Print Media and Political Bias: The Portrayal of Gender and Race in Cuban Anti-Separatists Newspapers at the Onset of the Ten Years War

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Abstract
The Cuban press waged an ideological warfare during the years of armed resistance against Spain on the island. The year 1869—just months after El Grito de Yara in October of 1868—incited the publication of caricatures, articles and editorials that unequivocally and aggressively defended the status quo for Cuba on the pages of Don Junípero (1862-1869?) and El Moro Muza (1859-1877). These publications ridiculed the efforts on behalf of the insurgency of exiled Cubans and in particular portrayed Cuban women as foolish ideologues. The war was portrayed as a radicalized effort that gave agency to abolition by enlisting enslaved Cubans of African descent in the ranks of the Liberation Army and in order to discredit the leadership of the war the papers characterized the white leadership of the Mambi Army as incompetent and immoral. Both publications attacked from the start the idea of the emerging new nation.

Resumen
La prensa cubana libró una guerra ideológica durante los años de resistencia armada contra España en la isla. En 1869—a sólo unos meses del El Grito de Yara en Octubre de 1868—se incitó la publicación de caricaturas, artículos y editoriales que de manera resuelta y agresiva defendían el estatus quo para Cuba en las páginas de Don Junípero (1862-1869?) y El Moro Muza (1859-1877). Estas publicaciones ridiculizaban los esfuerzos de los exiliados cubanos en favor de la insurgencia y particularmente representaban a las mujeres cubanas como ideólogas tontas. La guerra se representaba como un esfuerzo radical que favorecía la abolición de la esclavitud al aceptar a esclavos cubanos de descendencia africana en las filas del ejército de liberación. Además, para desacreditar al liderazgo de la Guerra de los Diez Años, los periódicos caracterizaban a los líderes mambises como incompetentes e inmorales. Ambas publicaciones atacaron desde los inicios de la guerra la idea de una nación libre.

Much of print media in Cuba in the late 1860s sought to inform and influence the population of the island particularly in regards to political actions against Spanish colonial rule. As exemplified by two weekly journals published in Habana, some newspapers surpassed the mere expression of unwavering allegiance to Spain to incite the growth of anti-independence sentiment in the western provinces of the island that had not been swayed yet by the uprising in Oriente Province in October of 1868. Directed at the elite society of the capital, Don Junípero (1862-1869?) and El Moro Muza (1859-1877) wanted to ridicule and discredit the war effort from as early as the first year after the start of the Ten Years War. Through their editorials, articles, and caricatures, both publications focused their critiques not only on the separatist movement led by the armed struggle of the Mambises and the Mambí Army (Ejército Libertador) but also targeted the Cuban community in exile composed of those who advocated annexation to the United States and separatists who wanted to see Cuba as a free patria. Three strategic subjects of these critiques appear on the pages of every issue published in 1869 by the two newspapers. First, the papers ridiculed the efforts on behalf of the insurgency of exiled Cubans and in particular portrayed Cuban women as foolish ideologues victimized by the financial demands of the war; second, the war was portrayed as a radicalized effort that gave agency to abolition by enlisting enslaved Cubans of African descent in the ranks of the Liberation Army; and third, in order to discredit the leadership of the war the
papers characterized Mambises as incompetent and immoral. These and other pro-Spanish publications promoted from the start the idea of a separate self-governing Cuba as a project doomed to failure.

The second decade of the eighteenth century ushered the first use of the printing press in Cuba. Works in print appeared with the first productions made by Carlos Habré in 1723, a rather late date in contrast to Spanish colonies in other parts of the world (Fornet cited by Valdés Díaz). The first book of the American continent was printed in Mexico City between 1536 and 1539.¹ The printing press began to publish works in Lima in 1581 and arrived in the Philippines in 1590 (Woodbridge and Thompson). However, the Cuban press came early compared to the rest of the Caribbean, Central and South America where there were no presses until well into the 18th century, having gone into production in Bogotá, Santiago de Chile and Buenos Aires in the years 1736, 1776, and 1780 respectively (Woodbridge and Thompson). Cuba’s first newspaper, La Gazeta de la Habana, began publication in 1782 followed eight years later by Papel Periódico de la Habana. “These early publications and those that came into being over the following century operated under Spanish press laws that had been in place in Spanish America since the late sixteenth century” (pressreference.com). During the nineteenth century printed media in Cuba enjoyed some privileges, all derived from the expectations of loyalty and service to the colonial system. The contradictions between the interests of Spain’s imperial power and the formation of nationhood in the colony were reflected on the printed pages of newspapers and journals. Most concerned with the ideology and development of the war effort, print media in the remaining Spanish colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines “played a role of the very first order in charting the route of independence from the moment it took its first steps in each territory” (Pascual 2; my translation). Thus, the Cuban press waged an ideological warfare during the years of armed resistance. In a period that spanned thirty years, from the Ten Years War (1868-1878) to the end of the War of Independence (1895-1898), as many as 88 newspapers of pro-independence leanings were published by Cubans. Of those 18 appeared in Habana, 35 were published by Cuban exiles in New York, 10 in Tampa, and 3 in Key West – although many of them were of very short duration (Pascual 4). The ideology of the war as well as military reports also occupied the pages of pro-Spanish publications. During the Ten Years War there were 29 newspapers promoting the idea of integration in Spain, 16 in Habana, and one each in Santiago de Cuba, New York, and Sagua la Grande (Pascual 5). Clearly, at the onset of the wars of decolonization from Spain print media in Cuba emerged as “the carrier of different ideological thoughts, allowing for readings that depended on the positions defended” (Valdés Díaz; my translation). There was no pretense regarding the biased perspectives and opinions that these printed papers endorsed.

