

“Trouble Ahead for the Trainer”: Satirical Representations in Puck of the American Colonial Island Empire of 1898

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Inception

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Abstract

This essay focuses on the visual representation of the American Colonial Island Empire of 1898 in the political satire and humour magazine, *Puck*. Between the period leading up to the formation of this empire at the closing of the 19th century until the end of Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency in 1909, *Puck* disentangled the unified representations of Hawai’i, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines when the questions that these island nations posed to the United States evolved from abstract ideas of race to more concrete issues like commerce.

From American Exceptionalism to American Empire

The year 1898, Paul Atwood argued in *War and Empire: The American Way of Life*, was “one of the most momentous” in the history of the United States.¹ He was referring to the year that the United States formed a colonial island empire composed of Hawai‘i, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines. The Kingdom of Hawai‘i had entered into treaties and exchanged diplomats with the United States in the early 1800s and the relationship was further solidified with the Reciprocity Treaty of 1875.² During the final decade of the 19th century, however, Hawai‘i experienced tremendous upheaval that involved the overthrow of the Kingdom in 1893, the formation of a Republic in 1894, and, ultimately, annexation by United States via the Newlands Resolution on July 7, 1898.³ The United States then took control of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines from Spain through the Treaty of Paris after the Spanish-American War signed on December 19, 1898. Atwood argued that, as a pretext for this war, the United States declared Spain a threat because of its (Spain’s) presence in the Caribbean Sea, which served only to draw new dangers to the surface from revolutionaries in Cuba and in the Philippines fighting for their respective islands’ independence.⁴ Laura Briggs contrasted the relatively peaceful annexation of Puerto Rico to those of Cuba and the Philippines by referring to the rhetorical device that I will explore in this essay: “[P]olitical cartoons from the period depict Puerto Rico as a polite schoolchild, sometimes female, in contrast to the ruffian boys Cuba and the

¹ Paul L. Atwood, *War and Empire: The American Way of Life* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), 96.

² Jon M. Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands of Hawai‘i?* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2006), 153-6.

³ Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands of Hawai‘i?*, 156-8, 172-5, 209.

⁴ Atwood, *War and Empire*, 97-103.

Philippines (who were rudely waging guerrilla wars against the U.S.).”⁵

In line with a trend that commenced during the first decade of the 21st century, the histories that I have used above have been critical about the imperialist nature of America’s rapid overseas expansion in 1898. In *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*, Paul Kramer used the case of Philippine-American colonial history to observe that American Exceptionalism had played a part in the telling of the history of America’s colonial island empire. He wrote that the historiography suffered from three aspects: (1) “relying on the temporal exceptionalism of the 1890s,” (2) “the analytic subordination of formal to informal empire,” and (3) “the minimizing of American contacts with European colonial empires.”⁶ In 2009, Alfred McCoy and the contributors to the volume *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* moved past the question of whether the United States’ acquisitions of 1898 constituted an empire or whether it was any different from the empires of European powers and towards the question of how empire contributed to the nature of the modern America. To this end, *Colonial Crucible* defined the United States’ insular empire in two ways. First, it, “for a full decade after 1898, became Washington’s main national project.”⁷ Second, it was but one of three forms of American imperial activity,

⁵ Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 2.

⁶ Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 16.

⁷ Alfred W. McCoy, Francisco A. Scarano, and Courtney Johnson, “On the Tropic of Cancer: Transitions and Transformations in the U.S. Imperial State,” in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco Scarano (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 11.

succeeding “the settlement society empire of westward expansion” and coinciding with “the informal empire of trade and investment (the open door).”⁸ That it took essentially a century before the historiography shifted from American Exceptionalism to American Empire and its practical aspects is an example of the inertia that historians experience even though, as I aim to show in this essay, the historical actors that they are studying were quick to recognize changes in the state of their world.

Based on the historical sketch and against the historiographical backdrop that I have presented here, I will now analyze the American “national project” of 1898-1908 by using the representations of Hawai’i, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines in the political satire and humour magazine *Puck*.

America’s Colonial Island Empire in Puck

Samuel Thomas described *Puck* as “a valuable source for the critical study and teaching of reform activity during the Gilded Age and early Progressive era” (i.e., from about 1870 to the first decade of the 20th century).⁹ Between 1998 and 2004, Thomas produced scholarship that took advantage of this resource and highlighted the activism of the Mugwump cartoonists who worked for *Puck* against Tammany Hall.¹⁰ Of course, other themes that were top-of-mind appeared in

⁸ Ian Tyrrell, “Empire in American History,” in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco Scarano (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 546.

