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REFORM AND EMPIRE: THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN TRANSNATIONAL SEARCH FOR THE RIGHTS OF BLACK PEOPLE IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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REFORM AND EMPIRE: THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN TRANSNATIONAL
SEARCH FOR THE RIGHTS OF BLACK PEOPLE
IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

By

Thomas E. Smith

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and Professor James D. Le Sueur

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Thomas E. Smith, Ph. D.

University of Nebraska, 2006

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Late nineteenth century modernity forced reformers in Great Britain and the United States to embrace a new sense of immediacy in their strategies. These new strategies, however, rarely extended to black people who were often subject to violence and discrimination in the period of high imperialism. Instead, when most reformers discussed the problems black people faced all they could offer were traditional promises of religious-based protections or “uplift.” The violence of lynching in the 1890s forced reformers to address the problems of white supremacy in a direct fashion, while promoting an understanding of the connection between the plight of African peoples in the British Empire and the American South.

The response to the widely publicized lynching of Henry Smith in Paris, Texas, on February 1, 1893, and the campaigns of the anti-lynching reformer Ida B. Wells introduced a discourse about political rights for black people and augmented traditional appeals to protections based on equality before God. This dissertation investigates how various metropolitan reformers – including Fabians, Positivists, and liberal humanists – not only discussed lynching, but also approached the issues of race and empire in the

late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Meanwhile, a group of transnational black people– with African-American John E. Bruce at the center – began to form their own line of protest within this broader discourse. Culminating at the London Pan-African Conference of 1900, they constructed a call for immediate rights due to black people as subjects of the British Empire and as citizens of the United States. This appeal informed their transnational social movement that continued to shift the discussion away from passive protectionism and “uplift” strategies toward a more active voice of political empowerment that began to de-legitimize the colonial venture as untenable in post-emancipated societies. This activism laid the groundwork for later, more formalized, human rights discourse and informed subsequent calls for decolonization.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT		ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		iv
INTRODUCTION		1
Chapter		
1	THE DISCOURSE OF VIOLENCE: TRANSATLANTIC REACTION TO LYNCHING	19
2	BROADER REFORM: TRANSATLANTIC FABIANS AND POSITIVISTS	58
3	TRANSATLANTIC LIBERAL HUMANISTS AND RACE	90
4	JOHN E. BRUCE AND THE TRANSNATIONAL PROTEST OF BLACK PEOPLE	122
5	EMPIRE, MANLINESS, AND THE TRANSNATIONAL SEARCH FOR RIGHTS	164
CONCLUSION		
	REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS	220
BIBLIOGRAPHY		231

INTRODUCTION

MODERNITY, REFORM, RACE, AND EMPIRE

With his comment in 1883, future British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain summed up the challenges that late nineteenth century modernity presented to progressive society: “The politics of the future are social politics.”¹ The emergence of modernity brought a longstanding crisis of traditional authority to a head, undermining the belief that traditional laissez-faire strategies could successfully grapple with social problems. Technological advances, economic expansion, improved communication networks, and the triumph of science created new possibilities that fractured the Victorian laissez-faire confidence in religious institutions and deductive rationalism as the sources of authority. Individual cognition no longer seemed as relevant or vital to the fast-changing, “real” world “out there.” In response, reformers increasingly favored empirical, interventionist, and practical approaches to reform and began to clamor for social rights and justice rather than wait for the system to right itself according to laissez-faire assumptions.

Historian Daniel Rodgers stresses that these transformations did not occur in the isolation of individual nation-states, but rather transpired within a vibrant transatlantic

¹ Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Edward Russell, 22 January 1883. Found in James Louis Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, Vol. 1, *Chamberlain and Democracy* (London: Macmillan, 1932), 384-385. Joseph Chamberlain was the British Colonial Secretary from 1895 to 1902. He largely orchestrated the machinations of the Boer War, lobbied for Imperial Federation, and proposed tariff reform to “save” the Empire and the domestic economy of Great Britain. Chamberlain’s enthusiasm for social politics did not extend to black people. He responded to inquiries about the imperial treatment of black people with bland assurances that the Colonial Office was concerned about native welfare. Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 224.

discourse of reform.² Rodgers concentrates on the impact of continental European challenges to laissez-faire ideologies in the United States. Transatlantic connections that denounced laissez-faire approaches also formed between reformers in the United States and Great Britain.³ The British and American variants, while questioning laissez-faire and emphasizing immediate action, did not radically denounce the status quo to the extent of the continental strategies, but, instead, was committed to working within existing frameworks to promote change. Two groups pushing this shift were the “radically secular” Fabians and the Positivists. Both organizations stressed empiricism, intervention, and practical strategies; and both groups had adherents on both sides of the Atlantic. Yet, in the Anglo-American context, this transformation of reform ideas was neither straightforward nor complete. Many other reformers tried to steer a middle course of “new liberalism” that incorporated some changes into their reform strategy, while remaining securely grounded in the traditions of earlier reform.⁴ This group maintained an institutional presence in many of the leading universities in both the

² Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

³ Rodgers acknowledges this reality and his work is a welcome corrective to those historians, such as Melvyn Stokes, who contend that “It is ... difficult to see how American progressives and continental reformers could regard themselves as part of the same movement in anything but the very vaguest sense.” Melvyn Stokes, “American Progressives and the European Left,” *American Studies* 17:1 (1983): 27. Without question, Rodgers’ summation, “On both sides of the Atlantic, visions of moderating and reconstructing the individualism of the day were integral to the progressive project” implies the truly transatlantic nature of the movement. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 104.

⁴ For the seminal work on new liberalism, see Michael Freedman, *The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). For some updated thought see, Marc Stears and Stuart White, “New Liberalism Revisited,” in Henry Tam, ed. *Progressive Thought in the Global Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 36-54. For the Anglo-American connections, see Marc Stears, *Progressives, Pluralists, and the Problems of the State: Ideologies of Reform in the United States and Britain, 1909-1926* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

United States and Great Britain and continued to control crucial aspects of the booming print media that disseminated reform ideas. Both groups - the “new reformers” and the “new liberals” - would contribute to the emergence of a shared Anglo-American belief in progressivism.⁵

On a broader level, the emergence of modern life made empire another reality shared by Great Britain and the United States. Colonialism was central to the development of each nation-state. Modern Britain emerged out of the colonial experience in the Americas and beyond, and the United States became a modern nation through aggressive continental aggrandizement. Both national experiences involved complex racial components that only deepened in the late nineteenth century. In the period bounded by the European scramble for Africa in 1885, imperial problems of the Boer War, and the Philippines insurrection around the turn of the century, the United States and Great Britain took advantage of new technologies - best symbolized in the power of a wide ranging naval presence - to lead the unprecedented expansion of nation-states' search for imperial possessions.

⁵ For the unwieldy nature of the term progressivism, see Daniel T. Rodgers, “In Search of Progressivism,” *Reviews in American History*, 10:4 (1982), 113-132. The search may still on for progressivism. Perhaps the best definition is that of Robyn Muncy in her *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), which argues that the “there existed no unified progressive movement ... but a hodgepodge of coalitions working for changes that often contradicted each other,” 27. My work suggests that several themes characterize Anglo-American progressivism; such as, the belief in the improvement of society, the elevation of the expert, the recognition that some level of government intervention was necessary, the holistic view of society - yet a recognition of individual effort, and a commitment to reform of existing institutions, not their overturn. Michael McGerr echoes this definition, adding that, in the setting of the United States, the middle class used progressivism to work out “basic questions of human life,” and were committed, even radically so, that other “social classes” should be “transformed” according to the answers they found. Micheal McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), xiv-xv.

Historians of the United States are re-evaluating this period of high imperialism. This re-assessment corrects an exceptionalist historiography which long contended that the United States, mostly by virtue of the nation's revolutionary struggle against the colonial system of the British Empire (ironically – as mentioned - the colonial system that inaugurated what would later become the expansion of the United States across the continent), was not an imperial power.

This reevaluation is long overdue. Until recently, William Appleman Williams' 1955 lament largely held true for the historiography of American imperialism: "One of the central themes of American historiography is that there is no American empire."⁶ Indeed, outside of Williams's revisionist challenge to the Keenan school in diplomatic history, and a few other works most notably by Philip Foner and Walter LaFeber, the study of the United States as empire was noticeably absent from the mainstream of the historiography until the 1990s.⁷ Rather, the discussion of the United States as empire remained a sideshow in the narrative of national development.

The recent focus on the United States as an imperial actor has occurred largely because of a shift in the focus of the historical profession led by the post-structural engagement with discourse and postcolonial theory. Spurred on by Edward Said's *Orientalism*, the postcolonial perspective explores the systems of power that originate and perpetuate the discursive field of knowledge production, which creates and informs

⁶ William Appleman Williams "The Frontier Thesis and American Foreign Policy," *Pacific Historical Review* 24 (November 1955): 379.

⁷ Both Foner and Lafeber were prolific authors. For their seminal discussions of U.S. imperialism, see Philip S. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism, 1895-1902* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972) and Walter Lafeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963).

the shifting identities of both the colonizer and colonized.⁸ These perspectives draw heavily on poststructuralist theory - especially those of Michel Foucault - to understand power as not only material phenomena but as totalizing epistemological systems manifested through an array of cultural signs, symbols, and representations. Hence, postcolonial theorists subject imperial language to a critical analysis that reveals the discursive foundations of imperial power.

While most imperial historians have not fallen prey to the more radical post-structuralist claims that all texts and interpretations of text are fraught with a subjectivity that undermines the ability of the historical enterprise to objectively portray the past, they are becoming more sensitive to the implications of postcolonial theory and discourse analysis.⁹ Over the last ten years, this turn has moved the study of imperialism away from the mining and re-mining of the material causes of empire to a search to understand the cultural and interpretative schemas of imperialism. Moreover, imperial historians have complicated Foucault's implication that power is a totalizing system – which caused some post-colonial theorists to see imperial power as a monolithic, unvaried presence - by problematizing imperial power as a fragmented, contextually contingent process that emerged in the course of a complex dialogue

⁸ Some of the seminal texts of the now highly diverse field of postcolonial studies are Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), and Partha Chatterjee's *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁹ For a judicious appreciation of this engagement see Dane Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24:3 (1996): 345-363.

between metropole and colony.¹⁰ This so-called “cultural turn” has prompted a spate of monographs and inquiries that are forming into a new and exciting field of imperial, colonial, postcolonial, and decolonization studies. New voices in the field of postcolonial theory debunk the insulation created around the definitions of imperialism that catered to traditional ideas of nation-state aggression and economic power, which has helped to remove the blinders concerning the colonialism of the United States.

One notable example of this “cultural turn” is Amy Kaplan’s argument that the main theme of Perry Miller’s historical classic *Errand into the Wilderness* (which grounds American exceptionalism in the experience of isolated self-discovery) did not merely occur against the foil of other exterior settings but, instead, arises from an unacknowledged, but fundamental, intimacy with what is *not* American. Kaplan comments, “Miller represents a coherent America by constructing Africa [in the preface] as an imperial unconscious of national identity. From the decentering perspective of the African background, a close reading of Miller’s preface foregrounds the ways in which imperialism has been simultaneously formative and disavowed in the foundational discourse of America studies.”¹¹ The theoretical implications of colonial discourse analysis have led some historians to assert that the United States has long

¹⁰ In fact, Foucault’s work is virtually silent about imperialism. Ann Stoler successfully applies Foucault to the imperial setting in her work, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995). Also, see her and Frederick Cooper’s “Between Colony and Metropole: Rethinking a Research Agenda” in Ann Stoler and Frederick Cooper, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA: University of Californian press, 1997).

¹¹ Amy Kaplan. “Left Alone with America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture,” in Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Culture of United States Imperialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 5.

been implicated in the imperial project and that the denial of this project, however subconsciously, is fundamental to the development of the United States' national meta-narrative. Specifically, many historians today invoke the cultural perspective to re-define the United States as complicit in transnational empire and, thus, contributing to the imperative for historians to approach the study of the United States outside her mythical exceptionalism – most notably in the refashioning of the Gilded Age and Progressive eras as the age of American “empire.”¹²

Moreover, the idea of the suffusing nature of power forced historians to look for imperial connections that transcend traditional boundaries. Empowered by this imperative, historians such as David Armitage call for a transnational understanding of imperialism, specifically with relation to the affinities that Great Britain and the United States share.¹³ Because Great Britain and the United States both have self-congratulatory national identities that often underwrote imperial projects with desultory effect on non-European peoples, comparative and connective studies reveal how similar and dissimilar constructions of language and power informed their respective colonial spaces. This inquiry can help counter the mythic nature of each country's exceptional meta-narrative. Armitage's exhortation to understand the continuities of the Atlantic World concentrates on linking British and American histories before 1783, and excellent research has resulted. Armitage's suggestion is hardly temporally restricted,

¹² See Ian Tyrell's argument for American non-exceptionalism in his, “American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History,” *American Historical Review* 96 (October 1991): 1031-1055.

¹³ David Armitage, “Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?” *American Historical Review* 104:2 (April 1999): 427-445.

but the comparative impetus is only recently influencing historians of later periods in a similar fashion.¹⁴

This study broadens Armitage's argument and analyzes the relationship between people of Anglo-Saxon heritage and black populations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contributing to our understanding of the ideological attachments to imperial power shared by Great Britain and the United States. Race is fundamental to the colonial encounter and nothing helped navigate its practical contours more than the "science" of evolution that developed from the theories of Charles Darwin. These notions strengthened the apologetics of Empire by moving evolutionist theory out of the realm of biology and natural history to social theory. Broadly conceived, this appropriation fell into two camps. The first school crafted a theory that extended biological competition to group-wide struggle. This popular thinking underwrote much of the nation-state imperialism through its belief that competition between peoples was part of the inexorable nature of human progress. This view held that racial characteristics were, effectively, quasi-permanent and that the stronger races would

¹⁴ The relevance of comparing British and American imperialism was the subject of a November 2000 conference sponsored by Johns Hopkins University entitled "Pairing Empires: Britain and the United States, 1857-1947." The September 2001 issue of the *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* published some of the papers delivered at the conference as well as an opening introduction by Paul Kramer and John Plotz. The conference focused "on the intersections between empires as contemporaries rather than separate entities... [which] made possible interdisciplinary, as well as interimperial, discussions between literary critics, historians, anthropologists and others." Paul Kramer and John Plotz, "Pairing Empires: Britain and the United States, 1857-1947" *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 2:1 (September, 2001): 3. Also see, Paul A. Kramer "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910," *Journal of American History* 88:4 (March, 2002): 1315-1353.

often push the weaker races into extinction.¹⁵ The second position held that mankind originated from a common ancestry, that racial characteristics were mutable, and that progress was not based on theories of group-wide competition but, rather, on a belief in individual evolution. These overlapping positions relied on racial hierarchies that placed Anglo-Saxons at the top in the late nineteenth century. Those that saw the Anglo-Saxon involved in a world-wide racial competition more easily accepted instances of colonial aggression, violence, and exploitation, while those that projected the Anglo-Saxon as the model to which all other races should aspire were more prone to criticize colonial excess. This work explores both, but focuses on reformers dedicated to the belief in a basic level of equality and concentrates on the recovery of voices that demanded immediate action from what often became a temporally open-ended reform model of paternalism and uplift.

The ascendancy of the Anglo-Saxon in the racial hierarchy endorsed not only a like-minded approval of imperialism in both countries, but also created similar colonial milieus. While British and U.S. expectations of empire varied and all colonial contexts had important differences, this study argues that the social, economic, and political

¹⁵ In an 1898 speech, British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury divided the nations of the world into the “living and the dying.” Found in Bernard Porter, *Britannia’s Burden, The Political Evolution of Modern Britain* (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), 121. Many other powerful people in the United States and the British Empire, including Theodore Roosevelt and Alfred Milner - High Commissioner of South Africa during the Boer War - agreed with scientific racism and its cultural ideology, Social Darwinism, that argued that the push of Anglo-Saxons into the imperial spaces of the world would result in the excusable extinction of “lower” races. These men also mixed a veneer of “uplift” ideologies when necessary to legitimize Anglo-Saxon imperialism. For Roosevelt’s views see Thomas Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982). For Milner’s views see, Carroll Quigley, *The Anglo-American Establishment: From Rhodes to Cliveden* (New York: Books in Focus, 1981).

space of white domination perpetuated spaces that oppressed peoples of color in broadly similar fashion. More important to a study of reform ideologies, both Great Britain and the United States perpetuated these conditions of inequality even as they evoked their self-proclaimed belief in equality. Perhaps more problematic is the fact that, theoretically, in Great Britain and her colonies black peoples had equal status as subjects of the Crown and in the United States black peoples had equal status as citizens. This study explores the discursive space created between the contradictory notion of de jure rights and de facto discrimination that existed in the colonial projects of both empires. By understanding the similar hopes embedded in subject and citizen this study asks a simple question that gives complicated, often unsatisfying, answers: how did reformers discuss the rights of black peoples in the post-emancipated, yet colonial, Anglo-American setting?

As pressing and apparent as this question may appear, the issue of rights for black peoples did not figure prominently by the time of the Berlin Conference of 1884. Mainstream society in both Great Britain and the United States viewed their experiments with expanded black rights through the lens of their failings in Jamaica, culminating in the violence of the Morant Bay rebellion and reprisals of 1865, and the “world turned upside” difficulties of Reconstruction in the American South. These experiences fueled a reassertion of ideas of racial hierarchy and severely restricted the discussion of political rights for those mired below the top echelons of “civilization.”

Reformers concerned with the plight of black peoples drew mostly on sentiment and an appeal to morality inherited from the abolitionist movement. A commitment to

the idea of the unity of man before God engendered a deep ethos of humanitarian compassion for oppressed peoples. This concern centered in religious groups in both the United States and Great Britain who shared transatlantic connections, such as the Society of Friends. The strategies of these groups appealed to morality to seek redress for wrongs committed against black peoples. The modernity of the late nineteenth century, however, had reduced the effectiveness of groups that still claimed authority, ultimately, through the power of God. Thus their calls for humanitarian protections seemed slightly anachronistic. More importantly, religious-grounded protest centered mostly on protections, and thus was content to provide solace in the form of God and his grace rather than call for the immediate granting of political rights intended by a post-emancipated world. The movement away from moralist strategies in favor of secular strategies sought not only to alleviate the extremes of inequality, as manifested in violence, but also to create a practical realm of change that could address the deeper realities of that inequality.

The pervasive violence in the imperial world of the late nineteenth century kept humanitarians busy. After the Conference of Berlin in 1884, the colonial contest reached a fevered pace that intensified the mistreatment of and violence toward colonial populations. Some of the more glaring examples were the increased transgressions in the Congo, the violence against the Matabele peoples in Southern Rhodesia, the systems of forced labor in the mining districts of colonial South Africa, and the continued aggression toward indigenous populations in Australia.

One especially pronounced manifestation of violence was the rise of lynching in the American South. As its frequency expanded in the 1890s, it became a critical issue that attracted the attention of reformers in Great Britain who expressed concern about the condition of black peoples in the United States. The publicized violence of lynching and African-American woman Ida B. Wells' anti-lynching campaign in Great Britain helped convince British reformers that the proliferation of lynching was evidence that their American cousins were not living up to the standard of civilization fitting the Anglo-Saxon.¹⁶ Lynching in the American South thus drew together reformers in Great Britain and the United States concerned with issues of race into an international discourse.

Lynching also drew the attentions of both metropolitan and colonial apologists for white domination. These like-minded whites were extremely anxious about the lingering implications of emancipation and, in an effort to reinforce racial boundaries, constructed a narrative of rape to exonerate and justify the act of lynching. This narrative depicted the black male as a "savage" who preyed on helpless white females. This link to savagery placed black males and, by extension black peoples, far removed from rights of civilization, including those of citizenship. The possible incursion of black peoples on white colonial privilege in the American South magnified by the

¹⁶ For more on Ida B. Wells' anti-lynching campaigns in Great Britain see Caroline Bressey, "A Strange and Bitter Crop: Ida B. Wells' Anti-Lynching Tours, Britain 1893 and 1894," *Center for Capital Punishment Studies Occasional Papers Series* Volume 1 (2003), <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/ccps/Caroline%20Bressey.pdf> (accessed November 1, 2006). Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Alfreda M. Duster ed., *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), and Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

power of the lynching narrative, however, fostered a reemergence of the discussion of political rights for black peoples. Indeed, the comparison of the American South as a testing ground for Anglo-Saxon relationships with emancipated blacks had been creeping back into the discourse of British society in its struggle to define the roles of peoples of color in their imperial spaces. Colonial violence in the form of lynching prompted protests that unavoidably raised the issues of race and rights. This dissertation explores how these protests were just one part of a growing transnational movement that began to question the plight of black peoples in post-emancipated societies.

Chapter One uses the highly publicized 1893 lynching of Henry Smith in Paris, Texas as an entry point to analyze how transatlantic reformers discussed the meaning of violence against colonized bodies, the rights of black peoples in a colonial world, and the connections of these rights to the larger question of Empire. The initial protest of lynching rarely denounced the gendered argument of rape and retained significant adherence to calls for religiosity-based protections. The discourse also introduced discussions of black political rights, and, while it hardly clamored for immediate action, it did use a body of language that problematized the meanings of citizenship.

Chapter Two moves from the commentary on the lynching of Henry Smith to the wider context of Anglo-American reform to track how this problematization of black rights played out in the broader discourse. The transatlantic Fabian movement was at the forefront of the new reformer emphasis resulting from the modern changes of the late nineteenth century. Their agenda placed emphasis on a practical and scientific

understanding of society, government intervention, and the call for political rights. The transatlantic Positivist movement also challenged laissez-faire reform strategies and called for an even more radical appreciation of empiricism to understand the social relations of man. Fabians and Positivists on both sides of the Atlantic rarely addressed the topic of lynching directly and tended to subsume it in the larger “negro question” that many social commentators discussed in the late nineteenth century. Both of these groups embraced an evolutionist view of man, denounced wanton competition, and clamored for immediate action with relation to political rights. Furthermore, they loosely connected the question of race to their criticism of imperialism, which peaked during the Boer War and the War of 1898. These groups contributed to the emergence of a rights discourse, despite the fact that their motivation revolved around the corrections of class issues in the metropolitan setting and their hesitancy to include colonial peoples of color in their vision of social justice.

Chapter Three evaluates how those reformers who remained attached to older ideas of the laissez-faire tradition adapted to the challenges of late nineteenth century modernity, and thus remained a viable force in transatlantic reform. As laissez-faire doctrines stemmed from the broad liberal tradition, which, at least in theory, promoted the idea of an inclusive political space, those liberal reformers left standing in the tumult of the late nineteenth century remained a voice that deserves attention, especially in relation to race and empire. These “new liberals,” despite the changes, did not forego the humanist belief in the individual. This belief in the sanctity of the individual combined with the commitment to progress propelled many ideas of colonial uplift in

the nineteenth century. These liberal humanists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries never renounced their belief in good empire; however, they became harsh critics of what they saw as colonial exploitation. This tradition moved away from religiosity as the answer to the problems facing black peoples and adopted decidedly secular approaches to questions of race. Liberal humanists also commented on the violence of lynching, the “negro question,” and the implications of empire for colonized populations. Their answer was to argue for legal protections for black peoples and to replace religion with education as the key to the notion of uplift. Education essentially operated as another temporally open litmus test for black peoples and the discussion of black political rights amidst a colonial world slipped away from immediacy.

Chapters Four and Five analyze how a transnational group of black people began to create their own version of reform against the backdrop of Anglo-American reform. This study uses the correspondence of John E. Bruce – a prolific black journalist in the United States – to investigate the development and arguments of this movement. Bruce formed transnational connections with many black people within British imperial space. The modern backdrop that forced changes in reform strategies also affected the voice of black peoples in their search for reform strategies that could help alleviate their position in a colonial world.

Despite the modern changes of transatlantic reform, discussions of the plight of black peoples still stressed protections and sought to create empathy through appeal to religious-based morality. The extension of social justice rarely trickled down to inform the appeal for black peoples compromised by the Anglo-Saxon world. John Bruce and

his cohort never lost touch with religious arguments; however, they began to denounce the machinations of the white-led Christian mission. This move not only condemned aspects of Christianity that deeply informed colonialism, but also argued that black peoples were more in touch with true Christian ideals.

Bruce and his transnational movement argued that the language of religion was losing power in the modern world and that the new calls for social justice clearly applied to the struggle of black peoples. The power of the transatlantic belief of preparedness – namely education, which had supplanted religion as the measuring stick to many reformers – continued to compromise Bruce’s transnational social movement and this shift to social justice occurred in fits and starts. These efforts, however, worked themselves out in a transnational fashion, which helped avoid a slippage back to the ideas of metropolitan reform that offered platforms for change, but rarely stood by their implications for colonized peoples. This transnational voice of black peoples morphed a “rights of man” language from a primary association with religious guarantee into a modern, secular argument that incorporated a sense of immediacy into the implications of citizenship in a post-emancipated, yet colonial, world.

The conclusion shows how this transnational movement directly related to the development of a human rights discourse. Historians who explore the evolution of human rights note that race was fundamental to the sweep of imperialism. Specifically, Western powers saw black populations through distinct racial lenses that legitimized violence toward racial “inferiors.” After centuries of worldwide slavery, the historical reality that whites were never slaves produced a powerful paradigm of white superiority

and white domination. Even as slavery extinguished, Tocqueville's observation of the United States sums up the larger Western, racialized worldview in the nineteenth century: "Slavery recedes, but the prejudice to which it has given birth is immovable."¹⁷ Indeed, as Paul Gordon Lauren explains, the resolutions to end the slave trade articulated at the 1815 Congress of Vienna were rhetorical and did not create a standard of observation or enforcement. Another seventy-five years passed before the 1890 multi-national Brussels Conference issued the General Act for the Repression of the African Slave Trade, which forced nations into concrete and verifiable action.¹⁸ If it took almost a century to create a consensus to stop the slave trade – thought of by many as the most heinous of violations - then it is little wonder that extension of other rights to black peoples involved a protracted struggle in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Human rights theorists discuss the transition from moral rhetoric that defends human rights to their concrete imposition in judicial code or legislative edict. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the assertion of nation-state sovereignty in the pursuit of imperial influence minimized the chance for international legal agreements, especially those that accord rights to colonized peoples who often complicated the practice of imperialism.¹⁹ Furthermore, the racial lenses of progressive politics seldom

¹⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 1, ed. John Spencer, trans. Henry Reeve, 4th ed. (New York: J. & H. G. Langley, 1843), 342-343.

¹⁸ Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 45-46.

¹⁹ Jack Donnelly notes the power of statist models of sovereignty: "The absence of human rights from modern international relations for its first three centuries [The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948] was the direct result

included black peoples in their call for political rights, government intervention, and immediacy to correct the woes of modern society and, as mentioned, threw the question back to the older tradition of protections.

Human rights theorists also argue that ideas of moral sentiment must combine with secular, political imperative to create the conditions necessary for consensus and, ultimately, enforcement. Generally, the historiography of human rights describes the nineteenth century as the “humanitarian” backdrop for more effective projections – those that combine the moral and the political – of human rights for colonized peoples that arose in the modern, twentieth century. These efforts, however, could not have occurred without some antecedents, which - specifically in relation to the human rights of colonial peoples – involved the de-legitimizing of Empire.

The transnational group that involved John Bruce contributed to this de-legitimization with arguments that did not remain grounded in traditional religious sentiment, but began to incorporate the changes wrought by modernity to the broader reform tradition. These arguments began to problematize the very nature of liberal democracy and clamored for political rights implied by the status of subject and citizen. This unique voice from the African diaspora contributed to the de-legitimization of the colonial project. This study, by examining this transition from humanitarian to rights-based protest through the lens of international discourse on race and Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, contributes to the history of reform, Empire, colonial violence, and human rights.

of an international order based in sovereign territorial states.” Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 26.

CHAPTER ONE
THE DISCOURSE OF VIOLENCE: TRANSATLANTIC REACTIONS TO
LYNCHING

On January 28 1893, the community and authorities of Paris, Texas charged Henry Smith, a black man, with the rape and murder of a young, white girl. After a three-day manhunt, Smith's pursuers captured him in Arkansas and placed him on a guarded railcar back to Texas. As scaffolding - marked prominently with JUSTICE! - was being erected in Paris, small mobs harassed Smith's train in towns along the route back from Arkansas. Upon arrival in Paris several people, including the mayor and the father of the girl, lynched and burned Smith in front of a throng of thousands. Immediately after the lynching, a locally produced, but widely distributed, pamphlet subtitled *The Facts in the Case*, described the event in detail.¹

Lynching was one particularly heinous method used to counter possible intrusions on white society in the American South. To many Southern white people, emancipation and the subsequent passage of constitutional amendments regarding citizenship and voting rights symbolized the political, social, economic, and cultural

¹ *The Facts in the Case of the Horrible Murder of Little Myrtle Vance and its Fearful Expiation at Paris, Texas, February 1st, 1893, with Photographic Illustrations* (Paris, TX: P. L. James, 1893). This pamphlet contains details, commentary, photographs, and excerpts from local and national newspapers regarding the lynching. Grace Elizabeth Hale calls the lynching of Smith "the founding event in the history of spectacle lynching" and stresses how the event's reproduction in a print and photograph allowed the wider white population to share in the modern simultaneity of the event and its all-important narrative. See her *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 207.

threat of a society “turned upside down.”² As a result, the number of black males lynched rose dramatically in the post-Reconstruction years.³ To lynching apologists the act, and the narrative surrounding it, pronounced the inferiority of black people, ritually exorcised the black body from the psychic white community,⁴ and confirmed the belief that they were far removed from a body politic and its conferring agency.⁵ On another level, the ability to consign black bodies to death struck at the very core of subjectivity by denying black people possession of individuality or a sense of self: prerequisites for inclusion into western, white-led society. By acting out a performance ritual on the objectified black body,⁶ white society exploited the unspeakable power of

² The formal status of citizenship for black people and voting rights for black males was ambiguous for several years after the end of the Civil War, as the nation came to grips with the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments of the United States. Proposed on January 31, 1865 and ratified on December 6, 1865, the 13th amendment prohibited slavery. Proposed on June 13, 1866 and ratified on July 9, 1868, the 14th amendment guaranteed the rights of citizens and prescribed reduced representation in Congress for states that denied voting rights to any male over 21 years of age. Proposed on February 26, 1869 and ratified on February 2, 1870, the 15th amendment ensured the right to vote regardless of race, color, or previous servitude.

³ Tolnay and Beck estimate that there were 2,264 black males lynched in the American South from 1882 to 1930 and that 1890s witnessed more lynching than any other decade. See Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynching, 1882-1930* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995), Appendix C.

⁴ “Ritual” and “exorcism” borrowed from two seminal works on lynching: Jacqueline Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jesse Daniel Ames and the Women’s Campaign Against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 139-145 and Trudier Harris, *Exorcising Blackness: Historical and Literary Lynching and Burning Rituals* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1984), 11-19.

⁵ For discussions of the symbolic meaning of the black body see, Catherine A. Holland, *The Body Politic: Foundings, Citizenship, and Difference in the American Political Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 139-169.

⁶ For works on the literary reproductions and meanings of lynching see, Mary Esteve, *The Aesthetics and Politics of the Crowd in American Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 118-152.

violence to affirm its own identity as the body politic,⁷ to elevate the white individual as the source of subjectivity, to designate the black person as different and outside the pale of active citizenry, and to reassert the traditional power of white supremacy.⁸

Lynching – as much in its narrative as in the act itself – became a powerful tool for projecting racial difference. *The Facts in the Case* provides a summation of the narrative that sought to continue white domination in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of this narrative’s power directly relates to the “world-destroying” nature of pain discussed by Elaine Scarry: “Whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language.”⁹ A witness to the lynching of Henry Smith, struggling to find words to describe the event, echoed this “unsharability”: “No language can correctly describe the fearful retribution visited upon the monster who committed a crime.”¹⁰ This inability of language – the disconnect between event and representation – helps us to understand that the construction of what acts of violence *mean* is highly germane to discussions of lynching.¹¹ If narratives can be created that fill the disconnect surrounding violent acts – like the above quote that emphasizes the “monster” nature of those who are lynched

⁷ Judith Butler argues that the designation of “abject beings” – those excluded from the livable zones of society – is fundamental to the constitution of the subject. See, most particularly, her introduction to *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

⁸ For a recent and insightful comment on the dense subject of passive and active citizenry, see Immanuel Wallerstein, “Citizens All? Citizens Some!” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45:4 (2003): 650-679.

⁹ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 29: 4.

¹⁰ *Dallas News*, 28 July 1893, found in *The Facts in the Case*, 54.

¹¹ See Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998) for an inquiry into how the control of the “slippage” following violence is fundamental to construction of power, memory, and identity.

and binds this condemnation within the “fearful” violence of the lynching - they become endowed with a profundity due to the very world-destroying nature of pain. How the image and meaning of lynching was controlled and contested, therefore, is of integral importance to understanding the racial boundaries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Facts in the Case opened with a description of “The Negro” Henry Smith that reflected exclusionary suppositions of white society. First, the article opined that cranial capacity was integral to cognition as, in the case of Smith, a small head affirmed animalistic qualities.¹² Second, the passage conveyed the popular assumption that alcohol loosened the non-human tendencies of the black male and led him away from his place as servant.¹³ Third, the account relegated Smith to outside the bounds of Western rationality by the objectification of him as more body than mind.¹⁴ The description dripped with the racial assumptions of the day:

¹² Phrenology argued that individual function corresponded with different portions of the brain and looked to some form of measurement to compare the “organs” of the brain. While phrenologists immediately made group-wide assumptions based on individual differences, they did not believe that one simple measurement accurately foretold intellectual capacity. Regardless, by the late nineteenth century, many scientists and most of society in both Great Britain and the United States assumed that skull size related to mental capacity. See Nancy Stephan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 20-29. For a understanding of how phrenology affected popular culture in the United States, see Charles Colbert, *A Measure of Protection: Phrenology and the Fine Arts in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

¹³ Temperance was a large part of the transatlantic attempt at social control in the late nineteenth century. Beyond its application in the United States, British reform movements concerned with Africa followed two main thrusts: keeping firearms out of the continent and discouraging native consumption of alcohol.

¹⁴ bell hooks argues that colonialism constrains the black to the bodily realm of Cartesian dualism: “racist colonization has deemed black folks more body than mind,” which, in itself, places blacks outside the pale of western rationalism. bell hooks, “Feminism Inside: Toward a Black Body Politic” in Thelma Golden, ed., *Black Male: Representations of*

A brawny, muscular body, surmounted by a small head, developed wholly in the direction of the animal passions and appetites; devoid of any humanizing sensibilities, or sympathies, a quiet industrious servant when sober, a fiend incarnate when in liquor, such, briefly stated, is a view of the general character of Henry Smith, whose name and fame have been sounded down every avenue of the civilized world since February 1, 1893.¹⁵

Ultimately, Smith, and by extension, the black male, was depicted as different from the white and was a distinct threat to the order of the “civilized” world.

The ascendancy of the Anglo-Saxon in the constructed racial hierarchy of the late nineteenth century placed Great Britain and the United States at the pinnacle of the "civilized" world. This position endorsed not only a like-minded approval of imperialism, but also created similar colonial milieus. Indeed, the American South was a colonial space. In a time of overt white expansion, the position of African-Americans in the late nineteenth century American South fit Du Bois' definition of colonial peoples: “[they are] poverty-stricken, with the lowest standards of living; they are for the most part illiterate and unacquainted with the systematized knowledge of modern science; and they have little or no voice in their own government, with a consequent lack of freedom of development.”¹⁶ For Du Bois, white supremacy, through violence, discrimination, and exploitation, consistently created pockets of colonial peoples throughout the modern world. Following this definition, the American South in the late

Masculinity in Contemporary American Art (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1994), 129.

¹⁵ *The Facts in the Case*, 3.

¹⁶ See W.E.B. Du Bois, “Colonialism, Democracy, and Peace after the War,” in Herbert Aptheker ed., *Against Racism: Unpublished Essays, Papers, Addresses: 1887-1961* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985), 229-224. For the relevance of Du Bois to postcolonial theory see Reiland Rabaka “Deliberately Using the Word Colonial in a Much Broader Sense: W.E.B. Du Bois’s Concept of Semi-Colonialism as Critique of and Contribution to Postcolonialism,” <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v712/rabaka.html> accessed September 25, 2006.

nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries was analogous to other colonial spaces of white domination. Moreover, lynching became a flashpoint that drew the attention of both metropolitan and colonial apologists for white domination as well as reformer critics of violence. In short, lynching was a colonial issue that echoed across the wider “civilized” world, had significance beyond the meanings apparent as an “American race ritual,” and is a fertile area to explore how transatlantic apologists and critics engaged with the topic of colonial violence.¹⁷

Great Britain was also dealing with the implications of emancipation in the colonial spaces of its Empire. After the Emancipation Act of 1833, all peoples, both in the metropole and the colony were British subjects.¹⁸ This status required a fealty to the British crown while, in return, guaranteeing basic protections. The British legal code did not specifically define citizenship or just who was a citizen. What this status implied was, therefore, highly contested terrain throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁹ In the last half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, citizenship became paramount in both discussions of self-government in the Empire and of reform movements in the metropole, and correlated, most simply, with the right to vote. The vote meant much more than the permission of the ballot. In fact, suffrage symbolized the political, social, and cultural rights of active citizenry.²⁰

¹⁷ This phrase used by John F. Callahan in his entry on “Lynching” in William L. Andrews, Francis Smith Foster, and Trudier Harris, eds., *The Oxford Companion to African-American Literature* (New York: Oxford University, 1997), 466.

¹⁸ The British Emancipation Act of 1833 took effect on August 1, 1834.

¹⁹ See Catherine Hall, “The Nation Within and Without,” in Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendell, *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, and Gender and the Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 178-233.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 180.

The grand experiment in citizenship for black peoples in the British Empire occurred in Jamaica where, by the 1840s, black men had limited voting rights and a small representation in the House of Assembly. Whatever inclusive promise these rights portended, however, soon slipped amidst the declining economic fortunes of free-labor sugar production, the fear caused by the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the violence of the Morant Bay rebellion and reprisals of 1865, and the general disbelief that black populations had advanced out of their “half-civilized” status.²¹ In March of 1866, Parliament declared Jamaica a Crown Colony, with a significantly more restricted electorate - which excluded all of the island’s black population - selecting only half of the governing Legislative Council.²² As the United States embarked on its experiment in black citizenship after the Civil War, Great Britain had differentiated its colonial populations away from the political, social, and cultural empowerment of citizenship.

Following the hopes and failings of Reconstruction, moreover, the inclusive promise of the abolitionist slogan “Am I not a man and a brother?” gave way to transatlantic hesitancy concerning just how “prepared” black people were for the responsibility of citizenship.²³ Aided by the hardening contours of scientific racism, late nineteenth century white society shied away from the universality that the anti-

²¹ Ibid., 200-210, 227.

²² Ibid., 224-225. Reflecting the complicated racializing of the citizenship question, James Patterson Smith argues that the British metropolitan government felt that “Black West Indians could no more be trusted with their own destinies than Indians or the Irish.” Indeed, Britain had stripped twelve of the fourteen West Indies possessions of their local charters, converting them to Crown Colony status by 1877. See James Patterson Smith, “The Liberals, Race, and Political Reform in the British West Indies, 1866-1974,” *Journal of Negro History* 79:2 (1994): 141.

²³ See Christine Bolt, *The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction: A Study in Anglo-American Co-operation, 1833-77* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 140: 152: 169-170.

slavery movement implied and, instead, retained exclusionary positions that had long designated black people as different.²⁴ This exclusionary marking helped underwrite the militarism and violence of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's imperial surge, which produced consistent brutality toward colonial peoples. The proliferation of lynching in the American South, the transgressions in the Belgian Congo, and the wars against native populations in Rhodesia are some examples of how white domination and its supporting language of racial difference perpetuated violence in the late nineteenth century.

It is important to understand the formidable web of scientific racism that supported this narrative of difference. By the late nineteenth century, science had become the main arbiter of truth, supplanting early notions of rational or religious epistemologies. The cultural and social norms and values that informed the rush to science and the scientific racism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, were not new. Instead they were an extension of a long tradition of white presuppositions that, at the core, relegated black people to inferior status. Audrey Smedley argues that this science gave “credence and legitimacy” to earlier “folk classifications” that had been a way of ordering different human populations.²⁵ Most

²⁴ Catherine Hall states: “... while notions of the universal family of man and brotherhood and sisterhood of black and white lived on in the culture, they had significantly lost ground to other conceptions of racial difference.” See her, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 424. For the embedded nature of exclusionary racism in Western culture see David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966).

²⁵ Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 27-28. “Difference” in this context relates to superiority and inferiority, not the later Boasian ideas of functional difference.

importantly, both the “folk’ and “science” of race arose from the colonial experience: “As a worldview, it was a cosmological ordering system structured out of the political, economic, and social experiences of peoples who had emerged as expansionist, conquering dominating nations on a worldwide quest for wealth and power.”²⁶ Arising partly from their antecedent and contemporary imperialism, the United States and Great Britain in the late nineteenth century shared a racial worldview, which the epistemological authority of science only hardened.²⁷

The science that underwrote white society’s racial lenses was, however, hardly monolithic or static. In the first half of the nineteenth century, arguments concerning the origin of man raged between monogenists and polygenists. The monogenist position operated from a religious “unity of man” before God position to argue that man was of one species and that declination – a falling away from God – explained differences of man. The newer views of the polygenists, however, argued that the races of man originated as separate species. Indicating the growing power of science and the gradual dissipation of religious surety, polygenist theory began to whittle away at the monogenist position in a decidedly transatlantic fashion. Beginning with Charles White in England, carried on by Samuel Morton and Louis Agassiz in America, and George Cuvier in France, committed polygenists published a flood of material that argued for the multiple origin theory of man. By mid-century, polygenism had the upper hand in the debate and three works were enormously popular and were read on both sides of the

²⁶ Ibid., 26.

²⁷ Smedley’s reference to North America in his title is misleading. His work is a good synthesis of a wider racial view, particularly the Anglo-American perspective.

Atlantic: Josiah Nott's and George Gliddens' *Types of Mankind* (New York, 1854) Robert Knox's *Races of Man* (London, 1850) and Comte Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau's *Essay on the Inequality of Man* (Paris, 1853-1855.)

Whether theories of race were monogenist or polygenist, nineteenth-century thought before the advent and acceptance of Darwinian evolution concurred that human species were created and fixed in an unchanging natural order.²⁸ More importantly, nineteenth-century pre-Darwinian science used these ideas of fixed characteristics to differentiate the races of men.²⁹ The monogenist position argued that the fall from grace had projected the "negro" in a profound and virtually irreversible path of degeneration. As explained, the polygenists argued that the "negro" was not of the same taxonomic grouping as the white. Hence, while the polygenist "scientific" theory perhaps portended harder and faster boundaries, both the monogenesis falling away schema and the polygenesis branches of humankind model relegated black people to a decidedly inferior status. As Smedley emphasizes: "Race in the collective consciousness had already assumed the same dimensions of differentiation as 'species,' even without a change in terminology."³⁰

²⁸ Although there are qualitative differences between the two views, what is most telling is not whether the species of man were of common origin (monogenesis) or of different origin and, thus, different species (polygenesis), but rather that, in the context of the nineteenth century, the taxonomic classification of man was largely superfluous to the like-minded worldview that sought difference.

