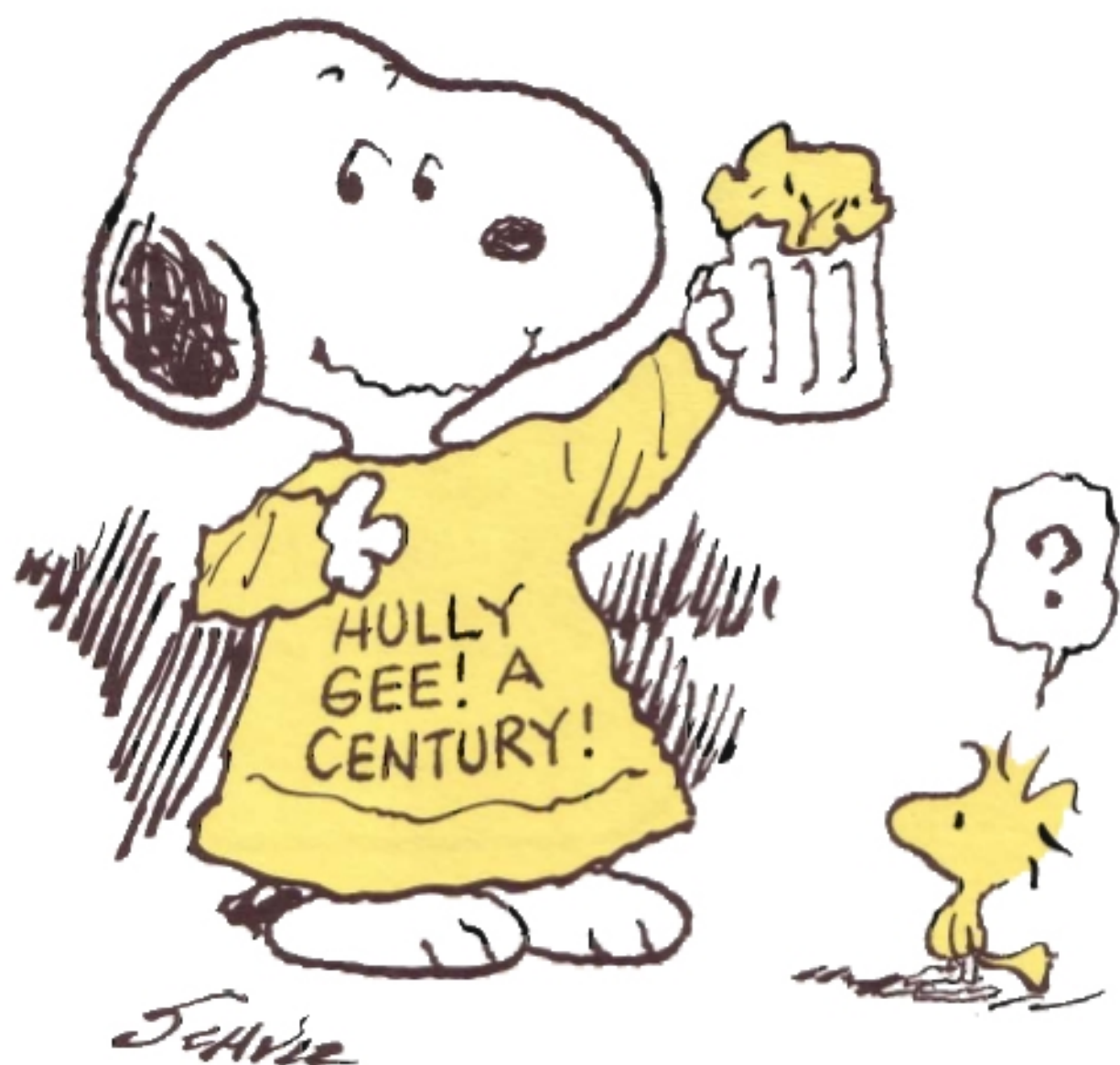


NOVEMBER 1995 • VOLUME 2 • NO. 3

inks

CARTOON AND COMIC ART STUDIES



of characteristics, it is a type of mass communication, an art form, and a business.

The enthusiastic public response to early newspaper comic strips is fascinating to consider a century later, when the idea of communicating via cyberspace is commonplace. The articles that follow offer several perspectives and range from an examination of the Yellow Kid's evolution to a look at the impact of American comic strips in Asia. In order to devote more space to perennial topics, several departments that are usually published have been omitted. Resources, reviews, and bibliography will return in volume 3, number 1.

Inks is now indexed in three publications: *ARTbibliographies Modern*, *BIA/Bibliography of the History of Art*, and the *MIA International Bibliography*. The access provided by these indices increases considerably the journal's scholarly usefulness.

This issue completes the second year of *Inks: Cartoon and Comic Art Studies*, a good time to evaluate what the journal has accomplished and where improvements might be made. Readers are invited to send their comments and suggestions to the editor.

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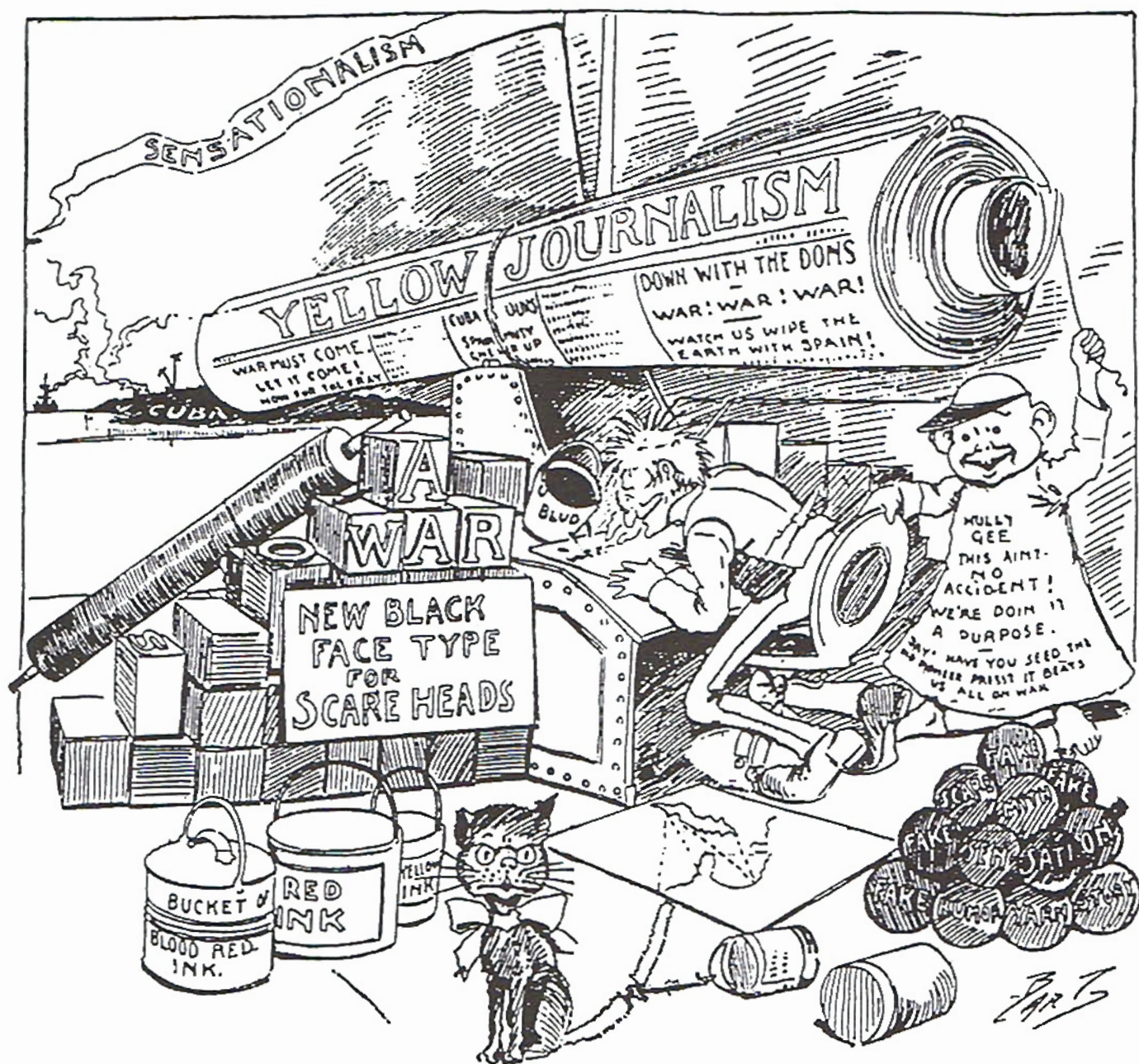


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Hully Gee, It's



WAR HAS BEEN DECLARED

The Fearless Yellow Journals Open Up Operations on the Enemy.

Bart [Charles Lewis Bartholomew], "War Has Been Declared:
The Fearless Yellow Journals Open Up Operations on the Enemy,"
Minneapolis Journal, 25 February 1898, 1.

s a WAR!!!

