TROPICALITY & THE ‘OTHER’:
ORIGIN & EVOLUTION OF US-CONSTRUCTED
CUBAN PLACE-IDENTITIES

A Thesis in
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by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the US-constructed place-identities of Cuba since 1898 and the broad process of tropical ‘othering’ that the US engaged/engages in with regard to Cuba. Through textual and archival analysis, the first part of the thesis establishes the US corporate presence in Cuba during the first quarter of the twentieth century by using case studies of the Cuba Company and Hershey. American presence in the Cuban sugar industry initiated major US tourism to Cuba, which led the US to construct Cuban place-identities and frame Cuban landscapes first in terms of economic potential and second in terms of leisure. Through content analysis of *National Geographic* and *Traveler* magazine photographs coupled with textual analysis of travel texts over the last century, I argue that American uses of Cuban spaces is reflected in and informed its representation of Cuban places; such representations are often informed by US geographical imaginaries. Additionally, I argue that the discourse of tropicality in which the tropics are dually equated as pestilent and paradisiacal is evident among US representations of Cuban landscapes, visually expressed uniquely through time. Based on participant observation in Havana, Cuba with a focus on the tourist souvenir landscape, I conclude that the modern tourism industry in Cuba is adopting tropically-inspired US-constructed Cuban place-identities. I argue that this is a form of post-colonial/imperial hybridity and mimicry, an expression of agency, and ultimately, one component of *la lucha*, or the daily struggle to survive that many Cubans face.

Key Words: tropicality, Cuba, ‘other,’ place-identity
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction:

American Use of Cuban Spaces & Representation of Cuban Places

Introduction

Che Guevara’s face on a T-shirt; Cohiba Cuban cigars; Havana Club rum; Tropicana dancers; rickety antique cars; Hemingway’s mojitos; folk artesanía; erotic mulatta figurines. These are the images of Cuba—tourist Cuba, that is. These are the images that both propel tourists to visit Cuba and are evident to tourists while in Cuban tourist landscapes. Modern American¹ guidebooks and travel agencies like Lonely Planet (2011), Fodor’s (2012), and InsightCuba (2012) lure future tourists with photos of picturesque crumbling Spanish colonial architecture, information about cultural heritage tours hearkening back to Cuba’s sugar industry and 1959 Revolution, promises of engaging with ‘authentic’ Cuba, and a chance to interact with the (darkened) ‘other.’ But these are also the images that appear over and over again in the actual tourist landscape in Cuba today. Based on participant observation during a two-week stay in Cuba and extensive textual analysis, it appears as though the Cuban tourism industry has adopted

¹ Unless otherwise specified, I use “American” to refer to the United States, excluding Canada, Mexico, Central America, and South America.
some of the US-constructed place-identities and imaginaries of Cuba. Why? What processes went into the formation of Cuban place-identities? Where did they come from, how have they changed over time, and why do they persist today? How has the US ‘othered’ Cuba and how has it framed Cuban landscapes since Spanish colonial independence?

In this thesis, I use archival analysis, content analysis, and participant observation to explore the origin and evolution of US-constructed Cuban place-identities as represented in texts and briefly analyze the modern appearance of Cuban-constructed Cuban place-identities. Archival analysis indicates that American economic enterprises operating in Cuba in the early twentieth century incorporated tourism into their corporate agendas, which initiated widespread dissemination of US representations of Cuban landscapes. By completing textual analysis of images of Cuba since 1898, it is possible to track the evolution of US-constructed Cuban place-identities. I argue that American representations of Cuban places match its use of Cuban spaces and that such representations frame Cuba with a tropical discourse, reflecting an American geographical imaginary of Cuba characterized by fear and desire. Based on participant

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2 I understand place-identity to refer to the collective tangible and intangible objects and qualities that an individual, a group, or a state associates with a geographical place; in my study, this geographical place is Cuba. Place-identity is about what types of things, actions, and behaviors are associated with or perceived to be characteristic of a particular landscape and place-identities change based on time, place, and person.

3 I understand imaginary, geographical imaginary, and imaginative geography to be mental constructions of a place and/or place-identity. For the purposes of my study, I use these three terms and place-identity more or less interchangeably.

4 In this study, I aim to assess US popular perceptions and representations of Cuba and thus, by the “US,” I am referring to popular US perception as illustrated in texts with US authorship, be they guidebooks, travel posters or magazines.
observation conducted in Havana, Cuba, I conclude that the Cuban tourism industry is adopting a tropical framing of Cuba, akin to how the US represented/represents Cuba. I argue that this is a form of post-colonial/post-imperial\textsuperscript{5} hybridity, mimicry, and ultimately part of \textit{la lucha}, or the everyday struggle to survive that many Cubans face.

\textbf{Methods}

To help gain knowledge about my research questions, I conducted archival analysis, content analysis, and participant observation. First, I analyzed archival documents from the Cuba Company and Hershey, housed at the University of Maryland Special Collections and the Hershey Community Archives, respectively. Second, I completed a content analysis of 508 \textit{National Geographic} and \textit{Traveler} magazine photographs from articles published about Cuba from 1898-2010; in Chapter 3, I discuss the specific methodological details of my analysis. Third, I traveled to Havana, Cuba for two weeks in June, 2011 and conducted participant observation focusing on the Havana tourist landscape and associated souvenirs. The knowledge gained from these methods buttress my broader arguments about, and understanding of, my questions.

Aside from participant observation, the methods of research that I use in this thesis—archival analysis and content analysis—fall under the large umbrella of textual analysis.

\footnote{The colonial power associated with Cuba is Spain and one of the imperial powers is the US. Given the similarities between the processes of colonialism and imperialism, I draw on colonial and post-colonial scholarship to inform my understanding of the imperial relationship between the US and Cuba. At different moments in history, the imperial relationship was/is based on economics, politics, and even culture, referring to the concept of cultural imperialism that is often associated/considered synonymous with modern globalization (Sharp, 2009).}
analysis. Reinharz (2007) very broadly defines textual analysis as “the examination of texts” which results in coding for overarching themes, usually with the intent of better understanding the processes that went into the production of the texts and/or the effects that such texts have had on certain people, places, or cultures (p. 148). Shurmer-Smith (2002) asserts that textual analysis is a method that helps understand “society’s processes of knowledge creation, including selection and encoding” (p. 97). My methodology is in alignment with Reinharz and Shurmer-Smith’s statements. I chose to use textual analysis as a method of inquiry because the goal of my research is to examine how the US constructed knowledge about Cuba that ultimately led to the representation of geographical imaginaries of Cuba in texts. Textual analysis is a common method of inquiry for cultural geographers and Shurmer-Smith writes:

An important task for a cultural geographer is to show how discursive practices relating to space and place reinforce or resist structures of power. It is in the analysis of texts that particular discourses can be identified and their power revealed. (p. 128)

In keeping with Shurmer-Smith’s statement, in my examination of texts I focus on the discourses that went into the creation of and which are expressed in texts. To do this, I draw upon Edward Said’s work on Orientalism and David Arnold’s work on tropicality. In his discussion of Orientalism as a process of ‘othering,’ Edward Said (1978) notes that widespread Oriental representations of the ‘other’ contribute to the formation of geographical imaginaries and imbue into the social consciousness of the non-‘other’ society an inaccurate and often highly romanticized and eroticized perception of the ‘other’ that is both feared and desired. He argues that such imaginaries can be vehicles for exploitation and domination and lead Westerners to believe that it is their right and
moral duty to ‘civilize’ non-Western people and cultures, a belief often used to legitimate colonial and imperial rule. As a geographically-specific brand of Orientalism, the same is true of tropicality, as discussed by Arnold (1996, 2000, 2006). I analyze the presence of tropicality in US representations of Cuba, which has been used to justify the US’s actions in Cuba.

The texts that I have analyzed for this research include guidebooks, paintings, postcards, diaries, posters, magazine articles, political cartoons, tourist brochures, and souvenirs. Texts can take many other forms and feminist scholars have analyzed texts and “cultural artifacts” ranging from children’s books to billboards, to fashion, to textbooks, to artifacts from women’s “private life” including cookbooks, diaries, songs, and quilts (Reinharz, 2007, p. 156). Additionally, as explained by Rose (2007), Forbes (2000), and Duncan (1990) in his discussion of the landscape of the Kandyan Kingdom of Sri Lanka and how it was discursively constructed and used as a form of hegemonic power, landscape is also a text that is worthwhile of analysis. I engage broadly with ‘landscape-as-text’ in my analysis of the tourist landscape of Havana, but I focus specifically on texts such as souvenirs within the landscape. The bulk of my analysis and interpretation are centered on National Geographic and Traveler magazine photographs of Cuba. Narrowing my sources to a single source—National Geographic—allows me to gauge how a single publication’s representation of Cuba has changed over time, serving as a sort of baseline against which to measure a multi-authored collection of non-National Geographic texts.

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6 National Geographic refers to both National Geographic and Traveler magazines.
Delimitations

In order to focus and complete my research given my resources and time frame, I have delimited my study in several ways. First, I focus my analysis on US-produced representations of Cuba with only a brief analysis of contemporary Cuban-produced representations. This is appropriate for my study because my research questions are specifically about US representations. US-produced texts are of interest to me because of the exceptional relationship between Cuba and the US due to the trade embargo and the effects this has had on contemporary US representations of Cuban places. To more fully assess the effects that US-Cuba relations and the embargo have had on Cuban place-identities, I briefly analyze Cuban-produced representations of Cuban places. I do not, however, analyze any non-US or non-Cuban produced texts. Second, while it would be informative to conduct a parallel analysis of Cuban-produced representations of Cuban places for the entire time period as I did for US representations, due to difficulty in accessing Cuban-produced texts, especially pre-Revolution texts, this was not possible for this study. In the future, such an analysis would nicely complement this study. Likewise, it would be informative to examine non-US and non-Cuban produced texts from other countries such as Canada, the country with the highest tourist presence in Cuba (818,246 Canadians traveled to Cuba in 2008) (Roland, 2011); the Soviet Union, a country from which Cuba received economic support during the Cold War and shared socialist ideals; Spain, Cuba’s former colonial ruler; or Venezuela, one of Cuba’s current supporters.

In addition, I delimit my study by choosing to examine representations of Cuba from 1898-2010. Of course, there are representations of Cuban places prior to this time
period, such as Alexander von Humboldt’s (1819) writings about Cuba and landscape artwork by Charles DeWolf Brownell from the 1850s (Kennedy Galleries, 1991); however, the start of major tourism is a point in time when widespread representations of the ‘other’ designed for consumption generally surface. Major American tourism to Cuba began after the 1898 War, and thus, I begin my analysis of texts in 1898 and continue to track changing place-identities to today.

Furthermore, I delimit my study by only analyzing a few types of texts, primarily photographs and other visual representations. Tourism scholars like Waterton and Watson (2010) believe that “representation [is] a key moment of meaning-making” (p. 1). Minca and Oakes (2006) call tourists an “army of image seekers” and Edensor (1998) writes that “tourist sites provide a space where political, spiritual, cultural or national identities can be imagined or expressed” (p. 6 and p. 7, respectively). The ‘visual’ is taken to mean the products and imagery that can be visually consumed, such as infrastructure, murals, photographs, statues, and landscapes. Whatever the form, the ‘visual’ has the power to narrate particular heritages and identities and marginalize or obscure others. Thus, because I am interested in the construction and expression of place-identities, I focus my research on analyzing texts with a strong visual component. Future research could include the analysis of additional types of visual or non-visual texts, like film and/or literature.
Outline

In Chapter 2, I explore the origin of US-constructed place-identities of Cuba. I use archival analysis to show how the burgeoning American economic landscape in early twentieth century Cuba led to the development of the American tourism industry, which led to widespread representations of Cuban landscapes. When Spanish colonial rule officially ended in 1898 after the Cuban-Spanish-American War, companies like the Cuba Company, Hershey, United Fruit, and General Electric were eager to set up operations in Cuba and make a profit by equipping the war-torn Cuba with Western infrastructure. Many of these companies were first interested in a single industry; however, many of them soon expanded their corporate agendas to include the tourism industry. In doing so, the companies equipped the Cuban landscape with tourist infrastructure, from rail lines to hotels to package tours, and widespread representations of Cuba were made available to the American public to entice them to the island.

To understand the role that this American corporate presence with imperial ambitions had in Cuba regarding the creation and propagation of Cuban place-identities, I turn to case studies of the Cuba Company and Hershey, each of which were US companies with operations in Cuba relating to the sugar industry. Coupled with the might of other American companies in Cuba, the Cuba Company and Hershey were powerful enough to have a hand in shaping the geography of Cuba and in doing so, fit it with tourism infrastructure, inviting Americans to engage with their geographical imaginaries of the neighbor island.
In Chapter 3, I explore the evolution of US-constructed place-identities of Cuba. Just as American use of Cuban space shifted from economic to leisure terms, so too did US representations of Cuban places. To explore the evolution of identities, I deconstruct a subset of political cartoons from the 1898 war, travel advertisements from the 1930s-1950s, and photographs from *National Geographic* and its offshoot *Traveler* from 1898-2010. In my analysis, I argue that American use of Cuban spaces is reflected in its representations of Cuban places and that such representations frame Cuba with a tropical lens.

The US was first interested in Cuba for political reasons and accordingly, around the time of the Cuban-Spanish-American War, the US framed Cuba as a place in need of US political tutelage. In the first quarter of the twentieth century after losing overt political control of Cuba in 1902, the US was interested in Cuba for economic reasons and its representations of Cuban places equated Cuba with economic profits tied to industry. By the late 1920s-1950s, during Prohibition, through the Great Depression and WWII, and into the post-WWII landscape, the US became interested in Cuba for leisure purposes and represented Cuba as a playground for Americans who liked to enjoy the sun, sand, sea, and sex that the “near-yet-so-foreign” island had to offer (Levi & Heller, 2002). By the 1990s, during the Special Period when the Soviet Union pulled support from Cuba, the US continued to have minimal engagement with Cuban spaces due to the trade embargo, which only served to increase American curiosity about the ‘forbidden’ and ‘frozen-in-time’ island; once again, American representations of Cuba emphasized the leisure landscape, replete with an array of types of leisure, from ecotourism to health tourism to political tourism to sex tourism. While popular American representations of
Cuba change in appearance over time, they remain framed in tropical terms, at times defining and visualizing Cuba as pestilent, paradisiacal, or both.

