may have been in dialogue with one another. See "Experiencing Nature in Early Film: Dialogues with Church's *Niagara* and Homer's Seascapes," in Nancy Mowll Matthews and Charles Musser, *Moving Pictures: American Art and Early Film, 1880-1910*, exh. cat., Williams College Museum of Art, Massachusetts, (Manchester, VT: Hudson Hills Press, 2005), 55-60. In addition to what can be described as *Searchlight's* cinematic lighting, the strong narrative element of the work also bares comparison with film. Even in this painting without figures, Homer's penchant for creating the components of a story are apparent. Together, the defunct canons and the searchlight suggest, but do not complete a narrative, resulting in a "cliffhanger" found in so many of Homer's paintings from *A Visit from the Old Mistress* (1876) to *Undertow* (1886). As a visual storyteller, Homer would have likely looked to film, perhaps the most compelling medium for narrative.

side, *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight* revealed the hubris behind film's projections of the nation's triumph.

### ***Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight* in the Culture War with Europe**

While *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight* were hardly complicit with the U.S. government in improving the stature of the United States after the war in the way that the Hearst-Edison films had, years later, critics found in these paintings a means of combating the nation's perceived cultural deficit. The Spanish-American War elevated the United States' political and economic profile, as McKinley had publicly proclaimed, yet the nation's cultural pedigree still appeared to be lacking in comparison with Europe. As discussed earlier in chapter 3, American art, according to late nineteenth-century critics, suffered from the invasion of an effeminate European aesthetic. Homer's "honest, virile and rugged"<sup>77</sup> style of painting, coupled with his masculine subjects, appeared as the American antidote to Europe's troubling dominance in the arts. Not all of Homer's work, as has been shown with *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight*, however, supported such ideals.<sup>78</sup> And yet, even these two paintings which countered the image of American masculine fortitude, came to play a prominent role in the culture war with Europe.

In 1906, both paintings entered the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art as part of an institutional effort to support contemporary U.S. artists. That year, renowned collector and philanthropist, George A. Hearn, donated a dozen paintings by U.S. artists

---

<sup>77</sup> Charles Vezien, "Protests against Psychopathic Art," *The Herald*, April 4, 1907 quoted in Bruce Robertson, *Reckoning with Winslow Homer: The Late Painting and their Influence*, exh. cat. Cleveland Museum of Art (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 69.

<sup>78</sup> As was also noted earlier, the same could be said of *Prisoners from the Front*, which, rather than celebrating the strength and victory of the North over the Confederacy, offers a more poignant and sensitive examination of defeat.



as well as an \$100,000 endowment to the Metropolitan.<sup>79</sup> Hearn specified that the income from the endowment was to be used to acquire “paintings by persons now living, who are, or may be at the time of purchase, citizens of the United States of America.”<sup>80</sup> He further delineated that any works purchased with funds from his endowment if sold or exchanged in the future had to be replaced with works produced by U.S. artists. At the time, Hearn’s gift marked a radical new direction in collecting for the Metropolitan. As artist and critic Kenyon Cox commented on the anomalous nature of the donation, “It is only recently that the Metropolitan has begun to perceive that its special opportunity is that of collecting the best American art to-day, and that there is much contemporary art in America worth collecting. The gift of Mr. Hearn is an admirable beginning in this direction.”<sup>81</sup> From its inception in 1870, the Metropolitan had followed and subsequently reinforced the national trend of collecting European rather than American art. Funds from the museum’s first endowment for acquiring art from a private collector, for example, were used to purchase paintings by popular French artists such as Rosa Bonheur, Jean Baptiste Camille Corot and Ernest Meissonier.<sup>82</sup>

In the period immediately following the Spanish-American War, however, this continued allegiance to the art of the Old World smacked of anti-patriotism. The editor of *Brush and Pencil* railed against this persistent marginalization of the nation’s artists at the time, when he stated:

---

<sup>79</sup> “Mr. George A. Hearn’s Gift to the Museum, and the Cause of American Art,” *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 1.3 (February 1906): 35.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Kenyon Cox, “Three Pictures by Winslow Homer in the Metropolitan Museum,” *Burlington Magazine* 12 (November 1907): 123.

<sup>82</sup> With the gift of the Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Fund in 1887, the Metropolitan continued expanding its holdings of European art. Although there were some notable exceptions to the Metropolitan’s general practice of collecting European art, such as a series of landscapes by John F. Kensett and the sculpture *California* by Hiram Powers, all acquired in 1872, for the most part, the museum existed as a repository for French, Dutch and Flemish paintings in the nineteenth century.

Our flags are flying and our victorious fleets are sailing the seas, our regiments are assembling and our loyalty to our country is genuine; our humanity embraces the world. Our art and our artists have been fighting a civil war against barbarism and ugliness, and the one thing so active and beautiful in the present war—patriotism—is not extended to them. The artist works and starves, ugliness reigns supreme, and our glorious United States of America withholds the helping hand.<sup>83</sup>

According to *Brush and Pencil*, not supporting the country's artists was an anti-American practice that contradicted the war's effort to rid the New World of European dominance.

In this climate of strident nationalism, Hearn's gift, mandating the collecting of U.S. artists, became a political act that answered *Brush and Pencil's* call to action.

*Searchlight*, included in the Hearn donation, became a part of this fight to bolster the nation's cultural patrimony.

The Hearn gift had a reciprocal effect; that same year, the Metropolitan used funds from other endowments with which it had previously acquired European art to purchase instead works by U.S. artists. *Gulf Stream*, for example, became "the first American picture purchased by the Wolf [sic] fund."<sup>84</sup> While *Searchlight* entered the Metropolitan's collection as one of the three Homer paintings offered in the Hearn

---

<sup>83</sup> *Brush and Pencil* 2 (April 1898): 143, quoted in Griffin, *Homer, Eakins and Anshutz*, 127. The editor of *Brush and Pencil* would no doubt be pleased to learn of what the *New York Times* called "the infusion of many things American" at the Louvre, one of the oldest and most esteemed of European art museums. In 2009, the Louvre commissioned site-specific works by celebrated contemporary American artists Joseph Kosuth and Cy Twombly. Moreover, the Louvre's new attempts at branding and its opening of satellite museums around the world, most notably and divisively in Abu Dhabi, have led to comparisons of what many might call American cultural imperialism abroad, best embodied by the Guggenheim. More than a century after the editor of *Brush and Pencil* levied his attack against U.S. collectors and museums for their neglect of the nation's artists, it seems Europe's leading fine art institution is just beginning to consider the cultural import of the United States. However, the steadfast perception of the United States as a cultural backwater to Europe, strengthened by the Metropolitan's own early dedication to French, Dutch and Italian artists, is shockingly evident in the Louvre's collection. As the Louvre's director Henri Loyrette admitted, "It's a scandal. We're supposed to be a universal museum but we only have three American paintings in our collection." See Carol Vogel, "On a Mission to Loosen Up the Louvre," *New York Times*, October 9, 2009. While the Louvre's recent efforts to embrace all things American demonstrates a complete reversal of the nineteenth-century artistic hierarchy, which *Brush and Pencil* would have relished, the collection illustrates that change is almost absurdly slow.

<sup>84</sup> Cox, 123.

donation,<sup>85</sup> *Gulf Stream* needed a petition and a group of rallying supporters in order for it to be accepted by the museum. With its dark subject matter, *Gulf Stream* appealed to few institutions and even fewer private collectors. Indeed, despite Knoedler's best efforts, the work went unsold for more than six years. According to Goodrich, initially the Worcester Museum considered the painting as a possible acquisition but eventually declined the work after two women on its board complained of the "unpleasantness" of the subject.<sup>86</sup> The Metropolitan also turned down *Gulf Stream* when it was first offered to the museum in October 1906, however, a petition from the members of the jury at the National Academy of Design where the work was on view led to further deliberation. The jury urged "the acquisition of this picture as a most notable achievement of American art".<sup>87</sup> Given the jingoist tone of *Brush and Pencil*, to deny a "notable achievement of American art" while continuing to support European artists would have appeared as unpatriotic. Such appeals to nationalist sentiments must have swayed the Metropolitan, which purchased *Gulf Stream*, in spite of its "unpleasantness," in December 1906 for the robust price of \$4,000, one of the largest sums Homer received for a painting during his lifetime.<sup>88</sup>

Perhaps in an attempt to draw attention to the patriotic implications of the Metropolitan's purchase, Curator of Paintings, Roger Fry declared, "I regard *Gulf Stream* as one of the most typical and central creations of American art. It belongs to this country in every way."<sup>89</sup> The purported "American-ness" of *Gulf Stream* soon became the work's

---

<sup>85</sup> Hearn offered the Met a choice of two out of three Homer paintings. The Met selected *Searchlight* and *Cannon Rock* and declined *Northeaster*.

<sup>86</sup> Goodrich, 162.

<sup>87</sup> W.H. Low to R.W. De Forest, December 12, 1906, Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.

<sup>88</sup> Spassky, 483.

<sup>89</sup> R.E. Fry to L. Loeb, December 14, 1906, Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.

defining characteristic. Echoing Fry's assessment, one viewer announced that *Gulf Stream* was as "American in character as Abraham Lincoln."<sup>90</sup> While these statements refer to *Gulf Stream*'s rugged, virile and supposedly honest brushwork, the subject is of course distinctly "American" as well. As Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer had reminded her readers, Homer had "sailed his artistic bark into these southern seas,"<sup>91</sup> and produced a body of work that rivaled in subject that of his American contemporaries abroad. Moreover, writing of *Gulf Stream* years later, Homer himself, had emphasized that the subject of the work was in fact that seething body of water between the American continents. And, as has been argued, alongside *Searchlight*, that body of water told the story of the United States' turbulent relationship with Cuba.

Within the walls of the nation's premier art museum, however, *Gulf Stream*'s narrative underwent a marked shift. Rather than an emasculated portrait of the nation, appearing in the guise of a victimized black man, *Gulf Stream* became an icon of American art and thus part of the arsenal of U.S. cultural might, augmented by the complementary *Searchlight*. This unlikely transformation of Homer's dark pendant into a venerable ode to Lincolnesque Americanism attests to the period's strident desire to cultivate a national art that completed the picture of New World power. That these two paintings, which flouted U.S. authority, could exemplify American art, shows just how pressing was the need to win the culture war.

## Cuba in the Twentieth Century

By the time *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight* entered the hallowed halls of the

---

<sup>90</sup> Vezem, "Protests against Psychopathic Art," *The Herald*, April 4, 1907.

<sup>91</sup> M.G. Van Rensselaer, "Pictures of the Season in New York," *The American Architect and Building News* (February 20, 1886): 89.

Metropolitan, anxiety surrounding the United States' relationship with Cuba had largely dissipated. Not long after the war, the island that had been the site of unrelenting contention became a paradise for U.S. pleasure seekers. As early as 1902, *National Geographic Magazine* observed this shift in the perception of Cuba when it stated, "There are many who believe that Palm Beach and the winter resorts of Florida are many times eclipsed by the charms of the Cuban capital, and that in the near future it will rightly become the most popular of American winter resorts."<sup>92</sup> *National Geographic's* prediction proved true; in the decades that followed, U.S. travelers flocked to Cuba in search of fun, adventure and reckless abandon.<sup>93</sup> The island returned to its pre-war days in the U.S. imagination as the "Eden of the Gulf"; the tension pictured in *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight*, as well as Homer's Cuban watercolors, dissolved into tales of blissful hedonism told by the press and a new generation of artists.

Among the artists who captured the new Cuba at the beginning of the twentieth century was Willard Metcalf. In 1902, Metcalf traveled to Havana in order to acquaint himself with the island before he began work on a series of murals for the Havana Tobacco Company in New York.<sup>94</sup> Metcalf's images of lush Cuban landscapes and sunny street scenes painted in pastel hues with soft brushstrokes are the antipode of Homer's menacing metaphors of turmoil on the island. Metcalf's *Havana Harbor* (fig. 4.19), for example, features a verdant hillside punctuated by red bursts of flowers and tall palm

---

<sup>92</sup> "American Progress in Habana [sic]," *National Geographic*, 13.3 (March 1902): 108.

<sup>93</sup> For further analysis of conceptions of Cuba as "fleshpot" and "endless cabaret" for U.S. tourists in the first half of the twentieth century, see Rosalie Schwartz, *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

<sup>94</sup> By 1902, tobacco was one of the most sought after exports from Cuba in the United States. In New York, the American Cigar Company and the Havana Tobacco Company competed with one another to be the preeminent purveyor of the much sought-after commodity. Metcalf's murals were meant to add a note of elegance to the building occupied by the Havana Tobacco Company and therefore an edge over its competitor the American Cigar Company.

trees blowing in what one imagines is a calming sea breeze. Beneath the hillside, an expanse of sun-dappled buildings encircles the purple and green still waters of the harbor. Rendered in warm tones, the image conveys a sense of the balmy Caribbean air that enticed so many northern travelers to the island. Similarly, in *Havana Cathedral* (fig. 4.20), Metcalf employs a palette of peach, aqua and lemon yellow to illustrate a sunny city street at midday. The palm tree at right, the barefoot dark-skinned man carrying baskets of vibrant fruits at center and the overall emphasis on pastel colors all function as signs of the tropics. Such pleasant pictures present Cuba as the inviting, warm weather, vacation destination that *National Geographic* foresaw as the future of the island.

With the increase in tourism to Cuba, came the proliferation of picture postcards of the island. Sent by visitors to the Caribbean to family and friends back home, postcards tempted more travelers to the tropics with their alluring subjects and vivacious use of color. The Detroit Photographic Company, one of the largest manufacturers of postcards from the “golden era” of postcard production (1895-1915),<sup>95</sup> presented views of Cuba that often portrayed the island as a cultivated and refined extension of the United States. One postcard by the company from 1904 (fig. 4.21), for example, pictures an elegant Havana café where well-dressed men sit at tables with white table clothes and fine crystal within a cavernous room adorned with elaborate light fixtures and patterned wallpaper. Devoid of any signs of the tropics, the café serves as a persuasive advertisement for potential U.S. travelers looking for familiar luxury while abroad. Alongside this image, the sender of the postcard has written, “If only we had such a place in Portland wouldn’t it be fine. Been all through Cuba and had a good time.” For the

---

<sup>95</sup> Howard Woody, “Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards,” in Christraud M. Geary and Virginia-Lee Webb, eds., *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), 13.

distant recipient, Cuba thus becomes an improved United States, “a good time” place where sites of leisure not only appeared similar to, but also exceeded, those at home.

Postcards also packaged travel to Cuba as a leisure pursuit in and of itself, as another postcard from the Detroit Photographic Company from 1905 (fig. 4.22) demonstrates. In the image, well-dressed travelers relax on the bow of a boat; the caption reads “On deck of P. & O. Steamer Between Cuba and Florida.” Although traversing the same treacherous water, infamous for its unpredictable storms, as Homer’s black sailor onboard the battered *Anna*, these men and women encounter only a calm sea and cloudless sky. The postcard illustrates the changes occurring at the beginning of the twentieth century when the Gulf Stream brought a new class of U.S. men and women to Cuba in search of leisure rather than commerce in the sugar cane trade.<sup>96</sup>

This transformation of Cuba into a destination of choice for U.S. pleasures seekers required some work as a 1902 *National Geographic* article makes clear. Entitled “American Progress in Habana”[sic], the article credits the United States for its “wise, conscientious, persistent measures” in “purifying” the city “despite the opposition and the dislike of the Cubans.”<sup>97</sup> The “progress” in Havana resulted from the efforts of a U.S. cleaning squad that sterilized the homes of all Cubans, thus “delivering the city from its old foes—filth and filth diseases.”<sup>98</sup> A series of “Before American Occupation and After” photographs accompany the article, thereby providing the supposed visual proof of the progress made on the island. In one set of images (figs. 4.23 & 4.24), a photographer

---

<sup>96</sup> This is not to imply that U.S. entrepreneurial interest in Cuba disappeared in the twentieth century. On the contrary, the island drew many fortune seekers south, as one headline from a *New York Times* article from July 14, 1903 attests: “Opportunities in Cuba: Splendid Openings for Educated Young Men Without Money”, underscoring the point that in the twentieth century the island returned to its pre-war days when it was perceived as a place of opulent riches.

<sup>97</sup> “American Progress in Habana [sic],” *National Geographic*, 13.3 (March 1902): 97.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

documents the effects of the campaign for progress on one street. In the first photograph, the street appears lined with ramshackle homes that assumedly suggest the kind of filth described in the article. The next photograph shows the street after the removal of these buildings. Clearly, the duties of the cleaning squad extended beyond a simple scrubbing with soap and water, which no doubt accounted for Cuba's opposition to imposed U.S. progress. Presumably, the second photograph is meant to be interpreted as an improvement in the former living conditions of the Cubans. However, as the image ironically, although perhaps not intentionally, illustrates, the work of the cleaning squad left Cubans homeless. The woman and four children seated on the barren side of the street imply the cost of "progress"; with the purification program came the displacement of the local population which made way for the invasion of the American winter resort.

The *National Geographic* photographs explicitly show that the rigid roles of submissive Cuba and a heroic United States remained in place even after the war. The campaign for progress once again presented Cuba as a helpless island that required the aid of the powerful neighbor to its north. The two nations remained "bound by ties of a singular intimacy" in the twentieth century despite Cuba's supposedly newly won freedom. The United States continued its military occupation of Cuba after the war until 1902 with the democratic presidential election of Tomás Estrada Palma. While in 1902 Cuba appeared to gain its official independence from the United States, the island stayed securely tethered to the imperial power to its north with the passing of the Platt Amendment. The severely curtailed authority of Cuba under this amendment led Estrada Palma's predecessor, Leonard Wood, U.S. Governor-General of the island from 1898-1902, to write, "there is, of course, little or no independence left Cuba under the Platt



Amendment.”<sup>99</sup> Cuban self-governance was indeed short lived; just four years later in 1906 the United States resumed control over the island, which it retained until 1909.

Homer’s work offered a disruption to this repetitive story of the United States’ presence in Cuba. Anomalous for their time, *Gulf Stream* and *Searchlight* neither upheld the myth of the Cuban Melodrama nor adhered to the later formula of depicting the island as an American winter resort. Instead, these two paintings questioned the period’s entrenched conceptions of the powerful and the powerless and suggested that the identity of the United States was grounded not in heroism and grandeur but as Mark Twain had professed in “debauched honor and a blackened face.”

---

<sup>99</sup> Wood to Roosevelt, October 28, 1901, Wood Papers, Library of Congress, quoted in Schoultz, 151.

## Chapter 5

### Picturing the “Spain of 300 Years Ago”: Mexico in Photographs and Paintings

While the Spanish-American War may have solidified the United States' position as a “world power,” as President William McKinley had proclaimed, the national preoccupation with constructing an image of strength and authority had already begun earlier in the century. In 1859, Hudson River School artist Frederic Edwin Church unveiled a visual tribute to U.S. world power with a provocative presentation of his monumental painting, *Heart of the Andes*. Presiding over Church's nearly six by ten foot canvas of the majestic Andes Mountain range, were the portraits of U.S. presidents: George Washington, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson (fig. 5.1). For the thousands of visitors who crowded into the Tenth Street Studio Building in New York to gaze upon Church's impossibly lush expanse of pristine wilderness, the southern continent must have appeared as a place that was a part of U.S. history, but one clearly positioned beneath the authority of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

With *Heart of the Andes*, Church established himself as one of the foremost U.S. painters of the southern continent, a reputation he cultivated in the following years with his numerous depictions of erupting volcanoes, regal palm trees and plunging waterfalls along the Guayaquil River. These grandiose representations of South America, however, have overshadowed Church's intimate portrayals of Mexico, a country he visited fourteen

---

<sup>1</sup> Church had a penchant for combining flora from diverse botanic zones within a single painting, thus allowing for excessively varied and verdant landscapes that would never be found in nature. See Stephen Jay Gould, “Church, Humboldt and Darwin: The Tension and Harmony of Art and Science,” in Franklin Kelly, et al., *Frederic Edwin Church*, (Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1989), 100. For a discussion of the reception of the painting while it was on view at the Tenth Street Studio Building, see Kevin J. Avery, “The Heart of the Andes Exhibited: Frederic E. Church's Window on the Equatorial World,” *The American Art Journal*, vol. 18, no. 1 (Winter: 1986), 52-72.

times, far more often than anywhere else he ventured south of the border. While Church's travels to Mexico were certainly adventurous for an aging artist in the late nineteenth century, they were hardly exceptional. During the time of Church's travels to Mexico from 1880 to 1899, the country received an enormous influx of U.S. tourists and entrepreneurs. Lured by the improved relations between the two countries under the Porfiriato, these new arrivals, Church observed, asserted their "American influence" everywhere.<sup>2</sup> Despite the rapid changes occurring in Mexico, Church's work preserves an idealized vision of the country as a picturesque place of the past, demonstrating the persistence of that myth forged by U.S. artists earlier in the century.