The Yellow Kid and the Coining of “Yellow Journalism”

BY MARK D. WINCHESTER

The phrase yellow journalism is often said to have been coined in the late nineteenth century to describe sensationalism in Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst's newspapers. Some have suggested that the term stems from the controversies surrounding their bitter struggles over Richard Felton Outcault's Yellow Kid.¹ Accounts of the derivation of the phrase are widespread in various dictionaries and histories (such as chronicles of journalism, cartoon art, and the Spanish-American War of 1898). Most sources note a connection between yellow journalism and the Yellow Kid, but there are several arguments for alternate origins of the phrase, including links with the “yellow peril,” “yellow fellow,” and “yellow-backed pamphleteering.” The alternate arguments do not deny that the Yellow Kid later became identified with yellow journalism, but they claim that the phrase was inspired by another phenomenon and later with the character. While these theories may have some merit, none are accurate.

The phrase yellow journalism developed as a direct result of the controversies between Pulitzer's *New York World* and Hearst's *New York Journal* over Outcault's Yellow Kid. By early 1897, yellow journalism was coined as a descriptive phrase to characterize New York's sensational newspapers, but it was not the phrase of choice nor was it differentiated from several other expressions in use

at the time. The introduction of the phrase followed the rise in popularity of the comic strip character in late 1896, but the term did not see widespread usage until the *World* and *Journal* published sensational reactions to the 15 February 1898 sinking of the battleship *Maine*.

The events of 1898 gave new meaning to the concept of sensationalism in newspapers and to yellow journalism. The sinking of the battleship *Maine* was an occasion for the *New York World* and *New York Journal* to churn out extra editions with shrieking headlines, questionable news items, and an ample supply of illustrations. The newspapers warned that the United States was in danger of going to war with Spain over the incident and suggested immediate and decisive action as the only alternative. Many newspapers published editorial cartoons that commented on and criticized Spain or the war hysteria, but a few newspapers further disparaged the conduct of the sensational newspapers as reminiscent of the Yellow Kid's antics. Editorial cartoonists contributed images of the Yellow Kid (often with the label “yellow journalism” somewhere on his person) and characterized the *New York World* and *New York Journal* as being as brutish, reckless and greedy as their favorite cartoon son.

With the phrase yellow journalism and the various theories, there is some question as to the significance of the color yellow and its symbolic

associations. The color suggests a large number of images, qualities and virtues such as energy, fire, gold, harvest, heavenly gates, light, purity, radiance, saintliness, sun, and wealth.² The "debased symbolism" of the color includes references to negative attributes and flaws, including ambition, arrogance, avarice, betrayal, cowardice, craftiness, decay, hypocrisy, illness, inconstancy, jealousy, sensationalism, and treachery.³ By the time the Yellow Kid had made his first newspaper appearance on 17 February 1895 (and first appearance in his yellow nightshirt on 5 January 1896), there were already several established uses of "yellow" as a pejorative adjective. The color was associated with cowardice in 1856 and jealousy as early as 1598.⁴ Two of the alternate origin arguments recounted here include imagery of the color "yellow." Yet, if the phrase yellow journalism was derived from these connotations, its use should have been more immediate and widespread when this type of journalism was identified in the mid-1890s rather than to follow the rise in popularity of the Yellow Kid in late 1896.

The "yellow peril" argument was published in *The Reader's Encyclopedia*, defining the "yellow press" as:

Sensationalism and jingoistic newspapers or journalism. The name arose in the United States about 1898 in consequence of scaring articles on the "yellow peril." Other accounts say the allusion was originally to the color of paper used by cheap newspapers.⁵

A later version of this work, *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, retained the phrase "yellow press," but revised the definition to correspond to the Yellow Kid theory of origin:

The sensationalistic newspapers. The name arose in the United States when W. R. Hearst's *Journal*, during the circulation battle with Pulitzer's *World*, introduced a comic picture feature called "The Yellow Kid." This rivalry was dubbed "yellow journalism" and came to be characterized by scare headlines, sensational articles, lavish illustrations, comic features, Sunday supplements, etc.⁶

Joyce Milton reintroduced several of the "yellow" arguments in her recent book, *The Yellow Kids: Foreign Correspondents in the Heyday of Yellow Journalism*. Milton suggests that the "yellow peril" inspired the creation of the Yellow Kid, which in turn inspired the phrase yellow journalism.

Outcault made the kid bald, with vaguely Asian features, no doubt intending to lampoon the

yellow peril hysteria that had erupted the previous year in the wake of the Sino-Japanese war, when Kaiser Wilhelm had warned that Western civilization was about to be swallowed up by *die gelbe Gefahr*. This topical allusion was lost on the great majority of *World* readers, however. They loved the Kid for the manic gleam in his eye and the sense that wherever he appeared, mayhem could be expected to erupt at any moment.⁷

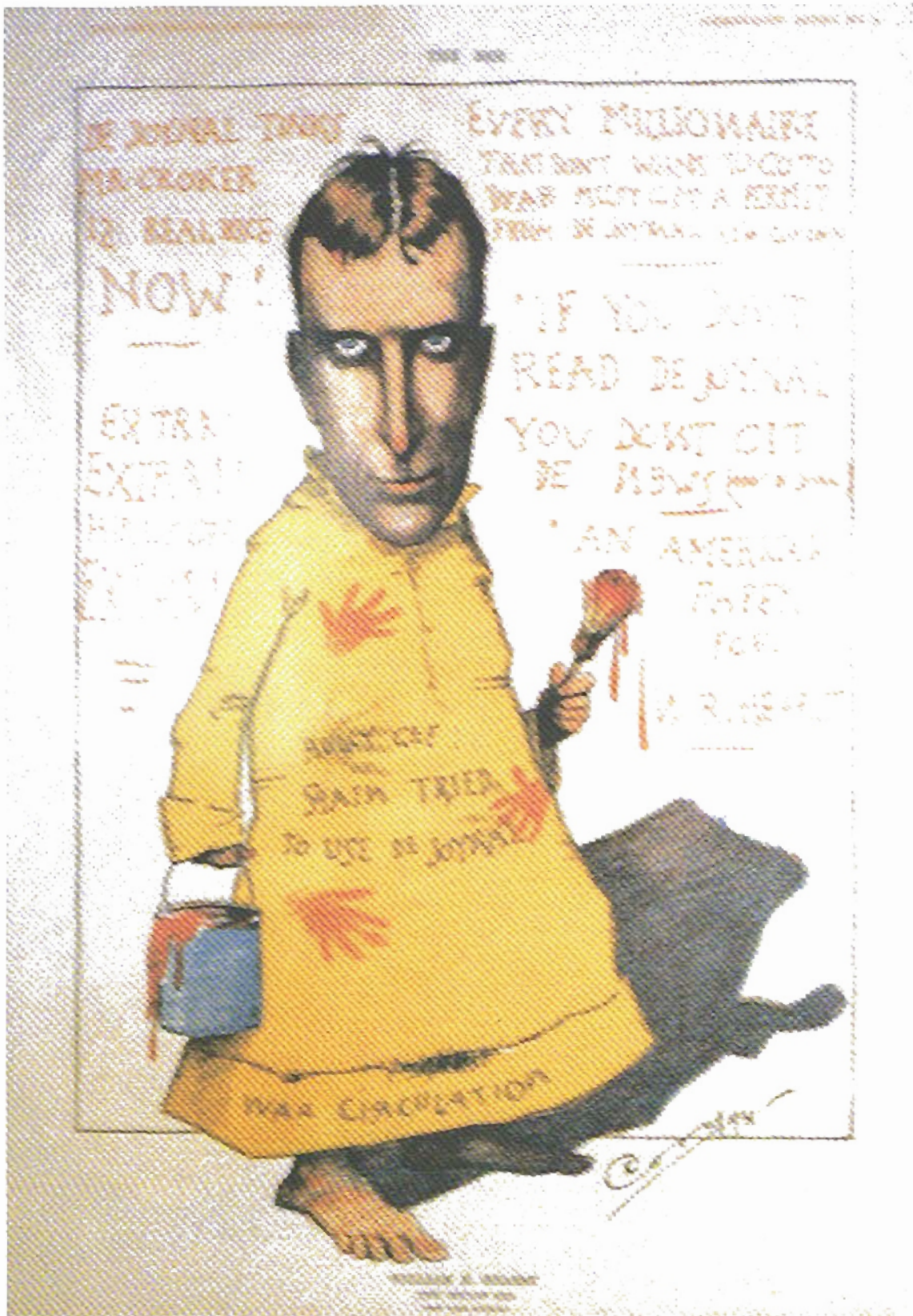
The "yellow fellow" argument (sometimes referred to as the "yeller feller") suggests that the phrase was derived from the *New York Journal-San Francisco Examiner's* one-time, yet extensive use of the "yellow fellow" to promote their transcontinental bicycle race in early September 1896.⁸ The correlation between the "yellow fellow" and yellow journalism has been informally suggested, citing Swanburg's *Citizen Hearst* as the authority for this association. While Swanburg discusses the "yellow fellow," he also links the Yellow Kid with yellow journalism.⁹ This argument fails to make any significant links between the connotative value of the color for the innocuous "yellow fellow" and its pejorative use to describe "journalism." Joyce Milton also discusses the phenomenon:

Unable to steal the Kid away from the *World*, Hearst did the next best thing—he mounted a campaign to publicize a *Journal* mascot he called the Yeller Feller. By the summer of 1896, America was in the midst of a bicycle craze and Hearst took advantage of the mania by organizing a coast-to-coast "Yeller Feller" relay race. The race began in San Francisco, where a cyclist dressed head to toe in yellow departed from the *Examiner's* offices carrying letters from the city postmaster . . .¹⁰

Milton wrote that the Yeller Feller was "a promotion without a product: there was no Yeller Feller cartoon."¹¹ Ultimately, Milton supports the idea that yellow journalism was coined by the editor of a rival newspaper.

