
RANSCULTURAL REPRESENTATIO
OF LATINIDAD

A Textbook of Americanism: Richard Harding Davis's *Soldiers of Fortune*

> [T]he United States of America—bounded on the north by the North Pole; on the south by the Antarctic Region; on the east by the first chapter of the Book of Genesis and on the west by the Day of Judgment . . . The Supreme Ruler of the Universe . . . has marked out the line this nation must follow and our duty must be done. America is destined to become the Light of the world.
>
> —Arthur Bird, *Looking Forward* (1899)

When Richard Harding Davis died in 1916, ex-President Theodore Roosevelt wrote in *Scribner's Magazine*: "He was as good an American as ever lived and his heart flamed against cruelty and injustice. His writings form a text-book of Americanism which all our people would do well to read at the present time" (Roosevelt, "Davis and the Rough Riders" 89). Davis's biographers disagree on the nature of the personal relationship between these two men, which dates from the late 1890s when Davis, then a correspondent for William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*, was reporting the Spanish-American War from the vantage point afforded by his attachment to the Rough Riders. The mutual admiration between Davis and Roosevelt is indicative of their engagement in a common project of exuberant nationalism in which writing, history, and politics intersect in order to redefine U.S. national identity primarily through the terms of its new role as a world power and its relationship with the rest of the western hemisphere.

Davis, the son of writer Rebecca Harding Davis, was born in Philadelphia in 1864. He began his journalistic career in Philadelphia and later moved to

work for several New York newspapers. He traveled extensively in and reported from Mexico, Central America, Cuba, and other Caribbean countries, which eventually became the backdrop for his travel books, novels, and dramas. In this study, I will discuss the function of his work, especially his 1897 novel *Soldiers of Fortune*, in the textualization of Latin America for the U.S. imagination, in the fictionalization of the Monroe Doctrine, and in the construction of what Roosevelt called "Americanism" as a symbol of U.S. national identity in a hemispheric context. In the 1840s, the United States became a model of success to be imitated by the emergent southern republics; at that time, however, the U.S. notion of Americanism was still a question of asserting cultural independence from Europe and, at least for intellectuals, rarely involved a consciousness of Latin America's role in New World relations. In the following five decades, contacts between the Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic cultures increased, both through the westward expansion of the United States on the North American subcontinent and its increased political and economic interests in the Caribbean and Central America. Because of these historical developments, the nineteenth century drew to a close with a greater mutual awareness between the Americas, often expressed in terms of fear or defiance on the Latin American side and of power and superiority on the U.S. side.

The meaning of Americanism was also modified. While it retained the connotations of political and cultural independence from Europe that lay behind the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 and Emerson's essay "The American Scholar" in 1837, Roosevelt's notion of Americanism, as defined in his speeches and writings of the 1890s, was also "broad adhesion to the whole nation," conceived as a monolithic entity in contrast to the anarchy and fragmentation of a South America he considered "a squabbling multitude of revolution-ridden States, not one of which stands even in the second rank as a power" (Roosevelt, *American Ideals* 19–26). National identity for the United States was—and continues to be—a function of existing in between two worlds: Europe and the other America.

Roosevelt's definition of Americanism against both Europe and Latin America was also consistent with his commitment to the Monroe Doctrine. To this would-be President, his country was like a woman in need of a defender "to stand up manfully for her when her honor and influence are at stake in a dispute with a foreign power" (241), and the Monroe Doctrine was the weapon to protect her against her potential enemies. This kind of gendered rhetoric exalting maleness and the "strenuous life" was also present in José Martí's calls for "una respuesta unánime y viril" [a virile and unanimous response] on the part of Latin America as a form of resistance to the advance of the U.S. empire (Martí, *Nuestra América* 48).[1] The original text of President Monroe's 1823 address reflects an intent to preserve the uniqueness of the American republican

system and to prevent European powers from extending their colonial possessions in the New World:

> The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America . . . It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can any one believe that our Southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition, in any form, with indifference. (Showman 13–14)

However, after Monroe's administration, the Doctrine had gained increasing acceptance as a justification of U.S. interference in Latin America's internal affairs. This interpretation culminated with the Roosevelt Corollary of 1904, which declared that

> chronic wrong-doing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and, in the Western Hemisphere, the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrong-doing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power. (Showman 34)

The Monroe Doctrine ultimately drove a wedge in U.S.–Latin American relations. The southern republics interpreted it as a gesture promising U.S. protection against European encroachment on their territory; when these expectations went repeatedly unfulfilled (Perkins 54, 63), and the unilateral character of the Doctrine was established, what was regarded in the South as a possible instrument of unification became a provocation and a cause for resentment (Selser 24; Fabela 11–12; Whitaker 37). I agree, however, with Richard Collin's assertion that the idea of a unified western hemisphere was always an illusion (Collin 5). As Lester Langley writes, "For the United States the Monroe Doctrine ultimately assumed the lofty status of first principle of the nation's foreign policy; for Latin America it became the distortion of the Bolivarian dream by an acquisitive United States" (Langley 52). The reactions varied from country to country. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, just as the United States was paying closer attention to Latin America, Argentina began to tighten its ties with Europe and to reject North American influence. In the 1880s, Irigoyen and Alberdi, among others, voiced alarm at U.S. expansionism (McGann 105, 97). But Argentina was too far away to have cause for real concern. As President Pellegrini wrote, "the Yankee empire will have as its bounds the *aurora borealis* in the north, the equator in the south, the rising sun in the east, and the immensity of the west. Lucky for us they are stopping for the present at the equator" (quoted in McGann 187).

Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America fared differently. Their geographical proximity placed them in danger of real aggression. By the end of the century, with the end of western expansion in North America, Manifest Destiny was redirected toward noncontiguous territories and new forms of empire, including "infinite expansion without colonial annexation, total control through the abdication of political rule, [and] the disembodiment of national power from geographical boundaries" (Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire" 671). Indeed, contemporary historians are exploring the similarities between frontier-building and empire-building and viewing turn-of-the-century imperialism as a special type of frontier expansionism (Nugent). Because Richard Harding Davis's novel deals with situations reminiscent of events taking place in Cuba at the time, it will be important, throughout this study, to juxtapose his views with the discourse of Cuban and Central American intellectuals who felt directly affected by the political effects of the ideology Davis's work espoused.

The changes in the history of the Monroe Doctrine force us to consider the United States' use of the term "America" in the light of the reactions which began to arise toward the end of the century. From early on, both Anglo- and Spanish-Americans associated the exclusive appropriation of the term by the United States with the Monroe Doctrine: "The United States have a proper name by which all the world knows and calls them. The proper name of the country is America . . . the fact is significant, and foretells for the people of the United States a continental destiny, as is also foreshadowed in the so-called 'Monroe Doctrine'" (Brownson 63). Though written in 1865, these words had the same force at the turn of the century when, more than ever, "America" was erected as a potent, virile U.S. empire. In one of the first Latin American books written about the Monroe Doctrine, the Cuban historian José María Céspedes maintained that it was necessary to read between the lines of the President's address, and that "America for the Americans" actually meant "América para los americanos del Norte" [America for North Americans] (Céspedes 218). Later on, when commenting on Secretary of State Frelinghuysen's 1882 assertion that the decision about American affairs rested with America, the Mexican scholar Isidro Fabela asked:

> Al decir América, ¿se refería a los Estados Unidos? Parece ser que sí, pues es de observarse que cuando los estadounidenses hablan de América, casi siempre designan con este término a los Estados Unidos. Como si las veinte repúblicas restantes no constituyeran la mayor parte de América, o como si todas ellas pertenecieran a Estados Unidos. (Fabela 172)

> [When he said America, was he referring to the United States? It seems so, for it must be observed that when the people of the United States speak of America, they almost

always designate the United States with that term. As if the other twenty republics did not constitute the largest part of America, or as if they all belonged to the United States.]