⁹ Samuel J. Thomas, “Maligning Poverty’s Prophet: Puck, Henry George and the New York Mayoral Campaign of 1886,” *Journal of American Culture* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 21.

¹⁰ See Samuel J. Thomas, “Holding the Tiger: Mugwump Cartoonists and Tammany Hall in Gilded Age New York,” *New York History* 82, no. 2 (April 2001): 155-82; and Samuel J. Thomas, “Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papacy, and Tammany Hall in America’s Gilded Age,” *Religion & American Culture* 14, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 213-50.

the pages of *Puck*. Michael Alexander Kahn and Richard Samuel West produced a visual history of *Puck* in 2014 and organized it according to the common subjects that the magazine tackled in its cartoons, such as presidential politics, governance, business and labour, foreign relations, race and religion, social issues, personalities, and others “just for fun.”¹¹ America’s colonial island empire does not feature prominently in Thomas’ work nor in the pages of Kahn and West’s history, but it interested the cartoonists of *Puck* during America’s imperial decade at the turn of the 20th century.

As early as 1895, *Puck* cartoonists like Louis Dalrymple, Udo J. Keppler, and J.S. Pugh had imagined the United States’ conquests, particularly of Cuba. In “Some time in the future” (July 10, 1895), Uncle Sam is comforting the “fair damsel” Cuba after, Dalrymple was predicting, “[i]nsurgent and Spaniard [in the background] have worn themselves out fighting.”¹² In “Uncle Sam’s dream of conquest and carnage—caused by reading the Jingo newspapers” (November 13, 1895), Keppler listed as one of these dreams “[a]nnexing all outlying countries” including Cuba and Hawaii [*sic*].¹³ In “She is getting too feeble to hold them” (November 18, 1896), Pugh chose Maria Christina (“she”) to represent Spain using all her strength to keep the diminutive figures of Cuba and Philippine Islands (“them”) in

¹¹ Michael Alexander Kahn and Richard Samuel West, *What Fools These Mortals Be! The Story of Puck: America’s First and Most Influential Magazine of Color Political Cartoons* (San Diego: IDW Publishing, 2014), 9.

¹² “Some time in the future,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012648643>. A similar portentous image appears in “The Cuban melodrama” (June 3, 1896) and in “It’s got to be sooner or later—and it looks like ‘sooner’” (April 27, 1898).

¹³ “Uncle Sam’s dream of conquest and carnage—caused by reading the Jingo newspapers,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012648579>.

line.¹⁴ These prognostications culminated right after the Spanish-American War broke out. In “No chance to criticize” (May 25, 1898; see Figure 1), Dalrymple put Uncle Sam in the company of other imperial powers during a feast of China pie, albeit in a separate table (and on a noticeably plusher chair) with a much smaller meal of a Cuba pastry, some Philippine Islands wine, and a bottle of Porto Rico [sic] champagne on ice. John Bull is admonishing his fellows: “What are you mad about? We can’t grudge him a light lunch while we are feasting!”¹⁵ There is still anxiety in the faces of the rest of the party, however. Whether or not the Great Powers were ready for it, the American imperial decade had begun.



Figure 1. “No chance to criticize” (May 25, 1898)

¹⁴ “She is getting too feeble to hold them,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012648489>.

¹⁵ “No chance to criticize,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012647567>.

1. School Begins

It would not be until the closing of the Spanish-American War that *Puck* cartoons would depict Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines together. "A trifle embarrassed" (August 3, 1898) shows Columbia and Uncle Sam receiving from the (literal) arms of Manifest Destiny four crying babies named Hawaii [sic], Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Philippine [sic] into the U.S. Foundling Asylum. Columbia looks inquisitive and welcoming, but Uncle Sam is rather hesitant: "Gosh! I wish they wouldn't come quite so many in a bunch; but, if I've got to take them, I guess I can do as well by them as I've done by the others!" By "the others," Uncle Sam means the four toddlers—Texas, New Mexico, Cal[ifornia], and, based on Udo J. Keppler's use of contrast in apparel and skin colour, Alaska—who are already inside the asylum playing a circle game.¹⁶ In "Uncle Sam's picnic" (September 28, 1898), Uncle Sam is helping little girls named Porto Rico [sic], Cuba, and Philippines (along with Ladrones, i.e., Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands) onto a wagon wherein Hawaii [sic] is already comfortably seated. Other children, most of them white, are also in the wagon waving American flags clearly meant to represent states and territories already in the Union. The girls are a few years older than the babies in "A trifle embarrassed," and Uncle Sam is definitely no longer embarrassed. Old Party, who is wearing a "Monroe Doctrine" tricorne, is worried: "Ain't ye takin' too many in, Sam?" Uncle Sam, flashing a wide smile, replies confidently: "No, Gran'pa; I reckon this team will be strong enough for them all!"¹⁷ In "School begins" (January 25, 1899; see Figure 2), Uncle Sam is teaching U.S. First Lessons in Self-Government to four boys or, more accurately, infantilized representations of the would-be leaders