Church was not alone in his picturesque portrayal of Mexico in the 1880s and 1890s. U.S. photographer William Henry Jackson, best-known for his sublime images of the western United States, set out for Mexico in 1882, 1884 and 1891, each time returning with picturesque views of the southern neighbor. Not unlike his predecessor Eadweard Muybridge, Jackson arrived south of the border to photograph the booming railroad industry, which had by then replaced the steamship as the transportation mode of choice. Commissioned by the U.S.-owned Mexican Central Railway to promote tourism and business opportunities offered by their newly expanding lines, Jackson captured the next phase in the United States' developing relationship with its southern neighbors previously pictured by Muybridge. At a time of increased political and economic encroachment south of the border, Jackson's and Church's insistence on maintaining a picturesque Mexico becomes laden with ideological implications. With Church's presentation of *Heart of the Andes* suggesting that the southern continent existed beneath

---

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Frederic Edwin Church to Charles Dudley Warner, dated December 27, 1884, Archives, Olana State Historic Site.

the authority of the United States and Jackson's early photographs establishing an all-powerful West, their picturesque images of Mexico defined the South as a place prime for U.S. control and containment.

### **Jackson's Beginning: The West as Sublime**

Jackson's professional trajectory in many ways mirrors that of Muybridge's. Like his English contemporary, Jackson established his own photographic studio in a burgeoning western frontier town. During his first year in business in Omaha, Nebraska in 1868, Jackson primarily produced commissioned portraits. Aware of the public's growing interest in the Wild West, however, he soon expanded the scope of his work beyond the confines of his studio to include landscapes and Native American Indians that he encountered along the newly built railroad lines. The success of this later work caught the attention of Ferdinand Vandiveer Hayden who had been selected by the Department of Interior to lead a surveying expedition in the Colorado Rockies and the Wyoming territory. During the nine years that Jackson spent with the Hayden expedition from 1870 to 1879, he photographed a variety of dramatic landscapes that would become some of the most iconic images of the nineteenth-century American West.<sup>3</sup>

The photographs Jackson produced from the Hayden expedition circulated in a variety of forms. Originally intended to accompany Hayden's report to Congress that detailed his topographic findings, the photographs were also reproduced as stereographs, as a series of albumen prints for albums and as engravings for popular illustrated

---

<sup>3</sup> Jackson was of course not the only pioneering photographer in the West at the time. Carleton Watkins and Timothy O'Sullivan both worked on important surveying expeditions, producing some of their best known images during this same period. Clarence King who led the U.S. Geological of the Fortieth Parallel employed both O'Sullivan and Watkins while Lieutenant George Montague Wheeler of the U.S. Geographic Surveys West of the One Hundredth Meridian employed O'Sullivan.

journals. Indeed, Jackson's pictures are considered by many to be the first widely distributed photographs of Yellowstone. Composed of expansive panoramic views, replete with soaring mountain ranges, plunging waterfalls and serene reflecting pools, Jackson's images portray a pristine environment, a place vastly different from the heavily developed East where the majority of his viewers lived.

In order to create this virginal land, however, Jackson had to conceal all signs of those inhabitants he did encounter on the expedition, for as Martha Sandweiss has pointed out, Hayden and his men were not alone in Yellowstone. In fact, they had to keep a night watch wherever they were camped as attacks by Native American Indians were common in the area.<sup>4</sup> Jackson dealt with this problem photographically by removing the Native American Indian from the land and placing him in a separate catalogue devoted to portraits. In *Descriptive Catalogue of Photographs of Native American Indians*, the majority of Jackson's pictures present his subjects in interior spaces complete with European rugs and upholstered chairs, much like those that would have been found in the homes of those who purchased these albumen prints and stereographs. These men appear more as curios than individuals as they sit perched on those chairs wearing feather a headdress or standing up right, but held in place by the photographer's iron clamp sometimes visible between their legs (fig. 5.2).<sup>5</sup> As exotic curios, they are transformed from contemporary men in their natural environment to relics of the past on view in a display case. By relegating the Native American Indian to the studio interior, Jackson emptied the West of its inhabitants and created the impression of an untouched, limitless

---

<sup>4</sup> Sandweiss, 201.

<sup>5</sup> As these clamps or braces were commonly used in portrait photography at the time, it may be that this idea of the Native American as an object of display is more striking to the twenty-first century eye than it would have been to a contemporary viewer.

wilderness.

This vision of the West, some have argued, set a precedent for Manifest Destiny in the region. As Martha Sandweiss asserts:

Jackson and his colleagues helped pave the path for continued American expansionism into the West. If places like Yellowstone had no complicated history of human use or interaction, they were easily appropriated for other ends; for settlement, for resource exploitation, for tourism. Without a past, such places could easily have whatever future their chroniclers could imagine.<sup>6</sup>

Jackson's photographs of Yellowstone and beyond, as well as those discussed in chapter two by Eadweard Muybridge and Carleton Watkins, do unequivocally establish the West as a tabula rasa on which the process of expansionism then already underway, as evidenced by the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, could be inscribed. What Sandweiss does not point out, however, is that in the case of Yellowstone what the chroniclers imagined for the future of the land was not unregulated exploitation, but rather preservation.

In 1871, Hayden returned to Washington to present his extraordinary findings in Yellowstone to the broader public. He published a series of articles in *Scribner's Monthly* that extolled the majestic beauty of the land. *Scribner's* illustrated these articles with engravings produced from the *en plein air* watercolors made by Thomas Moran, the expedition's official artist who had spent two month's painting the sites he encountered with Hayden's team. In the following years, Moran would transform these watercolor sketches into larger oil paintings that were to bring him great acclaim. At the time of the *Scribner's* articles, Jackson circulated his photographs of arresting natural beauty as stereographs, providing arm-chair travelers with a three-dimensional view of the nation's

---

<sup>6</sup> Sandweiss, 201.

unspoiled wilderness. Through these popular means, Jackson, Moran and Hayden, along with other members of the expedition, galvanized support for protecting the territory from future development. Most influential in this regard was the album of Jackson's photographs and the series of Moran's watercolors that Hayden presented to Congress to accompany his extensive report on Yellowstone. On March 1, 1872, Congress signed into law the act that set Yellowstone aside as a "public park or pleasure-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people".<sup>7</sup> The "people" referred to in this declaration, however, were the white tourists and settlers newly arriving in the territory and not the Native American Indians already living on the land. In order for Yellowstone to be that place of enjoyment, Native Americans and their cultural presence were removed from the land.<sup>8</sup> Yellowstone thereby became a place reserved for the contemplation of natural beauty only for this new white majority.

Jackson's photographs helped construct this "pleasure-ground", not only by eliminating any sign of Native Americans, but also by invoking the sublime in his depictions of the territory. In Jackson's stereograph of Old Faithful (fig. 5.3), the geyser erupts from the ground, dwarfing the two men who stand gazing upon the wild marvel before them. These men, as well as the external viewer there alongside them, thanks to the seductive three-dimensional power of the stereograph, feel the spray of the geyser and the true force of nature's *terribilità*. Together, these two figures and the viewer, take part

---

<sup>7</sup>*Index to the Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives for the first session of the forty-ninth Congress 1885-86 in Twelve Volumes* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1886), 266.

<sup>8</sup> Park Historian for the National Park Service at Yellowstone, Lee H. Whittlesey writes that "There seems to have been an effort by early whites in Yellowstone National Park to make the place "safe" for park visitors, not only by physically removing Indians from the park and circulating the rumor that 'Indians feared the geyser regions,' but also by attempting to completely segregate the place in culture from its former Indian inhabitants, including their legends and myths." Lee H. Whittlesey, "Native Americans, the Earliest Interpreters: What is Known about their Legends and Stories of Yellowstone National Park and the Complexities of Interpreting Them," *The George Wright Forum*, vol. 19, no. 3, (2002): 40.

in the spectator sport of observing the great outdoors in all of its sublime theatricality.

Reaching to the clouds and surpassing the mountains behind it, the geyser appears boundless, a central characteristic of the sublime also found in Muybridge's photographs of the Grizzly Giant and the Sierra Nevada Mountain range (figs. 2.3 & 2.15). Like the geyser, Muybridge's trees and mountains cannot be contained or controlled as they stretch beyond the confines of the photographs. The dramatic difference in scale between the figures and these natural wonders emphasizes man's insignificance in the midst of these overwhelming landscapes. That these diminutive figures appear completely transfixed by their surroundings, in one case the explosive geyser and the other the perfect stillness of a lake, suggests that each photographer conceived of these environments as places reserved for the higher purpose of profound contemplation.

Jackson repeated this trope of man immersed in and absorbed by transcendent nature throughout his depictions of the West. In *At the Mammoth Hot Springs, Gardiner River* (fig. 5.4), Jackson presents a single figure standing on a precipice against a backdrop of rushing water and imposing rocks. In contrast to Jackson's stereograph of Old Faithful in which the geyser is the central focus and the two men are barely visible, in *Mammoth Hot Springs* the figure is given greater prominence, allowing for a clearer understanding of his reflective state. Such a contemplative figure recalls Edmund Burke's notion of the sublime in which nature provokes man's recognition of his finiteness in contrast to Divine omnipotence in which he is immersed.<sup>9</sup>

More than any other image, Jackson's photographs of what became known as the Mount of the Holy Cross (fig. 5.5) conveys this sense of the Burkean sublime landscape

---

<sup>9</sup> Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, (London: R & J Dodsley, 1757).



that leads man towards contemplation of the Divine. In August 1873, Jackson made a vertiginous ascent up the Colorado Rockies in the hopes of photographing what had up until then been only an apocryphal tale of a cross inscribed on the side of a mountain. After an arduous vertical climb, Jackson was able to see and photograph the eastern-face of an opposing 14,000 foot peak upon which the last of winter's snow had settled into a cross formation. Widely circulated in the form of albumen prints and stereographs, this image of the snowy cross became proof for Christians throughout the United States of God's presence in the western landscape and therefore of the sacredness of that territory.

In addition to Jackson's photographs of the Mount of the Holy Cross, Thomas Moran also popularized the site in his monumental oil painting of 1875 (fig. 5.6). Moran's painting follows the formal principles of the Gilpian picturesque with a meandering stream leading the eye into the picture plane and descending mountains on either side of the canvas serving as natural "side-screens" that frame the composition. Yet, the point of focus, the majestic mountain emblazoned with the cross and surrounded by a hazy fog and celestial light, creates an undeniably sublime effect. Measuring seven by five feet, the painting overwhelms the viewer (who takes the place of a diminutive depicted figure in the landscape) and reminds him of his insignificance in the presence of Divine omnipotence. When viewed as Moran intended, as the central panel of an immense triptych, *The Mountain of the Holy Cross* becomes a particularly powerful representation of the sublime. The triptych includes *Grand Canyon of Yellowstone* (fig. 5.7), a seven by twelve foot panoramic view that shows a miniscule Moran and Hayden on the edge of a precipice overlooking the vast chasm before them. Following on the success of this work in 1872, Moran executed its equally ambitious and again seven by twelve foot pendant,

*Grand Canyon, Chasm of the Colorado* (fig. 5.8). Standing in front of this triptych, a nearly thirty-foot expanse of canvas, the viewer could not have felt anything other than awe for Moran's infinite West.

With Jackson's photographs and Moran's paintings providing visual documentation that the West was supposedly marked by God, the region became a place worthy of veneration. Indeed, by the early twentieth-century, the Mount of the Holy Cross had become a pilgrimage site. According to *The Denver Post*, the first organized expedition to the peak occurred in 1927. As the paper reported:

The fine success of last year's pilgrimage to the Mount of the Holy Cross—the first affair of its kind—which was sponsored by The Post, led to such nationwide interest in Colorado's wonderful natural emblem of the Christian faith, that reservations for the 1929 pilgrimage already are beginning to come in from all parts of the United States.<sup>10</sup>

In the same article, *The Post* also relayed that “there is already a good horseback trail four and one-half miles in length”<sup>11</sup>, suggesting that unofficial pilgrimages to the peak had been underway well before 1927.

From the gushing geyser Old Faithful (fig. 5.3) to the legendary Mount of the Holy Cross (fig. 5.5), Jackson's photographs and Moran's paintings presented an awe-inspiring West then unfamiliar to the majority of viewers. By picturing the West as sublime, they fostered a conception of the region as a limitless space where one could encounter the Divine. These images helped inspire such profound reverence for the land that hundreds of pilgrims made their way to the Colorado Rockies and Congress preserved more than 3,000 square miles of wilderness for the “benefit and enjoyment of the people.” The success of Jackson's work from the Hayden expedition established the

---

<sup>10</sup> “First Steps are Taken for 1929 Holy Cross Pilgrimage,” *The Denver Post* (October 4, 1928).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

reputation of the photographer and led to increased commissions farther afield. In the ensuing years, Jackson continued to focus on landscape in his work as he ventured to more distant terrain. He traveled south of the border to Mexico and Central America where he encountered mountains, volcanoes and vast valleys that rivaled those in the United States. Significantly, Jackson rendered these lands distinct from those in the north, presenting them as picturesque rather than sublime.

### **From Peaceful to Physical Conquest: the United States' Increasing Encroachment into Mexico**

By the time Jackson arrived south of the border in 1882, the railroad industry in Mexico had already experienced exponential growth. At the beginning of the Porfiriato in 1877, there were only 640 kilometers of railroad track in Mexico after forty years of construction initiatives; by the end of the regime in 1910, this number had jumped to 19,000.<sup>12</sup> U.S. investors financed the vast majority of this trackage thanks to the aggressive incentives they received from the Díaz regime then seeking to improve Mexico's ailing economy with the help of foreign capital. Ultimately, Díaz's strategy did little to better the standard of living for the average Mexican, but it did bring great wealth to U.S. investors who by the first decade of the twentieth century owned two-thirds of the country's railroad system.<sup>13</sup>

With the majority of Mexican railroads owned by U.S. investors and tracks extending from El Paso Texas to the Yucatán Peninsula, the two countries were literally tied together under the Porfiriato. The increase in transportation lines brought a rise in

---

<sup>12</sup> Teresa M. Van Hoy, "La Marcha Violenta? Railroads and Land in 19th-Century Mexico," *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 19 Issue 1 (January 2000): 35.

<sup>13</sup> Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, ed., *Mexico, The Revolution and Beyond: Photographs by Agustín Víctor Casasola 1900-1940*, (New York: Aperture Foundation, 2003), 15.

commercial exchange as well; combined U.S. imports and exports skyrocketed from \$7,000,000 in 1860 to more than \$166,000,000 by the end of the Porfiriato in 1910, over two-thirds of Mexico's total foreign commercial exchange.<sup>14</sup> Despite this interchange, the relationship between the two countries was far from equal as the majority of wealth flowed out of Mexico. As early as 1882, the year that Jackson arrived in Mexico, Louisiana Representative John Ellis observed:

Mexico is now undergoing a physical conquest by our people. Our railroads and other enterprises are permeating her territory. Before long Mexico will wake up to the fact that she is gradually being subjugated by the United States; and then will come the recoil and the revolt, and the United States may be called upon to conserve the interests and property of her citizens there.<sup>15</sup>

By 1882, “the peaceful conquest”, as described in 1869 by U.S. Minister to Mexico William Rosecrans, had become physical.<sup>16</sup> A wave of U.S. immigrants had entered Mexico, lured by the booming railroad, mining and commerce industries. A critical mass gathered in Mexico City large enough to establish and support the American Colony, which boasted its own private hospital, school, cemetery, YMCA, women's club, country club and golf course. The “Voice of the American Colony,” the newspaper *Mexican Herald*, printed in Spanish and English and supported by a subsidy from the Díaz regime, encouraged U.S. development of commercial tropical agriculture and other markets in Mexico to supply freight for the railways.<sup>17</sup> Later the *Two Republics* (the title referring to the United States and Mexico) replaced the *Mexican Herald* as the American Colony's newspaper of choice, but the emphasis on U.S. development in Mexico

---

<sup>14</sup> Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, 127.

<sup>15</sup> *Congressional Record*, 5 July 1882, 5652, quoted in Schoultz, 237.

<sup>16</sup> As discussed in chapter two, Rosecrans described the encroachment of U.S. interests into Mexico as a form of “peaceful conquest” south of the border, see Gilbert G. González, *Culture of Empire: American Writers, Mexico and Mexican Immigration, 1880-1930* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004), 17.

<sup>17</sup> William Schell, Jr., *Integral Outsiders: The American Colony in Mexico City, 1876-1911* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2001), 15.

remained the same. Both the *Mexican Herald* and the *Two Republics* helped further interest in the American Colony and Mexico as a whole among a broader segment of U.S. investors.

While the earliest U.S. investors in Mexico were some of the wealthiest businessmen of the time, among them William Randolph Hearst, J.P. Morgan and the Guggenheim family, by the turn of the century, a middle-class of entrepreneurs had begun trying their luck south of the border. In addition to the highly profitable mines, farms and ranches established by U.S. investors at the beginning of the Porfiriato, by 1902, there were also 1,112 companies and small businesses run by middle-class U.S. businessmen.<sup>18</sup> As in the case the of the railroads, however, the profits reaped from these smaller ventures remained in the hands of a few and did not make their way into the pockets of the average Mexican. Díaz's pro-U.S. policies led to brewing resentment among Mexicans that eventually ignited rebellion and finally the eruption of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. "The recoil and revolt" that Representative John Ellis had foreseen as early as 1882 finally came to pass, resulting in a massive loss of U.S. property, investment and influence in Mexico.

During the years of "physical conquest" under the Porfiriato, however, the United States enjoyed the status of a modern day conquistador, dominating Mexico's struggling economy. Within this period of physical conquest, Jackson arrived south of the border at the behest of the Mexican Central Railway, one of the most powerful arms of the modern day conquistador.

---

<sup>18</sup> Hart, 236.

### A “Quick Eye for the Picturesque”: Jackson's Photographs for the Mexican Central Railroad

While Jackson first ventured to Mexico in 1882, he ended his trip prematurely as the railroads he was hired to photograph were still under construction. He returned to Mexico in 1884 and again in 1891 to picture the people and places along the by then completed lines. As a photographer for the Mexican Central Railway, Jackson tailored his work to the expectations of his employer, presenting Mexico as a land rich with historical intrigue and economic opportunity that was intended to draw more business to the railroad industry. Like Muybridge before him, Jackson created images that oscillate between the past and future that appealed to both the tourist and the entrepreneur.

In *Mexican Central Railway Train at Station* (fig. 5.9), Jackson juxtaposes a shining new train, a gleaming emblem of modernism, with traditionally dressed men and women carrying pots on their shoulders. With the words *Central Mexicano* emblazoned on its side, there is no mistaking this truncated train for any other railway line than that of Jackson's employer. With just a few cars, this train would have been used to carry cargo and perhaps a few passengers from one town to the next. It would not have been used to transport passengers over any great distance and it certainly would not have brought U.S. travelers south of the border.<sup>19</sup>

While the train is clearly intended for locals, the photograph is packaged for foreigners. Jackson places the most “authentically” Mexican elements, the women with their pots and the men with their *serapes* and sombreros, in the foreground while the men wearing European dress are barely visible in the background. The men in this latter group

---

<sup>19</sup> For a fuller discussion of the types of trains in Mexico during this period see: Jim Harter, *World Railways of the Nineteenth Century: A Pictorial History in Victorian Engravings* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

wearing suits and derby hats would have appeared much like the intended viewer in the United States. By placing these men at a distance, behind the traditionally dressed Mexican men and women, Jackson obscures the similarity between the viewer and subject. Instead, he chooses to picture Mexico as a place of difference where tradition persists even in the midst of rapid modernization.

Jackson's portrayal of Mexico sharply contrasts with the work of his contemporary Augustín Víctor Casasola. A Mexican photographer who launched his career under the Porfiriato, Casasola eventually created his country's largest photographic archive from the first half of the twentieth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, when new technology allowed for photographs to be published in newspapers, Casasola's documentary work came into high demand. In Mexico, where the Porfiriato severely limited freedom of the press, Casasola's early photographs primarily appeared in *El Imparcial*, the official newspaper of the regime. As the authoritative voice of the Porfiriato, *El Imparcial* peppered its pages with photographs that bolstered the image of the regime from festive public celebrations to successful infrastructure projects. Given the Porfiriato's obsession with progress, it is not surprising that Casasola's photographs for *El Imparcial* chronicle Mexico's achievements and future promise.

Nothing defined the Porfirian dream of progress better than the railroad lines and Casasola's many photographs of the growing industry presented an unequivocally modern image of Mexico. In *Hombres bajan del vagón de primera clase del "FF. CC. De aguas potables"* (fig. 5.10), Casasola captures a jovial scene where Mexican men dressed in three-piece suits and derby hats celebrate alongside a train with the words *PRIMERA CLASE* prominently inscribed on the side of a railroad car. As they crane their necks out

of the windows of the train and dance beside the tracks, the men fix their eyes on the photographer and raise their glasses of beer as if to toast him. These gestures convey a sense of intimacy between the photographer and his subject; Casasola becomes an unseen participant in the scene rather than just an observer. Casasola's connection with the Mexican people, his own people, came to characterize his later photographs of revolutionaries, entertainers, the dispossessed and even the social elite and it is that quality for which he is best remembered today.

This familiarity with one's subject is not found in Jackson's Mexican work wherein the men and women remain completely absorbed in their own tasks (fig. 5.9). Jackson's photographs reveal him for what he was, a foreigner looking in on Mexico. Moreover, Jackson's work portrays Mexico as a place of both the past and future that would appeal to his audience back home, but undercuts the Porfiriato's attempt "to show the progress and resources of Mexico rather than its antiquities and other curiosities."<sup>20</sup> Outside of Mexico, the Porfiriato had limited control over its national image as a land of "antiquities and curiosities" that appeared in the form of the traditionally dressed men and women in Jackson's photographs. Within the country, however, Casasola's photographs of a Mexico for the *Primera Clase* (fig. 5.10), made that image of progress much easier to maintain.