Thus the greater mutual awareness did not bring the Americas closer. "America" became an increasingly divisive term, counteracted by José Martí's coinage of "our" America (1891) and José Enrique Rodó's exposition of the seemingly irreconcilable differences between the two major American cultures in *Ariel* (1900).

It was in this political climate, and alluding directly to these issues, that *Soldiers of Fortune* was published. The novel's protagonist, Robert Clay, is an engineer hired by Mr. Langham, a wealthy entrepreneur, to extract ore from the mines he owns in an imaginary Central American country called Olancho and to transport it to the United States. A military attempt to overthrow the current President, Mr. Alvarez, and restore control of the mines to the government of Olancho, disrupts Langham's plans. Clay single-handedly restores freedom and democracy to the country, thus preserving the economic interests of his employer, whose daughter he marries. At the end, Clay returns to the United States with his bride and becomes a member of the social elite to which the Langhams belong.

Many of Davis's works are unilaterally concerned with how the United States perceives its southern neighbors, and his treatment of Hispanic culture contains flaws that betray his lack of thorough knowledge of the language and culture (Porter 560–61). But this was not a problem for his audience, who always found more interest in his life than in his work, even though *Soldiers of Fortune* was an enormous literary success and was eventually turned into a play and a movie.[2]

The critical approaches to Richard Harding Davis have been dominated by the assumption that the history of the period developed as though following a script prearranged by him. It has been suggested that "the Rough Riders were an incarnation of Richard's conception of soldiers" (Langford 198), that "the Spanish-American War might best be described by saying that it could have occurred in one of Richard's novels" (Langford 193), and that "the war then looming was merely an elaboration of Davis's *Soldiers of Fortune*" (Hyde 97). Frederic Hyde credits this novel with having directly influenced United States–Latin American relations:

The disdain shown in it for members of the Latin race probably had something to do with the fact that American troops, when they landed in Cuba, soon decided their allies, the Cuban insurgents, were "worthless." And *Soldiers of Fortune*, as much as any novel of its time, seems to have prepared the way for that North American exploitation of the so-called "banana republics" which in the first years of the 20th Century was to sow seeds of distrust for "Yankee imperialism." (134–35)

My own approach takes its point of departure from the premise that the representation of identity and otherness in *Soldiers of Fortune* reflects the practices described by Edward Said as "Orientalizing":

> The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of a written statement about the Orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend, on the Orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is a presence to the reader by virtue of its having excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such *real thing* as "the Orient." (Said 21)

Said's theory refers primarily to underlying cultural assumptions in works about the "Orient"; Davis himself consciously nourished the presumption that the Latin American reality had taken a backseat to his fiction. When he visited Central America in 1895 he had already written *Soldiers of Fortune*, though it would not be published until 1897, and in his letters home he expressed his surprise "to find how true my novel was to what really exists here" (C. B. Davis 143). On his return to Cuba in 1897, he described the island as the setting of *Soldiers of Fortune* and related his visit to various imaginary places mentioned in the book. "It is just like the description in that remarkable novel of mine," he wrote to his mother (195). And, while covering the Spanish-American War in 1898, he discovered that the heroic feats he narrated in his fiction presented a more readily acceptable vision of U.S. heroism than the performance of the army, which he described as amateurish (246).

At the same time, during his extensive and frequent travels, Davis dismissed the opportunity to obtain firsthand knowledge of Latin America in favor of previous literary descriptions of it. He said he shunned direct contact with the people of the countries he visited, though he frequently blamed this on Latin Americans' distrust and unwelcoming attitude towards North Americans (145). Rather than describing his experiences to his family, he referred them to previous readings: "It is pretty much as you imagine it is from what you have read, that covers it, and I have discovered nothing new by coming to see it. I only verify what others have seen" (143). His fiction drew upon and reinforced pre-existing literary stereotypes, offering "the sayings of others about the other" (de Certeau 68) to his U.S. audience as a filter for the understanding of Spanish America and, at the same time—echoing Roosevelt's definition of Americanism—creating an image of the United States as a powerful, virile, unified nation that depended on those contrasting stereotypes to be believable. Davis's validation of his experience in Latin America through the authority of previous writings by himself and others places his own work in dialogue with western literary tradition about the Oriental, the primitive, and the barbarian; at the same time, his experience of writing translates and mediates the extratextual reality, subordinating its existence to the fiction, and ultimately seeking to obliterate it. As Said writes, "It seems a common human failing to prefer the

schematic authority of a text to the disorientations of direct encounters with the human" (Said 93). Yet while what Said describes is the traveler's "disappointment that the modern Orient is not at all like the texts" (100), in Davis's letters we find a disappointment precisely in the fact that the other America *is* the texts. Mutual contact between the Americas has always been mediated by a textual barrier through which representations of Latin America have penetrated the U.S. imagination as the exotic spot for vacations and shopping sprees or the dangerous region of illegal drugs and chronic revolutions, only at the expense of being silenced, and having national differences suppressed. In the early 1880s, José Martí, then living in the United States, had noticed an increasing respect for Latin America in the press, and a diminished number of allusions to the political instability of countries that were beginning to arise from social strife through hard work and technological progress (Martí, *Nuestra América* 12). Davis's work gave new validity to those stereotypes, proclaiming that any advancement made in Latin America had been brought about by U.S. expertise.

For Edward Said, "such texts can *create* not only knowledge but also the reality they appear to describe" (Said 94). Davis's story goes further: Olancho, the setting of *Soldiers of Fortune*, is literally an imaginary country, a conscious attempt to create the Latin America that best conformed to his own preconceptions and that best served the political ideology he supported. Much of the attention *Soldiers of Fortune* received was directed toward proving the real basis for the fiction, which in turn sought to validate it as history (Edeson; Porter). Similarly, in nineteenth-century Latin America "they went so far as considering narrative to *be* history; and several issued calls to literary action as part of the nation-building campaign . . . All this assumes that literature has the capacity to intervene in history, to help construct it" (Sommer 9–10). But as Doris Sommer also points out, this was possible because Latin American fiction and politics were inseparable, as the writers often were also politicians and even presidents (4–5); in the United States, where the two tend to be divorced, the task of connecting national imaginings to political realities has traditionally fallen to the journalist, and *Soldiers of Fortune* was the most successful novel of a very well-known one. Its serialization in newspapers, together with Davis's other non-fiction works on Latin American themes—*Three Gringos in Venezuela and Central America* (1896), *Cuba in War Time* (1897), and *The Cuban and Porto Rican Campaigns* (1898)—probably contributed to the blurring of the line between fiction and history.[3]

Much has been written about the geographical basis for *Soldiers of Fortune* and its characters' real-life counterparts. Weimer is based on the American Consul in Cuba, Otto E. Reimer, and MacWilliams on David Kirkpatrick, the engineer of the Juragua Iron Company (Osborn and Phillips 50). W. H. Porter provides a map and a detailed description of the locale, which he identifies as

a faithful reproduction, inverted, of the territory from Santiago to Siboney in the island of Cuba. Fairfax Downey tells of how during the Spanish-American War it was suggested that a copy of *Soldiers of Fortune* be given to every member of the Fifth Army Corps, so accurately were the scenes of the novel taken from that country, and ventures that "Davis was about to campaign in one of his own fiction settings" (Downey 151).

But the imaginary country of *Soldiers of Fortune* also has a "generic" quality that allows it to stand for any place in Latin America—to Davis, there were no meaningful differences between one country and another. In his letters home from Central America he recorded the monotony of the region: "we will probably . . . not visit another Republic. We have all travelled too much to care to duplicate, and that is what we would be doing by remaining longer in Central America" (C. B. Davis 147). Similarly, those characters in *Soldiers of Fortune* who are familiar with Latin America are bored with it; the rest are ignorant. The novel opens with a scene in which two ladies are talking about Robert Clay, who is said to have been "in New Mexico, or Old Mexico, I don't remember which" (R. H. Davis, *Soldiers of Fortune* 1).[4] Mr. Langham describes Olancho to his daughter as "one of those little republics down there" (25). The place is predictable and uninteresting to those who are more familiar with the region: "King knew what the capital would be like before he entered it, from his experience of other South American cities" (103). As they did for Davis himself, his characters' preconceptions blind them to the authenticity of experience.