Policies regarding the use of print media instituted by the Spanish colonial administration underwent a series of changes through the nineteenth century. In the early 1800s Spain softened regulations on the press “partly due to the decreasing power of Madrid on its distant colonies and partly in response to the political currents flowing from the French Revolution” (pressreference). Most significantly in terms of the anti-separatist movement among western Cubans was a supposed relaxation instituted the year after the Grito de Yara in Oriente Province. In January of 1869, just months after Yara, Capitán General of the Cuban colonial government Domingo Dulce y Garay (1808-1869) issued a decree establishing freedom of the press. Dulce intended to show the proponents of Spanish reforms his willingness to make changes on the island hoping to gain their support (Cited in Ziegler 112). Media censorship up to this point had been fierce in Cuba as noted by Richard Henry Dana who, on a visit to Cuba in 1859, decried the power of the colonial government to banish “without a charge made, or a trial, or even a record, but on the mere will of the Captain-General, persons whose presence he thinks, or professes to think, prejudicial to the government, whatever their condition, rank, or office” (Quoted by Lazo 67-68). Fear of persecution and death meant that “to publish a revolutionary newspaper in the 1850s was to risk death” (Lazo 68). In the months following Dulce’s decree, “a series of reform-minded periodicals began publication, of which the most important was El Cubano Libre, appearing on the war’s first day. Other new periodicals included La Estrella Solitaria, El Mambí and El Boletín de la Guerra,” all promoting separatist and revolutionary views and taking advantage of the relaxation of censorship (“Cuba Press”). On the opposite side of the conflict, the year 1869 provoked the publication of caricatures, articles and editorials that unequivocally and aggressively defended the status quo. Contrary to the peacemaking intentions of the decree, Don
Junípero and El Moro Muza offered resistance to all forms of reformist campaigns at home or separatist and annexationist efforts abroad. Instead, the journals steadfastly adhered to the integration of Spain and Cuba.

The strong integrationist ideology of Don Junípero and El Moro Muza can be explained by the intimate friendship of their publishers, Victor Patricio Landaluze and Juan Martínez Villergas. Born in Bilbao Landaluze established residence in Habana probably sometime before May of 1850, date in which he joined the ranks of the “Cuerpos de Voluntarios” in defense of Spanish interests and against the insurrection in Cuba (Valdés Díaz; Domingo Acebrón). He began his collaboration with Villergas (also born in Spain) as a humorous writer and illustrator for a weekly publication called La Charanga (1857-1858) and subtitled “periódico literario, joco-serio y casi sentimental, muy pródigo de bromas” (Tebeosfera). Landaluze contributed art reviews and commentary on current events to the pages of La Charanga in addition to illustrations grouping images to show customs, attire, and local scenes of Habana (Barrero 6). A series of cigar labels, Vida y Muerte de la Mulata, produced by the cigar factory of Llago y Cía depicted costumbrista-inspired scenes of everyday life in Habana and was illustrated by La Charanga de Villergas (Pulpnivoria). In 1862 Landaluze began publishing his own newspaper, Don Junípero. Alongside his editorials, articles, poetry and illustrations for Don Junípero, Landaluze’s humorous sketches and short political satires also appeared on the pages of Villergas’ El Moro Muza sometime under the pseudonym of Bayaceto. Not content with these two channels of expression Landaluze unveiled yet another weekly journal entitled Juan Palomo, published for a period of five years (Nov. 1869-1874) alongside the other two newspapers (Valdés Díaz). On the pages of these publications Landaluze will portray the most aggressive and disparaging caricatures against the leaders of the Cuban insurrection and against exiles giving aid to the cause of a free Cuba. His frank and direct commentary is presented with an accompanying graphic image which leaves little doubt regarding its content. The emphasis on caricatures on the pages of the paper responded to the taste among bourgeois readers for these vignettes on both sides of the Atlantic and may also be explained as an attempt to reach a less cultured readership, a strategy that makes reference to the scant level of literacy in Cuba during the nineteenth century. Landaluze’s sardonic technique with frequent grotesque and deformed figures reveals his strong sense for the kind of satire that was popular with the public during his time (Trujillo; Valdés Díaz). His readers included the integrista population of Habana in general and the members of the two most conservative organizations promoting Spanish interests on the island, namely the Comité Patriótico de la Habana and the members of Casino Español (Barcia Zequeira). The taste for these satirical vignettes among Landaluze’s readers reveals a feeling of disquiet regarding class and status, particularly among those who saw in them “un vehículo para la uniformización del poder en una sociedad paulatinamente más pendiente del poder del Mercado que el conferido por los privilegios de sangre, o los obtenidos por el linaje o la legitimación divina” (Barrero 14). Such anxiety over lineage and the privileges of class would increase on the island among these readers with the onset of the war.