Ervin Wardman of the *New York Press* may have been the first to use the phrase, but by the end of 1896, "yellow journalism"—also called "yellow kid journalism"—had become a part of the language.¹²

J. Campbell Cory, "Hearst as 'The Yellow Kid,'" *The Bee*, 8 June 1898. Illustration courtesy of Richard D. Olson.



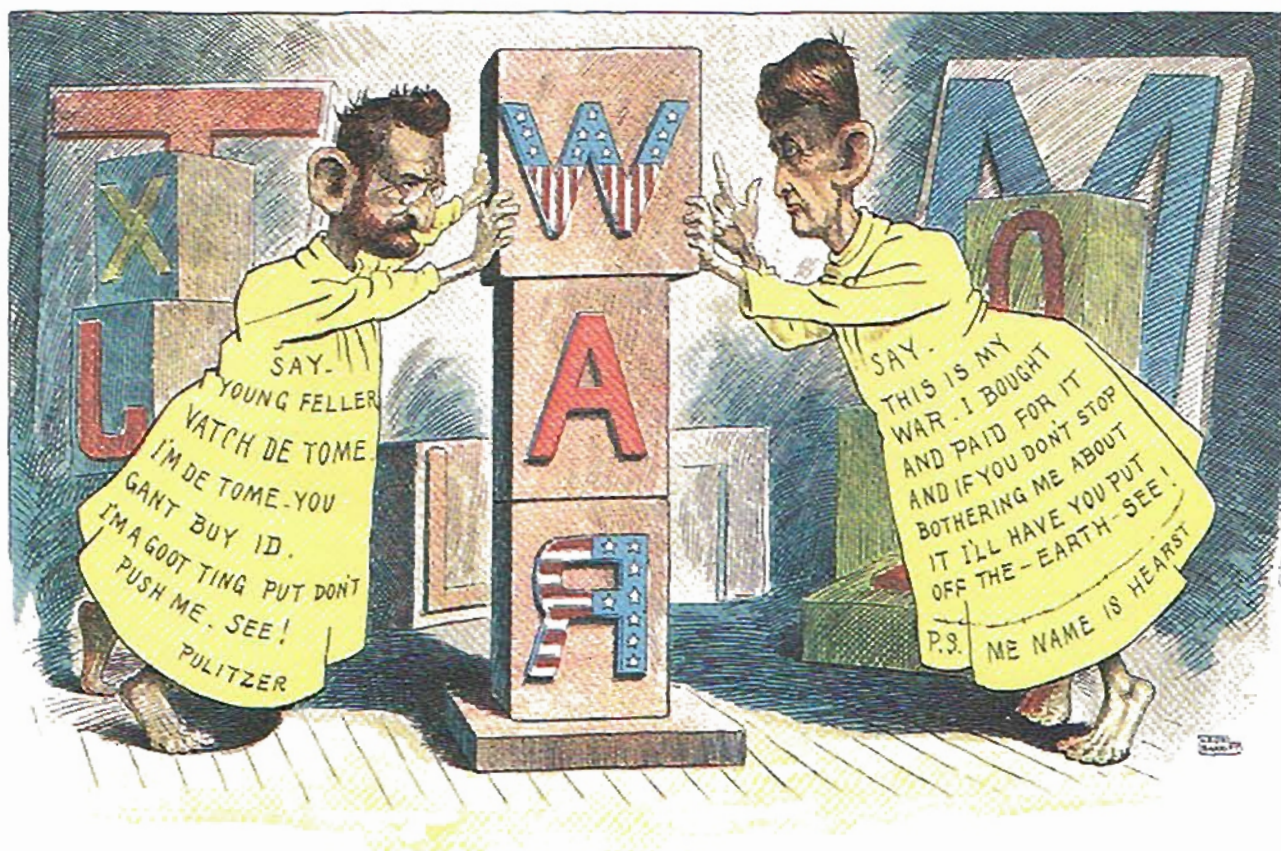
Wardman is one of several editors credited with coining the term in the fall of 1896. It is possible that Wardman coined the phrase and that it originated in 1896, but available sources do not support the idea that it became "a part of the language" by the end of that year. The phrase may have been in use in 1896, but the earliest sources that include this phrase date from 1897.

The "yellow-backed pamphleteering" argument notes that the yellow journalism phrase was "not original," but derived from a mid-nineteenth century usage referring to the "publication of sensational stories in inexpensive form, often in yellow covers . . . described by Poe and other writers . . . from 1846 on."²³ In 1898 it was not uncommon for people to associate lurid novels with the sensational press. The difficulty with all three alternate arguments is that the use of the phrase yellow journalism followed the development of the Yellow Kid controversies and did not appear

or enter general usage prior to this. If the phrases "yellow peril," "yellow fellow," and "yellow-backed pamphleteering" had any contribution to the founding of the phrase yellow journalism, the connections are vague in the presence of the ongoing (and heated) Yellow Kid controversies of 1896 and 1897. A more direct relationship must be demonstrated for those arguments to be taken seriously.

A majority of the sources make the yellow journalism/Yellow Kid link, but there is little consensus as to how or why this relationship developed. Those who support this argument simply state that the character inspired the phrase, without further discussion or documentation of its emergence. Many histories of cartoon art briefly note the derivation of yellow journalism in the context of the development of early newspaper comic strips. In 1944, Martin Sheridan wrote that the "title of the [Yellow Kid] strip gave birth to the phrase 'yellow journalism.'"²⁴ Three years later Coulton Waugh noted that "a phrase had been created to express this sensationalism, a phrase

Leon Barritt, "The Big Type War of the Yellow Kids," *Vim*, 29 June 1898, 16. Illustration courtesy of Richard Samuel West.



THE BIG TYPE WAR OF THE YELLOW KIDS.



CAPTURED BY THE YELLOW KID.

"While William Hemment photographed the wreck I scanned the shore for Spaniards, and finally saw some sort of figures huddled together in one corner of the beach. We shouted to them and made a demonstration with our firearms, and the poor, cowed fellows, with great alacrity, waved a white handkerchief or shirt in token of surrender. I sent our small boat for the ship's launch, first having landed Mr. Hemment and his assistant. We three stood guard over our wretched Spaniards until the launch arrived."—Telegram to *N. Y. Journal*, from *W. R. Hearst* at Santiago.

Leon Barritt, "Captured by the Yellow Kid," *Vim*, 27 July 1898, 20. Illustration courtesy of Richard Samuel West.

directly resulting from the race between the two Yellow Kids—"yellow journalism."¹⁵ Later histories of cartoon art draw from these two sources, ignore the argument, or disavow the connection between the character and the phrase. Additional histories of journalism, biographies of Hearst and Pulitzer, and accounts of the Spanish-American War add little to the discussion, aside from agreeing that the Yellow Kid controversies spawned the descriptive expression.

A review of late nineteenth century newspapers and periodicals reveals that the phrase became established in 1897 and entered general usage by 1898. It is significant that other descriptive phrases were used before yellow journalism became synonymous with sensational newspapers. The newspapers in question seized the phrase "New Journalism" to describe their style and methods. In early 1896, the *New York Times* included reports

that the *New York World* had published several articles that led to lawsuits, denials, and other complications. By fall 1896, the *New York Times* began a series of editorials that invoked the term "freak journalism" to describe the *World*/journal tactics.¹⁶

Despite the *New York Journal-San Francisco Examiner* bicycle race advertised with a "yellow fellow" in early September of 1896, later that month the editorials in the *New York Times* did not seize upon the color but still described the tactics and methods of the populist papers as a brand of "freak journalism." The "freak" label continued to be applied in several instances with the emphasis on the newspapers' "freakish" quality.¹⁷ In February 1897, the *New York Times* continued its editorial observation of the rivalry between the *New York World* and the *New York Journal*, still criticized their "freak journalism," but did not yet use the phrase yellow journalism.¹⁸

In early March 1897, complaints against the *New York World* and the *New York Journal* became louder as schools, public libraries, and private clubs began a public outcry and banished the newspapers from their collections and reading rooms.²⁰ In keeping with their coverage of the indignation over the sensational press, the *New York Times* reprinted an item on 12 March from the *Mail and Express* that supported a *Times* attack on the ignoble newspapers.²¹

Right! When Yellow Journals are denounced from the pulpit and barred from clubs, libraries, reading rooms, schools, and other organizations which value their reputations, we can easily judge the class of mind which advertisers in Yellow Journals reach. We find, for instance, the yellowest of the Yellow Journals boiling over with rage when the police "raid" a disorderly house. It calls this a "dangerous encroachment by the police upon private rights." Standing up for its friends and supporters and giving its editorial approval of their illegal and dissolute practices, Yellow Journalism shows on whom it relies for its readers.²¹

This appears to be the first clear use of "yellow journalism" in the pages of the *New York Times*. The *Times* continued to use the term in other articles and editorials, but did not yet prefer it over the phrases "new journalism," and "flashy newspapers."

