

WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

*A series edited by Catharine R. Stimpson*

**MANLINESS**

**& CIVILIZATION**

**A CULTURAL HISTORY OF GENDER AND  
RACE IN THE UNITED STATES, 1880-1917**

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# 1

## Remaking Manhood through Race and "Civilization"

At 2:30 P.M. on July 4, 1910, in Reno, Nevada, as the band played "All Coons Look Alike to Me," Jack Johnson climbed into the ring to defend his title against Jim Jeffries. Johnson was the first African American world heavyweight boxing champion. Jeffries was a popular white former heavyweight champion who had retired undefeated six years before. Although it promised to be a fine match, more than mere pugilism was at stake. Indeed, the Johnson-Jeffries match was the event of the year. Twenty thousand men from across the nation had traveled to Reno to sit in the broiling desert sun and watch the prizefight. Five hundred journalists had been dispatched to Reno to cover it. Every day during the week before the fight, they had wired between 100,000 and 150,000 words of reportage about it to their home offices. Most had assured their white readership that Jeffries would win. On the day of the fight, American men deserted their families' holiday picnics. All across America, they gathered in ballparks, theaters, and auditoriums to hear the wire services' round-by-round reports of the contest. Over thirty thousand men stood outside the *New York Times* offices straining to hear the results; ten thousand men gathered outside the *Atlanta Constitution*. It was, quite simply, a national sensation.<sup>1</sup>

Ever since 1899, when Jeffries first won the heavyweight championship, he had refused to fight any Negro challengers. Jack Johnson first challenged him as early as 1903. Jeffries replied, "When there are no white men left to fight, I will quit the business. . . . I am determined not to take a chance of losing the championship to a negro."<sup>2</sup> Jeffries' adherence to the color line was not unique. Ever since 1882, when John L. Sullivan had won the title, no white heavyweight champion had fought a black challenger, even though black and white heavyweights had previously competed freely.<sup>3</sup> Sullivan had announced he would fight all contenders—except black ones. "I will not fight a negro. I never have and never shall."<sup>4</sup> It was in this context that Jack

Johnson began his career, and eventually defeated every fighter, black or white, who faced him.

For two years Jeffries refused to fight Johnson, but when Jeffries retired in 1905, the remaining field of white contenders was so poor that the public temporarily lost interest in prizefighting. Finally in 1908, the reigning white champion, Tommy Burns, agreed to fight Johnson. By accepting Johnson's challenge, Burns hoped to raise both interest and prize money. Johnson promptly and decisively thrashed Burns, however, and won the title. Faced with the unthinkable—a black man had been crowned the most powerful man in the world!—interest in pugilism rebounded. The white press clamored for Jeffries to return to the ring. "Jeff must emerge from his alfalfa farm and remove that smile from Johnson's face. Jeff, it's up to you," implored Jack London in the *New York Herald*.<sup>5</sup> In April 1909, the *Chicago Tribune* printed a drawing of a little blond girl begging the former champion: "Please, Mr. Jeffries, are you going to fight Mr. Johnson?"<sup>6</sup> Across America, white newspapers pleaded with Jeffries to vindicate Anglo-Saxon manhood and save civilization by vanquishing the upstart "Negro."

Eventually the aging, reluctant Jeffries agreed to fight, reportedly explaining, "I am going into this fight for the sole purpose of proving that a white man is better than a negro."<sup>7</sup> From its inception, then, the Johnson-Jeffries fight was framed as a contest to see which race had produced the most powerful, virile man. Jeffries was known as the "Hope of the White Race," while Johnson was dubbed the "Negroes' Deliverer."<sup>8</sup> With few exceptions, predictions of the fight's outcome focused on the relative manliness of the white and the black races. For example, *Current Literature* predicted Jeffries would win because "the black man . . . fights emotionally, whereas the white man can use his brain after twenty rounds."<sup>9</sup> White men were confident that Jeffries's intrinsic Anglo-Saxon manhood would allow him to prevail over the (allegedly) flightier, more emotional Negro.

Thus, when Johnson trounced Jeffries—and it was a bloody rout—the defenders of white male supremacy were very publicly hoist by their own petards. They had insisted upon framing the fight as a contest to demonstrate which race could produce the superior specimen of virile manhood. Johnson's victory was so lopsided that the answer was unwelcome but unmistakable. After the fight, the black *Chicago Defender* exulted that Johnson was "the first negro to be admitted the best man in the world."<sup>10</sup>

The ensuing violence showed what a bitter pill that was for many white American men to swallow. Race riots broke out in every Southern state, as well as in Illinois, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Colorado, and

the District of Columbia. Occasionally, black men attacked white men who were belittling Johnson. In most of the incidents, however, rampaging white men attacked black men who were celebrating Johnson's victory.<sup>11</sup> In Manhattan, the *New York Herald* reported, "One negro was rescued by the police from white men who had a rope around his neck. . . . In Eighth Avenue, between Thirty-Seventh and Thirty-Ninth Streets, more than three thousand whites gathered, and all the negroes that appeared were kicked and beaten, some of them into insensibility. . . . Three thousand white men took possession of Eighth Avenue and held against police as they attacked every negro that came into sight."<sup>12</sup> Contemporary reports put the overall national toll at eighteen people dead, hundreds more injured.<sup>13</sup>

Even the United States Congress reacted to the implicit aspersions Johnson's victory cast on white manhood. Before the Johnson-Jeffries fight, Congress had refused even to consider a bill suppressing motion picture films of prizefights. The prospect of the filmic reenactment of the "Negroes' Deliverer" thrashing the "White Hope" in hundreds of movie theaters across the nation was too much for them, however. Within three weeks, a bill suppressing fight films had passed both houses and was soon signed into law.<sup>14</sup>

Soon after Johnson won the championship, an even more scandalous public controversy arose: the "Negroes' Deliverer" was making no secret of his taste for the company of white women. White men worried: Did Johnson's success with white women prove him a superior specimen of manhood? The spectacle of dozens of white women in pursuit of Johnson's favor pleased Johnson and infuriated many whites. These women were mostly prostitutes, but racial etiquette held all white women were too "pure" for liaisons with black men.<sup>15</sup> It seemed bad enough that Johnson's first wife was white, although antimiscegenist doomsayers felt smugly vindicated when she committed suicide in 1912.<sup>16</sup> But when authorities discovered Johnson was having an affair with an eighteen-year-old blond from Minnesota, Lucille Cameron, they charged him with violating the Mann Act—that is, with engaging in white slavery. The white American public, north and south, was outraged. In Johnson's hometown, Chicago, a man threw an inkwell at him when he made an appearance at his bank. Effigies of Johnson were hung from trolley and electric poles around the city. Wherever Johnson went he was greeted with cries of "Lynch him! Lynch the nigger!"<sup>17</sup> It didn't matter that Lucille Cameron insisted she was in love with Johnson and soon married him. It made no difference that she turned out to have been an established prostitute, not a seduced virgin. It didn't even matter that no violations of the Mann Act had occurred, and the original charges had to be

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dropped. By winning the heavyweight championship and by flaunting his success with white women, Johnson had crossed the line, and the white public demanded punishment.<sup>18</sup>

The national Bureau of Investigation was ordered to conduct a massive search to find *something* to pin on Johnson. After an expensive and exhaustive inquiry, it dredged up some old incidents in which Johnson had crossed state lines with a long time white mistress. Although the government usually invoked the Mann Act only to combat white slavery and commercial prostitution, officials made an exception for Johnson. He was convicted of crossing state lines with his mistress and of giving her money and presents. For most American men, these were perfectly legal activities. Johnson, however, was sentenced to a year in prison and a thousand-dollar fine. Hoping to get rid of him, government employees tacitly encouraged him to jump bail and leave the country, which he did. For the next seven years, all Johnson's efforts to make a bargain and turn himself in were rebuffed. Only in 1920 was Johnson allowed to return to the United States to serve his sentence, an impoverished and greatly humbled former champion.<sup>19</sup> The photograph of him losing his last championship bout to white fighter Jess Willard in Havana in 1915 was a standard feature in white bars and speakeasies for many years thereafter.<sup>20</sup>

By any standard, white Americans' response to Jack Johnson was excessive. Why should a mere prizefight result in riots and death? What was it about Jack Johnson that inspired the federal government to use the Bureau of Investigation to conduct a vendetta against him? That moved Congress to pass federal legislation to mitigate his impact? That impelled prominent leaders like former President Theodore Roosevelt to condemn him in print?<sup>21</sup> That caused so many respected Americans to describe Johnson's activities as "a blot on our 20th century American Civilization?"<sup>22</sup> That caused American men to celebrate his ultimate defeat in their saloons for decades?

The furor over Jack Johnson was excessive, yet it was not unique. During the decades around the turn of the century, Americans were obsessed with the connection between manhood and racial dominance. This obsession was expressed in a profusion of issues, from debates over lynching, to concern about the white man's imperialistic burden overseas, to discussions of child-rearing. The Jack Johnson controversy, then, was only one of a multitude of ways middle-class Americans found to explain male supremacy in terms of white racial dominance and, conversely, to explain white supremacy in terms of male power.

This book will investigate this turn-of-the-century connection between

manhood and race. It will argue that, between 1890 and 1917, as white middle-class men actively worked to reinforce male power, their race became a factor which was crucial to their gender. In ways which have not been well understood, whiteness was both a palpable fact and a manly ideal for these men. During these years, a variety of social and cultural factors encouraged white middle-class men to develop new explanations of why they, as men, ought to wield power and authority. In this context, we can see that Johnson's championship, as well as his self-consciously flamboyant, sexual public persona, was an intolerable—and intentional—challenge to white Americans' widespread beliefs that male power stemmed from white supremacy. Jack Johnson's racial and sexual challenge so upset the ideology of middle-class manhood that both the white press and the United States government were willing to take extraordinary measures in order to completely and utterly annihilate him.

The Jack Johnson controversy, then, simply exemplifies one of many ways Progressive Era men used ideas about white supremacy to produce a racially based ideology of male power. Hazel Carby has called for "more feminist work that interrogates sexual ideologies for their racial specificity and acknowledges whiteness, not just blackness, as a racial categorization."<sup>23</sup> This study attempts precisely that task.

In order to understand why turn-of-the-century middle-class Americans were so interested in using race to remake manhood, we need to outline a larger historical and analytical context. Thus, the rest of this chapter will consider three points. First, it will consider a question which is not as self-evident as it appears: precisely what do we mean by "manhood," and how do we study its history? Second, it will outline what was happening to middle-class manhood at the turn of the century, and why the middle class believed manhood needed to be remade. Finally, it will introduce a central set of ideas that turn-of-the-century Americans frequently used to tie male power to racial dominance—the discourse of "civilization."

### "Manhood": What Is It, and How Does It Work?

What do we mean by manhood? This question is not as simpleminded as it appears. Although most people can easily identify certain human beings as men, manhood has been defined quite differently in different times, places, and contexts.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, historians of American manhood have based their analyses on very disparate assumptions about the meaning of manhood,



which has led to confusion and misunderstanding. (I am purposely using the term "manhood" instead of "masculinity" here because, as we will see, the noun "masculinity" was only beginning to be widely adopted by 1890 and had very specific connotations which have been largely forgotten today.)

Many historians have simply assumed that manhood is an unproblematic identity—an unchanging essence—inherent in all male-bodied humans. These historians see manhood as a normal aspect of human nature, transparent and self-evident, which simply needs to be expressed without inhibiting factors like "anxiety." Although they recognize that manhood might be expressed differently at different times, they nonetheless assume that its underlying meaning remains basically the same. Historians using this sort of theoretical approach have tended to write about what men have done, historically, to express their manhood. For example, they have written fine accounts of men's activities in fraternal organizations and in the Boy Scouts. Moreover, these historians, by raising such questions as whether the Progressives experienced a "masculinity crisis," were among the first to identify male gender issues as proper subjects of historical analysis—in itself, a major contribution. However, their approach has the drawback of *assuming* what it ought to *investigate*. What did "masculinity" mean to men in organizations like the Boy Scouts? Why was it so important to them? Why would its presumed loss be painful enough to cause a "crisis"? Does power or authority have anything to do with manhood? By ignoring these historically important questions, this approach leaves the impression that manhood is a transhistorical essence, substantially unchanging over time, rooted in biology, and therefore not amenable to historical analysis—or to human efforts to change gender relations.<sup>25</sup>

Other historians have seen manhood as a culturally defined collection of traits, attributes, or sex roles. For example, one historian renders the Victorian definition of manhood as a list of adjectives: "a man was self-reliant, strong, resolute, courageous, honest."<sup>26</sup> These historians often analyze how the traits or occupations which are seen as masculine change from period to period or class to class. For example, colonial American men were socialized to be strong patriarchal fathers, while nineteenth-century middle-class men were shunted off to a "separate sphere" to be competitive businessmen. By investigating how manhood changes over time, historians using this approach encourage readers to see gender relations as mutable and improvable. Yet this approach, too, has its limitations. Attempting to define manhood as a coherent set of prescriptive ideals, traits, or sex roles obscures the complexities and contradictions of any historical moment. For example, some historians argue that middle-class Progressive manhood was most characterized

by chest-thumping virility, vigorous outdoor athleticism, and fears of feminization. Others disagree, and stress Progressive men's growing interest in erstwhile "feminine" occupations like parenthood and domesticity. Envisioning manhood as a unified set of traits gives us no way to consider the relations between these two coexisting but contradictory aspects of Progressive manhood, nor does it give us a way to understand how men themselves negotiated the contradictions.<sup>27</sup>

This study is based on the premise that gender—whether manhood or womanhood—is a historical, ideological process.<sup>28</sup> Through that process, individuals are positioned and position themselves as men or as women. Thus, I don't see manhood as either an intrinsic essence or a collection of traits, attributes, or sex roles. Manhood—or "masculinity," as it is commonly termed today—is a continual, dynamic process. Through that process, men claim certain kinds of authority, based upon their particular type of bodies. At any time in history, many contradictory ideas about manhood are available to explain what men are, how they ought to behave, and what sorts of powers and authorities they may claim, as men. Part of the way gender functions is to hide these contradictions and to camouflage the fact that gender is dynamic and always changing. Instead, gender is constructed as a fact of nature, and manhood is assumed to be an unchanging, transhistorical essence, consisting of fixed, naturally occurring traits. To study the history of manhood, I would argue, is to unmask this process and study the historical ways different ideologies about manhood develop, change, are combined, amended, contested—and gain the status of "truth."<sup>29</sup>

To define manhood as an ideological process is not to say that it deals only with intellectuals or ideas. It is, rather, to say that manhood or masculinity is the cultural process whereby concrete individuals are constituted as members of a preexisting social category—as men. The ideological process of gender—whether manhood or womanhood—works through a complex political technology, composed of a variety of institutions, ideas, and daily practices. Combined, these processes produce a set of truths about who an individual is and what he or she can do, based upon his or her body. Individuals are positioned through that process of gender, whether they choose to be or not. Although some individuals may reject certain aspects of their positioning, rare indeed is the person who considers "itself" neither a man nor a woman. And with that positioning as "man" or "woman" inevitably comes a host of other social meanings, expectations, and identities. Individuals have no choice but to act upon these meanings—to accept or reject them, adopt or adapt them—in order to be able to live their lives in human society.

Another way to say this is to define manhood as the process which creates

"men" by linking male genital anatomy to a male identity, and linking both anatomy and identity to particular arrangements of authority and power. Logically, this is an entirely arbitrary process. Anatomy, identity, and authority have no intrinsic relationship. Only the process of manhood—of the gender system—allows each to stand for the others.

We can see more concretely how this cultural process works by returning to our discussion of Jack Johnson and considering how Johnson's championship was construed by his culture's historically specific way of linking male anatomy, identity, and authority. Late Victorian culture had identified the powerful, large male body of the heavyweight prizefighter (and not the smaller bodies of the middleweight or welterweight) as the epitome of manhood. The heavyweight's male body was so equated with male identity and power that American whites rigidly prevented all men they deemed unable to wield political and social power from asserting any claim to the heavyweight championship. Logically, there was no reason to see a heavyweight fighter's claim to bodily strength as a claim to public power. Yet the metonymic process of turn-of-the-century manhood constructed bodily strength and social authority as identical. Thus, for twenty-seven years African American men, whom whites saw as less manly than themselves, were forbidden to assert any claim to this pugilistic manhood. When Johnson actually won the heavyweight title, white men clamored for Jeffries to ameliorate the situation and restore manhood to what they believed was its proper functioning.

Yet Johnson was not only positioned by these cultural constructs—he also actively used them to position himself. Embittered by years of vainly seeking a title bout, Johnson consciously played upon white Americans' fears of threatened manhood by laying public claim to all three of the metonymic facets of manhood—body, identity, and authority. During his public sparring matches, Johnson actually wrapped his penis in gauze to enhance its size. Clad only in his boxing shorts, he would stroll the ring, flaunting his genital endowments for all to admire, displaying his superior body to demonstrate his superior manhood.<sup>30</sup> In his private life, Johnson also took great pleasure in assuming a more conventional middle-class manly identity, sometimes taking on the persona of a successful self-made man. In 1912, he publicly claimed the right to move into an exclusive white suburb until the horrified residents took steps to prevent him.<sup>31</sup> He also dressed both his beautiful blond wives in jewels and furs and paraded them in front of the press. Johnson, who grew up in Texas, was well aware that throughout the South black men were regularly tortured and lynched for consorting with white women, and that even Northern whites feared that black men lusted

irrepressibly after pure white womanhood. Therefore, he made certain the public could not view his wives as pathetic victims of Negro lust. Instead, he presented his wives as wealthy, respectable women whose husband was successful and manly enough to support them in comfort and luxury.

Johnson was equally insistent upon his masculine right to wield a man's power and authority. He treated minor brushes with the law—his many speeding tickets and automobile violations—contemptuously, as mere inconveniences which he was man enough to ignore.<sup>32</sup> In his autobiography,



Fig. 1. An elegantly dressed Jack Johnson strikes a manly pose for a photographer in 1911, the year after he won the world heavyweight championship. Courtesy of Photos and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

he claims (falsely, according to his biographer) to have "mingled . . . with kings and queens; monarchs and rulers of nations have been my associates."<sup>33</sup> On a more sinister note, he physically beat and emotionally maltreated his wives and mistresses, implicitly claiming a man's right to dominate women.<sup>34</sup> In short he recognized that dominant white usage prevented him from being treated as the epitome of manhood, as a white heavyweight champion would be treated. Nevertheless he scornfully refused to accept this racial slight. Defiantly, Johnson positioned himself as a real man by laying ostentatious claim to a male body, male identity, and male power.

As Jack Johnson's example suggests, then, gender ideology, although coercive, does not preclude human agency. Numerous ideological strands of gender, class, and race positioned Johnson in a web which he could not entirely escape. He was inescapably a man, a black man, the son of a freed slave brought up in poverty, and so on. Yet although these discourses inescapably defined him, Johnson was able to take advantage of the contradictions within and between these ideologies in order to assert himself as a man and a pro-active historical agent. Recognizing that "Negroes" were considered less than men, he sometimes asserted his manliness in a race-neutral context, as a champion, a self-made man, and a world-famous hero. In other situations, he played upon his blackness, using his champion's body to present himself as an embodiment of highly sexed Negro masculinity. In all these ways, Johnson reinforced his claim to powerful manhood.