²⁹ Smedley, 230. Smedley draws from George Stocking's seminal work, *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968). Stocking argues that, by the mid-nineteenth century, the polygenist view reigned supreme in scientific circles.

³⁰ Smedley, 237. Louis Menand, in his *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrer, Straus and Giroux, 2001) acknowledges the non-egalitarian nature of both views, but argues that the change in terminology is important: "There will not seem, in the end, to be very much

Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection, moreover, did not stop racialized ideologies of differentiation from manipulating scientific doctrine. Faced with Darwin's denunciation of monogenist creationism and polygenist multiple origins, racial thought appropriated evolution to promote similar racial hierarchies like those underwritten by the degeneration argument of the monogenists and the inferior species reasoning of the polygenists.³¹ Couched now in the language of race evolution, competition-based theories rendered black people expendable in the inexorable "struggle for existence." Other theories embraced the evolutionist implication of racial uplift but usually relegated black populations to temporally open-ended periods of tutelage, which often masked deeper motives of exploitation. The scientific positioning of black peoples on the lowest point of the evolutionary scale - echoing earlier racial theories - permeated late nineteenth century Anglo-American society and helped to inform social violence, like lynching, that excluded them from the family of white civilization.

The well-worn reasoning of racial hierarchy alone, however, could not subdue the implications of a prospective black citizenry and apologists for white domination conflated racial suppositions with a powerful gendered argument into their lynching

to choose between monogenism and polygenism. Both assume the existence of deeply ingrained racial differences, and both are hierarchical. But polygenism is the more radical theory, because it supports the contention not just that black people and white people have evolved (or devolved) at different rates, but that they belong to an entirely different species." 104-105.

³¹ Indeed, in the midst of the evolution challenge, George Stocking details how polygenist doctrine remained popular in the late nineteenth century. See his essay "The Persistence of Polygenist Thought in Post-Darwinian Anthropology," in Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution*, 42-69.

narrative.³² This apologetic argued that the black man was a savage, sexualized rapist who preyed on the vulnerability of white women. Representative of this argument was W. Cabell Bruce's quote from the monthly *North American Review*: "If lynching is more prevalent in the South than elsewhere, it is because . . . in the last year or so, the negro there has violated the chastity of white women with such appalling frequency, and under circumstances so unutterably shocking to human nature, that the white race has been goaded into a degree of excited feeling."³³ Apologists like Bruce quickly reconstructed and controlled the narrative of lynching through the powerfully gendered charge of rape.

These arguments were not confined to the Southern press, but found publication in the most respected periodicals of the day. In the late nineteenth century worldview, sexual relations between a black man and a white woman were taboo and apologists used the unspeakable act of rape as the ironclad justification for lynching. The ability to reinvigorate the "savage" status of the black male and the successful campaign to label him a rapist of white women worked together in the apologist attempt to control infringement upon the privileges of white colonial society.³⁴ The headline coming on

³² Ann Stoler convincingly argues that gendered arguments grew as colonial control slipped: "Concern over the protection of white women intensified during real and perceived crises of control – threats to the internal cohesion of the European communities or infringements on its borders." See her, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 58.

³³ W. Cabell Bruce, "Lynch Law in the South," *North American Review* 155 (1892): 379-380.

³⁴ Jacqueline Dowd Hall effectively argues that the lynching not only sought to control black males, but also looked to constrain black and white women to subordinate positions in white, male society: "The racism that caused white men to lynch black men cannot be understood apart from the sexism that that informed their policing of white women and their exploitation of black women." In Jacqueline Dowd Hall, *Revolt against Chivalry*, xx.

the heels of the Smith lynching in 1893 - “No Negro Rapists Can Live in Texas” - is not only emblematic of the gendered argument that cemented racial differentiation, but also applicable to colonial space far removed from Texas.³⁵

For example, in Southern Rhodesia the relationship of the white settlers to the indigenous Matebele and Mashona peoples arose from a “race crucible” that was, in many ways, analogous to the racial setting of the American South.³⁶ White Rhodesians, drawing on arguments that elevated their “on the ground” experience as uniquely insightful, had a long-standing battle with reform-minded Exeter Hall over the treatment of native populations, were committed to stark ideas of social control, and took interest in the race relations of the American South. *The Rhodesian Herald*, directly after the lynching of Henry Smith in 1893, justified lynching as palatable “in regions where law and an efficient executive either would not or could not flourish.”³⁷ The opinion, however, did reference due process in its commentary: “To a native it is greater punishment to die by the slow and calm processes of the law than to meet immediate death by the violence of many,” and Southern Rhodesians ultimately codified methods of punishment for charges related to the “black peril.”³⁸ By 1903, the

³⁵ *The Facts in the Case*, 46.

³⁶ Southern Rhodesia and the American South shared many similar structural realities: labor-intensive economies, residential and economic segregation, white-dominated legal and social hierarchies, and an anxious distrust of black populations. The phrase “race crucible” borrowed from Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1987), 137.

³⁷ *The Rhodesian Herald*, 28 April 1893.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Southern Rhodesian legislative body enacted a law that made *attempted* rape punishable by death.³⁹

Instead of the extra-legal lynch law, accusations of black sexual crimes in Southern Rhodesia were, thus, subject to review by the courts, the resident commissioner, and, ultimately, the High Commissioner of South Africa. While white Southern Rhodesians rarely questioned the presumption of guilt and attempted to lynch black males accused of sexual affronts upon white women,⁴⁰ this legal review did provide a small chance of escape for black males accused of sexual crimes: courts declared some accusations unfounded and the office of the High Commissioner commuted several death penalties.⁴¹ These obstructions withstanding, “black peril” – stemming from deep-seated settler fears of intrusion on white society - became a powerful apologetic for social control and state-sponsored executions of black males occurred with frequency. Simply stated, a vocal white presence in the colonial spaces of Southern Rhodesia and the southern United States shared like-minded views of black populations, whether Matebele or African-American. As a result, control of boundaries revolved around similar arguments, which stressed the ultimate ability of white colonial society to consign black males to death.

³⁹ See Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935* (Bloomington IN: University of Indiana Press, 2000), 4: my emphasis. McCulloch is careful to note that the law made no distinctions regarding the skin color of the accused rapist; however, there was never an execution of a white man for rape or attempted in the history of Southern Rhodesia.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴¹ McCulloch argues that questions about the character of the white female accuser were most responsible for the dismissal of charges and that there were other pieces of legislation that also attempted to control the sexual behaviors of white women. In this respect, Southern Rhodesia also paralleled the attempts of white patriarchy in the southern United States to control females described by Jacqueline Dowd Hall in *Revolt against Chivalry*, xx.

While white apologists constructed a powerful narrative, lynching also contained a stark violence that forced transatlantic protest. In many respects, however, the racial and gendered arguments embraced by lynching apologists also informed this criticism of lynching. In the *Forum* article of October 1893, Bishop Atticus Haygood, wrote a nine-page article “The Black Shadow in the South.”⁴² Despite its general criticism of lynching it reflected the racial assumptions embraced by apologist logic.⁴³ Explaining the reasons behind lynching, Haygood explored the character of lynching mobs: “These burnings are not to be accounted for by any theory of superstition, or ignorance, or to low human development, but by what we know of the elemental forces that control human nature throughout all time and the world over.”⁴⁴ To Haygood, this “elemental force” was the expected and excusable “emotional insanity” provoked by the black male’s horrific crime of rape on white women.⁴⁵ While *The Facts in the Case* insisted that the lynching was not borne from “ungoverned passion,” Haygood argued that the very nature of the crime provoked a passionate, but excusable, sense of outrage. Haygood, moreover, takes care to show that the violent behavior of the white lynchers was not the result of “backward” or inadequate development of white society. Instead, he offers that, considering the nature of the accusation against the black male, lynching

⁴² Atticus G. Haygood “The Black Shadow in the South,” *Forum* (October 1893): 167-176.

⁴³ Haygood was the President of Emory College in Atlanta and a Methodist bishop who consistently addressed the “negro problem.” As a “friend of the negro,” Haygood ultimately argued that proper education, improvement over time, and the grace of God were the solutions to the race problem. For more on Haygood and how he fit into the social gospel movement, see Ralph E. Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White: American Racial Reform, 1885-1912* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 20-24.

⁴⁴ Haygood, “The Black Shadow,” 171.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 173

was, indeed, an adequate and wholly human reaction. By rescuing the “human” side of a lynching white society, Haygood allowed the white community a humane expression of relief, differentiated them from the idea of “backward,” even animal-like, behaviors commonly ascribed to black people, and reaffirmed the racial superiority of white southern society. Both *The Facts in the Case* and Haygood, through different arguments, exonerated lynching as an admissible act of a deeply offended white society.

In his efforts, “to not defend any sort of lynching”⁴⁶ Haygood, indeed, went to lengths to consign the black male to “savage” status, with similar descriptions such as “monstrous,” “gorilla,” “demon” and “brutish” that litter *The Facts in the Case*. Like many others in the American South, Haygood argued that immediate emancipation and enfranchisement was a “deadlier crime against republican government and civilization than the extremist Federalist believed secession to be,”⁴⁷ and that the black male was wholly unprepared for white civilization and, thus, was prone to slip back into his “savage” status that, some argued, was only contained by the paternal guidance of southern slavery.⁴⁸ With relation to lynching, even some of the criticism exonerated acts of violence committed by white people by combining the gendered argument of

⁴⁶ Ibid., 168.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 173.

⁴⁸ Joel Williamson demonstrates how the “radicals” in the white South argued that only slavery kept the inherent savagery of the black in check. Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), especially “The Rage of Radicalism, 1889-1915,” 111-285. To understand how the ideology of white racism shifted from the image of the black man as the inferior child to one of an aggressive and dangerous sexual predator see George Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind; The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 256-283. Also, see Sandra Gunning, *Race, Rape, and Lynching: The Red Record of American Literature, 1890-1912* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), most especially 3-17.

rape with the prevailing notions of racial differentiation to render the black male largely expendable and, again, far removed from the inclusive rights of citizenship.

Other voices of transatlantic protest, however, did not acquiesce as easily to accessible ideas of race and gender in the protests against lynching and incorporated the language of political rights into their counter narrative.⁴⁹ African-American woman Ida B. Wells began her life-long crusade after the 1892 lynching of three blacks in Memphis, Tennessee. Through public speaking, newspaper articles, and three lengthy pamphlets, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892), *A Red Record: Tabulate Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States, 1892-1893-1894* (1895) and *Mob Rule in New Orleans: Robert Charles and His Fight to Death* (1900), Wells mixed concrete detail with incisive analysis in an effort to challenge the constructions of race and gender that supported lynching. Unlike most of her contemporaries, Wells charged that the lynching of black male bodies was a powerful part of the larger process that denied citizenship to the black body politic.⁵⁰ She steadfastly insisted that the charges of rape were unfounded, that white women made sexual advances on black men, and that the miscegenation boundaries erected by white

⁴⁹ Frederick Cooper, Thomas Holt and Rebecca Scott comment that the question of inclusive rights was both “pried opened and obscured” throughout the nineteenth century. Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt and Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000): 13.

⁵⁰ A prime example of the threat of black political empowerment and its subsequent silencing is the fate of Populism in the American South. In its initial phases in the early 1890s, Populism catered to the black vote; however, it cavorted with the dangerous suggestion that placed class alliances above the time-honored system of unified white prejudice. The Democratic party in the South responded with intimidation, bribery, and violence, which effectively suppressed black participation in the movement. For more on this topic and the larger idea of white political “redemption” in the 1890s see, Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence*, 175-199.

society were hypocritical shams in light of the decades of forced sex by white males upon black females. Mixing an appeal to Christian duty with a secular critique of American civilization and a message of black political empowerment, Wells constructed a compelling anti-lynching counter narrative in the 1890s.⁵¹

Wells' protest against the Memphis lynching drew threats of personal violence, which forced her to flee the South and continue her anti-lynching campaign in the northern states. While many other reform movements found access to the public sphere, Wells, in late 1893, lamented that despite almost a year of effort she found little support in the North: "Only in one city – Boston – had I been given even a meager hearing, and the press was dumb. I refer, of course, to the white press, since it was the medium through which I hoped to reach the white people of the country, who alone could mold public sentiment."⁵²

If Wells found an uninterested America, her words were influential enough to encourage the English Society of Friends to finance her 1893 and 1894 speaking tours of Great Britain. Wells saw the attraction of a tour in England: "The moral agencies at work in Great Britain did much for the final overthrow of chattel slavery. They can in like manner pray, write, preach, talk and act against... the hanging, shooting and burning of a powerless race. America cannot and will not ignore the voice of a nation

⁵¹ The literature on Wells is vast. Two works that do a particularly good job concentrating directly on the style and analysis of Wells' three lynching pamphlets are: Ericka M. Miller, *The Other Reconstruction: Where Violence and Womanhood Meet in the Writings of Wells-Barnett, Grimke, and Larsen* (New York: Garland Publishers, 2000) and Shirley Wilson Logan, *"We Are Coming": The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999).

⁵² Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Alfreda M. Duster ed., *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 86.

that is her superior in civilization, which makes this demand in the name of justice and humanity.”⁵³ The transatlantic Anglo-American affinities ran deep and American reformers such as Ida B. Wells looked to the long tradition of British reform to help in the struggle against lynching. An investigation of Ida B. Wells’ anti-lynching campaigns in Great Britain uncovers a stream of protest that not only criticized lynching, but also problematized the meanings of black citizenship in a post-emancipated, imperial world.

As mentioned, how to deal with emancipated peoples of color long troubled Great Britain, the self-declared leader of moral reform in the nineteenth century. On the verge of an even deeper engagement with African populations as the Berlin Conference of 1884 opened the continent to official European intrusion, Great Britain was especially concerned with the progress of the African-American. In 1882, the *Pall Mall Gazette* featured a story from the southern United States that celebrated the advancement of American blacks. Situated within the colonizing mission’s framework that stressed the civilizing aspects of labor, the article demonstrated that the condition of the black person in America was important to the future possibilities of the British Empire in the tropics of Africa: “there is no better labourer than the negro to be found among any race of the world.... They are particularly suited for labour in semi-tropical climates.”⁵⁴ The article also opined that the black American was “fast-learning” and “as they acquire education, they will become better *citizens*.”⁵⁵ Laboring potential was

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵⁴ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 February 1882.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, my emphasis.

often the sole link for colonial peoples to even the most limited notions of citizenship and, further, how they adapted to labor in a capitalist setting was a test of the ability to grasp broader concepts of the market's, and thus liberal society's, rationale.⁵⁶ The article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* revealed that the need for labor was behind much of the rhetoric of the civilizing mission. It also, however, made the term "citizenship" available in the discursive debate on high imperialism's encounter with peoples of color. This resurfacing of the language of citizenship over the remaining course of the nineteenth century was not the exclusive domain of white, metropolitan society but often found meanings that did not cater to the intentionality underscoring the *Pall Mall Gazette's* usage.

Further, the British *Anti-Slavery Reporter* commented in the 1889 issue, "chiefs like Khama and Sechele and their people have shown themselves so capable of progress, and of assimilating civilised ideas and habits, that there is every good reason to hope that, under good guidance, they may become creditable British *citizens*."⁵⁷ Both Khama and Sechele were native chiefs in the "successful" British protectorate of Bechuanaland and, while, they certainly cooperated with British rule, they appreciated the meaning of their "civilized" status in a different manner than the Anti-Slavery Society and colonial officers of the Empire. As Chapter Five discusses, African chiefs involved in the turn of the century Boer War used their own ideas of belonging in the

⁵⁶ Cooper, Holt, and Scott, *Beyond Slavery*, 21.

⁵⁷ Khama and Sechele were native chiefs in the "successful" British protectorate of Bechuanaland. *Anti-Slavery Reporter* (September – October 1889), my emphasis.

civilized British system to wrangle for concessions and rights that, again, did not always mesh with intentions implied by the paternalist language of British society.

As high imperialism furthered Great Britain's encounter with Africans, the language of citizenship – lost in the tumult of mid-century rebellions in India and Jamaica - slipped back into the discourse.⁵⁸ As such, Great Britain was concerned with how the United States dealt with the problems encountered in the struggle over citizenship in the emancipated South. As mentioned, while historians concede that Anglo-American reform fervor waned in the late nineteenth century, the violence of lynching and Ida B. Wells' tours forced a transatlantic discussion of the rights held by black peoples in a post-emancipated world. These tours were only the beginning of how many other reformers began to appropriate the language of civilization, citizenship, and rights in ways hardly anticipated.

Largely due to Wells' tours, the British Anti-Lynching Committee formed in 1894. This committee met eleven times in 1894 and 1895, sent several letters to governors in Southern states where lynching had occurred, and corresponded directly with newspaper editors in the United States.⁵⁹ Certainly, the collective actions of Wells' tours, the coverage in British newspapers, and bodies like the Anti-Lynching Committee projected an influential criticism of American civilization that resulted in an upswing of commentary – both apologist and denunciatory – in the United States.

⁵⁸ For comparison, in 1866, the same *Pall Mall Gazette* was incredulous of the mission to uplift colonized populations: "We have bungled Ireland; we have bungled; India; we have bungled Jamaica; we have mismanaged Celts, Kaffirs, Hindoos, Maories, and Negroes, and all from the same case – because we refused to see that they were not Englishmen, or have fancied that we would make them Englishmen." *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 August 1866. Found in Bolt, *The Anti-Slavery Movement*, 149.

⁵⁹ *The London Times*, 20 December 1895.

While Wells' goal of awakening the United States through British condemnation was undeniably successful, the British Anti-Lynching Committee lost its momentum after 1895 and there is no evidence that its one planned convention ever took place.⁶⁰

Wells, moreover, as an African-American female, met with considerable resistance even on her second tour of Great Britain. The first Unitarian Conference in Manchester charged that Wells misrepresented the truth about lynching and initially turned down Wells' appeal for their body to issue a condemnation of lynching. Wells and others eventually appealed to the national Unitarian organization, which issued a resolution of condemnation.⁶¹ This incredulity, however, was present throughout Wells' tours of England.

Even dedicated sponsors of Wells' work in England had initial misgivings about her cause. Charles F. Aked, a prominent Presbyterian minister, was one of the main sponsors of Wells' second tour in 1894. Aked and his family opened their Liverpool home to Wells as her headquarters for six months and she later wrote: "The queen of England herself could not have been treated with more consideration than I was during the whole course of my stay with them."⁶² Aked had a deep effect on Wells – so much that she and her husband named their first son Charles Aked Barnett. Aked, however, was also skeptical of Wells' message during her first campaign. Aked only became critical of lynching after his trip to the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, where he read the

⁶⁰ Caroline Bressey, "A Strange and Bitter Crop: Ida B. Wells' Anti-Lynching Tours, Britain 1893 and 1894," *Center for Capital Punishment Studies Occasional Papers Series* Volume 1 (2003), <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/ccps/Caroline%20Bressey.pdf> (accessed November 1, 2006): 18.

⁶¹ Duster, *Crusade for Justice*, 191-199.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 127.

reports of a lynching in Kentucky: “I sat under the shadow of the Statue of Liberty in Jackson Park and read these accounts until I was wild. . . . I knew that what Miss Wells said was true.”⁶³ The hesitancy of Charles Aked, a minister and member of the Aborigine Protection Society, shows that many reformers were not eager to wade into the waters of lynching condemnation.

Wells, in the midst of her second tour and at the suggestion of Aked and other leading British men (including the Lord Mayor of London), urgently appealed to the most famous African-American man of the mid and late nineteenth century, Frederick Douglass, to lend support to her cause. In rushed correspondence, Wells pleaded to Douglass that he not only send a letter of introduction to Aked, but also that he also “write letters to all your friends in Great Britain.”⁶⁴ Douglass responded with a letter to Aked in which he emphasized that it was “highly important to the cause of justice and humanity that the English people should know the truth concerning the outrages committed upon the colored people in the Southern States of our Union.”⁶⁵ Douglass’ thoughts on the “outrages committed upon colored people” dominated the short letter

⁶³ Ibid., 129. The “statue of liberty” referenced by Aked was the sixty-foot tall Statue of the Republic that presided over the “white city” constructed by Daniel Burnham as the centerpiece of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Ida B. Wells declined to speak at the exposition in protest of the scant representation of African-Americans at the event. Instead, she, encouraged by Frederick Douglass and Frederick Loudin, organized the publication of a pamphlet entitled *Why the Colored American is not in the World’s Columbian Exposition*. For more on her thoughts of the exposition and the pamphlet, see Duster, *Crusade for Justice*, 115-121.

⁶⁴ Wells to Douglass, 18 March 1894, Box 10, Folder 4, Item 7, Ida B. Wells-Barnett Collection, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago.

⁶⁵ Douglass to Aked, 27 March 1894, Box 10, Folder 4, Item 8, Ida B. Wells-Barnett Collection, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago.

and he enclosed one of his recent addresses on the subject.⁶⁶ Douglass, however, also commented that he gave no credit to the denunciations of Wells by the Southern papers and that he was glad that “you now have in England, one so competent as Miss Wells, to tell the negro’s side of this story of race persecution.”⁶⁷

Wells, although appreciative of the letter, was disappointed that Douglass did not “speak more positively regarding me and my work” and renewed her appeal:

As the best known member of the race, a positive letter or voucher from you would have gone far to pave the way in many places I have been.... The people who have a vague idea that the negro race is a brutish one deserving death, and who never heard of me, don’t know whether to take my word or not that lynching is so terrible a thing, deserving their censure. They do know you, and a strong word to that effect from you would help the race cause wonderfully and help me counteract the bad impression every white American who comes across [the Atlantic], to say nothing of the newspapers and magazines leaves in the minds of Europeans.⁶⁸

As an African-American woman, even in her well-publicized second visit to England, Wells experienced serious difficulty accessing the public sphere, let alone exposing the gendered and racial constructions of the apologist argument. She needed the direct and effusive personal approval of none other than Frederick Douglass to address audiences and to vouch for her “testimony and character.”⁶⁹

Wells, however, cleared these hurdles and managed to gain audience with many influential British reformers, including the Aborigine Protection Society (APS).⁷⁰ The

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Wells to Douglass, 6 May 1894, Box 10, Folder 4, Item 11, Ida B. Wells-Barnett Collection, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago.

⁶⁹ Wells to Douglass, 10 May 1894, Box 10, Folder 4, Item 12, Ida B. Wells-Barnett Collection, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago.

⁷⁰ The meeting detailed in the journal of the APS, *The Aborigines Friend* (July 1894): 421-423.

society's mission was to protect the interests of native colonial populations in the British Empire, an agenda that limited its commentary on the plight of black people in the American South.⁷¹ Perhaps spurred by the now infamous lynching of Henry Smith in 1893, the APS could not countenance the violence of lynching and met with Wells in the summer of 1894. In this meeting, Wells did not refute or even address the apologist argument of rape, only briefly claiming that “falsehoods were put about,” and, instead, she concentrated on the argument that all people deserved a fair trial.⁷² Before a proposed resolution was adopted, one member of the APS commented that there were conditions in the South where the law was not strong, that this demanded “self-protection” and, thus, it was not fair to blame every “white man in America.”⁷³ Another member noted that “there was great fear on the part of the whites [in the South] that the negroes would become too strong and too numerous for them.”⁷⁴ After airing the traditional arguments of the apologists, both men agreed that they were no excuse for the “atrocities” discussed by Wells.⁷⁵

That Wells did not attack the apologetics of rape in front of the APS (or that the APS recorder chose not to acknowledge it in the report) shows the delicate path that Wells negotiated among the male-dominated British reform tradition. Moreover, that the members of a society sympathetic to the protections of people of color catered to the narrative supported by those favoring white domination – regardless of eventual

⁷¹ For background on the APS, see Charles Swaisland, “The Aborigines’ Protection Society,” *The Reporter* 13:3 (1987): 84-95.

⁷² *The Aborigines Friend* (July 1894): 421.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 422.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

denunciation – exposes the power of the apologist argument. Accordingly, the official APS resolution reflected the safe British criticism of uncivilized behavior, charging the United States with lawlessness, arguing that a fair trial was in accordance with justice and, thus, calling for the right to protection under the law, but shying away from claims of participatory citizenship for black Americans:

That this meeting, having heard the statement of Miss Ida B. Wells, as to the lynching of negroes and others in the southern portions of the United States, expresses an earnest hope that the Government and the people of the great American Republic will take prompt measures to prevent such lawless proceedings, and to secure for all alleged offenders, of whatever colour, fair trial in duly constituted courts of law, being assured that this is the only method consistent with the principles of justice and humanity, and that it is equally essential to the well-being of all sections of society.⁷⁶

Charles F. Aked was involved with the APS, was an original member of the British Anti-Lynching Committee and, in the end, did support Wells.⁷⁷ His contribution to the respected monthly *Contemporary Review* gives more insight into the concerns about lynching than that revealed by the official APS resolution.⁷⁸ In the article, Aked responded to the lynching of Henry Smith, commenting how the “father of the murdered girl and her two uncles commenced the torture: they thrust hot irons into his

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Charles Aked’s exact role with the APS in 1894, however, is unclear. Caroline Bressey maintains that he was the Secretary of the APS in 1894. H.R. Fox Bourne, however, was the national Secretary of the society from 1889 to 1909 and Aked did not hold either of the other two national offices of Treasurer or President. The office of President, however, remained vacant from 1882 to 1899 and individual members often took charge of committee meetings. Aked could have very well been part of these meetings throughout the 1890s as he was the organizer of the Liverpool local branch of the APS in 1899. Information supplied by Charles Swaisland and Lucy McCann of the Rhodes House at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, which holds the APS collection.

⁷⁸ Charles F. Aked, “The Race Problem in America,” *Contemporary Review* (June 1894): 818-827. Confirming the suspicions surrounding Wells’ effectiveness as a female African-American critic of the sexualized and racialized topic of lynching, Aked does not mention Wells in the article.

feet, they rolled him up and down his body, and then into his eyes, then down his throat.”⁷⁹ The use of detail creates a vision of reality, a description of the unsharable that, like Wells’ rhetoric, countered the prevalent abstractions that manipulated the violence into apologetic. Aked’s article and others, notably in the *London Daily Chronicle*,⁸⁰ did not shy away from detail and contributed a discourse that made lynching in America visceral to the English audience.⁸¹

Further, Aked not only reported details but also delved into several salient questions connected to lynching: political empowerment, miscegenation, and rape. These arguments deserve detailed attention because they contained both similarities and differences with Wells’ argument and can explore how British reformers discussed the inclusion of peoples of color into the active citizenry of white-led society.

Aked acknowledged crucial aspects of the apologist argument and, in the course, grossly misused evidence. Describing Reconstruction and its effects on the white population, he commented: “The successor of Jefferson Davis in the Senate of the United States was a negro. Ignorant, not able to write his own name, without money or land the negro might be, yet his vote counted for much as that of the proudest: small

⁷⁹ Aked, “Race Problem,” 824-825.

⁸⁰ For the entries of the *Daily Chronicle* see Bressey, “A Strange and Bitter Fruit,” 11-12.

⁸¹ Clearly, lynching was a brutal act. The question of distance, however, is always germane to evaluating the lurid descriptions of lynching. What perhaps is most important is not the validity of the claims, but the use of detail to describe the dehumanizing aspect of lynching, which, interestingly, in Aked’s account spoke not to the dehumanizing of the victim, but to the dehumanizing effect on the white people in the mob. Aked’s article began with the analogy to the Hegelian master-slave relationship, arguing that slavery “degraded” the white man to a greater degree than the black. These comments and the general strategy of protesting lynching on the grounds that it makes the white society “uncivilized” had the effect of drawing the focus away from the humanity of the lynched.

wonder that the conquered yet haughty South revolted with a passionate indignation from the new and all-hateful conditions...”⁸² While Aked may have been using the term “successor” in a general sense, the immediate replacement for Jefferson Davis in the United States Senate was Hiram Revels. Revels was highly educated, and, later, president of Alcorn University: hardly an ignorant man.⁸³

Beyond the gross misuse of evidence regarding Revels, Aked’s statement “No Englishman can understand the position of the South”⁸⁴ empathized with the apologist argument for local context. As mentioned, white apologists from colonial space – both in British southern Africa and in the southern United States - vehemently argued that sentimental metropolitan reformers did not understand the racial imperatives facing those whites on the ground. In an especially prescient strategy, apologists sanctioned the violent imposition of racialized boundary maintenance with an appeal to local rule. Local rule was not only the pat argument of the southern states in the wake of federally sanctioned Reconstruction, but also was a prominent topic in Great Britain and the Empire. The idea that centralizing rule had the tendency to violate basic extensions of democracy informed British debates over Irish home rule as well as the drive for imperial federation.⁸⁵ Aked unwittingly promoted apologist arguments in his attempt to

⁸² Aked, “Race Problem,” 819.

⁸³ For more on Revels see, Julius Thompson, *Hiram Revels, 1827-1901: A Biography* (Princeton NJ.: Ann Arbor, MI., University Microfilms, 1973).

⁸⁴ Aked, “Race Problem,” 819.

⁸⁵ Irish nationalism varied in degree throughout the late nineteenth century: from calls for legislative independence to demands for complete self-rule. William Gladstone introduced two Home Rule Bills in 1886 and 1893, which called for moderate levels of Irish empowerment. While both bills were defeated, the Home Rule movement was a contentious statement of nationalism and local power. See “Irish Home Rule” in John Cannon, ed. *The Oxford Companion to British History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 515-516 and

condemn colonial violence. This sympathy for white local rule shows how reformers exhibited continued fears about the participation of black peoples in civil society.

Aked also discussed miscegenation – a contested topic not only in the southern United States, but also in the wider colonial encounter. Aked denounced the hypocrisy of white society’s cries against inter-racial sexual liaisons by asking: “Where is there a corner of the uncivilized world in which the Anglo-Saxon has refused to ‘mix his blood’ with that of the native races? All that he objects to is doing that under honourable circumstances.”⁸⁶ Like Wells, Aked broached the topic of the sexual advances of white males toward black females and alerted the Anglo-Saxon that inter-racial sexual encounters were prevalent not only in the American South, but also throughout the reaches of empire. Aked, however, stopped short of arguing that race mixing was acceptable, only criticizing those white males who saw such extra-marital “vice” as “honourable.”⁸⁷

This concern with vice informed Aked’s discussion of the apologist argument of rape and he asked, “Why assume that it is such a monstrous and impossible supposition that the coloured man and the white woman yet come together in the South?”⁸⁸ Aked, however, argues that the relationship springs from the “common vice” of the white woman and black man.⁸⁹ Pointing to the numerous scores of women who will submit to any “conceivable degradation” to secure alcohol, Aked wondered, “Why should it be

David Fitzpatrick “Ireland and the Empire” in Andrew Porter, ed. *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III, The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 494-521.

⁸⁶ Aked, “Race Problem,” 822.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 827.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 826.

supposed an unpardonable sin to suggest that there are women of evil life in the South who do not shrink from the negro's embraces?"⁹⁰ By joining the adulterous white female and the black male in a common pool of vice, Aked may have debunked the narrative of rape and rescued the black male from "monster" status, but he still differentiated him as something outside the bounds of honorable sexual union and full participation in white society.

Despite never fully escaping the racial and gendered bounds that conditioned both the apologist and reformer discussions, Aked firmly argued that the "moral and material progress" of the black since emancipation had "no parallel in the history of civilization."⁹¹ Hence, he ridiculed the insistence that interpreted the advance of black populations since the Civil War as the threat of "nigger domination."⁹² Aked detailed the systematic removal of black males from the power of the ballot box and, instead of following contemporary discourse that invariably related "progress" to peoples of color, he turned the word upside down and ridiculed the "progress made by the white population" of again "reducing the negro to subjection and servitude."⁹³ His arguments did not approve of the "world turned upside down" immediate political inclusion of black peoples that so many vehemently argued was the case in Reconstruction, but his article argued that black people in the United States had demonstrated the kind of progress that qualified them for citizenship and its accompanying rights.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 820.

⁹² Ibid., 819.

⁹³ Ibid., 820-821.

Charles Aked's call for inclusion denied the prevalent theory that black people had quasi-inherent biological characteristics and, thus, supported ideas of social evolution. The Aborigine Protection Society and other associated British reformers also believed that black peoples were not inherently inferior. This belief motivated much of their growing dissatisfaction with violent imperial practices throughout the 1890s and the early twentieth century that violated the promise of uplift.⁹⁴ While much of this uplift ideology resulted in open-ended testing periods of progress, it intended a shift away from the safe terrain of protections into the more volatile area of political rights.

This construction of a language of political inclusion within the space triggered by the violence of lynching made sense amidst the rush of late nineteenth century modernity that provoked an emphasis on secular, practical reform. The use of the symbolic power of violence, however, was hardly new to Anglo-American reformers concerned with people of color. The abolitionist representation of the restrained black slave dovetailed with the popular assumption that slavery thrust a deeper set of violent, lash-driven incursions onto to the black body.⁹⁵ Just as the violence of lynching reinforced reformer's arguments of secular inclusion, the appropriation of violent images by some strains of the abolitionist movement appealed to the religious sentiment embodied by the call for unity under God. Thus, in using the discursive space prompted

⁹⁴ The APS, under secretary, H.R. Fox Bourne, led a tireless campaign in the 1890s to bring Southern Rhodesia under the direct rule of the Crown. Fox Bourne adamantly argued that rampant self-interest of localized colonial rule threatened the welfare of the native and the "civilizing" imperial mission. See Rachel Whitehead, "The Aborigines Protection Society and the Fight for Southern Rhodesia" (D. Phil., Oxford University, 1972).

⁹⁵ James Walvin argues that metaphor of the violent "lash" was a fixture in both white and black popular culture. See his chapter, "Domination and Control" in *Questioning Slavery* (London: Routledge, 1996).

by violence to introduce a more modern language of secular rights, some transatlantic reformers in the late nineteenth century borrowed a tactic from a successful methodology of the abolitionists. Moreover, most reformers who were concerned by the plight of black peoples also remained deeply informed by older concepts of religious humanity that suffused through the cries for emancipation.

Indeed, Charles Aked relied on the spirit of religious humanity in much of his critique of lynching as well as his ongoing lamentations against wider society. Best articulated in the rising social gospel movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reformers mixed religious thought with secular practice to argue for a fairer, more just society. Aked would later explore the transatlantic links of the social gospel in his work with American Walter Rauschenbausch, culminating in a 1917 essay “Private Profit and the Nation’s Honor: A Protest and Plea” in the respected *Atlantic Monthly*.⁹⁶ Although challenged by the secularizing turn of the late nineteenth century, religion still informed the language of reform, including protests against lynching.

For example, another transatlantic voice of protest, Englishwoman Catherine Impey, relied on God-ordained certitude in her reform efforts. Impey was a dedicated member of the Society of Friends, encouraged the APS to criticize British imperial practices, had ties with reform circles in England and the United States, and was intimately involved with Wells’ British tours.⁹⁷ While a deep religiosity informed the bulk of Impey’s protest, she also recognized that British imperialism – in theory – promised colonial populations secular political rights. Impey was cognizant of the

⁹⁶ *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1917.

⁹⁷ For more background on Impey, see Bressey, “A Strange and Bitter Crop.”

global presence of the Empire: “how little realized by [the] English, that England itself is a small part of a great empire” and she exposed the often invidious means of imperial aggrandizement and rule: “the masses of [colonial peoples] have been brought under British rule sometimes voluntarily but more often, we fear by force and fraud, and for ends not purely disinterested.”⁹⁸ While condemning imperial practice, she felt that a possible avenue of remedy stemmed from the equivalent political status of all imperial populations, both in the metropole and the colonies: “That we English are, as it were, but an inner cluster of the big crowd of British subjects.”⁹⁹ As subjects, colonial peoples could call on the state to solve inequities: “Now they, like us, press around the same British Government with its might and cumbrous machinery of State, looking to it – though almost despairingly at times – for power to carry out the necessary reforms, for the redress of public grievances.”¹⁰⁰ As her reference to despair implies, Impey had little hope that the State would effectively honor the political rights of colonial subjects and make corrections to the inequalities of the imperial world: “One is led to wonder how long the slender fabric of Empire shall hold together? Especially does this thought press when the bitter cry of suffering and oppression reaches us from some outer part of the great crowd.”¹⁰¹

Doubting the political and secular means to effect change, Impey relied on message of religious humanity to address the issue of racial discrimination she saw as prevalent in a colonial world. Several themes characterized her crusade. First, she

⁹⁸ *Anti-Caste*, 2:12 (December 1889).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

was at odds with reform organizations that she felt did not live up to their creed, or that took an unimpassioned approach to reform. Second, she relied on the earlier unity of man arguments to rail against the evils of the caste system. Third, she enthusiastically supported reform campaigns, including the anti-lynching cause of Ida B. Wells. Last, she denied the idea of miscegenation: as evidenced by her personal life, she firmly believed in the full assimilation of white and black people and all the political, social, and cultural rights this union implied.

In 1879, Impey lambasted the Good Templar Order in the United States for their exclusion of “coloured persons,” which, she argued, contradicted one of the founding premises of the organization: “a practical recognition of the brotherhood of all mankind.”¹⁰² Impey and her Society of Friends opened their own non-discriminatory branch and helped “the Good Templar Order act up to its fundamental truth, that ‘God hath made of one blood all nations of men,’ ignore the barriers of caste, and seek to admit the coloured race in every State.”¹⁰³ Later, Impey also found the scope of the Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines Protection Society limiting. While Impey had a good relationship with the secretaries of both societies, she wanted to address discrimination against people of color wherever it occurred: whether that was the Congo slave trade, the plight of the native peoples in Australia and India, or the transgressions in the American South. As she commented in a letter to the APS in 1886, “to deliberately choose a life of independence one has to carve out one’s own path instead

¹⁰² *Anti-Slavery Reporter* (January 1879): 148.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 149.

of following some beaten route.”¹⁰⁴ Not only did the agendas of the ASS and the APS seem constraining to Impey, but also her search for independence contained a challenge to the gendered order of the male-dominated upper strata of two of the most recognizable reform societies in England.

In 1888, Impey organized a society “Devoted to the Interests of Coloured Races” and dedicated to the “Universal Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man.” Similar to most reform movements in the late nineteenth century, she recognized the power of print and began the small monthly *Anti-Caste*. In this monthly, she consistently addressed the scientific discussion of the day regarding the question of mutable or immutable racial traits. She acknowledged that there existed “physical characteristics” that were distinct, like “race and complexion,” but claimed “arbitrary distinctions based on these differences are contrary to the mind of Christ.”¹⁰⁵ Impey believed in the unity of man before God: “It is a solemn sublime fact – that Every man is by birth, by natural descent as it were, a child of God,”¹⁰⁶ condemned prejudice based on constructed hierarchies of skin color, and unabashedly attacked all forms of caste, however couched they were in religious or scientific racism. While Charles Aked and most reformers in the late nineteenth century embraced an evolutionist perspective about the black person’s eventual preparedness for civil society, Impey used an older argument that interpreted the slogan of the abolitionist campaign: “Am I not a Man and a Brother?” as God’s call for immediate and full inclusion in all aspects of society.

¹⁰⁴ Impey to Cheeson, 3 March 1886, MSS Brit Emp S18 C61, Rhodes House Library, Oxford University, Oxford.

¹⁰⁵ *Anti-Caste*, 1:1 (March 1888).

¹⁰⁶ *Anti-Caste*, 1:2 (April 1888).

Impey combined a monogenist argument that all men were human with a dismissal of all rationales of racial hierarchy, whether biblical Great Chain of Being, polygenist differentiation of origin, or scientific racism's schema. Simply, Impey demanded the immediate recognition that all men were under the inclusive aegis of God. As she commented on the denial of a young black man into a drawing class at the YMCA: "It is not pretended that the rejected person is not a Christian. He is not only a church member but a member of the Young Men's Christian Association! If good enough to enter the kingdom, why should he not be good enough to enter the auspices of an association of Christians? No! It is not a question of character or religion, but really the old question of race and color."¹⁰⁷ To Impey, the YMCA was just one aspect of God's public sphere unduly shut off by racial prejudice, regardless of how this prejudice was emboldened by religious or scientific argument.

Impey co-sponsored Wells' first tour of England in 1893. Moreover, she used *Anti-Caste* to present a graphic, detailed indictment of lynching. The January 1893 edition of *Anti-Caste* had a pictorial scene of a lynched black man with the caption "HOW LONG WILL THE CALLOUS NATION LOOK ON?"¹⁰⁸ Her indictment of America was similar to Wells' strategy that drew attention to the uncivilized nature of a nation that lynched and burned its fellow citizens. Like Wells, Impey not only used oral and written arguments, but offered direct images in the campaign against lynching.¹⁰⁹ Wells and Impey were uniquely daring in this facet of their argumentation, as the use of

¹⁰⁷ *Anti-Caste*, 1:1 (March 1888).

¹⁰⁸ *Anti-Caste*, 6:1 (January 1893).

¹⁰⁹ During her tours in England, Wells showed a reprinted photograph of an 1893 lynching that had been published in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*. Duster, *Crusade for Justice*, 178.

direct, pictorial representation of lynching to condemn the practice was decidedly off-limits to women in the late nineteenth century.¹¹⁰

Impey's bold step of pictorial reproduction and tireless comment on the evils of caste contributed a distinctive voice of protest against the racialized assumptions of white society. Impey also took a color-blind approach in her personal life. In this area, however, Impey's views on interracial relationships challenged, as evidenced by Charles Aked's caution, a taboo subject. Isabella Mayo, the co-founder with Impey of the *Society for Recognition of the Universal Brotherhood of Man* (SRUBM) and well-respected reformer, lodged several foreign students of color in her home in Aberdeen, Scotland. Impey became acquainted with one student, George Ferdinands of Ceylon. In 1893, Impey sent a letter to Ferdinands declaring her affection and asking him to marry. According to Wells, Impey did so partially "to give proof to the world of the theories she had approved – the equality of the brotherhood of man."¹¹¹ The letter shocked Ferdinands and he forwarded it directly to Mayo. Mayo, aghast at the impropriety of Impey's suggestions, responded with exceptional ire, calling Impey a nymphomaniac and demanding that she end all association with the SRUBM. Through a bitter struggle, Mayo ousted her from the society and used the society's journal, *Fraternity*, to disparage Impey's character.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Of course, there was exhaustive visual reproduction of lynching by male apologists to reinforce its boundary-defining meaning.

¹¹¹ Duster, *Crusade for Justice*, 103.