¹⁶ "A trifle embarrassed," Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 5, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012647587>.

¹⁷ "Uncle Sam's picnic," Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 5, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012647475>.

Two patterns emerge from these three representations of the archipelagos that the United States acquired in 1898. First, *Puck* was looking to the past to describe America's new empire. It used Manifest Destiny in "A trifle embarrassed," the Monroe Doctrine in "Uncle Sam's picnic," and evocations to the British Empire and to the Civil War regarding consent to be governed in "School begins" to imply that the empire of 1898 fell within the existing program of American expansion. The visual cue that *Puck* used to show this was other children representing other states that had joined the Union up to that point in the United States' territorial evolution. Second, *Puck* was echoing the ostensibly tutelary nature of American imperialism. *Puck's* representations of the four archipelagos as babies, toddlers, school-aged children, or infantilized adults attests to the magazine's belief in the United States government's own view that these acquisitions needed to be nurtured for assimilation, if not immediately for self-government. Indeed, two other cartoons show the same representations. One shows Uncle Sam and Columbia distributing gifts shaped as symbols of democracy from "Our Christmas tree" (December 27, 1899).¹⁹ The other, which appeared after the 1900 U.S. Presidential elections, declares "Hurrah! The country is saved again!" (November 11, 1900) because of William McKinley's defeat of his anti-imperialist challenger William Jennings Bryan.²⁰ "Who will haul it down?" (January 11, 1899; see Figure 3) was even more direct in such projections. In this cartoon, Louis Dalrymple represented Hawaii [*sic*], Porto Rico [*sic*], Cuba, and Philippine Islds. (along with "Ladrones Islds.") as literal islands onto which disproportionately large American flags are planted. He quoted the speech that

¹⁹ "Our Christmas tree," Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed May 1, 2018, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012647395>.

²⁰ "Hurrah! The country is saved again!," Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed January 31, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010651346>.

President McKinley delivered in Savannah, GA, on December 17, 1898:

Can we leave these people who, by the fortunes of war and our own acts, are helpless without government, to chaos after we have destroyed the only government they have had? After destroying their government it is the duty of the American Government to provide for them a better one. Shall we distrust ourselves? Shall we proclaim to the world our inability to give kindly government to oppressed peoples whose future by the victories of war is confided to us? We may wish it were otherwise, but who will question our duty now?²¹

Paul Kramer criticized historians for having projected the view of American colonialism as ambivalent, tutelary, and democratic backwards onto historical actors, but *Puck's* initial cartoons on America's colonial island empire shows that such projection had been happening since the end of the Spanish-American War.²²

²¹ "Who will haul it down," Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed May 1, 2018, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012647455>.

²² Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, 17-18.



Figure 3. “Who will haul it down” (January 11, 1899)

Racial elements also featured in *Puck*'s representation of America's colonial island empire. The cartoonists used physical markers of race such as skin colour, facial structure, hairstyle, and even garb to contrast Hawaiians, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Filipinos (as well as Guamanians in “Uncle Sam's Picnic” and African Americans, Indigenous peoples, and the Chinese in “School begins”) to the white man while also minimizing the differences between these four nations and grouping them together into a generic racial “Other.” The overt contrast between white and non-white, and the lack thereof between the four colonized peoples makes it easy to detect *Puck*'s attempt to link race to empire.²³ However, *Puck* did not rely solely on physical markers to make this linkage. Here, Paul Kramer's work on race and empire again provides context. The “white man's burden,” Kramer claimed, is emblematic of the traditional historiography of race and American colonialism, but several of

²³ This has links to popular and “scientific” discourses that traded on the supposed homogeneity of non-Caucasians, especially in early anthropology. See the theories of, among others, Herbert Spencer and Lewis Henry Morgan.