The *New York Times* remained committed to the coverage of this controversy as the number of civic institutions that banned the sensational newspapers grew. The *Times* continued to use established descriptive phrases. An article appearing on 18 March still used the phrase "new journalism."²² An article appearing just a few days after that failed to label the phenomenon, but quoted Sam P. Jones' descriptive simile about the unsuitable newspapers:

The pages of a newspaper are like the rooms of a house. If I have a dead rat in one room of my house, a dead cat in another, a dead dog in another, a dead snake in another, a dead cow in my dooryard, and a dead horse in my lot, I will either move my dead animals or family. There is a dead thing of some sort on nearly every page of most of the newspapers I pick up these days. Either the dead things must be moved out of the newspaper, or the newspaper thrown out of the home.²³

At that time the *New York Times* also noted that the *New York World* charged the *Times* with conspiracy.

WHAT IS BEHIND THE WAR SCARE.



"What is Behind the War Scare," unsigned editorial cartoon credited to the *Philadelphia Times*, *Chicago Times-Herald*, 1 March 1898, 1.

The *Times* disavowed involvement in a conspiracy, but noted that the *World* and their style of journalism was "losing such toleration as was at one time weakly granted it by some otherwise decent people."²⁴

By fall 1897, the use of yellow in connection with a variety of other journalistic references began appearing in a wider context. In the 15 August editorial, "The 'Passionate Press Agent,'" the *New York Times* referred to the newspapers as "our esteemed contemporaries of the yellow variety" and "our yellow friends."²⁵ An editorial a few weeks later continued with references to "our yellow contemporaries," "yellow newspaper," "yellow journalist," and "yellow journals."²⁶ By this time the phrase yellow journalism and its variations were markedly preferred to similar phrases.

The phrase yellow journalism entered everyday speech by late 1897 and its popular use increased a few months later with the sinking of the battleship *Maine*. The style of journalism previously practiced by the *New York World* and the *New York Journal*

was mild compared to what occurred from that moment onward. The sensational press erupted in a flurry of activity, branded Spain as the culprit and called for war before the investigations were complete.

The day after the *Maine* incident, the *New York Journal* published an unsigned illustration on 16 February 1898 that featured New York "Ten Hours After the Bombardment Began." The *Journal* seized on the opportunity to sensationalize the threat of a nearby Spanish ship, the inefficiency of competing newspapers, and the superiority of both the *New York Journal* and the American people.

This is how Park Row would look in a short time should the Vizcaya open fire on us. The huge steel buildings would crumble, and the heart of the city would be a noisy, dusty, dangerous place. But the Evening Journal would keep coming out with war extras every few minutes. Do not for a moment forget that, and this country would get a gait on and sink the Vizcaya and the rest of Spain so quickly

that De Lome would hardly have time to write a letter to tell them that they would never see him any more.²⁷

The *New York Journal's* building is central to the drawing, towering over the smoking rubble and fallen dome of the *New York World*.

In the early weeks following the event, tensions were especially high and the yellow journals capitalized on the panic. The following account from late 1898 reprimanded the yellow press for using the *Maine* as an occasion to sell newspapers:

When the *Maine* disaster came upon us, the mission of all the yellow journals seemed to have become the creation of war. They played with the war idea as a child would play with a new and interesting toy, for not since the birth of yellow journalism had there been a war in the United States! While wise men and patriots watched and waited for the issue, the yellow journals put in a stock of extra paper and enlarged their printing presses. At the type-foundries orders were given for letters of such length and width as no newspaper had ever before used; and when the type was delivered at the offices some of the cleverest and highest-priced men on the papers set to work writing "emergency" headlines and scare-heads:—"HAVANA SHELLED!" "HAVANA BOMB-BARDED!" "GREAT SEA-FIGHT!" Such were the scare-heads that the smart young men were put to work upon. The getting ready of these was in itself a commendable enterprise had the yellow journals waited till occasion really called for their use, but long before war was declared they were used as half-page scare-heads. "Havana Shelled!" yelled the newsboys. "Havana Shelled!" announced the headlines of letters fifteen inches long. Thousands of people rushed hither and thither to buy them; timid women gasped and almost fainted at the sight of the scare-head! When the newspaper was bought, the two words, printed in the smallest possible type, "to be," were, on close examination, found inserted between the two principal words, but only through its spectacles could the crowd discover this!²⁸

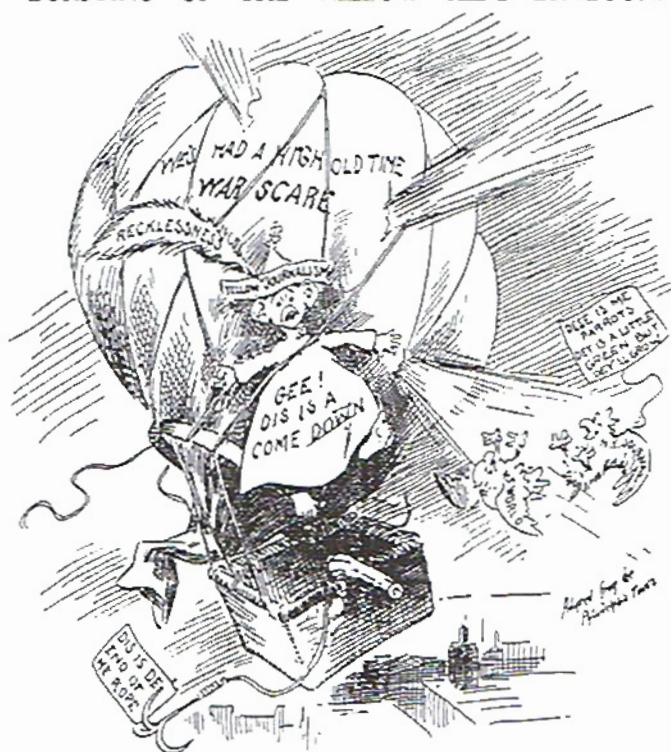
The yellow journals published a large number of extra editions, sometimes as many as a reported thirty or fifty a day. One account related that when the scare-heads no longer seemed to perform their desired function, one newspaper innovated with the use of a "star-spangled banner type" (a large typeface with letters formed of stars and stripes).²⁹

THE YELLOW KID AT HIS BEST.



"The Yellow Kid at His Best," unsigned editorial cartoon credited to the *Philadelphia Times*, *Chicago Times-Herald*, 3 March 1898, 1.

BURSTING OF THE YELLOW KID'S BALLOON.



"Bursting of the Yellow Kid's Balloon," unsigned editorial cartoon credited to the *Philadelphia Times*, *Chicago Times-Herald*, 4 March 1898, 1.

There were two immediate and lasting reactions to all of this in the non-yellow press. First, a print campaign was initiated against the evils of yellow journalism with a series of articles, editorials, and letters to the editor. Second, a series of editorial cartoons (featuring the Yellow Kid and references to yellow journalism) were published in a variety of non-yellow papers.

On 1 March, the *New York Times* published an editorial entitled "Lies and War" in which it condemned the yellow journals for perpetrating a war hysteria on the city of New York and noted that these newspapers' multiple editions and extras could "lie faster than anybody can confute their lies."³⁰ Non-yellow newspapers from across the nation (including the *New York Evening Post*, *Columbus Dispatch*, *Kansas City Journal*, *Nashville American*, and *Boston Transcript*) made damning comments about yellow journalism and its attempt to initiate a war.³¹

Harper's Weekly noted that "one of the sensational newspapers of New York City which have been exciting the warlike passions of the people . . . had deliberately and purposely engaged in the

effort to bring about war."³² Hearst's *New York Journal* immediately defended itself against this charge (although the newspaper was not named) and promised a \$100,000 libel suit against the *Harper's* editor if he would be as bold as to name the *Journal* as that newspaper. The *New York Times* printed an editorial on 12 March recounting the incident under the title "The Turning of the Yellow Worm."