In other words, ideologies of gender are not totalizing. Like all ideologies, they are internally contradictory. Because of these internal contradictions, and because ideologies come into conflict with other ideologies, men and women are able to influence the ongoing ideological processes of gender, even though they cannot escape them. Men and women cannot invent completely new formations of gender, but they can adapt old ones. They can combine and recombine them, exploit the contradictions between them, and work to modify them. They can also alter their own position in relation to those ideologies, as Jack Johnson did. Thus, looking at manhood as an ongoing ideological process—instead of as an inherent essence, or a set of traits or sex roles—allows historians to study the ways people have been historical agents of change.<sup>35</sup>

### Class, Gender, and the Impulse to Remake Manhood

Historians have long been aware that turn-of-the-century middle-class men seem to have been unusually interested in—even obsessed with—

manhood. They have spoken of a "virility impulse" among the Progressives, a cult of the "strenuous life," and, most frequently, a "masculinity crisis" among American men, pointing to the popularity of cowboy novels, the craze for hunting and fishing, and the profusion of "he-man" rhetoric.<sup>36</sup> Other historians have denied such a "masculinity crisis" existed, correctly noting that despite virile, chest-thumping rhetoric, most middle-class men did not flee to the Western frontier but remained devoted to hearth and home.<sup>37</sup>

Both positions have merit. Middle-class men were unusually obsessed with manhood at the turn of the century; yet I would hesitate to call this obsession a "crisis." For one thing, there is no evidence that most turn-of-the-century men ever lost confidence in the belief that people with male bodies naturally possessed both a man's identity and a man's right to wield power. They might not have been entirely certain *how* these three factors were related, but few seem to have lost confidence *that* they were related. Moreover, to imply that masculinity was in crisis suggests that manhood is a transhistorical category or fixed essence that has its good moments as well as its bad, rather than an ideological construct which is constantly being remade. Gender, which we have defined as an ongoing ideological process, implies constant contradiction, change, and renegotiation. Thus, change in the gender system—even extensive change—doesn't necessarily imply a "crisis." In any event, by 1890 a number of social, economic, and cultural changes were converging to make the ongoing gender process especially active for the American middle class. These factors were influencing middle-class views of men's bodies, men's identities, and men's access to power.

Class issues underlay many of these changes. By the last decades of the nineteenth century, middle-class power and authority were being challenged in a variety of ways which middle-class men interpreted—plausibly—as a challenge to their manhood. Ever since the middle class had begun to define itself as a class in the early nineteenth century, ideals of gender and of "manliness" had been central to middle-class consciousness.<sup>38</sup> Between 1820 and 1860, as increasing numbers of men had begun to earn comfortable livings as entrepreneurs, professionals, and managers, the middle class had begun to differentiate itself from other classes by stressing its gentility and respectability.<sup>39</sup> Gender was central to this self-definition, as the middle class celebrated true women as pious, maternal guardians of virtue and domesticity.<sup>40</sup> True manhood was equally crucial to antebellum middle-class identity. Middle-class parents taught their sons to build a strong, manly "character" as they would build a muscle, through repetitive exercises of control over impulse.<sup>41</sup> The middle class saw this ability to control powerful

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\* masculine passions through strong character and a powerful will as a primary source of men's strength and authority over both women and the lower classes. By gaining the manly strength to control himself, a man gained the strength, as well as the duty, to protect and direct those weaker than himself: his wife, his children, or his employees.

The mingled honor, high-mindedness, and strength stemming from this powerful self-mastery were encapsulated in the term "manliness."<sup>42</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, ideals of manliness remained central to middle-class male identity. In the context of the market economy's unpredictability, a manly character built on high-minded self-restraint was seen as the rock on which middle-class men could build their fortunes. Middle-class men were awarded (or denied) credit based on others' assessment of the manliness of their characters, and credit raters like Dun and Bradstreet reported on businessmen's honesty, probity, and family life.<sup>43</sup> Manly control over impulse also helped the middle class develop their distinctive family practices. Celebrations of manly self-restraint encouraged young men to postpone marriage until they could support a family in proper middle-class style, to work hard and live abstemiously so that they could amass the capital to go into business for themselves.<sup>44</sup> In short, by the end of the century, a discourse of manliness stressing self-mastery and restraint expressed and shaped middle-class identity.

By the 1890s, however, both "manliness" and middle-class identity seemed to falter, partly because economic changes had rendered earlier ideologies of middle-class manhood less plausible. Middle-class manliness had been created in the context of a small-scale, competitive capitalism which had all but disappeared by 1910. Between 1870 and 1910, the proportion of middle-class men who were self-employed dropped from 67 percent to 37 percent.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, the rapid expansion of low-level clerical work in stores and offices meant that young men beginning their careers as clerks were unlikely to gain promotion to responsible, well-paid management positions, as their fathers had.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, between 1873 and 1896, a recurring round of severe economic depressions resulted in tens of thousands of bankruptcies and drove home the reality that even a successful, self-denying small businessman might lose everything, unexpectedly and through no fault of his own. Under these conditions, the sons of the middle class faced the real possibility that traditional sources of male power and status would remain closed to them forever—that they would become failures instead of self-made men.

Under these changing conditions, manly self-denial grew increasingly

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unprofitable. No longer would the dream of manly independent entrepreneurship be achievable for most middle-class men. In this context, Victorian codes of manly self-restraint began to seem less relevant. Increasingly, middle-class men were attracted to new ideals—ideals at odds with older codes of manliness.

Concurrent with middle-class men's narrowing career opportunities came new opportunities for commercial leisure. The growth of a consumer culture encouraged many middle-class men, faced with lowered career expectations, to find identity in leisure instead of in work.<sup>47</sup> Yet codes of manliness dictated they must work hard and become economically independent. The consumer culture's ethos of pleasure and frivolity clashed with ideals of manly self-restraint, further undermining the potency of middle-class manliness.<sup>48</sup> Economically based changes in middle-class culture were thus eroding the sense of manliness which remained so essential to nineteenth-century men's identity.

At the same time middle-class ideals of manliness were eroding from within, middle-class men's social authority faced an onslaught from without—from working-class men competing with them for control over the masculine arena of politics. During the nineteenth century, electoral politics had been viewed as part of the male sphere, as an exclusively male bailiwick. Indeed, as Paula Baker has shown, partisan politics were seen as a proving ground for male identity. Political campaigns were male rituals celebrating participants' identities both as party members and as men. At the same time, electoral politics dramatized and reinforced men's connection, as men, to the very real power of the government.<sup>49</sup> Men objected so strenuously to woman suffrage precisely because male power and male identity were both so central to nineteenth-century electoral politics. In this light, immigrant men's contestation for control of city governments can be seen, in a very real sense, as a contestation of manhood. As immigrants wrested political control from middle-class men in one city after another, a very real basis of urban middle-class men's manhood received both symbolic and material blows. Immigrant men's efforts to control urban politics were, in a very real sense, contests of manhood—contests which the immigrants frequently won.<sup>50</sup>

While immigrant working men were challenging middle-class men's manly power to govern the cities, other laboring men were challenging their manly power to control the nation. Beginning with the Great Uprising of 1877, the Gilded Age had seen an abundance of labor unrest. Between 1881 and 1905 there were nearly thirty-seven thousand strikes, often violent, in-

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volving seven million workers—an impressive number in a nation whose total work force in 1900 numbered only twenty-nine million.<sup>51</sup> To many, class war seemed imminent. The strength of socialist and anarchist movements reinforced these fears. Middle-class men worried that they were losing control of the country. The power of manhood, as the middle class understood it, encompassed the power to wield civic authority, to control strife and unrest, and to shape the future of the nation. Middle-class men's inability to fulfill these manly obligations and exercise this manly authority, in the face of challenges by working class and immigrant men, reinforced their focus on manhood.

Immigrant and working-class men were not the only ones challenging middle-class men's claims on public power and authority. Concurrently, the middle-class woman's movement was challenging past constructions of manhood by agitating for woman's advancement. "Advancement," as these New Women understood it, meant granting women access to activities which had previously been reserved for men. Small but increasing numbers of middle-class women were claiming the right to a college education, to become clergymen, social scientists, and physicians, and even to vote. Men reacted passionately by ridiculing these New Women, prophesying that they would make themselves ill and destroy national life, insisting that they were rebelling against nature. As one outraged male clergyman complained, feminists were opposing "the basic facts of womanhood itself. . . . We shall gain nothing in the end by displacing manhood by womanhood or the other way around."<sup>52</sup> Yet the New Woman did "displace manhood by womanhood," if only because her successes undermined the assumption that education, professional status, and political power required a male body. The woman's movement thus increased the pressure on middle-class men to reformulate manhood.<sup>53</sup>

These challenges from women, workers, and the changing economy not only affected men's sense of identity and authority, they even affected men's view of the male body. White middle-class men now learned that they were threatened by a newly discovered disease, "neurasthenia." According to doctors, neurasthenia was spreading throughout the middle class, due to the excessive brain work and nervous strain which professionals and businessmen endured as they struggled for success in an increasingly challenging economy.<sup>54</sup> This discovery of neurasthenia led many to fear that middle-class men as a sex had grown decadent. Working class and immigrant men, with their strikes and their "primitive" customs, seemed to possess a virility and vitality which decadent white middle-class men had lost.

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Not coincidentally, while some doctors were focusing their attention on the neurasthenic male body, other physicians and medical investigators began to pay a great deal of attention to male homosexuals. After the 1880s, medical experts ceased to see homosexuality as a punishable act, and began to see it as an aberrant and deficient male identity, a case of the male body gone wrong through disease or congenital deformity.<sup>55</sup> Attention to the figure of the homosexual man—newly dubbed the "invert"—was one way to investigate, medicalize, and contain the wider social, cultural, and economic forces that threatened the potency of middle-class manhood.

Although some medical experts were discovering new identities and illnesses which threatened men's bodies, other middle-class men were finding new ways to celebrate men's bodies as healthy, muscular, and powerful.<sup>56</sup> Even the popular imagery of a perfect male body changed. In the 1860s, the middle class had seen the ideal male body as lean and wiry. By the 1890s, however, an ideal male body required physical bulk and well-defined muscles. A prime example would be Jim Jeffries' heavyweight prizefighter's body.<sup>57</sup> Middle-class men's new fascination with muscularity allowed strongmen Eugene Sandow and Bernarr McFadden to make fortunes promoting themselves and marketing bodybuilding magazines like *Physical Culture*.<sup>58</sup> By the 1890s, strenuous exercise and team sports had come to be seen as crucial to the development of powerful manhood. College football had become a national craze; and commentators like Theodore Roosevelt argued that football's ability to foster virility was worth even an occasional death on the playing field.<sup>59</sup>

Between 1880 and 1910, then, middle-class men were especially interested in manhood. Economic changes were undermining Victorian ideals of self-restrained manliness. Working class and immigrant men, as well as middle-class women, were challenging white middle-class men's beliefs that they were the ones who should control the nation's destiny. Medical authorities were warning of the fragility of men's bodies, and athletes like Jim Jeffries, boxing's "White Hope," were providing new models of muscular manhood to emulate. All this activity suggests that men were actively, even enthusiastically, engaging in the process of remaking manhood. Yet although older meanings of manhood were gradually losing their persuasiveness, masculinity was hardly in crisis. Middle-class men were clearly still convinced that manhood was powerful, that it was part of their identity, and that all beings with healthy male bodies had it. Indeed, the passions inspired by Jack Johnson's heavyweight championship and his interracial marriages demonstrate the vitality of the ongoing process of remaking manhood.



### Multiple Strategies to Remake Manhood: Sex, Class, Race, and the Invention of "Masculinity"

Facing a variety of challenges to traditional ways of understanding male bodies, male identities, and male authority, middle-class men adopted a variety of strategies in order to remake manhood. Uncomfortable with the ways their history and culture were positioning them as men, they experimented with a host of cultural materials in order to synthesize a manhood more powerful, more to their liking. In the process, they began to formulate new ideologies of manhood—ideologies not of "manliness" but of "masculinity."

→ Many men tried to revitalize manhood by ~~celebrating all things male~~. Millions joined fraternal orders like the Red Men, the Freemasons, and the Oddfellows.<sup>60</sup> Others concentrated on making boys into men through organizations like the Boy Scouts and YMCA.<sup>61</sup> Many, as we have already seen, glorified the athletic male body through muscular sports like prizefighting, college football, and bodybuilding.<sup>62</sup> Some wrote books about old-fashioned manliness, like Senator Albert Beveridge's popular, platitude-filled *The Young Man and the World*.<sup>63</sup>

→ Other men believed they could revitalize manhood by opposing excessive femininity. Some focused on strong-minded women as the problem, and complained about feminism, coeducation, divorce, and the suffragists.<sup>64</sup> Others worked to safeguard little boys' masculinity by recruiting more male teachers.<sup>65</sup> Still others warned that Victorian culture itself was "effeminate" and insisted that men must re-virilize their society. As Henry James had Basil Ransom put it in *The Bostonians* (1886),

The whole generation is womanized; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it's a feminine, nervous, hysterical, chattering canting age, an age of hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solicitudes and coddled sensibilities. . . . The masculine character, the ability to dare and endure, to know and yet not fear reality, to look the world in the face and take it for what it is. . . . that is what I want to preserve; or rather. . . . recover; and I must tell you that I don't in the least care what becomes of you ladies while I make the attempt!<sup>66</sup>

Conversely, other men, perhaps feeling that women had appropriated too much of the male sphere, worked to take control of erstwhile "feminine" occupations away from women. For example, men began to take a greater in-

terest in fatherhood and to claim an active role in raising their children.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, the mainline Protestant denominations tried strenuously to "masculinize" the churches through organized activities like the Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911–12, which aimed to find "1,000,000 missing men" to virilize the churches.<sup>68</sup>

Class, too, provided materials to remake manhood. Just as some men were remaking middle-class manhood by appropriating activities which had been deemed feminine, others appropriated activities which had been deemed working-class. Throughout the nineteenth century, many working-class men had embraced a "rough" code of manhood formulated, in part, to resist the respectable, moralistic manliness of the middle class. This rough, working-class masculinity had celebrated institutions and values antithetical to middle-class Victorian manliness—institutions like saloons, music halls and prizefights; values like physical prowess, pugnacity, and sexuality.<sup>69</sup> Since the 1820s, advocates of this rough working-class manhood had ridiculed middle-class manliness as weak and effeminate, while respectable middle-class men had derided this rough masculine ethos as coarse and backward. By the 1880s, however, as the power of Victorian manliness eroded, many middle-class men began to find this rough working-class masculinity powerfully attractive. In fashionable New York, for example, luxurious "lobster palaces" and Broadway restaurants provided daring middle-class men with a genteel analogue to the working man's saloon.<sup>70</sup> Boxing and prizefighting, too—long associated with the working class—became fascinating to middle- and upper-class men. Amateur sparring became popular and respectable enough for even YMCAs to offer instruction. By the time Jack Johnson became champion in 1908, many middle-class men had come to accept boxing champions like Jim Jeffries as embodiments of their own sense of manhood.<sup>71</sup>

As men worked to remake manhood, they adopted new words which could express their dynamic new understandings of the nature of male power. During the 1890s, they coined the new epithets "sissy," "pussy-foot," "cold feet" and "stuffed shirt" to denote behavior which had once appeared self-possessed and manly but now seemed overcivilized and effeminate.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, the very word "overcivilized" was coined during these years.<sup>73</sup> Most telling, however, was the increasing use of a relatively new noun to describe the essence of admirable manhood. This newly popular noun was "masculinity."

Although historians usually use the terms "manly" and "masculine" interchangeably, as if they were synonymous, the two words carried quite

Take on working-class activities

Football

Whitman

✗  
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Manly → Masculine

different connotations throughout the nineteenth century. Until about 1890, literate Victorians rarely referred to individual men as "masculine." Instead, admirable men were called "manly."<sup>74</sup> After 1890, however, the words "masculine" and "masculinity" began to be used far more frequently — precisely because they could convey the new attributes of powerful manhood which middle-class men were working to synthesize.

To understand the difference between "manliness" and "masculinity," we can consult *The Century Dictionary* (an American version of the *Oxford English Dictionary*) which, in 1890, outlined the differences between the two terms. "Manly," as there defined, had what we would now term a moral dimension: "Manly . . . is the word into which have been gathered the highest conceptions of what is noble in man or worthy of his manhood." "Manly" was defined as "possessing the proper characteristics of a man; independent in spirit or bearing; strong, brave, large-minded, etc." and was synonymous with "honorable, highminded." "Manliness" was "character or conduct worthy of a man."<sup>75</sup> In other words, "manliness" comprised all the worthy, moral attributes which the Victorian middle class admired in a man. Indeed, historians rightly use the term "manliness" to mean "Victorian ideals of manhood" — for example, sexual self-restraint, a powerful will, a strong character.<sup>76</sup> "Manliness," in short, was precisely the sort of middle-class Victorian cultural formulation which grew shaky in the late nineteenth century. Thereafter, when men wished to invoke a different sort of male power, they would increasingly use the words "masculine" and "masculinity."

Unlike "manly," which referred to the "highest conceptions" of manhood, the adjective "masculine" was used to refer to any characteristics, good or bad, that all men had. As *The Century Dictionary* put it, "Masculine . . . applies to men and their attributes." "Masculine" was defined as "having the distinguishing characteristics of the male sex among human beings, physical or mental. . . suitable for the male sex; adapted to or intended for the use of males."<sup>77</sup> During the early nineteenth century, "masculine" was most frequently employed to differentiate between things pertaining to men versus women — for example, "masculine clothing," "a masculine gait," or "masculine occupations." Thus "masculine," more frequently than "manly," was applied across class or race boundaries; for, by definition, all men were masculine.

"Masculine" thus existed as a relatively empty, fluid adjective — devoid of moral or emotional meaning — when the cultural changes of the 1890s undermined the power of "manliness." This very fluidity and emotional neu-

trality made the word "masculine" attractive to people casting about to synthesize new explanations and descriptions of male power.

As the adjective "masculine" began to take on these new sorts of connotations, people began to need a noun to mean "masculine things in the aggregate," a word they hadn't needed before "masculine" began to carry such powerful freight. It is probably not coincidental, then, that in the mid-nineteenth century, a new English noun was adopted from the French and very slowly made its way into popular usage — "masculinity."<sup>78</sup> While the noun "manliness" was in common usage throughout the nineteenth century, as late as 1890 Merriam and Webster's dictionary labeled the noun "masculinity" "rare." Earlier dictionaries frequently omit "masculinity" altogether.<sup>79</sup> The 1890 *Century Dictionary*, however, defined masculinity as "the quality or state of being masculine; masculine character or traits."

As middle-class men worked to add new shades of meaning and new powers to that masculine "quality or state," the words "masculine" and "masculinity" took on increasingly definite shades of meaning. By 1930, "masculinity" had developed into the mix of "masculine" ideals more familiar to twentieth-century Americans — ideals like aggressiveness, physical force, and male sexuality. Of course, these ideals had been associated with manhood from very early times. Yet with the rise of the middle class in the early nineteenth century, new "manly" ideals of manhood had partially eclipsed these traditional male values for most "respectable" Americans, although "rough" working-class male culture had continued to celebrate them.<sup>80</sup> It took several generations for the new formulations of "masculinity" to overtake Victorian "manliness" as the primary middle-class ideology of powerful manhood. Indeed, in 1917, when this study ends, middle-class Americans were equally likely to praise a man for his upright "manliness" as for his virile "masculinity." Yet in retrospect, the overarching direction of change — from "manliness" to "masculinity" — can clearly be seen.

Thus, in 1910, when Jack Johnson stepped into the ring to challenge Jim Jeffries for the championship, he was entering a larger arena as well — an arena in which white middle-class men were casting about for new ways to explain the sources and nature of male power and authority. Men were not only flocking to entertainments which had been associated with rough working-class men, like prizefighting; they were also joining male-only institutions like the Freemasons, working to masculinize the high schools by recruiting male teachers, ridiculing woman suffrage and coeducation, and even changing the very language associated with manhood with new words

From manliness  
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masculinitylook  
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like "sissy" and "masculinity." Many other middle-class strategies of remaking manhood during these years could be discussed as well.<sup>81</sup> This study, however, will focus on only one type of strategy—the ways middle-class men and women worked to re-define manhood in terms of racial dominance, especially in terms of "civilization."

### Constructing Male Dominance through Racial Dominance: An Ongoing Strategy

As the middle class worked to remake manhood, many turned from gender to a related category—one which, like gender, also linked bodies, identities, and power. That category was race.<sup>82</sup> In a variety of ways, Americans who were trying to reformulate gender explained their ideas about manhood by drawing connections between male power and white supremacy, as we have already seen with white men's hysterical response to Jack Johnson's heavy-weight championship.