Puck's cartoons clearly preceded historians in using the concept to portray contemporary historical actors.²⁴ “For once, science and religion agree” (September 7, 1898) shows Senator Chauncey M. Depew and “The Great Agnostic” Robert G. Ingersoll in a contorted embrace, pointing to quotes that characterize American imperialist activities as the introduction of civilization. Udo J. Keppler picked a quote from each of Depew and Ingersoll. According to Depew, God decreed that the United States “teach [its] civilization to those who are falling under [its] protectorate”; according to Ingersoll, Survival of the Fittest declared that the United States should keep its acquisitions because Americans are a superior race that can, among other things, enlighten Puerto Ricans and better manage Manila Bay.²⁵ “Horrible nightmare of a worthy old gentleman” (May 23, 1900; see Figure 4) shows Senator G. F. Hoar having a troubled sleep because of a quote from Republican state platforms written on his bedroom wall: “We have faith in American patriotism, character, and capacity, and we know that American government will extend the inestimable blessings of freedom, law, and civilization to the peoples who are brought under our protection.” Here, Keppler drew a framed image of Emilio Aguinaldo above Hoar’s bed, implying that what was then called the Philippine Insurrection was the source of the nightmares.²⁶

²⁴ Paul A. Kramer, “Race, Empire, and Transnational History,” in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco Scarano (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 199.

²⁵ “For once, science and religion agree,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 5, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012647468>.

²⁶ “Horrible nightmare of a worthy old gentleman,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 5, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010651278>.

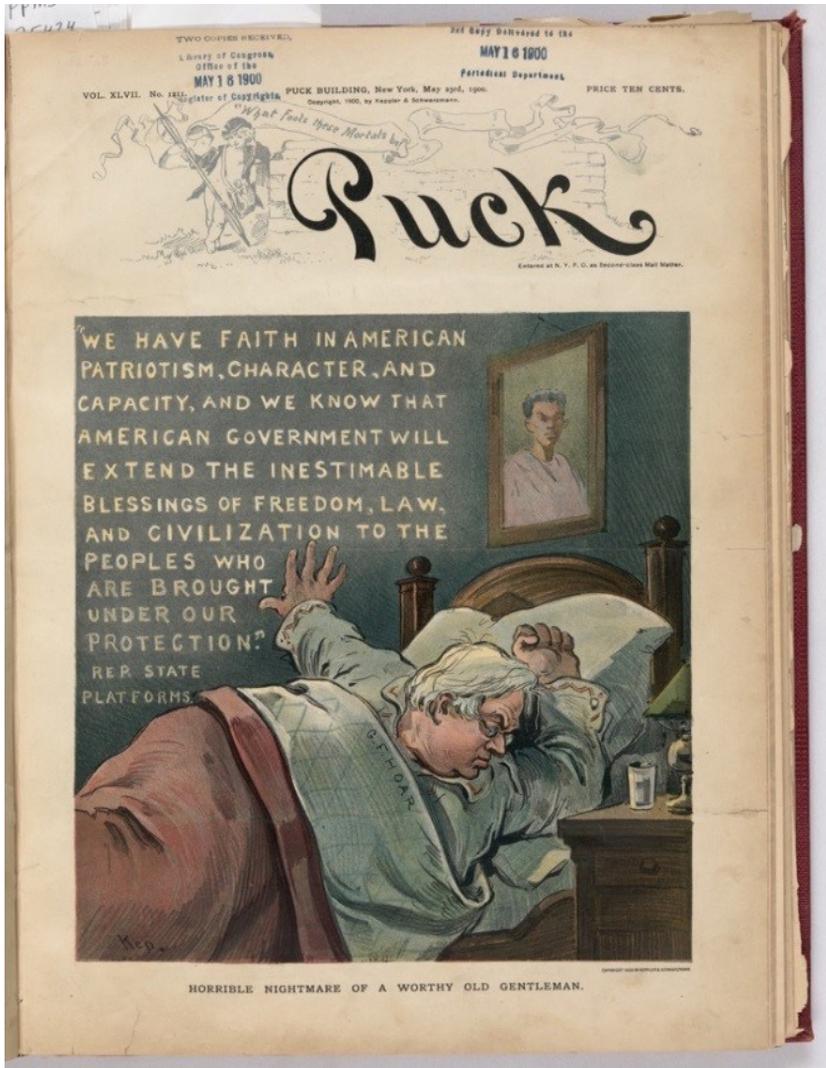


Figure 4. "Horrible nightmare of a worthy old gentleman" (May 23, 1900)