One of the key targets of these publications was the community of émigrés. Cubans in exile (in places such as Veracruz, New Orleans, Key West, Tampa, and New York) played a pivotal role throughout the years of war as they mobilized support for the revolutionaries on the island. Men and women founded clubs and societies to collect funds for the war, engaged in public debate about freedom for the patria, and kept abreast of the latest news from the island regarding the progress of the insurgency. In reading the pages of the pro-Spanish media, it is clear that the defenders of the status quo for Cuba kept abreast of the actions of the exile community and viewed their efforts as a threat to the already diminished power of Spain. In poking fun at the aid and support of the war by exiled Cubans, Don Junípero and El Moro Muza took particular aim at the efforts of Cuban women in the United States. Due to her ardent activism on behalf of the war, Emilia Casanova de Villaverde (1832-1897) became the favorite target of the colonial press. Casanova had moved to the United States as a young woman to attend school. In Philadelphia she met and later married noted Cuban novelist Cirilo Villaverde (1812–1894), author of Cecilia Valdés o La loma del ángel (1882), a text widely regarded as an antislavery narrative although not without expressions of ambivalence regarding race (Schulmann et al cited by Olivares 178). At the start of the war, Casanova was living in the family home in Mott Haven (part of the Bronx today), nine miles from New York City.
Casanova was one of the many Cuban women living abroad who in defiance of prescribed rules of behavior for women of her class and social status engaged in ardent and public support of the war. In her collection of letters and biographical notes, Casanova emerges as a steadfast and aggressive activist. She made and sent a Cuban flag made of silk to Carlos Manuel de Céspedes in early 1869. In January of that year Casanova “founded, not without much effort, the first society of political leanings that Cuban women had ever organized, either inside or outside the island, with the professed purpose of collecting funds to aid the sick and wounded members of the Cuban liberation army” (Apuntes 14; my translation). After founding La Liga de las Hijas de Cuba in New York, Casanova increased her level of involvement. From her newly found position of authority as the Secretary of La Liga, she wrote a letter later that same year to Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish, seeking US mediation in support of her father who had been imprisoned in Cuba by Spanish authorities. She visited Washington, presented herself at the White House, and managed to get an audience with President Ulysses Grant. For the rest of the war period Casanova wrote letters to and lobbied members of the United States Congress hoping to secure their support of the Cuban insurgency.