In itself, linking whiteness to male power was nothing new. White Americans had long associated powerful manhood with white supremacy. For example, during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, American citizenship rights had been construed as "manhood" rights which inhered to white males, only. Framers of state constitutions in sixteen northern and western states explicitly placed African American men in the same category as women, as "dependents."<sup>83</sup> Negro males, whether free or slave, were forbidden to exercise "manhood" rights— forbidden to vote, hold electoral office, serve on juries, or join the military. Similarly, white working men insisted that, as men, they had a claim to manly independence that women and Negro men lacked.<sup>84</sup> The conclusion was implicit but widely understood: Negro males, unlike white males, were less than men.

Conversely, African American men understood that their purported lack of manhood legitimized their social and political disfranchisement. They therefore protested that they were, indeed, men. Male slaves agitating for their freedom demanded their "manhood rights."<sup>85</sup> Frederick Douglass said that his first overt resistance to a whipping, as a sixteen-year-old slave, "revived within me a sense of my own manhood."<sup>86</sup> David Walker complained in 1828 that "all the inhabitants of the earth, (except, however, the sons of Africa) are called *men*, and of course are, and ought to be free. But we (colored people) and our children are *brutes!!* and of course are, and ought to be SLAVES. . . . Oh! my colored brethren, when shall we arise from this death-

like apathy!—and be men!!"<sup>87</sup> During the Civil War, 180,000 black men enlisted in the Union Army, despite unequal and offensive treatment, because they understood that enlisting was their most potent tool to claim that they were men and should have the same rights and privileges as all American men.<sup>88</sup> These African Americans all understood that the only way to obtain civic power was through gender—by proving that they, too, were men.

Although linking manhood to whiteness was no novelty, by the 1880s middle-class white Americans were discovering an extraordinary variety of ways to link male power to race. Sometimes they linked manly power with



Fig. 2. A manly European explorer is implicitly contrasted with "inferior" African pygmies in this illustration from a 1908 issue of the *National Geographic*. Courtesy of Brooke Hammerle.



the racial supremacy of civilized white men. For example, popular anthropology magazines like the *National Geographic*, first published in 1889, achieved a large circulation by breathlessly depicting the heroic adventures of "civilized" white male explorers among "primitive" tribes in darkest Africa.<sup>89</sup> A photographic illustration from a 1908 article, "A Journey through the Eastern Portion of the Congo State," encapsulates this dynamic. A tall white explorer, dignified, blond, carefully clad in jacket, hat, boots, socks, and knickers, and carrying a state-of-the-art rifle, is flanked—and implicitly contrasted with—two black "pygmy trackers." Savage-looking, naked, and armed only with bow and arrows, the pygmies reach barely to his shoulders. In both stature and armament, they are implicitly less powerful, less manly than the white man.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, Anglo-Saxonist imperialists insisted that civilized white men had a racial genius for self-government which necessitated the conquest of more "primitive," darker races. Like civilized women (whose efforts to vote had been met by howls of outraged manhood), primitive men lacked the racial genius to exercise "manhood rights." "God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation and self-admiration. No! He has . . . made us adepts in government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples," insisted Senator Albert Beveridge in 1900, calling on the white men of the Senate to organize a government for the Filipinos.<sup>91</sup> In a variety of venues and contexts, white Americans contrasted civilized white men with savage dark-skinned men, depicting the former as paragons of manly superiority.

Yet in other contexts, middle-class white men adopted a contrasting strategy and linked powerful manhood to the savagery and "primitivism" of dark-skinned races, whose masculinity they claimed to share. According to historian E. Anthony Rotundo, by 1870 middle-class men's letters and diaries had become infused with a new sense of primal manhood very different from moral Victorian manliness. These late-nineteenth-century men—unlike their fathers' generation—believed that true manhood involved a primal virility which Rotundo has called the "masculine primitive." According to him, this masculine primitive stressed "the belief that all males—civilized or not—shared in the same primordial instincts for survival," and that "civilized men—more than women—were primitives in many important ways."<sup>92</sup> Middle-class men who saw themselves in terms of this masculine primitive ethos were drawn to a variety of "savage" activities. White men joined fraternal organizations like the Improved Order of Red Men in order to perform elaborate weekly rituals imitating their fantasies of American In-

primitive man as dominant category to replace women

Darwin  
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the savage as an intrinsic part of manhood

dian adventures.<sup>93</sup> Interest in camping, hunting, and fishing—seen as virile survival skills of primitive man—flourished as never before. Middle-class men began to read heroic adventure stories: Jack London's novels, westerns like *The Virginian*, swashbucklers like *Graustark*.<sup>94</sup> Primitive heroics so permeated popular literature that one genteel critic complained, "Must a man have slain his lion and his bear to be anointed king, and is there no virtue in being a simple shepherd? Are we so barbarous?"<sup>95</sup>

**"Civilization" and Its Malcontents: Linking Race to Middle-Class Manhood through the Discourse of Civilization**

How could middle-class white men simultaneously construct powerful manhood in terms of both "civilized manliness" and "primitive masculinity?" Although these strategies may seem contradictory, they appeared coherent at the time because they both drew on the powerful discourse of civilization. "Civilization," as turn-of-the-century Americans understood it, simultaneously denoted attributes of race and gender. By invoking the discourse of civilization in a variety of contradictory ways, many Americans found a powerfully effective way to link male dominance to white supremacy.<sup>96</sup>

"Civilization" was protean in its applications. Different people used it to legitimize conservatism and change, male dominance and militant feminism, white racism and African American resistance. On the one hand, middle- and upper-class white men effectively mobilized "civilization" in order to maintain their class, gender, and racial authority, whether they invoked primitive masculinity or civilized manliness. Yet as effective as "civilization" was in its various ways of constructing male dominance, it was never totalizing. People opposed to white male dominance invoked civilization to legitimize quite different points of views. Feminists pointed to civilization to demonstrate the importance of woman's advancement. African Americans cited civilization to prove the necessity of racial egalitarianism.

Thus, the interesting thing about "civilization" is not what was meant by the term, but the multiple ways it was used to legitimize different sorts of claims to power. Therefore, rather than trying to reduce civilization to a set of specific formulations or points, I will be discussing it as a discourse that worked, albeit unevenly, to establish (or to challenge) white male hegemony. In other words, this study's focus will be the process of articulation, itself. Rather than trying to isolate commonalities about what people meant by

"civilization"—and perhaps flattening out contradictions and complexities—I will be concentrating on the different, even contradictory, ways people invoked the discourse of civilization to construct what it meant to be a man.

A brief tangent on methodology is in order. Like many recent historians, I have been influenced by Michel Foucault and his ideas of discourse. By "discourse," I mean a set of ideas and practices which, taken together, organize both the way a society defines certain truths about itself and the way it deploys social power. This sort of methodology shifts intellectual history in three useful ways.<sup>97</sup>

First, unlike traditional intellectual history, this methodology does not differentiate between intellectual ideas and material practices, or between superstructure and base. Discourses include both intellectual constructs and material practices. Following Foucault, historians who use this methodology presume that intellectual knowledge and concrete power relations are mutually constitutive. On the one hand, the daily practices which enforce a society's power relations—its institutions, customs, political movements—determine what sort of knowledges will appear to be true. On the other hand, ideas widely accepted as true determine what sorts of power relations people believe are desirable, as well as what sorts of political aims and strategies they can imagine. This simultaneous focus on intellectual constructs and material practices allows historians to simultaneously analyze ideas and practices, agency and power.

Second, this methodology assumes that the ideas and practices comprising any discourse will be multiple, inconsistent, and contradictory. As we've already begun to see with "civilization," discourses can be complex. Their very contradictions frequently give them a tenacious power over people's thoughts and actions. Rather than attempting to catalogue a unified set of ideas, or to reconcile the inconsistencies, this methodology interrogates the very different ways discourses are articulated in different situations.

Finally, because it interrogates these inconsistencies, this methodology implies a particular emphasis on human agency and the possibility of intentional change. As we saw earlier with Jack Johnson, the inherent contradictions and inconsistencies within and between discourses allow people to bend them to their own purposes. Discourse theory does not leave open an infinite possibility for intentional change. Only certain types of truths, and therefore only certain possibilities for action, are imaginable under the terms of existing discourses. Yet because so many potential ambiguities and contradictions exist within any discourse many possibilities for dissent and resistance always remain.

Bearing these methodological assumptions in mind, let us return to our discussion of "civilization." By about 1890, the discourse of civilization had taken on a very specific set of meanings which revolved around three factors: race, gender, and millennial assumptions about human evolutionary progress. Feminist and antiracist versions of civilization might combine these three variables quite differently from hegemonic versions; yet race, gender, and millennialism—in some form—were central to all.

To understand the counterhegemonic versions, we first need to understand the dominant version of civilization, and the way it interwove race, gender, and millennialism. To begin with race: In the context of the late nineteenth century's popularized Darwinism, civilization was seen as an explicitly racial concept. It meant more than simply "the west" or "industrially advanced societies." Civilization denoted a precise stage in human racial evolution—the one following the more primitive stages of "savagery" and "barbarism." Human races were assumed to evolve from simple savagery, through violent barbarism, to advanced and valuable civilization. But only white races had, as yet, evolved to the civilized stage. In fact, people sometimes spoke of civilization as if it were itself a racial trait, inherited by all Anglo-Saxons and other "advanced" white races.<sup>98</sup>

Gender, too, was an essential component of civilization. Indeed, one could identify advanced civilizations by the degree of their sexual differentiation.<sup>99</sup> Savage (that is, nonwhite) men and women were believed to be almost identical, but men and women of the civilized races had evolved pronounced sexual differences. Civilized women were womanly—delicate, spiritual, dedicated to the home. And civilized white men were the most manly ever evolved—firm of character; self-controlled; protectors of women and children. In contrast, gender differences among savages seemed to be blurred. Savage women were aggressive, carried heavy burdens, and did all sorts of "masculine" hard labor. Savage men were emotional and lacked a man's ability to restrain their passions. Savage men were creatures of whim who raped women instead of protecting them. Savage men abandoned their children instead of providing for them. Savage men even dressed like women, in skirts and jewelry. In short, the pronounced sexual differences celebrated in the middle class's doctrine of separate spheres were assumed to be absent in savagery, but to be an intrinsic and necessary aspect of higher civilization.<sup>100</sup>

Finally, the discourse of civilization linked both male dominance and white supremacy to a Darwinist version of Protestant millennialism. A Christian millennialist interpretation of human progress had been rooted in

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civilization

American culture for centuries. According to these doctrines, ever since Adam and Eve, human history had one cosmic purpose: the millennial fight against evil. Human history was itself the battleground, as Christian men and women, directed by the hidden hand of God, struggled against evil. Each small victory brought the world closer to the millennium—the day when evil would be vanquished, and Christ would rule over one thousand years of perfect peace and righteousness on earth.<sup>101</sup>

After Darwin's theories about evolution became widely accepted, however, many Protestants became confused about their place in this millennial scenario. As most educated Americans understood Darwin, the world evolved through survival of the fittest. Random conflict and violence had shaped the world's history, not the hand of God. Moreover, Darwin provided no cosmic telos to human evolution: one could hardly expect violent natural selection to culminate in a peaceful millennium.<sup>102</sup>

American Protestants who accepted Darwinism, but could not bear to jettison the belief that they were part of a cosmic plan to perfect the world, found in "civilization" a way to reconcile the seemingly contradictory implications of Darwinism and Protestant millennialism. Discourses of civilization gave millennialism a Darwinistic mechanism. Instead of God working in history to perfect the world, believers in civilization described evolution working in history to perfect the world. Instead of Christians battling infidels, they envisioned superior races outsurviving inferior races. Eventually, perfect human evolution would triumph. The most advanced, civilized races—that is, the white races—would be perfected. Part of this perfection would be the evolution of the most perfect manliness and womanliness the world had ever seen. And it was the duty of all civilized people to do what they could to bring about this perfect civilization, just as it had once been the duty of all Christians to take up the banner of the Lord. This millennial vision of perfected racial evolution and gender specialization was what people meant when they referred to "the advancement of civilization."<sup>103</sup>

"Civilization's" greatest cultural power, however, stemmed not from any of these elements individually but from the way the discourse interwove middle-class beliefs about race, gender, and millennialism. By harnessing male supremacy to white supremacy and celebrating both as essential to human perfection, hegemonic versions of civilization maintained the power of Victorian gender ideologies by presenting male power as natural and inevitable.

For one thing, hegemonic discourses of civilization conflated racial differentiation with the millennial drama of growing human perfection—that is, it

Christians  
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Darwin  
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conflated biological human evolutionary differences with moral and intellectual human progress. In 1897, a young Harvard-educated intellectual explained this connection. "The history of the world is the history . . . of races, and he who ignores or seeks to override the race-idea in human history ignores and overrides the central thought of all history." The spirit and ideal of race, he continued, was "the vastest and most ingenious invention for human progress" which had ever been invented. As the world's greatest races had evolved, their spiritual and mental traits—which were based on, but transcended, their physical traits—had grown increasingly differentiated. These "race groups are striving, each in its own way, to develop for civilization its particular message, its particular ideal, which shall help to guide the world nearer and nearer that perfection of human life for which we all long, that 'one far-off Divine event.'" That "one far-off Divine event" was, of course, a reference to the millennium, the perfection of civilization. The author of these lines was the African American intellectual, W. E. B. Du Bois. The fact that even Du Bois, a militant advocate of racial justice, accepted this racial evolutionary view of civilization suggests both the possibilities for counterhegemonic versions of the discourse and the pervasiveness of these millennialist assumptions.<sup>104</sup>

Ideologies of "manliness," like ideologies of race, were imbued with "civilization's" millennial evolutionism. As we have seen, manliness was not something which was intrinsic to all men, as we today think of masculinity. Instead, manliness was a standard to live up to, an ideal of male perfectibility to be achieved. As *The Century Dictionary* put it, "manly" denoted "the highest conceptions of what is noble in man or worthy of his manhood."<sup>105</sup> Ideologies of manliness were thus similar to—and frequently linked with—ideologies of civilization. Just as manliness was the highest form of manhood, so civilization was the highest form of humanity. Manliness was the achievement of a perfect man, just as civilization was the achievement of a perfect race. (Masculinity, we should remember, was usually not associated with civilization, because it dealt with "attributes which all men had," including savages. Manliness, in contrast, dealt with moral achievements which only the most civilized men could attain.)

Scientific theories corroborated this belief that racial difference, civilization, and manliness all advanced together. Biologists believed that as human races slowly ascended the evolutionary ladder, men and women evolved increasingly differentiated lives and natures. The most advanced races were the ones who had evolved the most perfect manliness and womanliness. Civilized women were exempt from heavy labor and ensconced in the home.

Civilized men provided for their families and steadfastly protected their delicate women and children from the rigors of the workaday world. As Herbert Spencer put it, "up from the lowest savagery, civilization has, among other results, caused an increasing exemption of women from bread-winning labour, and . . . in the highest societies they have become most restricted to domestic duties and the rearing of children."<sup>106</sup> In short, as civilized races gradually evolved toward perfection, they naturally perfected and deepened the sexual specialization of the Victorian doctrine of spheres.

"Savage" (that is, nonwhite) races, on the other hand, had not yet evolved pronounced sexual differences—and, to some extent, this was precisely what made them savage. Savage men had never evolved the chivalrous instinct to protect their women and children but instead forced their women into exhausting drudgery—cultivating the fields, tending the fires, carrying heavy burdens. Overworked savage women had never evolved the refined delicacy of civilized women.<sup>107</sup> Racist humorists frequently drew on these beliefs by depicting African American men as weak and henpecked, dominated by their robust and overbearing wives. For example, in 1910 the *Literary Digest* reprinted a joke from the *Woman's Home Companion*:

Mrs. Quackenboss—"Am yo' daughter happily mar'd, Sistah Sagg?"

Mrs. Sagg—"She sho' is! Bless Goodness, she's done got a husband tat's skeered to death of her!"<sup>108</sup>

In these contexts, African Americans were depicted as unsexed primitives who had never evolved the perfect manhood or womanhood characteristic of more civilized races.

Although to twentieth-century sensibilities, "civilization" seems to confuse biology and culture, Victorian ideas of race were predicated on precisely that conflation. Historian of anthropology George Stocking has persuasively argued that Victorians understood "race" to mean a seamless mix of biology and culture. For example, when Charles Darwin met a group of Indians in Tierra del Fuego, their physical and cultural attributes seemed equally strange to him. Lacking any complex theory of culture (which would not be developed until the early twentieth century) he assumed both physical and social attributes were equally characteristic of biological race.

What Darwin observed among the Fuegians was a kind of unhurried ethnographic gestalt, in which paint and grease and body structure blended into a single perception of physical type, percep-

tually unseparated from what he heard as discordant language and saw as outlandish behavior—a gestalt that he subsumed under the term "race." This was in fact quite consistent with the natural historian's treatment of other animal species, in which body type, cries or calls, and habitual behavior were all data to be used in distinguishing a variety or "race." Given the somewhat "Lamarckian" notion of adaptation which Darwin at that time still shared with so many of his contemporaries, this idea of "race," when applied to humans, inevitably had a mixed biocultural character.<sup>109</sup>

Lacking the conceptual framework to differentiate between physical morphology and cultural traits, educated Victorians subsumed both into a gestalt which they termed "race." Thus, white Americans' belief that primitive men were biologically incapable of achieving manliness was not a confusion between biology and culture, as some historians have argued, but a logical, if noxious, conclusion based upon their understandings of race.

Lamarckian biological theories about human heredity, too, supported "civilization's" assumption that racially primitive men lacked the biological capacity to be manly. Mendelian genetics had not yet been accepted, nor had the concept of genetic mutation. Until 1900, most biologists still assumed that the only way human races could evolve toward a higher civilization was for each generation to develop a bit more, and to pass these learned traits, genetically, on to their offspring. The educated public retained these beliefs decades longer than scientists. Thus, many middle-class whites felt scientifically justified in believing that no racially primitive man could possibly be as manly as a white man, no matter how hard he tried. Primitive races, lacking the biological capacity to develop racially advanced traits like manliness of character, would require many generations to slowly acquire manliness and pass these civilized capacities on to their offspring.

Civilization thus constructed manliness as simultaneously cultural and racial. White men were able to achieve perfect manliness because they had inherited that capacity from their racial forebears. Black men, in contrast, might struggle as hard as they could to be truly manly, without success. They were primitives who could never achieve true civilized manliness because their racial ancestors had never evolved that capacity.

By stressing the biological causation of race and gender, turn-of-the-century discourses of civilization tended to obscure the importance of another crucial category: class. Class issues had long been implicit in ideas of civilization, as historians have more frequently argued. Ever since at least the

eighteenth century, the refinement of more privileged classes had been associated with the highest civilization and contrasted with the coarse tastes of the unwashed masses.<sup>110</sup> By the late nineteenth century, a variety of "civilized" arts and graces had become indelibly associated with the middle and upper classes, ranging from the enjoyment of Shakespeare and fine paintings to elaborate codes for polite management of bodily functions.<sup>111</sup>

Yet by insisting that these "civilized" tastes and customs were racial and by downplaying the importance of mores and culture, the middle class was able to obscure the continuing importance of class. In the light of civilization, the middle class could depict its own preferences and styles as biologically determined, superior racial traits. Evolution—and not financial resources—gave the middle class the ability to enjoy and create great art, classical music, and their elaborately furnished homes. Evolution—and not middle-class cultural standards—had made white, middle-class women so delicate and domestic. Evolution—and not economic self-interest—had given white middle-class men the manly self-restraint which allowed them to become self-made men. The large proportion of immigrants in the working class lent credence to these ideas: one could hardly expect the Slavic or Mediterranean races to share the advanced, civilized tastes of Anglo-Saxons! In the light of "civilization," these class-based differences could be coded "racial."

