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Manifest Destiny's Child: Mary Hazelton Blanchard Wade and the Literature of American Empire

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Abstract This article discusses how, following in the footsteps of United States imperial children's writers Jacob Abbott and Edward Stratemeyer, Mary Hazelton Blanchard Wade (1860–1936), the original author of the *Our Little Cousins* series (1901–1905), contributed to the American culture of empire. Wade was one of the most prolific and popular imperialistic turn-of-the-twentieth-century American children's authors. Yet, she remains understudied and virtually unknown, except among a few scholars who have examined, briefly, a few of her most prominent texts. Given Wade's current popularity within certain Christian Evangelical homeschooling circles, and the resurgence of imperialist and othering discourses as part of the War on Terror, revealing her project and understanding its messages and relevance for the twenty-first century, is today all the more urgent.

Keywords Mary Hazelton Blanchard Wade · Our Little Cousins · United States · Empire · Imperialism · Theodore Roosevelt

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The building of a global American empire, mainly through the acquisition of territories, spheres of influence, and military bases via war, purchase, annexation, or soft power and hard power authority, began in earnest at the turn of the twentieth century with the Spanish-American War (1898), and was reinforced by World Wars I and II, and the events, foreign policy, and doctrines of the Cold War, which was gradually replaced by the current War on Terror. The children's author Mary Hazelton Blanchard Wade (1860–1936) wrote at the peak of the first wave of American external imperialism, specifically between the Spanish-American War and the outbreak of World War I in 1914 (with American entry in 1917). This period was dominated politically, socially, and culturally by Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919)—leader of the Rough Riders, victor at the Battle of San Juan Hill, president between 1901 and 1909, and indisputable icon of American masculinity, resourcefulness, ruggedness, courage, vigour, Progressivism, athleticism and worldliness.

As exemplified though his African safari hunting expeditions and transnational travels, Roosevelt advocated the "strenuous life" as a means of building personal and national character. This certainly shaped his domestic and foreign policies, the latter being mostly focused on securing the Western hemisphere—Central and South America—and the Pacific Ocean as natural extensions of United States dominion. Using territories gained through the Spanish-American War, such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, as a springboard, Roosevelt sought to craft a United States empire by expanding beyond areas already under American influence. To this end, in 1904 he amended the Monroe Doctrine (1823) with the Roosevelt Corollary which, in short, turned the Executive Branch into the Imperial Branch, granting the United States permission to intervene in Latin American affairs if they were not behaving "decently"—in other words, in accordance with American foreign policy—as well as to keep European aggression at bay. Roosevelt's "Big Stick" foreign policy transformed the United States into a hemispheric policeman. For the United States, diplomacy now meant "speaking softly" through soft power cultural and economic measures, but "carrying a big stick", or hard power military intervention, in its back pocket.

While the political and economic domination of "subordinate" nations was certainly strengthened by such policies, the American social domination of their "uncivilized", inferior, and always racialized citizens was undergirded by a mixture of discourses: the white man's burden; missionary agendas; nativism, especially towards immigrants from non-Western European and non-Christian nations; and colonial fantasy, which included the desire to emulate European empire, mercantilism, and cultural imperialism. Like Great Britain, the United States also developed its own culture of empire, including a children's literature of empire, which was not only meant to teach white, middle and upper-class American children about children around the world, stimulating a desire to travel and conquer, but was also designed to instil feelings of patriotism, national pride, and exceptionalism; racial, eugenic and cultural superiority; and political and economic domination—in short, the elements which comprised Roosevelt's personal philosophy and domestic and foreign policies.

This article will illustrate how, following in the footsteps of United States imperial children's writers Jacob Abbott and Edward Stratemeyer, Mary Hazelton Blanchard Wade, the original author of the *Our Little Cousins* series (1901–1905), contributed to the American culture of empire. Wade was one of the most prolific and popular imperialistic turn-of-the-twentieth-century American children's authors. Yet, she remains little studied and virtually unknown, except among a few scholars who have examined, briefly, a few of her most prominent texts. Given Wade's current popularity within certain Christian Evangelical homeschooling circles (May, 2009; Miss Maggie, n.d.), and the resurgence of imperialist and othering discourses as part of the War on Terror, revealing her project and understanding its messages and relevance for the twenty-first century, is today all the more urgent.

As this article will argue, Wade's message was deceptively simple: under the guise of increasing intercultural and international dialogue, her writing encouraged children to travel, at least vicariously, to "dark and dangerous" lands they would most likely never visit, all in the comfort of their secure white, middle and upper-class homes. However, her works simultaneously served the United States imperialist mission by reinforcing the righteousness of domestic expansionism—that is, conquering indigenous lands and peoples—as originally expressed in the 1840s and 1850s through Manifest Destiny, while working hand-in-hand with Roosevelt's global agenda, convincing Americans, both young and old, of the virtue, morality, and justice of bringing (white) civilization and democracy to the "uncivilized". Even though they are over 100 years old, these themes, and the lessons (not) learned from them, still disconcertingly pervade American political discourse, suggesting that although they might seem hackneyed and "obvious" to contemporary readers, they merit continuous conversation, debate, and discussion precisely because in today's world, they are so easily, and thus dangerously, dismissible.