After assessing US representations of Cuba, in Chapter 4, I engage briefly with Cuban representations of Cuba. Based on participant observation, I conclude that the contemporary Cuban tourism industry is adopting some of the tropically-framed, US-constructed Cuban place-identities, a phenomenon which is best understood using a post-colonial framework. I argue that Cubans involved in the tourism industry who adopt US-constructed tropical place-identities and package them for tourist consumption are engaging in a form of post-colonial/post-imperial hybridity and mimicry. I conclude that these Cubans, however, are not victims of the US nor of the Cuban government, but rather they are engaging in *la lucha*, or the daily struggle to survive that many Cubans face.
CHAPTER 2

Origin of US-Constructed Cuban Place-Identities:
The Cuba Company & Hershey

Introduction

Cuba was a colony of Spain for over 400 years, from 1492-1898. The Spanish Crown kept close control over Cuba with the intent of keeping foreign interests out of the lucrative colonial economy, consisting primarily of sugar, tobacco, and coffee (Pons, 2007). Because of this tight control and Spanish monopolies over Cuban products, the US did not have much direct contact with the island until the latter half of the nineteenth century, when Spanish colonial rule was waning in the wake of the three Cuban wars of independence: the Ten Years’ War of 1868-78, the Little War of 1879-80, and the Cuban War of Independence/Cuban-Spanish-American War of 1895-1898.

The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 signaled American interest in the Caribbean and Latin America. The doctrine promised US intervention in Latin American and Caribbean countries if a European nation attempted to (re)colonize them. Over the next several decades, Americans became increasingly interested in Cuba for political and economic reasons. Acquiring Cuba, which the US first tried to do in 1854 as part of the Ostend Manifesto, in which the US offered $120 million to Spain in exchange for Cuba, was in alignment with the American goal of manifest destiny (Perez, 1998). Acquiring Cuba was another step in transforming the dream of manifest destiny into a reality, a goal that
the US had been working towards throughout the nineteenth century, illustrated by the Mexican-American War of 1846-48 which resulted in American land acquisitions in the American southwest (Hornbeck, 1990). There was also interest among southerners in the US to acquire Cuba in order to add another slave state to the confederacy (Lazo, 2005). After failed attempts at acquisition, the US still wanted Spain to relinquish control of Cuba so that Cuba could become a state of the Union; however, many Cubans wanted freedom from Spain in order to become an independent nation, not part of the US. Cuban expatriates frustrated about continued Spanish rule came to the US in the mid-nineteenth century and began the filibuster movement, an effort to rally support among fellow exiles to invade Cuba to free it from Spanish rule (Lazo, 2005). In addition to political motivations for acquiring Cuba, many American businessmen were interested in investing in Cuba’s economy due to the high-quality sugar, tobacco, and coffee plantations in Cuba. And so, with Spanish colonial rule dwindling throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, US presence found its way south into the Cuban landscape, most notably into the sugar industry.

Companies that had a major role in the Cuban sugar industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include the Cuban American Sugar Company, Cuban Atlantic Sugar Company, Vertientes-Camaguey Company, Manati Sugar Company, Punta Alegre Company, Cuban Cane Sugar, General Sugar, United Fruit Company, Hershey Company, and the Cuba Company (Williams, 1970). Williams (1970) notes that “the combined acreage of six plantations operated by the Cuban American Sugar Company totaled half a million acres” (p. 429). Merrill (2009) writes that “by the end of the 1920s, foreigners owned 78 percent of the island’s arable land, much of it devoted to
either sugar or tobacco cultivation” (p. 109). Needless to say, foreign and US presence in the Cuban sugar industry was substantial and in part responsible for changing the geography of the Cuban sugar landscape.

The landscape was changed not only due to increased American presence in the sugar cultivation and refining industry, but also in the transportation industry, intimately related to sugar. In the context of nineteenth century Cuba, this was one thing: railroads. The first railroad in Cuba, also the first in Latin America, was built in 1837 from Havana to Bejucal about 15 miles south of the city and with American money and support was extended another 30 miles southeast to Güines in 1838 (Zanetti & Garcia, 1987).

As the sugar industry expanded in size and geographical reach, railroads became integral for transporting sugar from plantation to mill and finally to port, where it would be exported around the world. In the 1910s, American businessmen who owned railroads in Cuba began to transport people in addition to sugar, which invited tourists from the US to come down to Cuba and see American capital at work in the tropics. After land was leased or acquired for a railroad, mills were built, towns were formed, and hotels were constructed to accommodate tourists. The land-rail-hotel triplet, typical of late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Cuba, was an extension of the same development process and pattern found throughout North America. For example, Sir William Van Horne, before he became the president of the Cuba Company, worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway from 1882-1899, during which time he helped extend the Canadian Pacific Railway across Canada from Ontario to Manitoba and on to British Columbia, building hotels along the way (Regehr, 2000). His land-rail-hotel triplet signature found its way south to Cuba in 1900 when he began building railroads across the island.
The American sugar and affiliated industries in Cuba contributed to the construction of Cuban place-identities that equated the landscape with economic potential full of natural resources prime for American management. This identity was informed by discourses of empire and the tropics. The Cuba Company and Hershey are examples of American corporations whose transformations of the Cuban landscape not only ushered in major American tourism to Cuba, but in doing so, contributed to the construction of early-twentieth century Cuban place-identities. Before examining how these companies were in part responsible for initiating American tourism to Cuba, I turn to a brief overview of the sugar landscape in Cuba during its transition from Spanish colonial to American imperial management. This will help to more fully understand the context in which companies like the Cuba Company and Hershey operated at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Setting the Stage: Colonial Sugar Landscapes in Cuba

Widespread sugar production began in Cuba in the early nineteenth century, lagging greatly behind in output when compared with the rest of the West Indies. By 1815, Cuba produced 39,961 tons of sugar, as compared with 168,077 tons produced in the collective British West Indies islands (Williams, 1970). However, over the next century, with the increase in slave labor, water-powered mills, or ingenios, and later, railroads and large sugar mills, or centrales, allowed Cuba to surpass all other Caribbean islands in sugar production most of which still relied on windmill powered mills. Improved technology moved Cuba towards a monoculture agricultural economy.
Over the course of the nineteenth century, there was a widespread change in the geography of the sugar industry in Cuba, prompted by increased US presence. The geographical center of sugar production for most of the nineteenth century was in the provinces of Matanzas and Havana, on the western end of the island, with small sugar farms and factories producing about 30-50 tons of sugar per year (Williams, 1970). These small farms common in Cuba were often run by colonos, or small-scale cane farmers who were somewhat dependent on mill/factory owners. Over the course of a century, while production per factory increased dramatically—by 1894, production rates were up to an average of 2,635 tons per factory per year—the number of farms and factories decreased, due to the aggressive consolidation process that happened throughout the nineteenth century (Williams, 1970, p. 363). By 1890, there were only about 470 factories whereas thirty years earlier there were 2,000 factories (Williams, 1970, p. 362).

The consolidation process came about due to increasing global demand and prices for sugar, meaning there was a shift towards monoculture, which was most cost effective for large plantations and factories. Additionally, the increase in slave labor to Cuba meant the ability to cultivate and refine much higher quantities of sugar, leading to expansive plantations. By 1859, there were approximately 550,000 slaves in Cuba involved in the sugar industry (Williams, 1970, p. 362).

The consolidation process accelerated as legislation was introduced by the provisional government put in place after the 1898 war that supported latifundia, or very large land holdings and operations owned by a single plantation (O’Brien, 1996). For instance, there was a law that called to divide haciendas comuneras, or communal estates often owned by the Spanish or Creole planter class, which in practice meant that large
sugar plantations, mostly American, could incorporate land formerly held under such *haciendas* into their holdings. In the fast-developing east, the number of sugar farms decreased by half between 1899 and 1904 (O’Brien, 1996). Additionally, after a debt moratorium on sugar mills expired in 1900, Cuban and Spanish-owned sugar mills and factories struggled to survive because they were forced to pay debts accrued during the Cuban-Spanish-American War. With the closing of these indebted mills and the consequent dwindling of the Cuban planter class, the sugar industry was ripe for American businessmen and money to acquire land and farms previously held by Cuban planters (O’Brien, 1996). In sum, the turn of the twentieth century was a time when small Spanish, Creole, and Cuban-owned sugar farms were being incorporated into singular land holdings, often owned by American companies.

The coupling of colonial sugar landscapes and early American influence in the sugar industry that began in the mid-nineteenth century is illustrated in artist Charles DeWolf Brownell’s depiction of a sugar mill in Cuba, as seen in Figure 2-1. Brownell traveled to Cuba in the mid-nineteenth century and painted Cuban landscapes in the Hudson River School style. His relatives owned sugar plantations in Cuba and his 1850s painting “Cuban Sugar Plantation” depicts such a mill (Kennedy Galleries, 1991). Natural elements, plantation architecture, and mill infrastructure fill the painting, offering one rose-colored view of the mid-nineteenth century plantation economy into which Americans entered and re-defined in the early twentieth century.
The location of the principal sugar mills in Cuba in 1860 are indicated in Figure 2-2. Note that the map does not even include the eastern part of the island, indicating that there was not much development with regard to the sugar industry. However, this would change with the advent of American corporations in Cuba, who were by and large focused specifically on developing the eastern part of Cuba and fitting it with infrastructure needed for the sugar industry, from railroads to factories to electricity to wharves to hotels.
With the increase of American capital, mechanization, and modernization into Cuba, the heart of the industry shifted centers of production from Matanzas to the east, or *el Oriente*. Figure 2-3 complements the 1860 map and shows the development of eastern Cuba with regard to sugar mills and associated railroads.

Figure 2-2. Map of Western Cuba, 1860 (Chomsky et. al., 2003)
Figure 2-3. Map of Eastern Cuba, 1900-1930 (Zanetti and Garcia, p. 230, 1987)
With the shift from a Spanish colonial sugar landscape to an Americanizing sugar landscape, the stage in Cuba was set for American businessmen to set up operations in Cuba and engage their tropical fantasies. The Cuba Company and Hershey are two examples of American corporations whose presence in the Cuban sugar industry led to the start of major American tourism in Cuba, which initiated the widespread construction and dissemination of American representations of Cuban places.

**The Cuba Company: Railroads, *el Oriente*, & Tourism**

The largest North American enterprise in Cuba from about 1900-1920, the Cuba Company, was incorporated in 1900 in Jersey City, was originally headed by William C. Van Horne, and had offices in Montreal and New York (Santamarina, 2000). After getting his start in the railroad business as a young boy on the Illinois Central Railroad, Van Horne moved to Winnipeg in early 1882 to manage the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, becoming president in 1888 (Regehr, 2000). In his efforts to pull commerce and wealth across Canada via his railway, he aggressively promoted the development of agricultural, maritime, communications, and tourist hard and soft infrastructure. By doing this, Van Horne created a distinct signature on the Canadian landscape, most notably through the stylized tourist and urban architecture that he commissioned architect Bruce Price to design (Kalman, 1968). Price built train stations and tourist hotels in the *château* style, which helped to give an architectural identity to the Canadian countryside and cityscape that endures to this day. This land-rail-hotel triplet
pattern characteristic of Van Horne found its way south to Cuba as Van Horne managed the Cuba Company from 1900-1915.

In 1899, after extending the railway across Canada, Van Horne found himself waiting for business and commerce to catch up with his massive infrastructural imprint across Canada. He began dabbling in other business opportunities and in 1900 established the Cuba Company. The Cuba Company began as a railway company, intended to remedy the overall lack of railways across the entire span of Cuba and the pre-existing dilapidated steam railways, primarily throughout the western side of Cuba, the hub of the sugar industry at the time (Zanetti and Garcia, 1987). Figure 2-4 is of the railroad development in Cuba as of 1929. Note the presence of the Cuba Railroad Company’s (the Cuba Company’s railroad company) lines in eastern Cuba.
Figure 2-4. Map of Cuban Railroads (Zanetti and Garcia, p. 295, 1987)
This signifies the presence of the Cuba Company in eastern Cuba as part of a development and industrializing scheme related to extending the sugar industry to the east from its prior seat in the west. Not only were rails built, but so too was the port of Antilla, a joint-venture with the United Fruit Company (Regehr, 2000). Through this Cuba Company-controlled port passed commercial trading vessels as well as cruise ships carrying American tourists, many of whom traveled across Cuba on Cuban Company rail lines, illustrating the partnership between sugar and tourism.

*Marriage in Paradise: Sugar & Tourism*

Van Horne’s interest in railroads translated to one thing in the context of early twentieth century Cuba: sugar. Sugar had been cultivated and refined in Cuba for hundreds of years under Spanish direction, but as American businessmen became involved in the industry, they brought with them advanced technology that revolutionized the industry. With American capital and presence came larger plantations, bigger refineries, and the increased need to transport massive quantities of sugarcane and refined sugar from plantation to factory to port. The Cuba Company opened two sugar mills in 1905, Jatibonico and Jobabo, as seen in Figures 2-5 and 2-6, located in the central province of Sancti Spiritus and the eastern province of Las Tunas, respectively.
Figure 2-5. “Jatibonico Sugar Mill” (UMD CCA, Cuba Company Photograph Inventory)\(^7\)

Figure 2-6. “Jobabo Sugar Mill—West End View” (UMD CCA, Cuba Company Photograph Inventory)

\(^7\) UMD refers to the University of Maryland and CCA refers to the Cuba Company Archive.
Documents from the Cuba Company Archive, one copy housed in Camagüey, Cuba and a twin copy at the University of Maryland Special Collections, tell the story of how economic interests in sugar led the Cuba Company to include tourism in its corporate agenda. I now turn to discuss this process using the Cuba Company as a case study. By doing so, it is possible to see how US presence in Cuba initiated major American tourism, which led to the American representations of Cuban places that were in accordance with its use of Cuban spaces.

Company documents from 1900-1910 deal primarily with the railroad and sugar mill business, while later documents from the 1910s onward shift focus to include company business related to tourism and are examples of the Cuba Company engaging with tourism as a business venture. For instance, according to correspondence between the Cuba Company and the Hamburg-American Cruise Line Company, the cruise company made a deal with the Cuba Company to allow cruisers to use vouchers for Cuba Company railways to travel from the ports of Antilla and Santiago across the country, most notably to Havana (UMD CCA, series 1, box 17, folder 5c). In 1913, the Cuba Company expanded its infrastructure to include the steamship A.W. Perry to carry passengers between Antilla, Cuba and Kingston, Jamaica (Figure 2-7).
In August 1912, there was an outbreak of the plague in Cuba and the vice president of the Cuba Company wrote a letter to the Royal Mail Steamship Company—which operated a steamer coming from New York to Antilla—that outraged that the British government in Jamaica had demanded that the steamer not dock in Antilla. He writes:

We should be glad to know if you can influence the British Government to take the matter up with the Jamaican authorities, or if you can influence the Jamaican authorities yourselves, as the stoppage of the call at Antilla is causing a great deal of inconvenience to Cuba travelers and business people. (UMD CCA, series 1, box 17, folder 3c)
The position that the vice president takes in this letter, a mere thirteen years after the formation of the Cuba Company, signals the value that the company placed on travelers and tourism. This sentiment only grew with time, as the needs of tourists—and associated money—became a pillar of the Cuba Company’s corporate agenda.

