Masculinity and Nation in the Popular Fiction of the Spanish-American War: Kirk Munroe's *Forward, March!* (1899)

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Although the first accounts of the Spanish-American War in 1898 were written by journalists, including the novelist Stephen Crane, book-length memoirs such as Theodore Roosevelt's *The Rough Riders* (1899) and fiction novels such as Kirk Munroe's *Forward, March!* (1899) were not far behind. The war was quickly won but the battle over how to narrate, represent, and remember it raged in full force during the years that followed. The stakes were high: not only the question of foreign policy and America's right to control Caribbean territories, but also the definition of American nationhood itself seemed bound up with the issue of American men's performance in battle. Race was a major axis of debate and ideological pressure, as Amy Kaplan demonstrates in her discussion of Theodore Roosevelt's disparaging description of African American soldiers at the Battle of San Juan Hill in *Rough Riders*, but class was also important as a vector of ideological tension and containment.[1] Appearing at nearly the same time as Roosevelt's memoir, *Forward, March!* also narrates the exploits of the Rough Riders, but in a fictionalized form written for young readers and focusing on a fictional protagonist, Ridge Norris. A coming of age story staged in the theater of war, the novel interweaves the issue of manhood with a larger story of national honor, victory, and belonging. Precisely because it is written as an adventure story, and by definition accessible, emotionally engaging, and stereotyped, *Forward, March!* reveals the mechanisms that bound masculinity, nationalism, and militarism together in a combination that would profoundly influence twentieth-century American culture. In particular, the novel navigates the transition between earlier nineteenth-century notions of masculinity based on chivalry and self-restraint and a new definition emerging in the 1890s, favoring physical prowess, military experience, and active patriotism. In doing so, *Forward, March!* helped create a conflicted and contradictory masculinity that would inaugurate a century of imperial violence.

Nation and masculinity

The relationship between masculinity and the modern political invention called the "nation" has been very close from the start. While national identity is in principle gender-neutral, men have historically had a

more direct relationship to national citizenship than women. For example, when new nations were founded in Europe or the Americas, many classes of men could vote and participate as full citizens while women could not. In most cases, women would lose their citizenship by marrying a foreign national, while men conferred citizenship on their foreign brides. One explanation for why citizenship was initially regarded as more properly male than female has been linked to the role of military service to the new nation-state (Knouff 25). While previously soldiers had fought for money, for favors from a lord, or because of forced conscription, one of the defining features of the new nation state at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century was the notion of the citizen as soldier fighting for love of country (Singer 31). The citizen-soldier was an especially important symbol in the early years of the American Republic, as seen from the following toast made—with no irony—by John Jay's wife at an official ceremony in 1783: "May all our citizens be soldiers, and all our soldiers citizens" (qtd. in Keber 90). The fact that fusing soldiering with citizenship automatically excluded women from full enfranchisement did not strike Jay's wife as a problem or even a paradox reveals how closely the ideology of republicanism and militarism were intertwined with masculinity in the late eighteenth century (as principle, at least, if not always in fact, since few of the Founding Fathers were actually soldiers).[2]

The male monopoly on the rhetoric and iconography of the nation extends to other aspects of American self-definition as well. For example, the United States has traditionally been regarded as having been created exclusively by Founding *Fathers*.[3] Even if the nation is allegorized as a woman—such as Britannia or Columbia—its conception and birth is attributed exclusively to men. The most famous instance of this imagery is immortalized in Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, his short but powerful dedication speech at one of the nation's first military cemeteries. In this speech, Lincoln not only draws on existing imagery of the nation's founders as "fathers," he reworks the metaphor into one of the most memorable descriptions of the strange alchemy of nationalism ever articulated by a statesman. Returning again and again to the notion of "devotion," he creates an image of the nation as a living being "conceived" and "brought forth" by the founding fathers and subsisting on the dedication and devotion of its citizens. Attributing to "devotion" an almost magical agency, he describes the dead soldiers giving the "last full measure of devotion" so that the living could take "increased devotion" from their deaths (Lincoln). The trope evokes a kind of feedback loop or magic circle whereby willing deaths by patriots beget more patriots and keep the organism called the nation alive. Every step of this reproductive process is tacitly figured as exclusively male. Lincoln's speech, transforming the tragic slaughter at Gettysburg into meaningful and manly self-sacrifice, has framed the terms in which Americans have viewed military service for 150 years.

The Spanish-American War

Nevertheless, Lincoln's incantation did not wholly convince surviving veterans of the Civil War of the desirability of performing that bloody ritual again in their lifetime (Rotundo 238). The generation that fought the Civil War was notoriously skeptical of military ventures and kept the country at peace for the single longest stretch of its history, at least on the international arena (the Indian Wars of extermination and genocide continued unabated until 1924). The first foreign war that offered Americans an opportunity to demonstrate their devotion to their nation was the Spanish-American War of 1898, and young men leapt at it gladly. This was a short and relatively easy war with Spain, ostensibly to help Cuban revolutionaries liberate their island, except that the US ignored the revolutionaries when the war was over and signed a treaty with Spain giving it (America) control over Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.