¹¹² Wells found herself in the middle of the dispute and, while she thought Impey's actions "indiscreet," she refused to condemn Impey in public or to Mayo: "I spent a sleepless night praying for guidance and in the morning told Mrs. Mayo that I could not do as she wished; that I was willing to concede that Miss Impey had made a mistake in yielding to her feelings and writing such a letter, but I could not see that she had committed a crime by falling in love

Mayo argued that Impey was like other white women who were guilty of falling prey to vice. Further she implied that such action contributed to the proliferation of lynching: “if the women in the South were all ‘pure in heart and sound in head’, we should hear of fewer lynchings; and if British philanthropy, whenever forewarned gently set aside the dubious help of these diseased imaginations ... many good works which now flag and falter, would go apace.”¹¹³ Echoing Aked’s argument about the common vice of white women and black men, Mayo’s comments suggest that, while the reform movement in England could vehemently condemn lynching, it was not prepared to challenge the racial and gendered boundaries of interracial sexual relations and consummation. Impey’s fervent belief in the religious oneness of all man stepped over a boundary from which she could not recover and, although she tried to continue the struggle, publishing *Anti-Caste* intermittently until 1895, she lost control over the journal and did not find another steady vehicle to contribute to reformer print culture. Impey, while thereafter not as prominent in the public sphere, remained committed to issues of racial equality, as she played a supporting role in the first Pan-African Conference held in London in 1900.¹¹⁴

and confessing it – but that I did not believe she would do it again anywhere...” Duster, *Crusade for Justice*, 105. Wells’ position confirms her color-blind approach to sexual relations, but also reveals how cognizant she was of the social norms that considered interracial relations taboo.

¹¹³ *Fraternity*, (August 1894) found in Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London: Verso, 1992), 195-196.

¹¹⁴ Impey died in 1923. Her obituary in the Quaker journal *Friend* described that she “held deep convictions in her consistent advocacy of equal rights for the white and coloured people.” *The Friend*, 4 January 1923 found in Ware, *Beyond the Pale*, 187. Ware also suggests that the death of Impey’s mother in 1895 contributed to her diminishing activism.

Lynching in the American South was a colonial phenomenon that had meaning outside the United States. Those committed to white dominance appropriated the violence of lynching to construct a narrative that continued the attempts to remove the threat of black people's citizenship to white society. While widely accepted racial and gendered arguments buoyed this narrative, the violence of lynching also forced a protest from transatlantic reformers. Although this criticism could never fully escape the prevailing assumptions concerning race and gender, these voices, at a basic level, constructed a body of language that took seriously the promise of citizenship and its concurrent rights. This counter narrative problematized the limits and possibilities of post-emancipated societies and kept alive a discourse of inclusive hope amidst the assault of white imperialism.

CHAPTER TWO

BROADER REFORM: TRANSATLANTIC FABIANS AND POSITIVISTS

Arguments that appealed to protections based on the equality of man before God informed much of the reactions by transatlantic reformers to the lynching of Henry Smith. Within these protests, however, a language surfaced that connected the violence of lynching to the denial of secular and political rights to black peoples. The shift in the discourse of rights reflected the larger changes that the transatlantic reform movement underwent during the late nineteenth century. Traditional appeals to God or to other laissez-faire strategies that relied on deductively established standards – such as the individual or the market – began to appear inadequate to reformers dealing with the challenges of modern life.

These new reformers embraced strategies that differed from the laissez-faire approaches of traditional Victorian reform. Specifically, the emergence of science and empirical truth as prominent sources of authority challenged the belief that deductively established standards, such as “character” and “virtue,” primarily provided reformers the measurement of acceptable progress. This shift resulted in the rise of the expert who, by interpreting the new data of empirical investigation, began to challenge reformers who drew on socio-economic rank as their source of authority. Many reformers also argued that the individual sorting out problems through laissez-faire economic, social, and political mechanisms was woefully inadequate to deal with the

overwhelming nature of modern life. As a result, some reformers began to stress an understanding and elevation of the community over the individual and supported a wide range of interventionist agendas.

Traditional reformers mixed religion, the individual, and the extension of markets in their development of the imperial mission. This mission endorsed the concept of uplift, saw Empire as promising, and had a difficult time connecting the role of their underlying belief structures to the imperial aggression against peoples of color. As traditional reform was being challenged, this chapter investigates two Anglo-American reform groups who contributed to this questioning and who, more importantly, discussed race in ways that helps to connect the dramatic changes in transatlantic reform to the rights of black peoples. In other words, how did the approach of the new reformers undermine the suppositions of the uplift mission and what did this mean for black peoples suffering under colonialism?

The Fabians and the Positivists not only challenged earlier laissez-faire norms but also commented on the how these challenges applied to peoples of color. Like the reformers who had difficulty moving from calls of protection to demands for political rights for black peoples detailed in Chapter One, the Fabians and Positivists never fully escaped the racial bias that conditioned progressive thought. They, however, contributed new views to the marketplace of ideas that – like all ideas – had the potential to operate in fashions not wholly pursuant to the contributor's intentions.

In response to the perceived failings of traditional laissez-faire individualism, the late nineteenth century witnessed a transatlantic idealist movement that called for an

understanding of the broad interrelatedness of society. Drawing on the philosophy of Plato and Hegel, idealists called for a shift in the analysis of society from the individualist perspective to one that gave primacy to the social whole. Only by stressing the organic nature of man and society, idealists argued, could man regain agency in a modern world with forces that seemed beyond individual control. This emphasis on social holism signaled, at the minimum, a partial paradigm shift that altered the path of transatlantic liberalism and had significant implications for reformers.¹

Bernard Bosanquet of Great Britain and Josiah Royce of the United States led this transatlantic movement and, in tune with the proliferation of print culture, used two publications, *The International Journal of Ethics* and *The Ethical World*, to make their arguments. The 1898 article, “The Eclipse of Liberalism,” summed up the late nineteenth century shift from the elevation of the individual to the authority of social interrelatedness:

The reason why we should recognize our position as citizens is, in short, that it alone includes all the other interests and associations, and makes them possible. The association to which we belong as citizens is the only one which we accept as having natural authority – that is fully representing our own greater self, or our whole conception of a common good. All others are partial, and leave out the whole provinces of our lives, and whole massed of our fellow-countrymen; and the sign of this is that they are voluntary, except in as far as the State delegates authority to them. Thus it is the State, or civic community, in which

¹ For excellent works on the push toward social holism push see, Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 220-245, Marc Stears, *Progressives, Pluralists, and the Problems of the State: Ideologies of Reform in the United States and Great Britain, 1909 -1926* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 23-53, Nancy Cohen, *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) and J. H. Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy: Studies in the History of Idealism in England and America* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1931).

alone society is focused as a whole, that represents the connection and adjustment, the criticism, of all other interests and relationships, so as to form parts, in a many-sided good life.²

The idealist message argued that the authority of wider social awareness conditioned the very idea of self, which was quite dissimilar from earlier ideas that gave primacy to the individual in the development of self.

The British Fabian movement was an important contributor to this “eclipse of liberalism.” The Fabians emphasized the communal nature of society, and accepted the pervasive late nineteenth century epistemological shift that gave primacy to empirical investigation and the expert. The Fabians also – note the “eclipsing” not the “overturning” of earlier perspectives - dismissed radical notions of social revolution in favor of interventionist policies that worked within existing structures. Because of these timely arguments and tactics, the Fabians were a distinctive presence in the changing world of transatlantic reform.

Like many other reformers of the late nineteenth century, Fabians shared connections with a myriad of other groups and ideologies. From their inception in 1884 through the turn of the century, Fabians conducted a dizzying array of lectures and public engagements, interacting with virtually every element of the political spectrum: Marxist Social Democratic Federation, Liberals, Conservatives, and the Independent Labour Party. Indeed, their strategy was opportunistic and they avoided direct association with political parties, instead choosing to permeate public discourse, thus “informing and educating” the broader society. This recognition of the power of the

² “The Eclipse of Liberalism,” *The Ethical World*, 8 January 1898, 25.

late nineteenth century public sphere and associated print culture encouraged the Fabians to contribute endless essays and commentary to many newspapers and journals, develop relationships with periodical editors and owners, and publish their own source of information, most notably the *Fabian Tracts*.³

The Fabians addressed the dislocations of modernization - most significantly, those associated with capitalism - and hoped to instigate changes in the relationship between the state and society. While their discussions ranged wide and reflected the diversity of their viewpoints throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they consistently felt that an empiricist methodology and an interventionist state could correct the woes of capitalism. Stemming from their initial questioning of the deductive authority underwriting classical political economy, the Fabians pushed for an empirical, systematic investigation of society. In turn, experts trained for this investigation could discern practical state policies that would promote a greater degree of welfare and help to educate the wider public about the importance of bringing the organic, communal perspective to issues of social well-being. Fundamental to the attraction of Fabians to other moderate reformers, they dismissed the Marxian imperative that revolutionary class struggle was the path for change. Indeed, they viewed any class violence as dangerous and, instead, argued for peaceful transition through the improvement of existing institutions. This gradualist approach argued that

³ The most sophisticated overview of the Fabians remains A. M. McBriar, *Fabian Socialism and English Politics, 1884-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962). The Fabian strategy to “inform and educate” did not so much seek to encourage membership in their organization, but flooded the public with an area of leaflets and tracts to invigorate public awareness. See McBriar’s Chapter Seven, “Fabian Membership, Tract Distribution and Lecturing,” for these efforts, including a quantitative chart that demonstrates, for example, that the Fabian society distributed almost 330,000 leaflets in 1892 and 1893.

social holism was inevitable and – tying into the popular scientific language of the day - that its achievement was part of the social evolution of man.⁴

The Fabian approach resonated with reformers in the United States. After his interactions in England with members of the Fabian society during 1894, American W.D.P. Bliss established the American Fabian League in 1895 and was the first editor of *The American Fabian* magazine, in print from 1895 to 1900.⁵ The first issue of the magazine lauded the approach and reputation of the Fabian cause: “We desire to make it [*The American Fabian*] stand for the kind of educational Socialist work which is done by the English Fabian Society, and which has made the adjective Fabian stand for this kind of Socialist work all around our world.”⁶ As such, the paper would “educate” society with the “facts” about society’s pressing issues and convince a broad “union” of reformers, however seemingly disparate their views, of the inevitability and promise of the Fabian way.⁷

While lynching remained a pressing issue in the late nineteenth century, leading publications bracketed the topic within discussions of the larger “negro question.” Despite their concern for social justice, *The American Fabian* remained especially silent, not only about lynching, but also about the questions surrounding black

⁴ Fabians battled to restore human agency to the determinist implications that many felt Darwin’s theory of random mutation held. Fabians did not side with those who used Darwin’s ideas to posit group-wide theories of competition-based survival of the fittest. The Fabians, like much of late nineteenth century society, moved their ideas of evolution away from the biological arena and into the area of broader social “progress,” rid of the harsher aspects of competition.

⁵ For background on American Fabianism see Thomas P. Jenkin, “The American Fabian Movement,” *Western Political Quarterly* 1 (1948): 113-123.

⁶ *The American Fabian* 1:1 (February 1895): 5.

⁷ *Ibid.*

populations. The first real attention to the plight of black people in the American South came in an 1899 column that mixed evolutionary ideas with prevailing notions of semi-permanent biological determinism. In this piece, the author asks, “What is all this I hear about the negro?” and subsequently reflects that the “negro” had made “astonishing progress” despite “his low racial status, his limited advantages, and the heavy handicap of depressed ancestry and constant public prejudice.”⁸ The article argued that this progress, however, had not made black people eligible for political inclusion or rescued them from their station as “the backward children of the human family.”⁹ Despite the “public prejudice,” the acknowledgment of violence toward black people, – the article also commented that “they have been shooting him in the Carolinas and in Illinois, I’m told” – and the obvious economic exploitation experienced by blacks in the South, *The American Fabian* stated: “Like children, they must learn and wait – and their day will come.”¹⁰ In their long overdue response to a pressing issue of the day, American Fabians took a radically “gradualist” attitude toward the plight of black people in the South that effectively ignored the evolutionist basis of the term.

The American Fabian did not hesitate to invoke the urgency of earlier reform campaigns traditionally linked to black populations. Abolitionism, as discussed, was perhaps the most profound reform impulse of the nineteenth century. Further, the movement had direct connotations with emancipation in the United States: Anglo-American reform efforts had reached their zenith in the campaign to abolish American

⁸ *The American Fabian*, 5:1 (January 1899): 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

slavery. In their first issue, *The American Fabian* outlined their plan for the “Immediate Union” of reformers. The first sentence hoped to energize their movement by a direct reference and connection to abolitionism:

In the history of the American abolitionist movement, there went out in 1830, from the earnest spirit of William Lloyd Garrison, a cry for immediate abolitionism. Today is a greater, a more serious, a more difficult battle against industrial slavery, a cry that is needed at this hour for IMMEDIATE UNION, the immediate union of the political forces of reform.¹¹

The English Fabian society drew on a long tradition that linked political reform to the image of slavery. Indeed, slavery was a rhetorical tool with a long history of usage in the Anglo-American setting. Drawing on the Florentine civic humanist tradition, English nobility juxtaposed slavery against liberty in their struggles against monarchical power.¹² In the American colonies, the revolutionary call for independence extended the connections between the denial of liberty and political slavery.¹³ Moreover, the writings of Marx in the mid-nineteenth century popularized the equation of industrial labor with slavery. While this linkage to industrial slavery denounced core components of the classical humanist tradition, namely the individual, the Fabians used the powerful symbol of slavery to embolden their language of reform.

Fabian Tract 78, *Socialism and the Teachings of Christ*, argued that the core component of laissez-faire capitalism – individualism - created a group of slaves, stripped of manliness:

¹¹ *The American Fabian* 1:1 (February 1895): 7.

¹² See J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975) for this idea and the starting point of the debate between republicanism and liberalism.

¹³ See Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).

Individualism fosters the caste feelings and the caste division of society, creates the serfdom of one class and the indolence of another; makes a large body of submissive, silent, *unmanly slaves* undergoing grinding toil and continuous anxiety, and a smaller company suffering from debasing indolence and continual weariness; begets hatred and ill-will on one hand, and scorn and contempt of man on the other.¹⁴

The passage warned that laissez-faire capitalism created slavery and divisive social conditions, but, more poignantly, denied the slave (in this case industrial labor) the “manliness” that was necessary for participation in late nineteenth century civil society.¹⁵ By characterizing their cause as one that denied slavery and, thus, promoted manliness, Fabians tied into two powerful strategies in their assault on what they saw as the breakdown of white metropolitan society.¹⁶

While British Fabians were quick to link with abolitionism, they did not frequently tackle the question of race directly. Instead, like many in Great Britain, the Fabians’ racial attitudes were often contained in discussion of the imperial question.

¹⁴ “Socialism and the Teachings of Christ,” *Fabian Tract No. 78* (London, 1896): 11. My emphasis.

¹⁵ Catherine Hall links citizenship to manliness in her “The Nation Within and Without” in Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, Jane Rendall eds., *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 222.

¹⁶ Slavery remained a safe and popular issue in late nineteenth century society, even after emancipation in the United States and Brazil. The British Anti-Slavery Society spent the entire decade of the 1890s chronicling the fight against the “Mohammedean Slavers” of Africa and mythologizing those Westerners who carried the light of freedom into the “Dark Continent” such as H. M. Stanley. Adam Hochschild, in his work, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), demonstrates the appalling violence that Stanley perpetuated against native African populations. Interestingly, much of the effectiveness of the Congo Reform Association stemmed from their successful argument that slavery was alive and well in the fiefdom of King Leopold, not from the exposure of other related, but distinct, forms of violence against African populations. Perhaps the other most successful argument of the campaign also used the discourse of freedom: much of the nation-state grumblings arose from the lack of the Congo being the “free-trade” zone so lauded at the Berlin Conference of 1884. Slavery and its opposite, freedom, were powerful discursive tools in the world of late nineteenth and early twentieth century transatlantic reform.

While the British Empire was the nexus of the encounter with peoples of color, the Fabian society usually dismissed imperial politics as not particularly relevant to their emphasis on metropolitan reform. The Boer War, however, forced the Fabians – and many others in British society - to address empire.¹⁷ After a struggle within the Fabian society over the War that saw a significant fracturing of the movement,¹⁸ the society issued its famous *Fabianism and Empire* tract in 1900. The work, penned by George Bernard Shaw, directly addressed indigenous populations of the Empire and linked them back to the metropolitan cause: "For we shall find in Africa as well as in Asia that the races we have to govern no more consist of ignorant and helpless tribesmen, capable of nothing but pure tutelage, than our population consists exclusively of ignorant and helpless agricultural laborers."¹⁹ Shaw's conflation of the colony and the metropole reiterates the Fabians' primary concern of domestic reform and tempers any direct reading of the reference to colonial populations.²⁰ This withstanding, the passage argues that colonial peoples were capable of progress and demonstrates that British Fabians were largely in the evolutionist camp with regard to individual characteristics and, therefore, contributed to the discourse that denied the inherent "backwardness" of

¹⁷ As Andrew S. Thompson sums: "The Boer war was clearly an event of considerable importance. Events in South Africa touched the British population in a way that is difficult to appreciate, so much so that some have made comparisons between this conflict and that of America in Vietnam: both wars had significant domestic consequences." See his "The Language of Imperialism and the Meanings of Empire: Imperial Discourse in British Politics, 1895-1914," *Journal of British Studies* 36 (1997): 151.

¹⁸ For a detailed account of the clash over the Boer war, see McBriar, *Fabian Socialism*, 119-131.

¹⁹ *Fabianism and Empire: A Manifesto by the Fabian Society* (London, 1900), 21.

²⁰ Thompson comments that: "The manifesto ... attempted to promote Fabian policies under the pretense that they were relevant to the empire." Andrew S. Thompson, "The Language of Imperialism," 159.

colonial peoples.²¹ In a sense, the Fabians had no choice but to argue that all peoples were capable of progress. Much of their argument against laissez-faire emphasized that the structural reality of unregulated capitalism created inequality, not any type of inherent, individual inferiority. To lose face on this issue with relation to colonial populations could have seriously damaged the Fabians carefully crafted domestic agenda.

Moreover, the tract reiterates that imperialism required a dedication to self-determination: "In fact, our first duty to our subjects is to make them as independent of our guidance, and consequently as appreciative of our partnership, as possible."²² British law did not define citizenship and, at least formally, all males were equal subjects of the Crown, whether in England or the Empire. The phrase "our subjects," demonstrates that Fabians clearly did not escape the objectification of colonial peoples prevalent in metropolitan culture. By stressing independence and the notion of a partnership, however, the Fabians did question the invidious nature of colonial tutelage. This criticism did not mean the abandonment of Empire. In terms that crept into a language of group-wide competition, they felt that Empire was inevitable: "the world is to the big and powerful by necessity and the little ones must come within their borders."²³ When forced to address Empire, the Fabians were not anti-imperialist. They consistently opposed wanton imperial practices that they attributed to the same

²¹ However, as eugenics affected many in the first two decades of the twentieth century, some aspects of biological determinism crept into several prominent Fabian's outlooks, including George Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb. See Michael Freedon, "Eugenics and Progressive Thought: A Study in Ideological Affinity," *The Historical Journal* 22:3 (1979): 645-671.

²² *Fabianism and Empire*, 21.

²³ *Ibid.*, 50.

forces that caused metropolitan dislocations: the self-interested individualism that they argued was the lynchpin of laissez-faire capitalism.²⁴ British Fabians, well aware of the reality of a behemoth British Empire, extended their reform ethos to the Empire, arguing for a holistic partnership of domestic and imperial efficiency.²⁵

Meanwhile, the non-continental expansion of the United States in the 1890s that culminated in the Spanish-American War of 1898 gave reformers in the United States the opportunity to comment on their own “imperial question.” On this question, however, American Fabians were decidedly anti-imperialists. Their pat argument, like that of many other anti-imperialists in the United States, ignored the violence of America’s own internal colonialism – best typified by the plight of Native Americans and African-Americans – and condemned all imperial aggression as anti-American: “If you go out and, descending upon an alien people, try to impose your religion, your language, your politics, your education even, it will have to be done by force. In this case you cannot, by free opportunity and example, as in America, gently influence them, but you must achieve your end by hateful laws maintained at the bayonet’s point.”²⁶

American Fabians used this strain of American exceptionalism to further argue that, while the United States was “as a civilizer... a greater success than Great Britain,”

²⁴ Both Thompson in “Language of Imperialism” and McBriar in *Fabian Socialism* detail the “sane imperialism,” and “anti-jingoism” of the Fabians.

²⁵ Bernard Semmel describes the search for efficiency as “reform imperialism.” See his classic work, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought, 1895-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 13.

²⁶ “Shall Uncle Sam Go in for Imperialism?” *The American Fabian* 4:10 (October 1898): 5.

the line of altruism must be drawn somewhere.²⁷ To the American Fabians, the United States should decline overseas expansion and, instead, serve the “family of man” by continuing to open its borders to emigration: “In the last seventy years the United States has received nearly seventeen millions of emigrants. And the vast body of these have been taken up into our national life, raised, taught, encouraged, civilized, and assimilated. They are our most enthusiastic citizens.”²⁸ American Fabians argued that the United States had a special role as civilizer that was best foisted within the sanctity of the spatially and metaphorically bounded idea of Americanization: “Our method of taking the civilizee *into* our national life, making him a part of ourselves, so that he becomes in the first generation an ardent admirer and imitator of American life and ideals, and in the second generation a full-blooded American citizen – this is the only true method of civilizing.”²⁹ Clearly, metropolitan uplift was a major plank of transatlantic Fabians, but American Fabians, unlike the British, did not connect imperial expansion to the domestic agenda.

This message of immigrant, metropolitan uplift had decidedly racial bounds. To American Fabians and others, the possible incorporation of colonial populations into the machinations of the American republican system clearly threatened the democratic traditions of the United States. Hence, while American Fabians could tongue-in-cheek speak as “Uncle Sam” and invite colonial populations to the American laboratory of citizenship (note the use of homespun language and the westward/exceptionalist feeling

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

of the “ranch”): “Bring over yer Malays and Philippiners to my ranch and I’ll do what I kin fer ‘em,” it is clear that they doubted that the “polyglot populations of the Philippines and the natives of Cuba” ever had the real capacity to embrace the teachings of American democracy.³⁰

In another article that discussed the differences between American colonies and territories, *The American Fabian* detailed that the United States could not legally maintain colonies, but, instead was bound to follow the constitutional tradition of territorial status for new possessions. Therein lay the danger to American democracy, as they argued, in language steeped in racial symbolism, that it was not an issue of preparedness, but simply a matter of population:

A territory will be admitted to full membership in the States – not when it shall be deemed ‘fit for self-government’ . . . not when it shall have changed its language, its religion, its laws, its habits and almost its race - a process that would require almost centuries to complete – but merely when it shall have sufficient population, which is likely to occur in a few years. The territorial boy is expected only to become of age (or size) and is not required any more than the leopard to change his spots before he is received as full participant in the national life.³¹

This passage is highly reminiscent of the prevailing racialized language used in the descriptions of black people in the United States and colonized populations throughout the British Empire. The widespread argument that Reconstruction threatened

³⁰ For U.S. attitudes toward the democratic capacity of immigrants and foreigners, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: the United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000). Eric Love argues that similar fears informed the anti-imperialist argument against expansion. Further, the ability of policy makers to downplay the idea of racial uplift helped them move past the problematic terrain of “progress” for colonial peoples – or concern for colonial populations in general – and make decisions based on materialist objectives. See his, *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

³¹ *The American Fabian* 5:3 (March 1899): 3.

American democracy because of its elevation of “ignorant” blacks to positions of political power conditioned Fabian fears that population density alone dictated participation in the governing structures of the United States.³² The notation that it would take “centuries” to change a race of people considered in combination with the American Fabians’ relegation of blacks to quasi-permanent “childlike status” demonstrates that the anti-imperial, metropolitan uplift agenda of American Fabians decidedly ostracized peoples of color from its message. Hence, American Fabians fell into popular descriptions of both black Americans and non-white British colonial populations when they linked the descriptor “boy” to an animal and the unchanging physical markings of “spots.”³³

American Fabians, perhaps due to the divisive experience of Reconstruction and immediacy of the “negro question” within their own national borders, mixed the language of biological determinism and evolutionist progress to relegate blacks to a temporally open-ended state of childlike backwardness, denying them political rights in a post-emancipated world. In contrast, British Fabians, drawn into the question of

³² Recall Charles Aked’s derogatory description of Hiram Revels detailed in Chapter One.

³³ For example, see Chapter One’s analysis of the lynching of Henry Smith in 1893. Further, in a report to the directors of the British South Africa Company in 1895, company administrator Leander Starr Jameson lauded not only the cattle, but also the natives, of Southern Rhodesia, as “sleek and fat.” *Annual Report British South Africa Company for the Year 1894* (London, 1895). The title of Thomas Dixon’s highly popular first novel, *The Leopard’s Spots: A Romance of the White Man’s Burden, 1865-1900* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1902) sums the linkage of black people to an unchanging, animal-like state of being. Dixon, like the American Fabians, thought that Anglo-Saxon society could assimilate European immigrants, but he thought that blacks and the newly acquired populations of Cuba and the Philippines were beyond inclusion. Hence, he argued for the necessity of despotic rule in lands secured by the Spanish-American War. For more on Dixon, see Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

Empire by the Boer War, used a less convoluted language of evolutionist progress to argue for the immediate need of partnership with colonial peoples, and self-determination in the empire. While this language contributed an alternative discourse regarding race, it is evident that metropolitan issues conditioned the British message. On the whole, transatlantic Fabianism seamlessly appropriated the language of abolitionism to give rhetorical immediacy to their own, more particularized issues of “uplift” in the metropolitan spaces of Great Britain. During a time in which post-emancipated blacks, both in the United States and the British colonies, were battling overt violence and struggling for basic rights, Fabianism largely minimized the plight of colonial black populations.

By the 1890s, positivism was an established epistemological standard that influenced many reformers. The Fabians were no exception. Beyond intellectual debts that the Fabians owed to positivism, the formal Positivist group, led by leading thinkers such as Frederic Harrison, were often part of Fabian lectures and contributors to Fabian publications. Indeed, Positivists used many of the similar approaches that characterized the broad challenge to laissez-faire reform. Late nineteenth century Positivists attacked the confidence of traditional reform with their relentless push for empiricism that looked to flatten the Cartesian dichotomy between mind and body and, thus, cool the acceptance of deductive-only “truth.”

Positivists recognized that the onus of truth was shifting from deductive surety to empirical rigor, from the leap of faith to the knowable. Science, despite its vagaries and ill-defined nature, was the default catch-all for the empirical method and, partially

freed from the problem of mind-body dualism, empiricism and its expert handlers became virtually unbound as delineators of “truth,” which resulted in a powerful influence on reform agendas. Positivists were clearly at the forefront of these changes as their version of ontological “monoism” specifically conflated the mental and the material, stressing that observation was fundamental to the explication of the laws of nature and man and thus crucial to the authority of reform movements. Most relevant to this study, these Positivists directly addressed the plight of black populations in a colonial world.

Thaddeus Burr Wakemen of the United States was part of this transatlantic Positivist movement of the 1890s. Wakemen, in 1891, framed the monist agenda when he commented on several theorists who sought to redefine Herbert Spencer’s thought from one dedicated to materialist explanation to one that admitted the ultimate unknowable relationship between mind and matter:

This change of base [attested to Spencer] from scientific correlation to *nothing* – nothing at least, verifiable, seems ... a public confession of philosophic bankruptcy. For a system of philosophy which cannot account for the mind of the man, its origin, faculties, action, relations, and consequences, on at least a tentative and *working* scientific *hypothesis*, if not *law*, has cut off its head from its from its body.³⁴

Dedicated to the monistic redefinition of mind and matter, positivism vehemently argued that the investigation of the world was one in the same with the investigation of the mind and that the denial of this premise was anachronistic. In England, Frederic Harrison and Edward Beesly led the positivist movement and, beginning in 1893,

³⁴ Thaddeus Burr Wakeman, “The Latest Phase of Herbert’s Spencer’s Philosophy,” *The Open Court*, 13 August 1891, 2909. Wakeman’s emphasis.

published the monthly *The Positivist Review*. Like Wakeman, the monthly lobbied for the empirical investigation of society and looked to rescue the science of man from deductive schemas: “A practical result is at once visible when men become accustomed to regard events and acts – not as decreed or inspired by arbitrary will – but as the intelligible consequences of scientific law.”³⁵

Similar to the Fabians, Positivists were most concerned with metropolitan issues, specifically the troubles of the working class amidst the surge of late nineteenth century capitalism; but, positivists more directly and consistently connected metropolitan issues to the colonies. In 1893, before J. A. Hobson’s famous articulation of his “tap-root” critique of imperialism, positivists refused to buy into the jingoist reform argument that empire was a safety valve for industrial problems at home: “[we] refuse to be lured from the pursuit of industrial changes at home by the delusive bait of more extended markets abroad.”³⁶ Positivists argued, instead, that Empire was exploitation by a relatively small class of profiteers disguised in a language of jingoism that duped the working class into an ignorance of imperialism’s damage to their fortunes. Moreover, they actively warned that it must become a focus of those most damaged by capitalism in the metropole: “While workmen show their aversion for Imperialism by simply ignoring it, greedy speculators, restless soldiers, and jingo journalists have everything their own way. It is all very well for workmen to let the Empire alone; it will not let *them* alone.”³⁷

³⁵ *The Positivist Review* (September 1893): 188.

³⁶ *The Positivist Review* (October 1893): 189-190.

³⁷ *The Positivist Review* (October 1893): 190.

Related to race and empire, moreover, Positivists – similar to most reformers - grappled with the implications of Darwinian science. The theory of random mutation portended to many in the late nineteenth century the distinct possibility that human agency would be lost amidst determinist interpretations of Darwin. Positivists appreciated Darwin’s contribution that elevated empiricism and scientific inquiry; at the same time, they sought to rescue human agency from what they saw as crass applications of Darwin: “The appearance in 1859 of the *Origin of the Species* will remain an epoch in the history of science. But the theory will be supplemented by the incorporation of other factors.... Far greater caution will be used in the application of the Darwinian theory to the solution of human problems.”³⁸

The publication of Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* in 1859 only intensified the discussion of long-standing theories concerning inheritance and competition. Herbert Spencer relied on Lamarckian theories of inheritance and Malthusian ideas of population pressure to coin the term “survival of the fittest” in 1852.³⁹ Emboldened by Darwin’s biological theory, Social Darwinism spun Spencer’s ideas in a myriad of directions. Best understood as a worldview and not as a set of discrete prescriptions, Social Darwinism referred to the authority of science to argue that evolution (progress) to a higher social type (defined biologically) relied on competition.⁴⁰ This theory saw this competition as occurring between racial groups on a global scale and found many

³⁸ *The Positivist Review* (August 1894).

³⁹ Note that the earlier quote from T. B. Wakemen endorsed Spencer’s material methodology and but not his view of competition.

⁴⁰ Mike Hawkins argues for the understanding of Social Darwinism as a worldview instead of a prescriptive program in his *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 17: 21-24.

adherents in the imperial world of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Social Darwinism became omnipresent and “one of the most important modern trends in European and American thought.”⁴¹

Positivists consistently argued against social theories that stressed progress through competition. As such, they held special reproach for “survival of the fittest” proscriptions for human progress: “A factor which has been much overrated is the so-called struggle for existence. As regards lower organisms this may be of supreme importance. But in explaining human relations...it is made too much of.”⁴²

The Positivist Review consistently rebuked the popular Social Darwinist Benjamin Kidd, whose 1894 *Social Evolution* was widely popular in both Great Britain and the United States, went through multiple printings, and was translated into ten languages.⁴³ Although Kidd argued for an organic understanding of social relations, *Social Evolution* and his 1898 *Control of the Tropics* endorsed, unequivocally, Anglo-Saxons as the race best equipped to lead and to win the competitive struggle for worldwide progress.⁴⁴

To Positivists, human agency depended on a distancing from Darwinian ideas of individual biological determinism. But the shift to group-wide racial superiority made by Kidd was a fallacious halfway step that threatened the Positivist belief that humanity was an organic whole composed, like many other aspects of the natural world, of

⁴¹ Gregory Claeys, “The ‘Survival of the Fittest’ and the Origins of Social Darwinism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61:2 (2000): 226.

⁴² *The Positivist Review* (September 1896): 180.

⁴³ D. P. Crook, *Benjamin Kidd: Portrait of a Social Darwinist* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 51-53.

⁴⁴ For more on Benjamin Kidd, see Hawkins, *Social Darwinism*, 171 -175 and D. P. Crook, *Benjamin Kidd*.

interrelated, but diverse parts. The *Review* consistently lambasted Kidd and others for modifying Darwin in what they saw as incomplete and disingenuous fashion: “It is surely a very arbitrary sort of canon which recognizes that the struggle for existence is modified by the social spirit with the advantage to the family, to the tribe, to the nation, to the European race, but stops short of the conclusion that this modification will apply with similar advantage to Humanity as a whole.”⁴⁵ Simply, the Positivist critique argued that a nationalist belief in group competition misappropriated science: “The ideal here spoken of is the recognition that the weaker tribes of men as well as the stronger should be maintained in their own corporate existence, and that patriotism should not be the monopoly of those who can enforce it by the engines of scientific warfare.”⁴⁶ While they never escaped the prevailing aspects of racial hierarchies, the positivists denounced nation-state racial aggression that was at the core of much imperial aggrandizement, and advanced a notion of the interconnectedness of all men.

There were other challenges to the building blocks that supported racist social theories, such as Social Darwinism. The rediscovery of Mendelian genetics around the turn of the twentieth century began to reassert the ideas of natural selection and whittled away at Lamarckian theories of inheritable, acquired characteristics, which, as previously mentioned, linked the study of biology and social theory.⁴⁷ This questioning coincided with the turn in anthropology that began to separate biology from culture.

⁴⁵ *The Positivist Review* (September 1896):180.

⁴⁶ *The Positivist Review* (March 1894): 54.

⁴⁷ George Stocking Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 265. Stocking remains the fundamental voice on the interaction between anthropology and other disciplines and movements, including cultural studies. See Richard Handler, “Raymond Williams, George Stocking, and Fin-de-Siecle U.S. Anthropology,” *Cultural Anthropology* 13:4 (November 1998): 447-463.

Best exemplified by the work and legacy of Franz Boas, anthropology began to imbue “culture” with meanings unattached to the evolutionist idea. Specifically, anthropology assigned behavioral determinism to the idea of “culture” and this attachment continues to define the major emphasis of the discipline. In other words, anthropology led the break with seemingly inescapable association between “culture” and the single track of evolution defined by “civilization,” which, in late nineteenth century discussions of progress, invariably dovetailed with the example of the biologically defined Anglo-Saxon “race.”⁴⁸

In this sense, the Boasian tradition is widely recognized as a key player in the move from the idea of a monolithic “culture” to the use of the non-singular term “cultures” that is at the heart of pluralism. Boas’ recognition of the value of all cultures combined with his consistent denial that there existed inherent biological differences between human beings also encourages an appreciation of Boas as an anti-racist pioneer: “Boas, almost single-handedly ... developed the concept of culture, which, like a powerful solvent, would in time expunge race from the literature of social science.”⁴⁹

While some question just how effective Boas’ separation of culture and biology was to the broader dismantling of racism, his critique of the meaning of culture matured over time.⁵⁰ In his 1894 article, “Human Faculty as Determined by Race” Boas was

⁴⁸ George Stocking Jr., “Franz Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective,” *American Anthropologist* 68:4 (August, 1966).

⁴⁹ Carl Degler, *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 71.

⁵⁰ Kamala Visweswaran argues that Boas’ ability to make culture everything “race was not” and the subsequent attempt to “expunge race from social sciences by assigning it to biology” pushed race to the “hard sciences” and actually helped fuel the “machine of scientific

beginning to develop his ideas about cultural determinism. He remained at least partially beholden to the traditional definitions that combined culture with biology. Boas was, further, relatively isolated in his struggle and it was not him, but his students who most contributed to the acceptance of his definition of culture as the anthropological concept.⁵¹ Indeed, Boas was a “transitional figure” whose interpretations influenced an entire discipline, but he had trouble immediately displacing the biological-driven social theories of race that dominated the late nineteenth century.

In their emphasis on holism, Positivists often stressed the mantra “Unity not Uniformity” when approaching the study of man. Beyond their condemnation of competition, this mantra provides clues to the prefiguring of Boasian understanding of anthropology:

There are more civilizations than one, and that the name is not to be refused to systems of life and manners because they differ from our own. There are indeed, few so low, as not be in some points more commendable than ours.... It [is] the business of Anthropology to step in and make a knowledge of other civilizations a part of all decent education.⁵²

By the end of the nineteenth century, the positivists saw the increasing contact with Asia as an opportunity for an expanded worldview and a greater appreciation for other cultures. In many essays on China and Japan, the positivists stood by their assertion of anthropological understanding, indeed arguing that, “All things considered,

racism.” Kamala Visweswaran, “Race and the Culture of Anthropology,” *American Anthropologist* 100:1 (March 1998): 70-83.

⁵¹ Stocking, “Franz Boas and the Culture Concept,” 879.

⁵² *The Positivist Review* (October 1895): 183.

it would seem that if Europe and America have much to teach to China and Japan, they also have much to learn.”⁵³

In their search to understand humanity, the positivists continued their protest against “survival of the fittest” mentalities by arguing against theories of racial extinction. In these arguments, Positivists revealed their acceptance of some facets of the prevailing standards of racial hierarchies, which created limits to their vision of unity. One particular passage is representative of the Positivist simultaneous belief in the promise of Asiatic peoples and the suggestion that black people were one of the “few so low” races of man that were incapable of contributing to the progress of man:

With Man, the exterminating process has its limits. A few imperfect races like the Tasmanians or the Bushmen have disappeared or are disappearing. But the three great divisions of the human family, White, Yellow, and Black, survive in proportions perhaps not very different from those which prevailed three thousand years ago. *And whatever can be said of the Negro*, Japan and China bid fair to play a larger part in the future history of Humanity than they have played in the past.⁵⁴

The Positivist appreciation of cultural relativism, similar to the American Fabians’ discussions of the “negro question” and immigration, had boundaries that excluded black populations. Positivists did not argue that black people were prone to extinction. However, they refused – despite the emancipated legal status of colonial blacks – to argue that they were capable of contributing to civil society. Hence, their denunciations of lynching lacked a commensurate dedication to practical reform agendas that addressed the ideological and structural conditions that promoted the exclusionary violence.

⁵³ *The Positivist Review* (April 1901): 80.

⁵⁴ *The Positivist Review* (April 1901), my emphasis.

The Positivist racial exclusion of black peoples also influenced their practical discussions of colonial administration. While *The Positivist Review* consistently argued that enlisting Indians into the day-to-day operations of government was the most prudent way to soften the “Indian Millstone,” Frederic Harrison viewed African populations as far from self-government: “It will be centuries before the rude savages of central Africa can be brought to the stage of civilization of India or China.”⁵⁵ Moreover, Harrison argued that England, for the sake of progress, should avoid Africa: “For the last thirty years English interests have been absorbed in at least a score of wars – always with races of darker skin and of uncivilised condition. Our complications have arisen from miserable, and often unintelligible quarrels with barbarians and savages; and England has stood aside from the general march of European progress....From the point of view of European progress and the higher hopes of true civilization, it would be better that the nations of Europe should keep out of Africa altogether.”⁵⁶ Positivists demonstrated some appreciation for peoples and cultures different from the ubiquitous Anglo-Saxon standard. They were, however, still beholden in many ways to the idea of “civilization” and their tone decidedly became restrained when discussing the merits of African, and more broadly, black populations.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *The Positivist Review*, Annual Address (February 1895).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Bernard Porter, in his seminal work, *Critics of Empire: British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa, 1895 – 1914* (London: Macmillan, 1968) details the “new knowledge” of cultural understanding in Britain by, among others, Mary Kingsley and Ramsey Macdonald. This understanding questioned whether standards of “civilization” were universal and criticized the assumption that imperialism could uplift colonial populations. On the whole, it, however, denied the fundamental assumptions of Boasian notions of “cultures” and took a decidedly hands-off approach to African populations. Kingsley argued that Africans were different “in kind, not degree” and that, aided with differing levels of indirect rule, they should be left to their

Positivists also criticized the Christianizing reform mission as another fallacy that propelled Empire. Wakeman, as early as 1883, tersely summed the wide assault on religious certainty in the late nineteenth century: “Science is the true creed and the Bible of the world.”⁵⁸ To Positivists the deductive belief in God was completely out of step with their emphasis on empiricism and reform agendas based on the word of God and religious altruism were inherently faulty. Hence, beyond their criticism of competition-based interpretations of science, Positivists also deeply questioned the assumptions of Christian uplift in their anti-imperial discourse. The *Review* consistently argued that “heaven-sent mission of the Anglo-Saxon race” was an invidious doctrine of imperialism.⁵⁹

Positivists went to lengths discussing the “great question” of morality and religion that they saw as girding Empire. Similar to their attempts to bring together the mind and the material, they argued that religion and politics were not separate spheres, but that both were part of the natural world: “[morality and religion] must be fought out on practical and political lines. Here we make no pretence to possess any higher law than that of human duty and well-being, and we know no object more divine than peace,

own course of “development.” Macdonald begrudgingly accepted the imperial plight but commented in 1898 that the colonial experience was compromising British democracy: “The democracy of Britain is beginning to assume more and more the functions and the mental state of the Indian official; of the South African nigger-driver.... The events in Africa of the last year or two have brought sentimentality in this country nearer and nearer to a lynching potentiality.” This exhaustion with imperial practice pushed Macdonald to emphasize metropolitan reform: “In the long run, we can do more for Africa by civilizing the East of London than by putting an end forever to the inequities of the Khalifia in the Soudan.” Quotes found in Porter, pages 151, 186, and 189.

⁵⁸ T. B. Wakeman, *Evolution or Creation?* (New York, 1883). Found in Gillis J. Harp, *Positivist Republic: August Comte and the Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865-1920* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 79.

⁵⁹ *The Positivist Review* (April 1901): 83.

good-will and fellowship among men.”⁶⁰ On the heels of the Boer War, *The Positivist*

Review discussed its view of “International Politics” arguing:

Humanitarian sentiment is no doubt necessary.... But this [sentiment] is only the preliminary or rudimentary feeling which has to be enlightened by a true perception of the nature and history of the different societies which make up the human brotherhood. Otherwise the vague and uninformed sentiment will be diverted and controlled by the dominant prejudices and interests of the moment.⁶¹

To the Positivists, religion established a deductive standard that was highly susceptible to manipulation and abuse. Only by grounding morality in the real world, positivists argued, could man attain standards of knowledge that prevented religion from operating as a blanket apologetic. In this respect, they offered a direct and consistent criticism of the imperial mission.

The critique of imperial competition and the imperial mission also commented on colonial violence and race. As *The Positivist Review* summed in 1902,

The ‘Positivist Comments,’ collected in 1892, contain the incessant protests we have made against such acts of aggression as the first Transvaal annexation of 1881, the occupation of Egypt, and the successive expeditions and conquests up the Nile, against the Irish Coercion Bills of 1881 and 1887, against the occupation of Tunis by France, and against the continued aggression upon China.... Since the establishment of the Review in 1893, it has been found to be the most suitable organ for the expression of opinion on such subjects as the recent war in Zululand, Rhodesia, in West Africa, in China, and in the South African Republics.⁶²

Moreover, the *Review* recognized similarities between the American South and the British Empire and included lynching in their criticism of the colonial mission: “The sufferings of the natives of India, the practical slavery of thousands in South Africa, the

⁶⁰ *The Positivist Review* (February 1899): 48.

⁶¹ *The Positivist Review* (April 1901): 81.