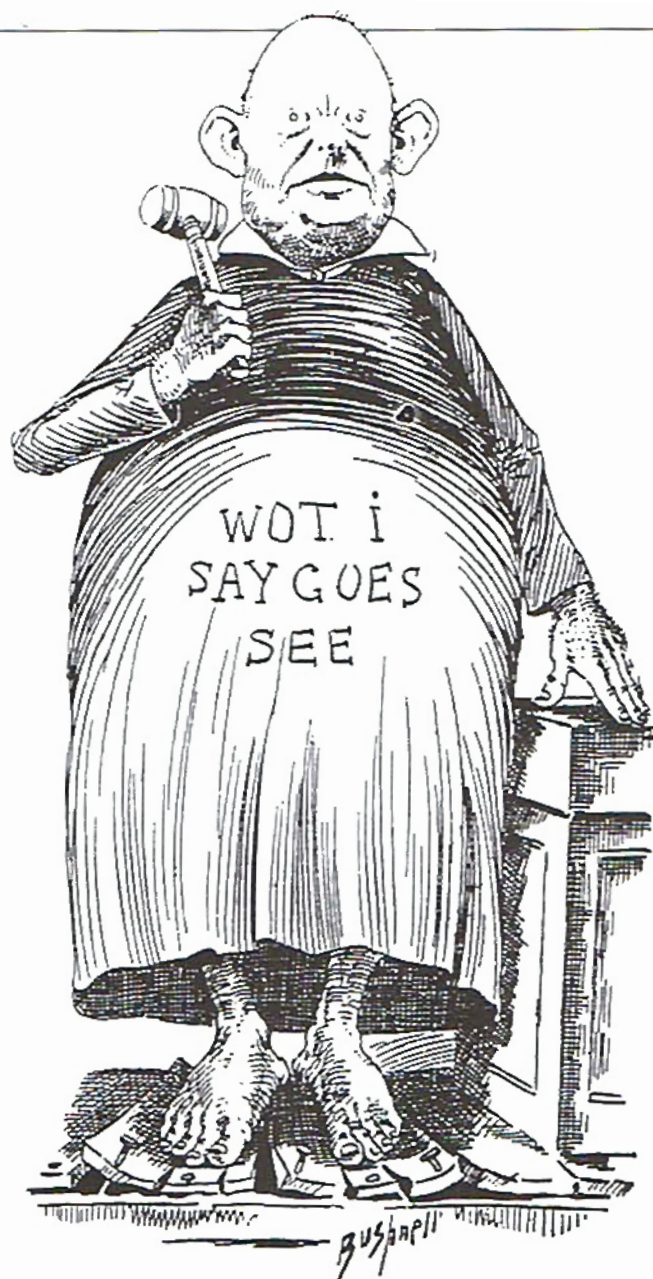
In keeping with the sentiment of the day, the students of Packard College passed a resolution in which they summarized the nature of "a species of journalism, commonly styled 'Yellow Journalism'" and resolved

that we condemn this method of misleading the public, that we disapprove the 'Yellow Journals,' and ask the co-operation of the public in refusing to buy these sheets, for to patronize them implies a sanction of their methods.³³

The *New York Times* followed this announcement with an editorial of support entitled "Yellow Journals and Yellow Readers."³⁴ The *Times* also printed several lengthy anti-yellow letters to the editor such as one from "an American,"³⁵ and another from W. W. Hallock, both of which called for severe measures to limit and control the yellow journals. Hallock's letter to the editor recalled the earlier use of "yellow" to describe literature and made an important comparison.

The yellow-covered novels of twenty-five years ago, which were termed "pernicious literature," are nothing at all compared with the "yellow journalism" of to-day in their evil effect, and while the publication of this class of newspaper is occasioned by the demand for it, I believe, since we cannot immediately control that demand by educating the ignorant and making the coarse and vulgar refined, we should regulate to a certain extent at least the character of matter which these publications are permitted to print.³⁶

In April 1898, John H. Holmes, editor of the *Boston Herald*, wrote a criticism of "The New Journalism and the Old" that discussed the merits and faults of the "new" press while avoiding any use of the word yellow.³⁷ Other notable editorials in the *New York Times* from that era were "Questions of Yellow Ethics"³⁸ and "Yellowness."³⁹ It is important to note that the print campaign against yellow journalism did not mention the Yellow Kid, nor comic supplements, but focused only on the tactics and methods of the *Journal* and the *World*.



E.A. Bushnell, "Our Correspondent's Idea of Speaker Reed," *Cincinnati Post*, 5 February 1898, 1. Caricature of House Speaker Thomas B. Reed as the Yellow Kid.

The pressures on the Yellow Kid's creator, R. F. Outcault, must have been tremendous, as on 1 May 1898, the *New York World* published his account of the creation of the Yellow Kid, in which he attempted to distance himself from his creation. Outcault wrote that the sheer over-exposure of the character in a variety of publications and merchandising schemes could lead most people to understand how the creator had grown tired of the creation. Outcault's son had even gone so far as to claim to his friends that his father knew the Yellow Kid, and "often brought him to the house late at night."⁴⁰

The second plank in the campaign against the sensational press transformed the Yellow Kid into an icon of yellow journalism, establishing a definite link between the phrase and the character. The editorial cartoons on this topic (featuring Yellow Kids, yellow journalism, yellow journals, jingoism and references to the impending Spanish-American crisis as drawn by cartoonists other than Outcault or Luks) appeared in several newspapers, including the *Chicago Times-Herald*, *Cincinnati Times-Star*, *Cleveland Leader*, *Columbus Dispatch*, *Detroit Journal*, *Minneapolis Journal*, *New York Herald*, *Philadelphia Times*, and *Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph*.

It was not uncommon before that time for other cartoonists to freely use the character for newspaper advertisements or the caricature of public figures. When Outcault joined Hearst's *New York Journal* in October of 1896 there was a proliferation of the Yellow Kid in the pages of the newspaper. Many of the drawings were composed by other artists for newspaper promotion (for the comic supplement and the want-ads section) or a humorous observation. Nor was it uncommon for the Kid to appear occasionally on the newspaper's masthead. Additionally, J. Campbell Cory rendered the Yellow Kid for his 30 October and 2 November 1896 *New York Journal* editorial cartoons criticizing congressional contenders.⁴¹ It appears that Hearst was not partial only to Outcault's drawings of the Yellow Kid, but that he wished for the pages of the *New York Journal* to be flooded with Yellow Kids from every available artist. Ironically, by the time of the sinking of the *Maine*, both the *New York World* and the *New York Journal* had discontinued their Yellow Kid features.⁴² The Yellow Kid feature helped sell newspapers for both publishers, but the sinking of the *Maine* was seized by both to create a greater furor and increase popular demand for their newspapers.

In this light, E. A. Bushnell's depiction of House Speaker Thomas B. Reed in the 5 February 1898 *Cincinnati Post* was borrowed from a correspondent's description.

Very noticeable was Speaker Reed's tall and portly form, big head and eyebrowless face. Seen from across the chamber the countenance is a large and very striking reproduction of that of the Yellow Kid, but stricken into supernatural gravity.⁴³

Bushnell's drawing of Reed used the Speaker's easily recognized features (as published in political cartoons of the day) but gave him bare feet (the

wooden planks buckling under his weight) and dressed him in the Kid's characteristic nightgown emblazoned with the words "Wot I say goes see."

Editorial cartoons that commented on the sinking of the *Maine* and following events featured Uncle Sam, McKinley and caricatures of Spaniards. These elements were consistent throughout the Spanish-American conflict. Several non-yellow newspapers leveled charges of "jingoism" and sensationalism at the yellow journals through the earliest of the editorial cartoons. In "A Jingo Uproar" five elfin men in short pants, paper hats and carrying wooden swords, pull at the coattails of McKinley and Uncle Sam who are engaged in sharpening a sword. The caption notes "the little fellows make a lot of noise, but they only embarrass the men at the grindstone."⁴⁴ While this cartoon did not feature the Yellow Kid, its sentiment was similar to the cartoons that did.

Charles Lewis "Bart" Bartholomew drew the earliest Yellow Kid/yellow journalism editorial cartoon of record, "War has been declared," published on the front page of the *Minneapolis Journal* on 25 February 1898.⁴⁵ Bart features the Yellow Kid running a newspaper (appropriately named *Yellow Journalism*) and flying a banner of "sensationalism" over his editorial desk. His office has a view of the distant gunfire between an American warship and Cuba. The newspaper proclaims "War must come, let it come! . . . Cuba is ours. Spain must give her up . . . Down with the Dons. WAR! WAR! WAR!" and "Watch us wipe the Earth with Spain." The Kid's office is well supplied, with buckets of "blood red" and yellow inks, a stack of a "new black face type for scareheads" spelling out "A WAR," a map of Cuba, and a stack of cannonballs (labeled "fake," "sensation," "mith," "scare," "rumor," "yarn," and "story"). The Kid keeps company with a black cat (with a tin can tied to its tail) and a copy assistant (writing out "WAR" from the bucket of "blud" in front of him). The Kid's nightshirt proclaims "Hully Gee, this aint no accident! . . . we're doin it a purpose," and "Say! Have you seed the old pioneer press? It beats us all on war." There is little doubt that Bart was criticizing the sensational newspapers and their treatment of a sensitive situation.