Moreover, the evolutionary millennialism embedded in discourses of civilization provided more satisfying ways for middle-class men to contain class-based challenges to their manly social authority. For example, middle-class Americans had long believed that a man's hard work and talent would inevitably be rewarded with riches and success. Yet by 1880 an increasingly corporate economy, as well as recurring rounds of bankruptcy-spawning depressions, meant fewer middle-class men could achieve manly power as successful, independent entrepreneurs. In the light of "civilization," however, these economic setbacks could appear temporary and insignificant: Middle-class whites' racial destiny was to approach civilized perfection, so eventually they or their children would inherit the earth, anyway. Similarly, recurring and seemingly unstoppable strikes by hostile working men might seem to threaten middle-class men's control over the nation's future; yet discourses of civilization suggested these challenges were irrelevant. In the long run, middle-class men's evolutionary destiny as members of highly civilized northern European races would allow them to prevail over a predominantly immigrant, and therefore racially inferior, working class. Thus, class-based challenges to the power of middle-class manhood seemed to disappear be-

hind civilization's promise that the hard-working, meritorious, virile Anglo-Saxon man was inexorably moving toward racial dominance and the highest evolutionary advancement.

### Race, Gender, and Civilization at the Columbian Exposition — FN.

To understand more concretely how "civilization" built hegemonic male power out of white supremacy and evolutionary millennialism—as well as how feminist and antiracist challenges to that power could be mounted—let us consider a familiar example: the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. In authorizing the exposition, Congress had called for it to be "an exhibition of the progress of civilization in the New World."<sup>112</sup> And, indeed, millennial assumptions were embedded in the exposition's rationale. As James Gilbert has pointed out, many of the civic leaders most active in organizing the Columbian Exposition were reared in the "burned over district" of New York, and the evangelical millennialism they had imbibed as youths underlay their visions of an exposition to demonstrate American civilization's astonishing progress toward human perfection.<sup>113</sup>

The millennial perfection embodied in the exposition was composed of equal parts of white supremacy and powerful manhood. As Robert Rydell has shown, organizers divided the World's Fair into two racially specific areas. The White City depicted the millennial advancement of white civilization, while the Midway Plaisance, in contrast, presented the undeveloped barbarism of uncivilized, dark races.<sup>114</sup> The civilized White City was intended to suggest a millennial future—what a city might look like as advanced white races worked toward a perfect civilization. Organizers employed the most eminent architects and city planners; and visitors commented upon the White City's breathtaking perfection.

In the White City, white racial perfection was repeatedly connected to powerful manhood. The White City's focal point was the majestic Court of Honor, a formal basin almost a half-mile long, surrounded by massive white beaux arts buildings. "Honorable," according to the 1890 *Century Dictionary*, was a synonym for "manly," and contemporaries would not have missed the Court's association with manhood.<sup>115</sup> The seven huge buildings framing the Court of Honor represented seven aspects of civilization's highest scientific, artistic, and technological achievements—Manufactures, Mines, Agriculture, Art, Administrations, Machinery, and Electricity. All were presented as the domain of civilized white men. These buildings housed thousands of

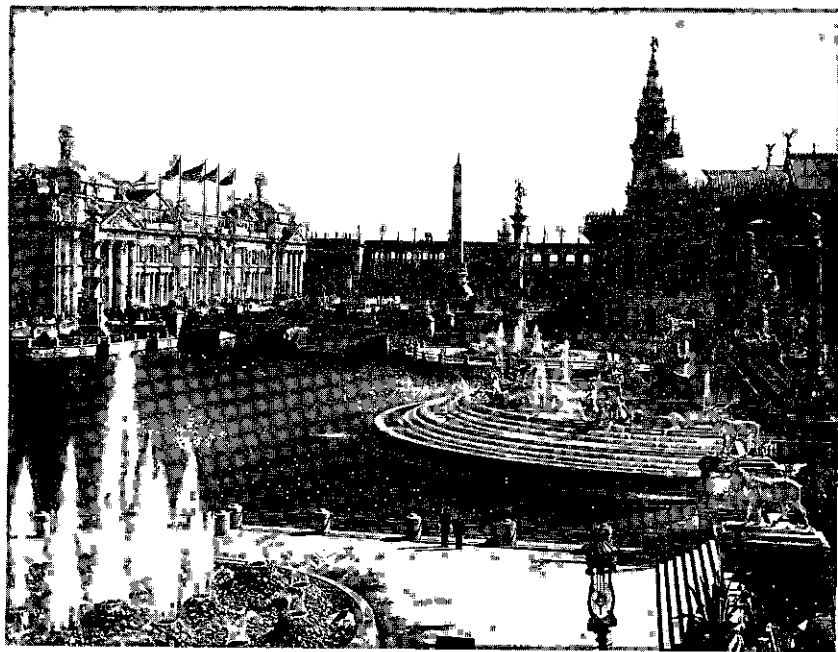


Fig. 3. The Court of Honor at the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893, epitomized the grandeur and advancement of manly white civilization. Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society.

enormous engines, warships, trains, machines, and armaments—all self-consciously presented as artifacts built and employed by men, only. The White City also glorified the masculine world of commerce, exhibiting the most advanced products and manufacturing processes—"dynamos and rock drills, looms and wallpaper"—and housing these exhibits in magnificent white temples.<sup>116</sup> Thus, by celebrating civilization, the organizers celebrated the power of white manhood. Men alone, as they saw it, were the agents who lifted their race toward the millennial perfection God and evolution intended for them. As one poet put it, the White City was "A Vision of Strong Manhood and Perfection of Society."<sup>117</sup>

The men who organized the Columbian Exposition made certain that the White City's advanced civilization appeared overwhelmingly male. They firmly excluded women's products from most of the exhibits, even though a large group of upper-class white women had worked tirelessly—if fruitlessly—to gain women equal representation. In 1889, over one hundred prominent women including Susan B. Anthony and the wives of three Supreme

Court justices had petitioned Congress to name some women to the exposition's governing commission.<sup>118</sup> Congress refused. Instead, it established a "Board of Lady Managers." (Even the title was patronizing and ridiculous, many women complained.)<sup>119</sup> Congress gave them almost no authority, yet through persistent efforts the Lady Managers were able to make themselves an important part of the exposition. Led by Bertha Palmer, they organized and built one of the most well-attended exhibits in the White City, the Woman's Building.

Yet the Lady Managers believed the Woman's Building was merely one aspect of their greater task—to make sure that the White City did not depict civilization as intrinsically male. Earlier expositions, they complained, had hidden women's manifold contributions to civilization by confining women's exhibits to only one small building. Therefore, they originally planned the Woman's Building as a small historical museum, illustrating the progress women had made toward millennial perfection over the centuries. The main display of woman's place in civilization would be found, not in the Woman's Building, but in exhibits mounted by women throughout the White City. By exhibiting women's technological, intellectual, and artistic achievements next to men's, they would demonstrate that civilization was as womanly as it was manly. Thus, the Lady Managers made it their task to actively solicit women's exhibits, to forward them to the appropriate administrators, and to make certain women's applications received fair and equal treatment. They also planned to place placards throughout the White City informing fair-goers what proportion of each exhibit was produced by women's labor.<sup>120</sup>

Alas, the Lady Managers' plans met with complete resistance. Male exhibitors refused to let the Lady Managers' placards about women's labor anywhere near their displays.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, it soon became obvious that nearly all women applying for exhibit space in the White City were receiving rejections. In January, five months before the fair's opening, Palmer received official notification: "It is useless for the ladies to send in any more applications for ladies' work." Although Palmer ultimately got this policy reversed, by then the point was moot: almost no exhibit space was left.<sup>122</sup> Reluctantly the Lady Managers decided that devoting large areas of the Women's Building to women's commercial exhibits was better than excluding women's work from the White City altogether.<sup>123</sup>

As they had originally feared, using the Woman's Building as an exhibit hall marked all the rest of the White City—and, by extension, civilization itself—as male. At the Horticulture Building, for example, Lady Manager



Rebecca Felton complained, "everywhere the work has been credited to men. . . . The work of women in the farm exhibits is so intermingled and indissolubly joined to that of men, that we might as well seek to number and classify the pebbles on the shore, or the waves on beautiful Lake Michigan."<sup>124</sup> Despite their best efforts, the Woman's Building was perceived as a place apart. The message was inescapable: The White City's civilization was built by men, only. Exhibiting men's achievements required the entire White City, while women's achievements could fit into the smallest exhibition hall at the fair. (Only the Administration Building was smaller than the Woman's Building.)<sup>125</sup>

Worse, segregating women's exhibits in one small building suggested that women's contributions to civilization were completely different from men's. Visitors were impressed mostly by the Woman's Building's softness, compared to the masculine dynamos and technological marvels of the manly exhibits of the White City. For example, the *New York Times* suggested that while some men might say, "the Woman's Building and all of its varied exhibits simply serve to demonstrate the superiority of man," such sentiments were beside the point:

The atmosphere of the entire building is not . . . woman's right to invade the domain of man, but the sublimely soft and soothing atmosphere of womanliness . . . the achievements of man [are] in iron, steel, wood, and the baser and cruder products . . . [while] in the Woman's Building one can note the distinct demarcation in the female successes in the more delicate and finer products of the loom, the needle, the brush, and more refined avenues of effort which culminate in the home, the hospital, the church, and in personal adornment.<sup>126</sup>

The Lady Managers had worked tirelessly to prove that women and men had contributed equally to the advancement of civilization. Yet, as the *Times* quote suggests, they failed. The lesson most people took from the Women's Building was that there was a "distinct demarcation" between men's contributions to civilization—machines, technology, commerce—and women's—needlework, beauty, domesticity.

Even the location of the Woman's Building underlined white women's marginality to civilization. Not only did the commissioners place the Woman's Building at the very edge of the civilized White City, far from the manly Court of Honor, they also situated it directly opposite the only exit to the uncivilized section of the fair, the Midway. On the border between civi-

lized and savage (as befit women who, according to scientists, were biologically more primitive than men), the Woman's Building underlined the essential manliness of the white man's civilization.<sup>127</sup> Deflecting the counterhegemonic assertions of the Board of Lady Managers, the White City remained a monument to civilization's essential male supremacy. ✓

The Columbian Exposition depicted white women as marginal to the White City; but at least white women got a building and an official board of Lady Managers. Men and women of color, on the other hand, were not marginal but absent from the White City. Although African American men and women objected vehemently to this policy, the white organizers—including the Board of Lady Managers—ignored them. In the Columbian Exposition's schema of hegemonic civilization, only whites were civilized. All other races were uncivilized and belonged not in the White City but on the Midway Plaisance.

As Robert Rydell has demonstrated, the Midway specialized in spectacles of barbarous races—"authentic" villages of Samoans, Egyptians, Dahomans, Turks, and other exotic peoples, populated by actual imported "natives."<sup>128</sup> Guidebooks advised visitors to visit the Midway only after visiting the White City, in order to fully appreciate the contrast between the civilized White City and the uncivilized native villages.<sup>129</sup> Where the White City spread out in all directions from the Court of Honor, emphasizing the complexity of manly civilization, the Midway's attractions were organized linearly down a broad avenue, providing a lesson in racial hierarchy. Visitors entering the Midway from the White City would first pass the civilized German and Irish villages, proceed past the barbarous Turkish, Arabic, and Chinese villages, and finish by viewing the savage American Indians and Dahomans. "What an opportunity was here afforded to the scientific mind to descend the spiral of evolution," enthused the *Chicago Tribune*, "tracing humanity in its highest phases down almost to its animalistic origins."<sup>130</sup>

Where the White City celebrated the white man's civilization as outstandingly manly, the Midway depicted savagery and barbarism as lacking manliness entirely. In the Persian, Algerian, Turkish, and Egyptian villages, for example, unmanly dark-skinned men cajoled customers to shed manly restraint and savor their countrywomen's sensuous dancing.<sup>131</sup> Male audiences ogling scantily clad belly dancers could have it both ways, simultaneously relishing the dancers' suggestiveness and basking in their own sense of civilized superiority to the swarthy men hawking tickets outside, unashamedly selling their countrywomen's charms.<sup>132</sup> Men who had just visited the White City would be especially conscious of their own racially

superior manliness. Civilized womanliness, too, was absent on the Midway. Although few American women deigned to see the exotic belly dancers, they understood the message: White women's place in civilization might be marginal, but at least it was moral and safe. Under barbarism, however, women experienced not respect and equality but sexual danger and indecent exploitation.

Least manly of all the Midway's denizens, according to many commentators, were the savage Dahomans, who seemed to lack gender difference entirely. The *New York Times* described "The Dahomey gentleman, (or perhaps it is a Dahomey lady, for the distinction is not obvious,) who may be seen at almost any hour . . . clad mainly in a brief grass skirt and capering nimbly to the lascivious pleasings of an unseen tom-tom pounded within. . . . There are several dozen of them of assorted sexes, as one gradually makes out."<sup>133</sup> Asserting that he could only "gradually" make out the difference between the sexes, the columnist suggests that savages' sexual difference was so indistinct that the Dahomans might have a larger "assortment" of sexes than the usual two. Uncivilized, and thus unable to evince the self-restraint of true manliness, the Dahoman (who was clearly no "gentleman," despite the ironic appellation) publicly cavorts to the drums' "lascivious pleasings." He even wears "skirts."

In short, the Columbian Exposition demonstrated, in a variety of ways, that "nonwhite" and "uncivilized" denoted "unmanly" and, conversely, that whiteness and civilization denoted powerful manhood. Whether they looked like women or pandered their women's sexuality, the "savage" and "barbarous" men of the Midway served as reminders that, in comparison, white American men were far more manly. At the same time, by relishing the exotic native dancing girls, white American men could savor their own primitive masculinity. Either way, the Midway's deployment of civilization allowed white men to see their own manhood as especially powerful.

The exposition's logic of constructing manly white civilization in opposition to unmanly swarthy barbarism made it impossible for the white organizers to accept the existence of fully civilized men and women who were not of European ancestry. Therefore, white organizers rebuffed the many African American men and women who demanded representation on the White City's organizing bodies.<sup>134</sup> In 1890, for example, leaders of the National Convention of Colored Men and the Afro-American Press Association urged President Benjamin Harrison to appoint at least one African American to the exposition's organizing commission. Harrison refused, saying it "would savor too much of sentimentality, [and] be distasteful to the majority

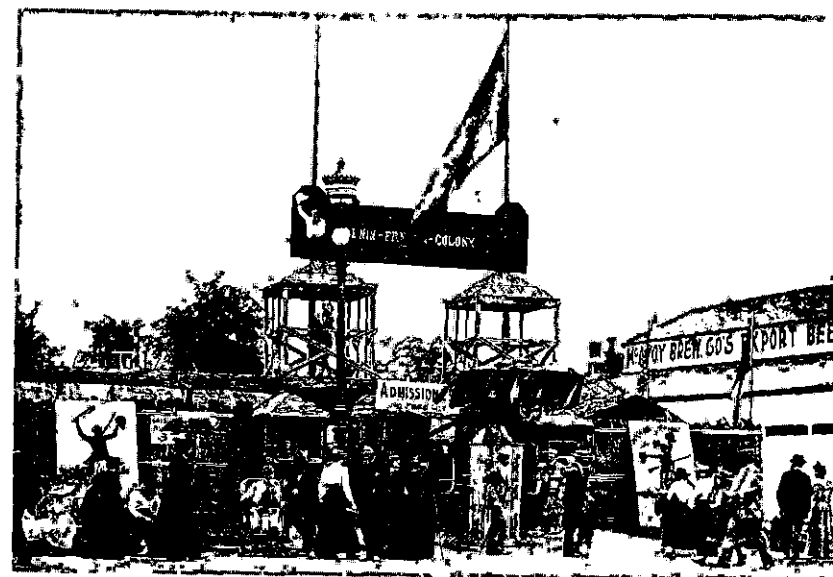


Fig. 4. The civilized grandeur of the manly White City contrasted with the rough savagery of the Dahomey Village, on the Midway. Note the Dahomey man wearing short "skirts" in the tower atop the building, as well as the life-size pictures of stereotypical "savages" waving their arms at the bottom.

of commissioners themselves." "Sentimental," of course, was synonymous with "unmanly." No black commissioner was ever appointed.<sup>135</sup> The Lady Managers were equally exclusive. Despite their own repeated frustration in wringing concessions from the male commissioners, they firmly and repeatedly rebuffed black women—individuals and organizations—who demanded that one of the one hundred fifteen Lady Managers be African American.<sup>136</sup> Eventually, the Lady Managers allowed a small "Afro-American" exhibit to be installed in a distant corner of the Woman's Building but, like the male commissioners, the Lady Managers remained "simon-pure and lily white" themselves.<sup>137</sup> Aside from some porters and few underclerks, almost no African Americans had any official connection to the White City whatsoever.<sup>138</sup>

The Lady Managers did highlight the work of some "primitive" women in the Woman's Building, however. In conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution, they organized an exhibition entitled "Woman's Work in Savagery." This impressive collection of baskets, weavings, and other arts from African, Polynesian, and Native American women was intended to demonstrate that



women had contributed productively to the advancement of civilization from the very dawn of time. As the "Preliminary Prospectus" put it, "The footsteps of women will be traced from prehistoric times to the present and their intimate connection shown with all that has tended to promote the development of the race." The contributions of these "primitive" women were acceptable to the Lady Managers, but only because they seemed historic: The African baskets, Samoan netting, and Navajo blankets were depicted, not as the products of living women of color, but as representations of the work of white women's own distant evolutionary foremothers. By proving that "women, among all the primitive peoples, were the originators of most of the industrial arts," organizers hoped to demonstrate that the talents of civilized women, like themselves, were important resources for civilization's further advancement.<sup>139</sup> Yet, ironically, constructing nonwhite women as representations of the distant past precluded their being accepted as fellow women in the present. Mrs. Palmer even tried to ban all contemporary Indian women's work from the exhibit, suggesting that Indian women's authentic artistic "instincts" were irrevocably "spoiled by contact with civilization."<sup>140</sup> The only acceptable primitive was the one who—anonymous, and preferably dead—could symbolize white women's racial past, in order to legitimize their contribution to the race's millennial future.

Although whites insisted tenaciously that civilization was built on white racial dominance, African Americans were equally tenacious in insisting that civilization was not necessarily white. This argument appeared in a widely circulated pamphlet, organized and partially written by Ida B. Wells and Frederick Douglass, that was explicitly designed to refute the fair's hegemonic, racist representations of civilization. It was addressed to the rest of the civilized world and was to be printed in English, French, German, and Spanish, so that all could read and learn why white Americans had excluded African Americans from the Columbian Exposition. Warning that "The absence of colored citizens from participating therein will be construed to their disadvantage by the representatives of the civilized world there assembled," they promised their pamphlet would set forth "the past and present condition of our people and their relation to American civilization."<sup>141</sup>

And it did. Entitled *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition*, the pamphlet inverted the White City's depiction of "Negro Savagery" as the opposite of manly civilization. Instead, it suggested that both manhood and civilization were more characteristic of black Americans than of white. What better example of the advancement of American civilization than the phenomenal progress African Americans had made

after only twenty-five years of freedom? Yet no such exhibit appeared in the White City. "Columbia has bidden the civilized world to join with her in celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America . . . but that which would best illustrate her moral grandeur has been ignored." For centuries, American blacks had "contributed a large share to American prosperity and civilization"; yet there was no hint of this at the fair.<sup>142</sup> Why, then, was the Colored American not in the World's Columbian Exposition?

The pamphlet's answer, left implicit to avoid excessive confrontation, was that the white American was not the manly civilized being he pretended to be. The white men who organized the exposition posed as exemplars of advanced civilization and superior manhood. Yet the truest American manhood and civilization were evinced, not by the white organizers, but by African Americans. By oppressing this true manhood, the Columbian Exposition demonstrated, not the advancement of white American civilization, but its barbarism, duplicity, and lack of manliness. Douglass lamented the unfortunate necessity of speaking plainly of wrongs and outrages which African Americans had endured "in flagrant contradiction to boasted American Republican liberty and civilization."<sup>143</sup> Far from embodying high civilization, white Americans still embraced "barbarism and race hate."<sup>144</sup> Nonetheless, the Negro was "manfully resisting" racist oppression, and "is now by industry, economy and education wisely raising himself to conditions of civilization and comparative well being."<sup>145</sup> Douglass concluded the chapter by insisting upon black manliness: "We are men and our aim is perfect manhood, to be men among men. Our situation demands faith in ourselves, faith in the power of truth, faith in work and faith in the influence of manly character."<sup>146</sup>

The balance of the pamphlet documented Douglass' assertion of black manhood. Since emancipation, African Americans had demonstrated manly character, making phenomenal strides in education, the professions, the accumulation of wealth, and literature. Nonetheless, white Americans had perversely attacked this youthful black manliness, through oppressive legislation, disfranchisement, the convict lease system, and the barbarism of lynch law. In closing, the pamphlet documented the exposition organizers' deliberate exclusion of blacks—except "as if to shame the Negro, the Dahomians are also here to exhibit the Negro as a repulsive savage."<sup>147</sup> In short, excluding the Colored American from the Columbian Exposition, far from glorifying white American civilization, demonstrated white American barbarism. Conversely, the truest exemplars of civilized American manhood were those excluded from the White City—African Americans.