While readers of *El Imparcial* observed a Mexico of modern railroads and the *Primera Clase*, viewers of Jackson's work encountered a nation that still clung to its past despite its slow progress into the future. In addition to traditionally dressed men and women, Jackson incorporated architectural "antiquities and curiosities" into his photographs of the railroads. In *Aqueduct with Train, Querétaro* (fig. 5.11), Jackson

---

<sup>20</sup> "Diaz's Progressive Ideas," *The Washington Post* (March 8, 1892): 2.



brings the past into the future by photographing a passenger train paused beneath the eighteenth-century aqueduct of Querétaro. A relic from a bygone era built before the United States achieved its independence, the aqueduct is a picturesque backdrop to the scene.<sup>21</sup> With its symmetrical arches, the aqueduct forms perfect side-screens that act as a compositional framing device, evoking William Gilpin's ideas and J.M.W. Turner's visualization of the picturesque.

The picturesque also defines Jackson's photographs of Mexico's natural wonders. Juanacatlán Falls, "the Niagara of Mexico", as the waterfall on the Santiago River near Guadalajara was commonly referred to by many nineteenth-century northern travelers, was among the places that piqued Jackson's interest.<sup>22</sup> Like many of Jackson's photographs, there is both a black and white and color version of Juanacatlán, the latter reproduced at a later date for the Detroit Photographic Company (figs. 5.12 & 5.13).<sup>23</sup> Both depictions show the falls from a panoramic perspective framed by palm trees. While the color image is taken from a closer range than the black and white version with its encompassing view of the surrounding landscape, both works convey a sense of the expanse rather than the height of the falls. This emphasis on horizontality is distinct from Jackson's representation of Juanacatlán's northern counterpart, Niagara Falls (figs. 5.14 & 5.15). Jackson's photographs of Niagara draw attention to the verticality of the falls by creating the illusion of infinitude; rather than terminating in a clearly delineated pool of water as shown in Juanacatlán, Niagara gives way to a hazy mist that obscures the view

---

<sup>21</sup> The Querétaro aqueduct was built from 1726 to 1738.

<sup>22</sup> "The Niagara of Mexico" was the catchphrase used to describe Juanacatlán by Lady Winefred Howard of Glossop in her 1897 *Journal of a Tour in the United States, Canada and Mexico*, Thomas Philip Terry in his 1909 *Terry's Mexico: Handbook for Travelers* as well as many other northern travel writers of the time.

<sup>23</sup> In 1897, Jackson became a partner at the Detroit Photographic Company, contributing thousands of negatives to what was already one of the largest photographic publishing firms in the United States as discussed in chapter four.

of what lays below. The fall thereby becomes an endless torrent of water that, much like the mountains in Jackson's photographs of the western United States, extends beyond the picture plane, unable to be contained or controlled by the camera's lens. Jackson further highlights the immensity of the falls by composing a dramatic contrast in scale between Niagara and the diminutive boat in the background of each photograph. It is the tourists peering over Niagara's spectacular look-out point, however, who best illustrate not only Niagara's massive size, but also its sublime essence. Like Jackson's figures who stand in awe of the majestic landscapes of Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon, these tourists appear mesmerized by Niagara. Their presence transforms this natural wonder into a place worthy of veneration where man can consider the immediacy of both the physical and metaphysical worlds.

This reverence for the land is notably absent from Jackson's depiction of Juanacatlán. Without a viewing platform from which tourists can contemplate the sublime in their surroundings, Juanacatlán exists simply as a pleasantly packaged picture rather than an awe-inspiring spectacle. Juanacatlán is therefore a consumable object produced for the viewer—the only present figure—and not an arresting rendering of the sublime as seen in Niagara. Jackson creates this effect in part by photographing the palm trees at close range, thereby minimizing the height of the falls. These prominent palms, which almost dwarf the falls, also serve the dual function of locating the scene in the tropics, at a distance from Jackson's viewers, while simultaneously framing the composition. The viewer is made aware that these falls, in their exotic locale, do not overwhelm like the ones at home, as exemplified by Niagara. Instead, these falls are hemmed in and defined by a natural side-screen, recalling Gilpin's vision of the picturesque rather than the

sublime.

Significantly, contemporary written accounts by northern travelers to Juanacatlán present a different picture than that which Jackson's photographs convey. Noblewoman and amateur artist Lady Winefred Howard of Glossop found Juanacatlán captivating upon her arrival there in 1897. Rather than a Jacksonian charming tourist destination, Juanacatlán appeared to Lady Howard as a place that could only be described in hyperbolic terms in order to express her almost transcendent experience there. In detailing her encounter with the falls, she enthused “the scene is one of the extremest [sic] beauty.”<sup>24</sup> She explained that the powerful cascade of water “gives forth a sound as of thunder, and great clouds of snowy spray rise in all directions drenching the spectator.”<sup>25</sup> The use of the word “spectator” suggests that Lady Howard conceived of Juanacatlán as a place where one came to observe nature's awe-inspiring theatrics. Lady Howard was not alone in her admiration for the dramatic falls. In fact, she noted that by the time of her visit viewing platforms were already in place to accommodate the crowds of spectators who gathered to watch Juanacatlán's sublime show.<sup>26</sup> Above this exuberant watery display, spectators would also find, as Lady Howard described it, “every moment lighted and relighted by the evanescent but continually recurring iridescence of the most exquisite series of rainbows in the glowing afternoon sun.”<sup>27</sup>

Jackson's images reveal none of these natural marvels, spectators or viewing platforms that Lady Howard observed just three years after the photographer's last visit to Juanacatlán. One wonders if Juanacatlán really was untouched by tourism at the time of

---

<sup>24</sup> Lady Winefred Howard of Glossop, *Journal of a Tour in the United States, Canada and Mexico* (London: S. Low, Marston & Co., 1897), 213.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

Jackson's travels or if he deliberately eliminated any sign of man's presence at the falls. If the latter is true, it suggests that Jackson sought to transform the Juanacatlán that Lady Howard encountered with its throngs of tourists contemplating nature's sublime spectacle into a subdued and pristine picture postcard intended to appeal to northern viewers' conception of the lands south of the border. Jackson's audience was of course well accustomed to picturesque depictions of Mexico given the barrage of images produced by photographers, illustrators and painters from the preceding decades that portrayed the region as such. A sublime rendering of Juanacatlán, akin to Lady Howard's description of those falls or Jackson's interpretation of Niagara, would have been unrecognizable to viewers who had come to expect the picturesque south of the border.

Even if Juanacatlán existed as that undiscovered oasis at the time of the photographer's visit, Jackson clearly tailored his work to northern audience's expectations by carefully framing and understating the height of the falls. Jackson's ability to wrangle his subjects into the picturesque came to define his Mexican images for his contemporary viewers. As travel-journalist and amateur artist Sylvester Baxter said of Jackson's work:

Mr. W.H. Jackson of Denver, in a visit of a few hours, *with his quick eye for the picturesque*, took a number of remarkably fine views, one of which I remember particularly—a strong foreground on the mountain-side, a group of organ cactus shooting up in the centre, out of a tangle of century plants and prickly-pear, the city spreading away and filling the depths; the mountains rising grandly in the distance, and receding in a delicious aerial perspective in which the delightful mining-villages on the slopes showed vaguely, and not with the brilliant vividness of color and distinct outline conveyed by nature itself—even the best of cameras not yet being able to accord wholly with our own optical impressions.<sup>28</sup>

This account, taken from a fifteen-part series Baxter published in *American Architect and Building News* entitled “Strolls through Mexico”, pertains to the author's time in

---

<sup>28</sup> Emphasis added. Sylvester Baxter, “Strolls about Mexico—X: From Guanajuato to Lagos,” *The American Architect and Building News*, XIX, no. 529 (February 13, 1886): 78.

Guanajuato, which apparently overlapped with Jackson's travels in the city. Baxter's precise description most likely refers to Jackson's panoramic view of Guanajuato (fig. 5.16). Although no images illustrate Baxter's article on Guanajuato, the similarities between his account and this photograph are undeniably striking. In the photograph, a small boy stands among the prickly pear and organ cacti in the foreground while in the background Guanajuato appears “spreading away and filling the depths; the mountains rising grandly in the distance and receding in a delicious aerial perspective in which the delightful mining-villages on the slopes showed vaguely.”

Baxter's assessment that Jackson had a “quick eye for the picturesque” suggests that the photographer went looking for the aesthetic. From Baxter's description, one can imagine Jackson surveying the scene, searching for and culling together those aspects that could be construed as picturesque. In the case of Guanajuato, Jackson found a row of cacti that formed a natural fence, which both blocks the viewer from entering the landscape and frames the city in the distance. The cacti also function, much like the palm trees in Juanacatlán, as a sign of the tropics. While cacti grow in the more arid parts of the United States, they would have been perceived by Jackson's viewers in the northeastern United States as an exotic anomaly. More specifically, the prickly pear is at the heart of the story of Mexican nationalism. According to legend, the god of war Huitzilopochtli appeared before the itinerant *Mexica* (later known as the Aztecs) tribe and told them to establish an empire in the place where they found an eagle with a serpent in its mouth resting on a prickly pear cactus. The Aztecs discovered this vision in a swampy valley where they built their sprawling megalopolis Tenochtitlán (or “place of the cactus fruits” in Nahuatl) that centuries later would become the site of Mexico City. An eagle

with a serpent in its mouth perched on a cactus thereby came to symbolize the birth of the nation; indeed, this emblem was emblazoned on the Mexican flag after the country gained independence from Spain in 1821. While the national significance of the prickly pear may not have been known to Jackson or his viewers, the inclusion of this specific cactus in the photograph clearly ties the image to Mexico.

Amidst the prickly pear stands a young boy. Unlike the figures in Jackson's photographs of the western United States (figs. 5.3 & 5.4), who appear immersed in their sublime surroundings, this boy has eyes only for the camera. Rather than following his gaze into the picture plane and losing oneself in the landscape, as seen in fig. 5.4, the viewer is instead made aware of the act of looking. The boy looks at the camera and the camera and viewer look back at the boy. By acknowledging the camera rather than the landscape, the boy calls attention to the photograph as a constructed image, one created by Jackson's "eye for the picturesque." Composed of a forward-facing figure and a wall of cacti that frames and contains the city beyond, this photograph does not purport to be, like Jackson's Mount of the Holy Cross (fig. 5.5), a grand meditation on nature and the Divine. Rather, it reveals itself to be simply "like a picture", the very definition of the picturesque.

This view of Guanajuato exemplifies Jackson's Mexican photographs, which appear humble when compared with his majestic depictions of the western United States. Whether nestled within valleys or abutted by palm fronds or walls of cacti, Jackson's Mexican cities and wilderness are circumscribed by a picturesque lens. Even those images which explicitly illustrate the decidedly unpicturesque theme of modernization (figs. 5.9 & 5.11) take on the characteristics of the aesthetic. Carefully framed within the

arch of an eighteenth-century aqueduct or flanked by traditionally-dressed men and women, Jackson's Mexican railroads reveal, as Sylvester Baxter noted, "his quick eye for the picturesque."

### **Searching for "the Spain of 300 Years Ago": Frederic Edwin Church in Mexico**

During his time in Mexico, Jackson may have crossed paths with another artist in search of the picturesque, Frederic Edwin Church. Often accompanied by friends, as the climate apparently did not suit his wife's health, Church included Sylvester Baxter among his companions. Baxter, who would go on to dedicate his book on Mexico's colonial architecture to Church shortly after the artist's death, could have introduced the elder painter to Jackson or shown him the photographer's work. Regardless of whether or not Church and Jackson were familiar with one another, the two were aligned in their desire to create a picturesque vision of Mexico.

In his many letters to his friends and family, detailing his travels throughout Mexico, Church characterizes the nation as a place that existed in the distant past. Writing to his friend Charles Dudley Warner, who later joined the painter on various trips to Mexico, Church declared in 1884, "If you wish to see the Spain of 300 years ago you must go to Mexico."<sup>29</sup> Such a statement, however, reflects more the romantic imaginings of the artist than it does an accurate portrayal of reality. Indeed, by 1884, Mexico was a rapidly modernizing country, speeding into the future under the direction of President Díaz's push for progress. Despite Church's longing to see Mexico as the "Spain of 300 years ago", he could not ignore the dramatic changes occurring within the country. Later

---

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Frederic Edwin Church to Charles Dudley Warner, dated August 16, 1884, Archives, Olana State Historic Site.

that same year, he lamented to Warner:

American influence is however asserting itself more and more...That fatal wedge [the railroad] will soon reach this centre [Mexico City] and the old and picturesque civilization will be dismembered. Patent portable houses, corrugated iron roofs and other patented Yankee improvements are already beginning to be conspicuous on the R.Road lines.<sup>30</sup>

For Church, Mexico's intrigue lay in its well-established conception as an “old and picturesque civilization”; modernization meant, therefore, not the change of a nation but the loss of one. Over the course of the twenty years that he traveled throughout Mexico, the dissolution of that entrenched conception confronted Church in almost every city and town that he visited. Writing from Cuernavaca in 1897, Church noted, “I have been in this city about 8 or 9 days and am astonished at the change wrought by the completion of the Rail Road. Crowds come daily—over 250 arrived yesterday and nearly all were obliged to take the return train for lack of accommodations here.”<sup>31</sup>

Although Church was keenly aware of the impact of the Díaz campaign, as his letters attest, his depictions of Mexico, and Cuernavaca in particular, reveal nothing of the reality that he encountered there. Rather than painting the modern railroads that transformed the landscape and deposited hordes of tourists to cities throughout Mexico, Church selected subjects that favored his conception of the country as a land mired in a distant past. Church's Mexican work upholds the words of journalist Arthur Howard Nole, who professed in an article from 1890, “The picturesque element of the remote past in Mexico is appreciated and furnishes an abundance of themes for the artist, as well as the *savant*, the historian, the poet and the novelist.”<sup>32</sup> By ignoring the “push for progress”

---

<sup>30</sup> Church to Warner, dated December 27, 1884.

<sup>31</sup> Letter from Frederic Edwin Church to Charles Dudley Warner, dated December 27, 1897, Archives, Olana State Historic Site.

<sup>32</sup> Arthur Howard Nole, “Art in Mexico,” *The American Architect and Building News*, XXVIII, no. 756,



that had dramatically transformed Mexico by 1890, Nole and Church found the country's most salient artistic subject to be the “picturesque element” of its past. Nole's assessment that the picturesque was “appreciated” assumedly refers to a U.S. audience; Mexico's northern neighbors wanted a glimpse of a romantic past south of the border not a realistic depiction of the current state of affairs there.

Church's *A View in Cuernavaca* (fig. 5.17), with its weathered archway and column set against a background of sloping purple and blue mountains exemplifies Nole's statement. Executed just a year after Church's letter to Warner, detailing the changes wrought by the railroads in Cuernavaca, the painting presents Mexico as an “old and picturesque civilization”, as he had hoped it would remain, rather than the rapidly modernizing nation that he had observed it to be. Church locates this scene firmly in the past by adopting the same compositional device that Jackson employed in his photograph of the railroad line at Querétaro (fig. 5.11)—framing the painting is the arch of a centuries old aqueduct.<sup>33</sup> The arch is a resonant architectural motif and indeed Gerald Carr has suggested that Church had triumphal arches in mind when he created *A View in Cuernavaca*.<sup>34</sup> As a triumphal arch, *A View in Cuernavaca* reaches even further back in history to ancient Rome. Carr speculates that Church's own group portrait of himself and the artists George P.A. Healy and Jervis McEntee beneath the Arch of Titus (A.D. 81) in 1871 may have been the inspiration for the arch in *A View in Cuernavaca* (fig. 5.18).<sup>35</sup> Sold in New York in 1897, just a year before Church painted *A View in Cuernavaca*, *The Arch of Titus* does share a similar composition with the later work. Yet, Church's

---

(June 21, 1890): 179.

<sup>33</sup> Built in the sixteenth century, Cuernavaca's aqueduct predates Querétaro's seen in Jackson's photograph.

<sup>34</sup> Gerald Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: In Search of the Promised Land* (New York: Barry-Hill Galleries Inc., 2000), 75.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Cuernavaca aqueduct is hardly the triumphant Arch of Titus. In contrast to the Arch of Titus, which, by Church's hand, dramatically soars upward, marking a monumental space, Cuernavaca's deteriorating arch appears narrow and low. Coupled with the small size of the painting itself, a mere 9 ¼ x 12 ¼ inches, the Cuernavaca arch functions not as a symbol of victory and grandeur, but instead as a pictorial device, a modest portal leading the eye through the composition to the view beyond.

With vines growing from in between the cracks in the rocks, the arch appears as a humble ruin, embodying the principles of the picturesque put forth by William Gilpin. Gilpin's characterization of the picturesque as having “rude stones, half lost among shaggy roots, decaying stumps and withered fern”<sup>36</sup> is an apt description of *A View in Cuernavaca*. Moreover, the “side-screens” of the arch, as Gilpin would have termed them, serve to contain and control the image, another important aspect of the picturesque as discussed in chapter two. Church's arch is, therefore, not a celebratory monument, but rather a pictorial device for keeping, as he had described in his letters to Warner, the “old and picturesque” from being “dismembered.”<sup>37</sup>

*A View in Cuernavaca* is not unique to Church's oeuvre in its masking of current events in favor of upholding entrenched conceptions of a particular place. Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert has observed that while traveling in Jamaica in 1865 Church erased from his work all signs of local resistance to colonial mismanagement that had then taken hold on the island following the Morant Bay rebellion.<sup>38</sup> Despite the palpable tension

---

<sup>36</sup> Uvedale Price in *A Letter to H. Repton*, 1795 quoted in James Ackerman, “The Photographic Picturesque,” *Artibus et Histoire*, 24 no. 48 (2003): 82.

<sup>37</sup> See footnote 78.

<sup>38</sup> In October 1865, Morant Bay erupted into racial violence after both white and black men were killed during a protest of the trial and imprisonment of a peasant who had been caught trespassing on a plantation. The tense state of affairs in Jamaica that culminated in the rebellion had been exacerbated by a punishing drought and rumors that slavery was to be reinstated on the island. See Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert,

then brewing in Jamaica, Church's *The Vale of St. Thomas* (fig. 5.19), Paravisini-Gebert argues, adheres to a Humboldtian vision of a pristine edenic wilderness that had come to define tropical America. Much like *A View in Cuernavaca*, in *The Vale of St. Thomas*, Church minimized signs of human presence in order to better portray that vision. In *The Vale of St. Thomas*, only the small church perched on the hill at right suggests man's imprint on the land. While man's presence is much more visible in *A View in Cuernavaca* with the prominent column and aqueduct, Church removes any signs of a contemporary civilization. Devoid of railroads, hotels, and, most notably, figures of any kind, whether local inhabitants or foreign tourists, *A View in Cuernavaca* presents the idea of a place frozen in time characterized by crumbling ruins and untouched wilderness; a place that only existed in Church's imagination.

Parallels have been drawn between the physical decrepitude of the aqueduct and column with Church's own ailing health. Carr referred to *A View in Cuernavaca* as “an old-age reverie”, as though the artist chose to equate himself or at least his perspective with these weathered ruins.<sup>39</sup> By this interpretation, the soft golden light emanating from the left side of the canvas takes on celestial connotations. Is this archway and the path that meanders towards it then beckoning the viewer to pass over to the other side into the heavenly light and the peaceful paradise beyond? Such biographical readings are tempting to entertain. Yet, Church's own words reveal that Cuernavaca made the aging artist feel young again rather than contemplative about the end of life that he certainly knew was fast approaching. As he wrote to Warner in 1897, just three years before his

---

“‘American’ Landscapes and Erasures: Frederic Church's *The Vale of St. Thomas* and the Recovery of History in Landscape Painting” in Michael Niblett and Kerstin Oloff eds., *Perspectives on the 'Other America': Comparative Approaches to Caribbean and Latin American Culture*, (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009), 73-100.

<sup>39</sup>Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church*, 75.

death, “Cuernavaca has a great reputation as a resort for persons with nervous disorders and my experience confirms it. I felt like work and accordingly made studies of effects architectural bits etc. with as much relish as I ever did in my younger days.”<sup>40</sup>

Cuernavaca's energizing effect clearly awakened Church's creative powers. Not only the city's architecture but the land itself, as *A View in Cuernavaca* illustrates with its meticulous attention to flora, captured Church's imagination. Although crippled by arthritis and physically unable to execute the monumental landscapes that had defined his earlier work, Church painted Cuernavaca in his signature style of seemingly exacting detail, albeit on a much smaller scale. The modest size of the work is appropriate given that it was intended for Church's private consumption rather than exhibition. As part of Church's extensive personal collection at Olana, *A View in Cuernavaca* functioned as a memento from his two decades of travel throughout Mexico. One can imagine the artist in his later years examining the painting and recalling his many memories of the people and places he encountered south of the border. Like all memories, however, *A View in Cuernavaca* is the Mexico that Church wanted to remember rather than the one he really saw. With that small canvas, Church could return to an “old and picturesque” Mexico impervious to U.S. railroads and influence.