The Social, Political, and Literary Worlds of Mary Hazelton Blanchard Wade

Very little biographical material exists on Wade, other than the scant information available in period reference books and encyclopedias. According to the 1903 edition of *Who's Who in America*, Wade was born on 23 March 1860 as Mary Hazelton Blanchard in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and was the daughter of Charles Henry and Caroline Cecilia Blanchard. She attended high school in Malden, and her education was supplemented by private tutors. Wade started teaching in 1877, at the age of seventeen, and on 14 November 1882, she married Louis Francis Wade of Ann Arbor, Michigan. She served as a member of Malden's school board between 1891 and 1892, and started writing children's fiction around 1900 (Leonard and Marquis, 1903, p. 1540).

Wade's writing generally falls into four major categories: her "Our Little Cousins" (OLC) series; her Native American works; her "Great Heroes" series; and her children's travel writing. Despite her wide range of publications, Wade is best

known, when she is acknowledged at all, as the author of the original nineteen-book OLC series, which was published by L. C. Page & Company of Boston between 1901 and 1905. Between 1906 and 1910, Wade continued to contribute to the series, but mostly through revised and updated editions of older works, which is why duplicate versions of the same titles exist. By 1905, Wade had begun to transition into other areas of interest, but the OLC series was continued by writers such as Blanche McManus, Mary F. Nixon-Roulet, Henry Lee Mitchell Pike, Luna May Innes, Clara Vostrovsky Winlow, and Anna Constance Winlow, well into the 1930s. However, none of the subsequent authors contributed as many books to the series as Wade.

At the turn of the twentieth century, colonialism and imperialism were at their peaks, and it was precisely at this time that publishing for children also became its own distinct market in the United States. Children's literature and imperialism thus became inextricably linked, with one feeding into the other "in a continuing cycle of book production to imperial indoctrination and back again" (Sands-O'Connor, 2014a, pp. 5–6). This connection is particularly observable in the works of prolific children's authors and publishers Jacob Abbott (1803–1879) and Edward Stratemeyer (1860–1930). The creator and author of the "Rollo" series, which involved a young American boy and his travels abroad, Abbott was an early contributor to imperialistic children's writing in the United States. Written in the decades just before and after the Civil War (1861–1865), Abbott's works suggested that Americans' sense of national identity was formed in relation to the rest of the world. Going abroad, even vicariously through literature, "offered Americans the chance to reflect on their identity, and what that entailed in a universal context" (Nesmith, 2014, p. 21). By discovering Others' "otherness" through these texts, American children discovered themselves and established racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, geographic, and ideological categories and hierarchies that placed themselves (i.e. middle and upper-class white Christian Americans) on top. Such children's literature "reflected and channeled anxieties about what it meant to be white" as well as "what that racial identity had to do with being American or with promoting civilization, democracy, or progress abroad" (Murphy, 2010, p. 4).

The Rollo books, and those that followed, such as works written by Stratemeyer and Wade, greatly influenced what American children thought of the outside world and of themselves, and helped "foster the idea of a cohesive American nation-state as well as a stable sense of national identity", usually defined in opposition to the identity being described (Nesmith, 2014, p. 22). United States imperialism expanded territory externally and consolidated the idea of the nation internally (Rowe, 2000, p. 5), and literary narratives reinforced this project by creating a fictive group identity or affiliation, particularly for white middle and upper-class children, when such a sense of belonging did not exist in remote, and newly-acquired, parts of the country, or was under "threat" from the social changes brought about by immigration, urbanization, and industrialization. One would imagine that the experience of traveling through these books would broaden minds, erase prejudice, foster maturity, and encourage liberal sensibilities, since travel in general supports self-improvement and the opening of new horizons through exposure to the outside world. However, in imperialistic children's books it did not.

While such works encouraged "good citizenship" and the transition into adolescence by allowing children to make sense of their complex worlds (adult/civilized/colonizer/superior/dominant), it did so by using the Other as a foil (child/uncivilized/colonized/inferior/subservient). Thus, for all its *worldliness*, such literature ironically promoted a *parochialism* and vehement nationalism that objectified, stereotyped, and degraded, through a biased and condescending imperial gaze, anyone who was "different".

Children's writing has always been replete with didactic potential, and imperialistic series were no exception. In fact, by the late nineteenth century this type of fiction developed a very specific function: "to instruct children of imperial nations about the wonders and responsibilities of the colonies" (Sands-O'Connor, 2014b, p. 59), a "white children's burden", as it were. Turn-of-the-twentieth-century United States foreign policy was creating an empire and, much like their British counterparts, American publishers scrambled to profit from the literary possibilities of the American imperial project. In 1898, the year of the Spanish-American War, Edward Stratemeyer's Old Glory series, which was about the war, began publication, and with it came the birth of the "Stratemeyer Syndicate", one of the most productive and profitable children's publishing groups of the twentieth century (Sands-O'Connor, 2014a, p. 10). Although by the late nineteenth century the United States possessed territory in the Pacific, such as Hawaii and American Samoa, it was American possessions in the Caribbean, which were closer to the continental United States and thus more accessible to the majority of Americans, that became the "proving grounds" for imperial children's literature. Not surprisingly, the Stratemeyer Syndicate "brought child characters to the Caribbean nearly two dozen times between 1898 and 1928" with the goal of "instructing young readers how to profit from America's newest possessions" (Sands-O'Connor, 2014b, p. 59). Such "travel-into-the-empire tales" helped define American imperial expansion and consolidate United States foreign policy in the public sphere. "From Teddy Roosevelt's Big Stick through Taft's Dollar Diplomacy and Wilson's Spheres of Influence, Stratemeyer's characters bullied, bought, and befriended West Indians, teaching generations of American children the tenets of 'friendly imperialism' in the Caribbean" (Sands-O'Connor, 2014b, pp. 60–61).