In late February, the *Philadelphia Times* began a series of yellow journalism editorial cartoons that criticized the New York newspapers. It is possible that the *Philadelphia Times* was able to sustain a short series because they may have owned or licensed the rights to the Yellow Kid in 1898.⁴⁶ Unfortunately this newspaper is not widely available, but the yellow journalism cartoons were

YELLOW KID'S WAR ON SOLDIERS' FAMILIES.



Ike Morgan, "Yellow Kid's War on Soldiers' Families," *Chicago Times-Herald*, 4 September 1898, 3.

redrawn by other cartoonists, published in other newspapers, and credited to the *Philadelphia Times*. The *Chicago Times-Herald* published three of these cartoons, with "What is Behind the War Scare" on 1 March, "The Yellow Kid at His Best" on 3 March, and "Bursting of the Yellow Kid's Balloon" on 4 March.

"What is Behind the War Scare" features the image of a brigadier general with a sword between his teeth, a pistol in his belt, a bayonet in one hand and a cannon in the other, being physically pushed to action by a businessman with a sheet in his pocket reading "Stock Speculator," who is in turn being pushed by the Yellow Kid with a rolled sheet in his pocket reading "Yellow Journals" and the legend on his nightshirt reading "I Say!! Dis is a good ting. Push it along." After first appearing in the *Philadelphia Times*, redrawn versions of this cartoon appeared in the *New York Herald* (27 February), *Chicago Times-Herald* (1 March), *Cleveland Leader* (1 March), *Columbus Dispatch* (1 March) and the *Cincinnati Times-Star* (2 March). Of these newspapers, only the *Chicago Times-Herald*

reprinted other cartoons in this series.

The second cartoon in the series, "The Yellow Kid at His Best," features the Yellow Kid wearing a paper hat (labeled "yellow journalism") with a protruding feather labeled "recklessness."⁴⁸ Resting on his shoulder is a bayonette with a sign that reads "Dis is a gun . . . I dont know it's loaded" and behind him is a bomb labeled "Public Decency" with a sign that the Kid "will have all kinds of sensations when dis explodes." Aside from a cat, the other significant feature of the cartoon is a "financial thermometer" measuring the business climate, being chilled by cakes of ice labeled "sensation" and "lying rumors." The third cartoon in the series, "Bursting of the Yellow Kid's Balloon," features the Yellow Kid hanging onto the outside of

a hot air balloon that has been pierced in three places.⁴⁹ The deflating balloon reads "We's had a high old time war scare" and the Kid's nightshirt carries the legend "Gee! Dis is a come down." Additionally there is another sign attached to two small birds that reads "dese is me parrots . . . dey is a little green but dey'll grow." The parrots are labeled "N.Y. World" and "N.Y. Journal."

The *Philadelphia Times* was also credited for first publishing the "Special Yellow Kid War News," a news satire that was republished in the *New York Herald* on 28 February 1898. The special print section carried two mottoes on the masthead, "Not to be believed" and "Printed to sell papers," and included four dubious news reports related to the Spanish-American conflict. Three of the "faked" news reports were from "special telegram[s]" and all inferred news from questionable sources. The implication is that the *World* and *Journal* were

regularly publishing rumor and innuendo as news.

On 5 March 1898, the *Columbus Dispatch* published the cartoon "He Doesn't Mind Them" with an image of Uncle Sam (on the phone with Havana) looking out of a window of the State Department while the "Spanish Yellow Kid" and the "American Yellow Kid" angrily swing at each other with "WAR" toys, with a caption that "Uncle Sam [is] too busy to pay attention to Yellow Kid Journalism."⁵⁰ Not only were the New York newspapers fighting each other, but they were also waging a vitriolic campaign against the Spanish press.

The *New York Journal* published a series of cartoons in April 1898 that were related to the Spanish-American conflict and the Yellow Kid, but had nothing to do with a critique of yellow journalism.⁵¹ The eleven cartoons appeared under the title *The Huckleberry Volunteers* and were drawn by none other than Richard Felton Outcault, the creator of the *Yellow Kid*. The last six of the eleven cartoons featured the return of the Yellow Kid as a legitimate character in a cartoon series.

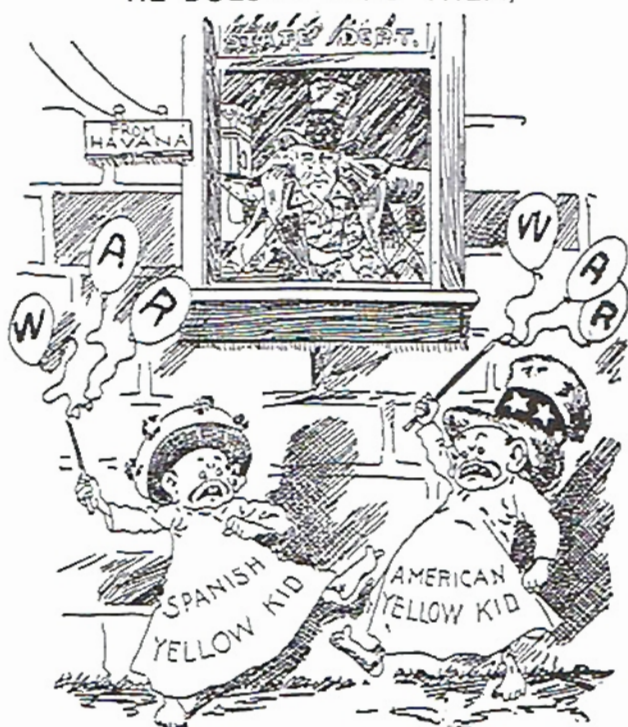
Ike Morgan, "Fighting Joe Wheeler Disperses the Yellow Journalists," *Chicago Times-Herald*, 5 September 1898, 3.

FIGHTING JOE WHEELER DISPERSES THE YELLOW JOURNALISTS.



"I have just finished my daily inspection of the hospitals. With rare exceptions the sick are cheerful and improving"—(From General Wheeler's statement.

HE DOESN'T MIND THEM,



UNCLE SAM TOO BUSY TO PAY ATTENTION TO YELLOW KID JOURNALISM.

"He Doesn't Mind Them," unsigned editorial cartoon, *Columbus Dispatch*, 5 March 1898, 1.

albeit a shortlived one. It is possible that the Yellow Kid reappeared in this context to help diffuse the association between the cartoon character and the idea of yellow journalism.

The humor magazines *Bee*, *Judge*, and *Vim* published editorial cartoons featuring the Yellow Kid and images of Pulitzer and Hearst dressed as the Yellow Kid. J. Campbell Cory's cartoon of Hearst as the Yellow Kid had the publisher staring at the reader holding a bucket of paint in one hand and a paintbrush in the other, with the caption "Hully Gee, Spain tried to use de Joynal" written across the characteristic yellow nightgown.⁵² Leon Barritt created two cartoons published in *Vim* in this vein with "The Big Type War of the Yellow Kids" and "Captured by the Yellow Kid." The first of Barritt's cartoons featured Hearst and Pulitzer dressed as barefoot Yellow Kids fighting over a large "star-spangled banner type" "W" (spelling out WAR) with lengthy captions on their

nightgowns.⁵³ The second of Barritt's cartoons featured Hearst as the Kid on a Cuban beach holding a banner that proclaimed "The Yellow New York Journal Guards," with Hearst's nightgown exclaiming "Say I've got Spaniards to Burn See! N.B. A Spaniard given wid every copy of de Sunday Journal."⁵⁴ The cartoons published in *Judge* used the Yellow Kid character to satirize figures involved with Tammany Hall (particularly Governor Hill) and did not comment on yellow journalism.

The use of the Yellow Kid as an icon in editorial cartoons continued throughout 1898. Ike Morgan's 4 September "Yellow Kid's War on Soldiers' Families" features the Yellow Kid running through a cloud of smoke with women and children running in all directions behind him. The Kid carries a gun firing straight up in the air and a sword labeled "LIES," and he is wearing a military overcoat, munitions belt (with a skull and crossbones on the buckle), and a paper hat labeled "Yellow Journalism." The Kid's nightshirt carries the message "De army has no grub, no water, no beds, no medicine, no nuthin, dey are all dyin!" The caption below the cartoon reads "Yellow Journalist — 'Gee, but Ain't I Scarin' 'Em!'"⁵⁵ A second Morgan editorial cartoon appeared the following day with "Fighting Joe Wheeler Disperses the Yellow Jour-

"A Dampener for the Yellow Journals," unsigned editorial cartoon credited to the *Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph*, *Columbus Dispatch*, 7 October 1898, 1.



A DAMPENER FOR THE YELLOW JOURNALS.
(Reproduced from *Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph* by Our Special Artist.)