Nevertheless, the Spanish-American War did generate a heated debate in the months leading up to it, with the Civil War generation often vehemently opposing it, and this debate was framed and articulated in explicitly gendered terms on every level.[4] First of all, those who pressed for war, so-called "jingoes," mainly younger men like Theodore Roosevelt (40 at the time), argued that America itself was like a young man who had reached adulthood and needed an outlet for his natural energies and an opportunity to show the world his prowess. A senator from Mississippi argued that war "teaches us devotion, self-abnegation, courage. . . . [I]t broadens our nature, and in my opinion, a wholesome war, like one for human liberty and human life, will have its purgatorial effect on this nation" (qtd. in Hoganson 73). Roosevelt also believed more specifically that American men also could use the experience of war as a counter-measure to the effeminizing tendencies of modern life (Bederman 192-96). War would toughen them up, provide opportunities to develop character, and above all, demonstrate men's essential and natural difference from women, who were entering universities and public life and seeming to break down the natural order of things with their mannish demands for civil rights. Up to now, argued supporters of the war, this kind of manly opportunity had been

offered by the frontier, but in 1893 the historian Frederick Jackson Turner had officially announced the end of the American frontier and its masculinizing influence at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Jingoes argued that American men needed to look abroad for new frontier experiences, and that war was an ideal arena for forging character. Roosevelt explicitly linked the war effort to the frontier by naming his volunteer cavalry the "Rough Riders," a name "long used" in popular novels to describe cowboys and "Western horsemen" of all kinds (Bederman 191).

Opposition to the war, often led by elder statesmen from the Civil War generation, also took the form of arguments about national manhood. In this version, America was like a mature man who did not need to prove anything to the world through a childish display of power. The anti-war position favored arbitration and diplomatic solutions, possibly even financial ones, such as buying Cuba from Spain. An editorial in the *Boston Journal* wrote: "An honorable nation, like a manly man, fights only when forced to fight" (qtd. in Hoganson 85). However, when an American battleship stationed in Havana Harbor to protect American interests and citizens sank as the result of an explosion, Americans were outraged and the jingoes prevailed. Investigations by the US and Spain drew different conclusions about the sinking of the *Maine*, one claiming the blast came from a mine outside the hull, and the Spanish concluding the explosion originated inside the ship and was purely accidental. In spite of lack of clear evidence of Spanish sabotage, many Americans felt that American honor was at stake and that a punitive response was necessary.

The issue of honor cannot be underestimated at this historical moment, and is, moreover, precisely the cultural category that links gender and national affairs more forcefully than any other. Honor was the touchstone of debate about the war, invoked by both jingoes and anti-interventionists. Honor was also the main category shaping the plots and worldviews of the many popular historical novels written about the South, where it provided a clear blueprint for male and female gender definitions as well as a clear set of values to distinguish Southern (and increasingly Western) American values from those of the mercantile North-East. According to the chivalric paradigm that placed honor at the center of its value-system, honor meant male power and protection of the weak, female purity and loyalty, and it represented a symbolic counter-weight to capitalism and its market-based logic. However, in the context of debate about foreign policy, honor was deployed to differentiate US moral superiority and gallantry from foreign cowardice, greed, and aggression. This dichotomy is explicitly staged in Munroe's novel.

War, nation, and narration

Kirk Munroe's *Forward, March!* shares with the historical romance of the time an obsessive preoccupation with honor and chivalry. However, unlike these other novels, which were by definition set in earlier times and trafficked heavily in nostalgia, *Forward, March!* is focused entirely on the present and specifically the war that had occurred just a year before the book's publication. It is an adventure story, using the war as context for the coming to manhood of Ridge Norris. The author, Kirk Munroe, was a journalist, writer, and pioneer conservationist best remembered for his young adult fiction, with titles like *The Golden Days of '49* (1889), *At War with Pontiac* (1895), and *With Crockett and Bowie* (1897). *Forward, March!* is a typical instance of this popular genre and lends itself well to an analysis of the cultural and ideological work that the novel as a form could perform around politically charged issues such as war.

The question that I wish to answer is not so much how the novel re-enchants and mystifies combat, which is fairly typical of the historical novel genre, but how it enchants and glamorizes that abstraction called "the nation," and what role gender plays in rendering this notion attractive and emotionally meaningful. If Benedict Anderson has convincingly shown that the nation is an imagined community, he confesses to be unable to account for why people are willing to kill and, more perplexingly, to die for that invention of their imagination. At the end of the first edition, Anderson writes: "I have tried to delineate the processes by which the nation came to be imagined[.] . . . But it is doubtful whether either social change or transformed consciousness, in themselves, do much to explain the *attachment* that people feel for the inventions of their imaginations—or, to return to a question raised at the beginning of this text—why people are ready to die for these inventions" (129). Munro's novel, linking these modern abstractions—nation, national honor, and patriotism—to a narrative of adventure and gender normativity, can help explain the particular meaning national identity, masculinity, and military service fused together to assume at the turn of the century (and which has endured in some form or another throughout the twentieth century).

There are two principle ways that war has been made attractive in narrative fiction: melodrama and adventure. The first method focuses on the seductive power and appeal of heroic self-sacrifice while the second