⁶² *The Positivist Review* (May 1902): 107-108.

lynchings in America, the horrors of the Congo, must make the most convinced optimist [supporting colonial “improvement”] hesitate and qualify his statements.”⁶³ Positivists provided a voice of criticism that consistently decried colonial violence and connected it across the boundaries of the nation-state.

The Positivists also discussed international issues especially relevant to black peoples across the African diaspora. Their commentary on the West Indies is one topic that directly conflated the “imperial question” in Great Britain and the “negro question” in the United States. The positivists, by 1898, saw the British West Indies as an almost complete loss:

If the United States would relieve us of our West Indian islands they would confer a great benefit upon the British taxpayer. We are now doling out large sums of money to these worse than worthless possessions without any prospect of return. Comte long ago suggested that the slave population in the United States should be emigrated thither. The first step toward carrying out this proposal would be that the British flag should be withdrawn.⁶⁴

The main reason for this position concerning the West Indies was, according to the positivists, that the colony was becoming more and more a “black man’s country.”⁶⁵ Moreover, while *The Positivist Review* ostensibly lauded the steps taken by black people toward self-government in the West Indies, they felt that it would take a long time for them to prepare for participation in white civil society. In other words, Positivists, like many other reformers in the late nineteenth century, were highly

⁶³ *The Positivist Review* (October 1900). The *Review* also connected lynching to other examples of colonial violence arguing, in 1895, that “civilized nations” could not legitimately condemn the repression of the Turks in Armenia unless there was a like condemnation of the British atrocities in Ireland, India, and Jamaica, and the “slaughter of Red Indian women and children” and the “lynching of Negroes” in the United States. See *The Positivist Review* (March 1895): 60.

⁶⁴ *The Positivist Review* (September 1898): 155.

⁶⁵ *The Positivist Review* (October 1901): 201.

suspicious of the role that black people would play in the post-emancipated world. In 1890, T. B. Wakeman highlighted the concern over this issue: “The abolition of slavery in this and other countries has brought to the forefront the questions of race occupation in a manner to test civilized statesmanship to the uttermost.”⁶⁶

To Wakeman, white society still asserted dominance over black people in ways analogous to slavery and he saw miscegenation as the only real corrective: “the question recurs, can and should miscegenation become so general so as to abolish caste and give equal mongrel citizens, with equal rights and privileges upon which Republics securing liberty and welfare to all may safely rest?”⁶⁷ In line with his choice of the derogatory word “mongrel” Wakeman answered that it was “absurd” to think that race mixing could occur in quick enough time to “obliterate” racial distinctions.⁶⁸ Instead, Wakeman, like his British counterparts, offered radical separatism in the Caribbean as the answer: “the West Indies, with ninety thousand square miles and with the inhabitants largely colored, are the garden of the world, and naturally and plainly the Canaan of the Colored Freedmen and their descendents from both North and South America.”⁶⁹

Beyond his biblical reference that joined the black cause to a religious imperative, which seems at distinct odds with the anti-religious emphasis of positivism, Wakeman’s argument flirted with the assertion that progress was a function of biology and, thus, neared the same type of determinist argument that fed scientific racism and

⁶⁶ *The Open Court*, 7 August 1890, 2433.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2434.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 2435.

underwrote imperial aggression. Positivists on both sides of the Atlantic had significant reservations about the contributions of black people to human progress and argued that, while their “mental and moral qualities” could indeed evolve, it was best done in separation from white society: “they should have a proper sphere for their evolution without danger to others and consequent repression to themselves.”⁷⁰ Hence, while Positivists argued that native Indians and Asiatics could contribute to worldwide progress, they effectively set black peoples outside the progress of civilization, hoping to leave them to their own in Africa and the West Indies. While this strategy had appreciation for cultural difference and, thus, countered the universalism that helped perpetuate white supremacy, it oddly avoided the realities of the colonial world that provoked much of the Positivist critique of Empire and made their idea of “unity” appear selective.

Positivists, in the main, argued for what was, at the time, a radical appreciation of other cultures and consistently ridiculed two powerful tropes of imperialism that propelled colonial violence: “The practical conclusion of theologian and Darwinian is the same – we need not scruple to go on pounding the coloured man.”⁷¹ Moreover, they also flashed out damning and prophetic indictments: “Our descendants will look back with bitter memories on this age; and an Empire so built up with the foundations of wrong, and cemented by blood, may hereafter dissolve more rapidly than it rose” that helped contribute to the counter-narrative of empire and race.⁷² The Positivist aversion

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ *The Positivist Review* (September 1896): 178.

⁷² *The Positivist Review* (May 1902).

to argue for immediate political rights for blacks who were deeply entrenched in colonial space and commonly subject to colonial violence compromised this distinctly valiant protest against the “pounding of the coloured man.” This method of protest demonstrates the exclusionary tendency of the new strains of late nineteenth century reform categories to minimize the inclusive rights for peoples of color contained within the promise of British and American reform and larger civil society.⁷³

This chapter has shown that the changes affecting reformers in the late nineteenth century did produce a discourse that addressed race in ways not sufficiently explored. In the final analysis, however, its center concentrated largely on economic issues and did not directly include black populations in their arguments. In many ways, the new reform partially undermined the liberal imperative that so often underwrote the imperial mission of uplift, but it also failed to provide platforms for the assertion of agency by non-whites. Ironically, Fabians and Positivists, largely helped undo the epistemological and practical mechanisms for colonial exploitation, but also failed to replace it with the hopes of citizenship in a post-emancipated world.

In fits and spurts, new reformers embraced the implications of evolutionist perspectives in their approach to black populations. This hesitancy allowed black populations to slip from the holistic vision that provided a backdrop to the challenge to laissez-faire reform. Moreover, reformers did not use their new empiricism to test the

⁷³ Indeed, British Positivists disconnected emancipation, citizenship, and imperialism: “Thirty-five years ago our youth was lifted out of the slough of the national self-satisfaction by the great struggle in America against slavery, and since that time this country has been deeply stirred by questions of national education and religious liberty. Yet greater problems await our solution, the incorporation of the workers into a full citizenship and the problem of our Empire.” *The Positivist Review* (July 1896): 112.

prevailing social “knowledge” about black populations, nor did they create a body of viable interventionist methods in ways that could deal with the reality of colonial violence and exploitation. In many respects, however, they did create a body of language that suggested that the changing standards of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were intended for more than just the white metropole.

CHAPTER THREE
TRANSATLANTIC LIBERAL HUMANISTS AND RACE

The Fabian and Positivist shift to an emphasis on empiricism, intervention, and social holism deeply offended liberal humanists. Liberal humanists gave priority to the Victorian tradition of the individual and were highly suspicious of all forms of authority that either threatened the individual or offered interventionist agendas that constrained the diversity of intellectual engagement with the public sphere. While the new challenges threatened the cultural authority of the liberal humanists, the emphasis on new reform strategies should not dismiss the perseverance – albeit in modified form – of transatlantic Anglo-American reformers who still believed in the traditions of deductive rationalism, laissez-faire policies, and the individual.

Evolving from the Victorian genteel tradition, transatlantic liberal humanists negotiated enough of the changes wrought by modernity to remain a viable voice of change and reform.¹ As historians have noted, many older voices in this genteel tradition did appear anachronistic amidst the changes of the late nineteenth century; some adjusted to the challenge, and, with their influence in academia and print culture, retained a viable presence in transatlantic reform.² Indeed, this pattern of reform helped

¹ The seminal work on the Victorian transatlantic connection is David D. Hall, “The Victorian Connection,” *American Quarterly* 27:5 (1975): 561–574.

² Leslie Butler, in the introduction to her, “The Mugwump Dilemma: Democracy and Cultural Authority in Victorian America” (Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 1997), effectively rescues the study of this genteel tradition from the death knell prescribed by Richard Hofstadter in *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Knopf, 1955). While Butler’s main focus is on expanding the understanding of late nineteenth century American life, her work also has an Anglo-American, transatlantic focus.

define the earliest form of “new liberalism,” which remained a powerful ideological force as the twentieth century unfolded.³

Further, the liberal humanist ability to embrace science, their belief that peoples of color were not biologically inferior, and, as such, had the capacity for improvement combined with the theoretical idea of an inclusive political space implied by the liberal tradition still made their ideas relevant to the high imperialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The liberal humanist’s emphasis on individual improvement through the vehicle of education remained a powerful tool that helped distinguish between the possibility of the liberal promise and the creation of conditions for its actualization.⁴ This ability was highly germane to the encounter with peoples of color and allowed liberal humanism to make the colonial encounter a potential site for the assertion of cultural authority amidst the modernist tumult. This chapter explores the ways that liberal humanism adapted to the shifting reform strategies, the criticisms they voiced against the new reform, their reactions to lynching, and the contributions these reformers made to the discussions of race and empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the mid-Victorian confidence in religious institutions and deductive rationalism began to fracture with the continuing

³ For an overview of new liberalism see, Michael Freeden, *The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

⁴ For an insightful discussion of the inclusionary premises and exclusionary practices of the liberal tradition, see Uday Mehta, “Liberal Strategies of Exclusion,” in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 59 – 81.

advances in technology and science.⁵ The importance of the religious tradition, of individual thought, and of mental abstraction in the private world of cognition did not seem as rewarding. The ability to “cut and fix” universal abstractions such as “respectability” and “character” from deductive, dichotomous reasoning became more and more tenuous in an experiential, modern world. As a result, reformers who grounded their authority within this framework witnessed a decline in their ability to define issues, lead discourse, form policies, and promote change. In short, the changes of modernity chipped away at their traditional assertions of cultural authority.

The new reformers discussed in Chapter Two directly challenged the laissez-faire reform tradition. Laissez-faire, to liberal humanists, not only favored individual decision-making in the marketplace, but also, on a much more fundamental level, celebrated the individual as the repository of human virtue. Drawing on a long history of classical humanism, transatlantic Victorian liberal humanists deduced that individual political participation in society was the ultimate expression of “good.” This civic virtue, grounded in Aristotelian principles, stressed that “liberty” was the opportunity to seek individual fulfillment through the political public sphere. As well, classical humanism stressed that, through rational thought, individuals gained a wide range of intellectual diversity, which could further invigorate individual actualization in the marketplace of politics and ideas. Importantly, these three standards: liberty, the

⁵ Of course, the imposition of empirical science on deductive reasoning is fundamental to the Western Enlightenment. The radical assertions of science in the last half of the nineteenth century pushed the challenge to a new level of urgency.

individual, and intellectual diversity, worked in concert and were preserved, not created, by the state.⁶

Therefore, Victorian liberal humanists had an expansive definition of laissez-faire, which considered individual autonomy sacrosanct. This worldview sustained a wide range of laissez-faire precepts. These included government non-intervention in the marketplace, an emphasis on the deductive ability of reason, and the suspicion of all forms of authority that threatened the individual or constrained the diversity of intellectual engagement with the public sphere. Liberal humanism, tested by the challenges of the new reform, retained significant attachment to the above principles regarding the sanctity of the individual and, further, managed to reassert some of the deductively established universals with relation to race and empire.

Edward Lawrence Godkin was a prominent journalist and thinker in the United States during the last half of the nineteenth century. He was born in Ireland and cultivated extensive contacts throughout Great Britain, where he died in 1900.⁷ Godkin was a holdover who embraced earlier forms of laissez-faire and struggled with the challenges posed by the new reformers. In an 1891 article entitled the “The Economic Man”, he discussed the late nineteenth century denunciations of liberal humanist precepts.⁸ Godkin argued that the new reformers ostensibly referred to scientific method to validate their policies, but their efforts were not different from any other

⁶ The literature on classical humanism is extensive, but the best and most challenging work remains J.G.A Pocock’s *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

⁷ For background on Godkin, see William M. Armstrong, *E. L. Godkin: A Biography* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978).

⁸ E. L. Godkin, “The Economic Man,” *The North American Review* (October 1891): 491-504.

moral reformer: “Their air of authority is that of scientists, but the eager philanthropy of their utterances indicates that they are really would-be legislators. Their clothes are economical, but their talk is ethical.”⁹ Godkin argued that the laissez-faire critics, such as the Fabians and the Positivists, fallaciously projected their pursuits as inductively driven. In fact, he maintained, they relied on deduction to outline their ideas of truth and project their own reform agendas. Thus, the harkening to empiricism as their arbiter of truth was disingenuous. This duplicity regarding truth combined with the suggestion that the answers to modern world were entitlement-based legislative projects was offensive to liberal humanism. To Godkin, this agenda duped the individual into reliance on state intervention and flattened the possibility of individual actualization: “The reason why the older political economy has seemed to them a dismal science has been that its teachings, in so far as it attempted to teach, discouraged reliance on the state for these things, and made the attainment of them dependent on individual character.”¹⁰ To Godkin, the new “social politics” of the late nineteenth century too easily simplified laissez-faire and, in the process, lost its wide-ranging subtleties developed from a long tradition of humanist thought, which fundamentally emphasized the sanctity of the individual.

Despite Godkin’s tirade against the new standards, modernity did modify liberal humanism’s faithfulness to classical humanist precepts. The Enlightenment, the popular revolutions of the late eighteenth century, and the new structural conditions of modernization altered the classical humanist approach. Certainly, transatlantic liberal

⁹ Ibid., 496.

¹⁰ Ibid., 501.

humanism relied on deductively established trans-historical universals, but also felt that historical circumstances and ideologies worked in a dialogical manner. Discarding the older assumptions that history was cyclical,¹¹ the Enlightenment posited that individuals, through the rational education of the mind, could lead the human race on a path of progress. Late nineteenth century modernity demanded that older confidence in rational education interact with the ongoing structural changes to retain authority. Liberal humanists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries still guarded classical assumptions of liberty, the individual, and intellectual diversity, but also recognized that their efficacy depended on their application in different historical contexts: “Discovering different ways of organizing society, or establishing different human capacities of needs, supplanted rather than replaced the Aristotelian and civic humanist emphases on individual autonomy and participation in society.”¹² Never giving up their core belief in the individual, liberal humanists of the late nineteenth century recognized the challenges of modernity and searched for strategies to maintain cultural authority.

As detailed in Chapter Two, new reformers emphasized an empirical methodology. This emphasis helped inform the need for a cadre of trained experts that

¹¹ Cyclical notions of history represent two strong themes of Western thought. First, the religious strain that presupposed man’s original sin, which conditioned history as a falling away, and, second, the classical humanist perspective that saw virtue as a natural good that society could never develop in a teleological manner, but could only hope to conserve.

¹² Alan S. Kahan, *Aristocratic Liberalism: The Social and Political Thought of Jacob Burckhardt, John Stuart Mill, and Alexis de Tocqueville* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 97. My location of transatlantic liberal humanism derives largely from Kahan, Robert Kelley’s *The Transatlantic Persuasion: The Liberal-Democratic Mind in the Age of Gladstone* (New York: Knopf, 1969) and Murney Gurlach’s *British Liberalism and the United States: Political and Social Thought in the Late Victorian Age* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

could interpret findings to suggest reform. This expertise manifested itself most noticeably in the progressive agenda that promoted a technocratic professional class that advised on social policy. While liberal humanists did not embrace the technocratic urge, in many ways they adapted to the modernist call for the expert. In their response, liberal humanism remained committed to the methodology of John Stuart Mill. Mill believed that Newtonian empirical observation of phenomena in nature produced generalizations, which could be organized into theories that aided rationalism and motivated individual behavior. This methodological approach often took the form of informed, public exchanges of ideas and resulting prescriptions for change. While this approach conformed to humanist laissez-faire prescription – indeed the public forum itself was an essential part of individual “liberty” – participation was not limited to just those of ascendant socio-political rank, but also catered to a new breed of member with prerequisite expertise on the subject matters. These experts were not from the empirical world of laboratory sciences, but experts from experience and contemplation: those with the practical observation of administration or those familiar with the subject.¹³

Regardless of how empirical Mill’s inductive-deductive synthesis was or how far removed the assumptions of liberal experts were from universal abstraction, the liberal humanist methodological approach remained malleable enough to highlight aspects that dovetailed with the shift in socio-cultural modes of authority.¹⁴

¹³ See Lawrence Goldman, “A Peculiarity of the English? The Social Science Association and the Absence of Sociology in Nineteenth-Century Britain,” *Past & Present* 114 (February 1987): 133-171.

¹⁴ Dorothy Ross comments that Mill and his tradition were selectively empirical, only using “facts” that meshed with the larger abstractions of the political economy. See Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991),

Two important reform-oriented associations, the British National Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences (SSA) started in 1857 and the American Social Science Association (ASSA) founded in 1865, epitomize the importance of the Millian tradition and the commitment to recasting social issues under the discursive power of empiricism and the expert. Further, the transatlantic links between the two were strong, with the British society being the model for the American.¹⁵ Both societies were committed to imbuing the deductive with an empirical methodology:

The province of Social Science... is simple enough. At the present time our task is nearly the same as that which Bacon commenced for physical science in the *Novum Organon*. In the first place a vast accumulation of facts and observations, statistics and experiments need to be gathered... gradually by induction, larger generalizations will be reached.¹⁶

and dedicated to reform guided by “expert” arrivals at the truth:

[The ASSA] would bring together the various societies and individuals now interested in these objects, for the purpose of obtaining by discussion the real elements of the Truth; by which doubts are removed, conflicting opinions harmonized, and a common ground afforded for treating wisely the great social problems of the day.¹⁷

By 1885, however, both societies were no longer in existence. Historian Thomas Haskell views the demise of these organizations as testament to the waning

17-18. Thomas Bender argues that, indeed, empiricism informed both the technocrats and liberal humanists. The real shift, however, was when the ability to “know” through technocratic training superseded the ability to “understand” through interest or experience. See his *Intellect and Public Life: Essays on the Social History of Academic Intellectuals in the United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1993), 10-15.

¹⁵ Harold Silver, *Education as History: Interpreting Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Education* (London: Methuene, 1983), 102: 117.

¹⁶ Frances Power Cobbe, “Social Science Congresses, and Women’s Part in Them” *Macmillan’s Magazine*, 5 (1861). Found in Silver, *Education as History*, 105.

¹⁷ *Constitution of the American Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (Boston, 1865). Found in Silver, *Education as History*, 112.

cultural authority of liberal humanism in the wake of the technocratic rising.¹⁸ As mentioned, certainly liberal humanists did not flock to technocratic settings. The emphasis on the technocratic expert of the late nineteenth century obviates that liberal humanists not only developed an altered notion of the expert but also transitioned away from associational reform movements to institutional settings. While universities like John Hopkins and the University of Chicago moved to a more theoretically based search for the interrelations of society based on the historicist doubt of laissez-faire economic theory, other institutions in the United States and Great Britain retained a commitment to expanded notions of laissez-faire and liberal humanism. Institutions such as Harvard University and other Ivy League schools such as Princeton and Yale maintained connections with the longstanding Anglo-American world of associational-like certitude that, with similar modification of their authoritative claims, were located at Oxford and Cambridge Universities in Britain.¹⁹ These “Oxbridge” settings nurtured a social science agenda that integrated empirical rigor into its liberal tradition in order to remain a viable voice in the battle for cultural authority and compensate for the dissipation of the authority that liberal humanism experienced over the course of the late nineteenth century. A distinct presence in the late nineteenth century print boom helped highlight this voice. Led by respected monthlies like *The Nation* in the United

¹⁸ See Thomas Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Authority* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977).

¹⁹ See Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science*, Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975) and Rebecca Soffer, *Discipline and Power: The University, History and the Making of An English Elite* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

States and *Nineteenth Century* in Great Britain, the institutionalized liberal humanist opinion found easy access to the wider public.²⁰

Like sociology, the social sciences in the university had their origins in the frustrations of associational reformism and, while social sciences and sociology imply important differentiations, they both sprang from, and found legitimacy under, the aegis of science.²¹ These developments demonstrate that knowledge production and, as a result, cultural authority mutated under the late nineteenth century modernist challenge. This study argues that the changes retained significant streams of transatlantic liberal humanist antecedents and that a vibrant print culture aided the visibility of these views. Specific to the position of black peoples within the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's imperialism, this adaptation enabled transatlantic liberal humanism to remain a voice of authority in the discussions of race. Keeping the differences and similarities in mind between the two sets of reformers detailed in this and the previous chapter can more incisively problematize the study of transatlantic reformers views on race and empire.²²

²⁰ Following the general argument of Joan Shelley Rubin in her, *The Making of Middle-Brow Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), this study argues that many "genteel" periodicals did not lose resonance in the flux of modernity, but, just as liberal humanist reformers adapted, the publications dealt more squarely with political issues and still used print as a vehicle to promote older ideas of character and virtue.

²¹ Goldman, in his "Peculiarity of the English," argues that the consistent bifurcation by historians between sociology and social science too quickly dismisses the affinities between the developments and unduly minimizes the prevailing scientific ethos of the last half of the nineteenth century.

²² James Kloppenberg, in his work, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) explores the "via media" of reformers: "The convergence of political thinkers from the traditions of socialism and liberalism paralleled the convergence in philosophy between

Two figures representative of transatlantic liberal humanism were James Bryce of Great Britain and Walter Page of the United States. Both men were heavily involved in Anglo-American print culture. Bryce was a prolific contributor to a wide array of publications, including *The Forum*, *The North American Review*, *Nineteenth Century* and others. Page also contributed to these publications and was the editor of *The Forum* and the *Atlantic Monthly*.²³ These two men knew each other and both men shared the belief in Anglo-American solidarity. Both men ended their careers as the ambassador to the other's country: Bryce to the United States from 1907 to 1913 and Page to Great Britain from 1913 to 1917. Beyond these important contributions to transatlantic liberal humanism, both men consistently addressed the question of race.

James Bryce successfully reconciled the liberal humanist imperative with the changes of the late nineteenth century. Bryce's most obvious connections to the United States were his popular 1888 work, *The American Commonwealth*, and, as mentioned, his tenure as Great Britain's ambassador to the United States from 1907 to 1913.²⁴ Two historians who discuss late nineteenth century social science refer to Bryce for distinctly

idealism and empiricism, and in both cases the differences in background and rhetoric have obscured important similarities." 7.

²³ Page was editor of *The Forum* from 1891 to 1895. In this period, Page turned the periodical around, dramatically increasing revenues and subscriptions. Page used the same "progressive" concepts in his tenure at the *Atlantic Monthly*: 1895 to 1900. He shifted the focus from genteel literary culture to an emphasis on contemporary issues, more than doubling the articles on politics, economics, and social issues. While the *Atlantic* never lost its literary flavor, Page's transformation underlines that the liberal humanist tradition adapted its publications in the effort to remain a viable voice of cultural authority. See Ellery Sedgwick, *The Atlantic Monthly 1857 – 1909: Yankee Humanism at High Tide and Ebb* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 240-273.

²⁴ James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (London: MacMillan, 1888). This work was widely known in the intellectual and political community of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and went through numerous updates and editions.

different purposes. Thomas Bender claims that Bryce's comment that the United States lacked a vibrant capital city gives evidence to America's dying urban civic culture in relation to the professional culture of the new technocrats.²⁵ Daniel Rodgers uses one of Bryce's comments to show how Bryce's contemporaries felt that American democratic civic culture was alive and, indeed, a guide for Europe.²⁶ These discussions show that Bryce's writings illuminated the transatlantic liberal humanist concern for the public sphere amidst the interventionist challenge. More importantly, Bryce contributed a discussion of race – fundamental in a period of high imperialism – to the broader Anglo-American discourse of reform.

Specifically, James Bryce's writings, lectures and letters can begin to bring into focus many of the topics referenced. Bryce is indicative of the shift of authority to the university setting. Bryce became a member of the Athenaeum Club of London after the publication of his 1864 Oxford dissertation, *The Holy Roman Empire*. The club functioned as a meeting place for those social intellectuals who had contributed to the arts, sciences, literature and public services. Its name referenced a clear connection to republican virtues and civic culture and, while it certainly catered to the letters and arts section of English society, its membership was not determined by tradition-bound elitism, but based firmly in the liberal sense of expertise typified by intellectual specialization and contribution to society.²⁷ Moreover, as the traditional letters and arts

²⁵ Bender, *Intellect and Public Life*, 46.

²⁶ Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 36.

²⁷ Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 15-21.

orientation of the Athenaeum club felt the pressure of specialization, Bryce transitioned to the university setting of Oxford. At Oxford, he occupied a chair for over thirty years and was intimately involved in the direction of not only the university, but of the British educational system in general.²⁸

Bryce did not support the undermining of deductive authority by the empiricist influences, but instead used the empirical-deductive synthesis to explore problems, set agendas, and suggest solutions. Bryce and his cohorts in the United States demonstrated that the liberal humanist effort to create knowledge and retain cultural authority was not in retreat in the wake of the new authoritative stamp of science, but was committed to bringing its heretofore associational pattern more in line with the prevailing social, cultural, and intellectual ethos of the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries.

Indeed, many of his correspondents in the United States were part of the earlier liberal, associational life who had made the transition “across the Charles” to institutional settings, best typified by Harvard University. Bryce’s first meeting on his inaugural trip to the United States in 1870 was with Edwin Lawrence Godkin, then editor of the liberal mouthpiece *The Nation*. Later, at the behest of another of Bryce’s connections, Harvard president Charles William Eliot, Bryce gave the first Godkin lecture at Harvard. Bryce, as well, corresponded frequently with William Philips Garrison, who was the editor of *The Nation* from 1888 to 1907. Bryce contributed over

²⁸ Bryce was the head of the 1902 Royal Commission on Higher Education that spun from an 1894 conference at Oxford, which he helped sponsor. For background on Bryce see, Hugh Tulloch, *James Bryce’s American Commonwealth: The Anglo-American Background* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1988).

300 articles to *The Nation* and other liberal monthlies over a fifty-year period and developed close rapport with many academics and public figures. Bryce was in direct contact with many in America who continued to produce a modified, yet clearly liberal humanist stream of discourse long after the associational crisis of 1885. Moreover, this stream often found its origins within the powerful academic apparatus of Harvard and other universities, whose overall message combined scientific method with a distinct sense of civic culture that was redolent of a Victorian liberal humanist worldview.

Transatlantic liberal humanism did have difficulty dealing with some of the problems of modernity. Because of the abstract belief that the ultimate good of liberty revolved around individual and virtuous participation in the public sphere, both British and American liberal humanists felt that political corruption most threatened civil society. Crucial to the understanding of liberal humanism is the fine line navigated between individualism and wanton self-interest contaminating society. Liberal humanists connected the corruption of the political sphere with their larger fear of democratic excess. These concerns argued that the dangers of wanton self-interest were especially tempting in the experiential conditions of modern times. The wider democratization of society had also catapulted many into the political process more imbued with the crass ideas of self-interest, instead of the principles of the virtuous individual foregoing self-interest to enhance his community and society. Hence, the majority of their protest concentrated on the cleaning up republican government and the

protection of the political process from democratic excess.²⁹ In this respect, the liberal humanist clamor that an informed public sphere - the power of good democracy fueled by the individual good citizen - was the cure-all for the woes of modernization seemed less and less viable as other reformers called for the immediacy of direct intervention in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. The inability to suggest other strategies to solve the deeper problems that laissez-faire capitalism perpetuated – particularly labor unrest and growing disparities of social condition – drew condemnation that the liberal humanist reform agenda had slid into a conservative and anachronistic malaise. The obsession with the abstract belief in the power of the individual and the distrust of government intervention compromised their ability to retain cultural authority in the important area of social politics increasingly dominated by the new reformer who staked out an empirical, scientific, and interventionist approach.

Liberal humanists who successfully made the transition to positions of authority in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, like Bryce, often incorporated the newest scientific knowledge into their approach to race.³⁰ Race in the context of a liberal democracy-led imperial world became a major theme upon which they articulated their specific study of man ideologies. Liberal humanists, like most all in society, accepted

²⁹ See Butler, “The Mugwamp Dilemma,” for details on the affinities between American mugwamps and British liberals, their concern for civil service reform, and their fears about democracy.

³⁰ Harvard President Charles William Eliot lauded the science of Bryce’s 1902 *The Relations between the Advanced and Backward Races*: “Under these circumstances, it seems clear to me that we are dealing with a distinct stage of progressive development. You have looked at it from this point of view, and dealt with it seriously – not in the mercantile or philanthropic sense, but in a spirit truly scientific.” Eliot to Bryce, MS Bryce USA 3:29, Bryce Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Oxford.

some components of Darwinian evolution. Instead of endorsing individual, random mutation, liberal humanists conflated biology with social theory to accept the theory of group-wide characteristics, which constrained non-whites to inferior rungs of the racial hierarchy. Shifting from complete reliance on earlier modes of deductive, dichotomous reasoning to elevate Europeans, liberal humanists, like many others in the late nineteenth century, invested their language with the racial science supposedly grounded in empiricism. Liberal humanism, however, took seriously the teleological and egalitarian implications of evolution and argued that, while inherited qualities were group-wide, characteristics were mutable and all men could improve and become eligible for the promise of democratic society. This logic was fundamental to the new language of political rights in a post-emancipated world, and problematized the role of peoples of color in colonial spaces.

As mentioned, while historians usually reference Bryce for his commentary on the state of civic democracy in America, he saw how important race was to both British and American society in the late nineteenth century. Bryce believed that a key difficulty facing Great Britain was how the Empire dealt with native populations. Convinced that the United States was on the verge of becoming a non-continental imperial power, Bryce predicted the same difficulties for the United States, especially with the history of America's "negro situation."³¹ In 1891, Bryce commented that race was the leading question facing American society and, by inference, the larger imperial

³¹ Tulloch, *James Bryce's American Commonwealth*, 194-196.

world: “Compared with it, those tariff questions and currency questions and railway questions with which politicians busy themselves sink to almost insignificance.”³²

The worldview of liberal humanists linked race with development in their ideas of reform and progress. Bryce, in tune with the empirical push of the time, embraced science in his evaluation of racial development. In his 1902 Romanes Lecture, *The Relations of the Advanced and the Backward Races of Mankind*, he commented that:

A point has been reached at which conditions likely to affect the relative development of the various branches of mankind have been so far known, that students may begin to deal with them in a positive and practical way. They have passed from the chaos of conjecture into the cosmos of science.³³

Further, Bryce embraced the evolutionist approach that denied difference based on “inferior natural capacity,” instead arguing that one phase of the “world-process” is complete and that the next only boded the interconnectedness of mankind: “The conditions that are now vanishing can never recur. The uncivilized and semi-civilized races cannot relapse into their former isolation. In passing under the influences of the civilized Powers they have indeed given to the world a new kind of unity.”³⁴ While accepting the prevailing notions of racial hierarchy, Bryce looked past ideas of permanent racial differences and approached the manner in which race relations would unfold: “Let us go straight to the facts and problems which the contact of diverse races bring into being.”³⁵

³² James Bryce, “Thoughts on the Negro Problem,” *North American Review* (December 1891): 41.

³³ James Bryce, *The Relations of the Advanced and the Backward Races of Mankind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1902), 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 9: 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

Although Bryce provided a “scientific,” even sociological, perspective on race relations,³⁶ he and his fellow liberal humanists used the older Millian tradition of negative and positive liberty in their discussions of race.³⁷ Negative liberty guaranteed protection of the individual from coercion and domination, while positive liberty stressed the good found through individual participation in the public, political sphere. Because it constrained intellectual diversity in favor of government expertise, the state intervention stressed by the technocrat progressives directly offended negative liberty: liberal humanists could never support a broad legislative agenda because it too deeply offended classical humanist roots. Liberal humanists, however, also realized that modernization complicated the mechanisms necessary to secure negative liberty and that, indeed, some level of government involvement in large, urbanizing societies was mandatory to protect against the coercion and domination caused by excessive self-interest.³⁸

Hence, transatlantic liberal humanists, strongly opposed to legislative intervention, favored judicial statute to ensure negative liberty. Liberal humanists,

³⁶ John Stone, in his “James Bryce and the Comparative Sociology of Race Relations,” *Race* 13:3 (1972), acknowledges Bryce’s limitations that were the product of the prevailing racial biases of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but still lauds him as viable contributor (and one of the earliest) to the comparative sociology of race relations. Douglas A. Lorimer calls Bryce’s 1902 *The Relations of the Advanced and the Backward Races of Mankind* the most respected statement on race among transatlantic intellectuals at the time. See his, “Race, Science and Culture: Historical Continuities and Discontinuities, 1850-1914,” in Shearer West, ed. *The Victorians and Race* (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1996), 30-32.

³⁷ For the seminal work on Mill’s ideas of negative and positive liberty as well as his overall thought, see Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). Another excellent work on the subject is Kahan, *Aristocratic Liberalism*.

³⁸ Modern society’s sheer mass, complexity, and irreversible presence of the nation-state shifted the discussion of domination away from the terrain of earlier, more manageable “social contract” questions.

however, couched the path to judicial guarantee in the classical humanist forum of political discussions by an informed citizenry in the public sphere. There were difficulties with this course. First, the corrupt nature of the United States' political system threatened the group's ability to rely on the public sphere to promote judicial action, let alone meaningful reform. Accordingly, liberal humanists obsessively discussed the remedies necessary for good democracy. Second, in a fast-changing, experiential world, the vibrant world of capitalism appeared more and more tempting for personal realization. Liberal humanists soon realized that self-interested, economic activities flirted with the self-absorbing greasy till of rampant capitalism, which threatened the tempered sensibilities of their understanding of laissez-faire and minimized the importance of the political, public sphere. In a circular fashion, liberal humanists thus directed their angst at homogenizing capitalist motives that threatened the loss of intellectual diversity, which, in their minds, was only accentuated by the failings of democratic public space.³⁹

In response to this problematic terrain, liberal humanists placed emphasis on education that not only promoted intellectual diversity, but also looked to resuscitate the political public sphere.⁴⁰ Education that cultivated intellectual diversity could reinvigorate the public sphere, which, in turn, would create manageable political discussions (forestalling dangerous class conflict) that would secure judicial protections

³⁹ The periodicals of the British and American transatlantic liberal humanists, most notably *The Contemporary Review*, *The Nation*, *The Forum*, *The North American Review*, and *Nineteenth Century*, consistently discussed these issues.

⁴⁰ Kahan, in *Aristocratic Liberalism*, argues that education largely replaced older notions of "virtue" by the mid-nineteenth century, 86-94.

of individual rights, fulfill the natural good of participation in the polis and dissuade egregious, private pursuits of self-interest. Education became paramount in the discussions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was, in itself, transformed to an experiential, political exercise that could temper the incongruities between older ideas of individual actuation in the public sphere and the new temptations of a rampant marketplace.

Bryce used the language of liberal inclusion, negative and positive liberty, and education in his commentary on peoples of color. Unlike proponents of harder-edged scientific racism and Social Darwinism discussed in Chapters One and Two, Bryce and his fellow transatlantic liberal humanists discarded notions of racial extinction and argued that all men were moral agents and thus eligible for the universal implications of humanist liberty. To Bryce, black people in United States retained “civil rights, those rights of citizens which the law gives and protects, [and] equality is complete in the public as well as the private sphere.”⁴¹ Bryce argued that de facto exclusion of blacks in the American South from suffrage violated the guarantees of liberty: “It is a standing breach of the constitution, a standing violation of that respect for law which is the very life-blood of democratic institutions.”⁴² While Bryce’s argument denounced practices that denied black populations access to the public sphere (positive liberty), he, again in a circular omission, did not argue that the white behavior violated the black people’s right to freedom from coercion (negative liberty), because these rights were already secured by law. Thus, instead of defending the right to negative liberty, Bryce argued

⁴¹ Bryce, *Thoughts on the Negro Problem*, 645.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 647.

that the exclusion of black people from the public sphere threatened white-led democratic institutions. In a reform period marked by the beginnings of legislative initiative, liberal humanism steadfastly adhered to their opposition to government intervention and the guarantees of negative liberty only found articulation through legal statute, despite its questionable enforcement.

Bryce switched his focus to discussions of positive liberty, arguing that black people were unprepared for the benefits of the public sphere: “The difficulty arises from the fact, not that colored men can vote, but that the majority of the colored voters are not capable voters, competent for the active functions of citizenship.”⁴³ To liberal humanism, education was the key factor in the development of proper appreciation for the power of the individual and the cultivation of intellectual diversity. Biological inferiority was not a terminal condition and, thus, did not bar black people from the rights of liberty; however, black populations needed the proper cultural education to learn the prerequisites of civil society. In a telling statement with relevance to contexts outside the American South, Bryce lamented that this process takes time: “it is little more than a century... since the negro of Africa came into contact with civilized man; only a quarter of a century since he was made a legal person capable of holding even private rights.”⁴⁴

Hence, while Bryce argued that the “contrast between the principle and practice, between a theoretical recognition of the rights of man as man and the denial of them to a section of the population [would] be palpable and indefensible,” he relegated those

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 655.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 649.

“unfit for suffrage” outside the bounds of political rights and prescribed “qualification based on property and education.”⁴⁵ Moreover, he equated progress not with intellectual capacity and diversity, but with the achievement of “character.” He commented: “The difference between them [the backward races] and the advanced races lie not so much in intelligence as in force of will and tenacity of purpose.”⁴⁶ “Will” and “purpose” were redolent of earlier measurements of “character” borne from the world of private cognition and deductive reasoning. Further, character in the Victorian sense involved the will to control the emotive parts of the self and the tenacity to deny selfish interest in pursuit of nobler civic purposes. Character was fundamentally about the restraint of base human instincts and, to liberal humanists, was a clear marker of the advance out of “savagery” and “barbarity” to civilization.⁴⁷ While its prominence was seemingly questioned by the modern, experiential world, liberal humanism managed to re-attach the power of “character” to the uplift of peoples of color. Education as character building resonated in the larger culture, especially with regard to black peoples, who - beyond battling their former status as slaves and the depictions of their home continent as dark and primitive - were dealing with a popular culture that labeled many of their people “savage” and “brutish.” Considering the racialized environment of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the liberal humanist use of education and character building with regard to peoples of color is a clear

⁴⁵ Bryce, *The Relations of the Advanced and Backward Races*, 31: 43.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁷ For more on the topic of character and restraint, see Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred: The Bourgeois Experience, Volume III, Victoria to Freud* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 502-506.

demonstration of how reformers articulated the promise of inclusion and simultaneously set the conditions for its denial.

As detailed in Chapter One, lynching, both in the act and in its narrative, was another powerful tool of exclusion faced by black populations. Although lynching was prevalent in 1891,⁴⁸ Bryce only briefly mentioned it in his lengthy article of the same year, inaccurately noting that lynching and other violence was “the work of poor whites far more frequently than of the descendants of slave owners.”⁴⁹ Further, Bryce argued that the transformative economic changes affecting the South caused the racial violence and that, while adaptation to the changes was difficult, the conditions were temporary and would soon allow white society to bring “a new civilizing influence to bear upon the black,” and the “negro problem” would wane after “twenty such years of prosperity.”⁵⁰ Nearing the explanation that lynching arose from economic pressures on whites, Bryce, in his steadfastness to the civilizing influence [read character building] of the Anglo-Saxon as the key to the progress, minimized the violence of lynching as a transitory moment in the preparation of black peoples for civil society. In other words, the preparation for positive liberty informed Bryce’s argument and he avoided arguing about the role of government intervention in the protection of black people’s negative liberties.

⁴⁸ For a statistical overview of lynching, see Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

⁴⁹ Bryce, “Thoughts on the Negro Problem,” 659.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

The brutal lynching and burning of Henry Smith at Paris, Texas, as discussed in Chapter One, provoked transatlantic condemnation. If apologists constructed narratives to re-cohere white supremacy, lynching forced reformers, including transatlantic liberal humanists, to address the violence. Reformers like Ida B. Wells, Catherine Impey, and Charles F. Aked, who, at some level, fashioned their protest around an appeal to God, were not the only people to discuss lynching. Transatlantic liberal humanists of the late nineteenth century came from a tradition of English non-conformism and American Unitarianism. In response to the secularization of the late nineteenth century, the movement had largely eschewed direct appeal to religion and instead, promoted a sense of Christian-like “virtue” in their reform argumentation.⁵¹ Indeed, Bryce doubted direct religious appeal would help the “racial” question:

Christianity has proclaimed in the most solemn and exalted terms the absolute equality and brotherhood of all men.... It must, however, be admitted that in nearly all the countries where white men and black men dwell together, Christianity... has failed to impress the lesson of human equality and brotherhood upon the whites established in the country.⁵²

Liberal humanists on both sides of the Atlantic did not cater to religious sentiment and continued to fashion secular arguments about lynching and the wider question of race.

Representative of this stream was the November 1893 article in *The Forum* entitled “The Last Hold of the Southern Bully” written by the monthly’s editor, Walter H. Page.⁵³ Similar to the wide majority of the dissent against lynching, Page

⁵¹ See David Hall, “Victorian Connection,” 81.

⁵² Bryce, *Relations of the Advanced and Backward Races*, 40-41.

⁵³ Walter H. Page, “The Last Hold of the Southern Bully” *The Forum* (November 1893), 303-314. Walter H. Page is an example of how the lines blurred between those of “liberal” leaning: although he graduated from John Hopkins – a leader in anti-laissez faire doctrine – he was steadfastly concerned with traditional liberal humanist topics, such as the sanctity of the

condemned the act as a failing of white civilization. Page takes the argument further by insisting that the weakness of white civilization was specifically a lack of sufficient “public sentiment” necessary to foster civil society. To Page, lynching was the final act of a society that, since emancipation, had undergone severe political decay. Page claimed that white Southern society expended all of its energies depriving black participation the benefits of the 14th and 15th Amendments, which, in turn, stagnated the political processes of the South. With “public sentiment” in low ebb, the southern “bully” became the only answer with which the South could answer the new, violent manifestations of the “race-clash:” “And during this period of race-conflict, as the old type of gentleman of the former time has receded into tradition, the qualities that were characteristic of him, growing rank on the lower slopes of life, have produced the bully, the race-bully, the romantic bully.”⁵⁴ To Page, the uncivilized behavior of the white South was a direct result of failings of the public sphere: in the language of liberal humanism, white southern society had slipped away from the hallowed principles of positive liberty.

public sphere. As discussed, Page later became the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, described by one historian as the epitome of “Yankee humanism.” See Ellery Sedgwick, *A History of the Atlantic Monthly, 1857-1909*. Another historian describes Page as a “mild critic of southern racial practices” and notes that his involvement in the philanthropic Southern Education Board and General Education Board demonstrates that white “paternalist” moderates contributed to the decline of black fortunes. The General Education Board spent 58 million dollars on southern education from 1901-1909, 90 percent of which went to white schools. The logic was to educate the white person to accept Booker T. Washigton’s Atlanta Compromise and treat American black people with more respect. See David W. Southern, *The Progressive Era and Race Reaction and Reform, 1900-1917* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 2005), 94: 103. This disproportionate amount of white educational funds and the thinking behind it is not surprising, considering Page’s emphasis on a white-led public sphere in *The Forum* article.

⁵⁴ Page, “The Last Hold,” 304.