Wells and Douglass had revised the hegemonic civilization discourse, which debarred African Americans from participating the World's Fair, and had turned it to their advantage. Headquartered in the White City's small Haitian Building, they distributed ten thousand copies of *The Reason Why* during the three months before the fair closed. (Debarred from representing his own nation, Douglass had been named Haiti's representative to the exposition.) Wells received responses from England, Germany, France, Russia, and India.<sup>148</sup>

In sum, the history of the World's Columbian Exposition exemplifies some of the many conflicting ways Americans deployed discourses of civilization to construct gender. Ostensibly, the exposition used civilization to assert white male hegemony. The White City, with its vision of future perfection and of the advanced racial power of manly commerce and technology, constructed civilization as an ideal of white male power. The Midway provided an implicit comparison between the White City's self-controlled civilized manliness and the inferior manhood of darkskinned primitive men who solicited customers for belly dancers or wore skirts and danced like women. Yet the Midway also allowed American men to play at being masculine barbarians themselves, savoring the visual pleasures of semiclad exotic dancers while simultaneously and inconsistently relishing their sense of superior, civilized, white manliness. By subsuming these ostensible contradictions within the larger experience of the World's Fair, these discourses of civilization provided powerful, persuasive representations and experiences of hegemonic white male power.

Yet the White City's powerful assertions of white male supremacy never succeeded in eliminating counterhegemonic assertions. The elite white women on the Board of Lady Managers tried to challenge the idea that civilization was especially male by placing women's work throughout the White City; although they failed in these efforts, their Women's Building nonetheless reminded fair-goers that white women did have a place in the White City. The Lady Managers' version of civilization rejected male supremacy, yet it shared the White City's racism. It fell to African Americans like Ida B. Wells and Frederick Douglass to develop a version of civilization that denied the implicit connections between advancement and skin color, and depicted non-whites as the truest exemplars of civilization.

All these versions of civilization linked assertions of millennial progress to issues of race and gender; thus, they were recognizably the same discourse. Yet different people, with different political agendas, defined and deployed "civilization" differently. It was this very mutability and flexibility, combined

with the powerful linkage of race and gender, which made "civilization" such a powerful and ubiquitous discourse during these decades.

### Conclusion

With this discussion of civilization in mind, let us take a final look at the Jack Johnson controversy, focusing on white journalists' reasons for expecting Jim Jeffries, the "Hope of the White Race," to prevail. Frequently, journalists predicted that Jeffries would beat Johnson because manly white civilization had long been evolving toward millennial perfection. *Collier's* magazine asserted that white men expected Jeffries to win because, unlike the primitive Negro, he was of a civilized race: "The white man has thirty centuries of traditions behind him—all the supreme efforts, the inventions and the conquests, and whether he knows it or not, Bunker Hill and Thermopylæ and Hastings and Agincourt."<sup>149</sup> The *San Francisco Examiner* agreed, predicting that the "spirit of Caesar in Jeff ought to whip the Barbarian."<sup>150</sup> Faced with rumors of a Johnson victory, the *Chicago Daily News* wailed, "What would Shakespeare think of this if he could know about it? . . . Could even Herbert Spencer extract comfort from so dread a situation?" Anglo-Saxon civilization itself might fall if Jeffries were beaten by the "gifted but non-Caucasian Mr. Johnson."<sup>151</sup> In these reports, a Johnson victory was depicted as an affront to the millennial advancement of civilization and the power of white manliness.

Yet in other reports, Jeffries was depicted, not as an exemplar of advanced civilization and high-minded manliness, but as a paragon of violent, primitive masculinity. In this context, Jeffries' eagerly awaited victory would show that white men's capacity for masculine violence was as powerful as black men's—that civilization had not undermined whites' primal masculinity. Journalists waxed lyrical about Jeffries' primal physical attributes, his "vast hairy body, those legs like trees, the long projecting jaw, deep-set scowling eyes, and wide thin, cruel mouth."<sup>152</sup> They printed pictures of him training for the fight by sawing through huge tree-trunks—which, in urban, twentieth-century America, had primitive connotations redolent of log cabins and the frontier.<sup>153</sup> Jack London, writing in the *New York Herald*, maintained that his own overwhelming desire to witness the match, like other white men's, was itself an Anglo-Saxon race trait. As he saw it, the love of boxing "belongs unequivocally to the English speaking race and . . . has taken centuries for the race to develop. . . . It is as deep as our consciousness

and is woven into the fibres of our being. It grew as our very language grew. It is an instinctive passion of our race."<sup>154</sup> For these men, a Jeffries victory would prove that, despite being civilized, white men had lost none of the masculine power which had made their race dominant in the primeval past.

Because both approaches drew upon the discourse of civilization, few people saw any inconsistency. Under the logic of "civilization," Jeffries could be simultaneously a manly, civilized heir to Shakespeare and a masculine, modern-day savage lifted from the forests of ancient England. The crucial point was that Jeffries' racial inheritance made him the superior man; and his superlative manhood would prove the superiority of his race. Whether manly and civilized or masculine and savage, whites were confident that Jeffries would beat Jack Johnson.

Thus, many white men panicked when the black champion thrashed the white. By annihilating Jeffries so completely, Johnson implicitly challenged the ways hegemonic discourses of civilization built powerful manhood out of race. Johnson's victory suggested that the heirs of Shakespeare were not the manly, powerful beings they had thought—that "primitive" black men were more masculine and powerful than "civilized" white men. Many white men could not bear this challenge to their manhood. The men who rioted, the Congress that passed laws suppressing Johnson's fight films, the Bureau of Investigation authorities who bent the laws to jail him—all detested the way Johnson's victory shredded the ideologies of white male power embedded in "civilization."

In sum, when late nineteenth-century Americans began to synthesize new formulations of gender, hegemonic discourses of civilization explained concisely the precise relation between the male body, male identity, and male authority. White male bodies had evolved through centuries of Darwinistic survival of the fittest. They were the authors and agents of civilized advancement, the chosen people of evolution and the cutting edge of millennial progress. Who better to make decisions for the rest of humankind, whether female or men of the lower races? It was imperative to all civilization that white males assume the power to ensure the continued millennial advancement of white civilization.

The following chapters will consider a variety of ways American men and women utilized discourses of civilization in order to support or to resist this ideology of white male power. They will focus on four very different historical figures. Ida B. Wells, a journalist and antilynching activist, worked for racial justice in the United States. G. Stanley Hall, a scholar and college presi-

dent, devoted his life to advancing the nascent science of psychology. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a feminist theorist, was passionately committed to the cause of woman's advancement. Theodore Roosevelt, Republican politician and president of the United States, devoted himself to Progressive reform and imperialistic politics.

None of these figures knew one another, and their work and concerns were entirely unconnected. Yet they all labored to remake ideologies of manhood by revising and adapting discourses of civilization. I will not consider whether any of these four succeeded in transforming other Americans' beliefs about gender, but will instead consider the strategies they used in their efforts to remake manhood. These four figures show some of the different discursive positions it was possible to take in relation to race, manhood, and civilization. I am not suggesting that they are in any way representative, however. Since my methodology focuses specifically on the process of articulation, my main concern is to select a diverse group of people who left a large enough body of sources to reveal their cultural assumptions about race, manhood, and civilization. Other equally viable figures could have been chosen, however—for example, W. E. B. Du Bois, Jane Addams, or Jack London.

Chapter 2 will go into more depth about the relationship between manliness and civilization by focusing on the way Ida B. Wells worked to change Northern white men's views about lynching. Wells, a brilliant publicist, exploited the contradictions and inconsistencies in discourses of both manliness and civilization and succeeded in turning them against white Americans who tolerated lynch law. This chapter will also investigate the significance of "dangerous" black male sexuality (which we have already encountered in the Jack Johnson episode) in the context of "manly civilization."

The third chapter, on G. Stanley Hall, focuses less on manly civilization and more on the related topic of primitive masculinity. Hall believed strongly in the power and beneficence of manly civilization, but he worried that American middle-class men had lost the toughness and strength necessary to keep civilization evolving upward. Yet Hall, a psychologist and professor of pedagogy, believed he saw a way to "inoculate" boys against racial decadence, so that they could grow into virile, powerful civilized men. For Hall, the key to a powerful manly civilization lay in giving all males free access to the primitive. Parents and educators must encourage boys to relive the evolutionary progress of the race—to be savages and barbarians as boys, so that they would develop the strength to be both virile and civilized as men.

Here she fails to do something important

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, too, was passionately committed to the upward march of civilization; but her view of women's relation to civilization was very different from that of most of her contemporaries. Gilman worked to transform the ideology of civilization from one which linked civilization to manhood, to one which linked civilization to womanhood. In the process, she magnified the importance of race to civilization and minimized the importance of gender. To do this, she worked to exploit contradictions in the ideology of civilized manhood, much as Ida B. Wells had done. Gilman, however, writing two decades later than Wells, was unable to convince her political opponents that primitive masculine brutality was an unmitigated evil. Gilman's example, like Wells', reminds us that women, too, were engaged in the ongoing historical process of remaking manhood.

Theodore Roosevelt, more than any man of his generation, embodied virile manhood for the American public. Chapter 5 argues that one source of his vibrant virility was Roosevelt's talent for embodying two contradictory models of manhood simultaneously—civilized manliness and primitive masculinity. Combining manliness and masculinity, civilization and the primitive, Roosevelt modeled a new type of manhood for the American people, based firmly on the millennial evolutionary ideology of civilization. Through this new type of manhood, Roosevelt claimed not only a personal power for himself but also a collective imperialistic manhood for the white American race.

Taken collectively, these four figures suggest how flexible the discourse of civilization was, how useful for the project of remaking manhood. Each had a different political agenda, and each invoked a somewhat different version of civilization. At first glance, it might seem inappropriate to consider them as a group. Puzzled readers may wonder how an antilynching activist, a professor of pedagogy, a feminist theorist, and a president of the United States could possibly shed any light on each others' activities. Yet when taken together, it becomes clear that each is drawing on a recognizable and coherent set of assumptions about the historical relationship between race and manhood. Each accepts parts of this discourse, and each tries to change other parts. Strategies used by one person pop up, in slightly altered forms, in the writings of another. Together, they demonstrate the turn-of-the-century meanings of the term "civilization" and illuminate some of the complex ways that ideologies of race and of gender have constructed one another in American history.

## 2

### "The White Man's Civilization on Trial": Ida B. Wells, Representations of Lynching, and Northern Middle-Class Manhood

*"For, if civilization means anything, it means self-restraint; casting away self-restraint the white man becomes as savage as the negro."*

RAY STANNARD BAKER, "WHAT IS A LYNCHING?"<sup>1</sup>

*"It is the white man's civilization and the white man's government which are on trial."*

IDA B. WELLS, *A RED RECORD*<sup>2</sup>

In March 1894, Ida B. Wells sailed to England in order to agitate against the rise of racial violence in the United States. She left a country where lynching was rarely mentioned in the white Northern press, and where she herself was unknown to most whites. Three months later, she returned to the United States a celebrity, vilified as a "slandorous and nasty-minded mulatress" by some papers but lauded by others.<sup>3</sup> Above all, she returned to a country where lynching was widely discussed as a stain on American civilization.

Wells' success in bringing lynching to the attention of the Northern middle class was due, in large part, to the ingenious ways she manipulated the discourse of civilization to play on their fears about declining male power. By playing on these anxieties about gender, Wells was able to raise the stakes among middle-class Northern whites, who had previously tolerated lynching as a colorful, if somewhat old-fashioned, Southern regional custom. (For example, the *New York Times* jovially editorialized in 1891, "the friends of order [in Alabama] have been in pursuit of a negro. . . . If they catch him they will lynch him, but this incident will not be likely to add to the prevailing excitement" of the more "serious" moonshining problem.)<sup>4</sup> Historians

tion to white boys' education, he could solve problems of overcivilized effeminacy and lead American civilization toward a millennial racial perfection.

By the early twentieth century, however, the abandonment of Lamarckian evolutionary theories, including racial recapitulation, had dashed Hall's hopes of developing white American boys into super-men. Hall temporarily salvaged his millennial hopes by changing his millennial agents. Adolescence remained the liminal time, but now Hall defined adolescence in terms of race stage instead of age stage. Instead of placing his hopes for a more virile civilization in the racial primitiveness of American youth, Hall began to look to more literal "primitives"—to nonwhite "adolescent" races. Hall was always one to take his metonymy literally. He had begun by arguing that white boys' access to the primitive could save civilization, but he ended by arguing that the hope of the future lay in primitive races untouched by the decadence and false development of modern civilization.

Yet even though Hall eventually stopped writing about the connections between race and manhood, others in his culture would remain interested in those connections. As the 1915 article in the *Boston Sunday American* suggests, white American men would continue to see nonwhite races, primitiveness, and violence as powerful ways to represent a virile masculinity, much desired by civilized man.

## 4

"Not to Sex—But to Race!" Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Civilized Anglo-Saxon Womanhood, and the Return of the Primitive Rapist*

*"The dominant soul—the clear strong accurate brain, the perfect service of a healthy body—these do not belong to sex—but to race!"<sup>1</sup>*

CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN, 1891

Although "civilization" was usually invoked in order to assert and remake white male supremacy, the discourse of civilization could also be used to convey quite a different message. Just as Ida B. Wells inverted ideas about civilization to combat American racism, so many white feminists recast ideas about civilization to combat male dominance. Ideologies of civilization were protean in their content and implications. "Civilization" always drew on ideologies of race and of gender, but people with very different political agendas could deploy the discourse in a variety of ways.

"Civilization" was especially useful for making claims about "the woman question." Antifeminists frequently used "civilization" to depict women as less civilized than men, less able to contribute to the advancement of the race. For example, as we have seen, the Columbian Exposition's male organizers located the Women's Building at the very edge of the civilized White City, next to the Midway, at the border between civilization and savagery, thereby constructing women's contributions to civilization as marginal. Yet feminists were unwilling to concede civilization to their opponents and developed a variety of counterarguments. Some depicted primitive societies as peaceful and prosperous matriarchies, ruled by women whose motherly altruism had led to centuries of orderly progress, cut short when men undermined civilized advancement by subjugating women. Others reinterpreted

evolutionary biology in order to prove that women were superior to men, not inferiors designed merely for reproduction. By reworking common assumptions about civilization, these women tried to undermine biologicistic arguments that nature never intended woman to go to college, to have well-paid careers, or to vote.<sup>2</sup>

The most influential of these feminist exponents of civilization was Charlotte Perkins Gilman. From 1898 until the mid-1910s, Gilman was the most prominent feminist theorist in America.<sup>3</sup> She wrote prolifically—her bibliographer lists 2,168 published stories, poems, books, and articles—and made her living lecturing to women's groups throughout the United States.<sup>4</sup> The topics she addressed ranged from child care to architecture; from feminism to physiology; from fashion to international relations. In much of her work, Gilman used the discourse of civilization to create an effective and persuasive body of feminist theory. Her most successful book, *Women and Economics* (1898), which went through nine American printings by 1920, was an explicit attempt to revise antifeminist ideologies of civilization by making women central to civilization.<sup>5</sup> Reviewers hailed *Women and Economics* as "the book of the age" and the most brilliant and original contribution to the woman question since John Stuart Mill's essays on *The Subjection of Women*.<sup>6</sup> Florence Kelley called it "the first real, substantial contribution made by a woman to the science of economics"; Jane Addams simply called it a "Masterpiece."<sup>7</sup>

Gilman's contributions as a feminist foremother have been widely acknowledged, but historians have not recognized that her work was firmly based upon the raced and gendered discourse of civilization and, as such, was at its very base racist. One problematic result has been that scholars have seen Gilman's blatant racism as merely an unfortunate lacuna in an otherwise liberal philosophy.<sup>8</sup> Although they find her racism surprisingly inconsistent with her sexual egalitarianism, Gilman herself would have seen no inconsistency. Her feminism was inextricably rooted in the white supremacy of "civilization."

Because Gilman drew so deeply on the discourse of civilization, racial issues pervaded her feminism. Like G. Stanley Hall, Gilman always assumed that civilization's advancement occurred as individual races ascended the evolutionary ladder, and that the most advanced races—those closest to evolutionary perfection—were white. Gilman rarely made race the explicit focus of her analysis. Woman's advancement was her main interest, just as pedagogy was Hall's. Yet because Gilman's feminist arguments frequently revolved around women's relation to civilization, implicit assumptions about

white racial supremacy were as central to her arguments as they were to Hall's.

When Gilman did turn her attention to explicitly racial issues, her white supremacy became apparent. For example, in a 1908 article in the *American Journal of Sociology*, Gilman suggested the government could solve "the Negro Problem" by forcing all African Americans who had not yet achieved "a certain grade of citizenship" to join compulsory, quasi-militaristic "armies" where they would be supervised, trained, and compelled to perform menial labor.<sup>9</sup> "Decent, self-supporting, progressive negroes" would not need to enlist in this army; but "the whole body of negroes who do not progress, who are not self-supporting, who are degenerating into an increasing percentage of social burdens or actual criminals should be taken hold of by the state."<sup>10</sup> Negroes who reached a certain level of advancement could "graduate" from this servitude; those who continued uncivilized had to remain in this army forever.

It might seem strange for a feminist who cared so passionately for political egalitarianism to advocate perpetual servitude for many African Americans; yet because Gilman's political philosophy was so enmeshed in the civilization discourse, she believed her proposal was profoundly egalitarian. Talented Negroes could advance to whatever degree of civilization they could muster, but those who were irredeemably savage would not cumber white Americans in their quest for a perfect civilization.

The mingled millennialism and racism inherent in the civilization discourse facilitated this strange mélange of racism and egalitarianism. On the one hand, "civilization" promised that humanity was infinitely perfectible. For many reformers, civilization's promise of human evolutionary perfectibility mandated the development of individual human potential. For Hall, civilization's advancement meant that boys could be turned into "supermen"; for Gilman, civilization's advancement meant that women must be freed from their subordinate position.

Yet, on the other hand, "civilization" as understood by most whites, including Gilman, remained irredeemably mired in white supremacy. By definition, civilized and savage races occupied different positions on the evolutionary ladder. Although liberals like Hall and Gilman insisted that all races had the *potential* to advance to higher levels, they likewise assumed that the savage races might take generations—even centuries—to catch up, even given the most careful, paternalistic attentions from benevolent Anglo-Saxons.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the racism inherent in "civilization" became an essential part of

why  
not  
whites?

Gilman's feminist egalitarianism. Gilman used "civilization's" mingled ideologies of gender and race to argue that human advancement was a matter not of *gender* difference but of *racial* difference. Where the antifeminists had argued that women could contribute to civilization only as wives and mothers, Gilman argued that sex should not affect one's contribution to civilization—that race was the key factor. Gilman believed that white women and white men shared a racial bond that made them partners in advancing civilization. In a myriad of ways, Gilman worked to displace antifeminists' insistence on male supremacy in civilization by insisting on the centrality of white supremacy in civilization.

This chapter will investigate three ways in which issues of race and "civilization" pervaded Gilman's feminism. First, it will show how Gilman, as a child and young woman, learned to see the demands of her race as conflicting with the demands of her sex, and how she resolved this dilemma, after falling ill with neurasthenia. Second, it will show that in *Women and Economics*, Gilman revised male supremacist versions of "civilization" by invoking race to argue that women were essential to civilization's advancement. Third, in *The Man-Made World*, Gilman revised male supremacist versions of "civilization" by raising the racial specter of the savage rapist to argue that, compared to women, men were peripheral to civilization's advancement.