According to William Ellis, "It was common in the nineteenth century to see one's national culture as unique and to contrast it to the rest of the world (often seen as an undifferentiated mass)" (Ellis 98). Yet in Davis's work the United States is also undifferentiated. Thus the novel glosses over the differences among Latin American nations at the same time as it makes its case for Anglo-Saxon homogeneity in the United States, a monolithic vision of citizenship that clashes with the cultural reality of the North American social body. The images were effective for political reasons: as Perkins suggests, "The American people . . . have believed, and they have frequently been told by their leaders, that their government was the most democratic, their institutions the most perfect, in the world" (Perkins 1). The persuasive power of Davis's book lies in its reinforcement of these tenets of North American national identity; the allegory of U.S. hemispheric control embodied in the strong, handsome, virile hero of *Soldiers of Fortune* was as seductive as the eroticism that dominated the plots of nineteenth-century Latin American national novels (Sommer 31).

Roosevelt's practice of defining U.S. Americanism in opposition to "a contemptible knot of struggling nationalities" (Roosevelt *American Ideals* 3) was typical of the period and coincided with Davis's project. The fragmentation

and instability of the socially and politically divided Latin America depicted in Davis's fiction provided the United States with a powerful contrast to cement the illusion of its own post–Civil War unity and strength at a time when the country

> was not nearly as unified a colossus as it appeared. Congress represented a vast sea of separate American local interests, and until the 1890s the president was a relatively weak political figure who superintended the division of national party spoils in a nation that had little foreign policy and little interest in foreign affairs. (Collin xi)

In addition, by showing how a strong North American figure could easily bring law and order to war-torn Olancho, Davis's novel reassured readers of the imaginary political stability and racial homogeneity of their country, populated and governed by a "civilized" white majority. The work reinforced North American exceptionalism, embodied in what Nicolás Shumway has termed the "guiding fictions" which "give individuals a sense of nation" (Shumway xi): the Monroe Doctrine, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, Manifest Destiny, and the Civil War.

Davis's fictional and travel writings respond to his impression that Latin America by itself could never be appealing to a U.S. audience unless the story involved North Americans:

> Up to date I think the trip will make a good story but it will have to be a personal one about the three of us for the country as it stands is uninteresting to the general reader for the reason that it *duplicates* itself in everything. But with our photographs and a humorous story, it ought to be worth reading and I have picked enough curious things to make it of some value. (C. B. Davis 155)

Like the travel book that resulted from these experiences, *Soldiers of Fortune* depends on the Anglo-Saxon hero for its success, grounded in the author's complicity with readers of his own culture whose assumptions about North American superiority and Latin American inferiority are not challenged. The novel is ultimately about Robert Clay and his friends; Olancho is seen through Clay's eyes, and the Olanchoans are secondary characters who speak in the same register as Clay does, a unitary language that stands in direct opposition to what Bakhtin terms "heteroglossia," and which effectively silences native voices and suppresses their difference. Yet, as Bakhtin argues,

> [E]ven when heteroglossia remains outside the novel, when the novelist comes forward with his own unitary and fully affirming language (without any distancing, refraction or qualifications) he knows that such language is not self-evident and is not in itself incontestable, that it is uttered in a heteroglot environment, that such a language must be championed, purified, defended, motivated . . . for this discourse cannot forget or

ignore, either through naiveté or by design, the heteroglossia that surrounds it. (Bakhtin 332)

For this reason, it would be unjustifiable to read Davis without reference to the contemporary Latin American, particularly Caribbean, voices also engaged in the discourse that constructed the new hemispheric relationships.

Contrast is what shapes self-definition: the barbarian, the savage, and the primitive all contribute to interpreting one's own identity by negation. Yet the self, as Said's argument implies, is inevitably imagined through its own invention of the other. *Soldiers of Fortune* fictionalizes both, interpreting the other America exclusively through the mediation of the United States and thus effectively denying its existence as an autonomous reality. Olancho's exoticism and simplicity astonish first-time travelers "with the fierce, hot tropics of their sister continent" (R. H. Davis, *Soldiers of Fortune* 102). As a knowledgeable guide, Clay escorts the Langhams through "what was most characteristic and picturesque" (103), "entertaining" (104), and "quaint" (105), in a country that seems to exist solely as a spectacle for the gaze of the North American visitor. In his role of guide, Clay gives his audience a simplified, easy-to-assimilate version of Olancho:

"It's a very beautiful country for the *pueblo*," was Clay's comment. "Different parts of the same tree furnish them with food, shelter, and clothing, and the sun gives them fuel, and the Government changes so often that they can always dodge the tax-collector." (101)

Olancho is packaged in the glittery, enticing rhetoric of tropical exoticism: "a land of romance and adventure, of guitars and latticed windows, of warm brilliant days and gorgeous silent nights, under purple heavens and white stars" (85), the perfect background—but nothing more—for the Anglo-Saxon hero's chivalrous feats and love conquests. For Davis, Latin America was a land of wealth and beauty, but also of laziness and incompetence (R. H. Davis, "William Walker" 161). He compared it to Africa, for in both continents he saw barbarism, lack of civilization (C. B. Davis 145), and a climate in which the customs of the civilized inhabitants of the temperate zone degenerated (Osborn 56). Davis thus refers us to the archetype of barbarism and primitivism, as well as to the tropes whereby Africa has traditionally been known: "a testing ground for men, a place of adventure, of rescues from danger. Then, after colonization, Africa is a place of 'work'" (Torgovnick 10). Thus Latin America must be known *by* Anglo-America, known *through* Africa; it is the new "dark" continent. Its authenticity and originality are once more denied through the Anglo-American's monolithic vision of what is different. As Marianna Torgovnick writes:

> Our culture's generalized notion of the primitive is by nature and in effect inexact or composite: it conforms to no single social or geographical entity and, indeed, habitually and sometimes willfully confuses the attributes of different societies. Ethnographers tend to compare the societies they study to Western culture and to other societies that have been the object of ethnographic inquiries; even here a generalized primitive is often indirectly invoked as a way of understanding the special qualities of the group at hand. Less professional discourses often unabashedly and irresponsibly mix attributes and objects from widely separate geographical locales. (22)[5]

This process of invention of the primitive had traditionally been carried out by Europe and, after the mid-1800s, by the United States. As Edmundo O'Gorman argues in *The Invention of America*, "America was no more than a potentiality, which could be realized only by receiving and fulfilling the values and ideals of European culture" (O'Gorman 139). At the end of the nineteenth century, Latin America was once again reinvented by some of its own intellectuals in view of its prospects of becoming like the United States, and by the Northern Republic itself in view of its economic and political use for the aggrandizement of the Anglo-Saxon civilization in the New World. The process is far from over: throughout the twentieth century, the construction of Latin America has been an integral part of U.S. mainstream culture, with the difference that the global distribution of U.S. cultural products through the mass media facilitates the penetration of these images into the everyday life of the very societies they fabricate.[6]

Soldiers of Fortune was not only received as an accurate reflection of an extratextual reality, but also as playing a key role in creating that reality. Davis's fiction has been credited with shaping Latin America for the U.S. imagination (Langford x). His way of living and writing had a considerable influence on writers who followed (Hyde 116), and at a historical moment in which U.S. politics turned its attention toward Latin America, his plots and settings provided a literary means of expression that "opened a new locale for American writers, the bullets-and-bananas school of fiction" (Downey 114). His biographers and critics have credited him with shaping American attitudes and opinions toward Latin America for several decades (Langford 158; Osborn and Phillips 63; Boggs 199), and with making "an immense contribution to the fantasy of the natural superiority of the American, which halfway through the twentieth century still dominated Hollywood" (Ziff 180). Davis's fictional and journalistic writings contributed not only to North American mythmaking but, so his critics claim, had tangible effects on the election of Theodore Roosevelt to the Presidency,[7] on the nation's policymaking towards Latin America,[8] and on the North American public's readiness to see their country at war with Spain over Cuba.[9]