Puck's portrayal of the American colonial island empire eventually became celebratory in 1901, anticipating eventual victory in what is now called the Philippine-American War. Uncle Sam toasted to "A Happy new year!" (January 2, 1901) and "to the health of my boys

in all parts of the earth!” Sheets of paper stuffed under a punch bowl contain messages like “greetings of the season” for Puerto Rico and “willing to stay till the work is done” for Manila and the rest of the Philippines Islands.²⁷ Ultimately, on “July 4th, 1901” (July 3, 1901; see Figure 5), an American Eagle, emblazoned in lights, stands over her eyrie of four young, one for each of the insular acquisitions, with fireworks unironically spelling out “FREEDOM” in the background.²⁸

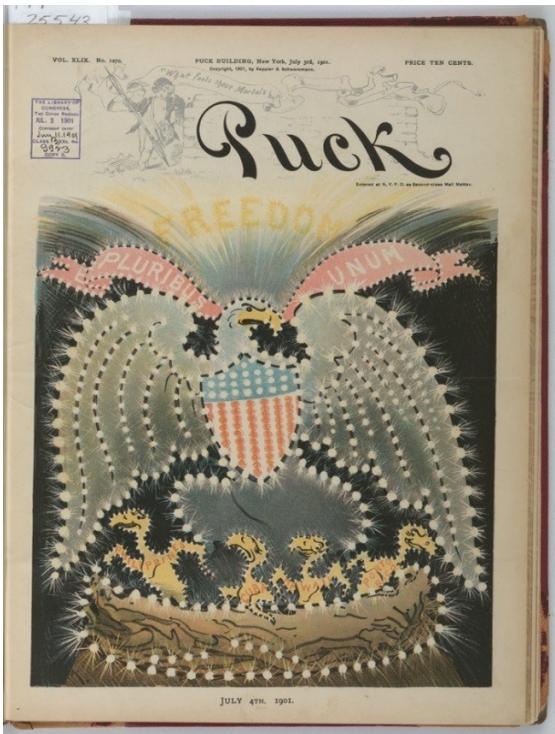


Figure 5. “July 4th, 1901” (July 3, 1901)

²⁷ “A Happy new year!,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed January 31, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010651360>.

²⁸ “July 4th, 1901,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed January 31, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010651441>.

2. A Question of Duty

After William McKinley died on September 14, 1901, from injury and infection caused by an assassin's bullets, *Puck* put the "white man's burden" squarely onto Theodore Roosevelt, who, for his part, established his aims for each of the United States' insular acquisitions from 1898. Roosevelt delivered his first annual message to the Senate and House of Representatives as President of the United States on December 3, 1901. He indicated the already fuller assimilation into the United States of Hawai'i and Puerto Rico relative to Cuba and the Philippines, both of which still posed lingering questions. On Hawai'i, Roosevelt wrote: "[O]ur aim must be to develop the Territory on the traditional American lines;" and, on Puerto Ricans, he wrote: "Their material welfare must be as carefully and jealously considered as the welfare of any other portion of our country." By contrast, on Cuba, Roosevelt brought up the issue of independence and the accompanying question of trade reciprocity. On the Philippines, however, Roosevelt admitted that the "problem is larger" and the amount of space he allocated in his message to this problem—he wrote three times as many words in his message about the Philippines as he wrote about Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, and Cuba combined—testified as much.²⁹

The inattention that *Puck* showed to Hawai'i and Puerto Rico during Roosevelt's presidency uncannily reflected the space that Roosevelt allocated to these islands in his first annual message to Congress. Hawai'i and Puerto Rico disappeared almost completely from *Puck* cartoons between 1902 and 1909, an indication of the almost complete resolution of the immediate imperial questions that each of these two territories posed to the United States. When they did

²⁹ Theodore Roosevelt, "First Annual Message," The American Presidency Project, accessed February 11, 2019, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/first-annual-message-16>. Roosevelt delivered all eight of his annual messages to Congress in written form rather than as speeches.