Our Little (Indigenous) Cousins

When Wade began the OLC series in 1901, she was building on a socially, politically, and economically burgeoning children's literary enterprise. The Stratemeyer Syndicate set the stage for Wade's works, which were written and illustrated to appeal to male and female middle and upper-class white Christian American children of Western European descent. As Marietta Frank explains, "Wade makes it plain in the prefaces to her Little Cousin books that she does not expect children of color" among her readers (2014, p. 98). Moreover, Wade's use of the word "little" in the series titles infantilises the non-white and/or non-American subject matter/reader, and her frequent use of terms such as "odd" and "queer" throughout the texts accentuates difference, distance, and alienation.

Overall, Wade's OLC books are a unique blend of "fact" and "fiction", or "faction". As Melanie Kimball describes, plots and characters may be well developed in works of children's faction, but usually they are designed to add interest to facts. International children's faction series, she notes, have two goals: "to teach young Americans about the way of life in other countries; and sometimes subtly, other times bluntly, to demonstrate the superiority of American democracy and the American way of life" (Kimball, 2012, p. 681). Wade uses the device of "telling the story of a particular 'cousin'" to "convey facts about life in various countries" (Kimball, 2012, p. 685). However, like many authors of pre-World War I international children's literature, Wade never actually visited the settings of her books. As she elucidates in a newspaper article, "I studied hard and I also had the advantage of having friends in the countries and I submitted my writing to them in order to be sure I was giving a true picture" (quoted in Frank, 2014, p. 96). Here, Wade is unclear about the nature of these "friends". Were they natives of the countries being studied, or white American expatriates possibly harbouring their own biases? What is clear is that, far from painting "a true picture", her narratives reified pre-existing cultural and racial stereotypes and highly distorted assumptions about food, clothing, housing, and traditional activities.

Starting with the first OLC books in 1901 (*Our Little Indian Cousin; Our Little Brown Cousin*; *Our Little Japanese Cousin*; *Our Little Russian Cousin*), and ending with her last in 1905 (*Our Little Armenian Cousin*), Wade's strategy with the series was using the literary device of faction to indoctrinate on many levels, above all, socially—in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, class, and gender—and politically (America's expanding place in the world). The imperialism of Wade's world was in essence an extension of the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny—the belief that the United States had the God-given right, or "destiny", to expand from "sea to shining sea"—both of which shaped American domestic and foreign policy during the nineteenth century. Deployed to expand the nation's borders through aggressions like the annexation of Texas (1845) and the Mexican–American War (1846–1848), and land acquisitions such as the Gadsden Purchase (1853), Manifest Destiny allowed the United States to accomplish its mission of expanding to the West Coast by the eve of the Civil War.

With the borders of Canada and Mexico already squared away, the Pacific, Caribbean, and Central and South America became the only immediate channels for expansion. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Monroe Doctrine provided the most socially, politically, and economically feasible and flexible way for the United States to imagine and articulate its diplomatic and military place in the world and engage in Manifest Destiny beyond its borders, for the doctrine "described the United States as the leader and protector of the Western Hemisphere, while Europe presided over the rest of the globe". Roosevelt's famous 1904 Corollary, or addition to the Monroe Doctrine, "made explicit the responsibility of the United States to not only protect the Western Hemisphere but also to police it" (Murphy, 2005, p. vii). Through the Corollary, the United States granted itself permission, and power, to interfere in, or even invade, other nations in the hemisphere as it saw fit, especially to engage in imperialism under the guise of promoting economic stability, "civilization", "decency", and democracy. Clearly, Manifest Destiny, as enabled

by the Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt Corollary, offered a narrative that allowed Americans to make sense of their place in the world (Murphy, 2005, p. ix).

Through works such as those written by Stratemeyer and Wade, early twentieth-century children would become Manifest Destiny's children, groomed to continue the imperialist projects initiated by their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers. According to John Carlos Rowe, Manifest Destiny was at the heart of the American imperialist project because it relied on "arbitrary, rigorous, and inherently violent" hierarchies of race, class, and gender (2000, p. ix), and children's literature of the period certainly reflected this. Although American imperialism did not follow the European model, focusing instead first on internal colonization, followed by the acquisition of islands and other external spheres of influence, mostly from other colonial powers such as Spain, American imperialistic children's literature, much like its European counterparts, affirmed the "civilized" white, wealthy, developed Christian nation's prerogative to dominate "inferior" (non-Christian/non-white) peoples both within and beyond its borders, mostly as a means to consolidate its own power and legitimacy—a project which, many would argue, continues today on a far larger global scale.