After Church's death in 1900, the painting remained in private hands, passing to his children who then gifted the work to Mrs. Charles Dudley Warner by 1915. *A View in Cuernavaca* would have held sentimental significance for Mrs. Warner, just as it had for Church, as she and her husband frequently accompanied the artist on trips to Mexico. When not traveling south of the border, the Warners were not far from Church's thoughts

---

<sup>40</sup> Letter from Frederic Edwin Church to Charles Dudley Warner, dated February 23, 1896, Archives, Olana State Historic Site, OL.1985.47 A-D

as they were of course the recipients of so many of the artist's effusive letters about Cuernavaca and Mexico in general. The small painting must have also stirred in Mrs. Warner a lifetime of memories that she had shared with her deceased husband and esteemed artist friend.

*A View in Cuernavaca* finally appeared in public in 1915 when Mrs. Warner lent the painting to the Wadsworth Atheneum where it has since remained.<sup>41</sup> What had once been an intensely personal image, seen only by Church and his close circle of family and friends, was then made available to the northeastern museum-going public in a loan exhibition that opened on April 6, 1915. While a small work, that perhaps went unnoticed amidst the exhibition's other examples of larger Hudson River School paintings, *A View in Cuernavaca* still formed part of the canon of images that had since the time of Stephens and Catherwood presented the land south of the border as a picturesque place of the past. Enshrined within the museum, *A View in Cuernavaca* went from being the artist's personal memento to a public document that if compared to the other paintings of the U.S. landscape included in the exhibition, would have appeared strikingly different. George Inness' almost abstract *Palisades on the Hudson* (fig. 5.20), for example, confronted the exhibition's visitors with an imposing cliff that looms over the seemingly endless river.<sup>42</sup> Pressed up against the picture plane, Inness' imposing mass shares an affinity with Jackson's sublime rendering of Niagara Falls (figs. 5.14 & 5.15). Although no minute figures peer over the edge of the cliff, as seen in Jackson's photograph, the diminutive boats below provide a sense of the monumental scale of the palisades.

---

<sup>41</sup> The painting entered the museum's permanent collection in 1936 as a bequest by the estate of Mrs. Warner.

<sup>42</sup> George Inness' *Palisades on the Hudson* is included in the "List of Paintings, Bronzes, Mezzotints, Etchings and Engravings," shown at the "Loan Exhibition" at the Municipal Art Society, Annex Gallery Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, April 6 to May 1, 1915.

Meanwhile, the river flows unencumbered beyond the edge of the canvas on the left and the horizon line that never coalesces in the distance. In contrast to *A View in Cuernavaca* with its neatly contained landscape, *Palisades on the Hudson* stretches beyond the viewer's field of vision. With these two distinct images, the Wadsworth Atheneum preserved a sublime view of the U.S. landscape, while maintaining Mexico as picturesque.

By 1915, both the United States and Mexico had undergone radical transformations since the time of the Hudson River School painters. Viewers were no doubt acutely aware of these changes and perhaps also savvy enough to realize that those nineteenth-century renderings were in fact just renderings and not veristic recordings of the past. Whether or not visitors to the Wadsworth perceived these paintings as accurate depictions of reality or fanciful interpretations by the artists, the conceptions of a sublime U.S. and picturesque Mexico clearly remained intact into the twentieth century.

## Conclusion

### Into the Twentieth Century: Enduring Narratives

The outbreak of the Mexican Revolution on November 20, 1910 brought a dramatic end to the United States' amicable relationship with Mexico under the Porfiriato. For the next seven years, Mexico endured the turbulence of warring factions that resulted in possibly one million deaths and untold destruction of infrastructure, but also the end of a repressive regime and the rise of national heroes like Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa.<sup>1</sup> The revolution also changed the United States' conception of its closest southern neighbor. For a brief period, Mexico ceased to be that picturesque place of the past as seen in the work of Muybridge, Jackson and Church. As *Harper's Magazine* lamented in a 1916 article, "A rude hand has been laid upon Mexico. Under the stress and upheaval of revolution the ancient culture, old-time customs and picturesque life are breaking down."<sup>2</sup> With that idyllic conception shattered, the United States quickly withdrew what *Puck* had described as the "welcoming hand" from the "republics of the tropic land", and retreated from Mexico.

As peace returned to Mexico in the 1920s, however, so too did its allure for U.S. politicians, entrepreneurs and artists. Up until the Cold War, when the country's socialist leanings once again worried U.S. leaders, painters, photographers and illustrators flocked to Mexico. From Edward Weston and Tina Modotti to Milton Avery and Robert Motherwell, Mexico became a home away from home or a brief, but inspiring, southern

---

<sup>1</sup>There are a variety of opinions within the scholarship on the exact number of deaths as well as the duration of the Mexican Revolution. For a more complete account of the revolution see: Michael J. Gonzales, *The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> "Vanishing Mexico: A Series of Pictures by H. Ravell," *Harper's Magazine*, 134:799 (December 1916): 95.

escape for many of the twentieth century's most prominent U.S. artists during the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Simultaneously, the “Big Three” of Mexican muralism: Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco arrived in the United States where they created public works in California, Michigan, New York and New Hampshire. The “Big Three,” along with Rivera's wife Frida Kahlo, attracted the attention of U.S. curators, dealers, private collectors, the press and the general public with their work that drew from Social Realism and Surrealism as well as Mexico's pre-Columbian past.<sup>3</sup>

The intensity of this twentieth-century interval of artistic exchange mirrors that of the period discussed in this dissertation. This second wave of cultural florescence has garnered far more attention, however, than its nineteenth-century equivalent. Beginning in 1993 with the pioneering exhibition *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914-1947*, a variety of museums and scholars explored images of Mexico produced by U.S. painters, photographers and illustrators from the revolution up until the Cold War. In recent years, more focused exhibitions and books that examine the Mexican work of Edward Weston and Tina Modotti have become particularly popular. In 2004, Sarah Lowe published *Tina Modotti and Edward Weston The Mexico Years*. Two years later, *Mexico as Muse: Tina Modotti and Edward Weston* appeared at the San Francisco Museum of Fine Art followed by Boston's Museum of Fine Art's *Viva Mexico! Edward Weston and his Contemporaries* in 2009.

While all insightful studies, the story of the artistic exchange between Mexico and the United States encompasses more than Modotti, Weston and the “Big Three.” As this

---

<sup>3</sup> Orozco's murals at Dartmouth College, Siquieros' numerous exhibitions in New York and of course Rivera's murals for Detroit and Rockefeller Center, the latter of which was famously destroyed, captured the art world's attention. Rivera's work in particular continues to be the subject of scholarly examination as evidenced by the 2011-2012 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York that presented the murals he made for the institution in 1931.



dissertation has attempted to show, 1875 to 1910 was also a vibrant period of artistic activity between the Americas. The Modottis, Westons and Riveras are part of a continuum, not an early twentieth-century phenomenon. Indeed, whether consciously or not, these early twentieth-century artists depicted a Mexico remarkably unchanged from its nineteenth-century representation. Edward Weston shared with his predecessors Eadweard Muybridge and William Henry Jackson a desire to present Mexico as a place of the past despite its recent revolution and rapidly modernizing landscape. Weston's Mexico is one of traditionally-dressed women, folk art and Mayan ruins (figs. 6.1, 6.2 & 6.3). While Weston's emphasis on simplified, almost abstract forms, often rendered with strong contrasts of light and shadow, distinguishes his work stylistically from that of Muybridge and Jackson, the central narrative of Mexico as a land not only geographically, but also temporally distant from the United States remains consistent in the later photographer's images.

Considering Weston's Mexican photographs as one part of this artistic lineage enriches the understanding of not only his work, but also that of his forebears. Within this context, Jackson's photographs for the Mexican Central Railway become more than commercial work intended to fulfill a lucrative commission. Muybridge's images of Mexico and Central America no longer appear as an anomaly in the artist's oeuvre, prompted by dramatic personal events. Together, their body of work forms a visual legacy that continues to resonate today, as evidenced by the work of the contemporary photographer Byron Wolfe. Muybridge's southern series inspired Wolfe to follow in the nineteenth-century figure's footsteps throughout Mexico and Central America, re-photographing the same coffee plantations, churches, towns and beaches almost 150

years later. Wolfe uses Muybridge's work, which he describes as, “complicated; sometimes descriptive and banal, sometimes highly manipulated and romantic, sometimes awkward and experimental,” as a vehicle for expressing his primary interest in how intimate relationships form between people and places.<sup>4</sup> His work also suggests a feeling of nostalgia not unlike that found in Church's *A View in Cuernavaca* (fig. 5.26). In Wolfe's reinterpretation of Muybridge's *Old Watch Tower, Panama* (fig. 6.4), the contemporary photographer superimposes his work on top of the nineteenth-century image. With the base of the tower in the recent photograph perfectly aligned with the rest of the structure in Muybridge's work, Wolfe creates a seamless transition between the past and present. While Wolfe, like Church, seems compelled to keep the “old and picturesque from being dismembered,”<sup>5</sup> he simultaneously draws attention to the changes wrought by industrialization. This juxtaposition of old and new also recalls Jackson's photograph of a train enveloped by the arches of the eighteenth-century Querétaro aqueduct (fig. 5.20). Both images combine an antiquated relic, a Roman-inspired aqueduct and a crumbling watchtower, with a modern mode of transportation.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the recent attempts by the U.S. government to distance itself from Mexico and Central America, the region remains a site of intrigue for U.S. artists. While political relations ebb and flow, for centuries U.S. artists have envisioned Mexico and Central America as picturesque places of the past. By framing the “southern brethren” within this aesthetic, painters, photographers and illustrators have created a continuous visual narrative of “peaceful conquest” in Mexico and Central America.

---

<sup>4</sup> In an email from Byron Wolfe to the author on September 7, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Frederic Edwin Church to Charles Dudley Warner, dated December 27, 1884, Archives, Olana State Historic Site.

Complementing this story of the United States, Mexico and Central America is the “Cuban Melodrama”, the twentieth-century version being no less climactic than the nineteenth-century episode. The twentieth century began with the island regaining its reputation in the United States as the “Eden of the Gulf.” Under the Platt Amendment, Cuba remained fully within the colonial clutches of the United States, resulting in a steady flow of U.S. tourists and dollars to the island. The United States' relationship with Cuba followed a similar downward trajectory as it had in Mexico after the Porfiriato, however, as revolutions and anti-U.S. leadership on the island spread discontent between the two countries.

Just two months before the outbreak of the Revolution of 1933 in Cuba, Walker Evans arrived on the island and encountered, as Homer would have described it, a “red hot place full of soldiers.”<sup>6</sup> It was this political unrest that lured Evans, just as it had his nineteenth-century predecessor, to the island. On assignment to photograph the cruel conditions of the U.S.-backed presidency of Gerardo Machado y Morales for publication in the book *The Crime of Cuba*, Evans focused his camera on Havana's coal workers, prostitutes, newspaper boys and occasionally the well-to-do (fig. 6.5). A stridently condemnatory account of the United States' role on the island, *The Crime of Cuba* took its title from scathing remarks made by a professor. “Then came America...You said to free us...All you did was snatch victory from our grasp...Our government, our President, is but a puppet of your dirty dollars...And that is the crime of Cuba.”<sup>7</sup> Printed within the book, this forthright indictment of the United States leaves no doubt as to the author's and Evans' view of the “Cuban Melodrama.”

---

<sup>6</sup> Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Collections: Letters (Homer): Winslow Homer Letter to Charles S. Homer Jr., 1885.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Carleton Beals, *The Crime of Cuba* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1933), 34.

In recent years, Evans' work from his three weeks in Cuba has received significant attention. The Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, South Carolina held the 2005 exhibition, *Ernest Hemingway and Walker Evans: Three Weeks in Cuba, 1933*. In 2011, the Getty Museum examined how artists have represented Cuba's political history in the exhibition, *A Revolutionary Project: Cuba from Walker Evans to Now*. As this dissertation has demonstrated, however, the visual manifestation of the United States' fraught relationship with Cuba begins before Evans. Homer, Remington and Edison's film company all engaged in the heated discourse over the "Colossus of the North's" hold on its most coveted Caribbean island. At stake in all of their work was the reputation of the United States then emerging as an imperial power. Unlike Evans' photographs, produced during a time when the United States had already established itself as a metropole state, these nineteenth-century images raise important questions surrounding the role of art in defining national identity of both those being pictured and those doing the picturing.

For more than two centuries, currents of cultural, political and economic exchange have flowed between the United States and its southern neighbors. Given the intensity of this shared history, it is no surprise that the 652-mile border fence meant to divide the United States from Mexico has been an epic failure. As the travel writer Paul Theroux said of the "pitiless fence," it is "more formal than the Berlin Wall, more brutal than the Great Wall of China, yet in its way just as much an example of the same folie de grandeur."<sup>8</sup> While an explicit declaration of the United States' current desire to distance itself from its southern neighbors, the fence cannot undo the "ties of singular intimacy" that have inextricably bound the Americas together. If anything, as Theroux explained,

---

<sup>8</sup> Paul Theroux, "The Country Just Over the Fence," *The New York Times* (February 26, 2012): TR1.

the fence has become almost like a work of art that simultaneously repels and compels, “This towering, seemingly endless row of vertical beams is so amazing in its conceit you either want to see more of it, or else run in the opposite direction—just the sort of conflicting emotions many people feel when confronted with a peculiar piece of art.”<sup>9</sup>

This dissertation has examined those who wanted to see more of what lay beyond what would become the other side of the fence. Some of these men brought with them their conflicting emotions about the United States’ position as an emerging world power while others brought clarity of vision with an objective to strengthen the North’s role as an expanding empire. All of them, however, brought back “peculiar pieces of art” that will continue to intrigue, provoke and complicate our understanding of the United States’ relationship with Mexico, Central America and Cuba.

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

## ILLUSTRATIONS



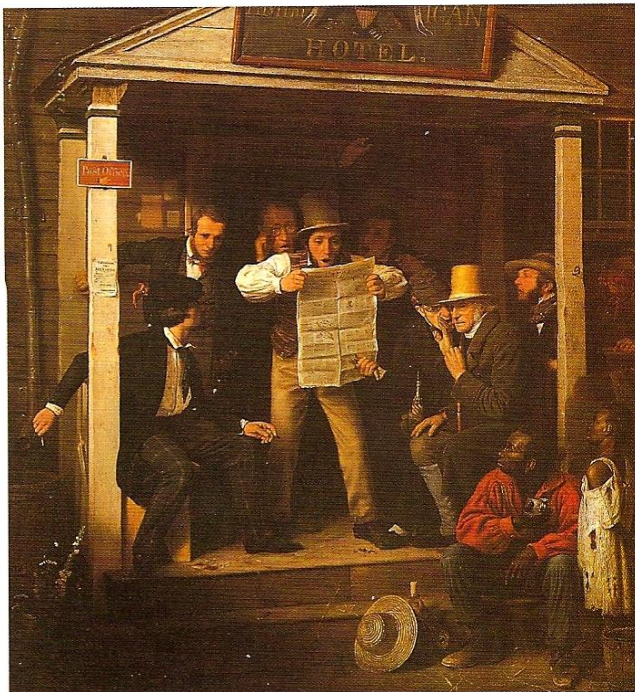
**Figure A.1**

Francisco Oller, *Portrait of President William McKinley*, 1898, oil on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.



**Figure 1.1**

Joaquín Torres-García, *South America's Inverted Map*, ink on paper, published in *Círculo y cuadrado* (May 1, 1936) Montevideo.



**Figure 1.2**

Richard Caton Woodville, *War News from Mexico*, 1848, oil on canvas, 27 x 34 ¾ in. National Academy of Design, New York.





**Figure 1.3**

*General Wool and Staff, Calle Real to South.* Daguerreotype, sixth-plate, c. 1847. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Reproduced in Martha Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).



**Figure 1.4**

Richard Caton Woodville, *Old '76 and Young '48*, 1849, oil on canvas, 21 x 26 7/8 in. Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland.





**Figure 1.5**

Edouard Manet, *The Execution of Maximilian*, 1867, oil on canvas, 77 1/8 x 102 1/4 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



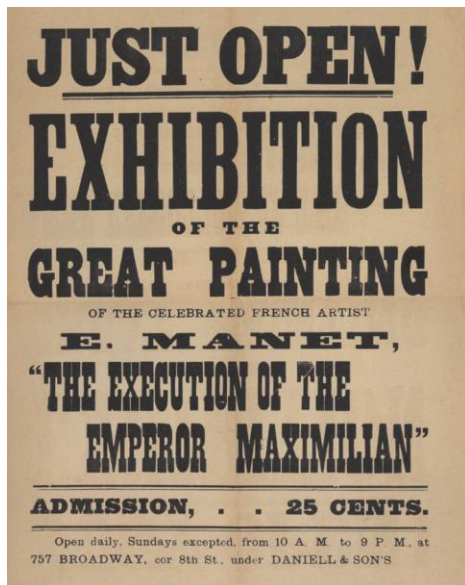
**Figure 1.6**

Edouard Manet, *The Execution of Maximilian*, 1867-1868, oil on canvas, 76 x 111 13/16 in., National Gallery, London.



**Figure 1.7**

Edouard Manet, *The Execution of Maximilian*, 1868-1869, oil on canvas, 99 3/16 x 118 7/8 in., Kunsthalle, Mannheim.



**Figure 1.8**

Handbill for the exhibition of Manet's *The Execution of Maximilian*, now in the Kunsthalle Mannheim, in New York December 1879, 24 x 19 1/2 in. Reproduced in John Elderfield, *Manet and the Execution of Maximilian* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2006).



**Figure 1.9**

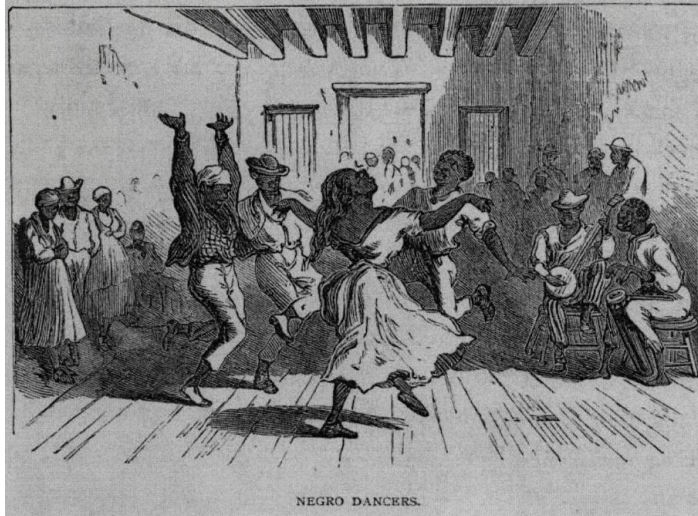
John Singleton Copley, *Watson and the Shark*, 1778, oil on canvas, 72 ¼ x 90 3/8 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



**Figure 1.10**

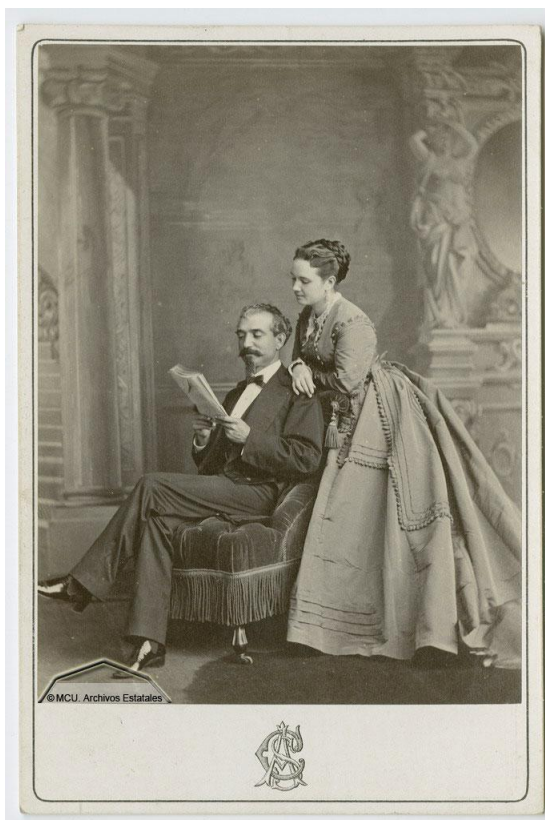
Samuel Hazard, *Fruit Seller*, 1871, published in Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*, 1871, Schomburg, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, New York Public Library, Image ID 1251601.