By locating the imagery of national self-definition outside the frontiers of the United States, *Soldiers of Fortune* displaces attention from internal conflict

onto the foreign. Internal racial and political friction appears as the identifying feature of all of Latin America, whose inhabitants are uniformly described as a dark, barbarian race incapable of self-government and economic progress. Arthur Boggs's review of *Soldiers of Fortune* describes the racist aspects of the book, which assumes

> that North Americans . . . are innately superior to South Americans; that white is much better than brown or black; that most Americans are honest, resourceful, and energetic and that most Olanchoans (South Americans) are greedy, unimaginative, and lazy. (Boggs197–98)[10]

Davis had found Central American governments despotic, uncivilized, and unstable (C. B. Davis 143), their economic infrastructure in the hands of North Americans and other foreigners (R. H. Davis, *Captain Macklin* 74; Langford 156, 158; Osborn and Phillips 63). Robert Clay's adventure suggests a course of interventionist action that, like Roosevelt's 1904 Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine later proposed, would correct the Olanchoans' "chronic wrongdoing." Clay is fashioned as a Quixotic righter of wrongs, a "powder-splashed young man who set American citizens at liberty" (335) in strange lands.

Earlier in his career, Davis had been strongly anti-imperialistic, and had written in favor of the Monroe Doctrine as a moral position and not a promise to back Latin America by force of arms against European intrusion (Langford 160); later on, however, he moved to a position that advocated imperialism and supported U.S. intervention in Cuba both to protect North American business and properties, and "in the name of humanity" (quoted in Langford 184). During his first trip to Central America, he viewed the natives as incompetent for self-government and self-defense as well as for exploitation of their own national resources:

> The Central-American citizen is no more fit for a republican form of government than he is for an arctic expedition, and what he needs is to have a protectorate established over him . . . There is no more interesting question of the present day than that of what is to be done with the world's land which is lying unimproved . . . The Central-Americans are like a gang of semi-barbarians in a beautifully furnished house, of which they can understand neither its possibilities of comfort nor its use. (Quoted in Langford 157)

This is the attitude that shaped *Soldiers of Fortune*, which denies, as Amy Kaplan puts it, "national agency to the conquered" (Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire" 680). The native soldiers work the mines while a dandy's recreational yacht is easily turned into a warship and its sailors into soldiers. The Olanchoans are even incapable of doing what they do best—revolutions—properly. Clay knows that "the revolutionists will sleep late, . . . drugged with liquor and

worn out with excitement"; the loyal soldiers submit to him because their natural state is a dearth of native leadership:

> We have no officers. If you do not command us, there is no one else to do it. We promise that our men will follow you and give you every obedience. They have been led by foreigners before, by young Captain Stuart and Major Fergurson and Colonel Shrevington. (312)

In *Soldiers of Fortune*, Latin American backwardness and incompetence provide the perfect contrasting background for a show of North American strength and exceptionalism. The novel is a fictionalization of the political discourse of U.S. expansionism and national greatness, enacted as a reinvention of the national origins of Latin American independence. Davis admired Bolívar (C. B. Davis 164), and Clay himself claims to be "following out General Bolívar".(223), but the neglect of the Plaza Bolívar in Olancho signals the decline of the Independence ideals and forgotten heroes that were once thought by North Americans to be following the lead of George Washington:

> The Plaza Bolívar stood in what had once been the centre of the fashionable life of Olancho, but the town had moved farther up the hill, and it was now far in the suburbs, its walks neglected and its turf overrun with weeds . . . Clay picked his way over the grass-grown paths to the statue of Bolívar, the hero of the sister republic of Venezuela, which still stood on its pedestal in a tangle of underbrush and hanging vines . . . "It's just the place for plotting. I hope there are no snakes." (174–75)

The fact that the town has moved away from the square and its trivialization by the hero symbolize a turning away from the ideals for which the Liberator stood. The definition of national identity involves a simultaneous process of exclusion and inclusion. The exclusion of Latin America from the ideals of Americanism has also had internal repercussions for the exclusion of the United States' nonwhite population from full participation in the nation's political life and has helped define new forms of empire that prevent the further incorporation of these populations into the Union. According to Amy Kaplan, the New American Empire was the expression of "a desire for total control disentangled from direct political annexation" (Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire" 662), and it imagined "American global power . . . as anti-imperial in nature and not territorially based, but depending on international commerce and the spread of the United States' cultural institutions" (Kaplan, "Nation, Region, and Empire" 258). Throughout the 1890s, this was the side Roosevelt took in the debate about whether the United States, after the end of western expansion, should annex noncontiguous territories: he declared that "The Monroe Doctrine may be briefly defined as forbidding European encroachment on American soil . . . The United States has not the slightest wish to establish a

universal protectorate over other American States, or to become responsible for their misdeeds" (Roosevelt, *American Ideals* 230). Territorial annexation in Latin America and the Pacific was considered by Roosevelt, among others, as inconsistent with the ideals of liberty and democracy that formed the basic tenets of the North American republic. Unlike Buchanan, a staunch supporter of Manifest Destiny, he considered the colonial subjugation of people ineffective and immoral.

However, North American attitudes rejecting an overseas empire had also been formed, throughout the nineteenth century, by two other ways of reasoning. On the one hand, there was the idea that the United States "conquer[s] to set free, and every accession of territory is only an extension of civilization and liberty" (Horsman 286). On the other, there was a political racialism that found its expression in the reluctance of Anglo-Saxon Americans to extend equal rights to nonwhites. Reginald Horsman has studied the influence of this "racial Anglo-Saxonism" in Manifest Destiny, concluding that though the United States had had designs on Cuba since the early 1800s, they objected to the incorporation of its Spanish population into the Union (Horsman 281–82). These objections, which remain in today's debate about Puerto Rico's statehood, were also present in the mid–nineteenth century after the United States' victory against Mexico (Berkhofer 155). Unlike Texas or Louisiana, "Cuba was too densely populated to be 'Americanized,' and Americanization consisted not in changing institutions but in changing the racial characteristics of the population" (Horsman 283). It is a combination of these two ideologies that finally accounts for Robert Clay's rejection of the Presidency of Olancho and the restoration of Rojas, a native, in his place. Thus at a time when the United States' foreign policies were not yet firmly established, Davis's fiction developed the manner in which North American intervention and expansion was to be done in much the same way as Roosevelt's ideology constructed it in the political arena.

Much of Davis's Latin American fiction was based on variations of the historical figure of William Walker. In *Real Soldiers of Fortune* (1906), Davis wrote a sketch about this North American filibuster who, in the 1850s, became President of Nicaragua and abolished the country's anti-slavery laws.[11] Walker's flag was a five-pointed star, which symbolized his ambition to rule the five "United States of Central America." Davis grouped him with the likes of Winston Churchill, and, like the North American people who gave Walker a hero's welcome in New York, admired this figure who, though prominent as a source of his fiction, has been largely ignored in his criticism. He wrote that "at no time in its history, as during Walker's administration, was Nicaragua governed so justly, so wisely, and so well" (R. H. Davis, "William Walker" 175). For Davis, Walker's only flaw was that he advocated slavery, and in *Captain Macklin* he creates characters that follow in Walker's footsteps to correct

it: while also governing Honduras more justly and wisely than the natives, the Foreign Legion "will found an empire—not the empire of slaves that Walker planned, but an empire of freed men, freed by you from their tyrants and from themselves" (R. H. Davis, *Captain Macklin* 199). According to Gregorio Selser, the armed union of the five Central American countries contributed to Walker's ousting from Nicaragua (Selser 8, 38), but in Davis's version he was checked by his own countrymen (R. H. Davis, "William Walker" 147) because his economic interests conflicted with those of entrepreneur Cornelius Vanderbilt. Though Congress turned a deaf ear, both Presidents Pierce and Buchanan initially disapproved, but ended up first tolerating, then supporting and recognizing Walker's regime (Selser 38–39).[12]