Letters exchanged between the vice president of the Cuba Company in 1913, George Hay Whigham, and D.A. Galdos, the vice president of the affiliate Cuba Railroad Company, discuss the possibility of the Cuba Company chartering another steamship, the *Prince Rupert*, for tourist travel to run between Santiago, Cuba and Kingston, Jamaica, where they would subcontract with the United Fruit Company to use its dock at Port Antonio (UMD CCA, series 1, box 22, folder 1b). The examples referenced above illustrate efforts to incorporate the tourism industry and associated infrastructure into the Cuba Company’s business operations.

Publishing companies like *Town & Country*, the *Tourist Magazine*, the *New York Sun*, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, and *Raymond & Whitcomb Co.* asked the Cuba Company to advertise in their publications and when the Cuba Company had sufficient funds and infrastructure, it did so (UMD CCA, series 1, box 22, Advertising Correspondence; box 22, folder 4b; and box 14, folder 4c). In 1913, Mitchell Chapple, a writer for the *National Magazine* in Boston, asked the Cuba Company to edit his article to more fully show “the splendid work which the Cuba Railroad has done in the exploitation of Cuba” and the “colonization projects of Sir William Van Horne,” sentiments oozing with imperial discourse (UMD CCA, series 1, box 22, June 21, 1913 letter from Mr. Chapple to Mr. Whigham). In reply to Mr. Chapple’s draft, a Cuba Company representative replies by suggesting that Mr. Chapple make reference to the Cuba Company hotels, such
as Hotel Camagüey, Hotel Antilla, and Casa Grande at Santiago, as well as to the Cuba Railroad Company’s cruise liner from Santiago to Kingston (UMD CCA, series 1, box 22, June 24, 1913 Cuba Company letter to Mr. Chapple).

The Cuba Company advertised in the “Winter in Cuba” brochure, a campaign with the goal of “solicit[ing] the various tourist agencies to bring their parties to Cuba and not stop in Florida except of course as stop-over points that may be of interest,” illustrating the desire to pull Americans directly to Cuba in order to make a better profit (UMD CCA, series 1, box 43, Advertising, April 7, 1921 letter from Porter King to Mr. Lakin). In an inter-company letter regarding “Winter in Cuba,” an agent from the Cuba Railroad writes:

[The “Winter in Cuba” commission] ha[s] one double and a single page set aside for us and I requested that the double page be devoted to the Cuba RR and the single page to our Hotels. This they will do using cuts shown in our booklet “CUBA.” I requested that a good description of the agricultural and other possibilities be written up and told them to use the information and reading matter contained in the booklet “CUBA.” (UMD CCA, series 1, box 43, Advertising, May 18, 1921 letter from W.H. Francis to Mr. Reed)

This quite clearly illustrates how tourism and railroad development related to sugar operated in tandem in early twentieth-century Cuba, sometimes conflating, and each drawing Americans to Cuba.

In a letter from 1912, Gilburt McClurg, the general manager of the American Land and Irrigation Exposition, petitioned Van Horne to persuade the Cuban department of agriculture to include a sample of Cuban soil in the 1912 New York Exposition (UMD CCA, series 1, box 14, folder 4a, March 22, 1912 letter from Mr. McClurg to Mr. Van Horne). This would show the high-quality soil characteristic of Cuba to farmers and
businessmen throughout the Northeast, perhaps enticing them to set up operations in Cuba. The Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* petitioned the Cuba Company to advertise employment opportunities on the Cuba Company railroad for future Dutch emigrants (UMD CCA, series 1, box 17, folder 4c, February 20, 1912 letter from H.A. Hulsmann to Mr. Van Horne). Such coordination efforts and liaisons between the Cuba Company and other businesses illustrate the economic potential that was equated with Cuba. Together, rail companies, racetrack operators, and cruise ship owners pulled Americans down to Cuba, the sunny haven where sweet and light sugar mills carved out rural Cuba, leaving the dark Cuba to be gazed at while riding in one of the fancy sleeper cars of the Cuba Company railways from Santiago to Camagüey to Havana.

The quote below from Cuba Railroad company agent W.H. Francis regarding “Winter in Cuba” clearly shows the incorporation of tourism into the Cuba Company’s operations:

> I believe we should join the movement started by the P & O [Peninsular and Occidental Steamship Company, headed by Porter King] especially due to the uncertain prospect of travel. The tourist travel will be in sleeping cars and by next winter we should have all our sleepers in such condition that we will be able to add more cars to the trains. With the new hotel at Santiago it will also give better hotel accommodations. Possibly there will be more room at the Camagüey Hotel next year and we could arrange for stop-over privileges. (UMD CCA, series 1, box 43, Advertising, April 22, 1921 letter from Mr. Francis to Mr. Reed)

By 1923, due to the increase in overall tourists to Cuba, the Cuba Company had to modify its “Winter in Cuba” excerpt to encourage stop-over service for meals instead of overnight stay at their hotels because it did not have sufficient infrastructure to accommodate the growing number of tourists (UMD CCA, series 1, box 43, Advertising, May 27, 1923 letter from the Cuba Railroad Company to Mr. Lakin).
In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Cuba Company was more interested in constructing railroads and moving sugar from the east to the west, but, as indicated by the archival documents summarized in this section, by the twenties the Cuba Company was ready to begin making tourism a significant branch of its operations and source of revenue.

The Cuba Company’s expanding infrastructure meant that American tourists may have read a “Winter in Cuba” brochure in a tourism office in New York City, taken the Hamburg-American cruise line from the East coast of the US down to Florida and across the straits to the port of Antilla, Cuba, partly operated by the Cuba Company, picked up their Cuba Railroad Company vouchers from the ship before hopping on the railroad, sleeping in a fashionable Cuba Railroad sleeper car, and awakening at the railroad station in Camagüey (Figure 2-8) to see the heart of rural Cuba before dining and sleeping at the Hotel Camagüey, owned by the Cuba Company, as seen in 2-9.
I end the chapter with my second case study, the Hershey Corporation, which was another American company that started with sugar interests in Cuba but incorporated tourism into its agenda as a source of revenue.
Hershey, Cuba: The Second Sweetest Place on Earth

Hershey, Pennsylvania is the chocolate capital of the world. Hershey Kiss lamplights greet visitors who want to experience the thrill of amusement park rides, the history of the chocolate factory, and the overall quaint nature and chocolaty aroma of the sweetest company town in America. But, as unique as it may be, Hershey, PA is not exactly one-of-a-kind; rather, it has a twin town over 1,200 miles to the south, appropriately named Hershey, Cuba. Hershey, Cuba was the sugar version of Hershey, PA and is an example of the extension of American capital into Cuba by American companies, exercising the imperial ambitions in alignment with the goal of manifest destiny that the US government had around the turn of the twentieth century. Like the Cuba Company, Hershey operations in Cuba drew American tourists to the island and in the process, contributed to the construction of Cuban place-identities in alignment with the economic use of Cuban spaces.

According to interview transcripts from former Hershey, Cuba employees, Mr. Hershey went to Cuba in 1915 and a year later opened his first mill, San Juan Bautista, in the province of Matanzas (HCA PWRC, series 1, box 1, folder 35, September 30, 1956 interview with Thomas T. Cabrera). He went on to operate a total of nine mills: San Juan Bautista, Central Hershey, Rosario, Gomez Mena, Carmen, Loteria, Jesus Maria, Triumfe, Nueva Paz, and nine companies in Cuba: Hershey Corporation, Hershey Cuban Railway, Hershey Terminal Railroad, Rosario Sugar Co., Compania Aguacarera Gomez, Central Gomez Mena, Central Carmen, Compania Azucarera San Juan Bautista, and

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8 HCA refers to Hershey Community Archives and PWRC refers to Paul Wallace Research Collection.
Compania Agraria Cubana. Interview transcripts indicate that Mr. Hershey’s goal was to vertically integrate his global company, so that he owned all parts of production, from raw materials to transportation networks, mills and refineries, and distribution centers, so that ultimately his company could become more self-sufficient and independent (HCA PWRC, series 1, box 1, folder 35, September 30, 1956 interview with Thomas T. Cabrera; series 1, box 2, folder 40, June 9, 1955 interview with George Hintz). An evocative map from 1923 (Figure 2-10) depicts the geography of the Hershey Corporation.

Figure 2-10. Hershey Geography, 1923 (HCA PWRC, item #B7006B11F7)
The Hershey geography stretches from Pennsylvania, where Hershey chocolate products were wrapped and sold, to Mexico, Cuba, Trinidad, and South America, where raw ingredients like chicle, sugar, and cocoa were produced under direct Hershey control. Interview transcripts indicate that Mr. Hershey experimented with sunflower oil, peanut oil (1937), rapeseed, and henequen (1941) plants in Cuba, all in an effort to produce all the products he needed to make his signature delectable chocolate bars (HCA PWRC, series 1, box 1, folder 35, September 30, 1956 interview with Thomas T. Cabrera; series 3, box 9, folder 31, item 1, October 30, 1956 letter from Mario Lauzardo to Mr. Snavely). These documents illustrate that Mr. Hershey’s initial intent in opening Central Hershey was for economic reasons related to the sugar industry.

Based on an array of documents housed at the Hershey Community Archives, philanthropic overtures seem to have been part of Mr. Hershey’s signature on the Cuban landscape, which led to an overall generally positive public perception of him and the Hershey Corporation. In an archival document that compiles newspaper clippings, under the subheading “Profile of the day,” a Cuban newspaper article reports:

Mr. Hershey is North American but he is a North American who knows us and holds us in high esteem and does not do what so many other of his countrymen do, which is to set us aside with irreverence after using our virtues and generosities to their advantage. (HCA PWRC, series 3, box 9, folder 34, Perfil del día, translated from Spanish by Author)

One of Hershey’s philanthropic and community engagement undertakings was the Hershey Agricultural School that he opened for orphaned boys at his Rosario mill in 1925. This school was intended to mirror the Hershey Industrial School in Hershey, PA, which was established in 1909. The aim of both of the schools was to provide orphaned
boys technical skills to help them with an agricultural or industrial trade. The first students at the Hershey, Cuba school were boys who lost their fathers in a railroad accident that happened along the Hershey Cuban Railroad in 1923.

Aside from the Hershey Agricultural School, Mr. Hershey hosted several events at Central Hershey for the betterment and entertainment of the surrounding Cuban community, such as rural and agricultural fairs as well as leisure activities such as horse racing. Archival documents indicate that there was an exposición rural or a rural fair in November 1927 and April 1928. A clipping from the Cuban newspaper El Comercio on November 24, 1927 reports on the fair:

In the midst of yesterday’s great excitement of handing out awards, the first Hershey Rural Exposition closed down. The goal of the fair is to stimulate better agriculture in the provinces of Havana and Matanzas. The creator and supporter of the fair, Mr. Milton S. Hershey, has placed his great wealth in the fields of these provinces in order to increase it hundredfold and to generously do for this country, which he loves like a second homeland, all the good that his splendid heart knows how to do. (HCA PWRC, series 2, box 6, folder 12, items 1 and 3, translated from Spanish by Author)

As Mr. Hershey began to expand his operations to engage the surrounding community, it was not long before he became directly involved in the tourism and leisure landscape at the personal and corporate scales. For instance, according to interview transcripts, Mr. Hershey much-enjoyed indulging in the burgeoning leisure landscape in Cuba. The sister-in-law of Mr. Hershey’s friend and manager of Central Hershey, P.A. Staples, recalled in an interview:
[Milton Hershey] loved Cuba, and so did Mr. Staples. He was disappointed when the school in Cuba was lost. He loved the Casino and races. He and the two Staples used to stick fast together at the Casino and the races. He used to play roulette until four o-clock in the morning. We all went home, I remember one time, at four o-clock, and left Mr. Hershey playing. He didn’t get up so early in Cuba as he did in Pennsylvania. (HCA PWRC, box 4, folder 28, December 12, 1956 interview with Mrs. McGrath)

Additionally, according to a 1923 advertisement, the Hershey Sport Club held horse racing in the Hershey hippodrome, indicating the incorporation of leisure activities into the Hershey corporate agenda (HCA PWRC, series 2, box 6, folder 12, item 1). This is the start of a marriage between sugar and tourism. This marriage is even better illustrated in the Hershey Cuban Railroad brochure “The Most Complete Day in Cuba” (Figures 2-11 and 2-12).
Figures 2-11 and 2-12. Hershey Cuban Railroad Tourist Brochure (HCA PWRC, series 3, box 9, folder 34)

Tourists could take the Hershey Cuban Railroad from Casa Blanca in Havana, pay $1.50 for the “Tourist Lunch,” play a round of golf at the Hershey Golf Club, and observe the impressive sugar refining process at the Hershey sugar mill. A quote from a
1956 interview with Tomas Cabrera, former employee of the Hershey Corporation in Cuba, summarizes Mr. Hershey’s imprint on the Cuban landscape and well-illustrates the ways in which his chocolate-turned-sugar company became a sugar-turned-tourism company:

When President Machado made [Mr. Hershey] an adopted son of Cuba at the Presidential Palace in Havana, it was not because he made sugar. It was for what he had done to help Cuba. His railway opened up the north shore area, which was wild and rocky. It had a black soil which was not good for sugar. But it was good for henequen [see Sisal hemp]. And the railroad opened up the beaches. Guanava, a bathing beach, was started after the Hershey Cuban Railway was built. It is near there that Hemingway lives today. Now there is a road, the Via Blanca, which runs along the shore. There is a great development there. There are lots of towns and beaches spreading out from Guanava on both sides. Hershey changed the whole economy of the northern shore. (HCA PWRC, series 1, box 1, folder 35, September 30, 1956 interview with Thomas T. Cabrera)

Mr. Hershey was remembered by some as a person who bridged sugar and tourism, both of which were pillars of the Cuban economy for the better part of the twentieth century, regardless of whether or not they were managed by Americans, Cuban Revolution officials, or the Special Period Government.