Page touched upon the arguments raised by Ida B. Wells and others with regard to lynching. Specifically, Wells decried the hypocrisy of lynching black men for violating white women when white men had preyed on black females for decades. While Page admitted that there was some validity to this argument, he only suggested that predatory white men unduly violated the rights of black women and did not mention the rights of white women in the article. Instead, Page constrained the female under the watchful eye of patriarchy. Page argued that women deserved protection in civilized society and that the main fault in the South was that the “defensive attitude that any other civilized society has toward its women” was excited to a point of “knightly gallantry” in the South.⁵⁵ As a result, “the veriest bully feels a sort of sanctity gather about him when he goes forth to defend or avenge a woman: the race tiger and the romantic tiger both leap to life.”⁵⁶ Page criticized the southern bully’s extreme protection of southern white woman, which resulted in actions that violated the strictures of civilized society. Like much of the liberal humanist argument, Page did not attack the deeper realities of gender and racial prejudice, instead buying into, at least partially, the logic of chivalry reproached by Wells: “Humanity abhors the assailant of womanhood, and this charge upon the Negro at once placed him beyond the pale of human sympathy.”⁵⁷ Page’s criticism did not question the prevailing stereotypes of the black male and, resultantly, his denouncement of lynching displaced the agency – both

⁵⁵ Ibid., 303.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ida B. Wells, *A Red Record*, (Chicago, 1895). Found in Trudier Harris, ed. *Selected Works of Ida B. Wells* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 144.

positive and negative liberty – of the black man, black woman, and white woman into the hands of the white male.⁵⁸

Page, like all transatlantic liberal humanists, felt that the institutions of civil society were the most important factor in the progress of civilization. In this respect, Page embraced an evolutionist perspective. White society was not exclusively civilized because of shared biological traits, but was civilized because of the development of political institutions that kept the nefarious side of human nature at bay. Thus, Page at least theoretically adopted a position of biological racial equality and explicitly argued that an invigorated civil society was the key to political evolution and that it was available to all men. What was most dangerous to Page was the passive approval of lynching, which portended the loss of white civilizing institutions and the fall of white society into the “long shadow” of “barbarism.”⁵⁹ Indeed, Page’s warning about lynching and the loss of civilization echoes Bryce’s comment about “character” building, most directly in the sense that social institutions helped check primal instincts:

The building-up of institutions that fortify us against the vengeance-taking temper of the savage, which is yet in us at no great depth below civilization, is the *summum bonum* of human achievement; and that the maintenance of these institutions is our only safeguard against a return to vengeance is perhaps the single great human judgment that no conceivable experience of our race can ever make subject to revision.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ As discussed in Chapter One, Jacqueline Dowd Hall effectively argues that the lynching sought not only to control black males, but also looked to constrain black and white women to subordinate positions in white, male society: “the racism that caused white men to lynch black men cannot be understood apart from the sexism that that informed their policing of white women and their exploitation of black women.” In Jacqueline Dowd Hall, *Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), xx.

⁵⁹ Page, “The Last Hold of the Southern Bully,” 308.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

In his critique of lynching, Page, like much of the criticism, had no doubt that black males were very capable of “brutish” and “savage” crimes such as rape. This assumption dovetailed with Page’s belief that, while black populations had made some progress, their relative inexperience with civilizing institutions left them highly susceptible to primitive behaviors, which, again, demonstrates that promise of civilizing uplift were invidiously bounded with regard to black populations. Page summed up by arguing that the loss of the civilized instincts of the white man not only signaled the end of progress for black peoples, but also reduced white society to the uncivilized, backwardness of black people:

The white man’s surrounding and educating civilization is necessary to the elevation of the blacks or even to the maintenance of the level they have reached.... The gravest significance of this whole matter [is] the danger that Southern public sentiment itself under the stress of this new and horrible phase of the race-problem will lose the true perspective of civilization. If this happens, the white will not lift the Negro: both will go down to the vengeance-taking level.⁶¹

Although Page operated from the liberal humanist belief in evolution, he limited the agency of black people, as he made the evolutionary track largely dependent upon white-led civilizing institutions. Page, as a liberal humanist committed in theory to biological equality and expanded notions of an inclusive public sphere, relied on the popular convention that set black populations outside the bounds of Western rationality by decrying a lack of history – a lack of inclusion in time - and, further, entrenching this exclusion with the visceral marker of blackness.⁶² Page cements the objectification of

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² For a discussion of how the development of heritage was fundamental to Anglo-Saxon ideas of civilization see Inga Bryden’s “Reinventing Origins: The Victorian Arthur and

the black by placing him beyond time: “His life has no background. What we mean by ancestry is lacking to him; and not only is it lacking but its lack is proclaimed by his color and he is always reminded of it.”⁶³ In the final analysis, Page, in a brusquer, yet similar fashion to Bryce, sidestepped the rights given by negative liberty to the African-American citizen, and, instead, concentrated on public sphere arguments, excluding blacks from the “boundless sweep of opportunity which is the inheritance of every white citizen of the Republic,” only commenting that perhaps “patience and tolerance” improved the chances for inclusion into civil society.⁶⁴

Page shared the similar stereotypical assumptions evidenced in Charles F. Aked’s denunciation of lynching discussed earlier. While Aked connected the vice of the adulterous white female with the predatory black male, Page argued that the lynching white “bully” and the raping black “brute” were joined in a common pool of vice that threatened civil society in the American South. Page’s answer to this dilemma revolved exclusively around white reclamation of his civilized public space, which would prevent a slide backwards into the dark spaces of human nature. The institutions of positive liberty were necessary to promote the progress of white society and to set an uplifting example for peoples of color. This reliance on the abstract belief in the power of the individual actualizing in the sanctity of the public sphere avoided the issue of inherent negative liberty that guaranteed all citizens, including the black body politic, freedom from coercion. Transatlantic liberal humanists condemned lynching in a

Racial Myth” in Shearer West, ed. *The Victorians and Race* (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1996), 141-156.

⁶³ Page, “The Last Hold of the Southern Bully,” 311.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 312.

language of political rights, which, in a secularizing world, would seemingly have had more practical application than older strategies of religiosity-based protest. Their arguments, like so many other voices, never fully escaped the racial lenses of the late nineteenth century and could not endow black people the agency guaranteed by the abstract beliefs in positive and negative liberty and implied by citizenship.

Historian Douglass Lorimer warns that the ability of present-day historians to deconstruct the arguments of the past can “create a binary opposition in which the Victorians are made into advocates of a stereotypical racism in implicit contrast to our presumed anti-racism.”⁶⁵ In a time during which popular and scientific views of racial hierarchies suffused throughout society, it is little wonder that liberal humanists such as Bryce and Page maintained ideas of white superiority. Indeed, without this acceptance of scientific norms, much of the liberal humanist argument – like their reform attempts in other areas – would have appeared anachronistic. Regarding race, liberal humanists recognized the power of scientific knowledge production and, as a result, larger society took their discourse seriously, endowing their language with cultural authority. Without question, the liberal humanist preoccupation with preparedness for the public sphere and the emphasis on the individual dovetailed with the imperial civilizing mission and helped support often-horrific periods of colonial tutelage. Additionally, liberal humanists often supported key components of the apologist arguments in their criticism of lynching and rarely saw through the complicated racial and gendered blinds of white colonial society.

⁶⁵ Lorimer, “Race, Science and Culture,” 13.

Unlike other white imperialists who accepted the extinction-based implications of scientific racism, liberal humanists argued that black people were not going away and that white society would have to deal with their rights. As the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, the organ of the liberal British Anti-Slavery Society, put it in 1891: “The coloured man is here to stay, and the constitution allows him to read his title clear to his present residence.”⁶⁶ Because of this fact, transatlantic liberal humanists seriously engaged how black people gained access to the positive liberty inherent in democratic society. Moreover, and despite binding negative liberty for peoples of color within the condition of positive liberty and positive liberty within the problematic area of education and character, liberal humanists protested lynching in the American South in condemnatory language that resonated in the Anglo-American settings. In a personal letter to Bryce, Wendell Philips Garrison, the editor of *The Nation* from 1881 to 1905, succinctly set the tone – and the limits - for the liberal humanist task in the late nineteenth century. Garrison explained that, while lynching was probably too deeply accepted by white society to be immediately stopped, the urgent task was “to arouse public sentiment against such atrocities.”⁶⁷ Liberal humanists asserted cultural authority with their language of political rights in combination with their calls for the ending of violent acts, such as lynching. This reassertion of cultural authority did not result in immediate change, but produced a viable discourse that kept alive the promise of the liberal tradition and grounded itself in the established practice that clamored for the protection

⁶⁶ *The Anti-Slavery Reporter* (July-August 1891): 200.

⁶⁷ Wendell Philips Garrison to James Bryce, 15 May 1892, Bryce Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

of bodies from violence. Understanding these complications does not rescue transatlantic liberal humanism from its exclusionary tendencies, but problematizes the discourse of race that was available to late nineteenth and early twentieth century reformers and the wider society.

CHAPTER FOUR

JOHN E. BRUCE AND THE TRANSNATIONAL PROTEST OF BLACK
PEOPLE

Earlier chapters investigated how the changes of the late nineteenth century intersected with the racial thought of transatlantic, metropolitan reformers. In a post-emancipated world, the discourse of reform began to refer to a language of political rights that augmented earlier ideas of protections guaranteed by religious certitude, best exemplified by the abolitionist campaign. Certainly, prevailing racial ideologies compromised the full-fledged endorsement of political rights for peoples of color and reformers often reverted back to languages of religious humanitarianism or set standards of preparedness that resulted in temporally open-ended periods of tutelage. Without question, transatlantic reformers criticized aspects of the civilizing mission and created agendas – albeit with varying degrees of immediacy – for political reform. Despite the seemingly obvious application to black populations, the criticism of empire and the templates for political change rarely addressed the needs of black peoples in a world still dominated by persistent, albeit varying in degree, racial discrimination. This rights-based argumentation and imperial questioning, however, contributed to the marketplace of ideas and appealed to other transnational reformers who advocated more vociferously for civil rights for black peoples in a post-emancipated, yet colonial, world.

In the post-emancipated United States, four people figured prominently in the protests of African-Americans: Frederick Douglass, Alexander Crummell, Booker T.

Washington, and W.E.B. Du Bois. In 1885, Douglass and Crummell had a clash of ideologies at the commencement exercises of Storer College in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. In this debate, Douglass argued that reform for African-Americans was, fundamentally, a moral issue and that an appeal to the moral traditions of European civilization would promote racial equality. Crummell, while certainly no stranger to moral arguments, insisted that real change only came through the development of institutional power.¹

Only a few months after the death of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington issued his famous 1895 Atlanta Compromise. In this treatise, Washington maintained that material gain and industrial training was the best path to racial equality. Washington's stress on industrial education and the resulting political and social gradualism gained support from a wide section of American society and his powerful "Tuskegee machine" soon made him the leading African-American voice.² Alexander Crummell attracted W.E.B. Du Bois to membership in the American Negro Academy. The A.N.A., while agreeing that African-Americans needed to build economic institutions, vociferously disagreed with Washington's emphasis on industrial education

¹ This synopsis taken from *Wilson J. Moses, Creative Conflict in African-American Thought: Frederick Douglass, Alexander Crummell, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2-3: 109-112.

² For the seminal statement on Washington's idea of material gain, see August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor; University of Michigan Press, 1966), 100-118. For more in the development of the Tuskegee Machine and the life of Washington in general, see Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

and instead stressed that the education of the intellect was the most pressing issue of reform.³

In 1900, W. E. B. Du Bois participated in the first Pan-African Conference, held in London. Du Bois' closing address "To the Nations of the World" not only viewed the problem of the "color line" as a global phenomenon, but also called for political rights for colonized peoples.⁴ This call for political rights clearly diverged from Washington's gradualist political agenda. Although Du Bois would minimize the importance of the Pan African Conference, his 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk* signaled his decisive break with the Washington camp.⁵ In 1905, Du Bois had gathered enough strength to organize the Niagara movement, which was the forerunner of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The NAACP created an institutional framework that led the twentieth century struggle for the immediate civil rights for African-Americans in the United States.

The transition from Douglass' morality to the NAACP's political agenda relates to the broader shift in transatlantic reform strategies detailed in the first three chapters. The late nineteenth century modern changes that rendered the concentration on moral reform and gradualism anachronistic also made available a platform of immediate social justice that was especially appealing to black peoples long told to rely patiently on the graces of God or the workings of uplift. John E. Bruce is an understudied figure who

³ For information on the American Negro Academy see Alfred A. Moss, *The American Negro Academy: Voice of the Talented Tenth* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981).

⁴ *Report of the Pan-African Conference* (London, 1900).

⁵ David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993). Lewis details Du Bois' participation in the Pan-African Conference and the impact of *The Souls of Black Folk*, 248-251: 265-296.

was at the heart of a growing transnational movement that took this shift to social justice strategies and applied it directly to the issue of political rights for black peoples. Indeed, Bruce and his contacts developed a radical call for the rights of black peoples that not only linked the colonial struggle across nation-state boundaries but that also denounced the legitimacy of the colonial venture itself in the years between Douglass and Du Bois. While Du Bois and the NAACP adopted strategies that no longer acquiesced to calls for patience, Bruce, long part of the practical struggle, commented in 1911 that the Du Bois-edited journal of the association, *The Crisis*, was too “stiff in manner and too much in the upper ether.”⁶

While historians have considered Bruce outside the mainstream of black thought in the 1890s, recent works have demonstrated his importance to not only reform in the United States, but – and most specific to this work - to his role in the growing circles of transnational discourse amongst black people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁷ John Bruce’s life – he lived from 1856 to 1924 – spanned one of the most tumultuous times in the history of black peoples: the end of slavery in the United States, the hopes of emancipation and Reconstruction, the imperial “scramble” for Africa

⁶ John E. Bruce to Alain Leroy Locke, 14 April 1913, Alain Leroy Locke Collection. Found in David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 417.

⁷ For the assertion that historians ignored Bruce, see the preface by Loren Katz in Peter Gilbert, ed. *The Selected Writings of John Edward Bruce: Militant Black Journalist*, (New York: Arno Press, 1971), viii. Two recent works assert the importance of Bruce: William Seraile, *Bruce Grit: The Black Nationalist Writings of John Edward Bruce* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2003) and Ralph L. Crowder, *John Edward Bruce: Politician, Journalist, and Self-trained Historian of the African Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2003). This study uses the same main source as Seraile and Crowder: The John E. Bruce Collection of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. For specifics on Bruce’s transnational connections, see Crowder’s Chapter Two of *John Edward Bruce: “Blyden, Crummell, and Bruce: Mentors, Patrons, and the Evolution of a Pan-African Ideology,”* 25-49.

started by the 1884 Berlin Conference, the rise of the United States' extra-continental imperialism, the proliferation of colonial violence against black peoples, the establishment of Jim Crow in the American South, and the hopes for self-determination articulated during World War I and its aftermath. Bruce was one of the most influential black newspapermen of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, in his journalist guise of "Bruce Grit," he provided a prescient voice on these topics and many others. Moreover, Bruce maintained a wide array of connections and correspondence with many transnational contacts and had articles published in America, Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean.⁸ Born a slave, Bruce would end his life as the "grand old man" of Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa movement and his prolific writings and broad associations arising from this journey were a significant contribution to the turn-of-the-century pan-African awareness.

Bruce used the violence of lynching to espouse his ideas of reform. He sought redress for the 1893 lynching of Henry Smith in Paris, Texas,⁹ and supported the campaigns of Ida B. Wells in Great Britain.¹⁰ Moreover, his 1901 anti-lynching work,

⁸ Outside of his prolific contribution to periodicals in the United States, Bruce published articles, often as the "official" U.S. correspondent, in such papers as the *African Times and Orient Review*, *The Gold Coast Leader*, *The Jamaica Advocate*, *The Lagos Weekly Record*, *The Sierra Leone Weekly News* and *The South African Spectator*.

⁹ Immediately after the Henry Smith lynching, Bruce sought an interview with his friend - and member of the national committee of the Republican Party - James S. Clarkson, with the expressed intention to encourage him to "speak out" against the "barbarities." John Bruce to James Clarkson, 6 February 1893, John E. Bruce Papers, Group A - Letters Received: C8, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York: hereafter referred to as the Bruce Collection. The biographical index of the *Calendar of the Manuscripts in Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature* (New York: Andronicus Publishing Company, 1942) calls Clarkson the "life-long and truest white friend of John Edward Bruce," 416.

¹⁰ African-American Lafayette M. Hershaw commended Bruce for his "resolution endorsing the mission of Miss Ida B. Wells to England." Lafayette M. Hershaw to John Bruce,

The Blood Red Record, echoed Wells' message and condemned an American "civilization" that lynched and burned its citizens.¹¹ Bruce ridiculed the "Christian civilization of the 'mightiest Republic on earth'" that was "contaminated with the miserable caste system" to the extent that "it [could] wink at the burning and lynching of the Negro and insist upon a fair trial for the white man."¹² While Bruce indicted the belief in the "divine" mission of American republicanism, and appealed to the basic "humanity" of man, his protest against lynching did not concentrate on religious concepts of justice and humanity, but instead exposed lynching as anachronistic in a time of modern "truth and reason," and portrayed it as a fundamental violation of political rights.¹³

In part, Bruce's strategy to argue for political rights in *The Blood Red Record* depended on the dismissal of white-led Christianity's ability to exhibit enough "moral courage" to denounce the violence.¹⁴ Bruce claimed that religious hypocrisy clouded the vision and effectiveness of the pulpits of the United States. Bruce, therefore, concentrated a significant part of his argument on rescuing the legal system of the United States from its "lawlessness" to avoid the day "when courts will be a superfluity

12 July 1894, Group A - Letters Received: H-7, Bruce Collection. Hershaw received a Bachelor of Arts from Atlanta University, a law degree from Howard University, was an employee of the Department of the Interior for forty-two years, and was one of the thirteen original organizers of the Niagara movement. For background see, "Lafayette McKeene Hershaw," *Journal of Negro History* (October 1945): 462-464.

¹¹ John E. Bruce, *The Blood Red Record: A Review of the Horrible Lynchings and Burning of Negroes by Civilized White Men in the United States* (Albany, NY: The Argus Company, 1901).

¹² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

and the law only a memory.”¹⁵ Yet he did not only seek protection before the law, but argued that black people in the United States deserved the full rights of citizenship. Accordingly this position announced that the “antagonism to the Negro is political; primarily the demand for his disenfranchisement proceeds from those who owe him the most – the white man of the South.”¹⁶

Bruce explicitly debunked that charge of rape was a cover for the political reasons underlying lynching: “The charge of rape is exceedingly diaphanous when applied to the Negro as the cause of opposition to him in those communities where he is most in evidence and most ambitious to enjoy, in common with white men, his constitutional rights and prerogatives.”¹⁷ *The Blood Red Record*, with its trenchant analysis of lynching as a manifestation of political tension caused by the potentialities of emancipation, its dismissal of white-led Christianity as hypocritical, and its clamor for secular rights represents a protest agenda that John E. Bruce developed from a growing transatlantic awareness of the plight of black peoples amidst the colonial world of the late nineteenth century. The following explores this development of Bruce’s reform ideology.

Bruce, as emphasized in the above discussion of *The Blood Red Record*, endorsed the shift in reform in ways very similar to the Fabian and Positivist movements detailed in Chapter Two. He switched from a concentration on faith-based sentimentality, and, instead, argued for an empirical and practical avenue to change. In

¹⁵ Ibid., 13.

¹⁶ Ibid., 23.

¹⁷ Ibid.

an 1880 comment on what would become an ongoing issue to Bruce - the federal enforcement of black voting rights in the American South - he expressed his frustration that feeling alone would do nothing for the black cause: "Sentiment is one thing, fact is another. What the negroes want are facts pure and simple."¹⁸ Indeed, Bruce argued that the question of secular rights was fundamental to realizing God-given, universal rights of man. Bruce repeatedly stressed specifically worded phrases in his writings, one of which intends this delimiting of political rights: "No amount of opposition or force or ridicule can ever settle a question satisfactorily or effectively which is fought with so much importance to the whole people as this question of civil rights which enfolds with the mantle of infinite clarity the universal rights of man."¹⁹ By constraining any kind of universal or absolute rights to a dependency on the realization of secular, political rights, Bruce turned the language of reform on its head. No longer would an appeal to God-given rights solely motivate secular concerns, but practical realization of secular goals provided the key to absolute truths.²⁰

In a telling essay, Bruce further evidenced his belief in the secular power of political rights as he discussed how none other than the Christian icon, St. Paul, appealed, not to God, but to his status as a citizen of Rome, in a time of trouble:

The title 'citizen' is one of the proudest badges any man can wear. It represents sovereignty – power [of] government. When St. Paul the great apostle to the

¹⁸ John Bruce, 1880, Group D - Manuscripts: 6-44, Bruce Collection.

¹⁹ John Bruce, 1890, Group D - Manuscripts: 6-46, Bruce Collection. Bruce's intentions to elevate political rights over grander ideas of deductively established universals is further evidenced by his scratching out of "human rights" and inserting of "civil rights" in this passage. Bruce consistently used "civil" and "civic" rights in his writings.

²⁰ Bruce would use "absolute" and "universal" interchangeably in this phrase. See John Bruce, 7 February 1891, Group D – Manuscripts: 6-47, Bruce Collection for the use of "absolute."

Gentiles was in danger at the hand of his enemies he proudly claimed the rights and protection of a Roman citizen and the effect of that declaration was magical, for behind him stood the power of the mightiest Republic of the then known world.. He knew and his persecutors knew that Imperial Rome would brook no insult or wrong to any of her citizens entitled to her care and protection.²¹ Bruce believed that the "magic" of citizenship was more meaningful in a modern, post-emancipated world than appeals to traditional promises of religiosity-informed reform.

In a similar vein of practicality, Bruce argued for the naturalness of nation-state intervention. In this sense, he also fell in line with the new, late nineteenth century reformer emphasis on state activism, which among other initiatives stressed the duty of the state to curb the excesses of individual self-interest. Writ large, this suggested that local rule in the South was a function of self-interested whites who wanted to preserve their power and authority by denying equal opportunity to black people. Slavery thus sprang from egregious self-interest of white people and that the Civil War was, if nothing else, a statement against self-interest that created oppression and a reiteration of the primacy of the federal government. Bruce argued that, with the act of reunification, Southern states admitted the failings of their wanton self-interest and acquiesced to the right of the federal government to discern and enforce equal rights. Bruce succinctly stated that, "The reason for the existence of the government is its necessity for the common weal, its right to control individual wills, for that object is beyond question."²² While the liberal humanists detailed in Chapter Three argued against self-interest and the persecution it often promoted, they were content that the negative protections of law alone were sufficient safeguards. Bruce disagreed and consistently argued for state

²¹ John Bruce, "The Dawn of Disillusionment," 1888-1891, Group D - Manuscripts: 9-104, Bruce Collection.

²² John Bruce, 2 February 1891, Group D – Manuscripts: 6-48, Bruce Collection.

intervention to control the oppression that sprung from self-interest, especially the persecution experienced by black people.²³

Bruce's pleas for equal protection before the law also argued that these protections were meaningless without guarantees. In a terse article entitled, "Is This Our Country?" Bruce reacted bitterly to the 1883 Supreme Court Decision that overturned the 1875 Civil Rights Act.²⁴ Bruce saw the decision and the plight of black people in the United States as a stain on the possibilities of the American nation. Simply, it was up to the federal government to enforce the protections guaranteed to each citizen and, if this remained unaccomplished, the political system of the United States, however great in theory, failed:

The government of the United States on paper is one of the best governments that ever saw the light of the day, practically it is not. We have [benefits and privileges of citizenship]... only in the abstract – the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution are well written and doubtless full of good intentions, but there is not to be found in any single one of them the ghost of a guarantee.²⁵

While Bruce's faith in the federal government would wane, he throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century created a powerful language that called for

²³ Bruce felt that oppression was not a function of local governance, but stemmed from abuse of self-interested power. Hence, he could argue for local rule in the case of Ireland as he felt British self-interest create oppressive conditions. The distinction revolved around calls for inclusion in a federalist system, like the United States, or cries for complete new forms of government, which was the case to Bruce not only for Ireland, but also for his later calls for self-determination for the colonized areas of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Bruce, like James Bryce, supported William Gladstone's efforts for Irish Home Rule. See the acknowledgement from Gladstone's office thanking Bruce for his support: William Gladstone to John Bruce, 1886, Group A – Letters Received: C-2, Bruce Collection. For an example of his calls for self-determination in the aftermath of World War One, see John Bruce, 1919, Group D – Manuscripts: 11-15, Bruce Collection.

²⁴ John Bruce, "Is This Our Country?" 7 October 1883, Group D – Manuscripts: 7-99, Bruce Collection.

²⁵ Ibid.

government intervention to secure political rights. The failure of the government to do so, to Bruce, was the “Blot on the Escutcheon” – the tarnishing of the emblematic promise of American life.²⁶

The idea of the organic naturalness of the nation-state in the late nineteenth century created, among other things, two profound ideologies. First, it linked the tenets of the nation-state with the natural order endorsed by God and, thus, endowed its principles with an immutable quality. Second, the nation-state became the ultimate arbiter in the matter of secular affairs. The nation became a node of unity, authority, identity, and power in the flush of late nineteenth century modernity.²⁷ Bruce invigorated the nation-state with life, principles, and holism: “A nation is an organism. It has an organic unity, it is determined in an organic law and constitutes an organic whole.”²⁸ Bruce linked the organic nature of the nation to God: “Men may change, monarchs and kingdoms disappear, the seasons and showers alternate but, principles never change. They are firm and immutable as Truth is immortal. Like unto their author, God, they know no variableness or conceive no shadow of shade of turning.”²⁹ Bruce felt the American nation was the modern embodiment of these principles and, as such, the “national government [was] the final and supreme judge.”³⁰ Because “this is a nation and... we [black people] are part of it,” the federal government, as arbiter of

²⁶ John Bruce, “Blot on the Escutcheon,” 7 February 1891, Group D - Manuscripts: 6-51, Bruce Collection.

²⁷ For the links between the nation and modernity see, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1983).

²⁸ John Bruce, 1901, Group D - Manuscripts: 11-32, Bruce Collection,.

²⁹ John Bruce, “Blot on the Escutcheon,” Bruce Collection,.

³⁰ Ibid.

justice, had the duty to “accord to the black man his rights under the organic laws of the Union.”³¹ Bruce used a powerful language of secular nationalism that appealed to the institutional seat of the nation-state, the federal government, for the delivery of civil rights. In this sense, Bruce morphed a “rights of man” language from a primary association with religious guarantees into a modern, secular argument that took seriously the implications of citizenship in a post-emancipated, yet colonial, world.

Bruce’s call for political rights partially developed from his international contact with peoples of color, including Dr. J. Robert Love of Jamaica. Born in Nassau, Bahamas, in 1839, Love lived in the United States from 1866 to 1881. In 1877, he was ordained as an Episcopalian minister and, in 1881, he was the first black person to get a medical degree from the University of Buffalo. Love began his ministerial career in Haiti under the direction of Bishop James T. Holly. Love became embroiled in a controversy with Holly over the construction of a medical center and he soon drew the ire of the president of Haiti, Florville Hyppolite, who deported Love in 1884.³²

Love left for Kingston, Jamaica, where he became heavily involved in Jamaican politics. He published the *Jamaica Advocate* from 1894 to 1905, which championed the rights of black peoples, he pushed for black representation in the Jamaican parliament - which occurred in 1899 - served on the Kingston City Council, supported Henry Sylvester Williams’ Pan-African Conference of 1900 and Williams’ 1901 tour of Jamaica, and became an advisor to a young Marcus Garvey. Historian Mary Lumsden

³¹ Ibid.

³² For background on Love, see Crowder, *John Edward Bruce*, 45-49, and Joyce Mary Lumsden, “Robert Love and Jamaican Politics” (M.A. Thesis, University of the West Indies, 1987).

describes Love as Jamaica's "outstanding black politician [and] possibly the most prominent politician of any racial origin between 1890 and 1914."³³

Bruce's and Love's shared interest in political rights and print culture resulted in the publication of several of Bruce's articles in the *Jamaica Advocate* as well as an exchange of personal letters. An emphasis on political rights informed their relationship and often came at the expense of a spiritual appeal. Bruce published "The White Man's Idea of Heaven" in Love's *Advocate* in March of 1900.³⁴ In this article, Bruce lampooned the "sacred song" voiced by black peoples as they approached the gate of heaven:

Give me Jesus, give me Jesus,
You may have all this world;
Give me Jesus³⁵

To Bruce, this acquiescence to the spiritual endorsed the transfer of discrimination to heaven and was analogous to the stripping of black peoples' empowerment in the secular world: "You black brethren, said he [the 'Great white chief'], are the happiest people in Heaven today. The magnificent song you have just sung indicates the state of your minds, and discovers the fact that you are satisfied to leave larger concerns of this celestial and blessed life to us. This is well, and most credible to your Christian piety and character."³⁶ Allowed to dictate the fortunes of humble black peoples, the "Anglo-Saxon" chief promptly segregates heaven and makes it safe as he describes in a general

³³ Lumsden, "Robert Love," 4.

³⁴ John Bruce, "The White Man's Idea of Heaven," *Jamaica Advocate* March 1900, Group E – Miscellaneous, Bruce Collection.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

letter to churches of the world: “Those on earth who contemplate visiting this Kingdom may now do so without the slightest fear of coming into contacts with the blacks – this is white man’s heaven.”³⁷ Bruce parodied that blind faith alone – whether in Heaven or on Earth – only played into the schemes of white-led oppression.

Bruce encouraged statements of black political agency and, to this accord, corresponded with Love concerning the procurement of the Proclamation of Haitian Independence. Love described the proclamation as “an able literary and political document,” had it translated to English and forwarded to Bruce in 1893.³⁸ Love hoped that Bruce would have it published in the *Colored American* and felt that it “would interest” Bruce and his audience.³⁹ Clearly, John Bruce saw the proclamation as an expression of black political genius and wanted to disseminate its message of political empowerment to his readers.⁴⁰ John E. Bruce of New York was one of the most vociferous critics of political inequality in the United States and J. Robert Love of Kingston was perhaps the leading political commentator in Jamaica.⁴¹ Their effort to

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ J. Robert Love to John Bruce, 26 April 1893, Group A – Letters Received: L-3, Bruce Collection.

³⁹ J. Robert Love to John Bruce, 6 June 1893, Group A – Letters Received: L-4, Bruce Collection.

⁴⁰ Bruce was not the first African-American to laud the events in Haiti as a statement of political empowerment for black peoples. Indeed, the same Bishop James T. Holly who Love ran afoul of in Haiti had published, in 1857, *A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self Government and Civilized Progress as Demonstrated by Historical Events of the Haytian Revolution* (New Haven, CN: Africa-American Printing Company, 1857). Holly was the first African-American consecrated by the Episcopal Church.

⁴¹ Love evidenced the power of his *Advocate* in an 1896 letter to Bruce: “The paper is hated and feared by its enemies (who however, read it greedily) and adored by its friends. If it lives, it will be the Negro’s standard bearer.” The letters from Love to Bruce are hardly self-congratulatory and there is no reason to doubt the validity of Love’s statement and the impact of

publicize one of the earliest statements of black self-determination is an indication that a message of political empowerment and rights occurred within the context of the white-led imperial world of the late nineteenth century and within a growing awareness of a connected African diaspora.

John E. Bruce constructed a language of secular civil rights. To black people in the late nineteenth century, God loomed large and Bruce, despite his consistent appeal to empirical practicality and secular-based rights, was never far from religion.⁴² In the same article that made the national government the “final judge,” Bruce demonstrated the tendency to, at times, connect citizenship more directly to God: “...we invoke the gracious favor of almighty God to the end that Liberty, Justice, and toleration may become synonyms for unrestricted and unhampered citizenship.”⁴³ Bruce also appealed to the law of God in the wake of the failings of government intervention to ensure the civil rights of blacks. As the federal government consistently ignored the tightening of Jim Crow in the nadir of the late nineteenth century, black peoples consistently invoked

his paper. J. Robert Love to John Bruce, 21 May, Group B – Letters Received: B156, Bruce Collection.

⁴² The church was fundamental to African-American life and took on many functions, including that of a site of spirituality, an institution for social welfare, the disseminator of information, and a source for community building. The church’s most important role in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, arguably, was to provide solace for black peoples suffering under racial discrimination. In this sense, the church relied on the deductively-established belief in ultimate redemption and God’s benevolence and, while these beliefs encouraged that secular change was possible (including millenarian revolution), many black peoples looked to the afterlife for the hope of freedom. See Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 378-403. For the idea that “black religion” provided “resistance within accommodation” to slaves (which can be extended to the struggle against post-emancipated white supremacy), see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 659.

⁴³ John Bruce, “Blot on the Escutcheon.”

God as the ultimate arbiter of rights.⁴⁴ Bruce's reform ideology, while clearly inspired by rational secularism, incorporated Christian ethics to lament the setbacks in the world of political rights.⁴⁵

In the same piece that he appealed to secular reason as the basis of his reform ideology, Bruce bitterly reacted to the overturning of civil rights legislation by dismissing its relevance to the court of God:

The decision of the Supreme Court [overturning the Civil Rights Act of 1875] – respecting our rights as human beings as men and women can never annul the decision of that highest of courts – which fixed the status of every man from the creation of the world when it declared that out of one blood were created all the nations that dwell on the face of the earth.⁴⁶

In 1891, Bruce, amidst the setbacks to his cause, again looked to God for hope in the future: “But the day will come when men the world over will acknowledge the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, as a universal law civilization, and the ethic of the religion of the future will teach God is our Father, and man our brother.”⁴⁷

Despite his emphasis on secular political rights, Bruce never dismissed the power of God in his reform ideology. He made a fundamental distinction that deeply informed his religiosity-based appeal; instead of endorsing traditional white-led

⁴⁴ The term nadir from Rayford W. Logan's classic work, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901* (New York: Dial Press, 1954).

⁴⁵ In one of Bruce's religious pieces - and there are many - he clarified his thoughts on reason and religion. Bruce was adamant that men use reason: "prove all things," but that there was a difference between "reasonable or voluntary doubt and skepticism." To Bruce, reason was the use of the mind to logically question blind faith, investigate the secular world, and to act as "practical Christians," but this voluntary doubt did not prevent the acceptance of divine revelation. Skepticism, however, was an irrational form of "pride" that, by refusing to have faith, prevented action and would only lead to "destruction." John Bruce, 8 March 1877, Group D – Manuscripts: 5-31, Bruce Collection.

⁴⁶ John Bruce, 1 October 1893, Group D – Manuscripts: 6-47, Bruce Collection.

⁴⁷ John Bruce, 19 October 1891, Group D – Manuscripts: 7-83, Bruce Collection.

Christianity, he condemned it as part of the falsehood that supported white domination. This ideological shift allowed him to reclaim the word of God in the hope for achieving reform. As a result, Bruce's call for political rights invoked messages of religious certitude, but in ways that he believed appropriated the true meaning of Christian egalitarianism back into his protest.

Notably, Bruce's transnational discussions with people of color informed his discussions of white-led Christianity. John P. Jackson, the editor of *The Lagos Weekly Record*, responding to information from Bruce discussing the plight of the African-American, wrote empathetically to Bruce: "The African is beginning to find out that the European or white man's Christianity is all a farce and tends to demoralize rather than improve the people."⁴⁸ In a letter to Wu Ting Fang,⁴⁹ Bruce lauded Ting Fang's article "Christianity and the Chinese" for its "broad and catholic views" that, to Bruce, highlighted one aspect of Confucianism superior to white Christianity: "If as you say Confucianism is broad enough to permit all men to worship the efficient first cause whom we know and recognize as God ... it has at least the merit of superiority in this circumstances over the narrow and bigoted thing denominated [as] Christianity and of which the Aryan race are the self appointed custodians."⁵⁰ While Bruce's papers exhibit other similar exchanges with many non-American people of color, he had a deep dialogue with two influential black men in the world of transatlantic ideas: Edward

⁴⁸ John P. Jackson to John Bruce, 1897, Group A - Letters Received: J1, Bruce Collection.

⁴⁹ See Chapter Two for a discussion of the Positivist's comment on Wu Ting Fang and the broader admiration of Chinese "civilization."

⁵⁰ John Bruce to Wu Ting Fang, 5 May 1900, Group A - Letters Received: B16, Bruce Collection. Bruce also refers to Wu Ting Fang in his commentary on lynching, *The Blood Red Record* (Albany, 1901).

Wilmot Blyden and Mojola Agbebi. All three men were in correspondence with each other and all commented on each other's thought and work. Most specifically, both Blyden and Agbebi had extensive and severe criticisms of white-led Christianity.

Edward Wilmot Blyden was one of the most internationally recognized black men of the late nineteenth century. Born in the Danish colony of St. Thomas, Blyden, sponsored by the American Colonization Society, migrated to Liberia in 1851, where he completed his high school training. Blyden soon became influential, writing and later editing the *Liberian Herald*, and in 1857 he published his first work, *A Vindication of the Negro Race*, in which he articulated a major theme of his career: the refutation of commonly held perceptions of African inferiority. Blyden was appointed commissioner to Britain in 1861 and Liberian Secretary of State in 1864. In these roles, Blyden sought funding from British and American philanthropists to endow the Liberian educational system. Further, he became a vocal supporter of African American emigration to Liberia. Due mostly to Blyden's uncompromising support of the "pure negro," he became politically embroiled with Liberians of mixed heritage and was forced to leave for Sierra Leone in 1871. In Sierra Leone he supported British extension of its civilizing mission and clamored for the United States to create colonies in Africa.

Blyden returned to Liberia in 1874, becoming ambassador to Britain and, later, the Liberian Minister of the Interior and Secretary of Education. Blyden failed in his attempt to become the President of Liberia in 1885 and after this defeat he largely centered his activities in other parts of western Africa, where he, among other interests,

was a British Native Affairs officer in Nigeria during 1896 and 1897 and was the Director of Mohammedan Education in Sierra Leone from 1901 to 1906. This capacity as director of Islamic education grew from another life-long project of Blyden's: his urging that Islam, while ultimately inferior to Christianity, had many redeeming features and could be a helpful force in both the "civilizing" of the continent and the administration of colonial Africa. Blyden formally articulated this sentiment in his 1887 work, *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race*.⁵¹ While he embraced many euro-centric perspectives,⁵² Blyden was also a strong believer in the value and uniqueness of African peoples and consistently argued for a sense of African unity. Blyden remained a prolific ideologue, contributing to the print culture of not only West Africa, but also to both white and black periodicals in the United States and in Great Britain, until his death in 1912.⁵³

Blyden corresponded regularly with Bruce and was a major influence on Bruce's thought.⁵⁴ In an 1895 letter, Blyden sent letters of introduction for Bruce to the *Lagos Weekly Record* and the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* and confirmed that Bruce was

⁵¹ Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (1887; repr., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967).

⁵² E. A. Ayandele states bluntly that Blyden was "essentially a 'black Englishman' [who] wore a white man's clothes all his life, [and] basked in the white man's culture of which he was very proud." See his *African Historical Studies* (London: F. Cass, 1979), 208.

⁵³ Hakim Adi and Marika Serwood, *Pan-African History: Political Figures from Africa and the Diaspora since 1787* (London: Routledge, 2003) provides the best biographical sketch of Blyden. See also, Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832 – 1912* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

⁵⁴ According to Bruce, he first met Blyden in 1880 and, at this meeting, they both hoped that the "acquaintance would grow into a lasting friendship." John Bruce, n.d, Group C – Letters Sent: 5-21, Bruce Collection.

helping him secure publication in the United States.⁵⁵ While the letter from 1895 is the first documented piece of direct correspondence between Bruce and Blyden in the John E. Bruce papers, it is clear that Bruce seriously engaged Blyden's work at a much earlier date. Bruce's papers contain a hand-written summary by Blyden of his visit to Charleston, South Carolina, in 1889 in which he discusses his strategy for black emigration to Africa.⁵⁶ This visit came as the United States Senate considered the controversial Butler Bill, which sought to support the migration of blacks from the South. While the Butler Bill died in committee, Blyden's discussions of black emigration elevated his prominence in American circles.⁵⁷

Blyden's writings on Islam severely criticized the Christian mission in Africa and suggested that Islam had many redeemable features. In doing so, Blyden contradicted the prevailing sentiment of British reformers who had created a veritable cottage industry based on the denunciations of Islam. In metropolitan England, the venerable Anti-Slavery Society had long blamed Islam and its proponents for the continuance of African slavery after the British Emancipation Act of 1807. In 1839, anti-slavery zealot Thomas Fowell Buxton published his influential work, *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy*, which conflated Arab peoples, the Islamic faith, and slave-

⁵⁵ Edward Blyden to John Bruce, 8 August 1895, Group A – Letters Received: B3, Bruce Collection.

⁵⁶ John Bruce, "Dr. Blyden in Charleston," December 1889, Group E – Miscellaneous: 13-20, Bruce Collection.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of the Butler Bill see Edwin S. Redkey, *Black Exodus: Black Nationalists and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890-1910* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 65-68. For a discussion of Blyden's visit to Charleston and Bruce's interest in the visit, see Crowder, *John Edward Bruce*, 29-32.

trading into a potent evil facing the Christian British in Africa.⁵⁸ This denunciation continued in the late nineteenth century as the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* consistently detailed campaigns against the Arab and/or Mohammedan slave traders.⁵⁹

Blyden deconstructed the common perception gleaned through lurid details of the Western press and argued that Christians could profit from a more realistic study of Islam's attributes: "Mohammedanism in Africa, instead of being treated in an off-hand and contemptuous manner by some, who seem to have gathered all their knowledge from the Arabian Nights, ought to be approached with earnestness and respect; for there is much in it which Christians may profitably study, and from which they might glean important lessons."⁶⁰ This Western press made no distinction between Arab and Islam, linking them both to slavery, polygamy, and despotism. Blyden also made this connection in much of his writing; however, he also, at times, made the distinction that there were Arabs who did not carry the spirit of Islam in their dealings and that Africans could distinguish between the two. In his 1902 article, "Islam in the Western Soudan," Blyden recalled conversations with African Muslims, who said: "The Arabs are the most stout in disbelief and hypocrisy, and are more likely not to know the bounds which God has sent down to His Apostle."⁶¹

⁵⁸ Thomas F. Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy* (London: Murray, 1839).

⁵⁹ For example, in an 1889 article with the oft-used title "The African Slave Trade" the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* clamored that the slave trade was "the greatest obstacle to civilization, to colonization and to missionary work" and joined religion and race in typifying the struggle as one against "Islam and Arab influence." *Anti-Slavery Reporter* (January-February 1889): 38.

⁶⁰ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "Christian Missions in West Africa," *Fraser's Magazine* (1876). Found in *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 62-63.

⁶¹ Edward Wilmot Blyden, "Islam in the Western Soudan," *Journal of the African Society* (1902): 21.

Beyond breaking down popular conceptions of the evil Islamic Arab, Blyden forcefully stressed what he saw as the color-blind attitude of Islam. As early as 1875, Blyden argued that “The Mohammedan Negro has felt nothing of the withering power of caste. There is nothing in his colour or his race to debar him from the highest privileges” and quoted an Islamic poet: “Blackness of skin cannot degrade an ingenious mind, or lessen the worth of the scholar or the wit. Let blackness claim the colour of your body; I claim as mine your fair and candid soul.”⁶² Blyden did not waiver from this assertion that Islam accepted Africans without prejudice and, in 1902, enlisted a quote from the liberal humanist discussed in Chapter Three, James Bryce: “Mr. Bryce, in his Romanes Lecture... confessed to the inability of Christianity on this subject as compared to Islam. ‘Christianity... with its doctrine of brotherhood, does not create the sentiment of equality which Islam does.’”⁶³ Blyden called on both "race experts" of the West like Bryce as well as African voices to tell of Islam’s declaration: “*Almuminuna Ikhwatun* – All believers are brethren,” which he felt summarized the religious situation in Africa - Islam practiced what Christianity only preached: the brotherhood of man before God.⁶⁴

⁶² Edward Wilmot Blyden, “Mohammedanism and the Negro Race,” *Fraser’s Magazine* (1875). Found in *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 15-16.