#### When Spheres Collide: Civilization, Womanhood, and Neurasthenia

Charlotte Perkins was born July 3, 1860. She grew up steeped in genteel Victorian values and Protestant evangelical culture. Her father, Frederick, was a member of the prominent Beecher family. Her mother, Mary, was a merchant's daughter who grew up with all the educational and cultural refinements of her class. Yet although both her parents had traditional Victorian upper-middle-class upbringings, Gilman herself grew up in near poverty. Her father was unable or unwilling to hold a job long enough to support his family, and by the time Charlotte was nine,<sup>12</sup> it was tacitly understood that he had deserted the family entirely. Gilman's mother, like most middle-class women, had neither the skills nor the opportunity to support herself. She and her two children were forced to take up the itinerant lifestyle of genteel "poor relations." Gilman spent her formative years—ages three to thirteen—moving between a succession of temporary homes in Rhode Is-

land, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, living with a variety of often resentful relatives of her father.<sup>13</sup>

As young Charlotte grew up and learned what it meant to be a woman and a member of her class, certain aspects of the Victorian doctrine of spheres came to seem contradictory and incoherent. It was well known that God and nature had designed a sexual division of labor, and that men and women occupied separate spheres—woman's within the home, and man's in the workplace, outside. Civilization could only advance if both sexes remained within these spheres. Woman kept civilization high-minded and Christian by providing a domestic retreat for her husband and children. Man's contribution to civilization's advancement was more direct: man raised civilization toward increasing material and intellectual perfection by developing commerce, technology, and the sciences to ever higher levels. The greater the degree of sexual differentiation—the more domestic the woman, and the more specialized the man—the more advanced the civilization was believed to be.

In Charlotte's family, however, something had gone terribly wrong with the Victorian arrangement of spheres. Although Mary Perkins was perfectly willing—even eager—to make a domestic retreat for Frederick, she could not. When her husband abdicated the duties of his sphere, Mary lost the financial means to do justice by *her* sphere and was left homeless. Gilman described her mother's frustration over her involuntary exile from domesticity: "Mother's life was one of the most painfully thwarted I have ever known. . . . The most passionately domestic of home-worshipping housewives, she was forced to move nineteen times in eighteen years, fourteen of them from one city to another." Debt was Mary's greatest problem. It was so improper for married middle-class women to work that no jobs were available to them—at least, none with living wages. Deserted wives like Mary were cultural anomalies, relegated to the margins of society, where few noticed or provided for them. For ten years Mary moved from one house to another, living wherever Frederick "installed her" but always "fleeing again on account of debt," leaving town one step ahead of her creditors.<sup>14</sup> Watching her mother, Charlotte learned early and bitterly that woman's duty to civilization could easily founder on the rocks of feminine economic dependency.

Although Gilman could have interpreted her homeless childhood as a divine trial intended to build her character or as proof of her father's moral weakness, she interpreted it, instead, as a demonstration of the unjust lim-



itations of "woman's sphere." In this, she was influenced by the growing woman's movement which, by the 1870s, had become extremely critical of just this sort of feminine economic dependency. Charlotte was probably exposed to these ideas when she boarded in the homes of her suffragist aunts Isabella Beecher Hooker and Harriet Beecher Stowe.<sup>15</sup>

Young Charlotte had no intention of sharing her mother's fate, and finding herself trapped and dependent in woman's sphere. Instead, she longed for artistic fame and intellectual success outside the home—achievements which she, like her culture, identified with man's sphere. As a young girl, she had envied her brother Thomas' access to the larger world and to her distant father's attention. Brighter than her brother, she had wooed her absent father by writing him to ask for books and magazines and by trying to dazzle him with her intellectual precocity.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, no one in her family saw fit to raise money for her education: she spent only four years in seven different schools before she turned fifteen.<sup>17</sup> Later, dull Thomas was sent to MIT while Charlotte had to beg to attend the Rhode Island School of Design.

Lacking much formal schooling to prepare her for important, remunerative work outside the home, she decided she must educate herself. In 1877, at the age of seventeen, she wrote her father, who was then working as assistant director of the Boston Public Library, informing him that she "wished to help humanity" and, in order to know where to begin, needed a reading list in history. In reply, Frederick sent her a list of nine books—not, as one might expect, about the history of modern social problems, or even about the history of modern nations. Instead, Frederick recommended scholarly tomes on ancient history and primitive anthropology.<sup>18</sup>

It was this reading list—the "beginning of my real education," according to Gilman—which taught her to identify the tantalizingly distant male sphere of intellectual achievement with the millennial mission to perfect the white races.<sup>19</sup> It also exposed her to the latest scholarly knowledge about the raced and gendered meaning of civilization. Frederick's list provided Charlotte with four of the central founding documents of a new type of Darwinist anthropology: Edward B. Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization* (1865) and *Primitive Culture* (1871); and John Lubbock's *Pre-historic Times, as Illustrated by Ancient Remains, and the Manners and Customs of Modern Savages* (1869) and *The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man* (1870). These anthropologies extrapolate from the customs of "modern savages" to explain how the men of the white races had gradually evolved their advanced civilizations. In other words, these books—like G. Stanley Hall's pedagogy—stripped dark-skinned races

of their status as people living in the nineteenth century and instead constructed them as ancient history texts—primitive survivals whose only importance to civilization was their capacity to provide information about the lost, primitive past of more "advanced" white races.<sup>20</sup> (Indeed, Hall, who cited both Tylor and Lubbock in *Adolescence*, drew on precisely this sort of anthropology when he looked to the customs of "savage races" in order to understand the impulses of "primitive" little boys.)<sup>21</sup> Frederick also sent Charlotte several issues of *Popular Science Monthly* to provide her with a grounding in evolutionary theory.<sup>22</sup> In short, Frederick's reading list depicted "the white man" as the cutting edge of civilization's advancement and the "primitive" races as evolutionary losers. All human history was a cosmic process of racial evolution, which was now thrusting the white races ever higher, toward a perfected civilization.

Inspired by her father's reading list, Charlotte soon moved to develop what she called her "religion"—a creed of the millennial importance of advancing the white races toward the highest possible civilization. Charlotte believed her studies of primitive history and anthropology gave her objective, scientific facts which she could use to answer her religious questions. It was the connectedness of her readings which impressed her, the way these seemingly unrelated books seemed to tie all human knowledge together in a "due order and sequence" which answered a variety of religious questions. As she put it, "they showed our origin, our lines of development, the hope and method of future progress."<sup>23</sup> Yet although she believed she saw a pattern in the facts, she really saw a pattern provided by the discourse. These texts, all shaped by the wider discourse of civilization, provided her with a ready-made philosophy of the millennial significance of racial evolution, which she discerned and adopted as her religion.

In taking evolution as the basis of her religion, Gilman was not unique. By the mid-1880s, a number of American Protestants were adopting evolution as a religious doctrine, including Gilman's great uncle, Henry Ward Beecher.<sup>24</sup> G. Stanley Hall, as we have already seen, also believed evolution had a profound religious significance, as it moved the race ever closer to millennial perfection.

Gilman's evolutionary religion differed from Beecher's and Hall's, however, in that it gave her a religious mandate to expand woman's sphere. By adopting this quest for a higher human evolution as her religion, Gilman was following in the footsteps of many Protestant women before her (including her great aunt Catharine Beecher) who had invoked religion to explain why it was necessary for women to do God's work outside the home.<sup>25</sup> For centu-



ries, Protestant theologians had agreed there was no sex in Christ: both men and women were spiritual equals. Therefore, when Gilman substituted evolution for the older Christian doctrine, it was no great jump for her to assume that just as Christian men and women had once shared the duty of advancing Christendom toward the millennium, so evolutionist men and women shared the duty to advance their race toward human evolutionary perfection.

Gilman describes her discovery of this evolutionary religion in her autobiography. After completing her studies, she writes, she asked herself what God was, and answered that God was the force which moved evolution always higher.<sup>26</sup> She then asked, "What does God want . . . of us?" and answered, "I figured it out that the business of mankind was to carry out the evolution of the human race, according to the laws of nature, adding the conscious direction, the telic force, proper to our kind—we are the only creatures that can assist evolution."<sup>27</sup> According to Gilman, this evolutionary religion would remain "the essential part of my life."<sup>28</sup> She would continue to see her mission as a reformer in terms of "carry[ing] out the evolution of the human race, according to the laws of nature." And those laws of nature, as she had learned them from her father's reading list, included the special evolutionary fitness of the white races to advance toward the highest possible civilization.

Gilman's studies in evolution gave her a way to understand her ambitions in terms of race instead of sex. Important work in the male sphere wasn't simply masculine; it was racial. Productive work, outside the home, was part of the cosmic, divinely ordained process of keeping the white race moving ever onward, toward a perfect civilization. As a woman, she had a mission to provide a civilized home for her family; yet as an Anglo-Saxon, she had a mission to "carry out the evolution of the human race." The claims of racial evolution and of womanhood were thus set in opposition, according to young Gilman's understanding of the spiritual implications of civilization.

By the time Gilman reached twenty-one, her choices seemed clear. Either she could follow the claims of sex—marriage, motherhood, domesticity and dependency—or the claims of race—intellectual labor to advance the race toward millennial perfection. Choosing race meant choosing the male sphere, and thus abjuring the joys of love, sex, matrimony, and motherhood forever.<sup>29</sup> As she wrote when she was twenty-one,

I am really glad not to marry. For the mother side of me is strong enough to make an interminable war between plain duties and in-

expressible instincts . . . Whereas if I let that business alone, and go on in my own way; what I gain in individual strength and development of personal power of character, *myself as a self*, you know, not merely as a woman, or that useful animal a wife and mother, will I think make up, and more than make up in usefulness and effect, for the other happiness that part of me would so enjoy.<sup>30</sup>

Gilman was deeply ambivalent. She was emotionally attracted to love and matrimony, but high-minded spinsterhood seemed the noblest option. Gilman vowed to choose race over sex and prepared to meet her future as an unmarried reformer.

Instead, she met her first husband. When Gilman was twenty-two, the promising and handsome young artist Charles Walter Stetson asked for her hand in marriage. Gilman was thrown into a quandary. She must either reject the attractive Stetson, together with the deep joys of motherhood which both the woman's movement and the civilization discourse told her was woman's noblest portion; or she must betray her deep-felt calling to improve the race, which she believed was the noblest possible occupation, albeit a masculine one. Racial duty—her mission to advance civilization—warred with her womanly duty and her own emotional desires. At first she refused Stetson, citing the conflict between woman's sphere and racial advancement: "If I were bound to a few [i.e., a husband and children] I should grow so fond of them, and so busied with them that I should have no room for the thousand and one helpful works which the world needs."<sup>31</sup> Yet she wavered. "On the one hand, I knew it was normal and right" for a woman to marry; "On the other, I felt strongly that for me it was not right, that the nature of the life before me [informed by her clarion calling to uplift the race] forbade it."<sup>32</sup> For sixteen months, Stetson courted her until finally she agreed to marry him. Still she had misgivings. She lamented to her diary, "Perhaps it was not meant for me to work as I intended. Perhaps I am not to be of use to others. I am weak. I anticipate a future of failure and suffering."<sup>33</sup> Charlotte and Walter were wed on May 2, 1884. Within two months, Gilman had fallen into an agonizing state of paralysis and despair.<sup>34</sup>

For the next four years Gilman brooded on her faults. Having chosen the claims of womanhood over race, she had failed as a woman. With everything a woman could want—everything her mother had been denied—"a charming home; a loving and devoted husband; an exquisite baby, . . . a wholly satisfactory servant"—still she "lay all day on the lounge and cried."<sup>35</sup> Unnatural! Worse, she had willfully and wickedly betrayed the cause of higher

civilization. "You did it yourself! You did it yourself!" she remembered thinking. "You were called to serve humanity, and you cannot serve yourself. No good as a wife, no good as mother, no good at anything. And you did it yourself!"<sup>36</sup> In desperation, she decided she must have a brain disease, uncharacteristically accepted a gift of a hundred dollars from a friend of her mother, and signed herself into the clinic of renowned neurologist Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, who diagnosed her as a victim of neurasthenia.<sup>37</sup>

Gilman herself already interpreted her own illness as the result of a conflict between her duty as a woman and her duty to her race, between woman's sphere and higher civilization. Neurasthenia was, thus, an appropriate diagnosis for her malaise. For, as we have already seen in our discussion of G. Stanley Hall and the neurasthenic paradox, neurasthenia was above all else a disease of higher civilization, which struck only men and women of the most advanced races, whose delicate, highly evolved nervous systems could not stand the demands of civilized life. Even Gilman herself ultimately agreed that the precipitating cause of her illness had been her society's insistence that the demands of womanhood must conflict with the demands of race.

Both sexes suffered from neurasthenia, yet the implications of neurasthenia differed for men and women, according to medical experts. Whereas men became neurasthenics because the mental labors of advanced civilization drained them of the nervous energy necessary to build a strong, masculine body, women became neurasthenics when they tried to combine their normal function—motherhood—with the masculine, enervating intellectual demands of modern civilization. Neurasthenic women lacked the nervous force to fully participate in modern civilization because their reproductive systems, unlike men's, were a constant drain on their nerve force. In fact, the most frequently cited single cause of female neurasthenia was reproductive disturbance.<sup>38</sup> This made the intellectual rigors of civilization especially dangerous for women. Indeed, George M. Beard repeatedly listed "the mental activity of women" as one of the five most dangerous developments of modern civilization.<sup>39</sup> Hall agreed and suggested that adolescent girls should take school holidays during their menses.<sup>40</sup>

Civilized intellectual activity and motherhood were thus medically incompatible for nervous women, according to the experts. Therefore, physicians' goals in curing neurasthenia were different for women than for men. While men must have their nervous forces recharged so they could return to the demanding intellectual pursuits of civilization, nervous women were advised to recognize their biological limitations and devote themselves exclusively to domesticity and the home. In other words, the neurasthenic man

must be returned to the civilized functions of the *race*, while the neurasthenic woman must recognize her biological limitations as a member of "the sex" and return to woman's sphere.

These, then were the assumptions upon which Dr. Mitchell proposed to treat the desperate Charlotte.<sup>41</sup> His first step was to disabuse her of her own opinions about what ailed her—after all, that sort of intellectual activity was what had made her ill, in the first place. Upon her arrival, Gilman had presented Mitchell with a long letter detailing the origins of her illness, which the good doctor dismissed contemptuously as itself a neurasthenic symptom. "I've had two women of your blood here already," he told her scornfully.<sup>42</sup> In order to recharge her nervous forces, he put her to bed and gave her the most common treatment for neurasthenia, the "rest cure." This consisted of complete bed rest; huge amounts of food, especially milk, handed by the nurse; soothing massages; passive dependence on doctor and nurse; and complete isolation from one's old occupations and friends.<sup>43</sup> Gilman found this regimen of infantilization and bodily pampering "agreeable treatment," and responded so well that, after a month, Mitchell pronounced her cured and sent her home with strict advice on how to prevent a neurasthenic relapse.

"Live as domestic a life as possible. Have your child with you all the time," Mitchell advised. "Lie down an hour after each meal. Have but two hours intellectual life a day. And never touch pen, brush or pencil as long as you live."<sup>44</sup> From now on, Gilman must remain in woman's sphere and forever abjure her duty to her race. By devoting her scanty nervous energy to domestic duties and rationing her contact with intellectually stressful civilization, she would be able to live a healthy, normal life. Diligently, Gilman tried to follow this advice—with disastrous results. As she put it, she "came so near the borderline of utter mental ruin I could see over."<sup>45</sup>

The most eminent medical expert had treated her, exiled her from civilization, and relegated her—as a mother, but like a child—to the home and nursery. In despair and in rebellion, she regressed to early childhood, playing with toys and crawling on the floor. "I made a rag baby, hung it on a doorknob and played with it. I would crawl into remote closets and under beds—to hide from the grinding pressure of that profound distress."<sup>46</sup>

Yet perhaps we should see this behavior as a regression not to childhood but to savagery. According to recapitulation theory, with which Gilman was surely familiar, children were at the same evolutionary stage as savages.<sup>47</sup> Gilman was forbidden to be civilized, forbidden to exercise the very functions which led to racial advance, the very gifts which had led her to believe she had a mission to advance civilization. Very well then—if she couldn't be

civilized, she would be a savage.<sup>48</sup> Sixteen years later, Gilman elaborated on this line of logic in her book *The Home*, which argued that, as currently organized, the modern American home was an atavistic remnant of savagery. Although the civilized world was a place of specialization and intellectual challenge, civilized white women were forced to live at home, doing unspecialized drudgery in primitive conditions—in short, living the life of a savage “squaw.”<sup>49</sup> Elsewhere, Gilman would make this argument more explicit: American women became neurasthenic because, as highly evolved, civilized human beings, they suffered from living an atavistic and primitive life in the home.<sup>50</sup> Gilman believed this because she had lived it: in 1887 she had found her total immersion in woman’s sphere and domesticity unbearable and so uncivilized that it literally drove her to savagery.

Medical science had offered Gilman a choice—the female version of the neurasthenic paradox. She could be either a healthy but primitive woman, happy in woman’s sphere and exiled from civilization, or a neurasthenic intellectual, weak and useless to civilization. Gilman, through her illness, reformulated her options: She could either be a crazy savage, cowering on the floor in woman’s sphere, or she could rejoin civilization and, neurasthenic as she was, take up once again the mantle of her millennial mission to advance her race. It wasn’t an easy decision but, in the end, only one choice was possible. Gilman left her husband and started a new life, working to uplift civilization as a writer and reformer. It had become clear that she simply couldn’t survive in woman’s sphere, exiled from civilization.

Nonetheless, her choice to rejoin civilization and abjure woman’s sphere came at a price. From then on, Gilman considered herself a debilitated neurasthenic. Even forty years later, in 1927, Gilman insisted that “the effects of nerve bankruptcy remain to this day.”<sup>51</sup> She reported that she had suffered “lasting mental injury” from her neurasthenic breakdown; that she had lost the mental abilities she had enjoyed as a young woman; that ever since her first marriage she couldn’t read, couldn’t concentrate, couldn’t work. Yet, as she complained bitterly, no one took her complaints of lasting damage seriously: “The humiliating loss of a large part of [my] brain power, of more than half of [my] working life, accompanied with deep misery and anguish of mind—this when complained of is met with amiable laughter and flat disbelief.”<sup>52</sup> Well might her friends be incredulous—for Gilman’s output after her divorce was prodigious! Between 1888, when she left her husband, and her death in 1935, Gilman wrote and published 8 novels, 171 short stories, 473 poems, and 1,472 nonfiction pieces (nine of them book-length).<sup>53</sup>

How could a woman so productive believe she was a neurasthenic in-



Fig. 10. This publicity photograph represents the civilized womanliness Charlotte Perkins Gilman worked so hard to construct for herself and her work. Gilman sits reading in a rocker. The atmosphere is homelike, with a Victorian lamp and furnishings. Yet this womanly domesticity is mingled with the “human” achievements of advanced civilization—the framed artwork on the table, and especially the shelves of thick, leatherbound books. Courtesy the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.

valid? Perhaps her own solution to her personal neurasthenic paradox left her no other choice. She had gone into her marriage believing she must choose between woman’s sphere and racial advance. She had wrestled with that choice until it nearly destroyed her. Only when faced with the complete destruction of her sanity could she give herself permission to desert woman’s sphere and rejoin civilization and the race. Yet she never completely rejected the terms of the neurasthenic paradox, which posited womanly health as the opposite of intellectual achievement, womanly fulfillment as the opposite of racial contribution. In leaving her first husband, Gilman made her choice;

but she could not completely reject the terms of that choice even years later, after a happy and fulfilling second marriage, and a productive career. And forever after, she would live with what she felt were the consequences of that debilitating choice—permanent damage to her nervous energies.