Conclusion

Like the Cuba Company, the Hershey Corporation changed the geography of Cuba. Both companies began with interests directly related to the sugar industry, which crystallized in the decades following the 1898 Cuban-Spanish-American War. Hershey and the Cuba Company expanded their corporate agendas to include leisure services and activities, ushering in major US tourism to Cuba in the twentieth century. Many images
of Havana early in the century highlighted American tourist infrastructure like hotels as much as they did Spanish-era forts. This tourism was the origin of US-constructed place-identities of Cuba, framed by discourses of empire and the tropics. Early US-constructed Cuban place-identities revolved around representing Cuba as a landscape of extraction and economic potential related to natural resources. With US-use of Cuban space re-defined in terms of leisure and tourism by the end of the first two decades of the twentieth century, American representations of Cuban places evolved. To gain a better understanding of how American representations of Cuban places changed over the last hundred plus years, I turn to Chapter 3 and consider how *National Geographic* photographs of Cuba and other texts represented and tropically framed Cuban places.
CHAPTER 3

Evolution of US-Constructed Cuban Place-Identities:
Tropicality & National Geographic

Introduction

The signature golden yellow border of National Geographic magazine literally frames places, peoples, and cultures from around the world, and has done so from the time of its conception in 1888 to today. How has National Geographic framed Cuba over the years? Has Cuba been represented as a natural landscape, an economic landscape, a leisure landscape, an exotic landscape, or possibly all four? What discourses run throughout the photos?

In this chapter, I explore the different ways in which Cuba was ‘othered’ by the US as visualized in representations. I deconstruct a series of texts in order to illustrate how US representations of Cuba changed and evolved from 1898 to 2010. After analyzing hundreds of pictures from National Geographic, newspapers, and tourism literature, I conclude that American representations of Cuban places matches its use of Cuban spaces, which evolved from economics to leisure, as discussed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, in deconstructing the representations, I argue that the US tropically frames Cuban landscapes, which is visualized differently over time and in each photo. At different time periods, in conjunction with other discourses like empire, colonialism, and
leisure, particular facets of tropicality are expressed in the photos. Tropicality, as discussed by David Arnold (1996, 2000, 2006), is a discourse and way of ‘othering’ that associates the tropical ‘other’ as both feared and desired, and understands the tropics as dually pestilential and paradisiacal. In some representations that I analyze in this chapter, Cuba is pestilent; in others, paradisiacal; and in others still, both. The presence of this dichotomous identity in representations complicates a simple understanding of the ‘other,’ the tropics, and Cuba specifically.

Before discussing how this complicated and nuanced ‘othering’ process is visualized in US representations of Cuban landscapes and places, I begin with an overview of the theoretical insights and procedural details of a content analysis that I performed of National Geographic and Traveler magazine pictures, the results of which I triangulate with textual analysis of non-National Geographic and Traveler pictures, archival analysis (Chapter 2), and participant observation (Chapter 4).

Methods

Theoretical Insights

My primary method of inquiry in this chapter is content analysis. Before, during, and after conducting my content analysis, I drew upon the work of scholars who have completed content analysis and/or discuss the methodology behind it to inform my

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9 I use the terms pictures and photographs interchangeably.
analysis. Doing so had led me to design, implement, and interpret a content analysis that allows me to maintain a constructivist researcher point of view, helps gain insight into my research questions, and falls within the range of research and interpretative skills typically associated with cultural and historical analysis.

Rose (2007) notes the historical development and use of content analysis and how it was originally perceived and employed as a quantitative research method that would ensure objectivity, often conducted by researchers with a positivist point of view. However, feminist understandings of content analysis recognize that it is a method which can be informed by any paradigm of knowledge—positivist or not—meaning that it is a method that allows me to apply a constructivist point of view to the analysis (Leavy, 2007).

To aid me in constructing my content analysis and analyze the results, I drew primarily upon the feminist scholarship of Gillian Rose, Patricia Lina Leavy, and Shulamit Reinharz, who discuss the ability and importance of applying feminist principals to the process of textual analysis. In Visual Methodologies, Gillian Rose (2007) writes about several methods of visual and textual analysis, including archival analysis, photo analysis, semiotic analysis, and content analysis. Content analysis is a method in which a researcher creates coding categories based on features in a set of texts and codes each text for the presence of those features. According to Leavy (2007), content analysis is a way to study culture and she writes that “by investigating culture in general, and popular culture more specifically, dominant narratives, images, ideas, and stereotyped representations can be exposed and challenged” (p. 224). Similarly, Reinharz (2007) states that the goal of content analysis is to look for themes present in a set of
images or texts that help explain the discourses that went into the formation of such texts, be they discourses of patriarchy, racism, colonialism, etc. Because one of my primary research questions asks how US-constructed Cuban place-identities evolve in appearance and discursively over time and helped create knowledges about Cuba, a content analysis allows me to best gain insight into this question.

Colonial and imperial knowledge production often occurred/occurs by observing, documenting, and categorizing information about a place, culture, or people which is used to mark it/them as different (Sharp, 2009). This knowledge both fit(s) into existing imaginative geographies and forged/forges new ones. In my research, I too code and categorize features of places and people but I do so not to acquire knowledge about that which is represented, but rather to understand the process of colonial/imperial knowledge production and representation. Content analysis allows me to do just that: identify themes present in colonial/imperial knowledge production. Extending content analysis of images into the twenty-first century allows me to go a step further than documenting colonial/imperial knowledge production and examine the continued presence of colonial/imperial framings of Cuba. This makes the ultimate goal of coding images to aid in assessing the present-day neo-colonial/neo-imperial influences in Cuba, in which post-colonial/post-imperial expressions of resistance exist.

Regarding the design of my content analysis, I drew upon Rose’s and Bartram’s understandings of what constitutes a strong analysis. Rose (2007) and Bartram (2003) suggest that a thick textual analysis should focus on three areas: text production, text content/aesthetics, and text audience. Attention to the sites of production and consumption reveals knowledge that is sometimes concealed, ignored, or silenced during
textual and content analysis that limits analysis to the texts themselves. In my content analysis, due to limited resources, I focus primarily on analyzing the text itself in lieu of sites of production and consumption; however, I draw upon the work of other scholars to inform my understanding of the role that production and consumption have on the meaning and interpretation of the text. For instance, Lutz and Collins (1993) discuss how National Geographic has long been widely revered by Americans and perceived as scientifically representing reality—as a “vehicle for scientific information” (p. 5). They write that National Geographic “capitalized on this notion of the photograph as evidence and established itself as a source of accurate and timely information on the colonial world” (p. 28). Based on the work of Lutz and Collins, I feel that assessing National Geographic constructions of Cuban place-identities is an appropriate way to gauge popular American discourse about and constructions of Cuban place-identities because of the place that National Geographic has held in the US since the time of its conception.

After designing the procedure itself, I began to code images. Coding was a reflexive process in which I continually recognized the power that I had as a researcher to decide for which categories to code and how to code each image. I recognize that content analysis—like all research methods—is a process in which my positionality influences the research process, results, and analysis. Additionally, I was conscious of the fact that I was a Westerner analyzing representations of ‘the other’ and I struggled with how to negotiate my coding-centric method of inquiry with Geography’s legacy of colonial categorization.

In their article, “Reflexivity and Positionality in Feminist Fieldwork Revisited, Nagar and Geiger (2007) suggest that it is important for researchers to ask “what kind of
borders we cross, in whose interests, and how our practices are interwoven with
processes of imperialism and neo-colonialism” (p. 8). This was a question that I had to
negotiate regarding my own research. Struggling with the notion of potentially doing
neo-colonial research, I was reminded of Edensor’s (1998) Tourists at the Taj:
Performance and Meaning at a Symbolic Site, in which he notes the similarities among
colonizers, tourists, and ethnographers, or more broadly, Western researchers. In an
effort to negotiate this and to not “reproduce conventional representations and discourses
which codify how difference can be understood,” Edensor incorporates an array of stories
and voices of tourists and non-tourists about their use and perceptions of the Taj Mahal
and tourism at the site (p. 2). Edensor feels that doing so “is diametrically opposed to
colonial knowledge, which erases the voice of the colonized and authoritatively
enunciates objective facts about the space and culture it surveys” (p. 2).

As a Western researcher sharing the concerns of Edensor, despite using very
different methods of inquiry, I have focused my research questions on understanding
instead of re-creating colonial/imperial knowledge. For example, coding images is not a
way to gain knowledge about Cuba, but rather coding allows me to analyze the presence
of themes and interpret them as expressions of colonial/imperial knowledge and
knowledge production. Insights gained about this knowledge production have permitted
me to assess the continued presence of such knowledge and colonial/imperial framings of
place today. In this way, due to its focus on the continued presence of colonial/imperial
knowledge, my research is positioned within neo- and post-colonial studies.

While the practice of content analysis is often primarily comprised of checking
boxes and coding for features present in texts, feminists note the importance of paying
attention to what is missing from the text (Rose, 2007; Reinharz, 2007). Coding for and/or analyzing the lack of certain features in a text, such as people of a certain race, gender, or age, is a way to avoid succumbing to the notion that simple frequency counts result in a complete understanding of a particular phenomenon. With regard to my research, I analyze the lack of certain features in the texts, such as black women, natural elements, and rural landscapes, which contributes to a more comprehensive understanding and interpretation of the text.

Another insight that I gained from feminist perspectives about content analysis is the understanding that it contains qualitative components in addition to quantitative components and thus is a “hybrid” of the two (Leavy, 2007, p. 230). A commonly held feminist belief is that codes are qualitatively constructed and may be quantitatively and/or qualitatively analyzed (Leavy, 2007). Lutz and Collins (1993), who completed a content analysis of approximately 600 National Geographic photos and concluded that the magazine tended to exoticize the ‘third world,’ discuss the role of content analysis in qualitative research when they write:

Although at first blush it might appear counterproductive to reduce the rich material in any photograph to a small number of codes, quantification does not preclude or substitute for qualitative analysis of the pictures. It does allow, however, discovery of patterns that are too subtle to be visible on casual inspection and protection against an unconscious search through the magazine for only those which confirm one’s initial sense of what the photos say or do. (p. 89)

My understanding of content analysis is in alignment with what Lutz and Collins purport the method can achieve, namely, to aid in discovery of themes and patterns. In sum, I code, count, and graph to aid me in deciphering themes among the pictures, of
which I interpret the meaning by triangulating my data with the results of other methods, like archival analysis and participant observation.

Analyzing the results from my content analysis of *National Geographic* pictures primes me to qualitatively interpret the content and meaning of the photos. The frequency counts that I calculated and the graphs that I made help to visualize my qualitative interpretation of the discourses that buttress the production and content of the photos and result in time-specific US-constructed Cuban place-identities. Before more fully discussing my interpretation of the coding category frequencies, I turn to an outline of the procedural details of my content analysis.

**Procedural Details**

Using the online *National Geographic* magazine publications index, I typed in the keyword “Cuba,” which brought up all publications having to do with Cuba. After weeding through non-magazine publications, like videos, books, and articles in *Adventure*, *Explorer*, and *National Geographic Kids*, offshoots of *National Geographic*, there were 64 articles published in *National Geographic* and *Traveler* magazines between 1898 and 2010 (National Geographic, 2010). I chose to include images from *Traveler* magazine in my analysis over other magazines like *Adventure*, *Explorer*, or *National Geographic Kids* for three reasons: 1) *Traveler* magazine caters specifically to prospective tourists and thus, I consider images in the magazine to be a more accurate reflection of *National Geographic’s* Cuban place-identities constructed specifically for tourism, of particular interest in this study; 2) *Adventure*, *Explorer*, and *National
*Geographic Kids* magazines are more thematically-oriented magazines with set points-of-view catering to specific audiences that are not of as much interest to me in this study; and 3) Choosing two publications from which to analyze pictures as opposed to five or more publications was a way to delimit my study.

Of the 64 articles published about Cuba—48 from *National Geographic* and 16 from *Traveler*—nine did not have any pictures and one did not have any pictures of/about Cuba, but discussed Cuba in the text (see Figure 3-1). Five of the articles with no pictures were published before 1910 and included short paragraphs or one-to-two-page articles/updates about Cuba, such as information about an outbreak of yellow fever (1901), the construction of Cuban railways (1902), and the results of the Cuban census (1909). The other four articles with zero pictures were published between 1989 and 2003 and consist mainly of short paragraphs, such as a note from the editor or the magazine’s top travel destination picks (*Traveler*, Nov/Dec 2003). If an article was about a broader topic than just Cuba and therefore included some pictures of places other than Cuba, I only coded the pictures of Cuba. This was the case for two of the articles (1921 & 1928).

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10 Unless otherwise specified, titles and dates of articles and pictures are from *National Geographic*, not *Traveler*.  

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It is important to note the variety of article type from which I coded pictures. There were 35 full-length feature articles averaging 21 pages and about 13 pictures, 29 short articles under two pages, many of which were “Geographica,” “On Assignment,” “Smart Traveler,” or “Editorials” abbreviated articles with one accompanying photo. While these abbreviated articles are short and have very few photos, they comprise a significant part of my analysis because all of them were published between 1989 and 2010, and therefore collectively represent a window into contemporary National Geographic-constructed place-identities of Cuba.  

The first step to conducting my content analysis was to create coding categories based on my research questions. The research questions that guided my content analysis

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11 Note that the X-axis goes from 1898-2010 but is not continuous. The years on the axis are years when articles about Cuba were published in National Geographic. This is the same for Figures 3-7, 3-13, and 3-15.

12 Based on the work of Lutz and Collins (1993) discussed earlier, and in full detail in their book, Reading National Geographic, in this study, I take ‘National Geographic-constructed’ Cuban place-identities to be representative of ‘US-constructed’ Cuban place-identities and use the terms interchangeably.
are: 1) What are the Cuban place-identities that the US-constructed in appearance and discursively and 2) How have these identities evolved over time? I coded ten categories for each article: Title, Magazine, Author, Author affiliation, Month, Year, Number of pages, Number of pictures, whether or not it was a Feature article, and whether or not it had a Cover picture. For each picture within every article, I coded for eighteen categories: Color/black and white; Location tag; Photographer; Caption/no caption; Number of people present; Sex, Race, and Nationality of each person/group of people present; whether or not the person/people in the picture are Tourists, Military, or neither; whether or not the person/people in the picture are Distant; Landscape; presence of a Leisure activity; whether or not Natural elements are prominent; type of Technology and Architecture present; and the presence of Manual and/or Mechanical labor. I also recorded the caption of each picture, when present, and coded for the presence of seven categories, such as references to ‘Tropical items’ or ‘Spanish colonial heritage’ (see Appendix A).

Based on the resources that were available to me for this research project, I was not able to have multiple people code every image, which would have helped to better calibrate the coding. However, two geography graduate students at Penn State University coded a subset of approximately 10-15 photos. After coding the pictures, we had a discussion about why they coded them as such, which categories they thought worked well and which did not, and what, if any, suggested categories to add or delete. I used the results of this exercise to modify my existing categories. At two points throughout the coding process, I modified categories based on this feedback and the content of photos that I encountered, and re-coded the photos that I had already coded. I now discuss my
interpretation of the content analysis results in conjunction with my analysis of non-
*National Geographic* texts, in which I argue tropicality runs throughout.