appear in a *Puck* cartoon, the cartoonists no longer portrayed Hawai'i and Puerto Rico as part of America's colonial island empire of 1898. The last time that Hawai'i appeared in a *Puck* cartoon before a 1907 cartoon that reunited the four archipelagos was in "A false alarm on the fourth" (July 2, 1902; Figure 6). In this cartoon, children representing different states and territories of the United States, including Hawai'i (unnamed but implied) and Porto Rico [sic], are playing around with explosives to celebrate Independence Day. Peace, an angel, is visibly concerned, but Uncle Sam reassures her that "It's all right! There's no fighting! The noise you hear is just my family celebrating!" A child resembling Emilio Aguinaldo is struggling to scale the wall to join in on the fun while a child representing Cuba is presumably behind the same wall, symbolic of these two colonies' unsettled cases.³⁰ Puerto Rico appeared two more times before the 1907 reunion cartoon. In "His 128th birthday" (June 29, 1904), an American Eagle stands over a globe, stretching its wings towards Panama (replacing Cuba) and the Philippines, with Puerto Rico relegated to the background and Hawai'i missing.³¹ Within the span of two years, "A false alarm in the fourth" assimilated Hawai'i and Puerto Rico and then "His 128th birthday" overlooked them. Similarly, in his eighth annual message to the Congress on December 8, 1908, Roosevelt only discussed improvements of Hawaiian harbours and simply recommended "that American citizenship be conferred upon the people of Porto Rico" [sic].³²

³⁰ "A false alarm on the fourth," Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed May 6, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010652033>.

³¹ "His 128th birthday," Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed May 6, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011645546>.

³² Theodore Roosevelt, "Eighth Annual Message," The American Presidency Project, accessed February 11, 2019, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/eighth-annual-message-4>.



Figure 6. “A false alarm on the fourth” (July 2, 1902)

Meanwhile, *Puck* prominently used the theme of commerce to describe the situations in Cuba and in the Philippines during the early part of Roosevelt’s presidency. Eight of the nine *Puck* cartoons regarding Cuba that appeared between 1902 and 1903 referred to trade reciprocity. The first four depicted the opposition of the American sugar industry to the tariff reductions that a reciprocity treaty would have afforded Cuban sugar growers. In “Cuba’s opportunity” (January 29, 1902), a woman trying to bring sugar cane into the United States asks an American sugar grower: “Why not let me in? Porto Rico [sic] is inside.” The sugar grower, in an aggressive pose and a similarly aggressive tone, responds: “She didn’t come in this gate. She went through the other one (i.e., annexation)—and I can’t control *that!*”³³ This discourse culminated in “Cuba’s choice” (August 2, 1902), which suggested that “[e]vents are fast limiting

³³ “Cuba’s opportunity,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed January 31, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010651559>.

[Cuba] to one path,” that is, annexation rather than reciprocity.³⁴ The latter four reciprocity cartoons showed Roosevelt taking on various personas navigating the issue, the last being “[t]he good samaritan” [*sic*] (November 11, 1903) trying to revive an anthropomorphic representation of the Cuban Reciprocity Treaty.³⁵

In the same vein, five of the more numerous cartoons regarding the Philippines that appeared during the Roosevelt presidency referred to the debate between tariffs and free trade. The first and most evocative of these five was “A question of duty” (February 4, 1903; see Figure 7), wherein Roosevelt is instructing Uncle Sam in a U.S. Custom House on the contrast between reciprocity with Cuba, free trade with Porto Rico [*sic*], and prohibitive tariffs on Philippine products: “You’ve been fair to the other two. Now, keep faith with this one.”³⁶ Two of the other four cartoons—“The Philippine Oliver asks for more” (December 3, 1903) and “Oh, Mother, may I go out to swim?” (January 24, 1906)—reiterated the racial component of the relations between Filipinos and Americans, while the other two—“Back from Bololand” (September 27, 1905) and “Upholding the honor of the American flag” (April 4, 1906)—showed the opportunities that the annexation of the Philippines afforded

³⁴ “Cuba’s choice,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 7, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010652150>. In between “Cuba’s opportunity” and “Cuba’s choice”, *Puck* also published “The proposed concession to Cuba” (March 26, 1902) and “Frightened” (May 7, 1902).

³⁵ “The good samaritan,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 7, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010652317>.

³⁶ “A question of duty,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 7, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010652212>. This also counts as one of the four Cuban reciprocity cartoons in which Roosevelt played different personas. Aside from “The good samaritan,” *Puck* also published “A volunteer crew wanted” (October 8, 1902) with Roosevelt as a fisherman and “A strenuous job on the Cuban ranch” (December 17, 1902) with Roosevelt as a cowboy.