Walker, like Robert Clay and several other characters in the novel, was a soldier of fortune, a figure that upholds North American ideals and superiority condoned by, but acting independently of, the United States Government. The soldier of fortune is Davis's solution to the dilemma of North American imperialism, because it achieves the expansion of U.S. influence while dissociating its government from the dishonest aspects of his methodology. As Martí observed, "Por violencia confesada, nada tomarán. Por violencia oculta, acaso" [Through admitted violence, they will take nothing. Through hidden violence, perhaps] (Martí, *Nuestra América* 17). The Government thus escaped charges of intervention and violation of international treaties untainted, leaving the nation's dirty work and questionable wars to individuals who, like Oliver North in the Iran-Contra scandal, are hailed as heroes for actions that remain officially unsanctioned. Like Walker, Clay is hailed by the natives as "the Liberator of Olancho, as the Preserver of the Constitution, and their brother patriot" (330), but he turns down the offer of the Presidency of Olancho, a job he had previously considered he could do better than the natives (62, 205), apparently satisfied simply with having brought political order and justice to the country while securing the Langhams' economic interests. Here it may be useful to note that Roosevelt considered the merely material and commercial interests debasing to the ideal of true Americanism (Roosevelt, *American Ideals* 13); hence it was necessary for Davis, if his novel was to be consistent with this ideal, to present a positive political impact of the United States in Olancho. As a white man taking control of a Latin American revolution, Clay effects what Amy Kaplan calls a "whitewashing" of the Revolution "as an indisputably Anglo-Saxon heritage" (Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire" 682). Clay does not want Olancho, with its nonwhite native population, for himself or for the United States; instead of a five-pointed star that signals the ambition to control five nations, Olancho's five ore mountains will suffice.

The mediation of the events in the novel through the imagery of play highlights Davis's perception of the incapacity of primitive societies to take care of themselves and sets up Latin America as the ideal stage for the display of U.S.

superiority in engineering and warfare abilities while minimizing the importance and repercussions of the Latin American revolution. In *Soldiers of Fortune*, war is an easy game. The first skirmishes of the revolution are for Langham—the wealthy owner of the ore mines—the basis of an anecdote to amuse his friends at the Union club (216); for the sailors in the dandy King's yacht, an exciting opportunity to play with weapons (227); for the engineer MacWilliams, a card game in which "we took the first trick" (236). The tense military parade that precedes the outburst of the revolution is for Hope Langham, Clay's bride-to-be, "the same thing as a polo match," for her brother Ted, the reminiscence of a football match (244), and for Clay himself, a chess game, a scene in a play (245). When the revolution is fully underway, the American soldiers are "inclined to consider the whole affair as a pleasant outing" (316). The final moments are referred to as theatrical—the scene takes place in a theater—and a spectacle of gladiators (323–24). Similarly, in *Captain Macklin* the Foreign Legion's participation in the Honduran revolution is described as a comic opera (R. H. Davis, *Captain Macklin* 72) and a gamble (274). For all these reasons the North Americans are able to fight successfully with few "players"—the backing of native soldiers is significantly downplayed"—and to avoid casualties by counting on the Olanchoan admiration of their superiority at arms: "every South American thinks that every citizen of the United States is a master either of the rifle or the revolver, and Clay was counting on this superstition" (316).[13]

This kind of mediation also contributes to making the United States' involvement in the Olancho revolution appear trivial and indirect, exonerating North Americans from the consequences of violence and the accusations of imperialism; as in recent history, it is justified as an act of self-defense as well as of generosity in restoring peace and democracy abroad. When General Mendoza starts the revolution in Olancho, Hope asks Clay to intervene. His reply is modest: "You are very flattering . . . Even if I could stop him, it's not my business to do it as yet. I have to wait until he interferes with me, or my mines, or my workmen. Alvarez is the man who should stop him, but he is afraid. We cannot do anything until he makes the first move" (205). It does not take long for Clay to decide that the threat to himself and his business is sufficient, and the time comes to intervene. When he does, his motivation has changed:

> They were there with arms in their hands, he said, for two reasons: the greater one, and the one which he knew actuated the native soldiers, was their desire to preserve the Constitution of the Republic . . . The second motive, he went on, was a less worthy and more selfish one. The Olancho mines, which now gave work to thousands and brought millions of dollars into the country, were coveted by Mendoza, who would, if he could, convert them into a monopoly of his government. If he remained in power all foreigners would be driven out of the country, and the soldiers would be forced to work in the mines without payment. (319)

José Martí had ridiculed the United States' pretension that a Latin American country could pose a threat to its national security (Martí: *Nuestra América* 17). As Lester Langley suggests, "Rarely were the goals that sustained the quest for national security called into question, only the means used to bring them to reality" (Langley 260). Even in our day, United States–Latin American policy follows the same dynamics, maintaining that intervention in Panama, Grenada, El Salvador, and Nicaragua responds to the necessity of self-defense as much as to interest in furthering the cause of democracy in the western hemisphere.

Politically, Olancho society is burdened by the corruption of President Alvarez, who seeks to steal the national treasure for his own personal use, and by the caudillismo of General Mendoza, who wishes to impose a military dictatorship on the country. Economically, there is no free trade, a fact which is hinted at through criticism of the low quality of Government monopoly products (104). Thus restoring liberty and democracy to Olancho goes hand in hand with an economic system that favors U.S. interests; Clay's goal in controlling the outcome of the revolution is not to duplicate the United States in Olancho—if this happened, the competition for power in the Americas would mean that the United States no longer was the strongest nation—but only to create the perfect conditions for its economic exploitation in a way that, as Martí remarked, repeats Spain's colonial despoliation (Martí, *Nuestra América* 60). Though Davis credits the native soldier-workmen with fighting for "their desire to preserve the Constitution of the Republic," which mandates that the Vice-President, Rojas, succeed the President (318), their patriotic duty is coupled with the desire to maintain the economic prosperity brought to Olancho by the North American entrepreneurs. If Mendoza won the revolution,

> all foreigners would be driven out of the country, and the soldiers would be forced to work in the mines without payment. Their condition would be little better than that of the slaves in the salt mines of Siberia. Not only would they no longer be paid for their labor, but the people as a whole would cease to receive that share of the earnings of the mines which had hitherto been theirs. (319)[14]

Thus the materialistic image of Latin America as a path to riches contrasted with the notion of the United States as a nation founded on ideas. The new North American empire was more concerned with commercialism than with patriotism, as observed by Benjamin Kidd, a British traveler and writer who remarked that the United States' policies of overseas expansion, especially to Latin America, were driven by economic reasons.[15] Similarly, José Martí's descriptions of North American society highlighted, as Rodó's would a decade later, the United States' lack of a spiritual dimension and its emphasis on materialism:

[L]o que asombra allí es, el tamaño, la cantidad, el resultado súbito de la actividad humana, . . . esa movilidad, ese don de avance, ese acometimiento, ese cambio de forma, esa febril rivalidad de la riqueza . . . Otros pueblos—y nosotros entre ellos—vivimos devorados por un sublime demonio interior, que nos empuja a la persecución infatigable de un ideal de amor o gloria . . . No así aquellos espíritus tranquilos, turbados sólo por el ansia de la posesión de una fortuna. (Martí, "Coney Island" 163–64)

[What astonishes there is the size, the quantity, the sudden result of human activity, . . . that mobility, that gift for advancement, that aggressiveness, that change of shape, that feverish rivalry of wealth . . . Other peoples—and we among them—live devoured by a sublime inner demon that impulses us toward the indefatigable persecution of an ideal of love or glory . . . Not so those tranquil spirits, troubled only by the anxiety of possessing a fortune.]