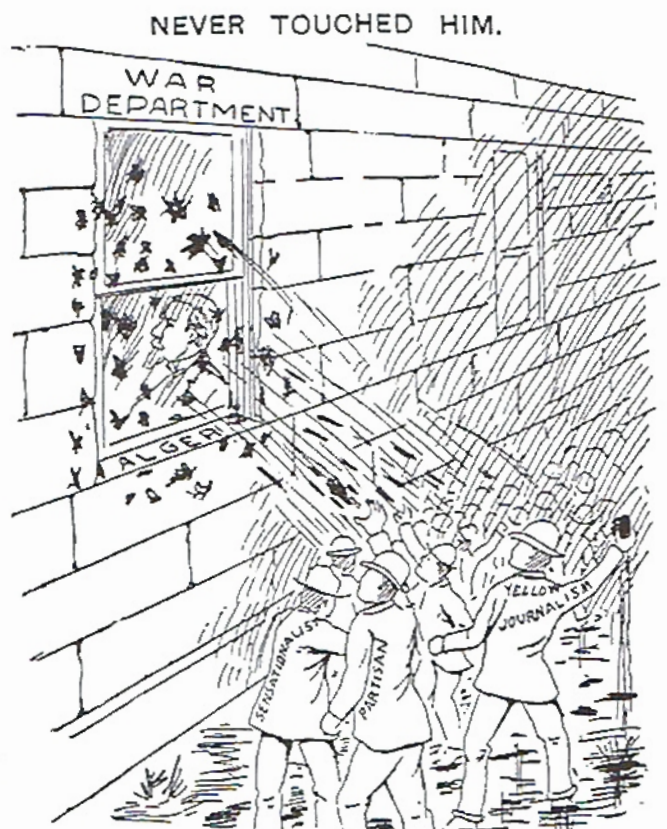
nalists," which features General Wheeler on a horse, wearing a plumed hat with the legend "Truth," brandishing a quill pen labeled "Justice," with saddlebags identified as "Facts." Wheeler bursts through a cloud and group of Yellow Kids (several with a "yellow journalism" on their night-gowns) who disperse in a broad panic at his appearance.⁵⁶ The two cartoons have similar graphic composition, with a central figure dispersing a crowd in clouds of smoke, and form complementary statements on the state and influence of yellow journalism.

Another editorial cartoon from October 1898, "A Dampener for the Yellow Journals," features General Wheeler standing in the entrance of the War Department (besmirched with the Yellow Kid's muddy handprints) holding a firehose spraying out a jet of water (labeled "Gen. Wheeler's Testimony") on a weeping Yellow Kid (identified as "Yellow Journalism" with muddy hands and with a bucket of mud) with the nightgown caption reading "Hully Gee! Dat feller's a demycrat too!"⁵⁷ The significance of these editorial cartoons is the clear link between the Yellow Kid character and the characterization of yellow journalism. The Yellow Kid became an icon of yellow journalism and synonymous with that concept, much as Uncle Sam became an icon for the spirit and guiding principals of the United States.

In the fall of 1898, Elizabeth Banks' article "American 'Yellow Journalism'" appeared in the British magazine *Nineteenth Century*. Banks noted that the phrase yellow journalism was inspired by the Yellow Kid controversies. Banks credited the editor of the *New York Sun*, Charles A. Dana, for coining yellow journalism in his immediate and vehement attacks on the *New York World* and *New York Journal*.

Charles A. Dana, a journalist of the old school, who hated sensational journalism, wrote an editorial in the *Sun*, in which he noted the transfer of the "Yellow Kid" to its new quarters, referring to the two papers as "yellow journals," and their style of journalism as the "yellow journalism." Thereafter the *World* and the *Journal* and all other sensational newspapers in the United States became known as "yellow journals."⁵⁸

Later accounts give the credit for coining the phrase to editors of other newspapers, including Ervin Wardman of the *New York Press*⁵⁹ and an anonymous editor from James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald*.⁶⁰



THOSE WHO ARE THROWING MUD AT THE SECRETARY FIND SOME OF THE SLIME FALLING UPON THEMSELVES.

"Never Touched Him," unsigned editorial cartoon, *Columbus Dispatch*, 3 September 1898, 1.

It is clear that throughout 1898 the link between the Yellow Kid and yellow journalism was commonly understood. After this time the phrase continued to be used, but without the regular appearances of the Yellow Kid in either the *New York World* or the *New York Journal* the connection between the character and the phrase faded. Banks' article was the first of several that appeared in the following years which further defined, condemned, and defended the journalistic style.⁶¹ Later discussions of yellow journalism did not include references to the Yellow Kid and narrowly discussed the mechanisms by which those newspapers operated.

Roy L. McCardell revived the connection for people interested in the history of cartoon art with his 1905 "Opper, Outcault and Company" in which he noted "the rivalry between the *World* and the *Journal* caused papers without the attractions of Mr. Outcault's and Mr. Luks' work to describe those papers as 'Yellow Kid journals,' and then, by dropping the monosyllable, to call them simply 'yellow journals.'"⁶² It appears that McCardell's

synopsis may be the basis for most later references to this link.

The existing records indicate that yellow journalism was initially coined to describe the Yellow Kid controversies between Pulitzer and Hearst. This connection, while noteworthy in the late 1890s, has largely become a matter of folklore, with a variety of origins attributed for yellow journalism persisting to the present day. It is not surprising that the namesake of the phrase was forgotten in the enormity and power of the epithet, but this connection must not be lost since it provides a fuller understanding of the Pulitzer-Hearst struggles and an indication of the impact of Richard F. Outcault's character. ●

NOTES

1. The earmarks of yellow journalism include the use of "scare-heads" (headlines that contributed a exaggerated urgency to the news reported), extensive use of drawings and photographs, reporting fraudulent events, the Sunday supplement (including comic strips, drawings, jokes and short stories), and sympathy campaigns for the lowly and downtrodden. See Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism, A History: 1690-1960*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 538-539.
2. Gertrude Jobes, *Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols* (New York: Scarecrow, 1962), 1704.
3. Jobes, *Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols*, 1704.
4. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd. ed., v. XX. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 718-724.
5. William Rose Benét, ed., *The Reader's Encyclopedia* (New York: Crowell, 1948), 1232-1233. The allusion to the yellow paper is also supported by one account which notes "Hearst announced himself as a 'yellow journalist,' believing that would incite curiosity and cause people to read the Hearst papers, which adopted the familiar saffron covering sheet. The *Journal* today, the *Chicago American* and other Hearst afternoon papers have a front and back page of this yellow-brown paper." See Ferdinand Lundberg, *Imperial Hearst, A Social Biography* (New York: Equinox, 1936. Rpt. New York: Arno New York Times, 1970), 57.
6. Ivor H. Evans, ed., *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), 1208-1209.
7. Joyce Milton, *The Yellow Kids: Foreign Correspondents in the Heyday of Yellow Journalism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 41.
8. "Established a Record; Finish of the Examiner-Journal Bicycle Relay Race," *New York Times* 8 September 1896, 6. Report from the *New York Times* does not even mention "yellow fellow" in the context of the race, although others note this as an important factor in the publicity for the race.
9. W. A. Swanburg, *Citizen Hearst: A Biography of William Randolph Hearst* (New York: Scribner's, 1961). The "yellow fellow" discussion is on pp. 88-89, with the "Yellow Kid" "yellow journalism" link made on p. 82.
10. Milton, *The Yellow Kids*, 41. See "Established a Record; Finish of the Examiner-Journal Bicycle Relay Race," *New York Times* 8 September 1896, 6.

11. Milton, *The Yellow Kids*, 42.
12. Milton, *The Yellow Kids*, 43.
13. John K. Winkler, *William Randolph Hearst, A New Appraisal* (New York: Hastings, 1955), 10 note.
14. Martin Shenden, *Comics and their Creators, Life Stories of American Cartoonists* (Boston: Hale, 1944), 57.
15. Coulton Waugh, *The Comics* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 7.
16. "Ethics of 'Freak' Journalism," editorial, *New York Times* 24 September 1896, 4.
17. "The Sorrows of Freak Journalism," editorial, *New York Times* 25 December 1896, 4.
18. "Beats' and 'Fakes,'" editorial, *New York Times* 16 February 1897, 6.
19. "Freak Journals Reprobated," *New York Times* 3 March 1897, 10; "Views of New Journalism," *New York Times* 4 March 1897, 3.
20. The *Mail and Express* editors were responding to "Newspaper Advertising," editorial, *New York Times* 10 March 1897, 6.
21. "Advertising in Yellow Journals," *New York Times* 12 March 1897, 6. The *Oxford English Dictionary* includes a reference to yellow journalism (linking the phrase to the Yellow Kid), but places its earliest reference to a quotation from the *Daily News* from 2 March 1898. The reference reprinted here from the *New York Times* is from March of the preceding year.
22. "New Journalism" Rebuked," *New York Times* 18 March 1897, 1.
23. "The Times' His Favorite," *New York Times* 21 March 1897, 4.
24. "An Unhappy World," editorial, *New York Times* 21 March 1897, 16.
25. "The 'Passionate Press Agent,'" editorial, *New York Times* 15 August 1897, 14.
26. "Instigating to Crime," editorial, *New York Times* 31 August 1897, 6.
27. "Ten Hours After the Bombardment Began," uncredited editorial cartoon illustration, *New York Evening Journal* 16 February 1898, extra edition number 9, 3.
28. Elizabeth L. Banks, "American Yellow Journalism," *Nineteenth Century* August 1898, 330-331. Banks' article is especially fascinating in that she writes of her experiences and those of other women as "yellow women journalists." She notes that the yellow newspapers employed both sexes equally with a greater possibility of pay equity, but also with few qualms about endangering their female reporters if there were a major story to be gained.
29. The use of this typeface is included in Leon Barritt's editorial cartoon "The Big Type War of the Yellow Kids," published in *Vim* 29 June 1898, 16.
30. "Lies and War," editorial, *New York Times* 1 March 1898, 6.
31. "Yellow Journalism" and the Maine Disaster," *Public Opinion* 3 March 1898, 263.
32. Quoted in "The Turning of the Yellow Worm," editorial, *New York Times* 12 March 1898, 6.
33. "Denounce 'Yellow Journals,'" *New York Times* 17 March 1898, 3.