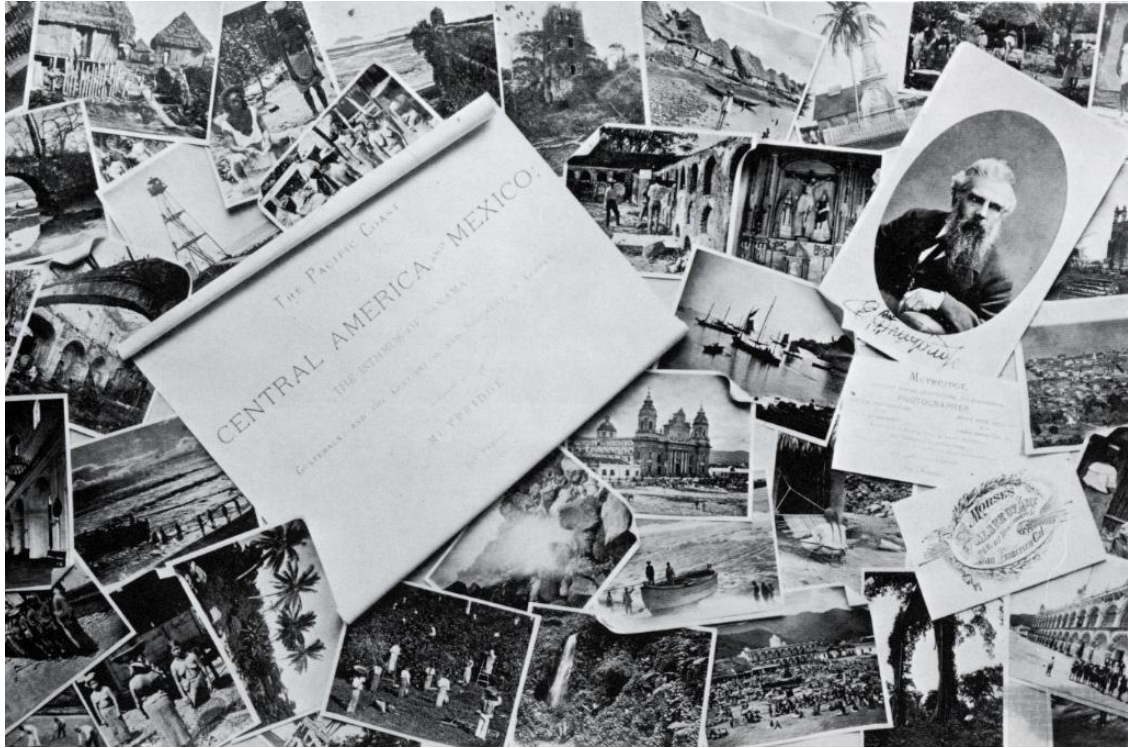
**Figure 1.11**

Samuel Hazard, *Negro Dancers*, 1871, published in Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*, 1871, Schomburg, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, New York Public Library, Image ID 1251609.



**Figure 1.12**

Samuel A. Cohner, c. 1863-1869. Digital Collection, Archivos Estatales, Ministerio de Culture, Gobierno de España.



**Figure 2.1**

Eadweard Muybridge, title page of *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*, 1876, albumen print, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.





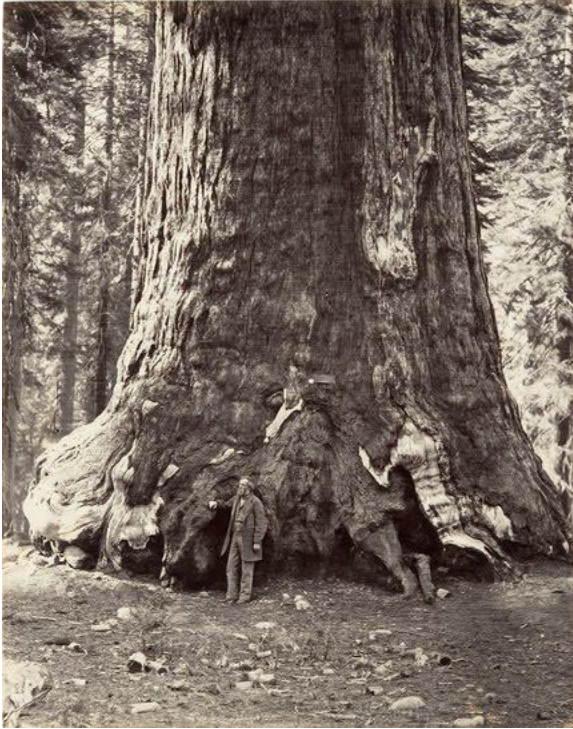
**Figure 2.2**

Frederick Catherwood, *House of the Governor Uxmal*, published in *Views of Ancient Monuments*, 1844, color lithograph, plate 10. New York Public Library.



**Figure 2.3**

Eadweard Muybridge, *Grizzly Giant*, Stereograph, 1867, University of California at Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Lone Mountain College Collection of Stereographs by Eadweard Muybridge 1867-1880.



**Figure 2.4**

Carleton Watkins, *Grizzly Giant*, 1865, mammoth print, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.



**Figure 2.5**

Frederick Catherwood, *Circular Building at Mayapán*, published in *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, 1841, engraving, plate 3.



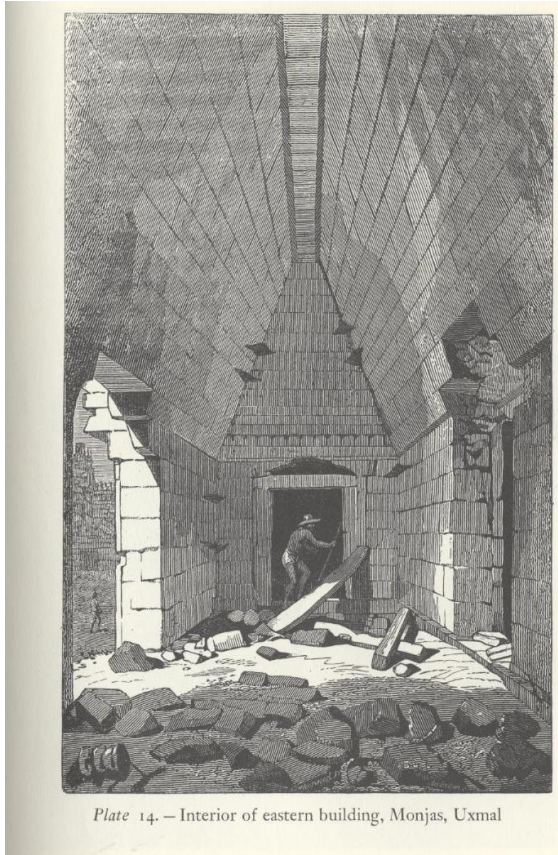
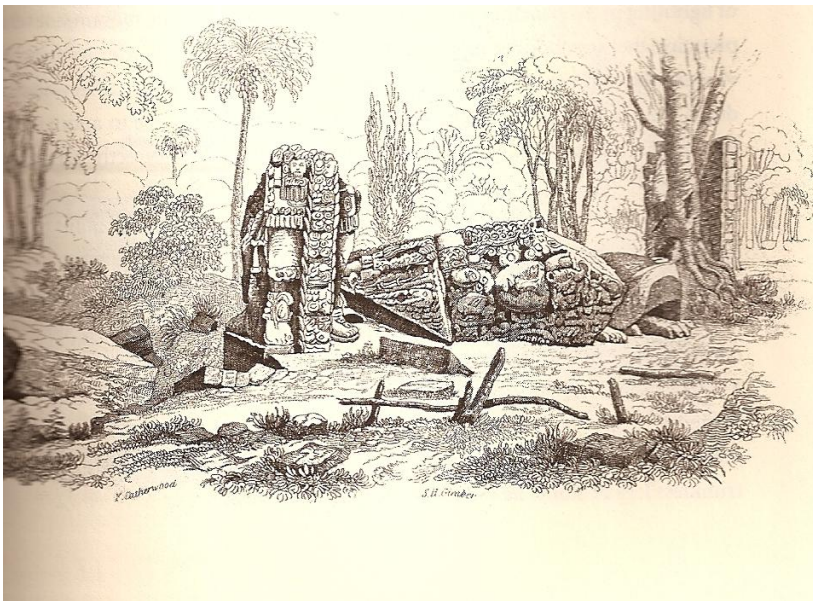


Plate 14. — Interior of eastern building, Monjas, Uxmal

**Figure 2.6**

Frederick Catherwood, *Interior of Eastern Building, Monjas, Uxmal*, published in *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, 1841, engraving, plate 14.



**Figure 2.7**

Frederick Catherwood, *Stele C at Copán*, published in *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, 1841, engraving.





**Figure 2.8**

Frederick Catherwood, *Stele C at Copán*, published in *Views of Ancient Monuments*, 1844, color lithograph, plate 4. New York Public Library.



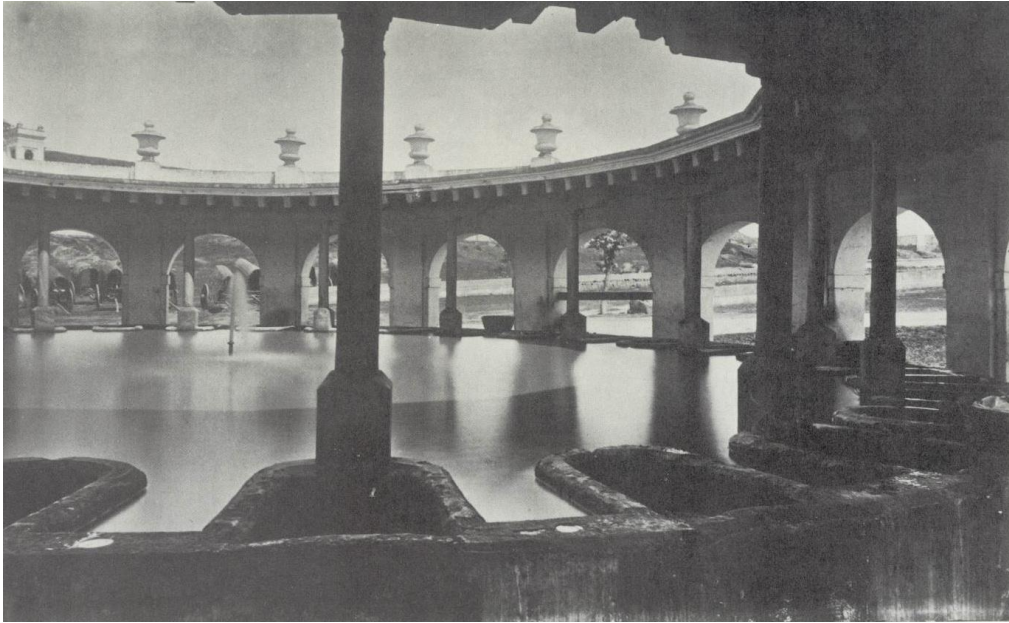
**Figure 2.9**

Eadweard Muybridge, *Church of San Miguel*, 1876, albumen print, from the album: *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.



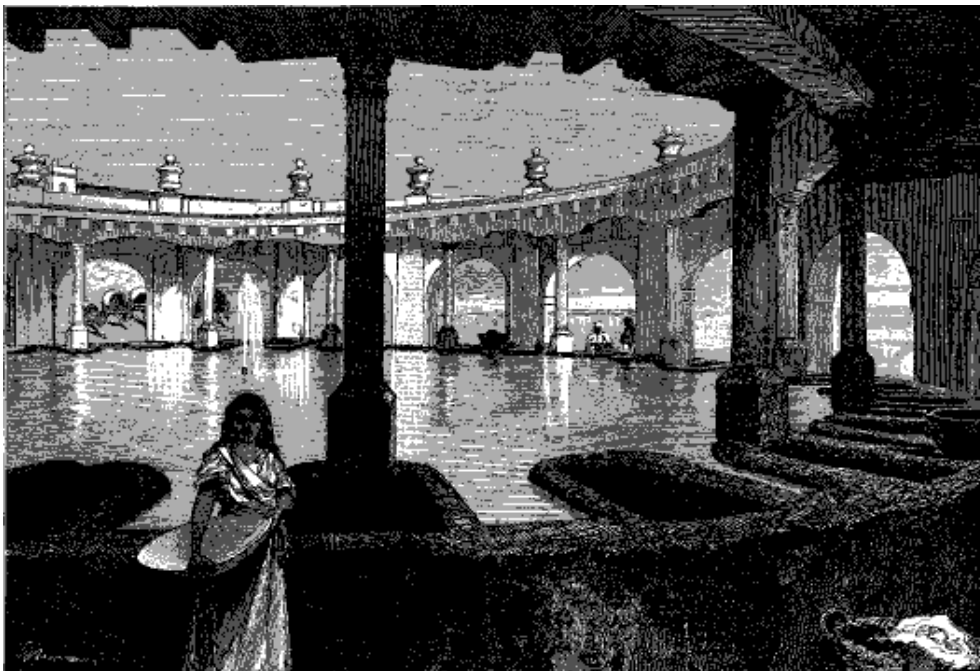
**Figure 2.10**

Eadweard Muybridge, *Church of San Miguel*, 1876, stereograph, University of California at Berkeley, Bancroft Library, *Lone Mountain College Collection of Stereographs by Eadweard Muybridge 1867-1880*, no. 1863.



**Figure 2.11**

Eadweard Muybridge, 1876, *Public Laundry, City of Guatemala*, albumen print, from the album: *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.



**Figure 2.12**

Illustration for “A Trip to Central America” published in *Scribner's Monthly*, vol. 15, Issue 5 (March 1878).





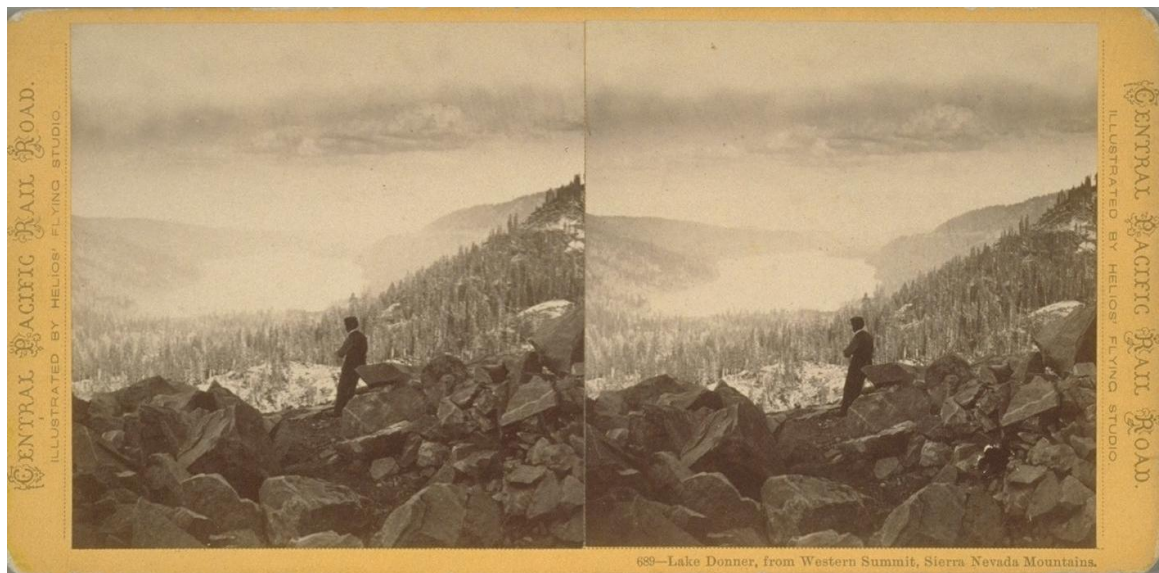
**Figure 2.13**

Eadweard Muybridge, *Church of San Domingo*, 1876, magic lantern slide, Eadweard Muybridge Collection, Royal Kingston, Kingston upon Thames, England.



**Figure 2.14**

Eadweard Muybridge, *Lake Atitlán, The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*, albumen print, 1876, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.



**Figure 2.15**

Eadweard Muybridge, *Lake Donner from Western Summit, Sierra Nevada Mountains*, stereograph, c. 1876, University of California at Berkeley, Bancroft Library, *Lone Mountain College Collection of Stereographs by Eadweard Muybridge 1867-1880*.



**Figure 2.16**

Albert Bierstadt, *Among the Sierra Nevada, California*, 1868, oil on canvas, 72 x 120 1/8 in., Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC.





**Figure 2.17**

Eadweard Muybridge *Lake Atitlán, The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*, 1876, albumen print, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.



**Figure 2.18**

Eadweard Muybridge, *Volcano Zuneil, The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*, 1876, albumen print, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.



**Figure 2.19**

Eadweard Muybridge *Weeding and protecting the young coffee plant from the sun, Antigua*, from the *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*, 1876, albumen print, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.



**Figure 2.20**

Eadweard Muybridge, *Hacienda Serijiers*, from *The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee*, 1876, albumen print, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.





**Figure 2.21**

Eadweard Muybridge, *Church of Las Monjas*, stereograph, c. 1876, University of California at Berkeley, Bancroft Library, *Lone Mountain College Collection of Stereographs by Eadweard Muybridge 1867-1880*.



**Figure 2.22**

William Henry Fox Talbot, *The Tomb of Sir Walter Scott, in Dryburgh Abbey*, 1844, salted paper print from paper negative, 6 5/8 x 7 1/6 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York





**Figure 2.23**

J.M.W. Turner, *Tintern Abbey*, 1794, watercolor on paper, 26 13/16 x 19 in., British Museum, London.



**Figure 2.24**

Eadweard Muybridge, *Ancient sacrificial stone, Naranjo, Guatemala*, stereograph, c. 1876, University of California at Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Lone Mountain College Collection of Stereographs by Eadweard Muybridge 1867-1880.



**Figure 3.1**

Illustration for *Puck*, vol. 16, Issue 405 (December 10, 1884).



Where the white splendor of her heaping bales  
Answers the snow of crowding foreign sails—

Wise sister, blessed be thy welcoming hand,  
Stretched to Republics of the tropic land!

**Figure 3.1 (Continued)**

Illustration for *Puck*, Vol. 16, Issue 405 (December 10, 1884).

**ROYAL HAVANA LOTTERY.**

The next ORDINARY DRAWING of the Royal Havana Lottery, conducted by the Spanish Government, under the supervision of the Captain General of Cuba, will take place at Havana, on

**THURSDAY, MAY 7th, 1857.**

**\$300,000!**

SORTEO NUMERO 580 ORDINARIO,  
**CAPITAL PRIZE \$100,000.**

<table border="0"> <tr><td>1 PRIZE OF .....</td><td>\$100,000</td></tr> <tr><td>1 " " .....</td><td>50,000</td></tr> <tr><td>1 " " .....</td><td>20,000</td></tr> <tr><td>1 " " .....</td><td>10,000</td></tr> <tr><td>1 " " .....</td><td>5,000</td></tr> </table>	1 PRIZE OF .....	\$100,000	1 " " .....	50,000	1 " " .....	20,000	1 " " .....	10,000	1 " " .....	5,000	<table border="0"> <tr><td>4 PRIZES OF \$2,000 .....</td><td>\$8,000</td></tr> <tr><td>5 " " " 1,000 .....</td><td>5,000</td></tr> <tr><td>52 " " " 500 .....</td><td>26,000</td></tr> <tr><td>143 " " " 400 .....</td><td>57,200</td></tr> <tr><td>20 APPROXIMATIONS .....</td><td>8,800</td></tr> </table>	4 PRIZES OF \$2,000 .....	\$8,000	5 " " " 1,000 .....	5,000	52 " " " 500 .....	26,000	143 " " " 400 .....	57,200	20 APPROXIMATIONS .....	8,800
1 PRIZE OF .....	\$100,000																				
1 " " .....	50,000																				
1 " " .....	20,000																				
1 " " .....	10,000																				
1 " " .....	5,000																				
4 PRIZES OF \$2,000 .....	\$8,000																				
5 " " " 1,000 .....	5,000																				
52 " " " 500 .....	26,000																				
143 " " " 400 .....	57,200																				
20 APPROXIMATIONS .....	8,800																				

**APPROXIMATIONS.**

The two preceding and the two following numbers to those winning the following prizes, are entitled to, viz.:

To the \$100,000, .....	To the \$20,000, .....
400 " " " " .....	400 " " " " .....
To the \$50,000, .....	To the \$10,000, .....
400 " " " " .....	400 " " " " .....

ALL THE PRIZES ABOVE STATED ARE DRAWN AT EVERY DRAWING.

**WHOLE TICKETS \$20. HALVES \$10. QUARTERS \$5.**

**PLAN OF THE LOTTERY.**

In the above scheme there are 25,000 tickets only, numbered from 1 to 25,000. There are 209 full Prizes, and 20 Approximations, making in all 229 Prizes. No smaller Prize than \$400.

The manner of drawing is as follows:

All the numbers are put into a wheel or globe in presence of the authorities of Havana and the public, two days before the day of drawing, and the Prizes in another globe; both of which are locked with three different keys, kept by the three Treasurers of the case of the Royal Lottery. The drawing takes place in the large court inside the Custom House Building, publicly. Two boys, not over 12 years of age, from the Orphan Asylum, draw the Numbers and the Prizes. One of the boys draw one Number, and at the same time the other draws out one Prize from the wheel of Prizes, and whatever prize comes out is placed to the credit of that Number, and they continue until the whole number of Prizes are drawn.

The tickets are printed in the following style: They are divided into eighths and sixteenths; the eighths are designated by the figure 8, printed on the face of the ticket; eight of these bearing the same number constitute a whole ticket; and the sixteenths by the figure 16, sixteen of these making a whole ticket.

The Prizes are payable without discount on presentation of the ticket at the Royal Treasury, in Havana, as soon as the result becomes known, and are paid in Spanish Doubloons.

The subscriber will cash all Prizes at 5 per cent. discount, charging this for the risk, &c., attending collection.

The Official Drawing will be published in the *Charleston Courier*, a copy of which will be sent to each purchaser. All orders strictly confidential and will be attended to with dispatch by

**DON RODRIGUEZ.**


N. B.—Be careful to address your letters: DON RODRIGUEZ, (care of City Post,) Charleston, S. C.

**Figure 3.2**

Broadside for the Havana Lottery, 1857, Collection of Ephemera, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA.