⁶³ Blyden, “Islam in the Western Soudan,” 27.

⁶⁴ V. Y. Mudimbe criticizes Blyden’s view of Islam: “Throughout the nineteenth century in Central Africa, Islamic factions represented an objective evil and practiced a shameful slave-trade. And here, again, we face an unbelievable inconsistency in Blyden’s thought: his naïve admiration for Islam led him to accept the enslavement of non-Muslim peoples.” V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 115. While this criticism is valid, my point is that Blyden used Islam to break down the automatic conflation of prevailing racial categories with particular religions and to show that there were serious problems with the egalitarian claims of Western Christianity.

In 1893, a representative from a London publisher asked Bruce to distribute Blyden's *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*.⁶⁵ This work clearly influenced Bruce's views of Islam and his critique of white Christianity. In an 1893 manuscript, Bruce flatly remarked: "Islamism does not suffer by comparison with the 'Christian' religion in Africa."⁶⁶ Mocking the common-place descriptors of African societies Bruce commented - in language very similar to Blyden - about religious and racial prejudice: "its [Islam] teachings are more readily embraced and absorbed by these 'savage and barbarous' peoples than are those of the 'Christian religion' because of their freedom from caste and race distinctions."⁶⁷ To Bruce, like Blyden, the Mohammedan "not only preaches, but he practices what he preaches in his daily life and in contact with his brethren. He does not consider [African people] to be his inferior before God nor does he treat him as an inferior, but as a man and brother beloved."⁶⁸ Bruce's overtures to Islam contributed to his critique of white-led Christianity and arose from his transatlantic association with Edward Blyden.

Blyden, in quite prescient language, also contended that the depiction of the African was largely a Western construction stemming from the acceptance of slavery in the Christian world. Further, Blyden argued that this construction caused lingering prejudice and the general failure of the Christian mission:

⁶⁵ Whittingham Publishing to John Bruce, 21 April 1893, Group C – Letters Sent: BL 4a-57, Bruce Collection. For the popularity of the work, see Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, 73-78.

⁶⁶ John Bruce, "The Odious Comparison," 1893, Group D – Manuscripts: 8-140, Bruce Collection.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

The Negro of the ordinary traveler or missionary – and perhaps two-thirds of the Christian world – is a purely fictitious being, constructed out of the traditions of slave-traders and slave-holders, who have circulated all sorts of absurd stories, and also out of prejudices inherited from ancestors, who were taught to regard the Negro as a legitimate object of traffic.⁶⁹

To Blyden, this perception dovetailed with the other lurid descriptions of the “Dark Continent” and informed the view of the missionary, as he asserted in the following quote attributed to an American missionary: “When I carry my own torch into the caves of Africa, I meet only filthy birds of the darkness, bats, owls, and evil things of the night, that, bewildered by the light, know not how to blunder out, or out, blunderingly dash themselves in again.”⁷⁰ The ability of the Christian missionary to metaphorically associate Africans with animals, darkness and filth demonstrated to Blyden a betrayal of God’s message. In a terse statement from 1902, it is clear that Blyden saw the connection between “Christian” denunciatory views of the African and the slip to colonial violence, and hence why he preferred Islam: “With Islam, Africa is safe at least from physical destruction: with popular Christianity it might share the fate of the North American Indians, Sandwich Islanders, New Zealanders etc.... In the case of Africa, we must say ‘better a cycle of Cathay’ than fifty years of Europe.”⁷¹

Blyden, however, did not doubt that Christianity was the supreme faith. In his discussions of “Christianity and the Negro Race,” he claimed: “There is, we doubt not, one and only one Prophet for all times and for all nations – the immaculate Son of God; and the teachings which He inculcated contain the only principles that will regenerate

⁶⁹ Blyden, “Christian Missions,” 58.

⁷⁰ Blyden attributes this quote to Rev. R. H. Nassau, delivered at the American Colonization Society on 21 January 1873. Blyden, “Christian Missions,” 55.

⁷¹ Blyden, “Islam in Western Soudan,” 33.

humanity of all races, climes, and countries.”⁷² His indictment was against white Christians who distorted the religion away from its egalitarian message into a statement of racial intolerance.

Another one of Bruce’s transnational contacts, Mojola Agbebi, was a prominent critic of white Christianity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁷³ Born David Brown Vincent (he assumed his African name in 1894) to parents of Yoruba and Igbo ancestry, he was educated by the Church Missionary Society and had a wide variety of connections both in the religious and political world. He undertook missionary work with chiefs of many different African locales, consulted with British officials – including Frederick Lugard, knew the British traveler Mary Kingsley, and began corresponding with John Bruce perhaps earlier than the documented date of 1898.⁷⁴ He received honorary degrees from universities in both Liberia and the United States, produced fifteen published works and, by the turn of the century, was the President of the Baptist Union of West Africa, which spread from Sierra Leone to the Congo. Fundamentally, Agbebi, like Bruce and Blyden, spent a lifetime battling the prevailing notions of African inferiority.

Agbebi felt that the tenets of Christianity profoundly demonstrated the equality of Africans and he echoed in his attack the monogenesis argument discussed in Chapter One embraced by Catherine Impey on the acceptance of biological inequality. Agbebi’s

⁷² Blyden, “Christianity and the Negro Race,” *Fraser’s Magazine* (1876). Found in *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 26.

⁷³ For background on Agbebi, see E.A. Ayandele, *African Historical Studies*, 107-136.

⁷⁴ Ayandale uses this date as the first extant letter from Bruce to Agbebi in the Mojola Agbebi Papers held at the Ibadan University Library in Ibadan, Nigeria. See Ayandale, *African Historical Studies*, 110.

exhortations for racial equality steadfastly contended that the Christian belief in the inclusive brotherhood of man was not only the ultimate blow to inequality, but was also a crucial step to the realization of the destiny of African peoples. He, accordingly, believed that white missionaries deserved high praise for bringing Christianity to Africa, as reflected in a passage written on the heels of the Berlin Conference and the resulting scramble for Africa: "Missionaries, and Missionaries alone, are the real pioneers of African civilization. It was commercial Europe that invented slave labour and discovered victims of slavery, but it was the evangelical that promulgated the edict of universal emancipation... whatever these pioneers of civilization are, whether they are Belgians, Frenchmen, Germans, Portuguese, English or American, tell them we shall ever hail them with delight, and God shall bless them."⁷⁵ Agbebi, however, in a vein similar to Bruce's implication that white-controlled religion was part of the deception of the African-American, increasingly became a vocal critic of what he viewed as the usurpation of Christianity by the economic and material interests of colonialism. Stemming from this belief, he created a powerful reform impulse that called for African re-appropriation of true Christianity.

In 1902, Agbebi delivered the "Inaugural Sermon" at the first anniversary of the African Church in Lagos, Nigeria. *The Sierra Leone Weekly News* published the lecture as a pamphlet and it found further circulation in West Africa, Great Britain, and the

⁷⁵ David Brown Vincent (Mojola Agbebi), *The African and the Gospel* (1885). Found in Ayandele, *African Historical Studies*, 112.

United States.⁷⁶ Blyden read the piece with “surprise and delight,” while John Bruce thanked Agbebi for his “great sermon” and asked for a full copy and photograph of Agbebi to be published in the United States.⁷⁷ Agbebi’s sermon is an example of the growing critique emanating from Africa of Western Christianity and, in the case of Agbebi, was an expression that arose from years of experience with Christianity in a colonial setting.⁷⁸

In his critique, Agbebi remained beholden to the emphasis on religion and he made no distinction between the secular world of politics and economics and the spiritual world of Christianity.⁷⁹ Agbebi delimited the power of faith in the everyday expression of agency and, unlike Bruce, he did not problematize the reliance on God with arguments that placed primary emphasis on secular-based political rights. Hence, while Bruce, at times, expressed his mortal inability to comprehend the word of God, Agbebi, in a deeper statement of fatalism, stressed man’s limits: “All nature is but

⁷⁶ Mojola Agbebi, “Inaugural Sermon,” (1902), Group E: Not Catalogued, Bruce Collection. This section has documents marked “From Mojola” and signed “Yours Sincerely Mojola Agbebi” and contains, in typewritten form: Agbebi’s “Inaugural Sermon,” associated letters from Blyden and Bruce, and additional commentary from Agbebi, anonymous commentators, *The Sierra Weekly News*, and the *Lagos Weekly Record*.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 17: 27. From the copy in the collection, the publisher Edgar F. Howarth of Yonkers, New York appears to have printed the work in 1903.

⁷⁸ British missionary societies, most notably the Church Missionary Society, had a presence in what would become Nigeria by the mid-nineteenth century. In 1861, the British government established a consulate that made Lagos and its immediate surroundings a Crown colony. The Royal Niger Company, officially founded in 1886, pushed the British into confrontation with the Ijebu people in north and the Yoruba people in the southwest. In 1893 the British proclaimed a protectorate over the Yoruba and in 1900 did the same in northern Nigeria (“Nigeria” officially adopted in 1897). Frederick Lugard honed his idea of “indirect rule” during his involvement with administration of both the Royal Niger Company and the British colonial government in Nigeria. For background on the history of Nigeria see, Toyin Falola, *The History of Nigeria* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999).

⁷⁹ Ayandele, *African Historical Studies*, 132.

unknown to us, All chance, direction which we cannot see, All discord, harmony, not understood, All partial evil universal good.”⁸⁰

Despite the unerring acceptance of God’s will that flirted with a passive acceptance of some aspects of colonial exploitation, Agbebi attacked what he saw as the clear failing of white Christianity. Agreeing with Blyden’s assessment of Islam on the African continent, Agbebi commented that, “Islam is the religion of Africa. Christianity lives here by sufferance.”⁸¹ The twisting of Christian doctrine by Europeans, Agbebi argued, was responsible for the success of Islam in Africa:

Christianity has been derided by some of its European friends as a bloody faith, the doctrine of shambles and the executioner’s creed. European Christianity is a dangerous thing. What do you think of a religion which holds a bottle of gin in one hand and a Common Prayer Book in the other? Which carries a glass of rum as a vade-mecum to the ‘Holy’ hymn book? A religion which points with one hand to the skies, bidding you ‘lay up your treasures in heaven,’ and, while you are looking up grasps all your worldly goods with the other hand, seizes your ancestral lands, labels your forests, and places your patrimony under inexplicable legislation?... O! Christianity, what enormities are committed in thy name.⁸²

Agbebi contributed to the transatlantic unrest regarding the distortion of religion by white Westerners and attempted to Africanize Christianity into a meaningful religion that, to him, could evoke the true merit of Christianity.⁸³

John Bruce also was a vociferous critic of American white Christianity as early as the 1880s. In 1883, he denounced the violence in the South as the shame of the

⁸⁰ Mojola Agbebi, “Inaugural Sermon,” 5.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Hazel King comments that “Agbebi stand as one such example of an African who not only attempted to translate Christianity into an African context, but was highly critical of the lack of this hitherto.” See Hazel King, “Cooperation in Contextualization: Two Visionaries of the African Church – Mojola Agbebi and William Hughes of the African Institute, Colwyn Bay,” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 14:1 (1986): 5.

civilized world and claimed the hypocrisy of "American Christians... [who] loved God, but hated the Negro."⁸⁴ In the 1891 essay, "White Christianity," Bruce continued his tirade, attacking the white clergy for their "clam-like silence" on the plight of black people in the South: "It is worthy of remark that the white clergy of the country, with here and there an honorable exception, have utterly failed to give any expression that can be construed to mean its disapproval of the acts of lawlessness committed against the rights, lives, and liberties of the Negroes of the South particularly, and of the country generally."⁸⁵ Bruce further argued that religious "preparedness" was a false promise:

They [white Christians] tell the Lord in classic English and well-rounded sentences what they have done to civilize and Christianize the Negro, and they prevent the Negro, however intelligent and respectable, from imparting any knowledge he has gained through their efforts and his own perseverance to the white Christians, who feel that there is some sort of social equality existing between them and divine providence which cannot be obtained between them and the Negro. On special occasions, however, when there is to be a grand blow out, when reports and addresses are to be made giving an account of the stewardship of these goody-goody white folks, they trot out a colored brother or sister who can talk or sing and they seem to say one to the other and each to the Lord, 'Behold Lord, what we have done!'⁸⁶

To Bruce, white Christians were a powerful force in American society: "They make the color line in religion, in political, social and business life."⁸⁷ The promises embedded in the message of Christian preparedness could not overcome this color line and, in language reminiscent of political paternalism, Bruce noted how it relegated black

⁸⁴ John Bruce, 7 October 1883, Group D – Manuscripts: 7-99, Bruce Collection.

⁸⁵ John Bruce, "White Christianity," 1891, Group D – Manuscripts: 9-73, Bruce Collection.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

people to religious wards: "the black man who loves Jesus feel[s] his inferiority and that he is a degree or two lower than the white Christian and a ward rather than an equal before God."⁸⁸

Influenced by his transnational connections Bruce also viewed Christianity in the United States as part of the larger white-led Christianizing mission:

What have the white ministers of the God of Justice said or done in condemnation of the many acts of barbarism which have smeared the Caucasian race with the innocent blood of the black man? These tender hearted Christians (God save the mark) send words of sympathy and substantial relief to the oppressed and downtrodden of foreign lands.... They spend thousands of dollars to Christianize and civilize the Chinese, and send missionaries to Africa with a bible in one hand and a bottle of Rum in the other, with the ostensible object of conquering the world for Christ. Well, if the world is to be saved by the half-hearted white Christians of America, then I haven't much faith in the ultimate result. A religion founded upon lies and prejudice isn't going to save anybody at any time under any circumstances. It is the refinement of cruelty, the apotheosis of hypocrisy and humbuggery when this Christian clergy and Christian sentiment of America shuts its holy eyes to the festering scab upon its own body and seeks to heal the sores of other nations.⁸⁹

By 1895, Bruce offered, in an essay entitled "How to be a True Missionary," that a "true Christian recognizes all creeds, all races, and all classes of the human family."⁹⁰ To Bruce, the "greatest handicap" to the "progress" of Christianity was the discrimination borne from "caste and race distinction."⁹¹ Like his transnational friends, Edward Blyden and Mojola Agbebi, John Bruce would never doubt the merit of Christianity, but he clearly warned that as long as white men perverted its message, it could not be a force of redemption for the oppressed peoples of the world.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Bruce's emphasis.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ John Bruce, 1895, Group D - Manuscripts: 8-123, Bruce Collection.

⁹¹ John Bruce, 1893, Group D - Manuscripts: 8-140, Bruce Collection.

Disconnecting Christianity's message from its distortion by white peoples, Bruce's ideas concerning racial equality invoked God's spirit. At the core, Bruce believed that all men were created equal. As such, Bruce did not support polygenesis theories of man's origin that used inherent and immutable difference to justify racial hierarchy: indeed, Bruce echoed the pleas of Catherine Impey's religiosity-infused *Anti-Caste* with his oft-repeated statement of religious monogenesis. As Bruce put it: "For of one blood created He all the nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth."⁹² He argued that "There are just as good people, morally, intellectually, and physically among Africans and their descendents, as among the people of any other race of mankind. We are only different in the color of our skin, the texture of our hair, and the contour of our skulls from other human beings. Inside of us, we are all the same."⁹³ Bruce would have agreed with Impey's contention that while distinctive physical characteristics existed "arbitrary distinctions based on these differences are contrary to the mind of Christ."⁹⁴

⁹² John Bruce, "The White Presence in Africa," n.d., Group D – Manuscripts: 9-30, Bruce Collection. William Seraile thinks that this was written "sometime after 1900," Seraile, *Bruce Grit*, 156. I, however, am not as convinced about this approximation. While Bruce's writings contain much contradiction even within documents written in the same year, I think this essay, which lauded the white presence in Africa, may have been written closer to the mid 1890's, when Bruce's correspondence with Edward Wilmot Blyden was at its peak. Blyden, as will be discussed, was a firm believer in the good of British imperialism in Africa. Bruce, I believe, wrote a scathing critique of imperialism in 1901 and, thus, the endorsement of whites in Africa at Seraile's approximate date seems incongruent, even considering some of the variance in Bruce's writing.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ *Anti-Caste* 1:2 (April 1888). Impey often used the phrase "For of one blood created He all the nations of men" in her writings. While the similar language was, more than likely, not the result of direct consultation, the Bruce Collection contains a letter from Impey as well as an urging from Alexander Crummell that Bruce forward an essay to Impey for publication. Catherine Impey to John Bruce, 24 October 1891, Group E – Miscellaneous: 13-21, Bruce

Notably, Bruce fortified his belief in traditional ideas of religious monogenesis with doses of modernized, secular reasoning: "... no rational being will claim that the Negro is the superior of the white man, nor will any rational being speak the superiority of the white race over the black."⁹⁵ Bruce, while not overtly acknowledging the Darwinian turn, was clearly aware of the evolutionary science of the day that argued for a common origin of man. Bruce's thinking about the origin of man, like his appeal to both political and God-ordained rights, mixed both secular and the spiritual monogenesis in his pursuit of racial equality.

Bruce without question believed in the equality of man. The prevailing strain of evolutionist thought that stressed preparedness in relation to peoples of color also affected his thought. In this respect, Bruce flirted with the dangers that preparedness held for black populations. Specifically, much of the civilizing mission stressed that black people were far behind the curve of proper civilization. This lag was due, most fundamentally, to the environmental conditions of "Dark Africa," and slavery and its legacy. Bruce, at times, agreed with many other black thinkers who thought that slavery was, in fact, a half-way step toward civilization as enslaved peoples experienced contact with white society.⁹⁶ While not endorsing the belief in inherent inferiority, the

Collection. Alexander Crummell to John Bruce, 15 December 1897, Group B – Letters Received: B8, Bruce Collection.

⁹⁵ John Bruce, 1883, Group D – Manuscripts: 6-47, Bruce Collection.

⁹⁶ Bruce Grit (John Bruce), "Bruce Grit's Melange" *Colored American*, 28 February 1903. Tunde Adeleke asserts that the slave experience - that "one and peculiar institution" - allowed American black nationalists to argue that slavery had introduced black Americans to civilization and Christianity and informed their "task of civilizing 'primitive' Africa." See Tunde Adeleke, *Unafrikan Americans: Nineteenth-Century Black Nationalists and the Civilizing Mission* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1998), 119. This sentiment was also held by Africans such as John L. Dube of Natal, South Africa who, in an

acceptance of slavery as part of the progress of African populations contributed to the tenor of the uplift mission. This mission, in many respects, reasserted temporally open-ended periods of tutelage that effectively created racial hierarchies, which operated in a very similar manner to the harder rankings of men constructed by bondage or polygenesis theories.

Bruce's relationship with the Reverend Alexander Crummell affected his views on preparedness. Crummell was an African-American who had lived in Liberia for nearly twenty years. During that time he became allies with Edward Blyden. Upon his return to the United States in 1873, Crummell established a position as pastor of St. Luke's Church in Washington, District of Columbia. Crummell was a leading voice for civil rights, an instructor at Howard University, and one of the main organizers of the American Negro Academy, which was a powerful voice that clamored for the intellectual and cultural cultivation of black men and whose membership included most all of the leading black male voices in the United States, including John E. Bruce.⁹⁷

By 1890, Bruce and Crummell were close friends and regular correspondents.⁹⁸

In an 1896 letter to Bruce, Crummell summarized his belief that the civilizing of black

1894 letter to Bruce, commented that "God has wonderfully prepared the Afro-American, through years of bondage by a civilized nation." John L. Dube to John Bruce, 1894, Group E – Miscellaneous: 13-54, Bruce Collection. Bruce, however, also expressed in 1902 - when his political views were moving away from traditional standards of uplift - that slavery had kept the black away from modern life when he described its conditions as "monotonous and trying customs that left him deaf, dumb, and blind to all that was going on around him." John Bruce, 1902, Group D – Manuscripts: 7-91, Bruce Collection.

⁹⁷ For background on Crummell, see Crowder, John Edward Bruce, 37-39. For more on Crummell see Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). For the membership of American Negro Academy see Moss, *The American Negro Academy*.

⁹⁸ Crowder, *John Edward Bruce*, 39.

people constituted a preparedness that was necessary for their full participation in the political realm: “The primal need of the Negro for some years to come is absorption in civilization, in all its several lines, as preparation for civil functions and the use of political power.”⁹⁹ As documented by his attack on white Christianity, Bruce would deeply consider the methods by which “civilization” prepared black peoples, and would deconstruct Crummell’s allusion to “its several lines of development.”

In this critique, Bruce never stopped asserting the equality of man. Bruce also fell in line with the evolutionist ethos of the period, making the argument that, while men were born equal, environment and effort dictated progress: "The essential characteristic of human nature will always remain the same, but individual men and individual communities are susceptible of improvement or degradation according to the circumstances in which they are placed, and the comparative rigor of their own exertion."¹⁰⁰ Bruce fell back on the popular call of progress to encourage black peoples to realize their capability and strive for improvement: "You know your birthright. Come, come here then and work it out. Gain the knowledge which you desire; train your faculties; elevate yourself."¹⁰¹

In the late nineteenth century, as discussed, many lauded material advancement as the best path for the “elevation” of black peoples. Expressed by Booker T. Washington at the 1895 Atlanta Conference on Africa, the Atlanta Compromise called

⁹⁹ Alexander Crummell to John Bruce, 5 December 1896, Group B – Letters Received: MS 4, Bruce Collection.

¹⁰⁰ John Bruce, “The Lyceum as Educator and Training School,” 19 October 1890, Group D – Manuscripts: 7-96, Bruce Collection.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

for black peoples to denounce politics, to embrace separatist policies, and to concentrate on material gain. William Seraile and other historians document that Bruce, not unlike many other black men in the late nineteenth century, was quite often on the margins of economic survival.¹⁰² As such, he occasionally loaned himself out as a journalistic "hired gun" for monetary reward. In this capacity, Bruce occasionally lauded Booker T. Washington's call for black peoples to concentrate on material gain at the expense of political participation.¹⁰³ Bruce, on the whole, disagreed with, most obviously, the call to forego politics, as well as the concentration on material gain alone. Documented by his participation in the American Negro Academy - which consistently promoted the intellectual capacity of black peoples – and demonstrated in much of his writing, Bruce denounced the material alone: "He who labors upon objects wholly material works upon that which however improved must, one day, perish."¹⁰⁴

Instead, Bruce steadfastly argued that all peoples had the same intellectual capacity and that it was the "mind" that was the key to the prospects of black peoples. In an 1894 essay entitled "Mind," Bruce held fast to his assertion of equality: "No individual, no race, and no community of individuals have a monopoly of mind."¹⁰⁵ Bruce further argued that it was through the cultivation of the mind that the black would

¹⁰² Seraile, *Bruce Grit*, 14.

¹⁰³ Seraile speculates that Bruce's call to forego politics was at least partially a function of his dissatisfaction with the Republican Party that was failing to approach the issue of black rights with the same fervor as it had exhibited in its abolitionist campaign, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. See Seraile, *Bruce Grit*, 18.

¹⁰⁴ John Bruce, "The Lyceum as Educator and Training School."

¹⁰⁵ John Bruce, "Mind," 4 April 1895, Group D – Manuscripts: 9-113, Bruce Collection, Bruce's emphasis.

best rise "from the ashes of its forced degradation."¹⁰⁶ To Bruce, the intellect was the dominant component of the tripartite nature of man: body, soul, and mind. The mind was, thus, responsible for all the advances of man: "From the brain great empires and kingdoms have sprung, and great inventions, the marvels of the ages have come into existence."¹⁰⁷ By making the material dependent on the mind, Bruce measured "progress" in terms that, once again, flirted with an emphasis on God and deductively established truths. These secular advances, Bruce argued, "have come into existence to testify to the matchless wisdom and power of the great architect of the universe, who made man in his own image and endowed him with all the elements beyond the narrow limits of vanity, conceit, and self-sufficiency."¹⁰⁸ While Bruce would argue that material advancement was important, he equated a celebration of it alone with a shallowness that his people needed to overcome: "...for as after we have tried a thousand pleasures and turned from one enjoyment to another we find no rest to our desires."¹⁰⁹ In the final analysis all the work for material gain and, indeed, the struggle for secular knowledge, only "brings us a sense of our weakness and makes us ready and with greater willingness to submit to revelation."¹¹⁰ Bruce mixed the secular with the spiritual with his argument that color had nothing to do with intellectual ability and that its cultivation was not only the key to reforming the conditions of this world but also fundamental to the realization of man's limited ability to understand providence.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Bruce's overture to providence clearly was part of his frustration with the old adage that both secular and spiritual "progress" took time. He began to see through the temporally-open ended period of preparedness that characterized much of the calls for patience from both white and black reformers. This realization helped endorse Bruce's argument for political evolution, stood in opposition to the dominant narrative's emphasis on material and spiritual evolution, and augmented his references to the ways of providence.

Bruce began to lash out at the accepted standards of advancement, especially those associated with Bookerite material gain. In an essay written in 1902, Bruce gives an empirical "proof" of the progress of black people: "The material advancement of the Negro race since its liberation from slavery is truly marvelous when we consider the depths from which it has risen, and the obstacles which for the past thirty years have been in the way of its progress."¹¹¹ Bruce counters the late Victorian contention that black populations were not only unprepared for political participation, but were also unable to grasp the logic of capitalism, which in a colonial setting reinforced the black peoples role as passive laborers.¹¹² Bruce endorsed the Victorian civilizing mission's old standbys of industry and thrift, but extended these standards to their logical end by arguing that, indeed, black peoples were economic agents with capacities for decision-making in the market. "The Negroes in the Old South," wrote Bruce, "have by thrift

¹¹¹ John Bruce, 1902, Group D – Manuscripts: 7-91, Bruce Collection.

¹¹² For an excellent series of essays that discuss how race deeply affected the assumptions of liberal economic thought, see David Colander, Robert E. Prasch, and Falguni A. Sheth eds., *Race, Liberalism, and Economics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

and industry shown most conclusively that they not only appreciate the benefits of freedom and citizenship, but that they were born to accumulate wealth."¹¹³

This wealth accumulation, however, did not signify real agency to Bruce as he argued that the methods of industrial education and capital for black people were all handed down, and thus controlled, by white interests: "Whatever success the race en masse attains to under present conditions in the direction of industrial education cannot properly be attributed to the Negro himself, but to the philanthropy of his white friends, North and South, who furnish the money to educate his head and hand, at the same time take away from his race."¹¹⁴ To Bruce concentration on material preparedness alone locked black people into being "bound to endless imitation" of the white race.¹¹⁵ This imitation provided safety: "wherever he has eschewed politics as business (which so many of them have been taught to believe is their only salvation) and have applied themselves to money getting, acquiring property and education and entering upon industrial and business pursuits there have been few if any complaints on his part against the white people of that section."¹¹⁶ Only in places where black peoples did not cater to this agenda was the "Negro a victim of lynch law and political intolerance."¹¹⁷

Bruce contended that the stress on material evolution through industry and thrift did result in the black people accumulating capital, but that this was part of the "mendacity" of the system: white society would never recognize black peoples as

¹¹³ John Bruce, 1902, Group D – Manuscripts: 7-91, Bruce Collection.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

equivalent economic agents nor see attainment of thrift and industry as evidence of "preparedness." White society held the strings and shaped the educational agendas of black institutions toward industrial training, which Bruce felt was far away from the true calling of black peoples: "The important thing to be done is to make the Negro realize that his race like all other races has a mission and that no other race can fulfill that mission quite as well as it can do it itself. That the Negro should stop imitating the white race, and be original, work out his destiny and make a place for himself in the world upon his own merits and by his own talents. Now he is being puffed up by the white people of the North and is dependent rather than independent. It may be all right, but we have serious doubts as to the wisdom of the policy which places the Negro in the dual character of man and mendicant at the same time."¹¹⁸ Importantly, Bruce connected the message of material uplift with the preaching of white-controlled Christianity and condemned them as empty rhetoric that ostensibly set standards of imitation that, in reality, went unrecognized as evidence of preparedness for equal participation in the fruits of modern society: "As long as the white race supports our institutions of learning and our churches we will always be educated and religious mendicants."¹¹⁹

While Bruce discredited two powerful platforms of white society's prescription for black peoples – religious and material preparedness - he had a more difficult time with the issue of education. As demonstrated by the Fabians as well as the urging of James Bryce and his cohort of liberal humanists, virtually all reformers in the late

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries believed in the necessity of "education." Most late nineteenth century reformers contended that the "backward" state of the continent and the period of slavery were harsh environmental conditioners that left black people unprepared for participation in civil society. This stress on environment escaped the language of inherent inferiority and, in the post-emancipated late nineteenth century, the emphasis on education first may have displaced, in theory, the vision of enlightened despotism favored by John Stuart Mill and other mid-century liberals. The language of environment and education in the late nineteenth century was not wholly altruistic, but instead operated as a tool of colonial control throughout many spaces of the imperial world, including the British Empire and the American South.¹²⁰ Simply, the powerful, seemingly ubiquitous elevation of the Anglo-Saxon as the race naturally geared toward good government made it an uphill struggle for any other race to participate fully in the white-dominated political sphere. Hence, emancipation in itself did not infuse formerly enslaved populations with any of the prerequisite attributes of the proper citizen. Education became a powerful measurement of the preparation for citizenship.

This issue of education frustrated Bruce, both in his ability to escape its shadow and eventually in his campaign to indict it as another vehicle of white supremacy. In 1883, Bruce expressed some of the difficulty. Bruce was consistent in the sense that he never doubted the commonality of man's origin, nor stopped believing in the

¹²⁰ Anthony Appiah discusses the power of education in colonial settings: "When the colonialist attempted to tame the alterity of the African (whether through what the French called assimilation or through the agency of the missionary 'conversion,' which was the main source of access to English culture in British Africa), the instrument of pedagogy was their most formidable weapon." See his "Language, Race, and the Legacies of the British Empire" in Philip Morgan and Sean Hawkins, eds., *Black Experience and the Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 397.

irrationality of prejudice based on skin color - both strong statements for equality. He, also qualified his belief in equality with a reference to the "educated" man and, within this allusion, - which was explicitly linked to the flashpoint issue of political participation in the language of the late nineteenth century - he reverted back to a "before God" justification of equality: "... there exists no difference between an educated negro and an educated white man, both are equal before God and... the black man loses none of his ability by reason of his color."¹²¹ Bruce conflated his message of equality before God with a marker of secular preparedness: education. In one sense, this approach tempered his call for immediacy according to God and allowed the secular educational system to become the arbiter of preparedness.

This delimiting of education at times affected Bruce's call for political immediacy. While much of his work stressed that the immediacy of citizenship rights should be guaranteed by judicial edict, he also wrapped up these rights in the language of political preparedness. Criticizing Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, Bruce clamored that the mission of industrial education produced what the "white race" wanted: "trained servants."¹²² To Bruce, this was clearly not the path of reform. Instead, Bruce – lamenting that black peoples were effectively removed from the public sphere in the United States – exhorted proper preparation for the day when the opportunity for full citizenship arose: "It is the duty and the business of the Negro to be prepared for the emergency whenever it shall arise and to quit himself like a man."¹²³

¹²¹ John Bruce, 7 October 1883, Group D – Manuscripts: 7-99.

¹²² John Bruce, April 1903, Group E – Miscellaneous: 13-17, Bruce Collection.

¹²³ Ibid.

This gendered ability to be prepared came through the education of “Negroes for the longer and more responsible duties of citizenship.”¹²⁴ Leaving the assumptions of “manhood” made by Bruce and his transnational contacts for later discussion, Bruce’s attack on the “servile” nature of the Atlanta Compromise endorsed the education of the mind as a fundamental requirement for citizenship. This imperative also suggested a path of preparedness for citizenship that contained the potential to dull other calls for political immediacy.

John Bruce, influenced by his transnational contacts, denounced white Christianity and argued that the exhortation for industrial training and material gain alone was another guise of civilizing mission intended to continue the subjugation of colonial peoples. These perspectives helped him create a reform strategy that argued, in the main, for the immediacy of political rights. Bruce did not consistently denounce Western education as a vehicle for the possible oppression of colonial peoples; instead, he argued that education was integral to the ability of black peoples to navigate the responsibilities of citizenship. This tack is important as it indicates the difficulty that transatlantic black reformers had in deconstructing the layers of Western thought and practice that underwrote the prejudice of the imperial world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE
EMPIRE, MANLINESS, AND THE TRANSNATIONAL SEARCH FOR
RIGHTS

John E. Bruce and his transnational connections looked directly to empire in their struggle for rights. Indeed, Alexander Crummell, Edward Blyden, Frederic Loudin and others in Bruce's circle lauded the British Empire as the world's benign civilizing power. Two contemporaneous imperial wars - the Boer War and the War of 1898 - tested the questions of empire, violence, and citizenship rights. Bruce and others argued that participation of black men in the sanctioned violence of Anglo-Saxon empire could demonstrate the prerequisite levels of "manliness" that could translate to fuller rights of citizenship. The conflicts did not result in any beneficial rights of citizenship and this disappointment combined with the continuing struggle of black peoples resulted in a questioning of whether "good" imperialism was even possible within the larger project of colonialism.

African-Americans had long viewed England as a more tolerant place than the United States.¹ Emblematic of this admiration is Frederick Douglass' 1846 comment in *The Liberator* about his reception in England: "[I was] received as kindly as though my skin were white.... I breathe, and lo! the chattel becomes a man."² Alexander Crummell, one of John Bruce's lifelong contacts was also a lifetime admirer of the

¹ This admiration is discussed in Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 52-58.

² *The Liberator*, 1 January 1846, found in Philip S. Foner, ed., *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass: Volume One* (New York: International Publishers, 1950), 127.

English way. Influenced by the testimony of Frederick Douglass about the British Isles, Crummell went to study at Cambridge to seek not only relief from the racial prejudice of the United States, but to also capture the very essence of Anglo-Saxon traits that many in the United States still felt emanated from the British Isles.³

Crummell received a degree from Cambridge in 1853 and, during his studies, was somewhat of a minor celebrity, not only at Cambridge but also on his speaking tours. In these talks, he indicted slavery and racial prejudice and argued that there was a pressing need for the spiritual and intellectual uplift of black people.⁴ Crummell was appreciative of the English environment that allowed his personal growth: "I do thank God for the providence that has brought me to this land, and allowed me, for once in my life, to be a freeman. Oh the acquisition to one's heart, mind, and soul, - the consciousness in all its fullness that one is a man! I never had it before I came to England. I used to think I had, but now I know it."⁵

Perhaps the most lasting influence on Crummell was his introduction to Platonic moral philosophy at Cambridge. From this grounding, Crummell formed a lasting belief in deductively established universals and a dedication to the primacy of intellectual improvement and the development of the moral spirit over issues of the body and the material. This worldview was most responsible for Crummell's involvement in the American Negro Academy, whose "talented tenth" intellectualism

³ Moses, *Alexander Crummell*, 50-51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 55-59. For the words "minor celebrity," see page 58.

⁵ Alexander Crummell to John Jay, 9 August 1848. Found in Moses, *Alexander Crummell*, 54.

could never support the materialist programs of Booker T. Washington.⁶ This thinking also deeply influenced Crummell's belief in the universal standard of progress, which he articulated in his steadfast adherence to the "civilizing" of "backward" peoples. Finally, Crummell was no fan of democracy, but similar to the expert-based progressivism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, felt that the educated elite should provide the standard of order and authority and lead the "civilizationism" of society, especially those components that needed improvement.⁷

Crummell linked progress, Christianity, and civilization in his message of worldwide uplift and specifically exhibited an admiration for the enterprises of the British Empire.⁸ In his search for order and progress, Crummell felt that England was the Christianizer and civilizer of the world and as such was not only an example for the United States, but also was a beacon of hope for the welfare of Africa.⁹ While this sentiment arose during the heart of Crummell's mid-century experience in England, Crummell retained his Anglophile leanings until his death in 1898.

This admiration did not mean that Crummell was an unequivocal supporter of the British Empire. Indeed, and especially in the wake of the scramble for Africa,

⁶ Moses, *Alexander Crummell*, 292. Crummell, only months before his death, urged John Bruce to correct the materialist focus and stress intellectualism in their struggle for equality: "Why can't you give us a strong historical well-researched paper on this topic – 'The battle of the Race is an intellectual one' proving that it is mind which will be the staff of achievement with us, as with all other peoples... pushing aside the materialistic notions." Alexander Crummell to John Bruce, 21 January 1898, Group B – Letters Received: MS 15, Bruce Collection.

⁷ Moses, *Alexander Crummell*, 287-301. "Civilizationism" is Moses' term to describe the uplift ideology of Crummell.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 263. Unlike John Bruce and Edward Blyden, Crummell found little redeeming qualities in Islam.

⁹ *Ibid.*, *Alexander Crummell*, 59.

Crummell was a critic of imperial ventures driven by self-interest instead of intellectual and moral idealism.¹⁰ He and the American Negro Academy, however, clearly admired the order and cultural ideals of a British Empire that projected the best attributes of Western civilization around the globe.¹¹

In 1897, Crummell made his last trip to England with the expressed interest to witness the “magnificent pageant” of Queen Victoria’s silver jubilee.¹² In a series of letters to Bruce from the trip – which was some fifty years after his Cambridge experience - Crummell still lauded the grandeur of England’s order and morality:

How wonderful is this great city of London! In its immense population and vastness of area, its palatial residences and fine equipages, its grand cathedrals and noble churches, its committed charities and its boundless beneficence, its marvelous sanitation and unparalleled order. And the glory of it all is the unequalled fact that all of this earthly magnificence is allied with moral responsibility, both with regard to authority at home and governmental control abroad.¹³

Perhaps no specific quote better sums up Crummell’s idyllic vision of civilizing order, emblemized in architectural grandeur, progressive works, good governance, and good Empire.

¹⁰ In an 1898 letter to Bruce, Crummell made a direct allusion to wanton imperial administration when he denounced “the opportunists, spidery demagogues, both dead and living who, during the last 25 years have been riding on the back of Africa into 4th rate offices for self, and who have painted on the brazen foreheads ‘statesman’ while the devil has quietly plastered upon their backs – ‘shams.’” Alexander Crummell to John Bruce, 21 January 1898, Group B – Letters Received: MS 15, Bruce Collection.

¹¹ Moses states: “The members of the Academy were Europhiles, more specifically, Anglophiles. Majestic government building, enduring archives, solid church edifices, and stately boulevards represented the cultural ideals of Western civilization that they cherished.” Moses, *Alexander Crummell*, 267.

¹² Alexander Crummell to John W. Cromwell, June 15, 1897. Found in Moses, *Alexander Crummell*, 267.

¹³ Alexander Crummell to John Bruce, 1 June 1897, Group B – Letters Received: MS 11, Bruce Collection.

Alexander Crummell's friend and peer, Edward Blyden also supported Empire as civilizer and had a special appreciation for the British. As noted by V. Y. Mudimbe, Blyden "accepted the efficiency of white colonization" and felt that the British were the best practitioners of empire.¹⁴ Blyden, like Crummell, denounced self-interested colonialism and, as such, found common ground with most reformers who indicted the crass materialism of colonialism but were more hesitant to condemn uplift. Blyden, as detailed in Chapter Four, further complicated his support of Empire through his attacks on white-led Christianity. In this sense, he managed to deconstruct one powerful apparatus of colonialism - the Christian mission. Blyden's pro-imperial thought also depended on two other contentions: first, that climatic conditions disallowed white settlement in Africa and that, second, the "redemption" of Africa would come through a mix of Western political structures and the retention of unique African cultural values.¹⁵

Indeed, while Blyden and other black intellectuals criticized white Christianity for denying the inherent message of equality contained in God's vision, Blyden also connected the usurpation of Christianity directly to political systems. Blyden thought

¹⁴ V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 130. Hollis Lynch also notes that Blyden felt that the Berlin Conference and the subsequent partitioning of Africa was "ultimately for the good of Africans" and that Blyden felt that Great Britain should be the dominant power. See Hollis Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 196, 190-198.

¹⁵ As Mudimbe discusses, this emphasis on cultural retention used the foil of racial difference, which, as an African operating within the hegemonic force of white colonial racism, was a "strain theory" that could never escape the contradictions embedded in the epistemological structure of power-seeking Western racism. Mudimbe acknowledges that Blyden certainly was a powerful and seminal voice of anti-colonialism. He also argues that Blyden's refusal to embrace "interest theory," which concentrates on the relations between the ideological and the material, prevented him from "generating a new African mode of production, and thus technical modernization, political democracy, and cultural autonomy." See V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, 129-134 (quote is on page 131).

that Christianity wielded by Anglo-Saxon Protestants prevented black peoples from embracing the political virtue of the British system:

The Negro, under Protestant rule, is kept in a state of tutelage and irresponsibility and can scarcely fail to make him constantly dependent and useless whenever, thrown upon himself, he has to meet an emergency.... The idea of representing the British colonies in the House of Commons is often discussed. If it ever be realized, would the people of Jamaica and Barbados be as liberal and enlightened as those of Martinique [Blyden's example of a French colony not dominated by Protestant thought]? For the present we fear not.¹⁶

Blyden attacked the connection between the uplift of Anglo-Saxon political institutions and the uplift of the white Christianizing mission and lauded the attempts of the British government to distance itself from affiliation with Christianity in its administration of West Africa. Blyden reprinted Lord Salisbury's insistence that the British government was working hard to convince "other nations that the missionary is not an instrument of the secular government."¹⁷ Blyden not only criticized the disingenuous nature of white-led Christianity, but also directly linked the failings of religion to the struggle that black peoples experienced in the political realm. By deconstructing the link between Christianity and Western political structures, Blyden hoped to create an opening that would open a path of progress for African peoples.

This progress to Blyden was dependent on governmental order and he looked first to Great Britain to provide this order through benevolent colonial rule. Blyden's long time affiliation with the American Colonization Society was at the base of his

¹⁶ Edward Blyden, "Christianity and the Negro Race," *Fraser's Magazine* (1876). Reprinted in Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (1887; repr., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), 40.

¹⁷ Edward Blyden, "Islam in the Western Soudan," *Journal of the African Society* (1902): 26.

campaign effort to draw black peoples of the United States to Africa and in the mid 1890s he began to endorse the formal endeavors of the other growing Anglo-Saxon imperial power, the United States, on the continent.¹⁸ Blyden, however, felt that the presence of Western powers was only a temporary condition. In line with prevailing theories of the day – Blyden thought that climatic conditions prevented the white man from surviving on the African continent. Therefore, the chance for “redemption” of the uncivilized regions of Africa rested with black peoples from America and the West Indies, who had sufficient exposure to Western civilization as well as a natural predilection to connect with Africans: traits crucial to placing Africa on a path of progress. This emphasis would combine with an educational schema to give Africans the sufficient “Western learning to be made... expounders of British spirit and policy.”¹⁹ Indeed, Blyden was an early proponent of indirect rule, which, to him, allowed the template of efficient Western government, but also provided a space for African agency and individuality. The order of Empire allowed the structural conditions for African progress (he clearly was in step with the teleological emphasis of the period); and if set in place with proper appreciation for African peoples, it could produce significant retention and development of African customs.