Wade began the series in 1901 with *Our Little Indian Cousin* and *Our Little Brown Cousin*, and it is not coincidental that she rapidly expanded it the following year to include cousins from Africa (a hotbed of imperialism), Alaska and Hawaii (valued American territorial acquisitions), and Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines (prizes from the Spanish-American War). In the minds of many white Americans, the internal colonial domination of the Native and Mexican populations was connected to the external colonialism exercised by the United States (Rowe, 2000, p. x). Wade's writing certainly underscores this observation. Her condescending and patronizing treatment of indigenous Americans, whom she divides into "Indians" and "Eskimos", for example, is replicated in her treatment of other colonized groups, ranging from Filipinos, to Hawaiians, to "Brown" peoples. Just as Manifest Destiny was the "final solution" to the "problem" of "domestic" native peoples (Rowe, 2000, p. 10), colonization and imperialism were the final solution to the "problem" of international Others in the hemisphere, and beyond.

Wade's *Yellow Thunder: Our Little Indian Cousin* (1901) certainly exemplifies all the traits of imperialist literature, ranging from the "white child's burden", to colonialism being "good" for the colonized, to the childlike, uncivilized inferiority of the imperial subject and his/her lifestyle. Although in the Preface Wade briefly ruptures the tidiness of her enterprise by sympathetically recounting the woes of the "red man" at the hands of the "white man"—that is, Natives being driven from their homes, sickness, alcoholism, the theft of their culture and land—she weaves strong imperialist rhetoric throughout the rest of the work which more than compensates for momentary slippages where the reader might think that her project is folding in on itself. She fills the text with condescending and derogatory statements that demean Native culture and tradition: "They call him Yellow Thunder. Do not be afraid of your little cousin because he bears such a terrible name. It is not his fault, I assure you" (9). Moreover, she passes judgment on the adults—a common thread throughout the series—reading them through a white, middle-class, patriarchal lens: "But what is Yellow Thunder's stern-looking father

doing all the time? He has no store to keep, no mill to grind, no factory to work in" (17).

Wade frequently derides and ridicules the foodways and domestic situation of the non-white peoples she examines, comparing their lifestyles to that of her readership in an insulting and racist manner. Because *Yellow Thunder* examines a conflated "Native American" typology, her descriptions likewise draw on, and reify, many of the stereotypes associated with indigenous North American people: the squaw, the scalper, the hopeless child, and the noble savage, living in a wigwam or teepee. "Suppose we follow the red man into his home. Ugh! What smoke there is inside! We can hardly see across the wigwam" (26). Moreover, "He must be brotherly to all creatures, and ready to give to others always". "'Be hospitable to all', is a maxim planted in the heart of every Indian child" (31); above all, we are to assume, to the white man. This is reinforced by their proported lack of desire for land ownership; their "illiteracy" (they do not write but, like other "primitive" peoples, use pictures to communicate); the fact that they do not attend school and that "Dame Nature" is their teacher; their reliance on medicine men instead of licensed doctors; their superstitions and worship of spirits and inanimate objects like feathers and bones, instead of worshipping Jesus Christ at a Christian church; and their innocent love of George Washington—all of which, readers are meant to conclude, justify past colonization and future domination by the white man. Wade also reminds readers that Native Americans "have been very cruel in warfare with us" (33–34), always stressing the difference between "us" and "them", even though all are, in fact, Americans. To accentuate this difference, the narrator asks, "I wonder if my red cousin has any holidays. He certainly cannot understand the glorious Fourth, and I don't believe he ever heard of Christmas. How does he get along?" (69) This strategy, as Amy Kaplan notes, was commonly deployed by writers of this era who sought to tame and domesticate the "stranger within" and regulate "the borders between the civilized and the savage" (1998, p. 582).

Wade treats another indigenous group of North Americans, the "Eskimos" or Inuit, in a very similar way, which is not surprising given that Alaska had become the new American domestic "final frontier", replacing the Old West, after its purchase from the Russians in 1867. Much like the West, Alaska was full of "strange" natives who were different and in need of taming by their benevolent and civilized white cousins. "We call them Eskimos", comments Wade. "They belong to another race than ours—a different branch of the great human family. They are yellow and we are white". However, as she continues, "we are the children of one Father" (vi). Here, Wade introduces the Christian values which would permeate some of her later books, especially works like *Twin Travelers in the Holy Land* (1919), for as Kerry Louane Fast notes, didactic children's books were an "avenue through which Evangelicals propagated their beliefs and values" (1999, p. 141, fn. 25), and perhaps one reason why Wade is so popular within the movement today. The Christian civilizing mission immediately takes centre stage, and by page fourteen Wade is describing, in detail, the uncleanliness of Eskimos. In fact, they are so dirty, she maintains, that they phenotypically "change races" when they bathe, and are almost white under their dark, polluted skin: "In the course of time" his skin "would grow darker still, because he did not wash himself. Please don't be