**Tropicality Through Time**

Tropicality, a term coined by David Arnold in 1996, is a brand of Orientalism specific to the geographic region of the tropics. With regard to the Orient, Edward Said (1978) argues that Westerners construct the Orient and all things Oriental as the ‘other’ through various modes of representation. The result is an inaccurate and often highly romanticized and eroticized perception of the Orient that is both feared and desired and is promulgated through the surfacing of additional representations of the Orient. As Said argues, representations contribute to the formation of an imaginative geography, which can be used to legitimate colonial and imperial power and rule. The US engaged in this broad process of ‘othering’ regarding its imperial interests of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and Hawai’i (Perez, 2008).

The hallmark of tropicality is that the tropics are perceived as dually pestilential and paradisiacal (Arnold, 1996). Texts and paintings that surfaced since initial Western contact with the ‘new world’ with Columbus’ exploration of the West Indies in the late fifteenth century, repeatedly represented Latin America and the Caribbean as possessing both paradisiacal and pestilential qualities. Through centuries of representations, a tropical discourse was constructed and inculcated into the social consciousness of European society, which contributed to the formation of an imaginative geography that characterized the tropics as both Edenic and dangerous. For example, both facets of this
discourse are evident in Alexander von Humboldt’s (1819) travel writings about Latin America and the writings of doctors practicing tropical medicine in the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries.

Alexander von Humboldt traveled throughout Latin America from 1799-1804 and wrote extensively about his travels (Humboldt, 1819). Humboldt’s writings inspired North American artists in the 1850s and 1860s to visually represent his romantic descriptions. North American landscape painters who were inspired by Humboldt include Frederic Church, who is famous for *Heart of the Andes* (1859), a very large oil painting of a lush, verdant landscape teeming with exotic vegetation draping the land and enveloping the minimal presence of people and infrastructure. The perceived paradisiacal qualities of the tropics are evident in the works of Humboldt and Church and the perceived pestilential qualities of the tropics are evident in medical reports and the emergence of the field of tropical medicine by European doctors. Many of these doctors wrote about how the tropical climate—be it of the Caribbean or India—caused illnesses and therefore threatened the health of Europeans (Arnold, 1996; Duncan, 2008).

Another way in which the tropics were perceived as pestilent was the perception that they were feminized and capable of feminizing. European explorers, travelers, and doctors from the eighteenth right up to the twentieth centuries commonly claimed that the above-head sun drained them of their masculinity, which they thought explained the alleged feminization of native men in the tropics (Arnold, 2000). The father of tropical geography, Pierre Gourou (1953, as cited in Arnold, 2000, p. 10), wrote “the tropics, unaided, can nurture nothing higher than a ‘vegetable civilization,’” sentiments on par with Ellen Churchill Semple’s (1911) and Ellsworth Huntington’s (1924)
environmentally deterministic and climatically racist beliefs. Following the nature/culture binary logic, the dominance of feminine nature in the tropics meant the lack of masculine culture.

The tropical process of ‘othering’ is a way of framing places, peoples, cultures, and overall landscapes. Operating in tandem with other discourses such as those of empire and patriarchy, tropicality is well-illustrated in political cartoons that surfaced before, during, and after the Spanish-Cuban-American War, *National Geographic* and *Traveler* photographs, and tourism brochures and posters.

**Imperial Landscapes**

In 1898 and the years immediately surrounding the Cuban-Spanish-American War, American publications published myriad political cartoons depicting the US, Cuba, and other imperial interests including Puerto Rico, Hawai‘i, Guam, and the Philippines. With the help of William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, a wave of yellow journalism swept the nation. Many scholars have suggested that such sensationalized journalism—specifically the journalism surrounding the sinking of the *USS Maine* in Havana Harbor—played a role in prompting US involvement in the Cuban War of Independence in 1898 (Johnson, 1994). I argue that representations of Cuba in the political cartoons of the war match American use of Cuban spaces, which at the time, had to do with assuming political control and exercising imperial ambitions. Furthermore, common to these political cartoons is a tropical discourse, sometimes equating Cuba with
paradise, other times with pestilence, and other times both. These tropical qualities are often most clearly expressed through text and markers of gender, race, and age.

In *Latin America in Caricature* by John Johnson (1980) and *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* by Louis A. Pérez (2008), the authors present dozens of political cartoons depicting the Cuban-Spanish-American War and its aftermath. The cartoons can be divided into two genres based on imagery used: pre-war/war for the cartoons leading up to and including 1898 and post-war for the cartoons in the decade following the war. The cartoons use metaphors and markers of gender, age, and race to ‘other’ Cuba and depict Cuba in need of US tutelage and incapable of self-rule. These cartoons frame Cuba in imperial and tropical ways.

The pre-war/war cartoons commonly depict Cuba as a light-skinned woman, effectively a damsel in distress who has been violated by Spain and is in need of US rescue. In some cases, she is actively requesting help and protection from the US by reaching out or up to the US, who is most often a male, usually Uncle Sam, as seen in Figure 3-2.
Historian Kristin Hoganson (1998) claims that the main reason for the overwhelming public support of the Cuban-Spanish-American War—or the ‘Splendid Little War’ as it was often referred to in the US—is due to the fact that Americans “viewed Cuba metaphorically, as a maiden longing to be rescued by a gallant knight” (p. 44). This served as ‘logical’ justification for the US intervention into the 1898 war, since surely it was the masculine and chivalric duty of the US to rescue feminine Cuba.
The imagery in the post-war cartoons shifted dramatically from feminized Cuba in distress to Cuba as either a male or female child usually with dark skin and in need of parental discipline from the US. For example, Cuba is often being taught how to ride a bike or walk in many of the cartoons. Pérez (2008) argues that child/parent and student/teacher metaphors were employed in order to make the intervention and actions of the US seem moral and natural. He writes:

The power of the metaphor lay in its capacity to represent power as a matter of normative common sense, to impose an obvious logic on the otherwise complex enactment of national interests. *This was imperialism enacted as an etiquette*: power was represented as caregiving authority and exercised as responsibility [emphasis added]. (p. 129)

The same metaphors and discourses were applied to places other than Cuba, including Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam, and Hawai‘i, which reminds us that representations of Cuba are positioned within the broader context of the US imperial project of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.
Figure 3-3. “It’s for His Own Good” by John T. McCutcheon in Chicago Tribune, 1916 (Johnson, 1980)

In this cartoon (Figure 3-3 above), Uncle Sam attempts to force-feed Mexico a pill that ostensibly Cuba, the Philippines, Nicaragua, and Panama have previously consumed from Uncle Sam, which has resulted in them docily waiting in their suits behind Uncle Sam—and many of them have been lightened also. Mexico resists Uncle Sam and is depicted as dangerous and pestilent because he has a knife and spurred boots; yet, Uncle Sam desires deviant Mexico. This cartoon exemplifies the defining paradise/desire-pestilent/danger dichotomous duality of tropicality.

The use of discourses of empire and the tropics in Cuban-Spanish-American War cartoons and other representations contributed to the pre-existing imaginative geography
of Cuba, Latin America, and the tropics as a whole. This imaginative geography constructed knowledge and perceptions that the region was paradisiacal and pestilent, a knowledge that was perceived to be true by the US. Said (1978) writes:

Imaginative geography, from the vivid portraits to be found in the *Inferno* to the prosaic niches of d’Herbelot’s *Bibliothèque orientale*, legitimates a vocabulary, a universe of representative discourse peculiar to the discussion and understanding of Islam and of the Orient. (p. 71).

Said argues that by Orientalizing the Orient through representations, Europeans create an imaginative geography of the Orient which they perceive to be reflective of reality; he writes “truth, in short becomes a function of learned judgment” (p. 67). The same argument is applicable regarding representations of the tropics/Cuba: knowledge was created by ‘tropicalizing’ the tropics/Cuba through representations, which facilitated the development of an imaginative geography. This allowed the US to justify its behavior, which in practice meant that the US could ‘morally’ quench its imperial thirst.

With the help of propaganda cartoons that packaged US-Cuba relations in imperial and tropical terms, the US easily justified its intervention in Cuba and became politically and economically influential and directive in Cuba. In addition to cartoons, guidebooks also helped popularize imperial attitudes. For instance, Baedeker’s guidebook references that after Cuba had been freed from the “Spanish yoke,” it was in need of US aid to better the country (Baedeker, 1909). Legislation reflected the sentiments expressed in political cartoons and guidebooks. For instance, the Teller Amendment of 1898 authorized US military presence in Cuba to help fight against Spain for Cuban independence. The military stayed in Cuba for a few years following the war until the Platt Amendment was passed in 1901, which established a provisional Cuban
government in Cuba, ceded military lands including Guantánamo Bay to the US, and effectively established a restrictive and dependent relationship between Cuba and the US. The Roosevelt Corollary of 1904 was also part of the suite of legislation that legalized US political and economic presence in Latin American affairs. The Corollary modified the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 by legalizing US intervention in the economic affairs of Latin American countries that, if left alone, would supposedly possibly face unwanted European presence/re-colonization (Perez, 2003). With such legislation in order, the stage was morally and legally set for increased US involvement in Cuban insular affairs, primarily fueled by interests in the lucrative sugar industry.

By examining political cartoons of the Cuban-Spanish-American War, it is evident that the US’s geographical imaginary of Cuba was framed by a tropical discourse. Additionally, representations of Cuban places matched the US’s (desired) use of Cuban spaces, which was initially for political purposes, as evidenced from the legislation passed. However, this was not the only desired use of Cuban spaces, but rather the US also desired Cuba for economic purposes. After the Cuban-Spanish-American War, American corporations had the opportunity to operate more freely in Cuba since they were no longer restricted by Spanish colonial rule. The result was an increased American corporate presence in Cuba, which is visualized in representations of Cuban places.

**Economic Landscapes**

From Chapter 2, we know that American corporations like the Cuba Company and Hershey used Cuban spaces for economic purposes, be it sugar or tourism; not
surprisingly, American use of Cuban spaces during the first quarter of the twentieth century matches American representations of Cuban places. In addition, these representations embody certain facets of tropicality, namely, that nature dominates over culture and that Cuba is desired due to economic reasons. In this section, I begin by explaining the details of my coding\(^\text{13}\) and end by deconstructing a few *National Geographic* photographs in order to analyze these tropically-framed economic landscape representations.

The following photograph is from a *National Geographic* article entitled “Cuba—The Isle of Romance.”

![Image of sugar cane workers](image)

**Fig 3-4.** “Raising cane for the sugar mill of the Antilles” (*NG*, September, 1933, p. 371)\(^\text{14}\)

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\(^{13}\) For explanations of coding categories that I do not discuss in this chapter, see Appendix B.

\(^{14}\) *NG* refers to *National Geographic*. 
There appear to be approximately nine people in the photo who are all directly involved in the cane cutting process of the sugar industry. Because the faces and skin of the people are not all exposed, making Race\textsuperscript{15} impossible to decipher, I coded the people in this photo as having an “other” Race. While oftentimes there were multiple people in a single photo, due to limited time and resources, I did not code demographic information for each person in a single photo. In the case above, “other” indicates either 1) there is one person in the photo whose Race is decipherable but is non-“white” and non-“black” or 2) there is more than one person in a photo whose Races are mixed (any combination of “white,” “black,” “other,” or “unknown”). I coded Sex in a similar way: specifically, a single person in a photo was given a Sex of “male,” “female,” or “unknown,” and if there were multiple people in a photo of different genders, I coded their Sex as “mixed,” or “unknown,” if undecipherable.

The caption of the image in Figure 3-4 suggests that it be coded as having a “sugar industry” Landscape. I coded for seven industry Landscapes, which were the “sugar industry,” “agriculture industry,” “other industry,” “tobacco industry,” “construction industry,” “service industry,” and “nickel industry.” In certain cases, like this one, the picture’s caption lent itself to be coded for in a particular way. Many times, the caption would indicate what industry was being represented, which happened for the majority of “sugar industry,” “agriculture industry,” and “other industry” Landscapes. As indicated by their captions, “agriculture industry” Landscapes included cocoa and coconut groves, and banana, pineapple, and strawberry fields. I grouped some industries

\textsuperscript{15}Italicized terms like Race represent the titles of the categories for which I coded. Codes within a given category, such as type of Race, are put in quotation marks (e.g. “other”).
into the “other industry” Landscape, which include the following industries: mahogany, sisal fiber/twine, jute, pine tree farm farming, radio assembly, baseball bats, wagon transportation, hog feed, and mail delivery.

When a picture had no caption, or the caption did not clearly indicate what type of industry or what Landscape was present, I used other features of the photo to help me code the Landscape. For instance, I coded Figure 3-5 as having a “rural scene/infrastructure” Landscape.

Figure 3-5. “Rural scene/infrastructure” Landscape (no caption) (NG, August, 1991, p. 116)

Photos with this Landscape did not have large amounts of infrastructure, perhaps just a single dwelling, a distant road, a well, a simple wooden-framed structure, or a plow. I coded pictures without any type of infrastructure or very minimal, distant, and/or indecipherable infrastructure as having a “nature” Landscape, like Figure 3-6.
As a geographer who recognizes the debates about natural and cultural landscapes, I question whether entirely natural landscapes without the presence of humans exist on earth. Regardless, “nature” shots characterized by minimal infrastructural presence and an abundance of vegetation and topographic features have been and continue to be emblematic of National Geographic; therefore, I chose to code explicitly for “nature” Landscapes.

“Nature” pictures either have no infrastructure or what I consider extremely minimal, distant, and/or indecipherable infrastructure. Pictures of the rocky coastline with green vegetation on the nearby land, karst-carved valleys with mostly sky and land are all encompassed by my definition of “nature.” I coded pictures with a strong presence of natural elements that also included infrastructure and/or people as having “natural elements prominent,” which is not a Landscape by itself, but accompanies other
Landscapes, ranging from “rural scene/infrastructure” to “portrait” to “sugar industry.” In order to preserve a distinction between “nature” Landscapes and a “natural elements prominent” characteristic, “nature” pictures were not coded as having “natural elements prominent,” since it is obvious that they already possessed this quality. Some of the elements that fit my definition of “natural elements” are water, flowers, fields, mountains, and palms—either the full tree or fronds bordering the picture. For example, I coded Figure 3-5 on page 62 as having “natural elements prominent” and the overall Landscape as “rural scene/infrastructure.”

The theme among Landscapes that peaked in frequency within the first quarter of the twentieth century is that they are characterized as economic landscapes, meaning they either depict ongoing industry in Cuba or Cuban landscapes that are prime candidates for economic development. The graph in Figure 3-7 shows the frequency distributions of economic landscapes, which include “rural scene/infrastructure,” “sugar industry,” “map,” “graph/chart/table,” and “other industry.” Every year for which I recorded data is along the X-axis and along the Y-axis is the frequency that each particular Landscape occurred in a given year. This number was calculated by taking the number of pictures with a given Landscape for a given year divided by the total number of pictures recorded for the same year.
Figure 3-7. Graph of *National Geographic* Economic Landscapes
From Chapter 2, we know that American corporations like the Cuba Company and Hershey set up operations in Cuba in the early twentieth century. Such corporations were probably in part drawn to invest in Cuba due to representations of Cuban places that presented Cuba as ripe for economic development, as illustrated on the pages of publications like *National Geographic*, a prestigious and ‘scientific’ magazine.