In Blyden’s view, political order was fundamental to all subsequent enterprises: without the leadership of Western powers, the largely “backwards” peoples of Africa

¹⁸ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, 200. Lynch also notes that Blyden, at times, endorsed French and German imperialism if it seemed appropriate for his intended audience. Overall, Blyden’s long engagement with British imperialism and American colonization of Africa clearly informed his preference for their presence in Africa.

¹⁹ Edward Blyden, “Some Problems of West Africa,” (1903) in Hollis Lynch, *Black Spokesman: Selected Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden* (New York: Humanities Press, 1971), 328.

could not embark on a path of progress. While Blyden exhorted for eventual African ownership of its unique teleological mission, a period of political tutelage was the first order of business. This tutelage differed from that of the colonial religious mission because it offered a guarantee of progress untouched by the corrupted sentiment of white Christianity. This corruption stemmed directly from slavery: “The Christian world, trained for the last three hundred years to look upon the Negro as made for the service of the superior races, finds it difficult to shake off the notion of his absolute and permanent inferiority,” and its benefits were inexorably linked to lamentation: “The religion of Jesus was embraced by them [black peoples] as the only source of consolation in the deep disasters.”²⁰

Blyden believed that the political institutions and educational systems of Empire could shake off the passivity of a skewed religious message; and in language that echoed Crummell’s penchant for order, he disconnected empire and religion: “It is not the business of Imperialism to make men, but to create subjects, not to save souls, but to rule bodies.”²¹ Blyden, conflicted over the proper method of spiritual teaching, embraced the secular structures of Empire: “Well regulated police supervision, technical and industrial schools, hospitals and dispensaries, are the proper and most effective instruments for civilizing and building up the backward races.”²² Blyden, like Crummell and other black intellectuals, lauded the order of the British empire and,

²⁰ Edward Blyden, “Christian Missions in West Africa” *Fraser’s Magazine* (1876), reprinted in Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (1887; repr., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), 46. Edward Blyden, “Mohammedanism and the Negro Race” *Fraser’s Magazine* (1875), reprinted in *ibid.*, 12.

²¹ Blyden, “Islam in the Western Soudan,” *Journal of the African Society* (1902): 28.

²² *Ibid.*

considered with his belief in indirect rule and education, saw it as not only instrumental in eradicating the “uncivilized” ways of Africa, but also as a space where native Africans could move toward political self-determination. While this method did not have the immediacy embraced by John Bruce in his call for black people’s rights in the United States, it did at some level move the question of rights from the religious to the secular realm.

Blyden did not forego religion; indeed, the egalitarian implications of what he saw as the true message of God motivated much of his thought and at times he conflated secular and spiritual arguments and goals. This tendency does not diminish Blyden’s ability to disconnect secular arguments from religious belief. Instead, it is another testament to the fact that the oppressive conditions experienced by black peoples under the colonialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries forced them to hold onto religious hope, even amidst a fast-secularizing world. Other connections of John Bruce never separated the spiritual and the secular, but argued instead that black people could rescue the true meaning of Christianity, which to them was the key to both secular and spiritual deliverance.

Another voice involved in the transnational exchange regarding reform agendas of black peoples, John P. Jackson, editor of the *Lagos Weekly Record*, not only condemned white Christianity as a “farce,” but also informed Bruce that Africans in Lagos had developed their own brand of Christianity, which, ironically would teach the white person about the true meaning of Christianity. In an 1897 letter, Jackson wrote: “We [West Africans] have a practical Christianity of our own which is more genuine

and nearer the principles which Christ intended so we can afford to laugh when the missionary in self-conceit alludes to the ‘dark places’ and ‘savage regions’ of Africa. Africa will have to teach the white man Christianity and show him the way to God.”²³

Jackson, committed to his belief in African ownership of Christianity, agreed with Booker T. Washington’s call for American black people to eschew politics and commented that, “the only teaching which Africa needs of the white man is industrial.”²⁴ Jackson supported the emigration of black peoples from the United States to Africa and this agenda saw the industrial path as the clearest model of success. As such, his argument to Bruce gave primacy to the African connection to God as counter-evidence to the stereotypes of African “backwardness” and did not posit a path of political agency, but instead supported the promise of God and the material vision of uplift that often reinforced colonial practices that constrained the role of black people in civil society.

Mojola Agbebi, as discussed in Chapter Four, created one of the most powerful “Africanization” movements of Christianity in colonial West Africa. One especially expressive part of Christian practice that Agbebi successfully morphed into a statement of African ownership was the hymnal litany of the West African Church. Agbebi held special reproach for the formulaic hymns handed to African populations by white missionaries, arguing that they were one example of the many “props and crutches” of

²³ John P. Jackson to John Bruce, 1897, Group A – Letters Received: J1, Bruce Collection.

²⁴ Ibid.

the white man that diminished the “religious manhood of the Christian African.”²⁵ To help escape what he saw as the distortion of Christianity, Agbebi argued: “In carrying out the function of singing, therefore, let us always remember that we are Africans and that we ought to sing African songs, and that in African style and fashion.”²⁶ Through African appreciation and performance of Christian songs, Agbebi called for a distinctive African religious voice: “We are come to the times when religious developments demand original songs and original tunes from the African Christian.”²⁷ While Agbebi saw the introduction of Christianity by white westerners as an important step in the progress of African peoples, he argued that the introductory phase was over and that it was time for Africans to infuse Christianity with their own spirit.

Agbebi’s thought, although it celebrated an African essence, did not disengage from Western standards of secular progress and he conflated material gain with Christianity. Discussing “the great essentials of religions,” such as the preaching of the Gospel to the poor, Agbebi remarked: “I would add . . . that at the present the cultivation of cotton, the raising of rubber trees, of coffee, of kola nuts, etc., the calling forth the riches of the soil, sanitation, and the promotion of handicrafts form part of the essentials of religion.”²⁸ Agbebi felt that the African command of his religious destiny and the creation of an African voice did not require the foregoing of Western material values. By bringing these aspects under the mandate of African religion African access to the

²⁵ Mojola Agbebi, “Inaugural Sermon,” (1902), Group E: Not Catalogued, Bruce Collection, 9.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 7.

²⁸ Ibid., 9.

advantages of modernity could be attained on his or her own terms. Obviously, the ability of African peoples to shape the terms of Western modernity through resource production was highly suspect in an imperial world, no matter how wrapped in religious purpose. Agbebi argued for African control of its own resources, regardless of any ultimate inclusion of those resources in markets dictated by western interests, is in some form a statement of ownership and agency. Both Jackson and Agbebi, in their correspondence with Bruce, denounced white-led Christianity and produced a uniquely African religious voice. The emphasis on African knowledge of God's plan subsumed all other questions. On one level, this position called for African ownership of material production. In other aspects, it did not emphasize the political arena as the mechanism to influence the political economy. In other words, whether overtly or unwittingly, Jackson and Agbebi - like Crummell and Blyden - attacked some aspects of white-led colonial racism, but also supported other aspects of imperialism.

Another one of Bruce's contacts who sought agency through music was African-American Frederick Loudin, who was the star bassist of the world-touring Fisk Jubilee Singers from 1874 to 1878 and who continued the Jubilee Singer tradition with a variety of troupes until the late 1890's.²⁹ In his travels as member or director of the groups, he toured the United States, England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, South Africa, Australia, India, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Japan. Loudin, like Douglass and Crummell, lauded the environment of England, where he

²⁹ For background on Loudin and the Jubilee Singers more generally, see Andrew Ward, *Dark Midnight When I Rise: The Story of the Jubilee Singers Who Introduced the World to the Music of Black America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2000).

died in 1903. On his first trip to England, Loudin exclaimed: ““It seemed to me as if I had always been walking around blind before. We were astonished to find such freedom, ... such an entire absence of racial prejudice.... I gradually realized that I could do what anybody else could do, if I had the capacity enough; and I could go where I pleased and do what I pleased, without any prohibitions on the ground of my color.”³⁰

Loudin's musical choice, the spiritual, dominated the Jubilee tradition. The spiritual appealed to emotion and sentiment while emphasizing suffering and the promise of salvation. In the depiction of biblical sagas, spirituals reflected an African hero tradition and followed African rhythms, patterns, and style.³¹ As such, spirituals were a statement of Afro-American culture and a vehicle of agency for black peoples long constrained by bondage and discrimination. Further – through the comparison of slavery to the position of black people in post-emancipated society – the spiritual was a call for audiences to contemplate the continuing prejudice facing black people and to recognize the "hope" embedded in freedom.³² While not a direct call for immediate political rights, spirituals were an expression of cultural-rooted creativity that, in the case of the Jubilee singers and their offshoots in the late nineteenth century, began to

³⁰ Found in Ward, *Dark Midnight When I Rise*, 293.

³¹ For spirituals, see: *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 14-17: 35-49.

³² An 1880 description of the Jubilee spirituals by sometime director Theodore F. Seward speaks to this effect: "The excellent rendering of the Jubilee Band is made more effective and the interest is intensified by the comparison of their former state of slavery and degradation with the present prospects and hopes of their race, which crowd upon every listener's mind during the singing of their songs." See, J. B. T. Marsh, *The Story of the Jubilee Singers* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1880), 121.

challenge the racist mockery of the other popular form of entertainment linked to black peoples: blackface minstrel shows.

In one important sense minstrelsy, like lynching and its narrative, assuaged white society's anxiety about the threat of black people and sought to reaffirm racial boundaries. Through incessant mockery and ridicule, white producers and consumers of blackface "demonized and de-humanized" black peoples, attempting to render them outside the pale of white "civilization."³³ Moreover, blackface minstrel shows were popular, not only in the late nineteenth century United States, but in other areas where racial tensions were high, namely South Africa. Indeed, in South Africa, many white people began to call their African laborers and servants "Jim" in direct reference to the Jim Crow stereotypes perpetuated by the minstrel shows.³⁴ The Jubilee tradition of spirituals performed in both the metropolitan centers and colonial spaces of the world – including the United States and South Africa - rescued some of the humanity of black peoples and restored some of the agency that was denied by pervading expressions of black inferiority, such as the black-facing of minstrelsy.³⁵

³³ This paragraph informed by Kevin Gaines, "Assimilationist Minstrelsy as Racial Uplift Ideology: James D. Corrothers's Literary Quest for Black Leadership" *American Quarterly*, 45:3, 341-369. Quote found on page 345. For more on minstrelsy, see Robert Toll, *Blackening Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

³⁴ Veit Erlmann, "A Feeling of Prejudice: Orpheus M. McAdoo and the Virginia Jubilee Singers in South Africa, 1890-1898," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14:3 (April 1988): 335.

³⁵ This position does not deny that minstrelsy did have other possible meanings. As John Storey reminds, "Popular, comedic texts are ideologically conflicted or layered, with manifest meanings and latent meanings that shift according to the cultural formation or readers or the circumstances at the site of the reception." John Storey, *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 118-119.

Beyond their performances, the Jubilee Singers and Frederic Loudin were vocal critics of racial inequality. Historian Andrew Ward argues that Jubilee tradition was hardly accommodationist, but grounded in "militancy and fierce autonomy."³⁶ Further, this dissidence only increased as their worldwide fame grew: "Fame did not make them cautious. In fact, it emboldened them. With increasing vehemence and eloquence, they denounced racism wherever they encountered it."³⁷ Loudin was perhaps the most prominent representative of this tradition and "champion[ed] his people with a boldness and a sonorous eloquence worthy at times of Frederick Douglass."³⁸

African-American members of the Virginia Jubilee Singers toured South Africa for almost five years in the 1890s and consistently challenged racialized norms in their daily behavior. One such example was Jubilee member Richard H. Collins. Accused by a white police officer of being a native African and thus subject to a law that prohibited natives from frequenting a bar, Collins refused to leave the establishment. When the officer addressed Collins in Zulu, he responded, "Who are you talking to? Talk English. I have as much right in the bar as you have."³⁹ The American consul in Durban intervened, all charges were dropped, and the *Times of Natal* was most concerned about the "blunder" and its effect on diplomatic relations with the United States.⁴⁰ The Jubilee tradition – inspired in no small part by Frederic Loudin, - in its

³⁶ Ward, *Dark Midnight When I Rise*, xiv.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 385.

³⁹ This incident described in Erlmann, "A Feeling of Prejudice," quote from 331.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

performance of spirituals and in the daily actions of its singers, protested the racism prevalent in the imperial world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In a long letter to Bruce written in 1900,⁴¹ Loudin directly commented on the racial climate and order of England, and the imperial sweep of Great Britain at an especially crucial time for the fortunes of British imperialism: the Boer War.⁴² In the correspondence, Loudin denounced the performances that defamed black people, called attention to the composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and lauded Taylor's success as evidence of England's tolerant racial attitude, especially in relation to the prejudice of "free" America:

I need not tell you what Britain has been to us [the Jubilee Singers] and is the bare fact of the experience of Coleridge-Taylor the fact that there is a sentiment prevalent here to render such a thing possible says more than all I could write in months. Think of it, one of the most exclusive and aristocratic musical organizations in the world if not the most exclusive asking a Negro to write a work for it and then to conduct their performance of it in the finest and largest hall in Britain with an orchestra of over 150 pieces... and a singing of Negro music (not a Coon song) and that Negro conducting it. Think of that and then tell me if the President, members of Congress of the Supreme Court and all the legislatures would not resign [sic] if such a thing would occur in Free America.⁴³

Beyond their friendship, Loudin and Coleridge-Taylor were at the forefront of a growing connectivity between black people in late nineteenth century Great Britain.⁴⁴ Both men were part of the circle that started the African Association in 1897 and both men were participants in the 1900 Pan-African Conference held in London.

⁴¹ Loudin's letter implies that his acquaintance with Bruce was longstanding. F. J. Loudin to John Bruce, 9 April 1900, Group B – Letters Received: MS 76, Bruce Collection.

⁴² See Chapter Two of this work for an exposition of how the Boer War motivated reformers to pay attentions to imperial questions.

⁴³ F. J. Loudin to John Bruce, 9 April 1900, Group B – Letters Received: MS 76, Bruce Collection.

⁴⁴ Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 272-287.

Accompanying his direct participation in political movements, Coleridge-Taylor, like Loudin, used music to emphasize his African roots and to make statements of agency.⁴⁵ Born in London in 1875 to a native Sierra Leonean and an English woman, Coleridge-Taylor attended The London Royal College of Music and, in the 1890s, settled into a middle-class lifestyle with his mother and his stepfamily (Coleridge-Taylor may have never seen his natural father and his mother had married by the early 1890s).⁴⁶

Coleridge-Taylor stormed onto the British classical music scene of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with an oeuvre of concert music infused with distinctive melodies and rhythms influenced by the culture of black peoples – many with overt reference to Africa, such as *African Romances* (1897), *African Suite* (1898) and *Ethiopia Saluting the Colours* (1902).⁴⁷ Moreover, the Jubilee tradition's stand-by spiritual, *Nobody Knows the Trouble I See*, provided the basis for the overture to Coleridge-Taylor's immensely popular *The Song of Hiawatha*.⁴⁸ Loudin's and Coleridge-Taylor's efforts to create a voice for peoples of color through music, association, or political organization, combined with Loudin's experiences in the United States and around the globe demonstrate that Frederic Loudin had an invaluable perspective on issues facing black people in a colonial world.

⁴⁵ On his highly publicized trip to the United States in 1904, Coleridge-Taylor also denounced a staple of minstrelsy - "coon-songs" - as being the "worst sort of rot" with "no real Negro character or sentiment." Found in Doris Evans McGinty, "That You Have Come so Far to See Us: Coleridge-Taylor in America," *Black Music Research Journal* 21:2 (Autumn 1990), 239.

⁴⁶ Jeffrey Green, "The Foremost Musician of His Race: Samuel Coleridge-Taylor of England, 1875-1912," *Black Music Research Journal* 10:2 (Autumn 2001): 233-235.

⁴⁷ Fryer, *Staying Power*, 256.

⁴⁸ Green, "The Foremost Musician of His Race," 239.

In the 1900 letter to Bruce, Loudin commented that the work of Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells contributed to the protest in England over the treatment of black peoples in the United States: “This country had passed resolutions at large and influential meetings condemning lynching [and] the press has spoken out against it.”⁴⁹ Loudin, however, argued that “white America” was assiduously working to diminish the concern of the British for black people in the United States: “in recent years... great efforts have been made to counteract that sentiment [anti-lynching], letters from Southerners and people from the north as well have frequently been published in various papers against us and to lead these people to believe they had not known the real facts in the case.”⁵⁰

Beyond his assertion concerning the intentional obfuscation of facts surrounding lynching, Loudin claimed that support in the United States for the Boer cause in the Boer War was contributing to the growing apathy of the British people for the position of the African-American. As discussed, the Boer War was an extremely divisive issue in Great Britain and was, as well, controversial in the United States, where many did indeed hold Pro-Boer sentiment.⁵¹ Loudin commented that people in England

⁴⁹ F. J. Loudin to John Bruce, 9 April 1900, Group B – Letters Received: MS 76, Bruce Collection.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The United States maintained a position of neutrality during the Boer War; however, it aided the British war effort in many ways. Much of this support arose from the belief in the racial solidarity of the Anglo-Saxon and its position as worldwide leaders of “civilization.” Secretary of State John Hay summed this feeling: “The fight of England is the fight of civilization and progress and all of our interests are bound up in her success.” John Hay to Henry White, 18 March 1900 found in Thomas J. Noer, *Briton, Boer, and Yankee: The United States and South Africa, 1870-1914* (Kent, OH: Kent University Press, 1978), 71. Pro-Boer sentiment also was readily available, especially as the conflict wore on. The majority of this thought cohered around the contention that the Boer republics were sovereign nations endowed

continually asked him about the conflict.⁵² In response to what he felt was the perception that the United States did not support the British in the conflict, Loudin argued that racial intolerance produced the sympathy in the United States for the Boers. This support, moreover, was in line with America's continued refusal to acknowledge the rights of black people. As America "had turned her back" on black people after the Civil War, she refused to protect the interests of black people in the Boer War, which Loudin viewed primarily as a racial conflict.⁵³ Loudin, however, argued that the charged context of the deeply racialized and provocative commentary surrounding the war presented an important chance for black peoples: "It is well for us I think that the white people of America are talking with the oppressors of our race for it gives us opportunity for our words to carry a weight with them they never would had the White Americans not acted so ungrateful."⁵⁴

This opportunity stemmed from what Loudin saw as the positive influence of the British on worldwide race relations. Loudin argued that the British presence in South Africa prevented the Boers from enslaving native populations and, indeed, the British dedication to this position most contributed to the onset of the conflict. While Loudin admitted that the "British rule in Southern Africa is not all that we want it to be," he thought it "a thousand times better than the Boer administration."⁵⁵ Coupling the

with the right to republican rule. This argumentation resonated with many in the American South, who were staunch supporters of local rule. While not referenced exhaustively, ideas about race informed both set of arguments.

⁵² F. J. Loudin to John Bruce, 9 April 1900, Group B – Letters Received: MS 76, Bruce Collection.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

spiritual and the secular, Loudin evidenced his belief in the mission of imperial uplift when he noted, “Britain has her missionaries there and [is] doing something to uplift the race while the Boers with all this religious hypocrisy [sic] don’t believe we even have a soul to be saved and only look to repress and further degrade us.”⁵⁶ Loudin, like Crummell and Blyden, accepted good imperialism and, indeed, welcomed it as part of the uplifting of black peoples across the world. Loudin, moreover, used the language of political rights when he endorsed, on the whole, British imperialism: “I have been under the British flag in nearly all the quarters of the globe and have never with the single exception of Canada – which draws its inspiration now from America than England – been denied any rights a white man enjoys.”⁵⁷

Loudin believed that the Boer War provided an opportunity for black people to show support for Great Britain. This was important not only because of the widely held view that Great Britain was protecting black populations from degradation by the Boers, but also because Great Britain was the leading imperial power and, in Loudin’s view, was committed to meaningful uplift and some level of racial tolerance. If black people could throw their support behind Great Britain, it would translate into a heightened awareness of colonial conditions: “I think we ought to speak out, there has been no time in our history when speaking out on this question will count for half so much as the present moment. No time when our words would have such weight for the good of our race in all parts of the world so far as Britain is concerned as just now. No time when

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

we could make so many friends as now.”⁵⁸ Loudin thought that the show of support for Great Britain amidst the violence of the Boer War was analogous to the endorsement of good Empire, which held the possibility of rights for black people and, by speaking out, black America could count on the continuance of British condemnation of racial oppression in the colonial spaces of the United States.

The Boer War was not a white man’s war. While both the British and Boers seriously questioned the wisdom of arming native populations and expressed, in public, a policy that steadfastly refused to use black peoples as military combatants, they were involved in the conflict in many roles, including in battle. Both the British and the Boers employed native Africans as scouts, workers, sentries and a wide variety of other ancillary functions of war. Moreover, African peoples were armed combatants in the employ of both the British and the Boers; however, it is clear that the British were much more predisposed to the enlistment of black peoples in the armed portion of the conflict. In a 1902 report, the British commander Kitchener reluctantly admitted to providing firearms to over 10,000 natives.⁵⁹ This figure is probably low as many pro-Boer elements in the British Parliament steadfastly denounced the arming of natives, especially in light of the widespread anxiety about giving black populations weaponry.⁶⁰ The Boer policy in the conflict endorsed the immediate execution of any armed black

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Peter Warwick, *Black People in the South African War 1899-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 25.

⁶⁰ Obviously, the pervasive idea of the black male as uncivilized and, thus, more prone to acts of “savage” violence informed these anxieties.

person in the service of the British cause, and black armed participation in the Boer cause was sporadic.⁶¹

Black people felt the impact of the war in ways other than direct participation. The reporting on the war's concentration camps by London-based reformers such as Emily Hobhouse, elicited widespread condemnation of British tactics.⁶² Hobhouse and others concentrated almost exclusively on the camps that held Boer people and ignored reporting on the some 115,000 native Africans who were either forcibly interned or sought refuge in the squalid conditions of African concentration camps.⁶³ Despite the official picture presented by Native Refugee Department that described the occupants as "generally contented," the conditions were terrible, with little shelter, a paucity of food, and limited medical care.⁶⁴ As a result, officials reported over 14,000 deaths and historians estimate the number higher.⁶⁵ In the "resettlement" process that followed the war, the government focused on reintegrating displaced Boer peoples into the fabric of South African society, but gave little or no attentions to thousands of black people

⁶¹ Warwick, *Black People*, 26-29.

⁶² The British strategy of attacking the crops and homes of the Boers, which reached a critical point with Kitchener's "scorched earth" policy displaced thousands of Boer civilians. With no means of survival, the British massed these civilians in numerous concentration camps. The widespread death of Boers – over 20,000 women and children dies – deeply affected the Boer military force and, arguably, encouraged the negotiation for peace. See Howard Bailes, "The Military Aspects of the War," in Peter Warwick, ed., *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (London: Longmont Group Limited, 1980), 97-98.

⁶³ Peter Warwick, "Black People and the War," in Peter Warwick, ed. *The South African War*, 204-205.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 204.

released from the camps or displaced by the blight of the war.⁶⁶ Hardly limited to white populations, the Boer War was a profound event for black peoples throughout the region.

Many black people in South Africa felt that this involvement in the war merited compensation. The widely varying position of black people in South African society determined not only the level of involvement in the war, but also the type of reparation sought. The late nineteenth century colonial setting in South Africa was a society in change and black people were intimately involved in these changes. As subjugated colonial peoples, black populations throughout the Boer Republics, British Colonies and British Protectorates of southern Africa felt firsthand the changes wrought by the modernization that swept over the region.⁶⁷ Specifically, the growing urban economy and the mineral discoveries of the 1880s – most especially the discoveries on the Witwatersrand in 1886 – had, by the 1890s, dramatically altered the already transforming position of black peoples in South African society.⁶⁸ Most directly affected were traditional societies, where the cattle complex was an important aspect of social formation. As one of the central motifs of native rural society, cattle were a

⁶⁶ The government spent over 1.1 million pounds on the rehabilitation of white agriculture after the war and only allotted 16,194 pounds for the entire resettlement project of African peoples. Warwick, “Black People and the War,” 206.

⁶⁷ The conflict most directly affected black peoples in these three geographically designated entities.

⁶⁸ “South Africa,” did not exist until union in 1910, however, for simplicity sake, this section will use, at times, the term to describe the three entities referenced in footnote sixty-six.

fundamental part of daily life and an important source of social control for chiefs and elders.⁶⁹

Accompanying these pressures was a series of wars between native peoples and colonial powers throughout the last quarter of the late nineteenth century. By 1898, either Boer or British forces had successfully defeated indigenous forces signaling the end of the political independence for traditional African societies. Despite the loss of political independence, other pressures of colonial white society – urbanization, and the mineral boom mentioned, missionaries, the white pressure for land and farm labor, taxation systems (most notably the hut-tax), and colonial administrators – were not monolithic in their application. As a result, many black peoples of the republics, the colonies, and the protectorates – while having varying levels of political involvement with the institutions of colonial rule - still followed a somewhat autonomous rural lifestyle on the eve of the Boer war.

Several of the principal chiefs of these peoples saw the procurement of cattle as one important motivating reason to help the British War effort. These pressures of colonialism and modernization combined with the devastating rinderpest cattle epidemic of 1896 and 1897 virtually wiped out the majority of cattle in southern Africa. Sekhuklane II successfully drove Boers from Pedi settlements and generally helped the British in their campaigns in the eastern Transvaal. Lentshwe of the Kgatla people and Sengale of the Koena people aggressively raided Boer farms, secured areas of Western

⁶⁹ See Patrick Harris, “Kinship, Ideology, and the Nature of Pre-colonial Labor Migration,” in Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Industrialization and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture, and Consciousness, 1870-1930* (New York: Longman, 1982), 142-160.

Transvaal for the British, and protected the region abutting the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Indeed, their campaign was efficient enough that the British were “relieved of all anxiety as to this district,” and their efforts resulted in significant increases in livestock.⁷⁰ In the protectorate, long-time British associate Khama of the Tswana people mobilized many sorties to quell Boer guerillas; after one such effort, over 150 Boers surrendered to Khama, contributing another 2600 head of cattle to his already significant supply of confiscated cattle from Boer farms.⁷¹

While these chiefs favored the British rather than the Boers, their involvement stemmed from the practical urgencies of the war and the objectives of the chiefs centered on practical gain. Further, although white society was anxious about the “savagery” of the black male, the exigencies of war allowed the timely minimizing of this concern. Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner in South Africa, apparently overlooked such fears and consistently supported the armament of the Kgatla peoples.⁷² These chief’s spheres of influence, although part of the colonial framework, were still relatively fluid spaces where power was highly contingent. As such, these chiefs saw the war effort as an opportunity to replenish assets that could help strengthen traditional claims to authority. They saw the violence associated with the war effort as a relatively straightforward mechanism to secure benefits in the pursuit of power.

⁷⁰ Warwick, *Black People*, 46.

⁷¹ King Khama, in a written exchange with Boer General Grobler scoffed at Grobler’s threats by making an allusion to his connection to Queen Victoria: “You must not think that you can frighten me, and my people, with your war talk. You know that I am a Son of the White Queen.” Found in Warwick, *Black People and the South African War*, 43. For more on Khama and his relationship with Great Britain, see Neil Parsons, *King Khama, Emperor Joe, and the Great White Queen: Victorian Britain through African Eyes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

⁷² Warwick, *Black People*, 46.

The war did bring significant practical gains to some of the chiefs. Lentshwe of the Kgtala recouped enough cattle to make up for the substantial losses of the rinderpest epidemic.⁷³ Khama, always in good graces with the British administration, also significantly increased his cattle holdings. Moreover, Khama and several other chiefs received British support in their own internal battles for political leadership. These benefits had clear bounds especially when it came to issues of land and political autonomy from colonial rule. Sekhuklane II of the Pedi people argued that his people were allies, not subjects, of the British government, and that as such the British should reduce the levels of colonial intervention in his region. These clearly political demands called for additional land rights, autonomy over local affairs, and British commitment to control the level of influence wielded by missionaries and traders in Pedi-controlled areas.⁷⁴ The British administration steadfastly refused these demands and consistently undermined Sekhuklane's influence by supporting rival factions in the Pedi community. The British did not meet the Pedi's demands largely because the new urgencies of the post-war Transvaal, especially the need for labor in the mines and the resettlement of Boer populations, required the tightening of colonial screws on native peoples.

Indeed, the closer native peoples were to concentrations of colonial power, the less the benefit for their participation in the war effort. The Zulu peoples, located within British Natal, had a long and violent history with white colonists. This history was partially responsible for white people's suspicions that the Zulu peoples were not so much supporting one side of the British and Boer struggle, but were willing to do

⁷³ Ibid., 48.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 100-103.

whatever necessary to subvert authority.⁷⁵ The British worked with the Zulu chief Dinuzulu, whom they had earlier sentenced to exile for his role in early Zulu conflicts, and he consistently carved out gains and wielded influences throughout the war with or without British approval. Colonial society saw Dinuzulu's actions as dangerous, which only fed the anxieties about arming indigenous populations. This unease combined with the need for Zulu labor in the mining centers and general poor economic conditions in the region immediately after the war, severely damaged the chances for meaningful post-war compensation for Zulu peoples.

White colonial society's relationship with the Zulu peoples and Dinuzulu in the years after the war was volatile, with wide-scale tax burdens placed on Zulu populations, organized Zulu rebellion, and the imprisonment of Dinuzulu for almost four years. Zulu participation in the Boer War was a continuation of the violent relationship that characterized Zulu relations with colonial projects. However, in the end, the participation only strengthened the notion of the Zulu as a potential "savage" and further steeled the commitment of both Boer and British to curtail Zulu rights.

As mentioned, the mineral boom in southern Africa put new pressures on traditional black societies as demands for labor compromised older systems of kinship patterns and the cattle complex. By the onset of the war, black peoples employed as mining labor bought into the general sentiment that a British victory in the war would trigger the realization of a benevolent British system working to reduce racial discrimination. Specifically, they hoped for a removal of the pass-law system, better

⁷⁵ Ibid., 94.

wage, and improved working conditions. The British victory, however, proved wholly dissatisfying as the Milner government strengthened the enforcement of the pass laws, reduced the ability of the worker to search for the best wage, and despite proclamations to the contrary initiated no real programs to improve safety in the mines or the health of the workers.⁷⁶ Despite hope, conditions for black peoples in the mining sector worsened after the British victory.

The sense that the British vision held promise for black peoples in South Africa was most apparent in the Cape Colony. Cape Colony franchise laws - in contrast to the other British colony, Natal, or the Boer Republics - extended the vote (with qualification) to African males.⁷⁷ While, in 1887, the African vote was a significant force in some of parts of the Cape, the continuing additions to qualifications – specifically, the 1892 Franchise and Ballot Act and the Glen Grey Act of 1894 – reduced the viability of the Cape franchise as an exercise of black political agency.⁷⁸ Cape policy, however, did offer the possibility for franchise. Many peoples of color saw the war as an opportunity for Great Britain to meet her promise of full political rights for all people, both in the improvement of conditions in the Cape and Natal colonies and the extension of rights in the Boer republics: the Orange Free State and Transvaal.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 169-170.

⁷⁷ By 1886, in the five Cape eastern constituencies, the African vote made up 47 percent of the voters. Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism: The African National Congress 1912-1952* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), 3.

⁷⁸ Les Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society: The Ciskei Xhosa and the Making of South Africa* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 101-103: 152-153.

Springing from the missionary tradition and from the affiliation with a broad array of British societies concerned about the welfare of black people - including the Aborigines Protection Society - the Cape climate in the late nineteenth century influenced African peoples with a specific economic platform and a language of political rights. A religious tradition, a commitment to modernizing capital exchange, and a belief in an evolutionary path to opportunity – including self-government - grounded this language.⁷⁹ This “Cape liberal tradition” produced several voices of reform, including the African John Tengo Jabavu. With the help of white liberals, Jabavu was the founder and editor of the paper *Imvo*, was perhaps the most active African political voice in the Cape during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was a participant in the London Pan-African Congress of 1900, and corresponded regularly with John Bruce.⁸⁰

Jabavu felt that the British promise of political rights for black peoples was the key to the reduction of racial antagonism in South Africa and the hope for the extension of black political rights. Political machinations in the Cape during the 1890s complicated Jabavu’s hopes and, ultimately, damaged the cohesion of those committed to the extension of rights to black peoples. Cecil Rhodes forcibly entered the political fray intent on extending British political influence into the Boer Republics and beyond. Further, the Afrikaner Bond, dedicated to the unification and fulfillment of Afrikaner

⁷⁹ Les Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society*, 136-137.

⁸⁰ Jabavu responded to a letter from Bruce, confirming that he would send *Imvo* directly to Bruce fortnightly. The memorandum is on *Imvo* letterhead, with a caption that demonstrates the Cape tradition of encouraging market exchange: “The Best Advertising Medium for reaching Native Consumers in All Districts.” John Tengo Jabavu to John Bruce, 13 September 1897, Group B – Letters Received: MS 134, Bruce Collection.

political goals, became a major force in Cape political life in the 1890s. Both of these groups simultaneously catered to the black vote and sought to reduce the rights of black peoples.

Throughout the 1890s, Jabavu looked to both the party of Rhodes and the Afrikaner Bond in an ad-hoc fashion for convergence on particular issues. This was an especially difficult course to navigate and the choices for black reformers under the persistence of racism often involved affiliations and arguments that appear illogical. Jabavu, like many others, was largely beholden to his white allies and at the onset of the Boer War, the rhetoric of the Afrikaner Bond wooed Jabavu and he took a position that called for British reconciliation with the Boers, not war.⁸¹

This position cost Jabavu much support and, further, resulted in the Cape government shutting down *Imvo* for over a year during the height of the war.⁸² Jabavu, however, never endorsed what he felt were Boer oppressive racial policies and he always viewed the British vision articulated in the Cape tradition as the main hope for racial equality. In fact, Jabavu was involved in many organizations throughout the late nineteenth century that specifically targeted the racial policies of the Afrikaner Bond.⁸³ Jabavu, often frustrated by the convoluted political scene of the Cape, also kept direct links to the metropolitan seat in London and would often appeal to direct intervention in the wake of what he and others deemed as failed Cape policy. Jabavu, like many

⁸¹ In fact, several white liberal “friends of the native” joined the Bond to oppose what they felt were even the more damaging views of Rhodes and his party. Switzer, *Power and Resistance*, 155.

⁸² Switzer, *Power and Resistance*, 157.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 143-144.

others, felt that the Boer worldview would never stomach political equality for black peoples and he argued for the British crown to take charge of the political fortunes of black peoples in South Africa. In 1897, he wrote, “Direct imperial control is the talisman engraved on the heart of every native in the land.”⁸⁴

Jabavu might have argued for negotiation with the Boers during war, but that does not mean that he supported Boer policies that denied rights to black peoples. Clause Eight of the peace treaty ending the war expressly delayed the question of the black franchise in the annexed colonies until after the achievement of responsible government. This crushing blow combined with the ongoing chipping away of black peoples rights in the Cape caused Jabavu to vehemently decry what he saw as British capitulation to, in a time of reform, anachronistic Boer racial prejudice: “The rights of our people have not been safeguarded by Her Majesty’s representative; they have been sacrificed to the tender mercies of a cruel and unreasoning majority of Dutch Boers, the eternal enemies of native political rights.... Can this be looked upon with indifference by Her Majesty’s Government in this decade of reform, in this the end of the 19th century?”⁸⁵ The rising transnational call for black people’s political rights often endorsed the supposed egalitarian nature of the British Empire. The reliance on “good” imperialism, however, appeared less and less tenable as the century closed with the disappointment of the Boer War.

⁸⁴ *Imvo*, 13 May 1897. Found in Brian Willan, “An African in Kimberly: Sol T. Plaatje, 1894-1898” in Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Industrialization and social change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture, and Consciousness, 1870-1930* (New York: Longman, 1982), 242.

⁸⁵ Aborigine Protection Society Papers, Jabavu to Cheeson, 25 July 1887. Found in Peter Walshie, *The Rise of African Nationalism*, 6.

John Tengo Jabavu had direct links to others reformers outside of southern Africa who also saw the Boer War as an opportunity for black people. Henry Sylvester Williams, a Trinidadian-born reformer operating out of London, founded the African Association in 1897 and in 1900 he organized the first Pan-African Conference. Williams and Jabavu met in London in 1899 during the initial planning stages for the conference and Williams surely had direct correspondence with Jabavu and others in the Cape.⁸⁶ Williams concurred with Lord Salisbury's 1899 statement that blamed the war on the Boer treatment of Africans and implied that a British victory would ensure correction of the inequity.⁸⁷ Williams also connected participation in war on the behalf of the British Empire to ideas of respectability, arguing in a 1901 lecture, that the "valor of our black soldiers" was responsible for the winning of all of Britain's West African colonies and territories.⁸⁸ Moreover, Williams extended the argument to the Boer War, arguing that it was clear that black people were fighting for the British cause and that the effort should secure improvements to the plight of black people. By the end of the war, Williams expressed his disappointment in the dismal record of the British with regard to black people's rights in the region.⁸⁹

Williams' connection of rights to exhibitions of "valor" in war gives clues to another central convention used in late nineteenth and early twentieth century struggle for rights: "manliness." The use of the term is, indeed, seemingly ubiquitous in the

⁸⁶ Owen Charles Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams and the Origins of the Pan-African Movement, 1869-1911* (London: Greenwood Press, 1976), 50.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 108-109.

language of all reformers. Frederick Loudin, in his last urgent stanza regarding the need for black people in the United States to support the British cause in the Boer War sealed his plea with this reference: “But our time has come, now have we the *manliness* to prove it?”⁹⁰

In Anglo-American discussions, manliness took on a sense of experiential vitality that countered the perceived weakness of the cloistered, Victorian gentleman. Whereas, heretofore, masculinity centered on self-control and restraint, the new manliness emphasized vitality and action. The references to violence as the experiential burst that could shake the stultification of the overly internalized Victorian male were readily available in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, while the need to demonstrate proper self-constraint to the “wild savages” of the world had long underscored the imperial mission, the experiential turn began to infuse imperialism with a martial spirit that the more strident tenets of Social Darwinism only reinforced. Manliness and its manifestations, including violence, dovetailed with the imperial ethos of the late nineteenth century.⁹¹

⁹⁰ F. J. Loudin to John Bruce 9 April 1900, Group B – Letters Received: MS 76, Bruce Collection. My emphasis.

⁹¹ Kristin Hoganson argues that the British assertion connecting imperialism to manliness appealed directly to those in the United States supporting the expansion in the late nineteenth century. See her, *Fighting for Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 140. For more discussions concerning the links between empire, violence, and manhood in the United States, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). For connections of gender to British imperialism, see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995) and Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture: 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

The manly idea of self-restraint did not disappear and there was always a tension between “civilized” or controlled forms of violence and “uncivilized” or unrestrained acts of savagery. Lynching provides an example of this tension. Most all of society denounced the rape of a white woman by a black man as wanton savagery. Those who performed the act of lynching and those who constructed the lynching narrative used the reference to, and acceptance of, a black man’s inexcusable violence to exonerate lynching’s retributive violence. The extra-legal violence of lynching, however, also threatened accepted forms of “civilized” violence; hence, lynching forced a body of protest. While this remonstrance was subject to fits and starts, the stereotype of the wanton savage with the inherent tendency toward uncivilized violence mercilessly constrained the black male.

Manliness, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, also connected to ideas of citizenship. Moreover, with the experiential push, citizenship was commonly associated with action: specifically the idea of active citizenship, which implied participation in the public sphere. Apparent in virtually all reform movements, the action of protest intertwined with the active sphere of citizenship as evidence of manliness. Manliness, in turn, was one of the major rhetorical tools in the clamor for reform. Action was the mantra, active citizenship the goal, and experiential, practical manliness deeply informed both.

Hence, black peoples were well aware of the symbolic power of manliness both in its often-perilous guise of violence and in its meaning for reform and active citizenship. Time after time, transatlantic black reformers depicted their lack of agency

as a denial of their manliness. While black voices in the Boer War may not have used the term “manliness” consistently, many of the participants and commentators analyzed in this study certainly intended very similar meanings with their demands for compensation and pleas for recognition. John E. Bruce, while not using the term in relation to the Boer War, used the expression explicitly as he argued that the United State’s own contemporaneous imperial war – the War of 1898 – was the perfect opportunity for the manliness of the black soldier to unequivocally claim rights that proved so elusive.

Bruce believed that citizenship required obligations to the state. Some ten years before the outbreak of war with Spain, he commented on the responsibilities of citizenship to the nation:

Citizenship beget justice and the primal object of citizenship the duty which the state owes the individual. In return for its protection he owes it his allegiance and is in honor bound to come to its defence whenever and by whomever assailed. It is a mutual compact and its object is best expressed in the phrase: one for all and all for one. Such a citizen can give a reason for the faith that is in him – can always justify his devotion and his loyalty to his country’s flag and its institutions for he is an equal partner.⁹²

These obligations were part of the “mutual compact” and, in exchange, the nation-state had to ensure that all citizens had equal rights. Any variance from this reciprocity was, as detailed earlier, a “blot on the escutcheon” of the American political promise.

Bruce, however, grasped how white society constructed ideas of uncontrolled violence to deny black people the rights of manhood and citizenship promised by the compact of the organic nation: “The Negro as a slave was peaceable, docile, and

⁹² John Bruce, “The Dawn of Disillusionment,” 1888-1891, Group D - Manuscripts: 9-104, Bruce Collection.

tractable. This is the testimony of many eminent southerners. . . . But the negro as a man, as a citizen, as a seeker of knowledge, has metamorphosed [sic] from a docile tractable being into a brute a worthless, shiftless, impudent creature, a menace to society, dangerous to the republic, a fire brand who will some day involve the nation into serious trouble.”⁹³

White supremacists had created a narrative of the violent black savage as the sensationalist crowning of the existing designations of inferiority assigned to black peoples. Bruce assiduously battled this supposition and he took two distinct positions regarding violence in the course of his assertions. First, as discussed in the previous chapter, Bruce elevated the mind over the material and argued that cultivation of the intellect was the most powerful method of protest. In this vein, he consistently eschewed extra-legal violence as an option for black peoples. To Bruce, violence would only reinforce the construction of the black savage and further justify oppression. Although Bruce was one of the most militant voices of black protest in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, he never endorsed wanton violence and he argued

⁹³ John Bruce, “The Irrepressible Conflict,” 1894, Group D – Manuscripts: 7-14, Bruce Collection. Bruce’s emphasis. Bruce was not the first to notice the “constructed” nature of the menacing threat posed to the republicanism of the United States by black people. As Bruce Dain details in his work, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), African-American James McCune Smith made a similar argument in the antebellum period: “The negro ‘with us’ is not an actual physical being of flesh and bones and blood, but a hideous monster of the mind, ugly beyond all physical portraying, so utterly and ineffably monstrous as to frighten reason from its throne, and justice from its balance, and mercy from its hallowed temple and to blot out shame and probity, and the eternal sympathies of nature, so far as these things have presence in the breasts or being of American republicans! No sir! It is a constructive negro – a John Roe and Richard Doe negro, that haunts with grim presence the precincts of this republic, shaking its gory locks over legislative halls and family prayers.” James McCune Smith, *Frederick Douglass’s Paper* (1852). Found in Dain, *A Hideous Monster*, xi.

that even the outrages of lynching should never push black peoples toward “the torch, or dynamite, in retaliation for wrongs heaped upon him.”⁹⁴ Bruce was poignantly aware of the white supremacist narrative that cemented the exclusion of black people through the attribution of savage violence and would not take the bait.