shocked. It's so hard to get water in that frozen land". "It is scarcely any wonder, therefore, that Etu has not been taught to be cleanly in all ways" (14). This, we are told, "was quite surprising to an Arctic explorer some years ago, when he discovered the difference soap and warm water would make in an Eskimo's appearance. 'Why, you are almost a white man,' he exclaimed" (15). As Wade conveys, despite the harshness of their environment, Eskimos are always "on the grin" (29), which she equates with their uncivilized, childish backwardness, need to be taught and dominated, and suitability to the imperial project. Not only do they have "queer ways of living and eating" (32)—"You may like chocolate creams and cocoanut cakes, and think them the greatest treat in the world", she tells her readers, "but in Etu's opinion there is nothing better than a big lump of seal blubber or the marrow from the inside of a deer's bones" (33–34)—but they also "have many strange beliefs". For example, like other indigenous non-Christian peoples, "They think there is a spirit in everything—the rock, the snow, the wind, the very air has its spirit. The seal, therefore, has its spirit, too, and must be treated respectfully" (74–75). Moreover, "Etu does not count time as we do. He speaks of a 'moon' ago, instead of a month. Yesterday is the period before the last 'sleep', and the years are counted by the winters". His people "do not write or read, except as they are taught by their white visitors, and Etu has never seen a book in his life" (78). Thus, much like Native Americans and immigrants from non-Western European countries, these individuals on American soil were also allegedly inassimilable. Clearly, Wade reflects this cultural anxiety, which was fueled by turn-of-the-twentieth-century race-consciousness, eugenic theory, nativism, and xenophobia, in her works.

Our Little Island Cousins

In 1902, the same year *Our Little Eskimo Cousin* was published, Wade also produced four books dealing with the United States' most recent imperial acquisitions, the island territories of Hawaii, which was annexed in 1898 with the political support of zealous expansionists, and Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, which were the spoils of the Spanish-American War. In much the same way as *Our Little Indian* and *Eskimo Cousins*, *Our Little Hawaiian Cousin* profiles the "queer" customs of a "queer" brown people, exoticizing them "by constantly articulating how unbelievably different they are" (Sands-O'Connor, 2014a, p. 7). Ironically, in the process of supposedly encouraging international understanding and world peace, Wade stumbles over her own national and cultural prejudices, suggesting the (not so) hidden imperial agenda behind her works. Wade begins this process in the Preface, where she sets the stage for this little cousin's tale:

> Far out in the broad island-dotted and island-fringed Pacific Ocean lies an island group known as the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands. […] Our missionaries went there, and the people welcomed them gladly. At length the time came when the Hawaiian Islands asked the greatest of the American nations, our United States, to receive them into her family; for they saw that

> they could not govern themselves as wisely alone as with her help. Thus these brown, childlike people came to be among the youngest of the adopted children of our nation. Our government has accepted a great trust in undertaking to care for these people who are of a different race and who live far from our shores. We shall all of us feel much interest in seeing that our adopted brothers and sisters are treated kindly, wisely, and well. (v–vi)

As Craig Howes asserts, throughout the text, Wade conveys typical turn-of-the-twentieth-century assumptions about the Hawaiian: "a happy, incompetent child, regardless of chronological age, whose former savagery resulted from superstition and evil chiefs, and whose current prosperity is therefore directly attributable to the loving but firm guidance of American missionaries" (1987, p. 72) and their white government, whom they invited to rule them. This portrait is repeated over and over again throughout the series, especially when Wade is depicting a non-white, indigenous, or colonized group residing in an American territory. Such an "invitation" not only absolves American readers of imperial guilt, but also affirms outright the colonial family romance. It also reifies the notion that colonization was beneficial to the childlike colonial subject, who could not rule him/herself, and thus needed the benevolent paternalistic guidance of Uncle Sam. As Wade comments, the "white men came and taught the Hawaiians many things. They helped the rulers in governing wisely; and at last the people saw it was best to put themselves under the care of their white brothers" (64).

Auwae, the young protagonist of the book, and her mother reinforce the idea of the Hawaiian colonial subject as a perpetual child in need of Big Brother's care. Auwae spends her days outdoors, playing, singing, and weaving lei, proudly looking "up at the American flag floating in the breezes not far away. The schoolmaster of the village tells her it is in honour of George Washington, the greatest man of the United States; that if he had not lived, America would not be what she is to-day, and she might not have been able to give Hawaii the help needed when trouble came" (9–10). Auwae's mother, who is described as a fat, brown woman, is also "idly making wreaths" with her neighbours, "instead of cooking and sweeping, dusting and sewing for the family!" "The fact is, all days are like this to the Hawaiian mother, who lives the life of a grown-up child" (18).

However, as Howes notes, "Always lurking behind the little child, or even the civilized Hawaiian adult, is the diabolical spectre of the savage" (1987, p. 72). Not only do Hawaiians eat with their fingers, but "These people, so cleanly in some other ways, do not object" to using "one pipe in common" (25). Wade forces Auwae to confront her racialized difference by having her ask the question, "Why wasn't I made white?" after she sees a blonde, blue-eyed American girl on horseback. "If I should bathe myself over and over again, it would make no difference", Auwae continues, "I should never look like her", a scene reminiscent of Pecola Breedlove's longing in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970). Although Auwae's mother comforts her by conveying that God made his flowers different colours, it is clear that the American girl, who stands in for Wade's readership, is superior to Auwae in every way possible. In fact, Auwae adds that "when Christmas

comes, I believe I should like a white doll that would look like that little girl" (35–37).

As Wade contends, the only hope the Hawaiian has of escaping heathen savagery is American Evangelical Christianity, which is woven throughout the narrative. Like an obedient colonial child, Auwae belittles the "hideous idols" her pagan people once worshipped and recites the Lord's Prayer, which she learned "in the white church in the village" (38). Auwae loves Sunday school, organ music, hymns, and the "Quarterly Review" when "all the children in the country for miles around come flocking into Auwae's village" for a special service. Auwae even "won a prize at the last quarterly review [sic]. It is a picture of the infant Jesus giving water to his cousin John from a shell" (39). Moreover, Auwae and her sibling Upa "think lovingly of the good missionaries who came to their land" to "drive fear from their hearts, to destroy the cruel power of the priests, and to bring freedom of mind and body" (43–44). For these Hawaiians, with American Christianity also came American civilization and democracy.