American capitalists.³⁷ All five, nonetheless, showed the difficult economic position in which the United States had put the Filipino people.

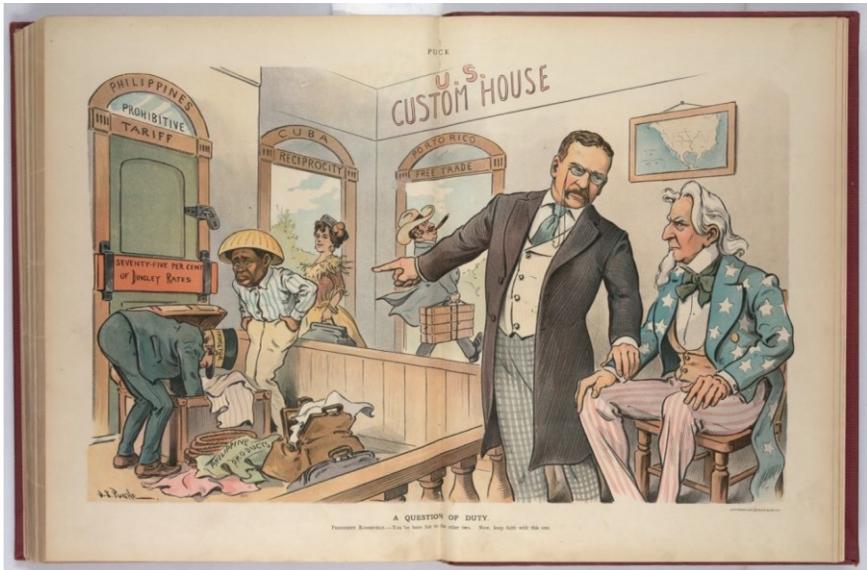


Figure 7. “A question of duty” (February 4, 1903)

Puck also paid attention to the Philippine struggle for independence that the United States had interrupted. Several cartoons appeared at the beginning of Roosevelt’s presidency and reflected on the

³⁷ “The Philippine Oliver asks for more,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010652326>; “Oh, Mother, may I go out to swim?,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011645809>; “Back from Bololand,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011645739>; “Upholding the honor of the American flag,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/201164582>

Philippine-American War. For example, “It’s ‘up to’ them” (November 20, 1901) shows an ostensibly generous, but, in reality, menacing Uncle Sam offering a no-longer-infantilized Emilio Aguinaldo a choice between soldiers (i.e., continued conflict) and teachers (i.e., universal education and peace).³⁸ Then, “Christmas in our new possessions” (December 24, 1902), calls back to Uncle Sam’s offer of education with a Santa Claus, who is “glad to oblige Uncle Sam,” offering books to a Filipino child depicted in a racialized fashion.³⁹ “What would Lincoln do?” (September 28, 1904) showed Roosevelt visibly pained by, among others, the Philippine petition for freedom.⁴⁰ “Trouble ahead for the trainer” (March 8, 1905; see Figure 8) showed Roosevelt trying to wrangle circus creatures representing political issues such as the Philippine question.⁴¹ Roosevelt struggled with this question until his final message to Congress:

[N]o one can prophesy the exact date when it will be wise to consider independence as a fixed and definite policy. It would be worse than folly to try to set down such a date in advance, for it must depend upon the way in which the

³⁸ “It’s ‘up to’ them,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 7, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010651486>; William McKinley had previously made a similar offer of peace in “Through peace to happiness” (September 20, 1899). See also “Wireless telegraphy” (February 26, 1902), “The flag must ‘stay put’” (June 4, 1902), and “Still scolding” (January 20, 1904).

³⁹ “Christmas in our new possessions,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 7, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010652192>.

⁴⁰ “What would Lincoln do?,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 5, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011645572>. See also “The last straw” (October 19, 1904).

⁴¹ “Trouble ahead for the trainer,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 6, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011645682>.

Philippine people themselves develop the power of self-mastery.⁴²

This is in contrast to Roosevelt essentially closing the book on the American occupation of Cuba in the message and, concurrently, *Puck* completely ignoring Cuba's own independence question and subsuming it into the issue of reciprocity.