**THE BEST ENTERTAINMENT IN THE COUNTRY.**  
**CHAPPELL'S GREAT**  
**KINETOSCOPE**  
**OF THE**  
**Island of Cuba!!**  
**THE MOST MAGNIFICENT PANORAMA IN THE WORLD.**



**CUBA!** **CUBA!**

This Splendid Painting, which has attracted so much attention, was executed by the  
**AMERICAN ARTIST, CHAPPELL,**  
 who, with the assistance of two talented artists, devoted more than seven years to this great work.

**MAJOR FELCH**  
 Having purchased this wonderful production of art, now fully completed, at a cost not over  
**FIFTY FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS,** respectfully informs the citizens of this place,  
 that he will open it

**AT ODD-FELLOWS HALL,**  
**On Wednesday Evening, Jan. 10, 1855,**  
**AND EXHIBIT FOR FOUR NIGHTS ONLY.**  
 CPA day Exhibits will be given on Saturday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

The above Splendid Painting was exhibited in Boston, to crowded audiences, for upwards of  
**TWO HUNDRED NIGHTS,**  
 where 120,000 PERSONS, are estimated to have visited it, and all speak in terms of highest  
 praise. For the truth of this statement, please read opinions of the Boston Press, and other  
 eminent gentlemen, to be found on the back of this sheet. This Gorgeous and wonderful  
**Mammoth Panorama,**  
 CONTAINS 33000 SQUARE FEET OF CANVAS, which is rolled on four immense cylin-  
 ders, making it the largest in the world, and in point of beauty, finish, interest, diversity and  
 immensity of the subject, is universally admitted will leave all competitors to suit after it in vain.  
 Here are represented, in the most beautiful style of art, with its elegant Parks and Paces, the beautiful world  
**CITY OF HAVANA,**  
 its Bares, Palaces, Fortresses, Churches, &c. with a recent view of the MORRO CASTLE, also, read life in Cuba,  
 with a series of views showing THE PROCESS of MAKING SUGAR, Sugar Cane growing, &c. &c. the view of  
 MATANZAS and JENIHUAY, Interior View of Sugar and Coffee Plantations, Palm, Orange, Cassia Nut Trees, &c.  
 CUBAN CITY LIFE, minutely portrayed. All objects of prominent interest are here represented, and more than  
 edge of the Social Character and Natural Beauty of this Island, the  
**QUEEN of the ANTILLES.**

That nothing may be wanted on the part of the management, to make this the best entertain-  
 ment ever offered, an engagement has been effected, at a large expense, with the celebrated  
**SIG. MORRILLO,**  
 Who will introduce at each exhibition, his Renowned  
**LILLIPUTIAN** **FAMILY!!!**  
**OR-ITALIAN FANTOCCINI,**  
 in their wonderful performances, representing mimical nature in such a life-like manner, as to  
 completely amuse and astonish the beholder. In conjunction with the whole will be given a  
**GRAND VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL CONCERT.**  
 By two charming Vocalists and Instrumental Performers of the highest merit. Making  
 the most highly elegant, intellectual and mischievous entertainment ever offered for your  
 consideration.

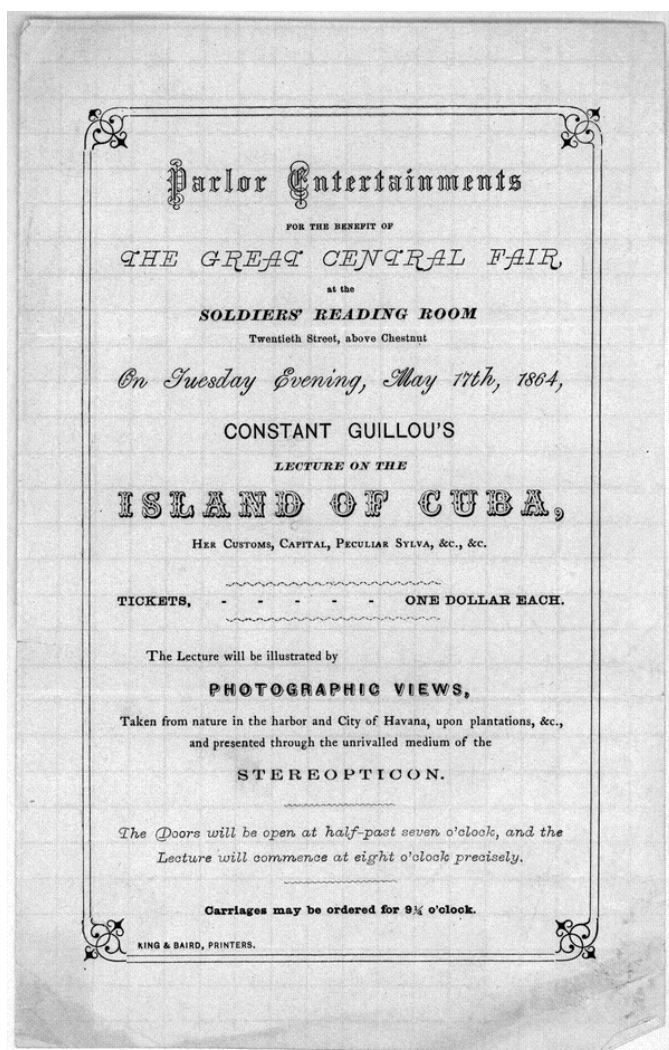
**Tickets, Only 50 Cents.** Doors open at 7, to commence at 7 1-2 o'clock.  
**Felch & Bartlett, Proprietors.....A. S. Merrill, Agent.**

(2nd) The management respectfully announces that, owing to engagements previously contracted, the great Work  
 of Art was removed to a short time and they would therefore beg their friends and patrons the necessity of an  
 early attendance. On Wednesday and Thursday Abundance of entertainment will be given, and an excellent and  
 the management for making the men, &c., that the former sheet is equal as perfect as the evening exhibition.  
**Children and Servants half price.**

Kentucky Historical Society

Figure 3.3

Broadside for Chappel's Great Kinetoscope of the Island of Cuba, 1855, Collection of Ephemera, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, KY.

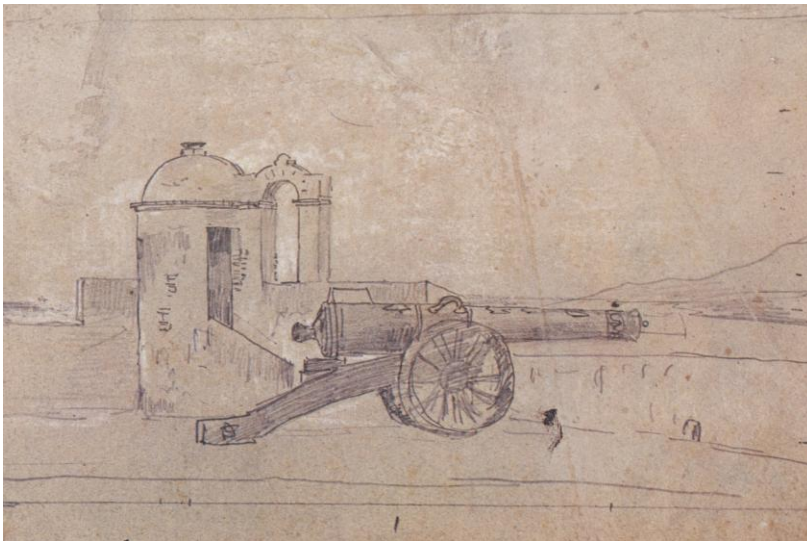


**Figure 3.4**

Broadside for Constant Guillou's Lecture on the Island of Cuba, 1864, American Ephemera Collection, Library of Congress, Portfolio 158, Folder 29i.

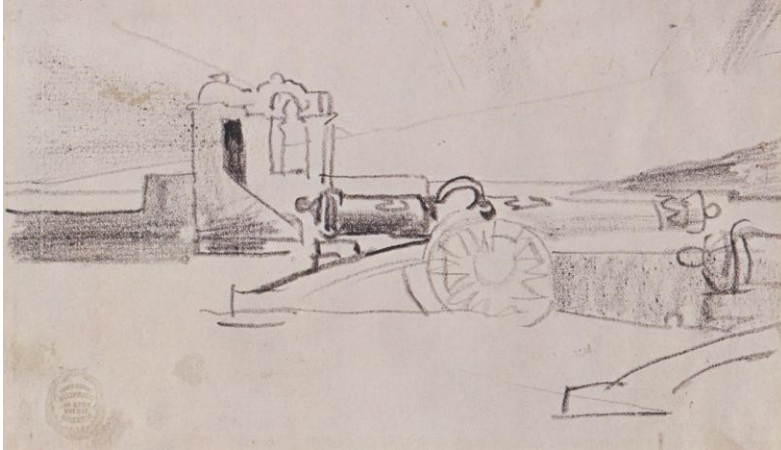


**Figure 3.5**  
Winslow Homer, *Morro Castle*, 1885, watercolor on paper, West Point Museum, West Point, NY.



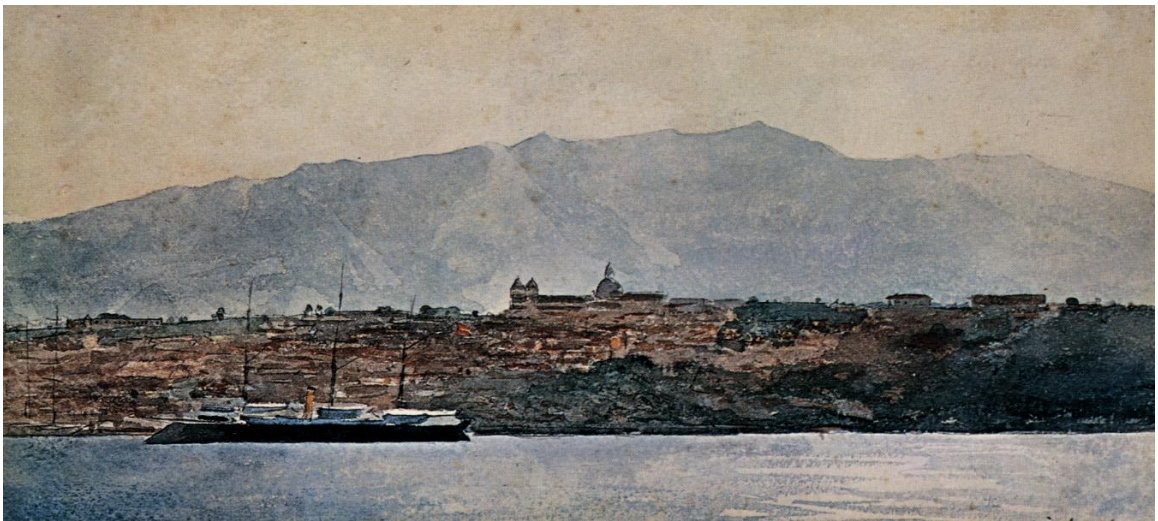
**Figure 3.6**  
Winslow Homer, *Morro Castle*, 1885, pencil and white chalk on paper, 5 x 8 in., Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, New York.





**Figure 3.7**

Winslow Homer, *Morro Castle*, 1885, charcoal on paper, 14 x 18 in., Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, New York.



**Figure 3.8**

Winslow Homer, *Santiago de Cuba*, 1885, watercolor on paper, West Point Museum, West Point, NY.





**Figure 3.9**

Winslow Homer, *Sponge Fishermen, Bahamas*, 1885, watercolor on paper, Karen A. and Kevin W. Kennedy Collection.



**Figure 3.10**

Childe Hassam, *Place Centrale and Fort Cabanas, Havana*, 1895, oil on canvas 21 ¼ x 26 ¼ in., Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI.





**Figure 3.11**

Childe Hassam, *Havana*, 1895, oil on canvas, 36 x 31 in., private collection.



**Figure 3.12**

Winslow Homer, *Volante, Mountain Road, Cuba*, 1885, watercolor on paper, 13 x 20 in., private collection.



**Figure 3.13**

Winslow Homer, *A Wall, Nassau*, 1898, watercolor and graphite on paper, 14 7/8 x 21 3/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.



**Figure 3.14**

Winslow Homer, *Palm Tree, Nassau*, 1898, watercolor and graphite on paper, 21 3/8 x 14 7/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.





**Figure 3.15**

Frédéric Mialhe, published in *Album pintoresco de la isla de Cuba*, 1853, color lithograph, plate 12.



**Figure 3.16**

Winslow Homer, *Flower Garden and Bungalow, Bermuda*, 1899, watercolor and graphite on paper, 13 15/16 x 20 15/16 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.



**Figure 3.17**

Winslow Homer, *A Garden in Nassau*, 1885, watercolor and graphite on paper. 14 ½ x 20 in., Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago.



**Figure 3.18**

Winslow Homer, *The Bather*, 1899, watercolor and graphite on paper, 14 7/6 x 21 1/16 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art.





**Figure 3.19**

Winslow Homer, *View of a Street, Santiago de Cuba*, 1885, watercolor and graphite on paper, 10 x 19 in., Westpoint Museum of Art, Westpoint, New York.



**Figure 3.20**

Winslow Homer, *Street Scene, Santiago de Cuba*, 1885, watercolor and graphite on paper, 11 x 17 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art.





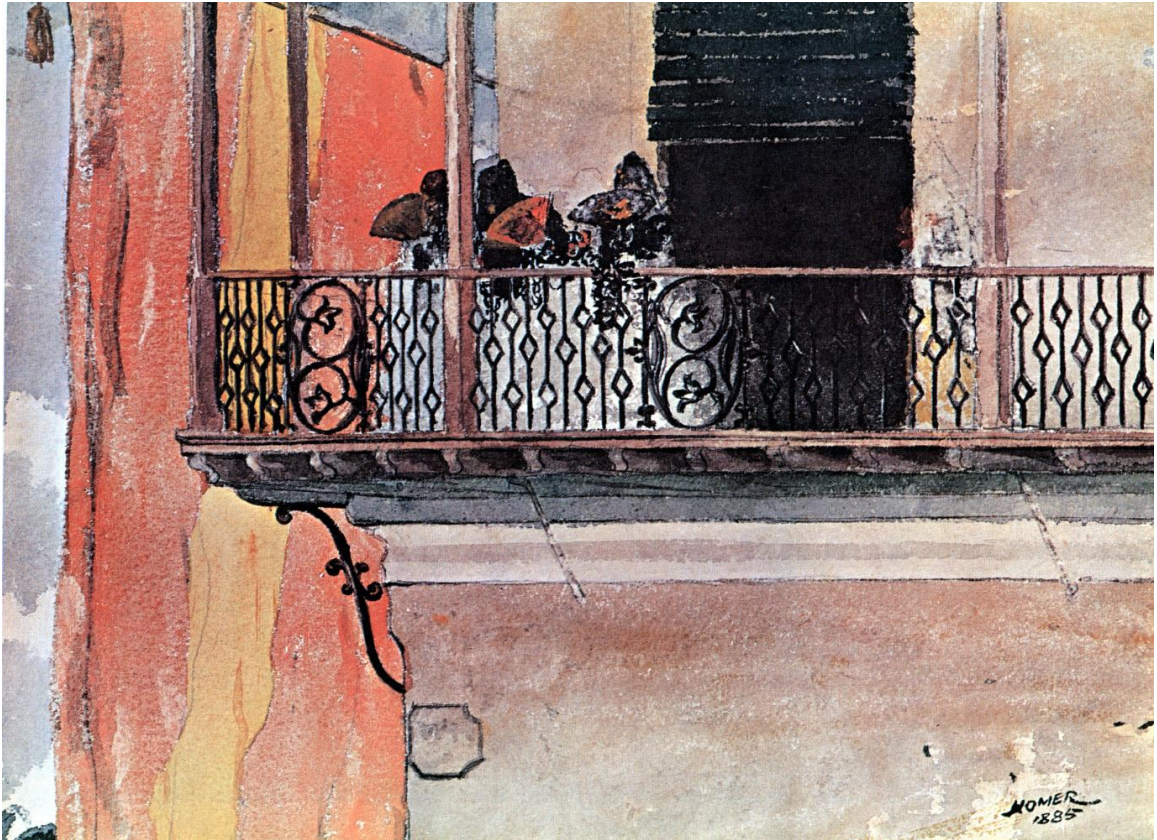
**Figure 3.21**

Diego Velázquez, *Lady with a Fan*, c. 1640, oil on canvas, 14 2/3 x 27 2/3 in. Wallace Collection, London.



**Figure 3.22**

Queen Isabella II, c. 1868, albumen print.



**Figure 3.23**

Winslow Homer, *Spanish Flag, Santiago de Cuba*, 1885, watercolor on paper, 12 ¼ x 16 ¼ in., Philadelphia Museum of Art



**Figure 3.24**

Winslow Homer, *The Veteran in a New Field*, 1865, oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 38 1/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.





**Figure 3.25**

Winslow Homer, *The Cock Fight*, 1885, transparent and opaque watercolor with traces of scraping over graphite on paper, 10 x 19 in. Art Institute of Chicago.



**Figure 3.26**

Frédéric Mialhe, "*Valla de Gallos*," color lithograph as published in *Album pintoresco de la isla de Cuba*, 1853.



**Figure 4.1**

Illustration for *Puck*, vol. 39, Issue, 1004 (June 3, 1896).





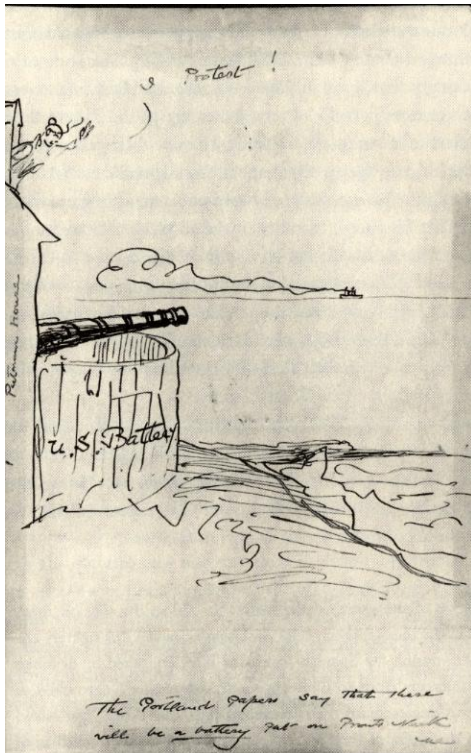
**Figure 4.2**

Winslow Homer, *Gulf Stream*, oil on canvas, 1899, 28 1/8 x 49 1/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



**Figure 4.3**

Winslow Homer, *Searchlight on Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba*, oil on canvas, 1901, 30 1/2 x 50 1/2 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



**Figure 4.4**

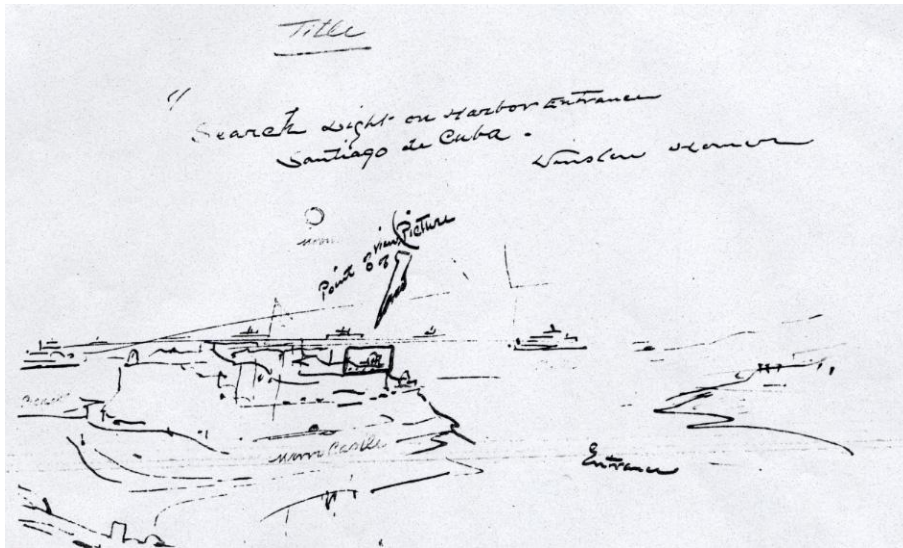
Winslow Homer, *I Protest!/Putnam House/The Portland papers say that there will be a battery put on Prout's Neck, Me*, 1898, ink on paper, 8 7/8 x 5 9/16 in., Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME.