tends to ignore costs and consequences of combat to focus on the excitement and fun of warfare. *Forward, March!* falls clearly in the adventure category. Both kinds of pro-war writing typically present combat as an effective means of achieving manhood and Munroe's novel is no exception. Masculinity Studies scholars have shown that manhood is a particularly fraught concept, not only because it is a social construct, but also because it is conferred mainly by the recognition of other men (Kimmel 5, Rotundo 244-46). This has been particularly true since the 1890s. In contrast, according to Michael Kimmel and other historians, the Civil War generation possessed a different, more autonomous, conception of manhood that located it in moral character, self-restraint, and independence (Kimmel 58; Bederman 12). Men of this generation could generally judge for themselves if they were living in accordance with the standards of normative masculinity. However, the generation that came of age at the end of the century felt far more anxious about their masculinity. These reasons include changes in women's expectations and behavior, but more directly changes in the organization of professional life. More and more men were employees, therefore dependent on others, and lived a fully urban existence. Many social commentators worried in print about the emasculating effects of modern life, and the idea that men needed to become more rugged, by traveling West, for example, and engaging in what Theodore Roosevelt, himself a sickly bookish child, called "the strenuous life," became fashionable (Kimmel 57-61, Bederman 184-86). While Roosevelt preached physical exercise and manly pursuits such as hunting as a cure for the effects of modernity, other men looked to each other for affirmation and recognition of masculinity. The huge popularity of men's clubs, fraternities, and lodges, including organizations that explicitly modeled themselves on American Indian tribal iconography, such as the Improved Order of Red Men, is a direct symptom of these shifts in masculine definition (Nelson 183-88). In 1897 up to one in five American men belonged to a fraternal organization (Kimmel 114).

Forward, March! negotiates the transition between these two paradigms of masculinity, the older honor-based model and the Roosevelt-style "strenuous" model, searching for a synthesis between the two. Munroe himself, though only eight years older than Roosevelt, came of age just after the Civil War and grew up with the older honor-based model of manhood, yet his novel is a heterogeneous mix of both. It also engages with the new aspirations of women in the 1890s, as many historical novels did, by making the main love interest a lively and independent woman, to a certain carefully measured degree, though only to foreclose those aspirations by making her assume a thoroughly conventional role at the end.

Masculinity and gender trouble

The novel announces gender as its main concern from the very first page, where the protagonist, a likeable middle-class boy from New Orleans, is arranging a bowl of flowers. The danger to him, and to American society more generally, is made immediately clear to the reader, as his friend and potential love-interest, Spence, waits impatiently for him to finish his task so they can go riding. After thirty minutes, she finally leaves with another man, a rival and foil to Ridge Norris named Dodley, who has dropped by in the meantime. As they ride out, Dodley presses his advantage, telling Spence that he has always thought of Ridge as a "Miss Nancy sort of boy, who was always coddling sick kittens, and never would go hunting because he couldn't bear to kill things" (4).[5] Thus, Ridge's gender trouble is placed front and center in the novel's exposition scene, as a problem for the narrative to resolve.

However, the solution is more nuanced than what one might expect. Ridge is not going to become a gun-happy soldier and hunter. As a conservationist, Munroe disapproved of game hunting and sympathized thoroughly with the sentiment that hunting was a cruel destruction of wildlife. The gendering of this position, however, is made clear in these first pages when Spence passionately defends Ridge against Dodley's sneering remarks, and we see that a disapproval of hunting was regarded as a typically feminine stance. Part of Munroe's complex task then will be to show soldiering as noble and masculine but killing for sport as cruel and cowardly, a compromise position starkly at odds with beliefs about hunting at the time as both the older generation and the young jingoes felt that hunting was a thoroughly manly activity (Rotundo 227). The novel privileges a complex compromise that is offered as a modern synthesis of male and female sensibilities in which war is fun but harming animals is not. Significantly, this composite masculinity corresponds to the theory of military masculinity advanced by Aaron Belkin in *Bring Me Men*, a polemical study that disputes the scholarly consensus that military masculinity is based on a thorough disavowal of everything feminine. Instead, Belkin argues that military masculinity is "structured by a range of contradictions," and among these is the "complex relationship between the masculine and the unmasculine" (30). The purpose of blurring the boundaries between these seemingly different categories, according to Belkin, is to create identity

confusion that leaves the subject more receptive to the tasks that the military assigns him, including absolute obedience and a willingness to engage in violence against racialized others (38-46).

To continue with the problem of the protagonist, as the exposition establishes it, Ridge Norris is introduced as "somewhat of a disappointment to his family" (4). He has been reared in luxury, we are told, and has become somewhat spoiled. He has just been fired from a job secured for him by his father's influence for refusing to take orders. He wanted to be "asked in a gentlemanly way" instead (5). The text assures us that he is "honest and manly in his instincts" but "indolent, fastidious in his tastes, and apparently without ambition" (4). Ridge Norris is, in short, exactly the kind of young man jingoes believed needed a good war to set them straight and develop their manhood: of good "stock" (a WASP father) and plenty of potential but effeminized by the comforts of modern civilization. Symptoms of gender trouble include Ridge's devotion to music and flowers, dangerous past-times for a young man in an age of emerging hetero/homosexual definition (Sedgwick 1-2), but also his failure to adapt to the public world of work which has sent him back to the domestic sphere. On the other hand, he is physically fit and an excellent horseman, having recently won a championship in Japan. His skill at horsemanship allows him to aspire to manliness by association with the newly popularized figure of the cowboy, also combining chivalry and physical prowess, but his feminine characteristics are clearly in the way.

Two warring tendencies, a feminine and a masculine, are further emphasized by Ridge's background: a mother with foreign blood (and foreign languages, which she has taught Ridge to speak fluently) and a New England WASP businessman father. Like many American boys of a certain class, Ridge Norris has travelled around the world, and has returned to the US with a heightened sense of appreciation for it. His patriotism and "pride in his native land" is described as a product of his experiences abroad, but is also clearly a natural extension of his "honest and manly . . . instincts" (4). In fact, patriotism, or what we could also call devotion to nation, is the affective site where experience and instinct meet and co-mingle, allowing the boundaries between the private and the public to momentarily dissolve. This will be the site where Ridge's professional and private troubles will be resolved, including his gender trouble.

