

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

*This Style of Plaster Will Cure All Their Wounds* (Political Cartoon)

AN ASSIGNMENT SUBMITTED TO

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In the 1890s, the idea of imperialism and of creating an empire for America was gaining strength from a large number of followers. Reasons given for expansion included economical, religious, territorial, racial superiority, and the idea of superiority over the Western Hemisphere. Some people also wanted to expand so as to preserve natural resources in the United States and exhaust the resources of other smaller and weaker nations. However, while there was a strong drive to expand by many, there were others who felt that further expansion was needless and that the exploitation of weaker countries was wrong. During President Grover Cleveland's second term in office, from 1893 – 1897, he had the opportunity to add Hawaii to the United States, but decided against it because he did not believe in needless expansion.

Yellow Journalists, which at the time could be called imperialists, were responsible for pushing America into the Spanish – American war. It began when a letter that was written by the Spanish ambassador to the United States, DaLome, directed towards the Spanish embassy in Cuba was illegally intercepted and published in one of the gossip papers. The content of the letter included criticism by the ambassador of the U.S. government and of President McKinley. Then, as fate would have it, the U.S.S. Maine accidentally exploded in Cuban waters. The gossip magazines quickly pushed for the conclusion that Spain had blown up the U.S. ship, when it would have been more likely that if it was not an accident, that Cuban Revolutionaries had blown up the ship in an effort to gain U.S. support in their struggle for independence.

The political cartoon, entitled *This Style of Plaster Will Cure All Their Wounds*, contends that after the war began, people in the United States started to see that the Spanish were more civilized than the Cubans. In this new light, it portrays the Cubans as being black, so as to depict the growing sense of inferiority that Americans were starting to see in the Cubans. It contends that much of the internal fighting that was going on between the Cubans was pointless and that all that was required to end their bickering was for the United States to give them money, believing that that was all that the Cuban people were really after. This cartoon portrays and alludes to the idea that poor Cubans had fought for their independence because they were mistreated and remained poor under Spanish rule, but that they welcomed the United States, which was a richer country at the time to give them more money to live a better life. The issue of ruling over Cuba divided the United States. Imperialists wanted to rule over Cuba because they viewed Cubans as being inferior, but on the opposite end, anti-imperialists did not want to rule over Cuba because they considered them to be inferior. Eventually, in 1902, Cuba added the *Platte amendment* to their Constitution, which made the United States a quasi-protector over Cuba, providing America with a sphere of influence over Cuban politics.