American corporate presence in Cuban spaces and the representation of Cuban places as landscapes of economic potential happened simultaneously—the processes were symbiotic with one feeding off the other. For instance, the Cuba Company’s construction of railroads signaled to Americans that Cuba was ripe for American capital and economic endeavors; at the same time, American businesses that were not already in Cuba saw Cuba’s industries, quantified resources, and its grand rurality on the pages of the revered *National Geographic* and other guidebooks (Hyatt, 1898; Baedeker, 1909) which ultimately signaled to them that Cuba was ready and waiting for American capital and economic undertakings.

Overall, I characterize the six Landscapes in Figure 3-7—“sugar industry,” “agriculture industry,” “other industry,” “rural scene/infrastructure,” “graph/chart/table,” and “map”—as fitting into a broader imperial identity of Cuba, one that frames and defines Cuba as a place ripe for American business. In his book, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*, Felix Driver (2001) notes that European notions of exploration included “the voyage, the survey, the mapping of the earth, the seas and the stars,” and that this exploration was part of empire building (p. 2). The presence of graphs, charts, tables, and maps that were most common in articles published prior to 1920 is reflective of the imperial sentiments of the US. Imperial discourse understood
terra incognita, such as Cuba, to be places worthy of being documented, mapped, surveyed, and inventoried. The 1898 book *Cuba: Its Resources and Opportunities* by Pulaski F. Hyatt and John T. Hyatt, compiles dozens of charts and descriptive paragraphs about the quantities and qualities of Cuban resources, from wood to soil to ‘empty’ land waiting for railroad and hotel development. The subtitle of Hyatt and Hyatt’s book is “Valuable information for American investors, manufacturers, exporters, importers, lumber and mine operators, wholesale and retail merchants, employment seekers, prospective planters, professional men, sportsmen, travelers, railroad men, and others” (1898). Clearly, the trajectory of American empire building in Cuba, from mapping to development, is reflected in *National Geographic* photos and other sources like Hyatt and Hyatt’s book.

High frequencies of “rural scene/infrastructure” *Landscape* pictures represent the Cuban landscape as ready for development. High frequencies of “sugar industry,” “agriculture industry,” and “other industry” *Landscape* pictures illustrate to American readers of *National Geographic* the potential to set up lucrative industries in Cuba. The pictures that decorated the pages of *National Geographic* in the first quarter of the twentieth century correspond to what actually happened in Cuba.

Figure 3-8 below is a summary graphic of the results of the *National Geographic* and *Traveler* magazine content analysis.
Figure 3-8. Star plot of *National Geographic Landscapes*
I coded for a total of twenty-three Landscapes but the above graphic consolidates those Landscapes into six categories. ‘Industrial landscapes (all)’ includes “service,” “tobacco,” “sugar,” “nickel,” “construction,” “agriculture,” and “other” industries; ‘Sugar, agriculture, other industries’ includes just those three industries which are included in the ‘Industrial landscapes (all)’ category; ‘Leisure landscapes’ includes “healthcare,” “animal/ecosystem,” and “sport/recreation” Landscapes; ‘Map, graph/chart/table’ includes hand-drawn, computer generated, or photographed “maps,” “graphs, charts, and/or tables”; ‘Other landscapes’ include “Cuban and non-Cuban military personnel,” “Cuban and non-Cuban military scene/infrastructure,” “object,” “other,” “urban scene/infrastructure,” “rural scene/infrastructure,” “portrait,” and “education” Landscapes; and “natural elements prominent” and “nature” Landscape include all photos with either of the two categories present.

The numbers along the axis indicate the percentage of photos with a given Landscape out of the total number of photos coded for in the given time period, as indicated by color. Certainly there are other notable patterns to be teased out of this data and other time periods that would make for worthwhile comparisons, but because I am interested in how representations of Cuban places match uses of Cuban spaces, I chose to analyze time periods that capture the shift in American use of Cuban spaces, reflected in its representations of places.

As will be discussed in subsequent sections, I argue that there was a shift in imagery from economics to leisure around the 1930s-50s. This shift is not captured in this chart because I combined photos from 1898-1947 into one category for analysis. I did this due to the dearth of National Geographic articles published about Cuba during
the 1930s-50s, and so a third category of analysis, from the 1930s-50s, would barely be populated with photos. To account for this dearth, in the next section I analyze non-\textit{National Geographic} photos published from the 1930s-50s in order to evaluate their characteristics.

Returning to the three photos presented in this chapter, I now discuss how the elements in these photos are in accordance with tropicality. The focus on natural elements equates Cuba with nature, which implies that it is devoid or lacking in culture. Binary logic/knowledge structures are classic ways of thinking in Western and especially colonial and imperial contexts: the presence of one characteristic prohibits the presence of another. Common binaries include culture/nature, mind/body, reason/passion, active/passive, white/black, and male/female (Sharp, 2009). Instead of destabilizing these binaries, the photos that I analyzed reinforce them. This binary colonial/imperial logic is in accordance with tropicality because it emphasizes the nature aspects of Cuba. Additionally, the content of these photos presents Cuba as desirable due to economic potential. This tropical framing is in accordance with how the US used and wanted to use Cuban spaces.

As indicated in Figure 3-8, which only captures \textit{National Geographic} representations of Cuba, the development of a leisure landscape did not develop until after 1947; however, from Chapter 2, we know this is not the case. While the \textit{National Geographic} content analysis is especially useful for gauging general American imaginaries over a long period of time, due to its over century-long publication history, a shortcoming of limiting analysis to \textit{National Geographic} is that articles about Cuba are not published consistently, which leaves gaps in the data. And so, before returning to
Figure 3-8 and interpreting the presence of a post-1947 leisure landscape in American representations, to fill the gaps of knowledge not captured by content analysis and to illustrate how American representations of Cuban places transitioned from framing Cuba in economic to leisure terms/parameters before 1947, I turn to textual analysis of travel advertisements from the 1930s-50s.

*Early Leisure Landscapes*

“Fascinating…Foreign…Fabulous”; “Cuba—Holiday Isle of the Tropics”; “Tourist Oasis”; “Forget Your Cares”; “Tropical, teeming, and colorful” (Levi & Heller, 2002; Ford, 1953). These are the lines that plastered travel brochures, postcards, and posters of Cuba from the early 1930s to the 1950s. Cuba had been transformed from an economic landscape to a leisure landscape in the eyes and pocketbooks of Americans. From Figure 3-1, we see that there was only one *National Geographic* article published about Cuba in the 1930s, one in the 1940s, and none in the 1950s. Therefore, to supplement my analysis of *National Geographic* photographs, in this chapter, I also consider how travel advertisements and brochures from the 1930s-50s both reflect how Americans used Cuba as a tourist leisure and pleasure space and are framed by tropicality.

We know from Chapter 2 that American corporations equipped the Cuban landscape for tourism through the introduction of railroads that stretched from Havana in the west to Santiago in the east, which transported tourists across the Cuban countryside, replete with American, Cuban, and Spanish-owned sugar mills, rustic country dwellings,
and karst-carved valleys covered in palms. The introduction of major American tourism to Cuba changed how Americans used Cuban spaces, which is reflected in US representations of Cuban places.

The tourist landscape of the 1930s-50s was defined by racetracks, hotels, casinos, and country clubs, populated by Americans. In Havana, posh hotels and recreational facilities, including the Havana Country Club, which opened in 1912, and the Oriental Park Racetrack, built in 1915, drew the moneyed upper-classes of New England and the Mid-Atlantic to Cuba in the winters (Skwiot, 2010). The first slew of hotels that made up the Havana tourist landscape include the Sevilla-Biltmore, built in 1908 and later purchased by hoteliers John McEntree Bowman and Charles Francis Flynn in 1920, the Hotel Plaza, which opened in 1909, and the Hotel Nacional, which opened in 1930 (Schwartz, 1997). The Hotel Nacional, as seen in Figure 3-9, remains a prominent feature in the Havana tourist landscape due to its architectural grandeur, the interior of which is inspired by Andalucían design, and due to its spatial location within the city, overlooking the beloved Malecón, a curving stretch of road, sidewalk, and sea wall along which people stroll and socialize.
The second series of hotels that catered to tourists sprung up in the 1950s and include the Hotel Habana Libre opening in 1958 and hotels Habana Riviera and Copacabana opening in 1957. The stylish Tropicana Club opened in 1939 and featured nightly singing and dancing performances for those who could afford to see them. Tourists could get to Cuba by sea, taking a Ward Line ship from the East Coast to Havana and by the late 1920s, they could take a plane (Baedeker, 1909; Schwartz, 1997). PanAm flights brought large numbers of Americans from Key West to Havana starting in 1928, with flights stopping in Camagüey and Santiago added months later (Schwartz, 1997). In addition to taking a flight or ship to the island, there was even a movement in 1936 to build a Pan-American highway from the US to Mexico to Cuba, signaling the desire to increase American tourism to Cuba, and by the 1950s, guidebooks like *Fiesta*
Lands included Cuba as a stop-over point along the highway (Freeman, 2009; Ford, 1953). Figure 3-10 illustrates the growing number of tourists to Cuba, barring the dips during WWII and the missing data for 1955 and 1956.

![Number of Tourists to Cuba](image)

Figure 3-10. Graph of Tourists to Cuba (Data from Santamarina, 2000)

In addition to hard infrastructure defining the Cuban tourist landscape and inviting tourism, legislation was passed that also promoted American tourism and leisure in Cuba. In the late teens, there were a number of tourism laws passed in Cuba, including the 1919 Casino and Tourist bill, most of which were designed by Cuban businessmen and politicians who wanted to boost tourism in Cuba (Schwartz, 1997). These laws, in combination with Prohibition in the US, initiated in July 1919, transformed the ways in which the US used Cuban spaces and represented Cuban landscapes. The plethora of tourist infrastructure coupled with tourism legislation illustrates the transformation that Cuba underwent from a landscape defined by economics to one defined by tourism and
leisure. The new leisure-oriented place-identity of Cuba fit within the emerging recreation and leisure landscape that was developing in the US and globally, as upper-classes were acquiring more money than they knew what to do with. Cuba was just the place to enjoy a weekend of sun, sand, sea, and sex. Tropically-framed *National Geographic* photographs and travel texts reflect the changing American imaginaries and place-identities of Cuba.

For example, Figure 3-11 is from a *National Geographic* article entitled “Cuba—American Sugar Bowl.”

![Figure 3-11. “A Rainbow Leads to a Pot O’ Good Cheer at Veradero” (NG, January, 1947, p. 24)](image)

I coded Figure 3-11 as a “sport/recreation” *Landscape* because the prominent activity in the photo appears to be one of leisure and appeared next to photographs in which the people in the photos were identified as tourists. Other pictures I coded with this category,
with the help of captions and prominent activities, include photographs with people on yachts and recreational fishing boats, watching a sporting event, dancing, and watching a cock fight. For this picture, I classified the architecture as “Spanish colonial” because it possesses the arches, porches, and clay-tile roof that is characteristic of the Spanish colonial architecture in Cuba. I coded the people in this image as being tourists because the photo was part of a suite of images about tourism in Veradero, the largest tourist beach in Cuba. This picture is also an example of one that I coded as having “natural elements prominent” because of the visible vegetation. Another example of an early leisure landscape representation of Cuba is Figure 3-12.

![Figure 3-12. Cuban Tourist Commission Postcard, 1955 (Levi & Heller, 2002)](image-url)
From Figures 3-11 and 3-12, we can see how tropicality was visually expressed in the 1930s-50s. For instance, like early representations of early leisure landscapes, the paradise, desire, nature, and feminine components of tropicality are prominent in these images. Green vegetation, fun, and sun characterize Cuba in Figure 3-11 and in Figure 3-12, a dancing, voluptuous woman entices visitors to Cuba. Her hair, perhaps more characteristic of the Caribbean and Latin America more so than the US, contributes to the process of ‘othering’ which is overtly present in the text of the poster, by claiming that Cuba is “foreign.”

It is important to note that Figure 3-12 is a postcard published by the Cuban Tourist Commission and thus is not of US-authorship; however, it still has a place in my analysis for several reasons. First, Schwartz (1997) details the history of the Cuban Tourist Commission and notes how Americans with interests in Cuba pressured and influenced the Cuban Tourist Commission to conduct business in accordance with American ambitions, which included engaging in and profiting from the tourism industry. Therefore, at this moment in history, I consider Cuban Tourist Commission authored-texts to be strongly influenced by the US, which makes them of interest to my study. Second, while I could not complete a comprehensive analysis of Cuban-authored texts, I begin to engage with them in the final chapter of this thesis and am interested in how they are in accordance or disjuncture with American representations of Cuban places. Thus, including Cuban-produced representations in the analysis of earlier time periods provides the groundwork for my fuller exploration in Chapter 4. Before turning to said exploration, I end this chapter by summarizing how late leisure landscapes reflect US use of Cuban spaces and embody tropicality.
Late Leisure Landscapes

Late in the night of December 31, 1958, *La Revolución* began. Fulgencio Batista, the US-backed Cuban president, was ousted and Fidel Castro and his M-26-7 forces assumed power in Cuba with the intent of forming a socialist state. Tourists who had previously enjoyed the sparkle of the casinos and the allure of the Tropicana dancers retreated back to America where, alongside the “Golden Exiles,” mainly white, middle-upper class Cubans who fled Cuba to the US, they watched—some in admiration, others in fear and disgust—the socialist revolution unfold in their tropical paradise. Soon thereafter came the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, landmark events that clearly defined the US’s position in the global Cold War. In 1962, the US established a stringent trade embargo against Cuba, severely restricting the economic, political, and cultural exchange between the two states. As a result, American imaginations of Cuba were effectively frozen.

With the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union officially pulled support from Cuba in 1991 and the island entered the ‘Special Period,’ referring to the initiation of wartime rations in a time of peace. It was at this time that *National Geographic* and *Traveler* magazine representations of Cuba picked up again, with a total of thirty-two articles about Cuba published between 1991 and 2010. Because American tourist access to Cuba was and remains very limited, more so than matching American uses of Cuban spaces, tropically-inspired representations of Cuban places match American desired and/or imagined uses of Cuban spaces. Instead of imaginaries being destabilized, the embargo reinforces them because it effectively legalizes the tropical construction of the
‘other’ as pestilent. At the same time, in making travel to Cuba nearly illegal, the embargo strengthens the American desire to see, feel, and be in a ‘forbidden’ place.