Wade's works on the spoils of the Spanish-American War—*Our Little Cuban Cousin, Our Little Porto Rican* [sic] *Cousin*, and *Our Little Philippine Cousin*—are arguably her most imperialist of all, with direct references to the wars, Theodore Roosevelt and his policies, American expansionism, and the dynamics of colonialism. As Wade delineates in the Preface to *Our Little Cuban Cousin*, the "largest of all the fair West Indian Islands which lie in our open doorway is Cuba", where recently we "had war and bloodshed". This war and bloodshed is blamed directly, in jingoistic fashion, on the Spanish government, which "in trying to subdue its rebellious province of Cuba, brought great hardship and suffering upon the Cuban people, our neighbours" (v). Benevolent power that it was, the United States "government at last decided that such things must not be at our very doorway". So "to-day Cuba is free, and the great trouble of war is over and past for her". However, Cubans, Wade explains, still "need the friendly help of their more fortunate neighbours", and as good neighbours we should "all feel a stronger interest than ever before in their welfare". Thus, she immediately justifies American colonial intervention in Cuba, which is ironic given that the United States originally sought to free the "poor Cubans" from another colonial power, Spain.

Wade then introduces her readership to 9-year-old Maria, pronounced "Mahreeah", who speaks Spanish, the language of her colonial oppressors, because her "forefathers came over seas [sic] from Spain to Cuba, as the English colonists came across the ocean to our country, which is now the United States" (here, Wade does not note that the British were also colonial oppressors who forced English on Native populations). As Wade conveys, although Maria has dark eyes, hair, and skin, "we must remember that the Spanish people and the English people are near akin in the great human family. They both belong to the white race; and so we shall call our black-eyed little neighbour our *near* cousin" (v–vii) (emphasis added).

Throughout the book, Wade is "stridently anti-colonial with respect to other imperial powers while endorsing" the United States' "imperialist policies" (Rowe, 2000, p. 4). Maria and her family, the Diazes, who own a lucrative sugar plantation, are part of the proud resistance/insurgence forces fighting for Cuba's independence from Spain, the land of their ancestors. In fact, Maria makes insurgent emblems to

distinguish friend from foe, and her 6-year-old sister, Isabella, is learning to read from "a book printed by the insurgents. No one had to urge her to study, for even her own little primer was made up of stories about the war" (19). Isabella, forever the little patriot, becomes fascinated by a new word, "victory", and teaches her parrot to say "liberty". Much like the Yellow Journalists of the time, Wade clearly sympathizes with the "poor Cubans" suffering at the hands of their vicious colonial oppressors. In fact, the Diazes are constantly praying for American intervention: "The Americans live so near us, I don't see how they can help taking our part, when they know the way we are treated" (14). Much like their Hawaiian cousins, they welcome this intervention, willingly inviting the substitution of one colonial power for another.

The overarching plot of war, however, does not preclude the repetition of the racialized discourse found in other Wade works. The "suffering" Diaz servant, Miguel, an Afro-Cuban, is praised for his obedience: "So many of the blacks are lazy, and only think of their own comfort. But Miguel is always good-natured and ready to help" (36). Meanwhile, Afro-Cuban children are happiest when illiterate, which contrasts markedly with Isabella's reading efforts: "'No, little master', said one of the black children, 'that doesn't trouble me any. I don't need any learning'" (57). Clearly, such depictions drew on turn-of-the-twentieth-century American readers' nostalgia for the plantations of the antebellum South, which were allegedly populated by contented slaves and mammies (the little boy's mother, Wade emphasizes, is also an excellent cook). "The boy's grandfather", on the other hand, "was born far away in Africa where the sun was always hot. He had lived a wild, happy life in his little village under the palm-trees by the side of a broad river. […] He was very happy" (58), until the cruel Spaniards enslaved him and brought him to Cuba. While Wade acknowledges this injustice in this work as well as in *Our Little Porto Rican Cousin*, she does not mention the fact that Americans had also engaged in the slave trade. She only refers to the liberation of their black brothers in America by "the great President Lincoln", and calls for the liberation of all Cubans from their oppressors. Similarly, while Wade condemns the eradication of the indigenous people of Cuba and Puerto Rico by their villainous Spanish colonial rulers, she does not acknowledge or condemn the fact that her own forefathers engaged in the extermination of Native Americans.