To sum up thus far, Ridge Norris is introduced as a promising young man, with good "instincts," but corrupted by his comfortable childhood. This was the quintessential concern of late-nineteenth-century pundits, who worried that young men were getting soft and indolent—in a word, feminized—by modernity. Ridge's problem specifically is twofold: he lacks professional drive and the discipline required to get along in a hierarchical workplace, and he seems to lack sexual drive (as evidenced by attention to flower arranging instead of his female friend), hence threatening to fail to reproduce society in two key ways. That war is indeed the right solution to Ridge's problems is made obvious by the novel's ending with his marriage to Spence a mere three months later. We are left to infer that his newfound ability to take orders, as acquired by three months of military service and discipline, will solve the problem of his professional advancement as well. Thus, the military is shown to serve as good training for the hierarchical and competitive world of business.

The fact that his coming to sexual maturity is linked to his war experience is underscored by his wearing of his uniform during his wedding. If at the beginning of the text Ridge and Spence are just two private individuals, they are clearly defined members of society at the moment they wed, as she also wears her nurse's uniform to the wedding. Finally, if Ridge is too feminine at the beginning of the text, busy with his flowers, and Spence is potentially too masculine, riding off impatiently with another man, they have assumed perfectly conventional and properly differentiated gender roles at the end of the novel, married as soldier and nurse.

The novel tries to answer the question: how does a flower-arranging Miss Nancy kind of boy become a military hero and properly mated husband in the space of three months? The answer, in a word, is: war. More specifically, he passes a series of trials, tests, encounters, and adventures that allow his male "instincts" to take over from his indolent habits. The plot of the novel has him join the Rough Riders and be sent on a secret spying mission to Cuba, where he proves his ingenuity, determination, and courage. At the same time, he endures physical hardship, including exhaustion, thirst, hunger, a night alone in the jungle, an escape from jail, and a nearly fatal illness. More important, however, are his tests of character, in which he proves not only his courage and discipline, but also his moral sense and honor.

In fact, Ridge's most important characteristic is his chivalry, which includes a natural compassion and protectiveness of the weak, as well as a highly developed sense of what is sportsmanlike and honorable in warfare. He proves his compassion by his care of his horse, his assistance to a Cuban mother and her children (one of whom infects him with a tropical fever for his trouble), his hesitation to shoot a man who clearly wants to kill him,

and, most notably, by his compassionate treatment of a Spanish prisoner of war. This incident is probably the most important because it is the most extreme example of chivalry. The Spaniard has been captured by Ridge's black Cuban guide while he slept and left trussed up, wounded, and thirsty, as a treat for Ridge to find and execute upon waking. Instead, Ridge immediately unties the prisoner, gives him water, and cares for his wounds. The bloodthirsty Cuban is so upset by this clemency that he tries to kill the Spaniard himself during the night. Although an enemy combatant, the Spaniard is himself a man of honor and chivalry and does not run away but in fact agrees to help Ridge in his mission. The bond between the two honorable men, though on opposite sides of the war, trumps the bond between Ridge and the black Cuban, who are ostensibly on the same side, because the racially othered Cuban is depicted as little more than a sadistic savage. Here we see clearly the vicious racialism of the turn of the century, which Munroe reproduces uncritically, using the Cuban as a dramatic foil to Norris's more civilized attitude of kindness and restraint.

Norris's unwillingness to kill except as a last resort links him to the Civil War generation, largely skeptical of war as a solution to the Cuban crisis (though Norris is actually quite enthusiastic about the war). It also links him to Munroe's conservationist values and disapproval of hunting for pleasure. The most sorrowful moment in the book by far is reserved for the death of Norris's horse, which is mourned far more than any human. Norris's dislike of killing, furthermore, also links him to his future bride, Spence, who, as we have seen earlier, is horrified by game hunting. In other words, Munroe has his hero negotiate a fine line between different late-nineteenth-century masculinities, avoiding the danger of being a Miss Nancy boy or sissy by being brave and resourceful, but also avoiding the crude gun-happy Dodley type of manhood seen at the beginning of the novel by being kind and empathetic. Munroe also makes Ridge more refined than the boisterous and almost child-like Rough Riders, twice compared to schoolboys at play (16, 80), but tough enough to survive alone in the jungle—even at night—like a real frontiersman.

In order to better define Norris's masculinity, which is, as I have argued, a compromise formation that negotiates both feminine and masculine traits (as defined at the time), Munroe gives Norris several foils in the novel. The bloodthirsty Cuban is only the most dramatic of these. A more subtle foil is the conventionally masculine and smug Dodley, who displays his egotism and stupidity by a series of blunders as he tries his utmost to get Norris into trouble. For example, after telling Norris to report to camp, which Norris promptly does, the foolish Dodley, unable to find him again, reports him as a deserter. A second mistaken report sent by Dodley denouncing Norris, who has by now been given an important secret mission, earns him a demotion to a recruiting station and the contempt of his superior officer. In this way, Munroe critiques normative masculinity as blindly aggressive and overly competitive in contrast to Norris's ability to enter into relation with other men and help even an enemy.

Another of Norris's foils is Silas, a soldier whose failed attempts to aggressively subdue a high-spirited horse allow Ridge to demonstrate the efficacy of treating a horse with kindness in order to tame it. This example allows Munroe to distance Norris from another aspect of normative masculinity at the time—a brute domination over animals—and earns him the admiration of Theodore Roosevelt himself. Norris's consideration and skill with animals will continue to define him in the novel as a young man of superior moral qualities.