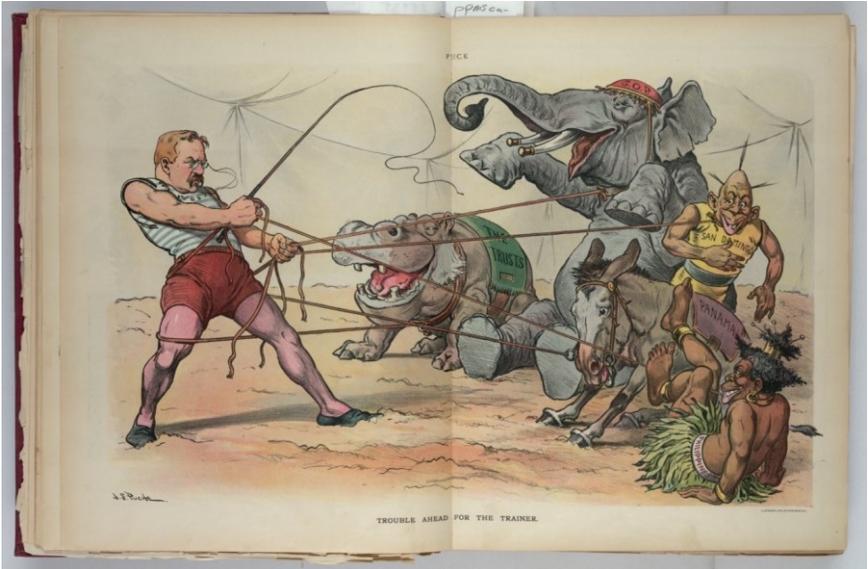


Figure 8. “Trouble ahead for the trainer” (March 8, 1905)

Puck would once again represent Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines together in one cartoon in “When Taft is president” (May 8, 1907; see Figure 9). It shows a globetrotting William Howard Taft—Governor-General of the Philippines from 1901 to 1903 and Roosevelt's handpicked successor for the Republican nomination—visiting each of the four archipelagos (plus Guam).⁴³ That each of

⁴² Roosevelt, “Eighth Annual Message.”

⁴³ “When Taft is president,” Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, accessed June 6, 2017,

the four has its own White House implies that they will remain a burden to the United States even after Theodore Roosevelt leaves office.

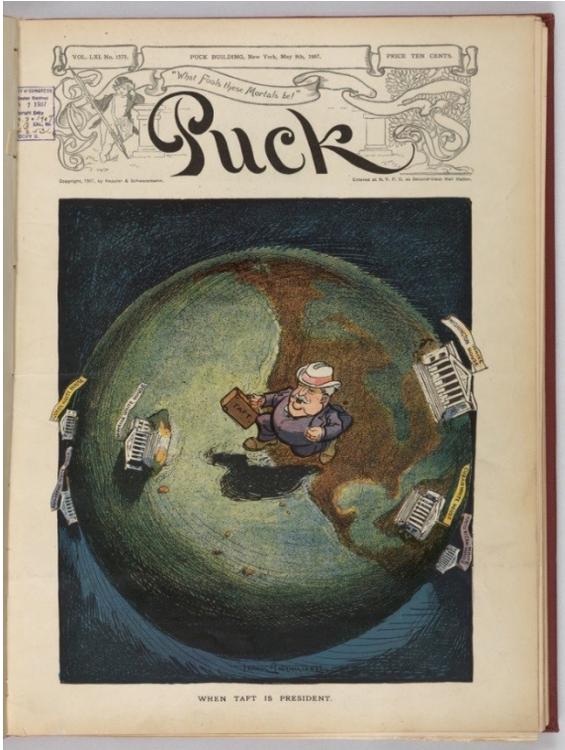


Figure 9. "When Taft is president" (May 8, 1907)

Conclusion

I explored in this essay how the American political satire and humour magazine *Puck* told a visual history through cartoons of the United States' imperial decade at the turn of the 20th century. *Puck* used William McKinley and Uncle Sam to symbolize and comment on the

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011647200>. Taft had previously appeared in *Puck* as "our foremost Filipino" in "Back from Bololand."

imperialist ambitions of the United States, which culminated in the annexation of Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines in 1898 into an American colonial island empire. However, during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, *Puck* deftly disentangled the erstwhile-unified visual representations of the four archipelagos in the aftermath of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars when the questions that the islands posed to the United States became resolved or evolved from abstract ideas of race and *civilisatrice* to more concrete and pressing issues of trade, commerce, governance, and independence.

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