Eventually, the Diazes' prayers are answered: American intervention comes at long last. Maria learns that "The U.S. warship *Maine* has been blown up", and comments that "Victory shall be ours at last, for the United States will now surely take our part against Spain" (70–71). Soon, they hear that the United States is preparing troops "to meet" (not invade) the Spaniards on Cuban soil, and that the "great battle-ship *Oregon* [i]s speeding through two oceans that she, also, m[ay] take part" (81). However, what interests the Diaz children most is Roosevelt's "Rough Riders and their daring charges at El Caney and San Juan Hill", where they "killed most of the Spaniards and drove the rest away. It was a glorious fight and a glorious victory" (92–93). "Still grander", Wade patriotically recounts, "was the sight on land when thousands gathered around the governor's beautiful palace at Havana to see the stars and stripes of America unfurled" and to hear the "Star Spangled Banner" played as "thousands of American and Cuban hearts were filled

with joy". Even the parrot joins in the festivities: "He seemed to feel that something very great must have happened, for his voice was shriller than usual" (95–96). The imperial family romance is completed by a statement made by Blanco, a little boy whose dream it is to go to Harvard College to become a missionary. "I wish to be a minister", he tells Maria, "but I'm afraid if I do become one, I shall not feel like praying for the Spaniards". As "the American flag wav[es] and peace rule[s] in the land" (99–100), Maria is "rapidly learning to speak English", so she can communicate with "one of her dearest friends", a "little American girl who has lately made her home in Cuba" (106).

American imperial forces as savior is also a propaganda theme that runs throughout *Our Little Porto Rican Cousin.* Unlike *Our Little Cuban Cousin*, which is set during the Spanish-American War, *Our Little Porto Rican Cousin* takes place in the aftermath of the war, with Puerto Rico secure in American hands. We meet "lazy little Manuel", a wealthy creole child, "born in the West Indies of European parents", as he is "sound asleep at eight o'clock in the morning", perhaps "dreaming of his newly adopted American brothers" (9). Small for his age but "well-shaped and graceful" (14), 12-year-old Manuel lives on a spice plantation engaged in mercantile trade with America, where "coloured boys" and their sisters pick "berries and store them in bags for their master to send to the United States mainland" (16). Interestingly, Manuel, like Maria in *Our Little Cuban Cousin*, belongs to the landed elite. Selecting the depiction of the white upper-class might have been a strategic move on Wade's part, who possibly believed that her readership would be better able to relate to, and empathize with, them. The plantation workers call Manuel "massa" and Teresa, Manuel's older sister, even has a "duenna", a dark "ugly-looking" mammy-like chaperone who follows her wherever she goes in order to maintain Teresa's class and gender status (23). Like the people of Hawaii and Cuba, Puerto Ricans are also "simple people": "If they have plantains enough to satisfy their hunger, plenty of cigars to smoke, and hammocks of the bark of the palm-tree to swing in, they are happy and contented" (16).

As with her other works, here Wade also focuses on educational and cultural differences, and the superiority of everything American. Manuel and his 10-year-old sister Dolores are "rather backward in arithmetic and other grammar-school studies, but their parents do not see the need of knowing as much of such things as do American fathers and mothers". Moreover, "The children have always had a governess, and have never been in a public schoolroom in their lives. In fact, these are only now becoming common since our people have taken Porto Rico under their care. Think of it, children! In this beautiful island, only one person out of five can read and write at present. […] They grew up ignorant indeed" (21–22). Furthermore, Puerto Ricans, like other "primitive" people, are superstitious due to their lack of education. Manuel and Dolores are not allowed out in the moonlight. As their mother reminds them: "Don't you remember poor little Sancho? He is feeble-minded because his careless nurse let him sleep in the moonlight when he was a baby" (69).

Like the people of the island, island food and customs are also strange and queer. As Wade suggests:

> Perhaps it is the hot climate all the year round that makes it necessary to have strongly flavoured foods to excite the appetite. […] Cigarettes are served, and, would you believe it! our little Manuel, as well as his mother and older sister, joins in a smoke. Such is the custom of his country that even children of three or four years use tobacco. It is no wonder, then, that as the boys and girls grow up, they have so little strength. (25)

This comment clearly implies that Americans are also physically superior. After church, the family attends a cock-fight, which prompts Wade to state that "when our government took charge of the island, after the war with Spain, they forbade any more cock-fighting". Yet, the locals still engage in the practice, which Wade describes in lurid detail, underscoring that Sunday, the day of the Lord, is the day Manuel's "people take for the cruel pleasure" (50–51). However, Wade hopes that American law and order will put an end to the savage practice, bringing civility to the people of Puerto Rico: "It is hoped that Manuel and Dolores will learn better as they grow older. We cannot blame them now, for the customs of their country have made it seem quite right and proper". She hopes the same for "a still more cruel sport" introduced by the vicious Spaniards, and "now forbidden by American law": bull-fighting (53–55).

As with Cuba, there is hope for improvement now that Puerto Rico is a United States territory. *Our Little Porto Rican Cousin* ends in much the same way as *Our Little Cuban Cousin*, with a trip to the capital replete with American patriotism, propaganda, flag-waving, and praise for its paternalistic benevolence. Although "it seems strange to the children to see the red, white, and blue of the American flag" floating over San Juan, Manuel explains to Dolores that "this new flag means friendship", freedom, and democracy. "The poor will not be taxed so much as they used to be, and the good Americans will not allow any other people to harm us". Moreover, the children are promised a trip to "that wonderful city, New York, where we shall see so much we have never even dreamed of", and where they will become "acquainted with [their] American cousins in their own land, our own land, now" (106).