A final foil later in the novel is an unpatriotic boat captain who illustrates the fact that devotion to nation is hardly a universal trait among Americans and so all the more precious in young men like Norris. In this scene, the boat captain refuses to aid Norris in delivering a message that would help avert the sinking of several American warships, claiming that his only allegiance is to the owners of his ship. The outraged Norris not only denounces the captain as a coward and traitor to his country, but also commandeers the ship at gunpoint. Compared to a pirate by the narrator, Norris displays in this scene a willingness to impose his will by force, if in a just cause, that puts on display his newfound manliness and transformation from the indecisive lay-about at the start of the novel.

The original edition of the book included four illustrations, with each one chosen strategically in order to portray Ridge's main character tests as he negotiates the fine line towards a balance between the older nineteenth-century model of masculinity based on self-control and the new one identified with "vigor and prowess" (Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire" 662). First is the encounter with the horse trainer Silas, who is thrown and defeated by the horse that Ridge will tame by a combination of kindness and expert horsemanship. The illustration depicts Silas on the ground, looking around "as one who is dazed" after being knocked over by the animal, opening an opportunity for Ridge to display his skill at mastering the spirited animal by befriending it. This

incident warrants an illustration because it arguably serves tacitly also as an analogy for how many Americans conceived of the US imperial project, namely, as one of friendly domination, in contrast to what was widely perceived as Spain's haughty and brutal administration of its colony.

The second illustration depicts the moral test, where the black Cuban Dionysus's cruelty is contrasted to Ridge's chivalry and compassion. In keeping with nineteenth-century representational codes seeped in the minstrel tradition, the black man is depicted as both callous and comic, urging Norris, "now you shoot" the prisoner, as he stands akimbo, dressed in torn pants and shirt, and wearing a large floppy hat. The disarray of his clothing serves to code the black Cuban as dirty and unkempt, key signifiers in a dichotomy that juxtaposed American hygiene to foreign filth and disorder, further justifying American imperial intervention.[6]

The third illustration is of the Cuban family that ends up infecting him, illustrating the other aspect of Ridge's chivalry, that of helping the weak. This illustration is important ideologically because it allows Norris's boyish adventure to assume the appearance of a humanitarian mission, again feeding into an American desire to see itself as a kind benefactor to Cuba rather than a colonizer. The incident also further reinforces the association of Cubans with dirt and disease, requiring American imperial purification.

And finally, there is the frontispiece showing the Rough Riders shooting at their invisible enemy, "invisible" because the Spaniards' smokeless muskets made it harder to see where they were as they fired. Ridge has rejoined his unit at this point and is fighting conventionally after several weeks of espionage. This illustration shows Ridge's courage as a regular soldier, which Munroe clearly felt was necessary to complement the less noble activities linked to spying and deception that Norris's mission involved, and also feeds into the myth that the Rough Riders liked to propagate about themselves that they could overcome superior numbers and technological advantage through their sheer spirit and manly grit.