34. "Yellow Journals and Yellow Readers," editorial, *New York Times* 18 March 1898, 6.
35. An American, "Yellow Journalism Nuisance," letter to the editor, *New York Times* 23 March 1898, 6.
36. W. W. Hallock, "Pernicious 'Yellow' Papers," letter to the editor, *New York Times* 28 March 1898, 5.
37. John H. Holmes, "The New Journalism and the Old," *Munsey's Magazine* April 1897, 76-79.
38. "Questions of Yellow Ethics," editorial, *New York Times* 27 July 1898, 6.
39. "Yellowness," editorial, *New York Times* 31 July 1898, 16.
40. Richard Felton Outcault, "How the Yellow Kid Was Born," *New York World* 1 May 1898, comic supplement, 7.
41. J. Campbell Cory, "Four Days More and the Political Campaign of '96 Will Be Over," editorial cartoon, *New York Journal* 30 October 1896, 5; Cory, "De're off in a bunch," editorial cartoon, *New York Journal* 2 November 1896, 3.
42. Luks' *Yellow Kid* made its last regular appearance in the *New York World* on 5 December 1897 (in "The Hogan's Alley Kids at the Continuous Performance"), but "Alex" and "George" continued to appear in various Luks cartoons, including "Mose's Incubator" through January 1898. Surviving a little longer, Outcault's *Yellow Kid* made its last regular appearance in the *New York Journal* on 6 February 1898, nine days before the sinking of the *Maine*. With Outcault's return to the *New York World* with "Casey's Corner" (13 February 1898), Luks discontinued regular use of any of the *Yellow Kids*, although Alex and George continued to appear periodically. One example is in "The Little Nippers in Their Great Wrestling Match for the Championship of the East Side" (*New York World* 24 April 1898).
43. E. A. Bushnell, "Our Correspondent's Idea of Speaker Reed," caricature of House Speaker Thomas B. Reed as the *Yellow Kid*, *Cincinnati Post* 5 February 1898, 1.
44. "A Jingo Uproar," unsigned editorial cartoon, *Columbus Dispatch* 25 February 1898, 1.
45. "Bart" [Charles Lewis Bartholomew], "War Has Been Declared: The Fearless Yellow Journals Open Up Operations on the Enemy," editorial cartoon, *Minneapolis Journal* 25 February 1898, 1; reprint *Cartoons of the Spanish-American War by Bart* (Minneapolis: Journal Printing Company, 1899).
46. Outcault and a business associate by the name of Connor assigned the rights to the *Yellow Kid* and *McFadden's Flats* to the McLaughlin brothers on 4 February 1898. The publisher of the *Philadelphia Times* was a McLaughlin, whose newspaper published *Yellow Kid*/yellow journalism cartoons later that month. It is likely that one of the brothers published the *Philadelphia Times*. Unfortunately this writer has not been able to further examine this relationship or closely review the *Philadelphia Times* from early 1898 by the time this article went to press. An examination of the *Philadelphia Times* from February through March 1898 might reveal more *Yellow Kid* related artwork and previously undiscovered yellow journalism cartoons.
47. "What is Behind the War Scare," unsigned editorial cartoon, credited to the *Philadelphia Times*, *Chicago Times-Herald* 1 March 1898, 1.
48. "The *Yellow Kid* at His Best," unsigned editorial cartoon, credited to the *Philadelphia Times*, *Chicago Times-Herald* 3 March 1898, 1.
49. "Bursting of the *Yellow Kid*'s Balloon," unsigned editorial cartoon, credited to the *Philadelphia Times*, *Chicago Times-Herald* 4 March 1898, 1.
50. "He Doesn't Mind Them," unsigned editorial cartoon, *Columbus Dispatch* 5 March 1898, 1.
51. The series began with Richard Felton Outcault, *The Huckleberry Volunteers*, "They Are Fired by Patriotism, and Start Off to Exterminate Spain or Anything Else," cartoon, *New York Evening Journal* 8 April 1898, extra edition number 13, 12. The series ended with Outcault, *The Huckleberry Volunteers*, "They Begin to Think that War has its Pleasures, After All," cartoon, *New York Evening Journal* 22 April 1898, extra edition number 15, 12.
52. J. Campbell Cory, "William R. Hearst (The *Yellow Kid*)," editorial cartoon, *The Bee* 8 June 1898. Rpt. Oliver Carlson and Ernest Sutherland Bates, *Hearst, Lord of San Simeon* (New York: Viking, 1936) 65. The background of the cartoon carries several messages such as "De Joynal tinks Mr. Croker is real nice now!" "Extra! Extra! Hully Gee EXTRA!" "Every millionaire that dont want to go to war must git a permit from de Joynal (I've got one)," "If you dont read de Joynal you dont git de news (about de Joynal)," and "An American paper for W. R. Hearst."
53. Leon Barritt, "The Big Type War of the *Yellow Kids*," editorial cartoon, *Vim* 29 June 1898, 16.
54. Leon Barritt, "Captured by the *Yellow Kid*," editorial cartoon, *Vim* 27 July 1898, 20.
55. Ike Morgan, "Yellow Kid's War on Soldiers' Families," editorial cartoon, *Chicago Times-Herald* 4 September 1898, 3. This cartoon also appeared in at least one other newspaper redrawn, unsigned, and uncredited. See "The War on Soldiers' Families," unsigned editorial cartoon, *Columbus Dispatch* 9 September 1898, 1. For another example of Ike Morgan's work, see Stephen Hess and Milton Kaplan, *The Ungentlemanly Art: A History of American Political Cartoons* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 47.
56. Ike Morgan, "Fighting Joe Wheeler Disperses the *Yellow Journalists*," editorial cartoon, *Chicago Times-Herald* 5 September 1898, 3.
57. "A Dampener for the *Yellow Journals*," unsigned editorial cartoon, credited to the *Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph*, *Columbus Dispatch* 7 October 1898, 1.
58. Banks, "American 'Yellow Journalism,'" 329.
59. Mrs. Fremont Older, *William Randolph Hearst, American* (New York: Appleton, 1936) 148; John Tebbel, *The Life and Good Times of William Randolph Hearst* (New York: Dutton, 1952) 120-121; Milton, *The Yellow Kids*, 43.
60. Winkler, *William Randolph Hearst*, 10-12.
61. Other articles on the topic include "Other Side of *Yellow Journalism*," *Independent* 29 March 1900, 785-786; "Shades of *Yellow* in Journalism," *Outlook* 25 August 1900, 94; "Responsibility for *Yellow Journalism*," *Nation* 26 September 1901, 238; Arthur Brisbane, "The American Newspaper IV: *Yellow Journalism*," *Bookman* June 1904, 400-404; Lydia Kingsmill Commander, "The Significance of *Yellow Journalism*," *Arena* August 1905, 150-155; W. I. Thomas, "The Psychology of the *Yellow Journal*," *American Magazine* March 1908, 491-497; "Moral Menace of *Yellow Journalism*," *Current Literature* April 1908, 414-415; and "Theology and *Yellow Journalism*," *Biblical World* June 1909, 363-366.
62. Roy L. McCardell, "Opper, Outcault and Company: The Comic Supplement and the Men who Make It," *Everybody's Magazine* June 1905, 764-765; reprint, *Inks: Cartoon and Comic Art Studies* 2:2 (May 1995): 2-15.

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Basic endnote style is as follows:

1. Rebecca Zurier, *Art for The Masses* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 89. [Note that no abbreviation precedes the page numbers.]

2. Allen Sheppard, "There Were Ladies Present: Antisocial Women Cartoonists and Comic Artists in the Late Twentieth Century," *Journal of American Culture* 7 (Fall 1983): 58-60.

3. Bill Baughman and Martin Williams, eds., *The Simpsons* (New York: Bantam, 1990), 12.

Collection of Newspaper Comics (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), 12.

4. George Newson Gordon, "Can Children Outgrow Our Comics?" in *The Funnies: An American Idiom* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 158-166.

5. Edwin McDowell, "America Is Taking Comic Books Seriously," *New York Times*, 31 July 1988, B8.

Style for second references:

1. Zurier, *Art for the Masses*, 66.

2. Sheppard, "There Were Ladies Present," 44.

3. Gordon, "Can Children Outgrow Our Comics?" 164.

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