The Cuban colonial press comments on Emilia Casanova and her activities in earnest. On the pages of El Moro Muza (Figure 1 – El Moro Muza, May 30, 1869, p 5). Casanova is presented in a derogatory manner. She is often ridiculed and portrayed as an unattractive and gaunt figure. The intention is clear in the caricature “Emilia Casanova Villaverde y Compañía, Gran Fábrica de Banderas.” The caption which partly reads “es mucho el trabajo que le dan a V. los muchachos,” clearly proposes that she and the other Cuban women of La Liga de las Hijas de Cuba have fallen prey to the demands of the Cuban army. The image and caption also contain a sexualized suggestion that underscores her new status as a working woman. Thus Casanova’s activism is reduced to an insignificant role meant to trivialize the war as well as to reduce her very public and courageous stance to the domesticity of a mujer artesana. The degree of information on Casanova’s activities and of coverage that print media on the island devoted to her is an indication that her contacts with the U. S. Congress and the White House were well-known and worthy of note inside Cuba. But rather than a commentary on her letter writing campaign and other more serious activities on behalf of the insurgency, Casanova’s role is reduced to that of the lowly seamstress. In another image also from El Moro Muza, she is the futile flag-maker (Figure 2 – “Los Labanderos de las Banderas” – El Moro Muza, July 11, 1869) engaged in a meaningless exercise. The caption humorously refers to the fading of the colors of the (distorted) Cuban flag, an image that conveys the futility of the ideal of independence as a goal. Just as soon as they arrive on the island, her flags “fade” and turn into the red and gold of the Spanish flag. Here the notion of fading colors again acts as a reference to the management of the war effort from the distant New York clubs and brings attention to the controversy surrounding the selection of this flag (Narciso López’s creation) rather than the version used by Céspedes in Bayamo. Attacks against the exile community and in particular against Emilia Casanova continued on the pages of El Moro Muza throughout the Ten Years War. A text from the issue published on the 6th of March of 1870 continued without reprieve the attacks against her: “Y es el caso que la pobre mujer [Casanova] tiene mala suerte para esos trapos. Los que manda a Cuba caen en nuestro poder, y los que destina a los ataúdes, hasta los muertos los rechazan” (El Moro Muza; Cited in Hojas de prensa). The reference to the Cuban flag as a useless and unwanted rag would have been appreciated by the ordinary readers of these newspapers, namely Spaniards living in Cuba and in administrative or governmental positions as well as Cubans of Spanish leaning sentiments. It should not surprise that the militant activism of Emilia Casanova and the women members of La Liga received such notoriety in the Cuban press. She was relentless in her efforts to raise money for the war and her letter writing campaign to compatriots and international figures alike. Her activism “became public in 1870 when she began raising money for an expedition of women who hoped personally to deliver arms to the battlefield in Cuba” (Lazo 131-132), a plan that did not come to pass but that underscores to what extent the upraising on the island had changed how Cuban women viewed their public roles. The war provided Cuban women a moment in time when they could join forces to perform tasks previously reserved for men.
Figure 1. Caricature of “Emilia Casanova Villaverde y Compañía, Gran Fábrica de Banderas.” *El Moro Muza*, May 30, 1869, p 5.
The attack on the many Cuban women engaged in subversive activities on the island was an additional target for the pro-colonial media on the island. At the onset of the war entire families left towns and cities to join the war effort; those families were overwhelmingly white criollos resentful of Spanish control of the economy, political and administrative offices, and formulation of policies (Pérez xix-xxi). Women joined the men of the family in the war camps, ran hospitals, and served as couriers. Whether in exile and aiding the war by raising funds abroad or on the island engaged in subversive actions, Cuban women from all walks of life expressed the hope that the vision of Cuba Libre would include their release from societal oppression. On the one hand, the war signified an extraordinary opportunity for women from diverse racial backgrounds and social classes to become actors in the work of the insurgency (Stoner). And indeed many women participated in various levels of resistance from as early as the Ten Years War and then even more so as the War of Independence erupted in 1895 and the idea of an independent nation took shape. Men, women, and children had to endure the horrors of war as entire families moved to the countryside, both in allegiance to the war and to escape the wrath of the Spanish authorities (Pirala). Some families faced severe poverty and as the war went on many more, particularly women and children, left the island to go into exile abroad or were deported by the colonial authorities.

These newspapers aggressively attacked Mambisas both at home and abroad. The representation of revolutionary women as immoral most often appeared in text rather than caricature. The prevailing view of women promoted on the pages of these journals was of Mambisas as “suripantas,” a pejorative term referring to a morally ruinous, despicable woman. The term “suripantas” especially insulted white women from the eastern provinces of Oriente and Camaguey who had followed the men of the family to the war camps. The image of white women as morally deviant added to the overall message that Landaluze and
Villergas advocated of the war as an immoral act against Spain. The following stanza from *El Moro Muza* dated January 8, 1869 presents the image of the Mambisa as “working women,” well trained to perform their newfound calling:

Las *Mambisas* que hoy día hacen servicio  
Aprenden en el campo el ejercicio  
Y lucen las personas informadas,  
Que ya están las *Mambisas* adiestradas.  
*Si es que licencias tienen y maestras,*  
*No dudo yo de que estarán, bien diestras.* (8; original emphasis)

The campaign to present Mambisas as women engaged in the war to serve as sexual exploits negates the reality of the subversive activities in which women were essential to the war effort. The situation of women on the island during the last decades of the nineteenth century encompassed different spheres of action. The Mambisas who participated as members of the Mambí Army was only part of the scenario. There were also the messengers who aided the cause of the war in urban and semi-urban areas. At the margins of society were the women who had been detained and served time in prison or were held in the Casa de Recogidas in Habana where “como acto de desprecio y humillación a su condición de patriotas, las mambisas tenían que cumplir su condena ... en un ambiente de corrupción, falto de las más elementales normas de santidad” (Alvarez 71). In addition to Mambisas, the Casa de Recogidas also served as the holding place for women who were mentally ill as well as prostitutes and delinquents.  