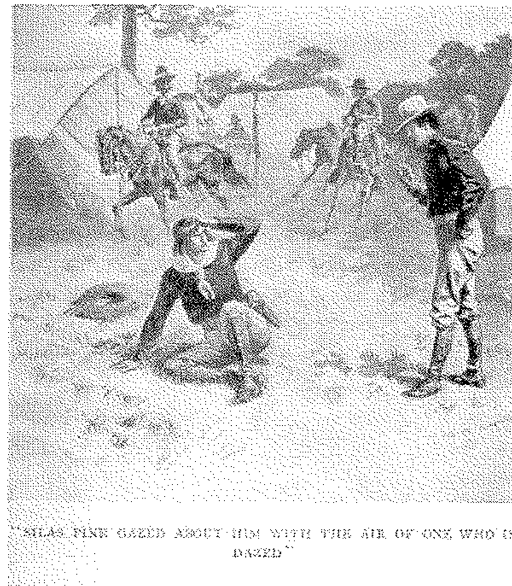

Fig. 1. Ridge's first foil, the failed horse tamer Silas

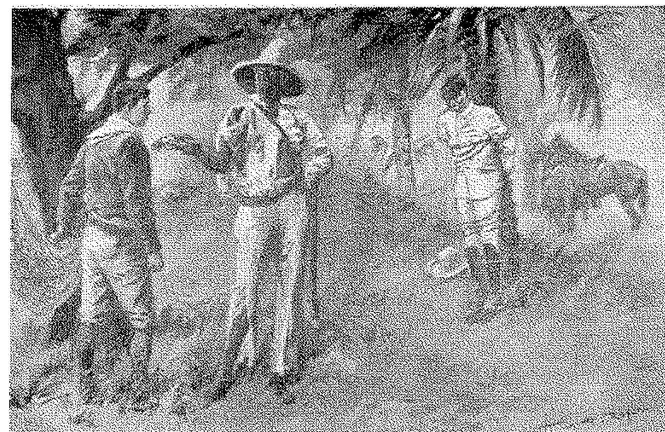

Fig. 2. Dionysus, the blood-thirsty black Cuban

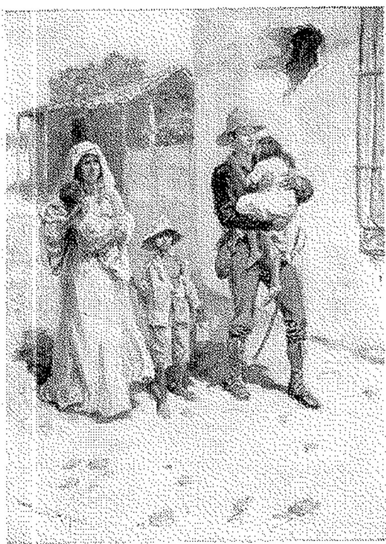

Fig. 3. The infected Cuban family

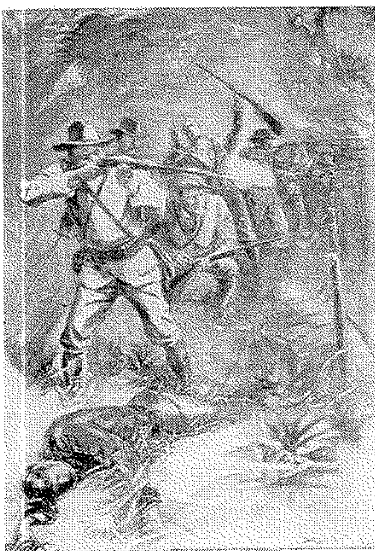

Fig. 4. Ridge Norris fighting with the Rough Riders

In fact, although most of Ridge's adventures require his Spanish language skills and ingenuity, combat occupies a special place in the narrative. Despite Munroe's own dislike of killing animals, he is able to describe the killing of men in as glorifying terms as any jingo. Hence, the first battle in Cuba is a "baptism of fire," a term implying a sacred initiation, as well as an exciting "bully fight" (83). "Aren't you glad we're here!" Ridge exults to his friend Rollo. The recklessly suicidal charge up San Juan Hill is described as a "deed of heroism that will never be forgotten as long as the story of the American soldier is told" (82-83). More importantly, Norris reacts in a distinctly sexualized way the first time he is fired upon. With "every drop of his blood at fighting heat" he sits "erect" in his saddle and fires back "until every shot in his magazine was exhausted" (48). The trope of combat as sex is a convention of war literature associated with later wars of the twentieth century (most notably the Vietnam War, with writers like Robin Moore) but we see its germs in this scene.

The sexualization of combat may also help explain how the novel expects readers to accept that Ridge is transformed from a sissy indifferent to girls to a marriage-ready groom in a space of three months. To be sure, the descriptions of the battle scenes are by far the most effective pro-war parts of the book, in the sense that they are rendered consistently as exciting rather than frightening or dangerous. Casualties are mentioned only in relatively antiseptic ways, emphasizing the Americans' manly stoicism, even as they perish. For example, the suicidal charge of San Juan Hill is depicted as a display of manly grit and will power: "With carbines held across their breasts, they simply moved steadily forward without a halt or a backward glance. Behind them the slope was dotted with their dead and wounded, but the survivors took no heed of their depleted ranks" (87).

The Rough Riders are not even shooting in this scene: they are simply marching into the face of death, proving their discipline and traditional military courage. Here the novel evokes the ideal of the heroic self-sacrifice (such as Lincoln eulogized at Gettysburg) in order to sanctify the Rough Riders as true soldiers and not mere adventurers. The suicidal march on the hill is described as successful, the result of "sheer pluck and dauntless determination," and the soldiers cheer and exult on the top of the hill (88).

Another key trope of pro-war literature is that of soldiers as brothers, a family or fraternity. The cultural work of this conceit is more complex than it might seem at first. More than just intense male bonding, brotherhood in arms implies the temporary dissolution of class and race

differences. Thus, military service is often represented, paradoxically, considering the importance of rank and hierarchy, as a democratic institution that brings men of different backgrounds together. In the Vietnam War the main thrust of this trope pertained to race, but in the Spanish-Civil war, the cultural problem that needed most urgent containment was class.[7] This explains the key supporting role given in the novel to Ridge's friend Rollo, a young millionaire who refuses to be given a commission purely based on his family background, and who enlists as a private, as Ridge himself does.[8] Rollo also offers his personal yacht to the government for the war effort, and when the offer is declined, he ends up lending it to the Red Cross. Rollo's simple generosity and natural chivalry, mirroring Ridge's, is meant to represent the upper class as patriots at a moment when many Americans suspected the rich of having no devotion to anything besides money and their own interests. Although Rollo could buy himself a commission or could simply avoid the war entirely, his willingness to place himself in danger and to serve on equal footing with the meanest soldiers demonstrates his devotion to his country and exonerates his entire class according to the typological logic of popular novels, in which characters always represent types or groups. In fact, Rollo is presented at the end of the novel as very nearly dying in the act of saving the American flag, a gesture that is intended to definitely prove both his patriotism and his selfless courage.