Yet even though she could not escape the dualities of the neurasthenic paradox herself, she was determined to dismantle them for other women. Gilman would devote the rest of her life to insisting that women like herself—white women—were members of their race, as well as members of their sex. No white woman ought to have to make the choices she had been forced to make between her sex and her race. As racially advanced Anglo-Saxons, civilized advancement was women's concern and heritage as much as it was men's. As she told the Los Angeles Woman's Club in an eloquent lecture given only two years after she had left her husband and rejoined civilization:

Some of you will say again that it is part of the male function in the human race to provide for the family, including under this head all the varied activities of our race, and the female function merely to serve the family . . . —in other words that the whole created human world, church and palace, book and picture, drama and oration, tool and weapon—can be produced only by the male sex, and that the female sex have no power beyond their functional ones! . . . But it is a lie! . . . Race function does not interfere with sex function. . . . The dominant soul—the clear strong accurate brain, the perfect service of a healthy body—these do not belong to sex—but to race!<sup>54</sup>

It was not true that all of civilization—“church and palace, book and picture, drama and oration, tool and weapon”—was part of man's sphere, and that the home was woman's only portion. “Race function” and “sex function” were as compatible for women as they were for men. The “dominant soul” of the highest brain and the healthiest body—of the most racially advanced, civilized members of the human family—“do not belong to sex—but to race!” This passionate tenet would remain the cornerstone of Gilman's feminism.

#### **Making White Women Central to Civilization's Advancement: *Women and Economics***

In 1898, ten years after Gilman rejoined civilization, she published *Women and Economics*, her eloquent argument that women like herself—white

women—were fully civilized beings, whose efforts were essential for the race to advance to the evolutionary millennium. It influenced countless American women, went through eight American printings by 1915 and was also published in translation in Japan, Hungary, Holland, Denmark, Italy, Germany, and Russia.<sup>55</sup> As the *New York City Review of Literature* put it thirty-five years after its publication, *Women and Economics* “has been considered by feminists of the whole world as the outstanding book on Feminism.”<sup>56</sup>

*Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* was one of Gilman's fullest explications of her racially based feminism. Its whole point was to create an alternative ideology of civilization in which white women could take their rightful place beside white men as full participants in the past and future of civilization. In it, Gilman passionately refuted the ideas about women and civilization which she had found most oppressive: that extreme sexual difference was a hallmark of advanced civilization; that civilized women must devote themselves primarily to domesticity; that women's economic dependency was essential to civilization. As Gilman saw it, all these noxious ideas that had once forced her to choose between her womanhood and her race overstated the influence of sex. Civilization's advancement, she argued, should be seen primarily in terms of race, not sex. The choice she had once been offered—between her race and her sex—was a false choice, because as a member of her highly civilized race, she had an indisputable duty to work for evolutionary advancement and the perfection of civilization, whether she was a man or a woman.

In writing *Women and Economics*, Gilman drew on the white supremacist knowledges of civilization which she had originally learned from her father's reading program in evolutionary anthropology, and which she had adopted as her millennial religion. She assumed that human history had a cosmic telos, an evolutionary mechanism, and a racial basis: it was a story of advanced white races evolving ever higher, striving toward a perfect civilization. Gilman herself rarely specified which race she meant when she invoked the need to allow “the race” to evolve upward. She didn't need to. As we have seen with the Columbian Exposition, Ida B. Wells' antilynching campaign, and G. Stanley Hall, most educated whites assumed that only the white races had the capacity to advance to the highest future stages of civilization. Gilman's knowledge of the discourse of civilization made her understand that to specify “white” would be redundant.

Gilman began *Women and Economics* by discussing the evolutionary implications of women's economic dependence. Like G. Stanley Hall and most of her contemporaries, Gilman was a Lamarckian: she believed that children

inherited their parents' acquired traits. The first chapter of *Women and Economics* argues that whatever creatures learned to do in order to obtain food was passed on genetically to their offspring and was the largest factor in the evolution of their species. For example, over the generations horses had evolved to be increasingly gentle creatures as they learned to depend on grazing for their livelihood, whereas tigers had become increasingly violent as they had learned ever more efficient ways to catch and dismember their prey.<sup>57</sup>

Women's economic dependence on men had made human beings evolve a most peculiar character. As Gilman put it, "We are the only animal species in which the female depends on the male for food, the only animal species in which the sex-relation is also an economic relation."<sup>58</sup> Gilman devoted her book to demonstrating how this "sexuo-economic" relation had distorted healthy human evolution and damaged civilization by making women develop sex traits at the expense of their race traits.

Gilman's condemnation of this sexuo-economic relation was the cornerstone of her feminist version of civilization. According to the masculinist civilization discourse, which Gilman was trying to rewrite, women's economic dependency on breadwinning husbands was indispensable to human evolution—an intrinsic part of civilized races' sexual difference. In *Women and Economics*, however, Gilman argued that women's economic dependence was entirely unnatural. Man's favor had become woman's bread-and-butter, and evolution had molded the human race accordingly. Woman had over-evolved those traits which men found sexually attractive. She had lost those robust qualities which normally led to racial advance, like physical size and strength, and had become specialized to man's sexual tastes. She was now delicate, soft, and feeble, unable to walk, run, or climb, or to perform any of the normal functions of the race. As Gilman put it, "our civilized 'feminine delicacy' . . . appears somewhat less delicate when recognized as an expression of sexuality in excess."<sup>59</sup> Excessive sexuality, and not advanced civilization, was the evolutionary result of women's economic dependence, according to Gilman.

In lower species, whose sole purpose was reproduction, this oversexed condition would not be a problem. Their females could afford to become "mere egg sac[s]," specialized entirely for sexual functions. But evolution intended human beings to develop a perfect civilization. As Gilman put it, "The duty of human life is progress, development . . . we are here, not merely to live, but to grow—not to be content with lean savagery or fat barbarism or sordid semi-civilization, but to toil on through the centuries, and

build up the ever-nobler forms of life toward which social evolution tends."<sup>60</sup> Humanity in general, and the advanced white races in particular, had a sacred task to evolve the highest possible civilization.

Gilman insisted that despite conventional wisdom, civilized races' elaborate and excessive sexual differences were not intrinsic to civilization's advancement. On the contrary, throughout human history, these excessive sexual differences had always led to civilization's destruction. As she put it, "The inevitable trend of human life is toward higher civilization, but while that civilization is confined to one sex, it inevitably exaggerates sex-distinction, until the increasing evil of this condition is stronger than all the good of the civilization attained, and the nation falls." This danger was not merely national, but racial: "The path of history is strewn with fossils and faint relics of extinct races,—races which died of what the sociologist would call internal diseases rather than natural causes." And she quoted Byron's assertion that there is only one tale to History: "First Freedom, and then Glory; when that fails, Wealth, Vice, Corruption—barbarism at last."<sup>61</sup>

Now, as we have seen in our discussion of Hall, Gilman was not alone in warning of the dangers of overcivilized racial decadence and the potential decline of civilization. Part of the larger discourse of civilization—the necessary corollary of its millennial aspect—was the sense that if a race did not continue progressing upward toward a perfect civilization, it would inevitably backslide and fall into racial decay. The need for races to struggle to achieve a millennial future necessarily implied a potential for failure. In the Christian version of this millennial struggle, God's opponent was sin or the devil. In Darwinized versions, including both Hall's and Gilman's, the evil that threatened evolution was stunted growth or racial decadence. Ancient Greece and Rome were frequently held up as cautionary examples.

Although warnings of racial decline and overcivilized decadence were a ubiquitous part of her culture, Gilman's explanations of this peril facing civilization were unique, intended to counter the antifeminist implications of the larger discourse. Masculinist commentators insisted that to avoid the decline of civilization, sexual differences must be upheld and even increased, lest the two sexes become more alike and thus more like uncivilized savages. As Hall wrote in *Adolescence*, quoting biologist Alpheus Hyatt:

In the early history of mankind the women and men led lives more nearly alike and were consequently more alike physically and mentally than they have become subsequently in the lives of highly civilized peoples. This divergence of sex is a marked characteristic of

progression among highly civilized races. Coeducation of the sexes, occupations of a certain kind, and woman's suffrage may have a tendency to approximate the ideals, the lives, and the habits of women to those of men in these same highly civilized races. Such approximation in the future . . . would not belong to the progressive evolution of mankind.<sup>62</sup>

These approximations between women and men, Hall continued in his own words, "would tend to virify women and feminize men, and would be retrogressive." This sort of "degenerative influence" must be avoided at all costs, because "one necessity of [continuous or certain progress] is that the sexes be not approximated, for this would inaugurate retrogressive evolution." Only the continuation and increase of sexual difference would allow civilization to move forward. If sexual difference decreased, evolution would move backward toward savagery, according to authorities like Hall and Hyatt.<sup>63</sup>

Gilman, on the other hand, argued the opposite: extreme sexual difference was not the proof of civilized advancement but the cause of overcivilized decadence and racial decay. "We, as a race, manifest an excessive sex-attraction, followed by its excessive indulgence, and the inevitable evil consequence. . . . What is the cause of this excessive sex-attraction in the human species? The immediately acting cause of sex-attraction is sex-distinction. The more widely the sexes are differentiated, the more forcibly they are attracted to each other."<sup>64</sup> Thus, for Gilman, extreme sex distinctions were dangerous devolutionary forces because they led to excessive sexuality in civilized men and women. In American civilization, this excessive sexuality manifested itself both within marriage (too much emphasis on sex) and outside marriage (in the seemingly ineradicable "social evil" of prostitution).<sup>65</sup> Thus, the sexuo-economic relation had deformed civilized men and women into a race of prostitute-like women, economically dependent on sexual allure, and of prostitute-patronizing men, who felt it was natural to support sexually attractive women.

Although Gilman was unique in seeing sexual difference as a cause of racial decadence, her view that excessive sexuality menaced civilization with racial decay was far more typical. Hall, for example, drew on these ideas when he constructed the figure of the masturbating, overstimulated youth as a metonym—cause and embodiment—of overcivilized decadence. For Gilman, the metonymic embodiment of civilization's impending decadence was the figure of the oversexed civilized woman—fat, weak, and ignorant—perverted from healthful evolutionary development and specialized, like a

courtesan, for man's sexual pleasure. For both Hall and Gilman, however, excessive sex signified endangered civilization and racial extinction.

According to Gilman, advanced civilizations' seemingly inevitable slide to decadence could be explained by a general scientific law—a law which codified the relationship between race and sex. Race development and sex development, she argued, were inversely related. The more energy a race devoted to "sex activity," the less energy it had to devote to "race activity."<sup>66</sup> Most animals could devote only a limited amount of energy to sex activity because self-preservation dictated they devote most of their energy to race activity. For example, if the peacock's tail, with which he attracted a mate, got too large and gaudy, he would lose the capacity to move about and he would starve to death.<sup>67</sup> But civilized women, dependent on sex for their bread, could become infinitely oversexed without starving.

Only civilized women could become so dangerously oversexed; thus, only civilized races were imperiled by this sexually caused racial decay. Savage and barbarous women, too, were economically dependent on men; yet savage races avoided racial decadence because they were too poor and primitive for their women to withdraw completely from productive labor. Savage women still had to work outside the home, producing goods to allow their race to survive, and this "race activity" kept their "sex activity" within tolerable bounds.

Highly civilized races, on the other hand, could produce enough to survive and still devote all their women, full time, to "sex activity." Over the generations, civilized races would become increasingly sexualized and therefore increasingly unfit for "race activity." Their women would grow increasingly feeble and oversexed; and their sons and daughters would inherit this oversexed feebleness via Lamarckian evolution. Inevitably, the entire race would grow so weak and oversexed that, unable to maintain the forward drive of race activity and civilization, they would decline and fall, just as ancient Greece and Rome had. This would be the fate of the United States and the white American race if the sexuo-economic relation were not abandoned.<sup>68</sup>

Here, then, was another way Gilman revised antifeminist elements of the discourse of civilization. The masculinist proponents of civilization depicted sexual difference and racial difference as *directly* related. That is, as civilized races advanced, they grew ever more unlike their racial inferiors, and at the same time their women grew ever more unlike their men. Gilman, on the other hand, depicted sexual difference and racial difference as *inversely* related: As civilized races advanced, they grew ever more unlike their racial



inferiors; but if sexual difference also increased, their racial superiority was likely to decrease, and they would degenerate back to the level of primitives. It was thus essential to civilized advancement that sexual differences not be exaggerated—otherwise racial devolution and the demise of civilization would result.

Here Gilman's millennialist evolutionary "religion" began to sound very much like the Protestant religion of her youth and her Beecher background. Like an Old Testament prophet—or one of her clergymen uncles—Gilman phrased her message as a warning that unless her people changed their ways, the fruits of their past sins would overwhelm them, and God/evolution would utterly destroy them. Civilization threatened to crumble at the very moment when humanity's perfection became conceivable. Holy evolution had brought the white races to a point where they had the potential to develop a civilization higher than any that had gone before. Yet despite this advancement, the white races' oversexed feebleness, born of their women's economic dependence on their men, threatened to destroy them and their civilization utterly.

To explain the higher evolutionary meaning of the sexuo-economic relation, Gilman drew on another story of thwarted divine intentions—the biblical story of Man's Fall in the Garden of Eden. These biblical echoes were probably unstudied, but they were powerful nonetheless, and structured her argument as a cosmic imperative. Just as God had originally intended Adam and Eve to live in happy perfection in the Garden, so Evolution had intended men and women to evolve happily and healthfully toward a perfect civilization. Yet evil had tempted man, and the Fall had occurred, as sin (the sexuo-economic relationship) had come into the world. *Women and Economics* contains two versions of this Fall—one prose version, contained in the text, and one version in verse, "Proem," which serves as a prologue.<sup>69</sup> Because the story they tell is substantially the same, the following discussion draws on both versions.

In the beginning, according to Gilman, "primitive man and his female were animals, like other animals," and, as with animals, the sexes were equal.<sup>70</sup>

In dark and early ages, through the primal forests faring  
Ere the soul came shining into prehistoric night  
Twofold man was equal; they were comrades dear and daring,  
Living wild and free together in unreasoning delight.<sup>71</sup>

Originally, men and women were merely dual aspects of "twofold man" and their world was a paradise of "unreasoning delight." Primal woman was as "strong, fierce, . . . nimble and ferocious" as primal man and, like primal man, she fed herself on what she found in the forests. Both sexes lived happily and equally together, supporting themselves, and not relying on the other for their economic needs.

Then came the Fall. Primal innocence was shattered when primitive man discovered evil, in the form of excessive sensuality and rape. Man

found the Tree of Knowledge, that awful tree and holy  
[And] he knew he felt, and knew he knew.

Gilman's Eve figure (male, unlike Genesis's) eats of the Tree of Knowledge and learns how to sin. He learns to eat for pleasure, drink for drunkenness, and imprison woman as his sexual possession:

Then said he to Pain, "I am wise now, and I know you!  
No more will I suffer while power and wisdom last!"  
Then said he to Pleasure, "I am strong, and I will show you  
That the will of man can seize you,—aye, and hold you fast!  
  
Food he ate for pleasure, and wine he drank for gladness.  
And woman? Ah, the woman! the crown of all delight!  
His now,—he knew it! He was strong to madness  
In that early dawning after prehistoric night.

Primal man, who now knows evil, subjugates primal woman, keeping her too weak to flee him, and fans the "flame of passion" with unnatural arts and forces.

Close, close he bound her, that she should leave him never;  
Weak still he kept her, lest she be strong to flee;  
And the fainting flame of passion he kept alive forever  
With all the arts and forces of earth and sky and sea.<sup>72</sup>

In future years, when Gilman lectured on the origins of woman's oppression, she continued to call this original discovery that man could violently compel woman to do his will—i.e. the birth of the primitive rapist—"the fall of man."<sup>73</sup>

Thus, the Fall from Evolution's original grace came when innocent primal man transformed himself from woman's equal into the first primitive rapist.

In her prose version, Gilman describes this development of the original savage rapist more explicitly than in the "Proem": "There seems to have come a time when it occurred to this amiable savage that it was cheaper and easier to fight a little female, and have it done with, than to fight a big male every time. So he instituted the custom of enslaving the female; and she, losing freedom, could no longer get her own food nor that of her young."<sup>74</sup> Man became intelligent enough to figure out how to circumvent the normal evolutionary process of sexual selection. He realized he didn't need to fight a big strong man every time he wanted sex—he could simply assault a small woman once, and then keep her weak and imprisoned. This was why men preferred small women to healthy large ones.

In other words, the origin of woman's subjection and the sexuo-economic relationship was the development of the primitive rapist—a figure we have met before. Like Northern white men, who demonstrated their own civilized manliness by contrasting it with the unrestrained lust of the mythic Negro rapist, Gilman was demonstrating women's capacity for higher civilization by contrasting virtuous primal woman with the unrestrained lust of primal man. Gilman intuitively understood the cultural power of the "primitive rapist," and, like most whites in her culture, she associated the "primitive rapist" with "the Negro." As she wrote in another context, Southern white "women suffer most frequently from masculine attack . . . by men of a lower grade of civilization to which no idea of chivalry has yet penetrated." Consciously or not, Gilman was drawing on the ubiquitous cultural images of manhood and Southern lynching against which Wells had fought so hard on her British tour, four years earlier.<sup>75</sup>

Gilman was not alone in seeing primal man as a rapist who destroyed a peaceful prehistoric period of sexual equality; the idea was already a commonplace among feminists who invoked a lost matriarchy. Yet by invoking the figure of the primitive savage rapist as the original enemy of sexual equality, feminists like Gilman were marshaling a powerful racist symbol for the cause of white women's advancement. The primitive rapist was already a figure of great cultural power in turn-of-the-century white America. Moreover, by making all men, including civilized white men, the evolutionary descendants of the original primal rapist—a figure indelibly coded Negro and therefore unmanly—Gilman was subtly arguing that men had no essential claim on civilization.

When man discovered rape, according to Gilman, he brought evil into the world, an evil which was now threatening the millennial future of all civilization. Evil, in Gilman's evolutionary religion, was whatever thwarted higher

evolutionary development, and the evil which the primal rapist had unleashed in the Garden had perverted all subsequent human evolution.<sup>76</sup> Because of her sexuo-economic dependence, first enforced by the primitive rapist, woman had evolved into a weak, parasitic creature. She was permanently dependent on her powers of sexual attraction and therefore lower than a prostitute, whose debasement was at least temporary. She was cut off from the forces of natural selection and sheltered from the race activity which would normally have made her evolve characteristics such as strength, skill, endurance, and courage.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, if it were not for the racially advanced traits civilized women inherited from their fathers (who, unlike their mothers, regularly engaged in race activity and so developed racially advanced traits to pass on to their offspring), women would be the most primitive of beings.<sup>78</sup>

Man-the-rapist's perversion of evolution's true intentions had by now left the race so oversexed that the ultimate evolutionary catastrophe loomed: "All morbid conditions tend to extinction. One check has always existed to our inordinate sex-development—nature's ready relief, death. Carried to its furthest excess, . . . the nation itself has perished, like Sodom and Gomorrah."<sup>79</sup> This was the precarious condition in which civilized American men and women found themselves at that moment. The evil unleashed in the Garden had now grown to such an extent that it threatened to undermine the divine workings of evolution entirely, leaving evolution's most favored race on the brink of devolution and eternal night.

Yet evolution, like the Lord of Hosts, would never fail its chosen people. Nature would not have allowed a condition like the sexuo-economic relation to develop unless it had a higher purpose, an important part to play in the millennial drama of civilization's advancement. Although the sexuo-economic relation currently threatened civilization with decadence and dissolution (just as the devil had threatened Christendom with eternal damnation), the Fall from the sexually equal Garden had a higher meaning which would ultimately allow the development of a perfect civilization (just as the original Fall allowed God an ultimate triumph over evil, in a millennial future).