**Figure 4.5**

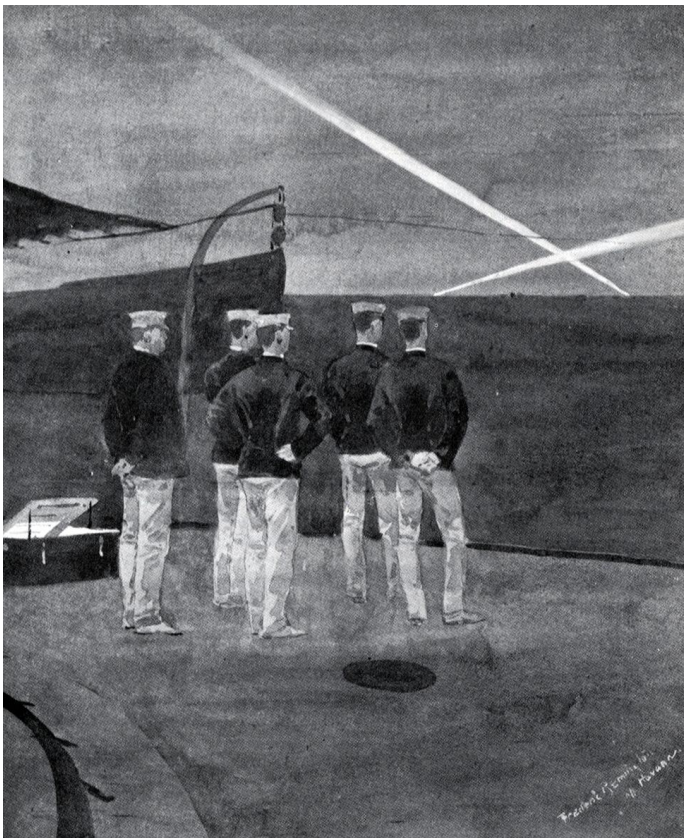
Frederic Remington, "Spaniards Search Women on American Steamers," published in *New York Journal*, (February 12, 1897).





**Figure 4.6**

Winslow Homer, drawing in a letter to Thomas B. Clarke, December 30, 1901, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington.



**Figure 4.7**

Frederic Remington, "Watching the Big Search-Lights [sic] in Havana," published in *Harper's Weekly*, (May 14, 1898).



**Figure 4.8**

Winslow Homer, *Prisoners from the Front*, 1866, oil on canvas, 24 x 38 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



**Figure 4.9**

Winslow Homer, *The Derelict*, 1885, watercolor over pencil, 14 ½ x 20 15/16 in., Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY.





**Figure 4.10**

Winslow Homer, *Shark Fishing, Nassau Bar*, 1885, watercolor, 13 5/8 x 20 in., private collection.



**Figure 4.11**

Winslow Homer, *Study for Gulf Stream*, 1898, watercolor and chalk, 14 1/2 x 10 1/16 in., Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, NY.



**Figure 4.12**

Winslow Homer, *The Fog Warning*, 1885, oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 48 1/2 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



**Figure 4.13**

Winslow Homer, *Undertow*, 1886, oil on canvas, 30 x 48 in., Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA.





**Figure 4.14**

Frames from Thomas Edison, *U.S. Infantry Supported by Rough Riders at El Caney, Cuba* 1899, Library of Congress, Washington.



**Figure 4.15**

Single frame from Edward Amet, *Freedom of Cuba*, 1898, Library of Congress, Washington.



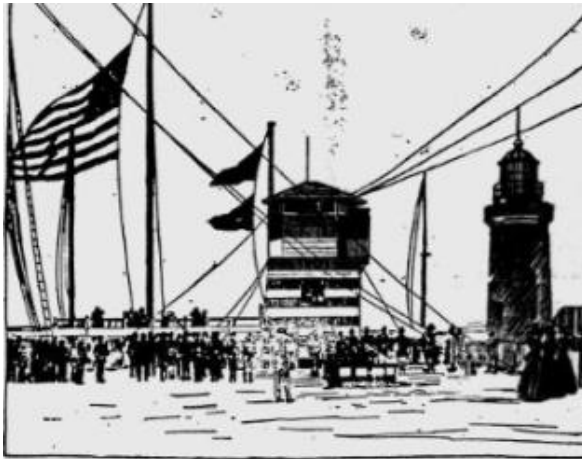
**Figure 4.16**

Single frame from Thomas Edison, *Raising Old Glory over Morro Castle*, 1899, Library of Congress, Washington.



**Figure 4.17**

*The Lowering of the Spanish Flag and the Raising of the American Flag at the Castillo de los Tres Reyes del Morro, January 1, 1899, 1899, photograph, 6 1/3 x 8 1/3 in., private collection.*



**Figure 4.18**

*“Raising the American Flag on Morro Castle,” published in *Arizona Weekly Journal-Miner*, (March 22, 1899).*



**Figure 4.19**

Willard Metcalf, *Havana Harbor*, 1902, oil on canvas, 18 x 26 in., private collection.



**Figure 4.20**

Willard Metcalf, *Havana Cathedral*, 1902, oil on canvas, 26 x 29 in., private collection.





**Figure 4.21**

Detroit Photographic Company, postcard, c. 1904, Library of Congress, Washington.



**Figure 4.22**

Detroit Photographic Company, postcard, c. 1904, Library of Congress, Washington.



**Figure 4.23**

“American Progress in Habana [sic],” photograph published in *National Geographic Magazine*, Vol. 13, no. 3 (March 1902).



**Figure 4.24**

“American Progress in Habana [sic],” photograph published in *National Geographic Magazine*, Vol. 13, no. 3 (March 1902).





**Fig. 5.1**

Photographer unknown, *Heart of the Andes*, Frederic Edwin Church on exhibition at the Metropolitan Fair in aid of the Sanitary Commission in New York, April 1864.



**Figure 5.2**

Jackson Brothers, *Two Arapaho Men*, 1867, carte de visite, 4 x 2 in., Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.



**Figure 5.3**

William Henry Jackson, *Old Faithful*, c. 1871, stereograph, J. Paul Getty Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.



**Figure 5.4**

William Henry Jackson, *At the Mammoth Hot Springs, Gardiner River*, 1871, photograph, East Hampton Library, New York.



**Figure 5.5**

William Henry Jackson, *Mount of the Holy Cross*, 1873, photograph, 4 ¼ x 7 ¼ in., Library of Congress, Washington.



**Figure 5.6**

Thomas Moran, *Mountain of the Holy Cross*, 1875, oil on canvas, 82 1/8 x 64 ¼ in., Autry Museum of Western Heritage, Los Angeles, CA.





**Figure 5.7**

Thomas Moran, *Grand Canyon of Yellowstone*, 1893-1901, oil on canvas, 96 ½ x 168 ¾ in., Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington.



**Figure 5.8**

Thomas Moran, *Grand Canyon, Chasm of the Colorado*, 1873-1873, oil on canvas, 84 ¾ x 144 ¾ in., Department of the Interior Museum, Washington.



**Figure 5.9**

William Henry Jackson, *Mexican Central Railway Train at Station*, c. 1884-1890, photograph, Library of Congress, Washington.



**Figure 5.10**

Augustín Víctor Casasola, *Hombres bajan del vagón de primera clase del "FF. CC. De aguas potables"*, c. 1910, photograph, Casasola Archive for the Fototeca Nacional of the National Institute of Anthropology and History, Mexico City.



**Figure 5.11**

William Henry Jackson, *Aqueduct with Train Queretaro*, c. 1884-1890, lantern slide, Southern Methodist University, Digital Collections.



**Figure 5.12**

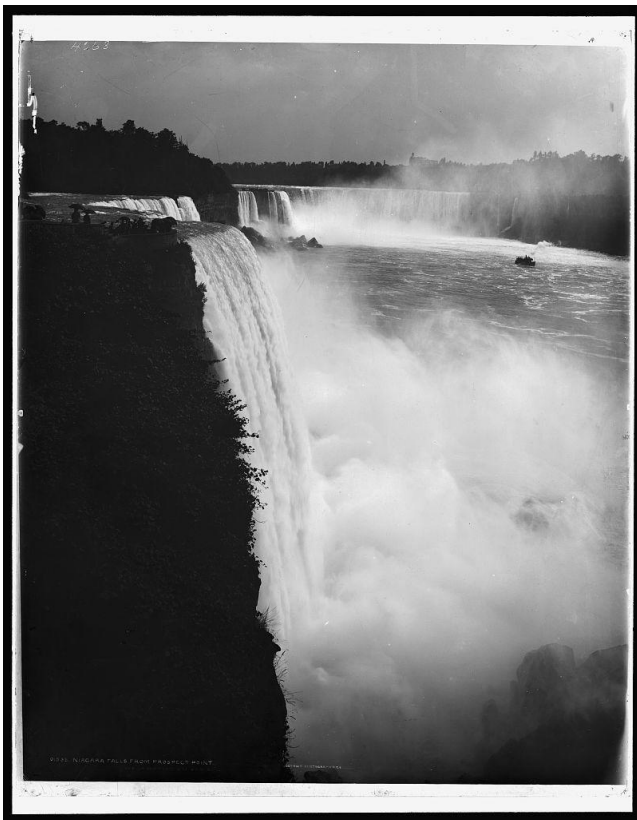
William Henry Jackson, *Mexico, Falls of Juanacatlán*, between 1884-1900, photograph, 18 x 22 in., Library of Congress, Washington.





**Figure 5.13**

William Henry Jackson, *Mexico, Falls of Juanacatlán*, between 1884-1900, photomechanical print, photochrome, Library of Congress, Washington.



**Figure 5.14**

William Henry Jackson, *Niagara Falls from Prospect Point*, c. 1898, photograph, 8 x 10 in., Library of Congress, Washington.



**Figure 5.15**

William Henry Jackson, *Niagara Falls from Prospect Point*, c. 1898, photomechanical print, photochrome, Library of Congress, Washington.



**Figure 5.16**

William Henry Jackson, *View of Guanajuato*, c. 1884-1900, photograph, Library of Congress, Washington.



**Figure 5.17**

Frederic Edwin Church, *A View in Cuernavaca*, c. 1898-1900, oil on paper laid down on canvas, 9 ¼ x 12 ¼ in., Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT.



**Figure 5.18**

Frederic Edwin Church, *The Arch of Titus*, 1871, oil on canvas, 74 x 49 in., Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ.





**Fig. 5.19**

Frederic Edwin Church, *The Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica*, 1867, oil on canvas, 48 5/16 x 84 5/8 in., Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT.



**Figure 5.20**

George Inness, *Palisades on the Hudson*, c. 1876, oil on canvas, 20 1/8 x 30 1/8 in., private collection.



**Figure 6.1**

Edward Weston, *Frida Kahlo*, c. 1926, photograph, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison Wisconsin.



**Figure 6.2**

Edward Weston, *Tres Ollas (Oaxaca Pots)*, 1926, Gelatin Silver Print, From the Private Collection of Margaret W. Weston, Carmel, California.





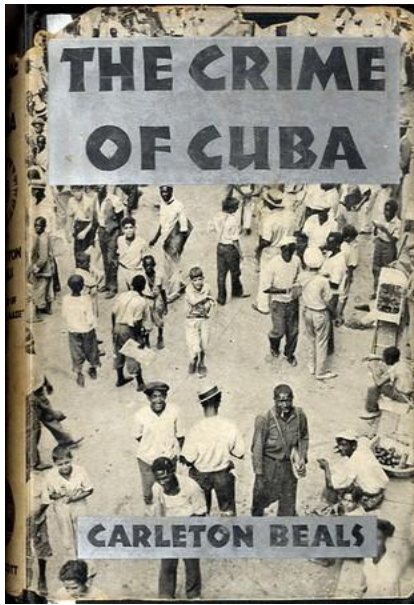
**Figure 6.3**

Edward Weston, *Pirámide del Sol, Teotihuacán*, 1923, gelatin silver print, 7 9/16 x 9 1/2 in., San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.



**Figure 6.4**

Byron Wolfe, *Beneath the Roof of the Centro Artesanía*, 2010, digital inkjet print, 18 x 33 inches. Behind: Eadweard Muybridge, 1876, photograph of the same site.



**Fig. 6.5**

Book cover for Carleton Beals' 1933 publication, *The Crime of Cuba* with Walker Evans' 1933 photograph of Havana street newsboys waiting for the paper.

## Bibliography

### Archival Material

American Antiquarian Society, Collection of American Broad­sides and Ephemera

Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC:  
     Childe Hassam Papers  
     Winslow Homer Papers

The Berkeley Digital Library SunSITE, The Library, UC Berkeley:  
     The Emma Goldman Papers

Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine:  
     Winslow Homer Papers

Library of Congress, Washington D.C.:  
     Detroit Publishing Company Collection  
     Printed Ephemera Collection, Portfolio 128, Folder 26

Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, New York, NY:  
     Letter from W.H. Low to R.W. De Forest, December 12, 1906

Milner Library, Illinois State University  
     Edward Muybridge, Kingston-Upon-Thames Scrapbook (photocopy version)

New York Public Library, New York, NY:  
     Detroit Publishing Company, Postcards from the Leonard Lauder Postcard  
     Collection  
     The Luso-Hispanic New World in Early Prints and Photographs  
     William Henry Jackson Papers

Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York  
     Frederic Edwin Church Papers

### Primary Sources

“Affairs in Cuba: The Situation Unsettled by Revolutionary Movements.” *New York Times* (April 12, 1884): 3.

“American Progress in Habana [sic].” *National Geographic Magazine* 13 no. 3 (March 1902): 97-108.

An Artist. “Three Weeks in Cuba.” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 6 (January 1853): 161-175.

“Art Exhibitions: American Pictures at the Union League Club.” *New York Daily Tribune* (January 11, 1902): 7.

“Bad State of Affairs in Cuba.” *New York Times* (June 4, 1884): 4.

Ballou, Maturin. *Aztec Land*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1890.

— —. *History of Cuba, or Notes of a Traveller in the Tropics Being a Political, Historical, and Statistical Account of the Island from Its First Discovery to the Present Time*. Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1854.

———. *Due South: Or Cuba Past and Present*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1885.

Baxter, Sylvester Baxter. “Strolls about Mexico—X: From Guanajuato to Lagos.” *The American Architect and Building News* XIX, no. 529 (February 13, 1886): 78-79.

Beals, Carleton. *The Crime of Cuba* Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1933.

Blake, Alexander V. *The New York Review* 9 (1841): 225.

Blake, Mary Elizabeth. *Mexico: Picturesque, Political, Progressive*. New York: Lee & Shepard. 1888.

Blitt, Barry. “The Politics of Fear.” *The New Yorker* vol. 84 Issue 21 (July 21, 2008): cover illustration.

“Bloodshed in Cuba.” *New York Times* (January 3, 1884): 1.

Boddam-Whetmam, John. *Across Central America*. London: Hurst and Blackett, 1877.

Brinton, Christian. “Winslow Homer.” *Scribner’s Magazine* 49 (January 1911): 9-23.

Burke, Sir Edmund. *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. London: R & J Dodsley, 1757.

Campbell, Reau. *Mexico: Tours through the Egypt of the New World*. New York: C.G. Crawford 1890.

Carson, William. *Mexico, the Wonderland of the South*. New York: Macmillan, 1909.

“Cartoons and Comments.” *Puck*, vol. 15, Issue 366 (March 12, 1884): 18.

Catherwood, Frederick, *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*. New York: Barlett & Welford, 1844.

Charnay, Desire. *The Ancient Cities of the New World*. New York: Harper & Brothers,

1887.

Church, William C. "A Midwinter Resort." *Century Illustrated Magazine* 33 (February 1887): 499-506.

Cox, Kenyon. "The Art of Winslow Homer." *Scribner's Magazine* 56 (September 1914): 377-388.

———. "Three Pictures by Winslow Homer in the Metropolitan Museum." *Burlington Magazine* 12 (November 1907): 123-124.

———. *What is Painting? "Winslow Homer" and Other Essays*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1917.

Creelman, James. *On the Great Highway: The Wanderings and Adventures of a Special Correspondent*. Boston: Lothrop Publishing 1901.

"Cuba." *New York Daily Times* (September 18, 1851): 2.

"The Cuban Melodrama." *Puck*, vol. 39, Iss. 1004 (June 3, 1896): 1.

"Cuba's Beautiful Women." *Boston Daily Globe* (June 29, 1884): 9.

Dalrymple, Louis. "Put up before Hunt's Time." *Puck* (August 28, 1893): 193.

Dana, Richard Henry. *To Cuba and Back: A Vacation Voyage*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1859.

Darton, N.H. "Mexico—the Treasure House of the World." *National Geographic Magazine*, 18 no. 8 (August 1907): 493-519.

"Diaz's Progressive Ideas." *The Washington Post*. (March 8, 1892): 2.

Downes, William Howe. *The Life and Works of Winslow Homer*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911.

"The Fatal Amour." *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 21, 1874): 3.

Fessenden, Nott Otis. *Isthmus of Panama: History of the Panama Railroad and the Pacific Mail Steamship Company*. New York: Harper & Brother, 1867.

"First Steps are Taken for 1929 Holy Cross Pilgrimage." *The Denver Post* (October 4, 1928).

Ford, Isaac Nelson. *Tropical America*. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1893.

Hawthorne, Julian et. al. *The Story of Evangelina Cisneros, Told by Herself*. New York:

Continental Publishing Co. 1898.

"Hints of a New Rebellion in Cuba Are Receiving Cautious Circulation." *The Galveston Daily News* (December 4, 1885): 4.

Holmes, Oliver Wendell. "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph." *The Atlantic Monthly* 3 (June 1859): 738-748.

Howard, Lady Winefred of Glossop. *Journal of a Tour in the United States, Canada and Mexico*. London: S. Low, Marston & Co., 1897.

Humboldt, Alexander von. *The Island of Cuba*. Boston: Derby & Jackson, 1856.

———. *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain: With Physical Sections and Maps Founded on Astronomical Observations and Trigonometrical and Barometrical Measurements*. Boston: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1822.

"Illustration 1." *Puck* vol. 16, Issue 405 (December 10, 1884): 232-233.

*Index to the Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives for the first session of the forty-ninth Congress 1885-86 in Twelve Volumes*. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1886.

Ingram, S. *The Centennial Exposition, Described and Illustrated being a Concise and Graphic Description of this Grand Enterprise, Commemorative of the First Centennial of American Independence*. St. Louis: N.D. Thompson & Co., 1876.

"The International Exhibition No. 31: Brazil in the Agricultural Hall." *The Nation* (November 9, 1876).

"Iron Rule in Cuba." *Milwaukee Sentinel* (March 1, 1885): F11.

Ives, A.E. "Talks with Artists: Mr. Childe Hassam on Painting Street Scenes." *Art Amateur* 27 (October 1892): 116-117.

"The Latest Route Proposed for the Isthmian Canal—Mandigo Route." *National Geographic Magazine* 13 no. 2 (February 1902): 64-71.

"List of Paintings, Bronzes, Mezzotints, Etchings and Engravings," shown at the "Loan Exhibition" at the Municipal Art Society, Annex Gallery Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, April 6 to May 1, 1915.

Martí, José. "One of the Greatest Modern Painters: The Career and Works of the Spaniard, Eduardo Zamacois." *The Sun* XLIX, 60 (October 30, 1881): 3.

Maudslay, Alfred Percival. *Biologia Centrali-Americana*. vols. 1-4 London: R.H. Porter,

1902.

"A Mexican Bugbear." *New York Times* (July 21, 1887): 4.

"Mexico at the Centennial." *New York Times* (April 1, 1876): 6.

Morton, Frederick W. "The Art of Winslow Homer: Twelve Illustrations." *Brush and Pencil* 10 no. 1 (April, 1902): 40-54.

"Mr. George A. Hearn's Gift to the Museum, and the Cause of American Art." *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 1 no. 3 (February 1906): 33-37.

Noll, Arthur Howard. "Art in Mexico." *The American Architect and Building News* XXVIII, no. 756 (June 21, 1890): 177-179.

"Opportunities in Cuba: Splendid Openings for Educated Young Men Without Money." *New York Times* (July 14, 1903).

Oran. "Tropical Journeyings." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* XVIII no. 104 (January 1859): 145-169.

"The People's Welcome to Evangelina Cisneros." *New York Journal* (October 18, 1897).

*Philadelphia International Exhibition, 1876, Mexican Section: Special Catalogue and Explanatory Notes* (Philadelphia: Dan F. Gillin, 1876).

Prescott, William Hickling. *History of the Conquest of Mexico: With a Preliminary View of the Ancient Mexican Civilization, and the Life of the Conqueror Hernando Cortés*. Boston: Harper and Brothers, 1854.

"Raising the American Flag on Morro Castle." *Arizona Weekly Journal-Miner* (March 22, 1899): 2.

"A Real American." *Bentley's Miscellany* 51 (1862): 210-221.

Remington, Frederic. "Spanish Guerillas Bringing 'Pacifcos into Camp.'" *New York Journal* (January 24, 1897): 1.

Reynolds, Sir Joshua Reynolds. *Discourses on Art*. San Marino, CA: Huntington Library Press, 1959. [originally delivered between 1769-1790].

Root, Marcus Aurelius. "The Magic Lantern." *Magic Lantern*, 1.1 (1874): 8-9.

"The Sale of Dynamite: Nobody Will Admit Having Supplied Cuban Rebels." *New York Times* (July 25, 1884): 8.