*El Moro Muza* and *Don Junípero* portrayed the war as a radical enterprise giving agency to abolition and therefore to the creation of a black nation. The sentiment was well founded. At the outbreak of the war in 1868, separatist leader Carlos Manuel de Céspedes (1819-1874) who was also a slaveholding sugar planter from Oriente Province had freed his slaves. In his Decree of Slavery, Céspedes stated that abolition was among the principles proclaimed by the revolution. He went on to say that Cuba could only fulfill the goal of abolition when it could “agree upon the best manner to carry it out to the true advantage of both its old and its new citizens” (115). In an attempt to pacify other slave-owners but at the same time gain their support, Céspedes decreed that “Proprietors who lend their slaves to the service of the revolution without freeing them … will conserve their ownership until the question of slavery reaches a general resolution” (116), thus forging an alliance between the Liberation Army and a society that still counted on the availability of slave labor and viewed with much trepidation the real possibility of abolition on the island.

A second area of critique for both newspapers was the racial component of the Mambí Army. Without a doubt the issue of how to integrate the almost half of the total Cuban population in the future nation was of vital importance to the independence movement. It not only played a key role during the Ten Years War; it persisted after abolition in 1880. Ada Ferrer states that of the processes that led to the final definition of the Cuban insurgency as a war of Independence for all Cubans, none was more difficult than defining how the future nation would incorporate the diverse racial makeup of the population in its vision of Cuba Libre. Indeed, the ideology of the revolution toward the start of the final War of Independence in 1895 included the idea of the creation of a nation without race:

In rebel camps and battlefields, as well as in newspapers, memoirs, essays, and speeches, patriot-intellectuals (white and non-white) made the bold claim that the struggle against Spain had produced a new kind of individual and a new kind of collectivity. They argued that the experience of war had forever united black and white; and they maintained a new kind of nation in which equality was so ingrained that there existed no need to identify or speak of races—a nation in which (to borrow a phrase of the mulatto general Antonio Maceo) there were ‘no whites nor blacks, but only Cubans.’ (Ferrer 7)
The leadership of the Liberation Army was pressed to aggressively defend the participation of Cubans of African descent from the very start of the war. On the one hand, colonial authorities promoted the image of the island as a chaotic place, incapable of solving its problems as a separate nation, and ill prepared for self-government. Additionally and as the war continued Spanish authorities adopted as a tactic the representation of the Mambí Army and of the war itself as a “guerra de negros,” a racial war to be dreaded. Separatist leaders of the uprising who were sensitive to the large number of Afro-Cubans among the ranks took steps “to prevent the mislabeling of the independence movement as a race war” by sending white leader Bartolomé Masó to the larger white areas and assigning Guillermón Moncada who was biracial to south and eastern Oriente Province where the population of African descent was larger (Helg 56). Toward the end of the century and with the start of the third war in 1895, the colonial government feared that Cuba could become a second Haiti. The war then became a battle of representation that demanded a redefinition of the ideology of independence and in particular of its multiracial character. Black and white intellectuals alike (José Martí, Juan Gualberto Gómez and others) wrote about the nation in symbolic terms of racial integration, harmony, and transcendence, all of which opposed the Spanish image promoting racial fear.

Print media is going to depict the issue of race in a rather restraint manner particularly in comparison to other more aggressive images and text. In its use of satirical caricatures, Don Junípero and El Moro Muza show the Cuban population of African descent most often as injurious to the established social order. Despite the prominence of men and women of color in the ranks of the Liberation Army, Afro-Cubans appear in two ways: first, as detrimental components of the insurrection itself but somewhat peripheral to the struggle; secondly, as socially threatening and subversive to racial purity and harmony. In the early period following the Yara uprising, the former slave population is not yet seen as having a leading role within the ranks of the Mambí Army or in any political terms. “El próximo entierro de la insurrección” (Figure 3 –The next burial of the insurrection – El Moro Muza, October 31, 1869) ridicules the wasteful spending of war funds. The cartoon shows a parade of financial supporters of the war, starting with exiled Cubans in New York (lower left), impoverished Americans wielding their bonds (lower right), and leading the funeral parade is Emilia Casanova holding a broom attached to the sword she presented to General Manuel Quesada. This is a highly charged political reference to the deep divisions among the New York City Cuban community as some exiles sided with the leadership of the Junta Cubana while others, including Emilia Casanova and Cirilo Villaverde, supported General Quesada and his newly formed Liga Cubana de los Estados Unidos. Other figures named are the leaders of the New York Revolutionary Junta, Morales Lemus and General Goicuria. Bringing the rear (top left) is a wagon full of leftover Cuban flags made by Emilia and her cohorts. As Rodrigo Lazo has pointed out, the militancy of Emilia Casanova and La Liga de las Hijas de Cuba “complicates gender roles in exile” (133) as Casanova engaged in a range of activities meant to keep the goal of a free Cuba as the goal of the insurrection. Casanova “situated these activities in a historical continuum; she saw Cuban revolutionary movements as progressing from a period of education to a period of action, with the former starting in 1818 and the latter inaugurated at the outbreak of the Ten Years’ War” (Casanova 169; quoted by Lazo 132). Indeed she wrote not only of her staunch support of both Céspedes and Quesada but was openly critical of Aldama, Morales Lemus and the Junta Cubana: “No necesito añadir más para que Vd. comprenda que la Junta Cubana no es, en mi concepto, el mejor conducto para servir la patria” (88). The Junta in New York had been reorganized by Morales Lemus and Cuban exiles that questioned the ability of Cuba for self-government and looked to annexation to the US as the viable option. Most of these political activists:

advanced annexation to avoid racial conflict. Some continued to fear slave rebellions in the event of a prolonged conflict on the island. A political pamphlet approved by the junta in New York in 1869 suggested that “the passions which revolutions let loose would find their vent, probably, in a war of races and factions, and we might see the horror of San Doming revived.” This pamphlet called for a quick end to the rebellion through North American intervention and annexation. […]
Many believed that a race war could be adverted only by joining the United States. (González 5; quoted by Poyo 26)

Unnamed but prominently centered in the cartoon is the barrel of funds spilling onto the pavement and carried by three black figures, which closely associates the responsibility of the wasteful spending of funds with the incursion of the black man in the war effort. It is noteworthy that this image brings together the various efforts taking place abroad among annexationists and separatists alike. As a Spanish loyalist Landaluze did not perceive any ideological discontinuity among these groups. In symbolic terms the image marginalizes the war as an endeavor driven by foreign and feminine interests on the one hand and also as an extravagant initiative at home. These and other portrayals of Mambí gatherings generally include mostly members of the white elite leadership as black Mambises stand on the edge of the images.

Figure 3. “El próximo entierro de la insurrección” - The next burial of the insurrection. *El Moro Muza*, October 31, 1869.

The interracial nature of the war is carefully presented by Landaluze in his cartoons for *Don Junípero* as to not reveal any political anxiety over the inclusion of race in the war effort. “El Presidente Céspedes celebrando en medio de su corte el aniversario de lo de Yara,” (Figure 4 – President Céspedes celebrating in the middle of his court the Yara anniversary – *Don Junípero*, October 17, 1869) depicts Céspedes in costume at a great ball surrounded by his ministers and General Manuel Quesada while “el campo se llena de perfumes Mambises” (the countryside fills with Mambí perfumes). The only reference to the participation of Cubans of African descent in the celebration is the inclusion of three figures at either side of the margins. The women on the right speaking with Minister of the Exterior Cristóbal Mendoza are elegantly dressed in contrast to the rest of the women at the ball, while the sole black male figure dances
with one of the many scanty and ill-attired white women. The scene speaks of debauchery, from the bottles of drink upheld by the man at the center of the image to the depiction of Quesada dancing with an animal to Mendoza openly courting the two black women. Racial integration is prominently displayed in this cartoon, carefully rejecting the portrayal of a real or significant collaboration in the war effort between the white leadership and Afro-Cubans. It is clear that a racially integrated war deserved greater attention from the editors of the newspapers who viewed the proximity of the races in unsympathetic terms.

Figure 4. “El Presidente Céspedes celebrando en medio de su corte el aniversario de lo de Yara” - President Céspedes celebrating in the middle of his court the Yara anniversary. *Don Junípero*, October 17, 1869.

During the chaos of war and the difficult conditions of the war camps, there emerged new patterns of relations between men and women with a growing number of couples practicing free unions. Alarmed by the practice, Céspedes issued an official communiqué discouraging concubinage and recommending civil marriages instead. Addressing what was perceived as lack of moral values among the troops, *El Moro Muza* published a dramatized dialogue in which “El Presidente,” meaning Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, president of the new Republic of Cuba at war, exalts the freedom to carry out any illegal action, including forced sexual unions:

[“El Presidente”]…. es el caso que las mujeres no nos aman. Ahora bien. Es preciso que nos quieran a la fuerza y que aumentemos así la población Mambisa. Por eso en mi proyecto de ley hay varios artículos que llenan con paternal solicitud esta necesidad del servicio. Resumiendo,
señores. Libertad de anexión, libertad de violación, libertad de tomar lo ageno [sic], libertad de quemar lo ídem, todo cobijado bajo esa bandera azul y blanca, con el triángulo encarnado, donde campea esa estrella, ya tan estrellada. Nada, ciudadanos: la bolsa ó la vida! –He dicho. (El Moro Muza, May 16, 1869: 2).

The image of a paternal Céspedes calling for a legal plan that includes illegal and preposterous acts means to insult his character and question his moral rectitude. In this text Céspedes seemingly stands on the one hand for the annexation of Cuba to the United States (which he did not advocate) and on the other for the raping of women and the pillaging and burning of property, all under the protection of the new emblem of the Cuban flag. In the convergence of those acts of “libertad” --some so clearly offensive and forbidden--, the reader would have understood these aspirations of freedom to be of equal value. Through this text in El Moro Muza annexation becomes as vile a thought as that of rape or theft or arson.