Wade is far more racist and judgmental in her depiction of the Filipinos, a United States colonial population she describes as brown, ugly, "savage children" who are not as easily amenable to American "liberty and democracy" because of, the reader is to assume, their race. With geographic distance correlating to racial and cultural distance, Wade describes the Filipinos as living "on the farther side of the great Pacific Ocean". Although "they have been adopted into the family of our own nation, the United States of America", the "people of these islands" are "wild and distrustful children. They have no faith in us; they do not wish to obey our laws" (v–vi). Alila, our Filipino cousin, is one example: "His big black eyes seemed to be moving around all the time, as much as to say: 'I must find out everything I can, and just as fast as I can, about this queer place in which I find myself'" (9). Small in stature, with "high cheek-bones like the Chinese and Japanese, and no beard upon his face", Alila's father is described as "not quite a man", projecting a racialized emasculation of the colonial subject. Moreover, he behaves like a superstitious child until he is "shown the foolishness of [his] ideas by the priests the Spaniards sent

among his people" (10–11). Alila's mother, "only fifteen years old", is also depicted as a grotesque child: "She was dressed in her brightest skirt and fairly shone with the abundance of cheap jewelry she wore. Her hair was combed straight back from her forehead. She wore nothing on her feet excepting her queer slippers, of which she seemed very proud" (21–22). Moreover, she has a "fear of white faces. […] Poor ignorant mother! She did not understand that it meant such different things,—schools for *all* children instead of a very few; work for any one [sic] who desired it; better care for the sick in the cities; fewer taxes for all. Yes, all these and many other good things would be done by the Americans to make Alila and Alila's children live more wisely and therefore more happily" (64–65).

A clear advocate of benevolent, paternalistic colonialism, altruistic imperialism, civilizing democracy and Christianity, American exceptionalism, and scientific racism, Wade conveyed that the United States was "a unique country, undeniably superior to all others in racial, political and moral terms". As Norberto Barreto explains, she "saw and represented American rule over the Philippines not only as an expression of the American exceptional nature, but also as its confirmation" (2007, p. 4). Moreover, Wade's characterization of the Filipino imperial project makes it sound as if Americans were altruistic, and "not pursuing any economic benefit from the Philippines, but only their Asiatic subjects' wellbeing". In other words, "American rule over the Philippines was not colonialism, but a selfless nation-making process that was helping the Filipinos to overcome their heterogeneity and become a nation". According to Barreto, Wade, above all, argued "that only through America's unselfish guidance would the Filipinos be ready for independence" (2007, p. 4).

The Legacy of Our Little Cousins

In general, Wade's other OLC books follow the same repetitive formula, stressing the strangeness, queerness, childishness, and difference of non-white people; reinforcing the superiority of (American) white civilization and its prerogative to expand across the globe; and belittling, deriding, and demeaning anything that is not understood. Wade's portrayals reflected the attitudes, preferences, and prejudices of the era, which is possibly why she was, according to Marietta Frank, "more comfortable writing about 'little cousins' […] originating from or living in a European country" (2014, p. 97). Moreover, when writing about European cousins, her tone is mostly informative and entertaining (as in *Our Little German Cousin* and *Our Little Swiss Cousin*), very rarely displaying any judgmental condescension. While her biases and hypocritical slippages are evident to twenty-first century readers, Wade's books were very popular with turn-of-the-twentieth-century educators and parents, especially for their "didactic value", and were carried in libraries across the country (Barker, 2014, p. 80). Their popularity also explains why the OLC series continued for over 30 years (1901–1937), from the beginning of the twentieth century through the bleakest years of the Great Depression, when money for luxuries, such as children's books, was not always available, even for the middle class. Moreover, it accounts for the numerous editions and printings that exist, and

the fact that, in some cases, copies have survived for over 100 years and are today available digitally through databases such as Project Gutenberg and HathiTrust.

According to Laura Apol, "Children's stories perpetuate the values a society wishes to pass on about itself—its hopes, fears, expectations and demands" (2000, p. 64) and, above all, the hegemonic values of the ruling class. Consequently, children's books serve as windows into the societies that create them. Even though the popularity of the OLC series began to wane by World War II, most likely because it appealed more to adults as a didactic tool than to children, who were more interested in the mystery and adventure books that were becoming popular at the time, such as Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, the imperialist discourse of Wade and her contemporaries certainly did not disappear: it merely changed over the course of the twentieth century into picture books, comic books, cartoons, television shows, and other forms of children's entertainment (Dorfman, 2010; Bradford, 2007). Thus, Wade should be seen as part of a long lineage of children's cultural production in this area, which continues to the present day.

Given this context, it is not surprising that Wade's texts are experiencing a renaissance in the twenty-first century on Evangelical homeschooling websites, which tout them as traditional "good old-fashioned" reading for children because of their overt Christian messages. This is particularly troubling for a number of reasons that extend far beyond the works' entrenched prejudices and obvious political and social agendas. The resurgence of Wade's texts in the United States, which is currently questioning the need for political correctness despite its persistent problems with racial, ethnic, and religious conflict and inequality, speaks volumes. The popularity of these works in a country engaged in a diffuse, long-haul global War on Terror with no clear end in sight—a war in which the larger American imperial project continues to be couched in democratic, soft power rhetoric despite its clearly violent, hard power practices—is equally disturbing. Clearly, reactionary groups in the United States, and elsewhere, still find such ideas appealing, usable, relevant, and applicable to an expanding range of racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, and national "others" in the twenty-first century. This suggests that there are still many unresolved and undiscussed issues undergirding such children's works that deserve immediate attention, and that there are still many lessons we have not learned, despite the passage of over a century.

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