The theme that was present among *National Geographic* photographs in articles published from 1989-2010 was one of leisure. From the previous section, we know that this is not entirely unique, since the US has been framing Cuba in terms of leisure since the 1930s. However, the leisure landscapes characteristic of the post-1990 period are visualized differently from those of the 1930s-50s. For instance, instead of associating Cuba with ‘whiteness,’ post-1990s texts often associated Cuba with ‘blackness,’ which illustrates a feared quality of Cuba. This is an example of how tropical frames continue to be present in American depictions of Cuban places, but are visualized differently throughout time.

Based on the content analysis, there were six *Landscapes* that peaked in frequency post-1990: “animal/ecosystem,” “construction industry,” “healthcare,” “sport/recreation,” “object,” and “other.” There is also a peak in people with a “black” *Race* post-1990. Figure 3-13 only shows the frequency of three landscapes, “animal/ecosystem,” “sport/recreation,” and “healthcare,” because these are the *Landscapes* that I interpret as fitting in with late leisure landscapes.
Figure 3-13. Graph of *National Geographic* Late Leisure Landscapes
While “object,” “other,” and “construction industry” Landscapes peaked in frequency post-1961, I do not interpret them as fitting in with late leisure landscapes. Regarding “object” Landscapes, three out of fifteen occurred post-1990. I interpret the presence of objects, such as a close-up photograph of a decorative metal star, to be a stylistic trend of the National Geographic editors characteristic of the 1990s and early 2000s; therefore, the presence of this stylistic Landscape trend is of little substantive meaning to my study. Three “other” Landscape pictures occurred in a 2001 National Geographic article and include photos of gold coins found beneath the Havana Harbor; since such photos did not fit into the Landscapes for which I coded, I classified them as “other” Landscapes. The “construction industry” Landscape pictures, which peaked in 1989, are of housing and restoration projects of Spanish colonial architecture. I interpret the presence of “construction industry” Landscape photos to be a relic of Cold War discourse. That is to say, on the cusp of the end of the Cold War in 1989, “construction industry” photos that suggested that Cuba was in need of reconstruction in the wake of Soviet Union support and influence were expressions of an American Cold War discourse. Analyzing the presence of this Landscape is better-suited to research questions about US-Cuba political relations regarding the Cold War, communism, and socialism, which is out of the scope of my study.

What is of particular interest to me are the three Landscapes that I interpret as late leisure landscapes: “animal/ecosystem,” “sport/recreation,” and “healthcare.” I coded pictures as having an “animal/ecosystem” Landscape if the central focus of the picture was on an animal or natural habitat, sometimes indicated by the caption. These photos reference the existing ecotourism in Cuba and invite more. “Sport/recreation” Landscape
pictures are characterized by leisure activities, often with one or more participants. For instance, pictures of people dancing in a club as in Figure 3-14, watching a sporting event, riding go-karts, or boating were all coded as having “sport/recreation” Landscapes.

![Figure 3-14. “Sport/recreation” Landscape (no caption) (NG, August, 1991, p. 94)](image)

Pictures with “healthcare” Landscapes included pictures of hospitals and treatment facilities, mainly for foreigners participating in medical tourism. Medical tourism has been on the rise for the last decade or so and is gaining popularity (Connell, 2006). Like with ecotourism, places like Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Cuba, have become popular destinations for doctors and hospitals to set up medical facilities to accommodate patients, mainly from Latin America, the US, and Europe, to come and receive medical procedures. Upon receiving medical procedures, be it cosmetic surgery or cancer treatment, patients recover in a warm and mild climate, surrounded by the
For instance, as early as the 1830s, Cuba was used for “invalid tourism” in which people—including Sophia Peabody who later married Nathaniel Hawthorne—suffering an illness would go in the hopes of getting better by the sun (Lazo, 2005). Additionally, according to archival documents, Mr. Hershey first went to Cuba with the hopes that the climate would help to alleviate his throat problems (HCA PWRC, series 1, box 2, folder 40, June 9, 1955 interview with George Hintz). Nowadays, the medical and pharmaceutical industries, which service medical tourists and export medical packages of doctors and pharmaceuticals abroad, make up the primary resource and export in Cuba (Landa de Saá, personal communication, June 3, 2011). This is a function of the lack of Cuba’s access to material products which has shifted the Cuban economy from an export-based one primarily having to do with sugar to a knowledge economy. But medical tourism in Cuba is but one of the many types. Also prevalent is ecotourism, cultural and political tourism, heritage tourism, religious tourism, and sex tourism. National Geographic photographs with “animal/ecosystem,” “sport/recreation,” and “healthcare” Landscapes are illustrative of the overall leisure identity of Cuba.

In addition to Landscape categories, I also coded for Race. Of the Races for which I coded—“white,” “black,” “other,” and “unknown”—people with a “black” race were most characteristic of the post-1990s time period and had a distinctly different distribution than people with a “white” race (see Figure 3-15).
It appears that “black” is part of the American tropical framing of Cuba characteristic of the late leisure landscapes time period and “white” is decidedly part of an earlier identity characteristic of early leisure landscapes in the first half of the twentieth century. This racial difference is an example of how the US visualization of the tropical Cuban ‘other’ evolved over time. Furthermore, it hints at what Roland (2006) calls negrificación, or a darkening discourse diametrically opposed to blanqueamiento, a whitening discourse. She argues that some Cubans involved in the tourism industry, especially in the sex tourism industry, employ their sexuality and dark or at least perceived dark race as cultural capital. The “white” and “black” Race frequencies in National Geographic articles are in accordance with this modern-day phenomenon.
Around the 1930s-50s, as indicated by the *National Geographic* photographs and the travel advertisements previously analyzed, it was more common to depict a “white” person or a “white” Cuban in texts than a “black” person. Recall, however, that in the political cartoons of 1898, at times the ‘other’ was darkened, representing a pestilence (see Figure 3-3). Again, this is an example of how the visual expression of tropicality changed at different historical moments. In post-1990 representations, I interpret the presence of ‘blackness’ as a way of tropically ‘othering’ Cuba. The darkness of Cuba represents an ‘otherness,’ an exotic-ness, a sort of pestilence that is nonetheless desired, due to the commonly sexed nature of people in the texts. In this regard, darkened representations of Cuba are a visual expression of tropicality in the post-1990 era.

**Conclusion**

Content analysis of *National Geographic* and *Traveler* magazine photographs and visual analysis of non-*National Geographic* images has given me an understanding of how the US has ‘othered’ Cuba over the last hundred and fifteen years. Regardless of time period or publication, American representations frame Cuba in tropical terms. Visually, this translates into using markers of gender, age, and race, emphasizing natural elements, and including text that establishes differences between the US and Cuba. From deconstructing American representations of Cuban places over time, it is evident that the visual expressions of tropicality have evolved. The time-specific American use of Cuban spaces informed the facets of tropicality that were emphasized in US representations of Cuba and constructions of Cuban place-identities. For instance, during the time of the
Cuban-Spanish-American War, the US mobilized both facets of tropicality in constructing Cuban place-identities through representations because doing so—equating Cuba with fear and desire—was a tactic which allowed the US to justify its political use of Cuban spaces.

The texts that I analyzed in this chapter nearly all have American authorship; however, as we saw with Figure 3-12, the 1955 “so near yet so foreign” travel brochure, there exist texts with Cuban authorship that visually parallel texts with American authorship. While the presence of this trend in 1950s texts was probably more a function of direct American influence on the Cuban publisher, this is not the case today. In Chapter 4, I conclude by discussing the presence of this phenomenon in modern-day Cuba and suggest that it can best be understood using a post-colonial framework.
CHAPTER 4

Conclusion:
Modern Appearance, Post-Colonialism, & Frozen Imaginaries

Introduction

The aim of this thesis has been to understand how the US has ‘othered’ Cuba since 1898 by understanding evolving place-identities. The majority of research already completed in this thesis has explored the process and visual representation of knowledge production in an economic, politically, and culturally imperial context. To understand the ‘othering’ and knowledge-production processes, through archival analysis, I began by exploring the start of major US tourism to Cuba, which was partially initiated by American corporations like the Cuba Company and Hershey. Both of these companies incorporated tourism and leisure into their initially sugar-driven corporate agendas. These tourism-initiated widespread representations of US geographical imaginaries and place-identities of Cuba began by identifying Cuban places with economic potential and later with leisure and pleasure. I then traced the evolution of these place-identities as expressed through visual representations in popular print media, mainly from National Geographic. In conducting content analysis, I coded the content of the images with an emphasis on the type of Landscape prominent and interpreted the pictures as both reflecting American use of Cuban spaces and tropically framing Cuban places. I
illustrated how tropicality was visualized in unique ways, be it through markers of gender, race, or explicit text, depending on individual photographs and US (desired) use of Cuban spaces at different historical moments. To conclude, I discuss further avenues of research, one of which includes examining the modern Cuban tourist landscape with a post-colonial lens, the preliminary research of which I outline below. Because of this extension of research, in addition to being positioned at the intersections of geography, tourism, and colonial studies, this thesis also intersects with post-colonial studies.

Of the two types of further research that would complement the research already presented in this thesis, the first is research that builds upon this thesis and extends it in different directions and the second is research that thickens research already completed content-wise. Regarding the first type, one possible research avenue that I could take would be to examine how US-constructed identities of the ‘other’ are negotiated and/or destabilized by Cubans in Cuba today. To illustrate what I mean, I turn to an overview of preliminary research that I have conducted via participant observation, which builds upon the work already presented and suggests that modern Cuban-constructed Cuban place-identities and geographical imaginaries fuse Cuban and American understandings and perceptions of Cuba, making them examples of post-colonial/post-imperial hybridity and mimicry.

New Directions: Souvenirs, Post-Colonialism, & Sex Tourism

If you walk around the neighborhood of Vedado in Havana near the Hotel Habana Libre, you may notice a small, uncovered tourist market in which people sell leather
sandals, silkscreen prints of Che, and little clay female dolls with brightly painted dresses accenting their curvaceous and black bodies. The same dolls appear again in the massive crafts and souvenir market of Havana, where hundreds of vendor stalls grid the warehouse-like space. They are the mulatta figurines: female dolls with dark skin, curvy bodies, and sizeable chests, often with cigars stuffed in their mouths (Figures 4-1 and 4-2).

Figures 4-1 & 4-2. Mulatta Figurines (Photos by Author)
In my discussion of late leisure landscapes in Chapter 3, I noted that the presence of people with a “black” Race in National Geographic pictures was on the rise in the post-1990 time period. In this regard, mulatta figurines match the imagery characteristic of post-1990s National Geographic and Traveler magazine photographs (recall Figure 3-14 of non-“white” Cubans dancing in a club, positioned within the late leisure landscapes). I interpret the mulatta figurines as embodying both the fear and desire aspects of tropicality—fear due to their dark and ‘different’ skin and desire due to their sexed bodies.

There is one marked difference, however, between National Geographic photos and the mulatta figurines: the latter do not have American authorship, but rather Cuban. Participant observation of the Havana tourist landscape with a focus on tourist souvenirs sold at small craft stands, the official craft market designed for tourists, and airport souvenir shops, gave me a window into how the Cuban tourism industry was representing Cuba, which I interpret as being in accordance with tropically-inspired US imaginaries and representations of Cuba. To understand why this is the case, I first outline the origin of the dolls and then discuss how their commodification in the contemporary Cuban tourist landscape can be understood as post-colonial/post-imperial expressions of hybridity and mimicry.

Dr. Gisela Arandia Covarrubia, a journalist in Cuba and professor at the University of Havana, says that the mulatta image originated from Africa and was brought to Cuba during the slave trade (personal communication, June 4, 2011). While by today’s standards, the image appears erotic and sexual, in Africa during the time of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, having an exposed or nearly-exposed chest was an everyday
reality and not perceived as exceptionally erotic. When the image was transplanted to Cuba, some Cuban influence was added, such as the style of dress. Dr. Covarrubia notes that the historic image of the Caribbean *negra mujer* or black woman has had two identities, that of the whore and that of the mammy and that the iteration of the *negra mujer* that is embodied by the mulatta figurine falls within the second identity category.

The Cuban authorship and sale of the dolls is an example of the commodification of place. Minca and Oakes (2006) write that “travel, it seems, turns locals into self-appointed packagers of place” and Edensor (1998) notes that at tourist sites, “textual and visual forms reproduce discourse of ‘otherness,’ luxury, and escape” (p. 8 and p. 8, respectively). If, then, mulatta figurines are a case of Cuban packaging of place and a type of self-‘othering,’ why is the Cuban tourism industry is packaging Cuba in accordance with tropically-inspired US imaginaries of Cuba? I argue that such an adoption is an expression of post-colonial/post-imperial hybridity and mimicry, and ultimately, what Dr. Covarrubia (June 4, 2011) calls an example of how in Cuba, “tourism came as solution to emergency,” arguing that the commodification of the mulatta image is an economic means of survival.

Homi Bhabha (1984, 1994) conceptualizes hybridity and mimicry as types of resistance. In post-colonial, and by proxy, post-imperial terms, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2007) write that hybridity “refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization,” be they cross-bred animals, pidgin languages, or syncretic cultural forms (p. 108). The mulatta figurines are examples of two iterations of hybridization: first, between African cultures and Cuba, and second, between the US and Cuba. I interpret the mulatta figurines as a type of hybrid cultural
form between Cuba and the US because the dolls have Cuban elements and are being sold in the tourist landscape because they conform to US, and perhaps more broadly, Western, tropically-inspired geographical imaginaries. Some scholars, like Mitchell (1997), understand hybridity as a type of loss or trauma, arguing that it unjustly muddles the cultural purity of the colonized. Bhabha, on the other hand, views hybridity as a form of resistance. Furthermore, he argues that the unavoidable presence of hybridity in a colonial culture destabilizes the power of the colonizers and is ultimately a force that dissolves colonial relations.

Very related to hybridity, Bhabha (1984) defines colonial mimicry as “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite [original emphasis],” which he later restates as “almost the same but not white [original emphasis]” (as cited in Desai and Nair, 2005, p. 266 and p. 269, respectively). Mimicry, then, is the transformation of the colonized from being perceived as different from the colonizer to being perceived as similar to and mimicking the colonizer’s identity. This mimicry, however, is a brand of mockery, whereby the colonized express their agency and consciously adopt colonial identities. I interpret the mulatta figurines characteristic of Cuba as being a version of post-imperial mimicry, not because the dolls match imagery characteristic of the US, but rather because the dolls match or mimic post-1990s National Geographic representations and American imaginaries of Cuban place-identities. These representations and imaginaries equate Cuba with pleasure and desire and include a peak in the number of people with a “black” Race. The dolls maintain a “not quite/not white” characteristic in their ‘blackness’ and African heritage, like the fear/pestilent aspect of tropicality. Like Bhabha would argue,
such mimicry does not imply that Cubans are victims of a colonial/imperial, but rather highlights their agency.