Sampson, William. "The Atlantic Fleet in the Spanish War." *Century Illustrated*

- Magazine* 57 no. 6 (April 1899): 886-913.
- Schurz, Carl. "The Future of Cuba." *Harper's Weekly* (March 26, 1898): 291.
- Showalter, William Joseph. "Mexico and Mexicans." *National Geographic Magazine*, 25 no. 5 (May 1914): 471-493.
- . "The Countries of the Caribbean." *National Geographic Magazine* 24 no. 2 (February 1913): 227-250.
- Stephens, John Lloyd & Frederick Catherwood. *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan* [sic]. New York: Dover Publications, 1841.
- . *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* [sic]. Boston: Harper and Brothers, 1855.
- "Still Yearning for Liberty." *New York Times* (November 12, 1893): 3.
- Terry, Thomas Philip. *Terry's Mexico: Handbook for Travelers*. Mexico City: Sonoro News Co., 1909.
- Tisdell, Edine Frances. "Guatemala, The Country of the Future." *National Geographic Magazine* 21 (January 1910): 596-624.
- "To Invade Cuba." *New York Times* (November 25, 1884): 5.
- Trollope, Anthony. *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*. Leipzig Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1860.
- Twain, Mark. "To the Person Sitting in Darkness." *North American Review* 172 (February 1901): 161-176.
- "Unhappy Cuba: The Revolution There Impending and the Trouble which it May Cause the United States." *Boston Daily Globe*, (April 18, 1884): 4.
- "Vanderbilt's Trip." *The Atlanta Constitution* (January 5, 1883): 5.
- "Vanishing Mexico: A Series of Pictures by H. Ravell." *Harper's Magazine* 134:799 (December 1916): 95.
- Van Rensselaer, M.G. "Pictures of the Season in New York." *The American Architect and Building News* (February 20, 1886): 89.
- Walker, William. *The War in Nicaragua*. New York: S.H. Goetzel & Co. 1860.
- Walton, William. *Art and Architecture: World's Columbian Exposition*. Philadelphia: George Barrie, Pub., 1893.



Warren, John Esaias Warren. "The Romance of the Tropics." *The Knickerbocker*, (June 1849): 496-500.

W.D. "A Winter Voyage in Cuba." *New York Times* (February 24, 1885): 2.

Westervelt, Ellsworth. "A Trip to Central America." *Scribner's Monthly*, 15 (March 1878): 609-623.

Wheatstone, Charles. "Contributions to the Physiology of Vision." *Journal of the Royal Institution* 1 (1830): 101-117.

White, William Trumbull. *The World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893*. Boston: J.K. Hastings, 1893.

Wilcox, Walter. "Among the Mahogany Forests of Cuba." *National Geographic Magazine* 19 (January 1908): 485-498.

Wilson, Edward L., ed. *Photographic Mosaics: An Annual Record of Photographic Progress*. Philadelphia: Benerman & Wilson Publishers, 1873.

"Winslow Homer at Doll & Richard's." *Boston Evening Transcript* (February 25, 1886): 6.

### **Secondary Sources**

Abel, Christopher and Nisa Torrents, eds. *José Martí: Revolutionary Democrat*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1986.

Ackerman, James. "The Photographic Picturesque." *Artibus et Histoire* 24 no. 48 (2003): 73-94.

Ackerman, Karl ed., *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993 [orig. 1841].

Adams, Henry. "Mortal Themes: Winslow Homer." *Art in America* 71 (February 1983): 112-126.

Adelson, Warren. *Childe Hassam: Impressionist*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1999.

Adler, Kathleen ed. et.al., *Americans in Paris 1860-1900*. London: Rothschild, 2006.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London & New York: Verso, 1991.

Anderson, William. *An American in Maximilian's Mexico, 1865-1866: The Diaries of*

- William Marshall Anderson. San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1959.
- Andrews, Malcolm. *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1989.
- Aparicio, Frances R. and Susana Chávez-Silverman, eds. *Tropicalizations: Transcultural Representations of Latinidad*. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1997.
- Ashcroft, Bill ed. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London & New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Auerbach, Jeffrey. "The Picturesque and the Homogenization of Empire." *British Art Journal* 5 no. 1 (2004): 47-54.
- Avery, Kevin. "The Heart of the Andes Exhibited: Frederic E. Church's Window on the Equatorial World." *The American Art Journal* vol. 18, no. 1 (Winter: 1986): 52-72.
- Ayers, William. ed. et. al. *Picturing History: American Paintings, 1770-1930*. New York: Rizzoli, 1993.
- Banta, Melissa. *From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography and the Power of Imagery*. Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum Press, 1986.
- Barratt, Carrie Rebora. *John Singleton Copley and Turkish Fashion in 18<sup>th</sup> Century America*. New York: Putnam Foundation, 1998.
- Barrell, John. *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Baudez, Claude. *Lost Cities of the Maya*. Paris: Gallimard, 1987.
- Beam, Philip. *Winslow Homer at Prout's Neck*. Boston: Little Brown, 1966.
- Berger, Martin. *Site Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Bermingham, Ann. *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition 1740-1860*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Berthold, Dennis. "Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Huntly and the Origins of the American Picturesque." *William and Mary Quarterly* 41 no. 1 (January 1984): 62-84.
- Blair, William and William Pencak ed. *Making and Remaking Pennsylvania's Civil War*.

- University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2001.
- Bohn-Spector, Claudia. *The Great Wide Open: Panoramic Photographs of the American West*. London: Merrell Publishers in association with the Huntington Library, 2001.
- Boime, Albert. "Blacks in Shark-Infested Waters: Visual Encodings of Racism in Copley and Homer." *Smithsonian* 3 (Winter 1989): 19-47.
- Bondil, Nathalie ed. et al. *Cuba: Art and History from 1868 to Today*, Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2008.
- Bourbon, Fabio. *The Lost Cities of the Mayas: The Life, Art and Discoveries of Frederick Catherwood*. New York & London: Abbeville Press, 2000.
- de Borbón, Eulalia. *Memorias de Doña Eulalia de Borbón, Infanta de España*. Barcelona: Editorial Juventud, 1958.
- Bowden, Charles. "America's Border Wall." *National Geographic Magazine* 211 no. 5 (May 2007): 116-139.
- Brombert, Beth Archer. *Edouard Manet: Rebel in a Frock Coat*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Brookman, Philip, et. al. *Helios: Edweard Muybridge in a Time of Change*. Washington DC: Concoran Gallery of Art, in association with Steidl, 2010.
- Broun, Elizabeth. "Childe Hassam's America." *American Art* 13 no. 3 (Fall 1999): 32-57.
- Brunhouse, Robert. *In Search of the Maya: The First Archeologists*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1973.
- Bryson, Norman. *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting*. London: Reaktion Books, 1990.
- Burns, Bradford. *Muybridge in Guatemala, 1875: The Photographer as Social Recorder*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Burns, Sarah. *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Campbell, Joseph W. "Not likely sent: The Remington-Hearst 'Telegrams.'" *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 77 no. 2 (Summer 2000): 405-422.
- Carr, Gerald. *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné of Works of Art at Olana State Historic Site*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

- . *Frederic Edwin Church: In Search of the Promised Land*. New York: Barry-Hill Galleries Inc., 2000.
- Castleberry, May. *The New World's Old World: Photographic Views of Ancient America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003.
- Chomsky, Aviva ed., et al. *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Chowder, Ken. "Winslow Homer: The Quintessential American Artist." *Smithsonian* 26 (October 1995): 116-118.
- Clegg, Brian. *The Man Who Stopped Time: the Illuminating Story of Eadweard Muybridge: Pioneer Photographer, Father of the Motion Picture, Murderer*. Washington D.C.: Joseph Henry Press, 2007.
- Cikovsky, Nicolai et. al. *Winslow Homer*. Washington: National Gallery of Art, in association with Yale University Press, 1996.
- . et al. *Winslow Homer: A Symposium. Studies in the History of Art*. Washington: National Gallery of Art, in association with University Press of New England, 1990.
- Cole, Thomas. "Essay on American Scenery." *American Monthly Magazine* 1 (January, 1836): 1-12.
- Conrads, Margaret. *Winslow Homer and the Critics: Forging a National Art in the 1870s*. Kansas City, MO: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, in association with Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Conron, John. *American Picturesque*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2000.
- Crary, Jonathan. "Techniques of the Observer." *October* 45 (Summer 1988): 3-35.
- Cueto, Emilio. *Mialhe's Colonial Cuba: The Print's that Shaped the World's View of Cuba*. Miami: Historical Association of Southern Florida, 1994.
- Curtin, Philip D. *Death by Migration: Europe's Encounter with the Tropical World in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Dash, Michael. *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998.
- Davis, Keith. *Desire Charnay: Expeditionary Photographer*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988.

- Davis, John. *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.
- Dent, David W. *The Legacy of the Monroe Doctrine*. Westport, CT & London: Greenwood Press, 1999.
- Debroise, Claude. "José María Velasco y el paisaje fotográfico decimonónico." in Fausto Ramírez ed. *Homenaje Nacional José María Velasco 1840-1912*. Mexico City: Amigos del Museo Nacional de Arte, 1993.
- Edwards, Elizabeth. *Anthropology and Photography, 1860-1920*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Einfeldt, Kirsten. "The Transformed Landscape: Nineteenth-Century U.S. Photography and Mexican Art and Identity." Paper presented at the Smithsonian American Art Museum conference *Encuentros: Artistic Exchange between the U.S. and Latin America* October 5, 2011.
- Elderfield, John. et al. *Manet and the Execution of Maximilian*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007.
- Evans, Tripp. *Romancing the Maya: Mexican Antiquity in the American Imagination, 1820-1915*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004.
- Fojas, Camilla. "American Cosmopolis: The World's Columbian Exposition and Chicago across the Americas." *Comparative Literature Studies* Vol. 42, Issue 2 (January 2005): 264-287.
- Frazier, Donald. *The United States and Mexico at War: Nineteenth Century Expansionism and Conflict*. New York: Macmillan Reference, 1998.
- Geary, Christraud M. and Virginia-Lee Webb, eds. *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998.
- "Geographic Sketch of the Yosemite Region and the Sierra Nevada." U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 160, the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/geology/publications/pp/160/sec1b.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/geology/publications/pp/160/sec1b.htm).
- Gilbert, Joseph. ed., et. al. *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Glissant, Édouard. *Le discours antillais*. Paris: Gallimard, 1981.
- Goldschmidt, Lucien. *The Truthful Lens: A Survey of the Photographically Illustrated Book 1844-1914*. New York: Grolier Club, 1980.

- Gonzales, Michael. *The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1940*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002.
- González, Gilbert G. *Culture of Empire: American Writers, Mexico and Mexican Immigration, 1880-1930*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004.
- Goodrich, Lloyd. et. al. *Record of Works by Winslow Homer*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, in association with Spanierman Gallery, 2006.
- . *Winslow Homer*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, in association with Macmillan Co., 1944.
- Gottfried, Ted. *The Fight for Peace: A History of Antiwar Movements in America*. Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-First Century Books, 2006.
- Graham, Ian. *Alfred Maudslay and the Maya: A Biography*. Tulsa: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.
- Griffin, Randall C., *Homer, Eakins and Anshutz: The Search for American Identity in the Gilded Age*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2004.
- . *Winslow Homer: An American Vision*. London: Phaidon, 2006.
- Groseclose, Barbara and Jochen Wierich eds. *Internationalizing the History of American Art*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009.
- Gruesz, Kirsten Silva. *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing*. Princeton and Oxford: The Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Gunn, Drewey Wayne. *American and British Writers in Mexico, 1556-1973*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974.
- Haas, Robert Bartlett. *Muybridge: Man in Motion*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
- Hales, Peter. *William Henry Jackson*. London: Macdonald, 1988.
- . *William Henry Jackson and the Transformation of the American Landscape*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.
- Hallam, Elizabeth and Brian Street. *Cultural Encounters: Representing Otherness*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Hannaway, Patti. *Winslow Homer in the Tropics*. Richmond, VA: Westover, Pub. Co., 1973.
- Harrison, Charles ed. et.al. *Art in Theory, 1815-1900*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell,

1998.

- Hart, John Mason. *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Harter, Jim. *World Railways of the Nineteenth Century: A Pictorial History in Victorian Engravings*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.
- Henderson, Timothy. *A Glorious Defeat: Mexico and Its War with the United States*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2007.
- Hendricks, Gordon. *Eadweard Muybridge: Father of the Motion Picture*. New York: Viking, 1975.
- Herbert, Stephen. et al., *Eadweard Muybridge: The Kingston Museum Bequest*. London: The Projection Box, 2004.
- Hight, Eleanor M., and Gary Sampson. eds. *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Hoopes, Isabel. "The Story of a Picture." *Mentor* (August 1929): 34.
- Humphries, Steve. *Victorian Britain through the Magic Lantern*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1989.
- Hunt, John Dixon. *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.
- Hutchinson, Elizabeth. "They Might be Giants: Carleton Watkins, Galen Clark and the Big Tree." *October* 109 (Summer 2004): 47-63.
- Jackson, William Henry. *Time Exposure: An Autobiography of William Henry Jackson*. Tucson, AZ: Patrice Press, 1994.
- Johns, Elizabeth. *Winslow Homer: The Nature of Observation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.
- Johnson, William S. *Nineteenth-Century Photography: An Annotated Bibliography, 1839-1879*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1990.
- Langley, Lester. & Thomas Schoonover. *The Banana Men: American Mercenaries and Entrepreneurs in Central America, 1880-1930*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1995.
- Leighton, Howard B. "The Lantern Slide and Art History." *History of Photography*, 8 no. 2 (April-June 1984): 107-118.

- Luján Muñoz, Luis. *Guatemala 1875: fotografías de Eadweard Muybridge*. CENALTEX, Ministerio de Educación, Guatemala, 1984.
- Manthorne, Katherine. "Ambas Américas: A Proposal for Studying the Nineteenth Century." Paper presented at the Smithsonian American Art Museum conference *Encuentros: Artistic Exchange between the U.S. and Latin America* October 5, 2011.
- . "Remapping American Art," *American Art*, vol. 22, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 112.
- . *Tropical Renaissance: North American Artists Exploring Latin America 1839-1879*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989.
- Mason, Peter. *Deconstructing America: Representations of the Other*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- . *Infelicities: Representations of the Exotic*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Matthews, Mowll and Charles Musser, *Moving Pictures: American Art and Early Film, 1880-1910*, Williamstown, MA: Williams College Museum of Art, in association with Hudson Hills Press, 2005.
- McCartney, Paul T. *Power and Progress: American National Identity, the War of 1898, and the Rise of American Imperialism*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 2006.
- Metken, Gunter. "Heart of the Andes, Humboldt's Cosmos and Frederic Edwin Church." In *Cosmos: From Romanticism to the Avant-Garde*, edited by Jean Clair, 60-66. Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, in association with Prestel, 1999.
- Michasiw, Ian. "Nine Revisionist Theses on the Picturesque." *Representations* 38 (Spring 1992): 76-100.
- Miller, Angela. *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Monasterio, Pablo Ortiz ed. *Mexico, The Revolution and Beyond: Photographs by Agustín Víctor Casasola 1900-1940*. New York: Aperture Foundation, 2003.
- Mozley, Anita. et al. *Eadweard Muybridge, the Stanford Years: 1872-1882*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Art Museum, 1972.
- Musser, Charles. *Before the Nickelodeon: The Early Cinema of Edwin S. Porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.



- . *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Naef, W.J. *The Ear of Exploration: The Rise of Landscape Photography in the American West, 1865-1885*. Buffalo, NY: Albright Know Museum of Art, 1975.
- Nochlin, Linda. *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*, Oxford: Westview Press, 1989.
- O'Hare, Mary Kate et.al. *Constructive Spirit: Abstract Art in South and North America, 1920s-50s*, Los Angeles: Pomegranate Press, Ltd., 2010.
- Olcott, Charles Summer. *The Life of William McKinley*, vol. 2, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916.
- Oles, James. et al., *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination: 1917-1947*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993.
- Osborne, Peter. *Traveling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture*. New York: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth. "'American' Landscapes and Erasures: Frederic Church's *The Vale of St. Thomas* and the Recovery of History in Landscape Painting." In *Perspectives on the 'Other America': Comparative Approaches to Caribbean and Latin American Culture*, edited by Michael Niblett and Kerstin Oloff, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009, 73-100.
- Pérez, Louis. *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2003.
- . *Cuba Between Empires, 1878-1902*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983.
- . *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
- . *Impressions of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century, the Travel Diary of Joseph Dimock*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998.
- . *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality and Culture*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.
- . *Slaves, Sugar and Colonial Society: Travel Accounts of Cuba, 1801-1899*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1992.
- . *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography*.

- Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Pike, Frederick. *The United States and Latin America: Myths & Stereotypes of Civilization and Nature*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1992.
- Pohl, Frances. *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002.
- Potash, Stephen and Robert Chandler. *Gold, Silk, Pioneers and Mail: History of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company*. San Francisco: Friends of the San Francisco Maritime Museum Library, 2007.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Prodger, Phillip. *Time Stands Still: Muybridge and the Instantaneous Photography Movement*. New York: Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University in association with Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Ramírez, Fausto. *Arte del siglo XIX en la ciudad de México*, Madrid: Editorial la Muralla, 1984.
- . ed. *Homenaje Nacional José María Velasco 1840-1912*. Mexico City: Amigos del Museo Nacional de Arte, 1993.
- . *El nacionalismo y el arte mexicano*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1986.
- . *La plástica del siglo de la independencia*. Mexico City: Fondo Editorial de la Plástica Mexicana, 1985.
- Robertson, Bruce. *Reckoning with Winslow Homer: His Late Paintings and their Influence*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- Rojek, Chris and John Urry eds. *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Ryan, Alan ed. *The Reader's Companion to Cuba*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997.
- Rydell, Robert. *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Sandweiss, Martha. *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Schell, William. *Integral Outsiders: The American Colony in Mexico City, 1876-1911*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc. 2001.

- Schoonover, Thomas David. *The United States in Central America, 1860-1911: Episodes of Social Imperialism and Imperial Rivalry in the World System*, vol. 1 Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991.
- Schoultz, Lars. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Schwartz, Rosalie. *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Sears, John F. *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*. New York & London: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Shimamura, Arthur. "Muybridge in Motion: Travels in Art, Psychology, and Neurology," *History of Photography* 26 no. 4 (Winter 2002): 341-350.
- Skidmore, Thomas and Peter Smith, *Modern Latin America*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Skolnick, Arnold ed. *The Watercolors of Winslow Homer*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001.
- Sluyter, Andrew. "Humboldt's Mexican Texts and Landscapes." *The Geographical Review* 96 no. 3 (July 2006): 361-386.
- Smith, Joseph. *The United States and Latin America: A History of American Diplomacy, 1776-2000*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Solkin, David. *Painting Out of the Ordinary: Modernity and the Art of Everyday Life in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Solnit, Rebecca. *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological West*. New York: Viking. 2003.
- Spassky, Natalie, et. al. *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. vol. 2, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, in association with Princeton University Press, 1985.
- Stepan, Nancy. *Picturing Tropical Nature*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Taylor, Frank. *"A stately picturesque dream": Scenes of Florida, Cuba, and Mexico in 1880: Forty-seven Brush Drawings and Watercolors*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, 1984.
- Tedeschi, Martha, et al. *Watercolors by Winslow Homer: The Color of Light*. Chicago: Chicago Art Institute, in association with the University of California, 2008.

- Tenorio-Trillo, Mauricio. *Mexico at the World's Fair: Crafting a Modern Nation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Theroux, Paul. "The Country Just Over the Fence." *The New York Times* (February 26, 2012): TR1.
- Thompson, Krista A. *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Truettner, William. "Storming the Teocalli—Again, Or, Further Thoughts on Reading History Paintings." *American Art* 9 no. 3 (Fall 1995): 57-95.
- Unger, Miles. *The Watercolors of Winslow Homer*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2001.
- Vallance J.W. et al., "Volcano Hazards at Fuego and Acatenango, Guatemala." U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2001.  
<http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/Volcanoes/Guatemala>.
- Van Hoy, Teresa M. "La Marcha Violenta? Railroads and Land in 19th-Century Mexico." *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 19 Issue 1 (January 2000): 33-61.
- Veliz, Zahira. "Signs of Identity in *Lady with a Fan* by Diego Velázquez: Costume and Likeness Reconsidered." *Art Bulletin* 86 no. 1 (March 2004): 75-95.
- Vogel, Carol. "On a Mission to Loosen Up the Louvre." *New York Times*, (October 11, 2009): AR1.
- Wasserman, Mark. *Everyday Life and Politics in Nineteenth Century Mexico: Men, Women and War*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000.
- Weigley, Russell and Wolf, Edwin. *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982.
- Weinberg, Barbara, et al. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Whittlesey, Lee H. "Native Americans, the Earliest Interpreters: What is Known about their Legends and Stories of Yellowstone National Park and the Complexities of Interpreting Them." *The George Wright Forum* vol. 19, no. 3 (2002): 40-51.
- Wilmerding, John. *Winslow Homer*. New York and London: Praeger, 1972.
- Wood, Peter. *Weathering the Storm: Inside Winslow Homer's Gulf Stream*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004.
- Woodward, Ralph Lee. *Central America a Nation Divided*. New York & London: Oxford

University Press, 1976.

Ybarra-Frausto, Tomás. "Imagining a More Expansive Narrative of American Art."  
*American Art* 19, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 9-15.

**CURRICULUM VITA**

2000	B.A., Art History, Wesleyan University, graduate, cum laude honors and departmental honors.
2001-02	Public Information Officer, New Orleans Museum of Art.
2002-03	English Instructor, Iprefour, Santiago, Chile.
2003-05	Graduate Fellow, Art History Department, Rutgers University.
2005-07	Teaching Assistantship, Art History Department, Rutgers University.
2006	M.A., Art History, Rutgers University.
2006	Instructor, Art History, Rutgers University (Summer Session).
2007-08	Instructor, Expository Writing, Rutgers University.
2008-09	Instructor, Art History Department, Pratt Institute.
2009	Instructor, Art History, Rutgers University (Winter Session).
2009-present	AVP, Specialist, Department of 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Paintings, Christie's, New York.
2012	Ph.D., Art History, Rutgers University.