The newspapers will devote a fair amount of commentary to the changing fabric of Cuban society. The cartoon with the caption reading “Las ovejas descarriadas van volviendo al redil” (The runaway sheep start returning to the fold – Figure 5 CENTER, Don Junípero, October 3, 1869) shows a procession of pregnant women returning home from the war, a humorous yet hostile reference to the preponderance of free love unions in the war camps. The possibility of love unions of a biracial nature would have been considered unacceptable and even immoral given that fact that isogamy in marriage was the preferred reproductive pattern among white families (Martínez-Alier 57-60). The derogatory caption “Efectos de la Guerra” further indicates to the reader the possibility of racially unfavorable results of such free unions in the war camps. In this case it is the birth of a racially mixed child, a reminder of what the insurrection has produced (“¿Ése mi sobrino?” –That’s my nephew? Figure 5 BOTTOM, Don Junípero, October 3, 1869). Clearly the child stands as a symbol of what the insurrection might usher in terms of a biracial society. These and similar images underscore a restricted view of the racial component of the Mambí Army. For their readership, who very likely advocated for the status quo which would have included the retention of the system of slavery, Landaluze and Villergas presented the inclusion of all races in the war much less as politically significant than as socially aberrant. Both newspaper editors wished to promote the participation of the Afro-Cuban population in the war as threatening to the social fabric of white Cuban society but not quite (as yet in the first year following Yara) as threatening or meaningful in political terms.

These and other portrayals of Mambises during the first year following Yara promote the idea of insufficiency, immorality, and ineptitude on the part of the leadership of the Liberation Army. The hegemony of the Spanish colonial system and the trappings of government that surrounded colonial administrators provided quite a contrast to the calamitous circumstances under which the Liberation Army operated. During the subsequent years, famine in the countryside became a very harsh reality of the war for the Cuban army. An historical account written by a Spanish soldier provide a glimpse of the conditions that Cuban soldiers had to endure in the eastern region of Oriente:

La vida del cubano era allí excesivamente dura, pues se carecía de ropa y calzado, no había carne (desde mediados de 1870 se comían caballos) y, para surtirse de vianda, era preciso hacerlo en los campamentos enemigos, pudiendo asegurarse que cada boniato que se comía había costado sangre. Además, la carencia de caballos obligaba á hacer la guerra á pie, lo que hacía más terrible la situación. (Pirala 351)

[The life of Cubans was excessively harsh there, since they lacked clothing or shoes, there was no meat (from the middle of 1870 they ate horses) and, to get vegetables, it was necessary to find them in enemy camps, meaning for sure that for each yam eaten blood had to be spilled. Also, the lack of horses forced to wage war on foot, which made the situation even more terrible].
Figure 5. *Don Junípero*, October 3, 1869. Center: “Las ovejas descarriadas van volviendo al redil” – The runaway sheep start returning to the fold. Bottom: “¿Ése mi sobrino?” – That’s my nephew?

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Far from the immediate scenes of the war, these Habana newspapers derided Céspedes and his cabinet. In “El ministerio mambí en su salón de sesiones” (Figure 6 – The Mambí Ministry in its Meeting Hall, *El Moro Muza*, June 13, 1869), the leadership of the new republic holds a meeting atop tree branches. Céspedes himself is at the center right of the image and holding on to very thin twigs with both outstretched arms. His precarious position and the fact that he appears unprepared and bewildered without documents or file folders in his hands puts into question his authority and command. The mood of the ministers, none of whom are speaking or even making eye contact but rather also holding on to the trees or in the case of Minister of War Francisco Aguilera (labeled number 3 in the cartoon) taking a drink, is one of dejection and disconnectedness. Both Minister of the Exterior Cristóbal Mendoza and Eduardo Agramonte, Minister of Government, appear more formally dressed and prepared for a meeting but they are absentminded and preoccupied. The flimsy trees and high surroundings amidst the clouds add to the air of impossibility and gloom that the cartoon wishes to convey. The depiction of this meeting on the tree tops as if among the clouds adds to the sense of doom for the outcome of the revolutionary process.

**Figure 6.** “El ministerio mambí en su salón de sesiones” - The Mambí Ministry in its Meeting Hall. *El Moro Muza*, June 13, 1869.