Second, Bruce argued that a sanctioned war was an opportunity for black people to use the power of controlled violence as a method of protest. Bruce had long claimed that the “valorous” participation of black men in the American Civil War was evidence of the prerequisite manliness necessary to gain the reciprocal protections owed by the state and he spent a career arguing for those rights.⁹⁵ Indeed, Bruce thought that manly fighting on behalf of the nation would encourage one of his long-called for solutions: federal intervention in the southern states to enforce the rights of citizenship for black peoples. Even after the disappointment stemming from the War of 1898, Bruce lamented that black people had no choice but to fulfill their duty to the nation or else they could not expect federal reciprocation of the calls of black people for domestic restitution. Bruce, in most respects, like all of the reformers documented in this study, wanted to work through the existing system to redress grievances and only supported violence that the nation-state sanctioned. For example, Bruce never supported the more radical ideas which argued that violence against the nation was the path to change. Immediately after the assassination of President William McKinley in 1901, he

⁹⁴ Bruce Grit (John Bruce), “Will Reap the Whirlwind,” *Colored American*, 17 December 1898, 2.

⁹⁵ Bruce often used this line of reasoning. For a long description of the efforts in the Civil War and the refusal of the nation to recognize the rights of black people in spite of these efforts, see John Bruce, 1883, Group D - Manuscripts: 6-47, Bruce Collection.

denounced “incendiaries” that excited “class hatred” and led the country to “anarchy and bloodshed.”⁹⁶

The 1898 war shows the complexity of black people’s thought concerning empire, manliness, violence, and rights. The sinking of the battle ship *Maine* on February 15, 1898, elicited a general upsurge in American patriotism. Black people in the United States took a complicated view of any potential war. Many supported a war with Spain to free fellow black peoples from the yoke of a repressive colonialism, yet many were deeply suspicious that the United States’ growing extra-continental imperialism was part of the continued aggression of domestic white supremacy. Other critics scoffed at the idea that the United States could ever be the liberator of black peoples. Black peoples also looked to a war as another opportunity for the assertion of manliness by black soldiers to secure expanded rights for black peoples in the United States.⁹⁷

While Bruce was in touch with all these positions, he saw the war as an opportunity to free fellow black people from oppression and another testing ground for the black man to use controlled violence to demonstrate proper manliness. This, in turn, could help realize the rights of citizenship for black people in the United States. Despite the incessant condemnation of the United States’ political system, Bruce held out hope that the implications of American republicanism could help those oppressed by

⁹⁶ John Bruce, 1901, Group D - Manuscripts: 11-32, Bruce Collection.

⁹⁷ William B. Gatewood, Jr., *Black Americans and the White Man’s Burden, 1898-1903* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 13-21.

colonial systems. As a result, Bruce penned his poem *Cubre Libre* as a call for “good” imperialism to sever the bonds of oppression:

O bankrupt, proud and haughty Dons!
 Your hour of doom is near;
 And the oppressed of Cuba’s isle
 As freemen then will shout
 The stars and stripes for them will be
 a sure and safe defense⁹⁸

Bruce felt that the participation of black soldiers in the liberation of Cuba demonstrated the proper levels of manly discipline in the execution of violence and, as such, debunked myths of the uncontrolled savage and encourage the fulfilling of the contract of citizenship sought so desperately by Bruce and black people in the United States.⁹⁹

Upon the cessation of the violence, however, black people in Cuba gained little control over political institutions on the island. The “valor” of black males from the United States who were involved in the war, moreover, resulted in little tangible change to the racial climate of the United States. Some felt that racial tension in the United States, in fact, increased during the war. Just as the white participants in the Boer War experienced anxiety over the arming of black peoples because it cavorted too intimately with the very narrative of black savagery that was a powerful tool of exclusion, many in American society were quite uneasy with the proposition that black peoples not only had guns, but used them efficiently (like “men”). The *Richmond Planet* commented: “It would seem that the war would tend to allay race prejudice and bring closer together

⁹⁸ Bruce Grit (John Bruce), “Valor of the Negro Soldier,” *Colored American* 7 May 1898.

⁹⁹ This paragraph informed by Seraile, *Bruce Grit*, 51-73.

the races in the South. It has had an opposite tendency for the number of lynchings has been steadily on the increase.”¹⁰⁰

In the eyes of many black people, including Bruce, any positives of U.S. imperialism withered in the resulting insurrection in the Philippines.¹⁰¹ Bruce denounced the actions in the Philippines as nothing more than the push to assert U.S. commerce that was hardly about any kind of freedoms for the indigenous populations. This criticism combined with the lack of progress for black peoples following the efforts of the war made Bruce take an about face and advise all black men to stay out of the conflict. The power of manly violence, to Bruce, - like so many other strategies - proved ineffective for peoples of color caught in the push of white-led imperialism.

Despite all the pro-British feeling exhibited by a number of Bruce’s contacts, he remained curiously silent on the benefits of a British victory in the Boer War, or on the war generally.¹⁰² His disillusionment with the Philippines and the lack of rights procured by the efforts in the war of 1898 may have distinguished any hopes that anything, including a British victory in the war, would improve the position of black people in South Africa. Indeed, at the crucial juncture of contemporaneous imperial

¹⁰⁰ *Richmond Planet*, July 2, 1898. Found in Piero Gleijeses, “African Americans and the War against Spain” in Earnestine Jenkins and Darlene Clark Hine, eds., *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men’s History and Masculinity, Volume Two* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 328.

¹⁰¹ Gleijeses effectively makes this argument in his, “African Americans and the War against Spain.”

¹⁰² Neither Seraile in *Bruce Grit*, nor Crowder in *John Edward Bruce*, mention Bruce’s position on the Boer war. Further, while the Bruce Collection is hardly a complete picture of Bruce’s prolific correspondence and manuscripts, it contains no direct insight on Bruce’s thoughts on the subject.

wars by both Great Britain and the United States, Bruce began to denounce the broader colonial venture, including the promise of British imperialism.

Amidst all of the insistence on the benefits of the British system heaped on him by a variety of sources, Bruce also received correspondence that cast suspicion on the benign intentions of British imperialism. Bruce's "great friend," Bishop William B. Derrick of the American Methodist Episcopalian Church in Bermuda, agreed with many of Bruce's other contacts on the order of the British way.¹⁰³ In a letter to Bruce, Derrick lauded the homes in British Bermuda as "beautiful and white – surrounded by beautiful cedars," and described the people as "tidy and clean."¹⁰⁴ Derrick, however, told Bruce that, despite the outward order, "Still the same old righteousness colorphobia is rampant. Although it is claimed to be a British country, I am aware that kind of thing is not in accord with English rule."¹⁰⁵ Derrick blames this falling away directly on colonialism: "But colonial rule is one thing and English is another."¹⁰⁶ To Derrick,

¹⁰³ In a letter to Bruce in 1900, James Clarkson states that he had the recent privilege of having a discussion with Bishop Derrick, who he described as Bruce's "great friend." James Clarkson to John Bruce, 5 February 1900, Group C – Letters Received: BL4a-44, Bruce Collection. Derrick's career with the American Methodist Episcopalian Church included stints in the United States, West Indies, West Africa, and South Africa. James T. Campbell argues that Derrick "exuded an unshakeable faith in Britain's essential beneficence." Campbell's evaluation is clearly influenced by Derrick's tenure in South Africa, which involved a great deal of catering to colonial officials to calm suspicions about the American Methodist Episcopalian Church and their relationship to native South Africans, specifically their ties to what was seen as rebellious "Ethiopianism." See James T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 245-246.

¹⁰⁴ Bishop William Derrick to John Bruce, 15 July 1899, Group A – Letters Received: D2, Bruce Collection. Derrick's emphasis.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

British Bermuda, with its gleaming outward appearances, was simply another colonial setting that warped even the best intentions of political rule.

Around the turn of the century, Bruce also received letters from an A. Goldsmith of Australia who further lambasted British colonial rule. Goldsmith forwarded Bruce copies of the South African paper, *The Argus*, which contained excerpts from speeches of Lord Milner regarding British citizenship.¹⁰⁷ Goldsmith noted that Milner and *The Argus* praised that the white man, as a subject of the Crown, automatically received absolute freedom, protection of person and property, and the full rights of citizenship in any part of the British Empire. Goldsmith asked, “Where does the black British citizenship come in under ‘Lord Milner[s]’ speech?”¹⁰⁸ In answer, Goldsmith called Bruce’s attention to a previously sent set of articles that will “give you a clearer view of [the] situation of [the] Negro under the British Flag.”¹⁰⁹ Goldsmith had little hope that the British empire would ever elevate black peoples to the status of white subjects of the Crown: “Those Negroes who are putting on high notions ought to hush up. The Black Britishers are the blindest of fools I ever saw or met with in my whole life.”¹¹⁰ Goldsmith also directed Bruce’s attention to another enclosed article that detailed opposition in the Canadian House of Commons against the immigration of black peoples to the western provinces of Canada. After detailing the Canadian example,

¹⁰⁷ A. Goldsmith to John Bruce, 1900, Group B – Letters Received: 313, Bruce Collection.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Goldsmith summed up what he saw as the British aversion to black peoples throughout the Empire: “We are not wanted in Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.”¹¹¹

Thus, despite all of the flowery descriptions of the promise of the British imperial uplift sent by many of Bruce’s transnational contacts, he also received condemnations of Empire that diminished his hope that black peoples could ever prosper within the British colonial venture. These denunciations combined with the failure of manliness in the war effort of 1898 to secure additional rights, the general disappointments of peoples of color amidst the colonial violence of still prevalent lynching in the American South, the repression of the insurrection in the Philippines, and the wanton disregard for humanity in the concentration camps of the Boer War paved the way for Bruce’s adoption of a decidedly anti-colonial protest.

Around 1901, Bruce lamented that, “There are times in our lives when our hearts become too full for us to give proper expression to our thoughts,” and notes his consistent battle against racial discrimination: “I have foreseen the conditions which confront the Negro race in America today and I have been constant... in calling attention to it.”¹¹² Bruce now felt that any hope that the inclusion into white society would solve the inequities facing black people was disillusionment: “The Negro who has dreamed of merging the destiny of his race with that of the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ will

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² John Bruce, Group D – Manuscripts: 9-74, Bruce Collection. The Schomburg calendar lists “no date” for this document; however, its tone and most especially its direct references to 1901 “white-only” legislation in Australia considered in combination with the dates of the correspondence with A. Goldsmith, presents a strong argument that Bruce penned this piece no later than 1902.

never live to see the day.”¹¹³ Bruce, clearly influenced by his correspondence with Goldsmith, Bruce sealed his indictment of Anglo-Saxon colonialism by condemning the white only policy of Australia - formally enacted in 1901- by exclaiming “and Australia is an English colony.”¹¹⁴

Bruce directly connected the conditions in the United States to his condemnation of white-led colonialism throughout the world: “The settled policy of the white race the world over is to subjugate and dominate the darker races. The facts cannot be disguised or glossed over by honeyed words of fair promises. In India, in Africa, in Australia, in Porto Rico [sic], Cuba, the West Indies islands and the United States the thin edge of the wedges has been placed under the darker races and they will soon be brought to the painful realization of the fact that the white race is determined to rule or ruin.”¹¹⁵

Bruce argued that the “darker races are waking up to the facts” of white-led global oppression.¹¹⁶ In a pithy statement that certainly stemmed from his primary role in the growing network among black people throughout the tumultuous late nineteenth century, he issued a new call for rights that had serious transnational implications: “If Englishmen are justified in far off Australia in refusing asylum to the black where is the injustice in the cry ‘Africa for Africans...?’”¹¹⁷

As evidenced in the above anti-colonial critique, John Bruce felt that connectivity could be a strong platform of reform for those of the African diaspora

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

caught in the oppression of colonialism. His plea was hardly an isolated musing as several individuals who contributed to his circle of transnational awareness were directly involved in the 1900 Pan-African Conference held in London. These included Mojolo Agbebi, John Tengo Jabuvu, Frederic Loudin, Henry Sylvester Williams, Alexander Walters and Englishwoman Catherine Impey.¹¹⁸ Beyond these connections, the Pan-African Conference arose out of a transnational social movement that John Bruce helped establish. The conference thus provides a window onto the continuing effort of black transnational reformers to adopt some of the changes affecting the reform movement and to establish a voice of rights.

In a letter written to Bruce in early 1898, Alexander Crummell noted that during his recent trip to England he spoke to “three law students (negroes)” about an “African organization.” Crummell was excited, and wanting to put “his finger in that pie,” told the students about Crummell’s and Bruce’s own “movement.”¹¹⁹ Crummell and Bruce shared the view that the problems of black people was an international issue. As a result, they were building a “movement” that looked to establish a pan-African identity as a platform for protest. Indeed, by the mid 1890s, John Bruce had long since moved

¹¹⁸ As discussed in Chapter One, Impey’s activities waned after her journal, *Anti-Caste* stopped in the mid-1890s. While her exact role in the Conference is unclear, her participation demonstrates that Impey still understood the worldwide nature of the struggle for the rights of colonized peoples.

¹¹⁹ Alexander Crummell to John Bruce, 21 January 1898, Group B – Letters Received: MS 15, Bruce Collection. While Crummell does not identify the students, it is safe to assume he was speaking to either Henry Sylvester Williams or another person linked to the small population of students from Africa or the West Indies studying in London in the 1890s. Further, the “organization” discussed had to have been the African Association started by Williams in September of 1897, which was the progenitor of the 1900 Pan-African Conference. The best discussion of the origins of the African Association and the Pan-African Conference is Immanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe, and Africa* (New York: African Publishing Co., 1974), 176-192.

from a concentration on the struggle for racial equality in the United States. His ongoing conversations with Crummell and other peoples of color shifted his thought toward the idea of African unity as a source of empowerment (Mojola Agbebi signed his correspondence to Bruce with the epithet “Yours from Africa”). As early as 1891 - long before his anti-colonial comment that asked why not “Africa for Africans?” and long before his position as the “grand old man” of Marcus Garvey’s back to Africa movement – John E. Bruce started to recognize the potential of African unity captured in the popular expression “Ethiopia shall stretch her hands unto God.”¹²⁰

Historians acknowledge that the Pan-African Conference was an important step in the evolution of African diasporic unity, but the conference itself has not received sufficient attention.¹²¹ Several possible reasons exist. First, the Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigine Protection Society, whose support for the rights of black peoples was paternalist, were primary supporters of the African Association and the Conference. This created the impression that the Conference catered to a paternalism that could

¹²⁰ John Bruce, 19 October 19 1891, Group D – Manuscripts: 7-83, Bruce Collection. Crummell and Blyden constantly used this phrase and, further, the seal of Ethiopia is the letterhead of an 1894 letter from John L. Dube of Natal, South Africa to Bruce. Dube, in 1912, would become the first President of the African National Congress. John L. Dube to John Bruce, 1894, Group D – Miscellaneous: 13-54, Bruce Collection. For more on Dube, see Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa*.

¹²¹ Exceptions are Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), Charles Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams and the Origins of the Pan-African Movement, 1869-1911* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976) and Jonathan Schner, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999). The Conference received coverage by *The London Times*, *The Colored American*, *The Lagos Weekly Record*, *Imvo* of the Cape Colony, and *The Jamaica Advocate*.

never result in real change.¹²² Second, although W.E.B. Du Bois was involved in the conference, he minimized its importance in later writings and historians tend to concentrate on Du Bois' contributions to the other Pan-African conferences of the twentieth century. Last, the movement had a difficult time maintaining organizational momentum; its journal, *The Pan-African*, only published a few isolated issues and the planned conferences of 1902 in the United States and 1904 in Haiti never took place.¹²³

This lack of “success” should not obviate important points concerning the protest of black peoples in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As seen in this work, the ability for black people to prosper in a white colonial world was a difficult proposition. These pressures were even more intense for some black reformers, such as John Bruce, who constantly battled financial troubles. These difficulties were rooted in the seemingly ubiquitous catering to “white friends.” John Tengo Jabuvu, as discussed, was beholden to his liberal white friends in the Cape and this indebtedness was responsible for his “support” of the “wrong” side in the Boer War. Edward Wilmot Blyden was virtually destitute near the end of his life and only the intercession of an official at the Colonial Office secured a small pension for Blyden (the original plea noted that Blyden probably would not live much longer).¹²⁴ John Bruce, at times, would offer himself as a “hired gun” to help augment his struggling financial picture and constantly looked to secure government appointments from the

¹²² As will be discussed, this lumping of metropolitan reformers into involvement (however covert) with an undifferentiated imperial mindset ignores the impact of de-legitimization of colonial practices.

¹²³ Information taken from Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 176 to 192. The bulk of the speculation mine.

¹²⁴ Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832-1912* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 245.

white-dominated Republican party. As marginalized voices, it is little wonder that black peoples had to rely on the support and infrastructure of white reform organizations that – like most in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – adopted some vestiges of paternalism in their relations to black peoples. To fail to acknowledge the attempts of black peoples to speak from within the shackling realities of white supremacy – however virulent or subtle – unduly concludes that their protests did not resonate in any meaningful way. It should be emphasized that the conference and the ideas of Bruce and his transnational contacts began to condemn key aspects of the colonial venture.

Clearly, the struggle witnessed an effort by pan-Africans unified by a growing awareness that connected the suffering of black peoples across boundaries. Similar to Catherine Impey's *Anti-Caste* philosophy that targeted discrimination wherever it occurred, the African Association announced its 1898 agenda as one which hoped: "to influence public opinion on existing proceedings and conditions affecting the welfare of the natives in the various parts of the world, viz. South Africa, West Africa, West Indies, and United States of America."¹²⁵ The 1900 Pan-African Conference folded the old African Association into the new Pan-African Association and created branch associations in areas that Bruce and his contacts had been corresponding with throughout the 1890s, including, West Africa, South Africa, the United States, and the West Indies and that had "kindred associations" already in place.¹²⁶ As mentioned, these branches had a difficult time surviving. The ability to have a physical location

¹²⁵ *Report of the Pan-African Conference* (London, 1900), 2.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

and produce published material is certainly important. The lack of these things, however, does not prove that black peoples were not clearly aware of the connectivity of the colonial experience. Rather, this unity of awareness contributed to the marketplace of ideas and created a discourse of protest.

The report of the conference proudly lauded the event as the “first assembling of members of the African race from all parts of the globe.”¹²⁷ While the conference admitted that the conditions facing black peoples were less than reassuring, they lauded a distinct “esprit de corps” that pointed to an encouraging feature. This new “spirit” still endorsed much of the older ideas of reform and progress that typified the struggle for the rights of black peoples. The conference supported the idea of “good” British imperialism and hoped that the true objectives of the British could weather the desultory circumstances of colonialism: “There are good friends in England yet, and though we wade through the mire of the evil curses of civilization in the Colonies, their voices will blend with ours, that righteousness and justice will be the ruling words of British civilization.”¹²⁸ The idea of legitimacy providing restraint on imperial practice, even if the groups providing the critique did not condemn the imperial mission, did have results. As discussed, one “paternalist” organization affiliated with the Pan-African Conference - The Aborigines Protection Society - led a campaign against imperial practices that damaged colonial populations. These ideas of “good” imperialism did result in putting pressure on colonial powers to attempt to squelch practices that overtly violated the consensual norms of imperial practice. While never approaching an

¹²⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 2.

argument that denounced the imperial project, most of these voices did contribute to an awareness that empire did have to meet some form of legitimacy in their relations with colonial peoples. In some fashion, this protest brought hard questions to bear on the violence of colonialism and, as well, checked the self-interest of chartered companies such as Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company and denounced the activities of King Leopold in the Congo.¹²⁹

While these strategies rarely questioned the overall colonial project or the belief in the Christian mission, their voice of conscience did two important things. First, the protests checked excessive imperial behavior and brought security and safety to some colonized peoples, which kept alive the idea of providing basic protections. Second, their critique provided information about colonized peoples and the injustice they often suffered. This role as a voice of conscience and conduit of information was not limited to the relatively benign goals that hoped to clean up imperial practice, but, often, spun from their control and informed other, more radical protests. Neta Crawford argues that these "modest reformers," who retained firm belief in Christianity and the uplift mission

¹²⁹ Throughout the latter part of the 1890s, Henry Fox Bourne, President of the Aborigine Protection Society, led a campaign against the British South Africa Company and against the transgressions in the Congo. This chastising of the "mission" in the Congo helped prepare the groundwork for the successful campaign of the early twentieth century led by Roger Casement and E. D. Morel chronicled by Adam Hochschild in his work *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terrorism, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998). Neta Crawford details some of APS's questioning in her, *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 239-248. For an example of the denunciation of practices, but the hesitancy to question the larger imperial project recall, from Chapter One, that after Ida B. Wells' talk to the APS, they denounced the violence of lynching, but refused to condemn the notions of white colonial supremacy that constructed the lynching narrative.

of imperialism, contributed to the “reframing” of colonial practices in ways that asked questions about the legitimacy of Empire that, at times, only found deeper queries.¹³⁰

The Pan-African Conference also evoked arguments of religiosity that characterized much of the protest regarding black peoples. The proceedings twice note that the need for reform was “for Christ and humanity” and the conference dates were deliberately chosen to follow on the heels of the “World’s Christian Endeavor Conference.”¹³¹ The Pan-African Conference issued an official memorial to the Reverend Bishop James Johnson of Lagos, which hoped all could follow his example and “glorify the cause of our common Master, Jesus Christ.”¹³² The conference also thanked the Society of Friends for their efforts at teaching black peoples “a true sense of civilisation calculated to bring them to Christ.”¹³³ Connections to religious bodies and an appeal to the grace of God informed the Pan-African Conference of 1900: like it did virtually all forms of protest concerning peoples of color.

The conference also echoed the arguments of many studied in this work, especially Ida B. Wells and Catherine Impey, in their attempts to lampoon the supposed Christianity of imperial powers. In this sense, they also used the tenets of Christianity as to de-legitimize European-led civilization: “if, by reason of carelessness, prejudice, greed and injustice, the black world is to be exploited and ravished and degraded, the results must be deplorable, if not fatal, not simply to them, but to the high ideals of

¹³⁰ Crawford, *Argument and Change*, 201-205.

¹³¹ *Report of the Pan-African Conference* (London, 1900), 7: 2.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 8.

justice, freedom, and culture which a thousand years of Christian civilization have held before Europe.”¹³⁴

While the Pan-African conference invoked Christianity to condemn unjust “civilization” and confirmed the older belief that coupled civilization and Christianity into a statement of good imperialism, it also made the strident assertion that Christianity itself was part of the problem. Echoing the transatlantic black voices - represented by John Bruce’s network - the conference harshly denounced the legitimacy of the white-led Christian project and reiterated the accusation that missionary work and, indeed the broader church, often operated as an apologetic for colonial abuse. Positivists and the Liberal humanists, imbued with a modern skepticism of religious certitude, also censured the missionary component of the colonial mission. Furthermore, the conference voiced the contention of Edward Blyden - discussed in Chapter Four - that argued that white-led institutional religion stunted political development. The Pan-African proceedings clamored, “Let not the cloak of Christian missionary enterprise be allowed in the future, as so often in the past, to hide the ruthless economic exploitation and political downfall of less developed nations, whose chief fault has been reliance on the plighted faith of the Christian church.”¹³⁵ The conference, in some respects, catered to the paternalist ethos that found refuge in religiosity and promised improvement through preparedness – including the path of industrial training.¹³⁶ However, it also

¹³⁴ Ibid., 10.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹³⁶ Booker T. Washington attended one of the preparatory meetings in 1899. Washington, while neither in attendance nor an elected officer at the actual 1900 Pan-African Conference, exerted broad influence and the participants at the conference most certainly supported, at some level, his plan for industrial training. In a letter to Washington, Henry

demonstrated a shift away from Christianity toward a language of political rights with immediate implications.

This shift grew from impatience with the traditional avenues of progress provided by colonial powers. The proceedings declared its frustration with the path of patience and God: “we have morality, religion, and perseverance on our balance sheet,” and, instead, reasoned that it was time to appeal to the “deep sense of justice of our age.” The idea of “justice” in the late nineteenth century directly related to the idea of rights and, in many reform circles, this meant the struggle for immediate rights in a secular world. This meaning of social justice was certainly not lost on pan-Africanist leader Henry Sylvester Williams, who was an active member in London reform circles and, later, a member of the Fabians.¹³⁷

Many reformers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century hearkened back to the imagery of abolitionism to embolden their causes. While most – including anti-lynching advocates Ida B. Wells and Catherine Impey – tied the reference back into a call for unity before God, back into an appeal to morality to secure protections, others, such as the Fabians and Positivists, incorporated abolitionism to argue for immediate secular rights – social justice - for the working class in the metropole. The Pan-African

Sylvester Williams commented that one of the topics of discussion at the Conference would be “The industrial emancipation of our people in light of current history.” Williams noted to Washington that “this is yours of course.” Henry Sylvester Williams to Booker T. Washington, July 1899, in Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 5* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press), 166-167. Neither Williams nor the conference agreed with Washington’s call to eschew politics.

¹³⁷ *Justice* was, in fact, the organ of the Social Democratic Federation, the largest socialist body in London. A reporter from *Justice* covered the Pan-African Conference and hesitantly answered in affirmative to his own question: “Is it possible that the much-despised negro race may yet come to the front and lead in the march to a higher stage of human development?” *Justice* 28 July 1900. Found in Schneer, *London 1900*, 224.

conference referred to the tradition of abolition to argue directly for political rights: “Let the British nation, the first modern champion of negro freedom, hasten to crown the work of Wilberforce, and Clarkson, and Buxton... and give, as soon as practicable, the rights of responsible government to the black colonies of Africa and the West Indies.”¹³⁸

The phrase “as soon as practical” and the reference to the “British nation” supply an important reminder to how deeply entrenched preparedness and “good empire” was in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If the contamination of the civilizing mission – the misuse of Christianity, for example - partially stalled procurement of rights in the British Empire, however, the conference argued that black people in the United States had demonstrated more than enough progress to deserve rights. Invoking the power of abolitionism and showing its worldview that connected colonial spaces, the conference argued for the immediate recognition because of the advancement of black peoples in the United States: “Let not the spirit of Garrison, Phillips, and Douglass wholly die out in America; may the conscience of a great nation rise and rebuke all dishonesty and unrighteous oppression toward the American Negro, and grant to him the rights of franchise, security of person and property, and generous recognition of the great work he has accomplished in a generation toward raising nine millions of human beings from slavery to manhood.”¹³⁹ According to the Pan-African conference, blacks in the United States had met the “manhood” measure of Western

¹³⁸ *Report of the Pan-African Conference*, 11.

¹³⁹ *Report of the Pan-African Conference* (London, 1900), 4.

progress and the conference used the memory of the abolitionist tradition to call for the immediate deliverance of the rights of citizenship.

As discussed in Chapter Four, Pan-African leader Henry Sylvester Williams had lobbied for citizenship rights for black peoples who had exhibited “valor” in taking up arms on behalf of the British Empire. This allusion to manly behavior took a more direct tone in the course of the Pan-African conference. The proceedings thanked the Society of Friends in both Great Britain and the United States for the efforts to help, “assert our manhood and become loyal and true citizens of the various countries represented.”¹⁴⁰ The period of “progress” - the exhibition of manliness - had arrived in the United States and, according to the conference, other black colonial peoples were nearing the goal of manly citizenship rights.

The conference, despite its implication that some black peoples had not made sufficient progress toward manly citizenship, was clearly aware of the rights supposedly accorded to subjects of the British Empire. The African Association, in 1898, firmly established the recognition of these rights as a core objective: “an association ... to protect the interests of all British subjects claiming African descent, wholly or in part, in British Colonies and other places, especially in Africa, by circulating accurate information on all subjects affecting their rights and privileges as subjects of the British Empire and by direct appeals to the Imperial and local governments.”¹⁴¹ This statement, echoed the “inform and educate” mantra of the Fabians, pressed a reform agenda that saw both the metropole and the colony as potential sites of protests and,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 2.

similar to the efforts of John E. Bruce, argued that the political status of black peoples guaranteed rights.

The Pan-African Association, which spun out of the 1900 conference, used an even more direct approach in its aims and objective. Its primary goal was to “secure to Africans throughout the world true civil and political rights.” Moreover, the association endorsed an interventionist, practical approach to “secure effective legislation.” This overt reference to political rights and government intervention represents how transnational black people – often marginalized within the reform movements who adopted new strategies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – appropriated many of those changes embraced by “progressive” reformers. The call for facts and education combined with the argument for governmental activism firmly places the Pan-African Association – and the progenitors discussed – within this new reform emphasis on empiricism and governmental intervention as the method to foment change and to secure secular gains and rights. Most importantly, the conference documents that black peoples were augmenting the religiosity-based calls for protection for those caught in the grasp of colonialism with a voice that clamored for immediate political gains in post-emancipated societies.

CONCLUSION

REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The changes of late nineteenth century modernity reduced the authority of those Anglo-American reformers wed to earlier ideas of laissez-faire. New reformers, such as the Fabians and Positivists who operated in both Great Britain and the United States, argued for an empirical, interventionist, and practical approach to achieve immediate social justice. Liberal humanists, while never foregoing their attachments to crucial aspects of laissez-faire, adapted to the new challenges and remained a viable voice of transatlantic reform.

Both new reformers and liberal humanists problematized earlier assumptions of race and empire, which were especially topical issues in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Specifically, during this period both Great Britain and the United States participated in the unprecedented rise of imperialism. At the same time, the colonial situations apparent in the American South and in parts of the British Empire contained obvious contradictions with the promise that post-emancipated society held for black peoples who, technically, were equal subjects of Great Britain and citizens of the United States.

New reformers, in the main, viewed empire as demonstration of the more sordid aspects of capitalism that perpetuated social dislocation. Liberal humanism also criticized aspects of the imperial “civilizing mission,” most especially ideas of Christian uplift. Liberal humanism effectively supported ideas of racial equality, but replaced the

former measurement of “progress” - Christian virtue - with education. Education became the appropriate gauge to evaluate the readiness of black peoples for the benefits of citizenship. New reformers, even more radically, introduced ideas of racial pluralism in their arguments; however, they stopped short of including black people in this appreciation. New reformers, hence, focused their activism on strategies that sought immediate changes for the benefit of white, metropolitan society.

Other transatlantic reformers discussed race and empire in their protests against colonial violence, specifically in the campaign against lynching in the American South. Lynching and its narrative became a mechanism for social control in white-led colonial societies in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. White supremacists in colonial milieus such as Southern Rhodesia shared a racialized simultaneity with many white southerners in the United States. This shared worldview combined the powerful argument of rape with existing standards of scientific racism to provide apologetics for lynching and the continual denial of rights to black peoples.

Tireless reformer Ida B. Wells denied the constructed nature of the lynching apologists and, frustrated with the lack of response to her efforts in the United States, took her protest to Great Britain, where earlier abolitionist efforts resulted in affinities in Anglo-American reform with relation to black peoples. In her arguments against lynching, Wells used a religiosity-infused message that echoed one strain of the earlier abolitionist movement; the appeal that all men were one before God: “Am I not a man and a Brother?” By exposing the British to the violence of lynching, Wells’ tours elicited British condemnation of lynching, which achieved her goal of the de-

legitimizing of the United States as a member of Anglo-Saxon “civilization.” Wells tours also contributed to rising self-reflection by the British of their own imperial mission.

Presbyterian minister Charles F. Aked, one of Wells main supporters in Great Britain, also joined the protest against lynching. Specifically, Aked denounced the now famous lynching of Henry Smith in Paris, Texas, in 1893. This lynching was widely publicized and found audiences as far away as Southern Rhodesia. Aked also used a similar line of religious argumentation as Wells. Aked shifted his argument from one that argued for the protection of black peoples because of equality before God to one that began to introduce a language of secular rights for black peoples. While Aked adhered to the measurements of progress and never successfully negotiated the gendered constructions of rape that informed the apologist narrative, he argued that lynching denied the rights that black people in the United States deserved as citizens.

Catherine Impey was an Englishwoman intimately involved with Wells’ tours and was herself a tireless campaigner against the poor treatment of colonized peoples around the world. In her journal *Anti-Caste*, Impey recognized the transnational nature of racial discrimination propelled by the unavoidable reality of Empire. Impey protested vehemently against any act what she deemed as caste discrimination, whether that occurred in the United States, southern Africa, Australia or any other colonial space. Impey also relied primarily on the religiosity infused message that delegitimized the practices of supposedly Christian civilization. For example, as

discussed in Chapter One, one of the covers of *Anti-Caste* had a cover that pictorially reproduced a lynching with the caption “How Long will a Callous Nation look on?”

African-American John E. Bruce supported Ida B. Wells and corresponded with Catherine Impey. In his journalistic guise “Bruce Grit,” he provided a caustic voice on the plight of black peoples. Moreover, beyond his affiliations with Wells and Impey, he also was at the center of a prolific and vibrant transnational discourse of leading black people from around the globe. These reformers created a voice that recognized the similar position of black people in various colonial societies, embraced an appeal to God and his mercy for relief, and initially accepted much of the imperial rhetoric of uplift. Bruce and many in his transnational group also wearied of the gradualism supplied by colonial powers and drew on the ideas of social justice contributed to the marketplace of ideas by such groups as the transatlantic Fabians and Positivists. Especially discouraging were the hopes that many black peoples placed in the violence of nation-state wars at the turn of the twentieth century. John Bruce and others felt that valorous participation in state-sanctioned violence – for example the contemporary imperial conflict of the Boer War and the War of 1898 – could demonstrate that black males were capable of controlled, rational violence. This participation could evidence a prerequisite “manliness” that would dismantle the constructed nature of the irrational, savage black male that provided such an unshakeable girding to the lynching narrative. Black peoples did not reap benefit from their participation in both wars and most of Bruce’s transnational group lost confidence in the imperial venture. In 1902, John Bruce

wrote a scathing critique that identified all colonialism as part and parcel of the deprecations of like-minded white supremacy.

Even before the disappointment of the wars, this transnational activism began to denounce white-led Christianity and argued that, as equal subjects of the British Empire and equal citizens of the United States, black peoples were entitled to immediate political and social rights. Much of this thought cohered in the first Pan-African Conference of 1900. The Conference certainly embraced a religious message and lauded some aspects of the imperial mission. The conference and its progeny, the African Association, clearly recognized the similar position of black peoples in the colonial spaces of the British Empire and the United States. Specifically, it argued that black people were subjects and citizens, and as such, deserved immediate recognition of rights.

Without question, the articulation of a voice calling for black people's rights was a difficult challenge in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Symbolized by the 1884 Conference of Berlin, nation-state self-interest and balance of power objectives helped fuel a surge of imperial activity. Under high imperialism - the systemic condition of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries - the nation-state was both judge and jury on colonial behaviors, a fact that predisposed the implementation of realist policies in their encounter with colonial peoples.¹ Realist perspectives – power

¹ For the foundational work on the realist perspective in international relations theory, see Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Amongst Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1967). Kenneth N. Waltz continued the Morgenthau tradition with his influential neorealist work, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979). A good overview of realism and neorealism is Robert O. Keohane, "Realism, Neorealism and the

and interests, not ideas and norms – seemingly dominated the encounter between peoples in the context of Empire.

While there was no strong body of either international law or institutional presence to facilitate enforcement, the Berlin Conference, however, created a discourse of “protections” (however mired in apologetics) that articulated limits to the nation-state imperialism with regard to colonized peoples. Some political scientists take issue with what they feel is the unnecessary reductionism of realist theory and argue, instead, that normative beliefs inform and interact with realist preferences to drive behavior.² This “constructivist” approach places ideational argumentation at the core of normative belief systems. Ideological argumentation is a process that legitimizes, de-legitimizes, structures, and restructures normative beliefs. The creation and, more significantly, the de-legitimization, of normative standards is especially important when evaluating how a growing metropolitan and transnational voice in the late nineteenth and early twentieth fought not only for protections implied by the very conference that propelled European aggression, but also for the rights of black peoples in an imperial world.³

Study of World Politics,” in Robert O. Keohane ed., *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 1-26.

² Two of the major voices of constructivism are John G. Ruggie and Alexander Wendt. See John G. Ruggie, “What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social-Constructivist Challenge,” *International Organization* 52:4 (Autumn 1998): 855-885 and Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For a good overview of the debate between realism and constructivism, see Dale C. Copeland’s review of Wendt, “The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism: A Review Essay,” *International Security* 25:2 (August 2000): 187-212.

³ See Neta Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) for the full development of the importance of ethical argumentation and legitimization.

The history of human rights recognizes the campaigns for protections of peoples in the late nineteenth century. Similar to the acknowledgment that there were voices in the late nineteenth century which de-legitimized imperial practice but had a more difficult time de-legitimizing the imperial project, human rights literature acknowledges those movements that sought protections for colonized people out of a sense of moral duty, but relegates them to “precursors” to later, harder-edged calls for human rights. The term human rights, indeed, implies something more than humanitarian concern, specifically the idea that human rights fundamentally involves a strident call for secular entitlement. This advocacy for secular rights became obvious in the aftermath of World War I with calls for self-determination at the Versailles conference in 1919. The idea that human rights are, therefore, a modern phenomenon tied to many of the epistemological shifts detailed in this study became more entrenched in the literature by the post World War II development of an international body and international law to enforce basic rights, best encapsulated by the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The jump from the humanitarian ethos of the nineteenth century to the post-World War path to the codification of human rights is apparent in the history of human rights and, again, is connected to the urge to rush from the limits of sentiment to the power of the political that the very term of human rights implies.⁴

⁴ As David Forsythe comments, “Even if human rights are thought to be inalienable, a moral attribute of persons that the state cannot contradict, rights still have to be identified – that is, constructed – by human beings and codified in the legal system.” See David Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3. This codification and all of its practical implications concerning enforcement, deservedly, dictates the primary focus of those interested in human rights. The construction of the

For example, Kathryn Sikkink and Margaret E. Keck identify several “historical precursors” to modern human rights advocacy groups. They laud the abolitionist movement, the international movement for female suffrage, and campaigns against footbinding and female circumcision – all clearly important, but not specifically related to the struggle of post-emancipated black peoples. Paul Gordon Lauren gives a more thorough discussion of the Pan-African Conference of 1900 (although he calls it the Pan-African *Congress*), the development of the Niagara movement, and the NAACP. He also discusses the early movement of Mohandas Ghandi - partially inspired by his experiences in South Africa - and how these campaigns against racial discrimination created a body of argumentation that contributed to the Universal Race Congress of 1911.⁵ While these histories make important contributions to the literature, the emphasis of human rights scholars clearly remains on later periods.⁶

Kathryn Sikkink argues that a political focus and a transnational network are fundamental to the development of human rights: “Virtually any explanation of the rise of human rights must take into account the political power of norms and ideas and the increasingly transnational way in which those ideas are carried and diffused.”⁷ The identification of John Bruce and the transnational social network who moved beyond a

normative beliefs over time that contribute to this codification and perhaps create normative beliefs outside of formal law (soft power), I suggest, may be partially the realm of the history of human rights.

⁵ Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 75-77.

⁶ Further, historians do not give attentions to human rights at the same pace as other fields, namely legal scholars and political scientists. In 2004, Kenneth Cmiel pronounced that the history of human rights “remains refreshingly inchoate.” See Kenneth Cmiel, “The Recent History of Human Rights,” *American Historical Review* (February 2004): 119.

⁷ Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Politics, International Relations Theory, and Human Rights,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 31:3 (September 1998): 517.

sole reliance on moral arguments and, instead, clamoured for political rights meets this definition and contributes to the history of human rights in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fundamentally, this transnational social movement began to give teeth to the demands for human rights in ways unfulfilled by calls for protections. This activism helped inform later institutional frameworks that elevated rights to the forefront of protest, such as the NAACP and the African National Congress.

Another contribution of John Bruce and the transatlantic social movement was their positioning of their call for political rights within the larger power of the corporate body of the diaspora. This search for a collective voice also reflected the embrace by many reformers in the late nineteenth century of the idea that social holism and cooperation informed social relations, not the individual and competition. While this movement took time to develop, the shift to rights conceptualized around a transnational sense of dispossessed colonial peoples began to flatten not only the fractures implied by individualism and competition, but also the cognitive separation of metropole and colony. In this sense, the transnational social movement of John Bruce and his contacts helped to breakdown the safe distance between colonizer and colonized. This leveling brought the abstract margins of the colony more directly to the conscience of the metropole and, more importantly, invigorated the demands of colonized people for the inclusionary aspects of rights in a new manner that had serious implications for the colonial project.

Neta Crawford writes about this flattening of the distance between colonizer and colonized as provoking “empathy” for colonial peoples, which contributed to the

process of de-legitimizing the colonial project.⁸ Hendrik Spruyt takes this argument further, contending that the levelling of the distance between metropolitan and colonial connections directly influenced the moment of decolonization. Spruyt argues that, while the metropole largely dismissed the normative de-legitimization concerning imperialism that did not relate directly to economic conditions in the metropole – a point intended by this study’s analysis of the Fabians and Positivists - peripheral peoples began to condemn the failings of the normative scripts of political rights with relation to colonial subjects. Spruyt’s model demonstrates how the impact of the de-legitimizing of Empire in the colonies directly affected the movement for decolonization.⁹

Germane to Spruyt’s implication, John Bruce and his transnational movement began to move their protest out of metropolitan circles and into the discourse of colonial space. The connection between the plight of African peoples in the Empire and African peoples in the American South and, more importantly, their connective voices of protest, contributed to a de-legitimizing of white colonial privilege that had implications for the entire colonial project. The metropolitan unwillingness to take seriously de-legitimizing strategies lessened as marginalized peoples began to recognize their common plight. Black British subjects and black citizens of the United States paid grudging obeisance to guidelines of the nation-state, but chafed under the reality that they had no requisite equal protection under the law and had little access to political

⁸ Crawford, *Argument and Change*, 204.

⁹ Hendrik Spruyt, “The End of Empire and the Extension of the Westphalian System: The Normative Basis of Modern State Order,” in James A. Caporaso, *Continuity and Change in the Westphalian Order* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 65-92.

participation or the wider rights of “citizenship.” The transnational social movement described in this work shifted the framework of discussion away from passive protectionism within the legitimacy of the colonial mission into an active voice of political empowerment that had the potential to de-legitimize the colonial venture itself. This voice eventually grew to a clamour that shook the very seats of imperial powers and profoundly shifted the arguments into an entirely new direction that invigorated the search for formalized human rights.

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