While at this time Latin American nations were concerned with rectifying the errors of their short histories as independent nations, the United States set itself up as the agent of change not at home but abroad. Intervention in the Olancho revolution "corrects" history by staging a rebellion against an undemocratic regime and, in accordance with the Monroe Doctrine, by liberating its inhabitants at once from Europe's designs on their country and from their own mistakes. The main European element is the character of Madame Alvarez, the President's wife, a Spanish noblewoman plotting, separately from her husband, to become Queen of Olancho and to return the country to Spain:

She's a tremendously ambitious woman, and they do say she wants to convert the republic into a monarchy, and make her husband King, or, more properly speaking, make herself Queen. Of course that's absurd, but she is supposed to be plotting to turn Olancho into a sort of dependency of Spain, as it was long ago, and that's why she is so unpopular. (131)

Her plotting was never considered serious enough to be dangerous except to herself; her presence even ridicules her also corrupt husband, as it is considered a shame for the revolution to be started by a woman, and it highlights Davis's point that Latin Americans were incompetent to handle even their own political systems, no matter how corrupt and unjust: "And if you're a South American Dictator, you can't be squeamish about throwing your enemies into jail or shooting them for treason. The way to dictate is to dictate,—not to hide indoors all day while your wife plots for you" (206). Clay enjoys a short stint as Dictator of Olancho before a new President can be democratically elected, thus hoping not only to show Olanchoans how a proper dictator operates, but also utilizing this foreign arena as the stage for a role that would be considered inappropriate on U.S. soil.

The most action-packed parts of the novel deal with how Clay and his

friends rescue Madame Alvarez from the forces of General Mendoza, who wants her dead. That Clay should devote his energies to saving a woman with whom he is not in love—in fact, he enlists his own lover, Hope Langham, in the effort—and with whose politics he does not agree either, suggests an image of a weakened, feminized Spain necessitating the charitable aid of the strong, male United States to save her from a dangerous situation created by her own hopeless thirst for colonial power. Madame Alvarez is saved, but her forced departure from Olancho is a gesture of giving up America to the sole influence of the United States.

The European presence pervades the novel in other, subtler ways, that contribute to acknowledging a link to Old World civilization while demonstrating the ways in which the United States has been able to surpass its Anglo-Saxon heritage. Stuart, President Alvarez's English bodyguard, is one such element. He is also a soldier of fortune who combines loyalty to his new country and to the old. He "has been selling his sword" for military and economic advancement (207). His death in defense of Madame Alvarez makes him a true knight-errant, a crusader who "serves her with the same sort of chivalric devotion that his ancestors felt for the woman whose ribbons they tied to their lances, and for whom they fought in the lists" (207). Stuart's glorious ending aggrandizes him in the eyes of the other characters at the same time as it links him to a remote past:

> One who had known him among his own people would have seen in the attitude and in the profile of the English soldier a likeness to his ancestors of the Crusades who lay carved in stone in the village church, with their faces turned to the sky, their faithful hounds waiting at their feet, and their hands pressed upward in prayer. (263)

However, though his death is heroic, it also represents a failure to fulfill his obligation of defending the President's hearth and home. Thus while finding in the European a glorious chivalric past to imitate, the new North American knight-errant bypasses death by combining chivalry with the practical skills of engineering. During his campaigns in Europe, Clay, rather than selling arms like Burke, the novel's mercenary, had "showed the other good-for-nothings how to dig trenches" and "designed a fort" (168–69), fighting with technology instead of weapons. In Olancho, he steps in as a new "Connecticut Yankee" who brings a happy ending instead of the catastrophic destruction of Hank Morgan's utopian dream. One of the most powerful scenes in the novel, illustrated by Charles Dana Gibson, shows the vigorous, manly figure of Robert Clay carrying Stuart's small, lifeless body up the stairs. Thus North America lays down the weight of a dead old world and continues its undone work.

Benedict Anderson has argued that one of the manifestations of nationalism is people's willingness to die for their country (Anderson 129–31). But North

American patriotism outside the nation's borders makes death a wholly unnecessary, outdated sacrifice. Stuart does not die for England, but for a woman; as for Clay, "He groaned at the mockery of having found his life only to lose it now. . . . and to lose it in a silly brawl with semi-savages" (290). This also makes William Walker's death seem like a thing of the past; having surrendered to a British naval officer, he was turned over to the Hondurans along with other prisoners and executed:

> [The British captain] turned over his white brothers to the mercies of half-Indian, half-negro, savages, who were not allies of Great Britain and in whose quarrels she had no interest . . . and he offered, if Walker would ask as an American citizen, to intercede for him. But Walker, with a distinct sense of loyalty to the country he had conquered, and whose people had honored him with their votes, refused to accept life from the country of his birth, the country that had injured and repudiated him. (R. H. Davis, "William Walker" 186)

Clay displays no such loyalty to Olancho. Though Davis writes admiringly of Walker's loyalty to Nicaragua, his fictional characters triumph and live. Clay belongs to a different historical moment in which imperialist patriotism requires that the righter of wrongs escape unscathed to share everlasting happiness with the heroine. What the United States brings to Olancho is a new, efficient way of fighting a revolution, one that has a minimal cost in human lives while rapidly restoring political stability without jeopardizing the nation's natural and economic resources. Indeed, one of the causes of Davis's support of the United States' intervention in Cuba was his preoccupation with the island's destruction by the native insurrections (C. B. Davis 197).

This is a historical moment in which the outright exclusion of Europe from the western hemisphere gives way to Anglo-Saxon racial solidarity. According to Kelley Griffith, Davis's imperialism "upholds three things: the inferiority of non-European cultures to United States' republicanism; the inferiority of non-European races to White Anglo-Saxons . . . ; and the belief that the United States and other 'superior' cultures should rule these 'inferior' cultures or control their businesses and natural resources" (Griffith 130). Thus certain links with Anglo-Saxon Europe are cultivated, as long as the United States' superiority remains intact. Clay cooperates with the Englishman Stuart, his friend MacWilliams identifies himself as Scotch (123), and though he disagrees with Burke, the Irish-American arms dealer, mercenary, and promoter of revolutions, Clay sets him free at the end of the novel. Although a soldier of fortune like the others, Burke is not a heroic figure, because he is unpatriotic. His Irish accent is detectable (196), and he claims to be an Irishman and thus a British subject in order to obtain the protection of Her Majesty's representative against his imprisonment by Clay: "'That's no good, either,' said Clay, shaking his head. 'You fixed your nationality, as far as this continent is concerned, in Rio

harbor, when Peixoto handed you over to the British admiral, and you claimed to be an American citizen, and were sent on board the "Detroit"'" (195).

This incident places Burke in direct contrast with Clay, Stuart, and MacWilliams, all of which also have interests in Latin America, but are ultimately loyal to their own countries. Burke exemplifies the kind of anti-Americanism that Roosevelt lashed out against:

> We welcome the German or the Irishman who becomes an American. We have no use for the German or Irishman who remains such. We do not wish German-Americans and Irish-Americans who figure as such in our social and political life; we want only Americans, and, provided they are such, we do not care whether they are of native or of Irish or of German ancestry. (Roosevelt, *American Ideals* 26)

Madame Alvarez, Stuart, and Burke all end up leaving Olancho. None of them is an entirely negative character, yet they all represent aspects of Europe that no longer have a place in America. On the other hand, Robert Clay integrates North American values with a kind of high European civilization that the United States has yet to internalize. He is a rough self-made frontiersman who in his spare time has obtained a European education. He learned to appreciate European art and music, and he can talk about concerts in Vienna with the same facility as about fighting wars in Africa or building bridges in South America. He has been decorated by European statesmen, and has been better received in European society than in the United States, where he is still considered a rough and semi-civilized cowboy.