As was mentioned earlier, patriotism is the cultural category where private character and public or national interests intersect in the most emotionally charged and immediate way. It is in fact a concept—a "political emotion"—that inherently undermines the distinction between public and private.[9] In the case of Ridge Norris, patriotism is both a natural instinct and a learned preference for his country through the experience of travel. In the novel, moreover, patriotism serves the crucial ideological function of rendering nationalism vital and personal. The most emotionally intense moments of the book, clustered around the climactic ending, are all moments of patriotic feeling. For example, when he steps upon an American ship, though disguised as a Spanish soldier, he can "barely contain his joyful emotions at finding himself once more among his countrymen and under his country's flag" (71). A few hours later, when he witnesses the meeting of the Navy warships and the army transport ships bringing soldiers, he watches for an hour "with swelling heart this wonderful meeting of his countrymen" (73). Soon after he is again "thrilled with the sight" of American warships (75) and once more his heart "swells with loving pride" when he sees the white and red guidons of the "on-sweeping column" of men (79). Having spent the entire novel utterly stoic and unfazed by anything except the death of his horse, now he "could have wept for very joy" when he sees his own regiment parading towards the battlefield (79). In this not-too-subtle way, the novel models for its young readers the appropriate emotions that should accompany patriotic displays while tacitly suggesting that patriotism is a natural, spontaneous, and involuntary emotion, an affective "swelling" not unlike an erection.[10]

Although the main focus of the novel is the fine calibration of a model of masculinity that navigates older and newer values, the representation of women plays an important supporting role in this process. There are four main female characters: Ridge's mother, his sister, his girlfriend, and the fiancée of the Cuban revolutionary he befriends. The two love interests are given fairly important if secondary roles, while the mother and sister are depicted in a conventionally stereotyped way. None are negatively portrayed (Munroe is too chivalrous to stoop to such a level), but the mother and sister are rendered ridiculous due to their class-consciousness, their general ignorance, and their preoccupation with rank and uniform. This is a source of humor that emerges every time the mother is mentioned, for example. When she travels to meet him just before his deployment abroad, the narrator relates: "The mother's anxiety to meet her son was almost equaled by her desire to see how handsome he would look in an officer's uniform. Concerning this she had formed a mental picture of epaulettes, gold lace, brass buttons, plumes, and a sword; for had she not seen army officers in Paris?" (21). The fact that the mother does not know the difference between a French and an American officer, and that she imagines her son wearing feathers and gold lace, codes her as both ignorant and laughable.

A more insidious consequence of this consistent depiction of women as preoccupied with uniforms, rank, and accessories is to make women's relationship to the military seem superficial. As a result, their relationship to citizenship itself seems mediated and indirect, as if they were incapable of understanding nation and patriotism except through decorations and outward signs of rank and status. The two other women in the story, love interests of Ridge and his Cuban friend, respectively, also appear to have a mediated relationship to their country, channeled through their relationship to their male partner. Hence the Cuban woman who helps Ridge escape from prison does it mainly to help her lover, and Spence helps her country by being a nurse, caring first for anonymous soldiers and then

devoting herself entirely to Ridge. Although both are brave and not domestic, acknowledging the new ambitions and claims of women in the 1880s, as popular historical novels tended to do, they are still given secondary and supporting roles in keeping with their "natural" subordination to men and their activities. In this way we see how the novel negotiates cultural developments and ideological tensions, such as women's greater independence and claims to a public role, ultimately seeking to reconcile and contain them with safe boundaries that maintain male dominance.

Ironically, Spence's final subordination to Ridge is accomplished by his seeming emasculation by illness. This is a complex final development in the plot that serves to naturalize conventional sexual roles and exorcise the specter of racial contamination. His last chivalric display, that of helping the Cuban refugee mother and her children, had caused Ridge to contract a fever and come dangerously close to dying. In this way, Munroe tacitly acknowledges the huge toll that tropical diseases had on American forces, many more men dying of illness than in combat during the short war with Spain in Cuba. The result is a moving scene of Ridge near death in a stiflingly hot—pestilent—Cuban hospital with an attentive Spence at his side, a tableau that performs a multi-layered cultural and ideological function. First of all, it re-domesticates the soldier and allows him to enter into relation with the potential wife as an object of her solicitous care, establishing the proper gender roles of each. Secondly, there is a racial or ethnic component to this operation, since Ridge has become so altered by his combat experience on the frontier represented by Cuba that he is assumed to be Spanish by the American troops he encounters. In a comically literalized reworking of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, where the American must first go native by adopting the manners of the Indians in order to survive, Ridge has also gone native and begun to resemble the darker Spanish enemy. The near-fatal fever thus serves to whiten and re-civilize him. Thirdly, it permits the woman to witness the stoicism of the young warrior and to experience something of the war's affective intensity in experiencing his near death.[11] Finally, this near death experience brings the novel to a satisfying dramaturgical climax while choreographing the last affective maneuvers that allow Ridge and Spence to assume properly domestic roles in anticipation of their future married life.

To conclude, Kirk Munroe's novel *Forward, March!* offers a powerful nexus of national, gender, and war experience in order to create an emotionally fleshed out narrative of national and individual coming of age through combat. The myth created by Theodore Roosevelt, and propagated by jingoistic fiction such as this novel, was that war experience was an effective means of achieving manhood at a time when masculinity seemed to be in danger as a result of modernization and feminism. War was also presented as an ideal arena in which to exercise one's natural patriotism, a political affect that yoked an older chivalric paradigm which commanded authority across the political spectrum to a new imperialistic ambition. Recalling how eighteenth-century novels made sensibility into a new standard of social hierarchy, a character trait that distinguished natural aristocrats from natural boors and moral monsters but one that could also presumably be developed and reinforced by selective novel reading, popular jingoistic fiction assumed that patriotism was both an instinct and an attitude that could be taught through modeling and narrative empathy. Young adult fiction became the privileged medium for teaching such public values and political emotions through its complex deployment of normative, pathologized, and idealized gender performances. At stake was a fine recalibration of masculinity that would tie national identity to desirable gender performance and offer boys an emotionally engaging lesson in how to be a man at the dawn of the age of American imperialism.