These editorials and cartoons allow for an understanding of the media strategies used by Spanish loyalists to undermine and delegitimize the Cuban insurgency. The texts and images discussed shed light on the established patterns of thoughts regarding the struggle for a free Cuba and in particular for the role of women and the Afro-Cuban population as components of that struggle. On that point, it is evident that the intent of such derogatory representations was to delegitimize the supporters and advocates of
independence from Spain. One strategy was to contrast the activist and aggressive efforts of the exile community (New York as a special target) to the indecision, immoral patterns, and irresponsibility of Cubans at home; another was a sustained effort to delegitimize the role of women as agents of revolution as exemplified by the attacks on Emilia Casanova de Villaverde. One could find the seeds of what will later become a steadfast portrayal of Cuban Mambisas as wives and mothers rather than activists and combatants already on the pages of these conservative papers. And while at this early part of the conflict there seemed to be a deemphasizing of race as a meaningful component of the war, the social implications of racial relations are amply conveyed. As loyalists to Spain and proponents of colonialism in Cuba, Landaluze and Villergas clearly saw in the war more than an historical and political rupture with the past. They perceived a war for the formation of a free nation as threatening to the status quo in other more significant ways: it was a war that meant to usurp the established racial and social order established after more almost four centuries of Hispanic influence in Cuba.

REFERENCES
*Censo de la República de Cuba.* La Habana: Impresores O’Reilly, 1919. Print.


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1 One source gives the date of 1536 to the first book printed on the American continent in Mexico City: *Escala espiritual de San Juan Climaco*, printed by Jesuit missionaries and by order of Mendoza, the Spanish Viceroy (“On Printing in America”). Another source cites 1539 as the first printing in Mexico City. The printer is Juan Pablos de Brescia with a printing press established by the archbishop Juan de Zumárraga. First book printed: *Breve y mas compendiosa Doctrina Christiana*. Some 300 editions were printed between 1539-1600 (Hensley C. Woodbridge and Lawrence S. Thompson, *Printing in Colonial Spanish America*; cited by Hortensia Calvo, “The Politics of Print: the Historiography of the Book in Early Spanish America”).

2 Villergas was born in Valladolid in 1816. He made a first trip to Cuba in 1857, and a year later left for México (1858) only to return to Cuba in 1859. Back in Spain in 1871 he was elected diputado to the Spanish Corte by the republican party. In Buenos Aires (1874-1876) he published the weekly journal *Antón Perulero* (1875); he was to enter into a polemic with Argentine statesman Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in *Sarmenticideo* (1853). He returned definitively to Spain in 1889.

3 The urban militia known as “Voluntarios” was launched in the Winter of 1869 to combat the insurrection by Céspedes in Oriente Province in 1868. The number of Voluntarios increased rapidly from 30,000 men in 1869 to almost 60,000 at the end of 1871. There were almost 15,000 in Habana District (Domingo Acebrón 41, 141).
Despite this joint project with Llaguno y Cía. both publishers would go on to publicly oppose the reading of news and literature to cigar factory workers, an idea proposed and promoted by Cuban reformists.

Landaluze produced a series of texts where paintings and illustrations depicted Cubans and everyday life in Cuba. In 1852 he published *Los cubanos pintados por sí mismos* (La Habana, Imp. Barcina) in collaboration with Cuban illustrators Cárdenas, Costales, Otero, Larios, and Auber (Barrero 5-6). Also of note is his much cited *costumbrista* album *Tipos y costumbres de la Isla de Cuba* (La Habana, Ed. Miguel de Villa, 1881).

Juan Palomo echoed the themes of the other two papers, particularly regarding the illustrations. For a study of anti-independence illustrations in Juan Palomo, see Hany Valdés Díaz.

The 1861 census in Cuba reported the index of illiteracy at 80% (*Censo de la República de Cuba*; cited by Valdés Díaz). Other sources report the literacy rate between 35% and 45% before 1900 (“The Making of Literate Societies,” UNESCO, p192).

The *Mambisas* who perform services today
Learn their skills in the countryside
And informed people are boasting
that the *Mambisas* are already so adroit.
Considering that they have licenses and teachers,
I don’t doubt that they must be well-trained.

Casanova expressed fierce opposition to the Junta Cubana decrying their lack of commitment to the war. In reference to the Junta’s lack of effort on behalf of the armed struggle in Cuba she denounced the leadership of the Junta as a group of “hombres nulos en todos sentidos, menos en las intrigas” who lacked faith in the success of the revolutionary struggle and who decided to “resolver la cuestión antes por las vías diplomáticas que por la fuerza de las armas” (87). In her letters and in her many efforts to send supplies to the island she fully supported Quesada and recognized his authority in New York as the envoy of Céspedes.

Landaluze presents himself to his readers as the caricaturist of Juan Palomo while at the same time defining his position regarding the political turmoil taking place inside the island. It is clear that he viewed the exile community in New York as the overall enemy of Spain, disregarding factions and ideological differences among annexationists and separatists. In his editorial for the first issue of Juan Palomo he warns: “(…) no se libraran los enemigos de España, por mucho que se escondan en la espesura del monte ó entre las nieblas de los Estados-Unidos.” (Cited in Barrero 13).