In his social refinement, Clay represents the legacy of European civilization, which is portrayed as alien to Latin American culture, and at the same time he legitimizes the United States' position of power by means of an association with the religious Puritan rhetoric of North American mission that excludes Latin America:[16]

> [T]hey don't know how to amuse themselves in a civilized way—at least not in my way. I wish I could just drop in at home about now; don't you, MacWilliams? Just about this time up in *God's country* [my emphasis] all the people are at the theatre, or they've just finished dinner and are sitting around sipping cool green mint, trickling through little lumps of ice. What I'd like . . . to do now . . . would be to sit in the front row at a comic opera, *on the aisle*. (44–45)

On another level, however, Clay represents a uniquely North American aspect of civilization. He plays the role of the engineer as civilizer, the one who continues to extend the imaginary frontier of the United States overseas:

> They were marching through an almost unknown part of Mexico, fighting Nature at every step and carrying civilization with them. They were doing better work than

soldiers, because soldiers destroy things, and these chaps were creating, and making the way straight . . . They dragged their chains through miles and miles of jungle, and over flat alkali beds and cactus, and they reared bridges across roaring cañons . . . They are the bravest soldiers of the present day, and they are the least recognized. I have forgotten their names, and you never heard them. But it seems to me the civil engineer, for all that, is the chief civilizer of our century. (12–13)

This civilizing task is carried out through the North American work ethic, which contrasts with the laziness of Latin Americans. For Robert Clay, this is so important as to influence his choice of a wife who will understand, as Alice Langham does not, that the work he has done is a more important part of himself than the personality he was born with. Alice's sister Hope, on the other hand, proves to be an adequate spectator for Clay's endeavors, because she understands and admires both his person and his work: "We do not like men because they build railroads, or because they are prime-ministers. We like them for what they are themselves. And as to your work! . . . I think it is a grand work, and a noble work, full of hardships and self-sacrifices . . . You should be very proud" (211).

It is by virtue of the North American's transformation of Olancho's beauty and abundance into economic profit that the country becomes a place of interest to U.S. audiences. And Clay's fight against a dehumanized Spanish-American general's politics of enslavement is inseparable from his battle against a humanized nature: "And beyond the house he saw his five great mountains, the knuckles of a giant hand, with its gauntlet of iron that lay shut and clenched in the face of the sea" (97).

The civilizing mission of the North American engineer consists in transforming not only nature but also human attitudes, in turning native soldiers into miners. His work, as Davis himself put it in 1914 while making the movie version of *Soldiers of Fortune* in Cuba, is not only "to make the dirt fly and clear the jungle, to build bridges, barracks, hospitals, a railroad, and an ore pier, but with diplomacy to overcome the prejudices and indolence of a people who . . . had never changed" (R. H. Davis, "Breaking into the Movies" 275). Davis depicts the Olanchoan workers as shiftless, though not innately so. When Clay discovered the ore in the mountains, he wrote to Langham about the natives' ignorance and laziness which led to such resources going unused (29); the same attributed incapacity extends to self-government or the ability to choose the right form of government. But just as Clay can extract ore from the mountains, so can he obtain good work from the natives by respecting them, paying them fairly, living in the same conditions as they do, and speaking their Spanish patois. He compares the Spanish engineers' treatment of the workers to Southern slavery: "I've more respect for these half-breeds that you've allowed to starve in this fever-bed than I have for you. You have treated

them worse than they'd treat a dog, and if any of them die, it's on your heads. You have put them in a fever-camp which you have not even taken the trouble to drain" (35). By improving the workers' conditions, Clay is also able to steal their loyalty to Mendoza and win their support as soldiers in the revolution.

Of all the soldiers of fortune in the novel, MacWilliams is the only one who retains a somewhat conventional patriotic feeling toward the United States. Though at the end of the novel he resolves to follow Burke to Macedonia, MacWilliams remains the prototype of the now-extinct western frontiersman who carries his country with him wherever he goes:

> He came from some little town in the West, and had learned what he knew of engineering at the transit's mouth, after he had first served his apprenticeship by cutting sagebrush and driving stakes. His life had been spent in Mexico and Central America, and he spoke of the home he had not seen in ten years with the aggressive loyalty of the confirmed wanderer, and he was known to prefer and to import canned corn and canned tomatoes in preference to eating the wonderful fruits of the country, because the former came from the States and tasted to him of home. (45)

While Clay can feel at home in European cultural circles and in the tropical adversity of Latin America, MacWilliams remains homesick and homeless, idealizing the United States to the smallest detail of everyday life.

Neither Burke nor Clay share this sense of belonging. For Clay, "Captain Burke is a brave soldier and a citizen of my own or of any country" (188), though Clay himself is unrecognizable as a North American officer because he has served in several armies but never in that of the United States (335).[17] All he has in North America is "a plot in the cemetery" in Colorado, where his mother is buried (169). And yet what distinguishes Clay from Burke is precisely his Americanism, his sense of what is right to fight for. The only thing that binds the two men is a racial solidarity that, in the novel's system of values, supersedes patriotism.

For all that the novel attempts to present the United States as a united, whole, homogeneous nation, Clay's character also exposes the class divisions existing in the society of the time. All the soldiers of fortune are social outcasts, though Clay's European refinement prevents him, unlike MacWilliams, from resigning himself to this fact. For Clay, living in the United States again entails being accepted in circles comparable to those he frequented in Europe, an acceptance that can only be sanctioned through marriage to Hope Langham. By representing the United States abroad, the novel achieves a certain social homogenization of the nation at home. The only racial differences are between North and South America. But in North American society, Clay himself is the outsider. He and his colleagues treat the Langhams like royalty, and when he plans a dinner for the Langhams, he is "gratified that they should know him to be not altogether a barbarian" (111). MacWilliams keeps reminding Clay of

these class divisions which exclude them from the Langhams' social circles (147). Clay's marriage to Hope helps him bridge the class barrier but, in distinction from the Latin American novels analyzed by Doris Sommer, this union does not bring about the kind of nation in which lovers from divided camps can be together; it only reinforces the myth that class barriers can more easily be crossed than the racial, which remain as strong within the nation as those that separate the Americas. For marriage to have worked as an allegory of racial unification, Clay would have had to marry Mme. Alvarez, the "damsel in distress" whom he rescues from danger, and the only non-Anglo-Saxon female character in the novel.

Clay's name suggests a down-to-earth character.[18] As an engineer, he is in close contact with nature; at the same time, he is able to adapt as easily to the circumstances of life of the people who work for him as to the social conventions of the ruling class. By contrast, Reggie "King" denotes aristocracy and recalls the concepts of monarchy and social inequality inherent in European society. King redeems himself by helping in Clay's fight against the insurgents, but the differences between them remain. Clay fights on land while King fights from his yacht on the sea, at a safe distance. While Clay is an engineer who extracts from the earth the natural resources that will enrich his country and advance progress, King dabbles in archaeology, an activity that makes him useless as well as exploitative, like the Spanish conquerors: "From King he drew forth tales of the buried cities he had explored, and then robbed of their ugliest idols" (109). Yet Clay wants to be an engineer by day and an aristocrat by night, moving between the two environments as easily as he changes clothes. The occasional crossing over the borders of class and gender liberates the new North American hero and heroine, even if the crossing can only be done in one direction: both Clay and Hope are comfortable in European concert halls and American jungles; Hope herself, who "should have been a boy" (82), can adapt to both the feminine world of dance-halls and the masculine world of mines and railroad-engine driving. However, Hope, as Griffith points out, returns to dependence on men following her "bout of independence" and assumes a more feminine role after her marriage to Clay (Griffith 139).