While Bhabha’s understandings of post-colonial resistance having to do with hybridity and mimicry may not sufficiently take into account the destabilizing effects of other forms of resistance, such as violence (Fanon, 1963), I agree with Bhabha that examining hybridity and mimicry in colonial/post-colonial and imperial/post-imperial contexts is important because it recognizes the agency of the colonized. It is this agency that Bhabha argues is mobilized in expressions of resistance. In the context of modern-day Cuba, in addition to being expressions of resistance, I argue that selling mulatta figurines which conform to tropically-inspired American geographical imaginaries is related to other processes in Cuba such as cogiendo la botella, or hitchhiking, and engaging in el jineterismo, often understood as activities relating to prostitution and sex tourism (Roland, 2011; Rundle, 2001). Together, these acts are part of la lucha, or the everyday struggle to survive that many Cubans face.

Additional avenues of future research that build upon this thesis and use it as a foundation to ask supplementary research questions include research about the eclectic array of tourism in Cuba, from ecotourism, to heritage tourism, to religious tourism, to sex tourism. Cuba is a melting pot of tourism and narrowing research to understanding the development, the expressions, and the effects of one particular type, such as sex tourism, constitutes a future research direction. For example, research about sex tourism could draw upon Eileen J. Suarez Findlay’s (2000) work about the development and implementation of policies that regulated women’s bodies in the Caribbean, explained in her book *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-
She discusses how these policies were buttressed by Puerto Rican and American colonial conceptions of decency, morality, and race. While Findlay’s discussion is centered on Ponce, Puerto Rico, it is widely applicable to Cuba as well, as illustrated by Garcia (2010). Garcia notes how modern-day sex work in Cuba, often referred to as *jineterismo*, is intimately linked to the long-time Cuban state regulation of women’s bodies, like the regulation that happened in Puerto Rico. Future research could examine the intersections between sex work and tourism, in both historical and contemporary contexts. The research already completed, which addresses the representation of the darkened and sexed Cuban ‘other,’ could serve as a starting point for such research and aid in developing specific research questions.

**Filling in the Gaps: Texts, Texts, & More Texts**

Regarding the second type of further research, additional research that fits directly with my existing research includes continuing to analyze data from my content analysis, completing textual analysis of texts other than photographs and brochures, and examining non-US-authored texts, especially additional Cuban-authored ones. Because of the quantity of data that I recorded about each of the 508 photographs about Cuba in *National Geographic* and *Traveler* magazines, for this thesis I was not able to sufficiently analyze all of the data and instead focused my analysis around data that informed my research questions. However, additional research questions that I have—about how US-representations appeared and were constructed during the Cold War, in what ways have the written discourse as recorded in photo captions about Cuba changed over time, and
why some *Landscapes* like “tobacco industry,” “education,” and “nature” have been consistently present since 1898 instead of being more characteristic of a particular time period—would be informed by continued engagement with the data from my content analysis.

As indicated in the *Delimitations* section of Chapter 1, the texts that I analyze are primarily photographs, brochures, posters, and a smattering of guidebooks, diaries, etc. Expanding my analysis to include paintings, newspapers, interpretive performances, films such as *Scarface* and *The Godfather II*, and literature such as *Old Man in the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway would broaden my existing study, continue to give me insights into popular American perceptions and imaginaries of Cuba over time, and incorporate additional non-*National Geographic* voices, which would contribute to accessing a wider sample of ‘American’ authorship.

For instance, it would be worthwhile to examine if/how Ernest Hemingway and his legacy is a lens through which Americans view Cuban places and use Cuban spaces. Hemingway was a resident of Cuba off and on from the early 1930s to 1960 and is a person who Americans often associate with Cuba. In Cuba, Hemingway was known for his leisurely lifestyle full of fishing, drinking mojitos, and expressing his creativity through writing. His use of Cuban spaces, in which he socialized with Hollywood’s elite, including Spencer Tracy, Errol Flynn, and Gary Cooper, contributed to a glamorous identity of Cuba (Palin, 1999). Analysis could begin by overviewing Hemingway’s use of Cuban spaces, drawing upon Spanier and Trogdon’s (2011) *The Letters of Ernest Hemingway: Volume 1, 1907-1922* to explore Hemingway’s engagement with the Cuban landscape and the lifestyle he lived and/or embodied. Further research could focus on the
ways in which Hemingway’s inscription in the Cuban landscape, for instance, the statue of him drinking a daiquiri at El Floridita or the Hemingway Museum at Finca Vigia near Havana, contribute to Hemingway-framed representations of Cuban places. Furthermore, as evidenced by Fidel Castro’s admiration of Hemingway and the May 2010 four day celebration of the 50th anniversary of Fidel’s and Hemingway’s first meeting, Hemingway and his legacy has become a type of tourist interest among Cubans, not just Americans (Prensa Latina, 2010). This makes Hemingway and his legacy a unique site at which to tease out ways in which Americans and Cubans alike view Hemingway himself as a frame for Cuban places.

In addition, further research could include expanding the sample of texts that I analyzed to include additional non-American-authored texts, perhaps most importantly, Cuban-authored ones. Since the majority of American-authored texts I analyzed were tourism texts and popular print media, analyzing similar texts with Cuban authorship would parallel the existing study nicely. For instance, I could examine the tourism campaigns designed and marketed by the Cuban Tourist Commission, founded in 1919, and the Ministry of Tourism, founded in 1994 (Skwiot, 2010; Ministry of Tourism, 2004). Additionally, of great interest are the representations of Cuban places that decorate the pages of the Cuban magazines Bohemia (1908-present) and Carteles (1919-1960), both of which published articles about Cuban culture, society, and politics and are landmarks in the historical trajectory of Cuban journalism (Cuba Headlines, 2008). Focusing analysis on representations by state tourism agencies would offer a window into the official state discourse about tourism over the last century, and examining the images of Bohemia and Carteles would parallel my existing analysis of National Geographic.
images, due to the position of the magazines within the Cuban society. Supplemental Cuban-authored texts could include artwork of Cuba by Cuban artists, maps of Cuba and Havana specifically, which sometimes include advertisements around the borders (“Map of Havana,” n.d.), and travel journals by Cubans traveling throughout Cuba. Completing complementary analysis of additional Cuban-authored texts would offer more insight into if, when, and why Cuban-constructed Cuban place-identities are in accordance or disjuncture with US-constructed ones.

**Conclusion**

Investigating the origin and evolution of US geographical imaginaries and representations of Cuba has given me insights into the processes of how identities of the ‘other’ are created. Given the texts I analyzed, this thesis has also illustrated how “tourism aestheticises otherness,” and therefore, is a project in tourism in addition to geography, colonial, and post-colonial studies (Sharp, 2009, p. 95). In the context of Cuba and the US, I conclude that US-constructed Cuban place-identities are informed by American uses of Cuban spaces and are framed in accordance with tropicality.

Since 1898, American representations of Cuba have oscillated between fear/pestilence and desire/paradise. As we continue to live in a rapidly globalizing world with equally rapidly-advancing transportation and communication technologies, which permit circumnavigation of the globe in less than twenty-four hours and international communication in less than twenty-four seconds, it is easy to think that perceptions of ‘otherness’ are on the decline. However, regarding Cuba—a mere ninety miles from the
US—it is a wonder that the island which used to be both a tropical setting for businesses like the Cuba Company and Hershey to profit from sugar and a vacation home for middle class Americans, still remains one of the most difficult places for US citizens to access.

In the case of Cuba, the present-day half-century-old embargo/bloqueo (blockade) against Cuba amplifies instead of destabilizes tropical notions of the Cuban ‘other.’ The embargo concretizes and legalizes the ‘forbidden’ quality of the island, which re-affirms the perceived dual paradise/desire-pestilent/fear tropical identity. It remains to be seen for how long this frozen tropical identity will monopolize the American imagination.
Captions were coded for the presence of the following word categories:

**Positive Tropicality Words**
Includes words that describe Cuba in a positive light, contributing to a positive tropical identity. Words include the following: beautiful, venerable, finest, harmony, fantastic, lovely, superb, and elegance.

**Negative Tropicality Words**
Includes words that describe Cuba in a negative light, contributing to a negative tropical identity. Words include the following: wretched, disease, destitute, piratical, necessity, old-style, old-fashioned, inflammatory, refugee, and shanties.

**Spanish Colonial Reference**
Includes words the reference Cuba’s Spanish colonial heritage, often referencing the 1895-1898 war and associated battles and infrastructure. Words include the following: old fortification, surrender tree, San Juan Hill, Old Spain, Columbus, Morro Castle, Plaza de Armas, Spaniards, Battle of Santiago, and Admiral Cervera.

**American Occupation Reference**
Includes words the reference the American occupation after the Cuban–Spanish-American War. Words include the following: American city, US occupation, Major Black, Guantánamo Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, American governors, U.S.S. Maine, and U.S.S. Merrimac.

**Spanish Words**
Includes words in Spanish. Words include the following: Capitolio, central, gallo, Malecón, mojito, señora, and señorita.

**‘Tropical’ Item**
Includes words that reference items and resources that are found in Cuba and the Caribbean. Words include the following: palms, sugar, cane, coconut tree [sic], banana, tobacco, mahogany, corn, cocoa, schooner, cyclone, sunset, chicken coops, coconuts, fresh fruit, sugar-cane, sugar plantation, sugar mill, raw sugar, leaf tobacco, tobacco leaves, wrapper leaves, tobacco barn, jute fiber, fish, sugar-bowl, embryo rope, binder twine, hog, yachts, fishing craft, Ceiba tree, sea horses, coffee, orange, cacti, vines, flowers, thatch, nickel, sea, and sand.
Nature Reference
Includes words the make reference to nature, including topographical features and vegetation. Words include the following: geologic/geology, plans, bay, valley, harbor, palms, topography, mountain, park, stream, tree, cocoa, grove, plantation, field, country, farm, field, beach, island, mounds, soil, Ceiba tree, Atlantic, flowers, isle, sponge, mangrove, sea, sand, river, terrace, mouth of river, canyon, and cape.
APPENDIX B

Content Analysis Coding Explanations

Landscape

Tobacco industry
Includes pictures of people rolling cigars, tobacco leaves drying in barns, and tobacco fields.

Service industry
Includes pictures of servers in a restaurant, store clerks, flower deliverers, and messengers.

Nickel industry
Includes pictures of nickel mining, as indicated by captions.

Urban scene/infrastructure
Includes pictures of urban infrastructure that usually highlight the urban architecture. For instance, this Landscape includes pictures of building facades, the Capitol building, and scenes of the urban cityscape from atop tall buildings. Sometimes there are people present in these photographs, but they are generally distant and/or not portraits. These pictures also include forms of transportation, including bikes, carts, cars, and busses.

Non-Cuban military scene/infrastructure & Cuban military scene/infrastructure
Includes pictures with military infrastructure, such as weaponry, bases, or soldiers in uniform. Captions, especially ones that specify a location like Guantánamo Bay, indicate whether or not the military infrastructure was Cuban or non-Cuban, generally American.

Non-Cuban military personnel & Cuban military personnel
Includes pictures with military personnel as determined by their attire and/or captions. On a few occasions, the families of military personnel are photographed and coded as military personnel.

Portrait
Includes pictures in which most of the frame is taken up by one or more people not engaged in an activity other than looking at the camera. These pictures occurred indoors and outdoors.

Education
Includes pictures with students seated in classrooms, orphans at an orphanage, and students at a reform school.
**People**

**Nationality**
A person’s nationality was coded if indicated in the caption. In instances where the caption did not indicate a person’s nationality, I coded it as “Cuban” if the caption identified the setting, location, and/or features of the photo to be Cuban. The nationalities that I coded for include the following: “American,” “Cuban,” “unknown,” and “mixed.”

**Distant group**
Pictures with people who are not the central focus of the picture, such as people strolling the streets, working in the fields, serving other people, or operating machinery are coded as “Distant group.”

**Miscellaneous**

**Cuban architecture**
If infrastructure is present in a photo, it is coded as having “Cuban architecture” if it does not possess classic Spanish colonial architectural elements, including arches, clay roofs, and ornate moldings. “Cuban architecture” includes rural houses and all infrastructure that was built after the 1898 war, like the Capitol building and high rise apartment buildings.

**Location tag**
Each picture has a “location tag” associated with it based on information from the caption and/or surrounding article text. Locations include the following: Cayo Coco, Mata Bay, Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve, Sierra del Cristal, Zapata Swamp, Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere, Zapata National Park, Monte Cabaniguan Wildlife Refuge, Trinidad, Cuba, Guanabo, Moa, San Juan y Martínez, Manicaragua, US, Veradero, Ciego de Ávila, Oriente, Bay of Pigs, Nuevitas, Key West, Guantánamo, Nicaro, Havana, Mariel, Baracoa, Ceiba del Agua, Sierra Maestra Bayamo, Camaguey, Sibanicu, Cienfuegos, Habana, Matanzas, Santiago, Santa Clara, Isle de Pines, San Juan Hill, Casa Blanca, Guanabacoa, Guanajay, Pinar del Rio, Vuelta Abajo, Cochinos Bay, Nipe Bay, New York, Vinales Valley, Consolción del Sur, and other.

**Technology**
Presence and type of technology are recorded for photos with the following items: bicycle, boat, brass mold, bulldozer, bus, tripod camera, camera, canons, car, helicopter, bicycle taxi, motorcycle, cart, railroad car, hoist, cigar cutter, crane, truck, crushing machine, diving board, diving suit, dump truck, dirt road, highway, electric wires, electric box, ferry, fishing boat, gun, hoe, industrial lighting, inner tube, kerosene lamp, life ring, machete, mechanical cutter, microphone, mop, motor scooters, movie screen, needle and thread, plane, ship, polariscope, refinery machinery, refrigerator, rifle, rocket, gun, row
boat, sailboat, scaffolding, construction supports, schooner, scuba equipment, smoke stack, stethoscope, surgery table and breathing machine, tank, telephone, telephone pole, television, tour bus, tractor, train, railroad, truck, video camera, wagon, wheelbarrow, wheelchair, and yacht.

**Manual labor/ Mechanized labor**
The type of labor involved in an activity is coded as either “Manual” or “Mechanized.” The former refers to labor without the help of machinery, like people moving sacks of flour and picking tobacco or sugar cane with their hands and/or a knife; the latter refers to labor with the help of machinery like a tractor or sugar cane press.
REFERENCES

Archives of the Cuba Company. College Park, MD: Special Collections at the University of Maryland.