The new masculinity proposed by Munroe's novel was a composite of seemingly contradictory social identities: it combined gentlemanly ideals of chivalry with a new physically rugged and combat-ready body, and it short-circuited class division by combining aristocratic and democratic values. The result, as always, was an impossible amalgam that could exist only on the pages of popular fiction, but it performed the crucial ideological task of preparing young men for an imperialistic and militaristic national project. One memoirist wrote, "I cannot separate in my own memory the bands and cheering of '98 . . . and manifest destiny in an expectant world, from the extravagant romanticism of the shallow, unphilosophical, unpsychological novels we had all been reading." He continues by insisting that no one will understand America of the time without understanding how the "school-of-Scotts" novels of the period were "real determinants of inner life for readers brought up in the eighties and nineties" (qtd. in Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire" 660). This analysis has shown how at least one such novel fused national and sexual development into an emotionally and ideologically charged narrative of war and adventure that helped usher in a century of global American militarism.

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Notes

[1] For discussions of class tensions, see Kaplan, "Black and Blue" (219-36), and Bederman (17). For a discussion of class tensions and the stereotype of the "dude," or effeminate Eastern wealthy man, see Hoganson (118-23).

[2] There has been a considerable amount of new scholarly interest and research on the relationship between masculinity and early modern citizenship. See, for example, Blom, Hagemann, Hall, eds., *Gendered Nations* (2000); Dudink, Hagemann, and Tosh, eds., *Masculinities in Politics and War* (2004); Dudink, Hagemann, Clark, eds., *Representing Masculinity: Male Citizenship in Modern Western Culture* (2007); and Hegemann, Mattele, and Rendall, eds., *Gender, War and Politics* (2010).

[3] Only at the end of the nineteenth century did the legend of Betsy Ross emerge to create a narrative of a "mother" of the nation. See Testi, *Capture the Flag: The Stars and Stripes in American History* (18-19).

[4] A full discussion of this debate can be found in Hoganson (68-87).

[5] See Rotundo for a discussion of the term "Miss Nancy," and for late-nineteenth-century fears about effeminate men (272, 184-96).

[6] For an extensive discussion of the link between images of dirt and American colonial interventions, see Belkin (125-72).

[7] See note 1.

[8] This character is clearly meant to represent the several Ivy League men that Roosevelt chose for the Rough Riders in order to show that well-educated upper-class men (like himself) could hold their own among bronco riders and rough Western types.

[9] For a theoretical discussion of political emotions, see Janet Staiger et al., *Political Emotions: New Agendas in Communication* (2010).

[10] Love of country serves as a kind of gauge of character and specifically of honor in the novel as well as a means to classify the different races depicted. The highest category of man is the patriot, and the book proves willing to admire the Spanish and Cuban patriot as much as the American. However, a further refinement and differentiation is made through the related category of chivalry. The Spanish prove superior to the Cubans in this regard. They are both patriotic and chivalrous, while the Cubans are patriotic but not nearly as noble as the Spanish. For example, when the Americans have destroyed a Spanish warship, the Cubans fire upon the Spanish soldiers in the water, much to the Americans' disapproval, who stop this "cowardly" slaughter and gallantly rescue the Spanish men. In this way, Munroe tacitly justifies the Americans' decision after the Spanish surrender to cut the Cuban revolutionaries out of the peace agreement, on the implicit grounds that Cubans are not morally fit to govern themselves.

[11] See Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire" for a discussion of the importance of a female spectator to male displays of military prowess in the historical novel of the 1890s (675-80).

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Communities in Anonymity:
The Remarkable Confidence of Modern Nations

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The assumption that nation-states are the products of modernity has become, as Caren Kaplan notes, "a commonplace of our time" (1). Though historians may differ over the exact moment of nationalism's birth, it has become a widely held conviction that nation-states were formed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, in the wake of the American and the French revolutions (Smith, *Nationalism* 1). Influenced by the Enlightenment and Western liberalism, nationalism is claimed to have appeared as an inclusive and liberating force: as Anthony D. Smith argues, for instance, contrary to the violent outbursts of national sentiment since about the mid-nineteenth century, which already signal the decline of the modern nation, nationalism proclaimed the right of people to determine their destinies (*Nationalism* 1). The nation-state was "intrinsic to the nature of the modern world" (3), as Smith points out: conceived as a rational, inclusive, and democratic entity, it embodied the ideals of Western modernity.

A number of social scientists and literary critics, however, challenged this belief by calling our attention to the inequalities based on gender and race, for instance, which remain unaddressed in the historical discourse of nationalism. Especially in the 1980s and 1990s critics argued that "*the* Western nation" is yet another highly problematic grand narrative, one of the central sites of hegemonic masculinities. As Kaplan claims, for example, "[f]rom its very inception . . . as excentric subjects, women have had a problematic relationship to the modern nation-state and its construction of subjectivity" (1). Issues such as citizenship for women, the position of racialized ethnicities, and nonheteronormative sexualities in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western societies question the narrative of the modern nation as an inclusive and democratic ideal. Critics who take a postmodernist stance, such as Kaplan and Homi K. Bhabha, for instance, argue that the modern nation has never been a seamlessly inclusive entity, which later disintegrated due to its blending "with the darker forces of fascism, racism, and anti-Semitism" (Smith, *Nationalism* 2). Relying on the theories of Jacques Derrida, Fredric Jameson, and David Harvey, among others, these scholars claim that the lack that was hidden by national master narratives was contained *within* the contradictory logic of modernity (Kaplan 2).