Just as the turn-of-the-century United States defined itself through its borders, so its civilizing mission was being carried out by outcasts and outsiders who sacrificed recognition in their own country in favor of a world audience for the United States' international relevance at a time when Theodore Roosevelt became the first President concerned with America's position in the world while many politicians were absorbed in domestic issues (Collin 51).[19] The new heroes of Americanism were those who did not feel at home in North America because they were doing controversial, though desirable, work. Although they extended U.S. cultural values and protected its economic interests,

soldiers of fortune did not fight for their country but for themselves, for economic gain, exciting adventure, and personal heroism. The Latin American view of them was, as can be expected, different: "Estos eran filibusteros vulgares que pensaban aprovecharse del botín, y que arriesgaban sus vidas por paga y no por patriotismo. Si hubiese existido en ellos el sentimiento más noble de acrecentar el poderío de su propia nación, merecerían alguna disculpa sus actos invasores" [These were vulgar filibusters who wanted to take advantage of the loot, and who risked their lives for pay and not for patriotism. If there had existed in them the nobler sentiment of aggrandizing the power of their own nation, their invasive actions would deserve some forgiveness] (Céspedes 365). Yet their individualism was also an expression of Roosevelt's definition of Americanism: "I ask only that what every self-respecting American demands from himself and from his sons shall be demanded of the American nation as a whole" (Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life* 1). While his actions bring freedom to Olancho, the hero of *Soldiers of Fortune* remains more interested in his employer and in his lover than in rhetorical altruism and patriotism. Thus when MacWilliams announces that he is going to liberate the Macedonians, he fails to arouse Clay's sympathy for a feeling entertained for "a quarter of an hour": "Think of them all alone down there bullied by the Sultan of Turkey, and wanting to be free and independent. That's not right. You, as an American citizen, ought to be the last person in the world to throw cold water on an undertaking like that. In the name of Liberty now?" (343–44).

The popularity of *Soldiers of Fortune* was enabled by an idealization of United States–Latin American relations that presented an extensive North American economic empire while rejecting colonial domination over the tropics. In this novel, the United States' control of Latin American resources is masked by the heroic feats of the soldier-engineer whose restoration of liberty and democracy to strife-torn Latin American countries reimagines the terms of their independence as an accomplishment of the United States. At the same time, leaving Latin America politically independent temporarily reassures the United States of the prevalence of its own exceptionalism not only against Europe, but also within the western hemisphere.

Notes

1. See Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire," for an analysis of *Soldiers of Fortune* and other novels of the period as rewritings of U.S. national identity in terms of the male body.
2. John Solensten laments the lack of "major published studies devoted exclusively to

either the journalism or the fiction" of Richard Harding Davis and the fact that some of the existing biographies present "the man as greater than the work" (Solensten 303–4); Van Wyck Brooks called Davis "one of the most influential of writers, not as a writer but as a man" (Brooks 101). A new biography of Richard Harding Davis appeared recently, portraying him in a less than ennobling light as a person and dismisses his writings as crowd-pleasing and unimportant pieces that never challenged the status quo (Lubow).

3. In addition, Davis is the author of a novel loosely based on the story of the filibuster William Walker—*Captain Macklin* (1902)—two minor plays involving Americans embroiled in Central American revolutions—*The Orator of Zepata City* (1900) and *The Dictator* (1906)—and a book of biographical sketches, of which some have Latin American themes, *Real Soldiers of Fortune* (1911).
4. Page numbers correspond to this edition of *Soldiers of Fortune* and will subsequently appear in parentheses in text.
5. I agree with Torgovnick's point, though it is unfortunate that her own book fails to meaningfully take into account the discourses of intellectuals from the "primitive" societies she discusses.
6. See Julianne Burton's essay in *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (1992) for a discussion of how Hollywood's Latin America has been received on both sides of the border.
7. "His despatches from Cuba, featuring a colonel of the Rough Riders, helped to make a President of the United States" (Downey 2); "Davis . . . ultimately helped open to him the door of the White House" (Hyde 105–6); "with Davis to chronicle their exploits for newspaper readers, the Rough Riders so captured the public imagination that their organizer, Theodore Roosevelt, returned from Cuba to find a straight path to the White House laid out for him" (Langford x–xi).
8. In an 1895 letter to his brother Charles, Davis wrote: "Several of the papers here jokingly alluded to the fact that my article on the Venezuelan boundary had inspired the President's [Cleveland's] message" on the Monroe Doctrine (C. B. Davis 170–71; Quinby 37). Cleveland's message declared: "The doctrine upon which we stand . . . is strong and sound, because its enforcement is important to our peace and safety as a nation, and is essential to the integrity of our free institutions and the tranquil maintenance of our distinctive form of government" (quoted in Perkins 189–90).
9. *Soldiers of Fortune* sparked interest in Central America and "played a role in preparing the mood of America for the conflict which loomed just ahead" (Hyde 132). Others claim that "it must have stirred American fighting blood and been an unintentional preparation for the war we were about to wage" (Knight 122). A biographer writes: "Indeed, his part in the making of history at this time should not be discounted. Considering his reports from Cuba in 1897 and his coverage of the American invasion in 1898, it might be said that without him Hearst would have been somewhat less successful in whipping up war sentiment, and it is an obvious fact that without Richard as his laureate Roosevelt the Rough Rider would not have captured the public imagination so vividly as he did" (Langford 192).
10. In his later novel *Captain Macklin*, Davis describes the Latin American population even more contemptuously as "swarthy barefooted brigands" (R. H. Davis, *Captain Macklin* 61).

11. There are varying accounts of how Walker became President of Nicaragua. Davis himself believed that he was elected (R. H. Davies, "William Walker" 175); the Nicaraguan historian Gregorio Selser states that he made himself President (Selser 38). Other U.S. sources suggest that there was a rigged election (Carr 189).
12. See also Arthur D. Howden Smith's 1926 novel *A Manifest Destiny*, a fictional account of William Walker's exploits.
13. A few years later, while reporting the Spanish-American War in Cuba, Davis dismissed it as expensive entertainment, realizing that fictional entertainment was safer: "if this is war I am of the opinion that it is a senseless wicked institution made for soldiers, lovers, and correspondents for different reasons, and for no one else in the world and it is too expensive for the others to keep it going to entertain these few gentlemen" (C. B. Davis 198). He makes a similar comment in the William Walker sketch: "with his rifle one American could account for a dozen Nicaraguans" (R. H. Davis, "William Walker" 165).
14. Showman and Judson insist that the economic motivations of the United States' policy toward Latin America were linked to this country's uses and interpretations of the Monroe Doctrine throughout the nineteenth century (Showman and Judson 23–24, 32).
15. "The people of the United States will be driven to seek the widest possible outside market for their industrial productions; they must be able to buy raw material in outside markets . . . [T]here can be little doubt that the trade of the world in the future will be largely a trade with the tropics. The tropics are naturally the most richly endowed portion of the world . . . [N]o nation can remain permanently indifferent to the condition of a country with which it has large and vital trade relations" (Kidd 116–17).
16. "Only in the United States has nationalism carried with it the Christian meaning of the sacred. Only America, of all national designations, has assumed the combined force of eschatology and chauvinism. Many other societies have defended the status quo by reference to religious values; many forms of nationalism have laid claim to a world-redeeming promise; many Christian sects have sought, in secret or open heresy, to find the sacred in the profane, and many European defenders of middle-class democracy have tried to link order and progress. But only the American Way, of all modern ideologies, has managed to circumvent the paradoxes inherent in these approaches. Of all symbols of identity, only *America* has united nationality and universality, civic and spiritual selfhood, secular and redemptive history, the country's past and paradise to be, in a single synthetic ideal" (Bercovitch 176).
17. Davis's biographers have described him as a soldier of fortune (Downey 130; Griffith 104). While reporting the Spanish-American War, Davis was offered a captaincy, which he declined. In a letter to his brother he regretted the decision, thinking of himself as the hero of his own novel: "We shall not have another war and I can always be a war correspondent in other countries but never again have a chance to serve in my own" (C. B. Davis 240).
18. It also reminds us of Henry Clay, the U.S. politician who was a staunch supporter of Latin American independence.
19. See also Roosevelt's essay "The Two Americas" (Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life* 229–41).

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