The sexuo-economic relation, Gilman now revealed, was only a temporary condition, designed by nature in order to make civilization possible. According to Gilman, civilization in its essence was social. The highest civilization was the one in which humans had developed the most specialized and efficient ways to serve one another: "To serve each other more and more widely; to live only by such service; to develop special functions,



so that we depend for our living on society's return for services that can be of no direct use to ourselves—this is civilization, our human glory and race-distinction."<sup>80</sup> Yet this social feeling, which was the basis of civilization itself, was essentially feminine. (Gilman, as we will see later, believed in certain sex-based characteristics, which were aspects of biological motherhood or fatherhood.) Among animals, only females show any rudiments of social feeling, because only females were mothers. Female animals nursed their young, while male animals gratified only their own individual needs. Among the earliest primal humans, this animal dynamic continued: only females were social or altruistic. Primal woman developed social maternalism to new heights, developing primitive agriculture to feed her children, primitive architecture to house them, primitive industry to clothe them. Primal man, however, remained as individualistic as male animals, caring about nothing except himself. Had man remained this individualistic, civilization could never have evolved.

The sexuo-economic relation was evolution's way of forcing man to be social—and, ultimately, civilized—by harnessing his sexual passion to the cause of evolutionary advancement. It was only after man developed into the primitive rapist and imprisoned woman to serve as his concubine that he was forced, for the first time, to provide for beings other than himself. Captive, weakened females lost the ability to feed themselves and their children, and man was forced to support them himself.

The subjection of woman has involved to an enormous degree the maternalizing of man. Under its bonds he has been forced into new functions, impossible to male energy alone. He has had to learn to love and care for some one besides himself. He has had to learn to work, to serve, to be human. Through the sex-passion, mightily overgrown, the human race has been led and driven up the long steep path of progress . . . until at last a degree of evolution is reached in which the extension of human service and human love makes possible a better way.<sup>81</sup>

Driven by his "mightily overgrown sex passion," the human male had gradually been driven up "the long steep path of progress." He had gradually been feminized and had become social, altruistic—civilized. Only this gradual feminization of man had made higher civilization possible.

According to Gilman, then, civilization is intrinsically feminine. Had men been feminized, they could never have become either human or civilized. In other words, Gilman was inverting the more common idea, which

had so paralyzed her during her marriage, that civilization was intrinsically masculine, and woman's place in it merely reproductive. Gilman encouraged modern woman to be proud of the crucial and unrecognized role she had played in the evolution of civilization. "With a full knowledge of the initial superiority of her sex and the sociological necessity for its temporary subversion, she should feel only a deep and tender pride in the long patient ages during which she has waited and suffered, that man might slowly rise to *full racial equality with her*."<sup>82</sup> Woman was not, in other words, merely ancillary to civilization's advancement, as so many assumed. She was the central factor which had allowed the race to rise. "Women can well afford their period of subjection for the sake of a conquered world, a civilized man."<sup>83</sup> Man would have remained a pathetic animal had woman not suffered and sacrificed to raise him to her racial level, and to civilize him.

Now, however, the men of the most advanced races had finally become truly civilized. The women of those advanced races, therefore, could abandon their excessive sex distinctions. And it was imperative that they do so! It was a question of racial survival. We have seen that the sexuo-economic relation held in it the seeds of racial destruction. This had happened before; highly civilized races had always become oversexed and degenerated, while new, fresher races had risen to take their place. But white Americans today had the scientific and historic knowledge to understand the dangers and to develop a newer, better form of sex relation. As Gilman put it, they could "grasp the fruits of all previous civilizations, and grow on to the beautiful results of higher ones."<sup>84</sup> White, native-born Americans could choose either women's sexual dependence, leading to racial decline and barbarism, or women's sexual equality, leading to racial advance and the highest civilization ever evolved.

Sexual equality was, thus, a racial necessity. The white American woman must now abandon her primitive domestic labors in order to take her place as a civilized member of the Anglo-Saxon race. As Gilman put it, "the long-subverted human female" was now ready to emerge "to full racial equality."<sup>85</sup> And Gilman did, indeed, mean full racial equality, with all the trappings of white racial supremacy. It was because white Anglo-Saxon men had reached a civilized status that white Anglo-Saxon women could now claim the right to be treated as equal members of a civilized race.

Gilman didn't need to specify "white races" in *Women and Economics*. White readers, familiar with the discourse of civilization, could confidently and correctly assume that when Gilman mentioned "civilization," "women," or "racial advancement," she meant white civilization, white women, and

white racial advancement, even if she rarely used the word "white." If we look for her to say this explicitly in *Women and Economics* we find only hints and implications. For example, when Gilman described women's current push toward equality, she wrote that "women in the most advanced races are standing free." In other words, not all women were evolutionarily prepared to throw off the sexuo-economic relation—only women in the most advanced races.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, Gilman suggested that women's push for "full racial equality" was stronger in the United States than in any other country partly because American women were mostly Anglo-Saxon.<sup>87</sup>

When asked directly, however, Gilman unhesitatingly made her white supremacist assumptions explicit. In 1904, while lecturing on "Woman as a Factor in Civilization," Gilman was asked whether her analysis applied equally to Negroes and whites. No, it did not, Gilman replied. She explained that the evolutionary purpose of the sexuo-economic relation was to raise man to woman's level, thus making civilization possible. The Negro race, unlike the white, had not yet become completely civilized. Therefore, until the Negro man no longer needed to be forced to work to support his family, "it was best for the negro woman to remain at home and for the man to support her for yet awhile."<sup>88</sup> (Four years later, Gilman would expand on this point in the *American Journal of Sociology*, arguing that until they were civilized, most American Negroes should be conscripted into forced-labor armies.<sup>89</sup>) The Negro man still needed the spur of sex to teach him the virtues of hard work and altruism—to civilize him. Until the Negro man was civilized, Gilman saw no point in demanding equality or economic independence for the Negro woman. Anglo-Saxon whites, on the other hand, were already highly civilized. It was therefore time for Anglo-Saxon woman to become economically independent of Anglo-Saxon man and to begin engaging in "race activity."

The best known sections of *Women and Economics*—Gilman's suggestions that housework, food preparation, and child care be performed by paid professionals—were simply practical proposals to extricate Anglo-Saxon women from the primitive, unspecialized home, and allow them to rejoin civilization. Anglo-Saxon women had been exiled from true civilization and kept artificially primitive in comparison to Anglo-Saxon men. They were confined to the home, which was organized along primitive and inefficient lines—forced to do the work of a "savage squaw." Gilman therefore devotes several chapters to practical suggestions about how to reorganize housework in ways which would not only civilize home life but also free Anglo-Saxon women to engage in Anglo-Saxon race activity. In short, permitting civilized

woman to abandon her sexuo-economic dependence would not merely give her *sex equality*—that is, parity with man—it would also give her *full racial equality*. It would allow her to claim her birthright as an evolutionarily advanced Anglo-Saxon.

At the end of the book, Gilman encapsulates her argument with a graphically racial metaphor of miscegenation. By artificially keeping Anglo-Saxon women in a painfully primitive condition and refusing to allow them to claim their civilized racial heritage, their society was committing the "innate perversion" of "moral miscegenation."<sup>90</sup> This perverted racial mixing had led the race to all kinds of social turmoil and needed to be stopped.

Marry a civilized man to a primitive savage, and their child will naturally have a dual nature. Marry an Anglo-Saxon to an African or Oriental, and their child has a dual nature. Marry any man of a highly developed nation, full of the specialized activities of his race . . . to the carefully preserved, rudimentary female creature he has so religiously maintained by his side, and you have as a result what we all know so well . . . the innate perversion of character resultant from the moral miscegenation of two so diverse souls. . . . We have been injured in body and in mind by the two dissimilar traits inherited from our widely separated parents.<sup>91</sup>

Of course, white America's fears of miscegenation in 1898 stemmed less from intermarriage and more from its terror of the "savage Negro rapist"—the modern version of Gilman's primal sexual terrorist. By stirring up white terrors of the primal rapist and of a racially impure civilization—those same terrors which Ida B. Wells was trying to eradicate—Gilman was marshaling the most powerful available racist images to argue against keeping white women marginal to civilization.

White America, in Gilman's eyes, remained stunted in its growth and thwarted in its evolutionary development because it had committed a crime against nature, the crime of miscegenation. The white American race was as conflicted as the literary "tragic mulatto"—unable to rise to its civilized destiny; kept down by its primitive heritage. Yet, unlike the tragic mulatto, the white American race could remake itself as racially pure. Anglo-Saxon women no longer needed to remain racial primitives. When race development replaced sex development, white women would become civilized, and moral miscegenation would be replaced with a eugenic marriage between racial equals.

In sum, *Women and Economics* was Gilman's solution to the neurasthenic



Fig. 11. Cartoon from the *London Morning Leader*, March 2, 1905, illustrating Gilman's views (presented in a lecture during one of her many tours) that by forcing women to remain in the home, society made women "savages" compared to active, "civilized" men. Courtesy the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.

agonies she had suffered as a young woman, when she had been forced to choose between her race and her sex. When Dr. Mitchell had tried to confine her to the nursery and to exile her from civilization, Gilman had nearly lost her sanity. *Women and Economics* proved that she had suffered needlessly. Her physician and her society had posed a false dualism: there was no need for her to choose between her womanhood and her race. Women like herself were central to civilization—to its original development, to its past history, and above all, to its future advancement. As Anglo-Saxons, they had every right and every duty to contribute their all to civilization's future by taking part in what had erroneously been called "the male sphere." This was their racial duty, a duty they dared not shirk. For if white women remained domestic "squaws," in a state of savagery, civilization itself was doomed. It was their duty, both as members of their sex and as members of their race, to take up the struggle to advance civilization.

Gilman's basic assumptions about civilization were quite similar to Hall's. Both Gilman and Hall wanted to help the most advanced white races evolve toward a millennial future, using the mechanisms of Lamarckian evolution. Both framed their mission as a struggle to prevent overcivilized decadence. Both argued that perverted gender and excessive sex threatened their society with overcivilized decadence. Both looked to quasi-anthropological studies of "primitive" man to understand the meaning of modern civilization.

When it came to their views about civilization and manhood, however, Hall and Gilman drew completely opposite conclusions. Hall invoked "civilization" in order to strengthen masculinity. He believed civilization had weakened men and saw civilization's opposite, the primitive, as a source of powerful manhood. Gilman, however, had no interest in finding a source of powerful manhood—she believed manhood was far too powerful, as it was! Instead, she found in "civilization" a way to strengthen womanhood. According to her, men had unjustly appropriated civilization for themselves, leaving women only those marginal spheres of activity associated with sex and reproduction. Therefore, in *Women and Economics*, she depicted the primitive past as a time of sexual equality, when primitive woman possessed a vibrant power which, if restored, could counter civilization's repeated tendency to decadence and collapse. Both Hall and Gilman looked to the primitive for a lost primal strength, in other words; but Hall found a lost, powerful manhood, while Gilman found a lost, powerful womanhood.

Yet although Gilman and Hall disagreed completely about the relation of civilization to modern manhood, their characterizations of primitive masculinity were quite similar. The unfettered violence and passion that Hall hoped to find in primitive man were echoed in Gilman's figure of the primal savage rapist. Indeed, as we saw with Ida B. Wells and Jack Johnson, many whites shared Hall's and Gilman's view that primitive masculinity implied unfettered sexual violence. Even scholarly anthropologists assumed that primal man was a rapist and that promiscuity and sexual violence were characteristic of savage races. For example, anthropologist John McLennan asserted "savages" were promiscuous or even rapists: when an aboriginal Australian wanted a woman, according to McLennan, "he forces her to accompany him by blows, ending by knocking her down and carrying her off."<sup>92</sup> Hall had found something powerful and exciting in this unfettered primal passion. Gilman, on the other hand, found it entirely reprehensible. Like Ida B. Wells lecturing in England, she

assumed that unbounded masculine passion was unmanly, uncivilized, and therefore despicable. Yet, as she would soon discover, many American men were becoming as intrigued as Hall by this passionate, primal masculinity.

***The Man-Made World and Primal Masculinity: "Desire, Combat, and Self-Expression"***

Gilman didn't stop at making women central to civilization. Not long after *Women and Economics* was published, Gilman began to argue that, compared to women, men were peripheral to civilized advancement. For years, men had considered women to be merely "the sex," devoted by evolution to reproduction, and had assumed that only men could advance the race. Yet Gilman insisted the opposite was true: it was men who were "the sex," while women were the ones with the greatest capacity to advance the race. Indeed, by exiling women from civilization, and keeping racial advancement to themselves, men—"the sex"—had distorted civilization by permeating it with male sex traits.

Gilman made these arguments in a number of different, sometimes contradictory, ways. Sometimes she invoked biology, drawing especially on sociologist Lester Ward's "gynaecocentric theory." Ward had argued that the true meaning of sexual difference could be found by looking at sex's origins among insects and other invertebrates. When these sexually undifferentiated creatures first evolved into male and female, males were puny, inferior creatures designed merely to fertilize the female, whereas females carried all the species' superior and characteristic traits. Indeed, Ward argued, the presexual creatures who reproduced parthenogenetically ought themselves be seen as female.<sup>93</sup> Thus, females were the original organisms who had advanced evolution, while males' original evolutionary purpose was solely reproductive.

Gilman seized upon Ward's theory to refute the widespread assumption that biology dictated females' function to be merely maternal. Indeed, the opposite was true! As she gleefully pointed out (returning again to the Garden of Eden), Ward's evolutionary origin theory completely reversed Genesis, with all its antifeminist implications. Woman was not created out of Adam's rib as a mere afterthought and helpmeet for man. On the contrary, evolution had created her first and had created males merely for purposes of procreation.

Our ideas are all based on the primal concept expressed in the Adam and Eve story—that he was made first, and that she was made to assist him. On this assumption rests all our social structure as it concerns the sexes. Reverse this idea once and for all; see that woman is in reality the race-type, and the man the sex-type, and all our dark and tangled problems of unhappiness, sin and disease, as between men and women, are cleared at once.<sup>94</sup>

Once society realized that common wisdom had it backwards—that it was *man* who was the "sex type," and *woman* who was the "race-type"—modern social problems could be cleared up and civilization could be perfected.

Yet although sometimes Gilman insisted that woman was the race-type and man merely a creature of sex, at other times she insisted that men and women were equally creatures of sex and that both had an equal capacity for meaningful contribution to civilization. Gilman explained this by redefining the concept of separate spheres. It wasn't true that woman's sphere was the home and man's sphere the world, as she had been taught as a child. Instead, she insisted that there were three distinct spheres which needed to be differentiated. "As a matter of fact, there is a 'woman's sphere,' sharply defined and quite different from his; there is also a 'man's sphere,' as sharply defined and even more limited; but there remains a common sphere—that of humanity, which belongs to both alike."<sup>95</sup> Gilman called for a new system of classification which would differentiate between these spheres and labeled them, "masculine, feminine, and human."

Gilman explained the differences between the masculine, feminine, and human spheres by invoking the difference between lower and higher evolution. "That is masculine which belongs to the male sex, as such; to any and all males, *without regard to species* . . . That is feminine which belongs to the female sex, as such *without regard to species*."<sup>96</sup> By definition, then, masculine and feminine traits were traits which people shared with animals—traits which remained unchanged as species ascended the evolutionary ladder. These traits were intrinsically sexual: they referred to reproduction, which worked alike in all species. Thus, for Gilman, masculinity and femininity were simultaneously sexual and animalistic.

Another way to say this is that Gilman (like so many others in her culture) saw "masculinity" as a primal trait, expressed as perfectly in animals or savagery as in civilization. "The male savage," Gilman wrote in another context, "is 'masculine' enough surely; but he is little else."<sup>97</sup> Femininity, too, was as perfectly expressed in animals or in savagery as in civilization. As she argued

in *Women and Economics*, excluding civilized women from race activity forced them to develop the primal femininity of savage "squaws," without the advanced human attributes of civilization.

Unlike "masculine" and "feminine," which referred to all species, however, "human" referred to only one species—the one which had the capacity to become civilized. Indeed, the higher a species or race advanced toward a perfect civilization, the more human it was. As Gilman defined it, "That is human which belongs to the human species, as such, *without regard to sex*. Through all organic life we find the distinction between species steadily increasing as we rise, till in our own we find such marked differences as have enabled us to become long since the dominant race on earth. It is in this race distinction that every thought of humanity inheres."<sup>98</sup> Race distinctions, such as higher intelligence, were the hallmarks which distinguished true humanity. "That degree of brain development which gives us the human mind is a clear distinction of race. The savage who can count a hundred is more human than the savage who can count ten."<sup>99</sup> Once again, Gilman insisted that as human evolution advanced it was the distinctions between races which counted, not the distinctions between the sexes.

In short, sometimes Gilman minimized the importance of sex difference (pointing instead to the centrality of race difference), while at other times she made sex difference central to her analysis (arguing that femininity expressed the race-type, while masculinity merely expressed sexuality). The contradictory implications of these positions never bothered Gilman, even when she used both models simultaneously, as she frequently did. In fact, as Gilman used them, these ostensible contradictions buttressed one another. The world's supposedly ineradicable problems, until now excused as "human nature," were in fact simply excess masculinity. Conversely, the normal racial work of the world, commonly seen as masculine, was really human: "The task here undertaken is . . . to show that what we have all this time called 'human nature' and deprecated was really male nature, and good enough in its place; [and] that what we have called 'masculine' and admired as such, was in large part human, and should be applied to both sexes."<sup>100</sup> Once woman was recognized as human and not merely feminine, she would be able to address the true cause of civilization's problems: excessive masculinity. This was the argument of *The Man-Made World*.

*The Man-Made World; or Our Androcentric Culture* (1911; published serially 1909–10) demonstrated how woman could perfect civilization by ridding it of excessive masculinity. Gilman defined masculinity as consisting of three basic traits: "In these studies we must keep clearly in mind the basic

masculine characteristics: desire, combat, and self-expression."<sup>101</sup> Gilman's characterization of masculinity looked much like the figure of the original primitive rapist. Desire, combat, and self-expression—lust, violence, and egotism—defined the crime of the primal rapist. Thus, *The Man-Made World* elaborated on the argument, already presented in *Women and Economics*, that the development of the primitive rapist was the original source of evil in the world. Rooting her analysis in the biology of sex differences, Gilman demonstrated precisely how modern civilization had been warped and damaged by the primal rapist's excessive masculinity, which lived on in modern, civilized man.

Gilman's definition of "excess masculinity" as "desire, combat, and self-expression" was drawn from a number of respected scientific sources. One was Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson's influential 1889 treatise, *The Evolution of Sex*.<sup>102</sup> Geddes and Thompson, prominent British biologists, argued that the basic differences between males and females of all species stemmed from essential differences in their cell metabolism. Females were characterized by the "anabolic" tendency to store up or conserve energy, which made them loving, intuitive, patient, altruistic, and maternal. Males, on the other hand, were characterized by the "katabolic" tendency to dissipate or expend energy, which made them passionate, forceful, strong, and aggressive.

*The Evolution of Sex* thus gave biological authority to Victorian middle-class assumptions about sexual difference, both feminist and antifeminist. Geddes and Thompson themselves were antifeminists: "What was decided among the prehistoric Protozoa cannot be annulled by Act of Parliament," they archly told woman suffragists.<sup>103</sup> Yet Gilman, like many other feminists of her generation, found in *The Evolution of Sex* a far more positive view of female biology than that held by antifeminist authorities like S. Weir Mitchell. Where Mitchell and his colleagues believed women's energy-hungry reproductive systems threatened to drain their bodies of the nervous force necessary to advance civilization, Geddes and Thompson depicted women as biologically different from men, but equally valuable; and feminists embraced the idea that women's anabolic energy gave them valuable, civilized attributes like altruism which katabolic men lacked.<sup>104</sup> Conversely, Gilman drew from Geddes and Thompson a much more pejorative view of masculinity than they ever intended. "Desire, combat and self-expression [were] all legitimate and right in proper use," she argued. But when allowed to run rampant (as in the masculine figure of the primal rapist) they were "mischievous," "excessive," "out of place," and a danger to human advancement.<sup>105</sup>

In defining desire, combat, and self-expression as the three essential masculine characteristics, Gilman was also drawing on Darwin's theories of sexual selection. Darwin had identified two biological mechanisms of sexual selection: male battle and female choice. Some male animals fought each other to win the female's favor (male battle); other males developed gorgeous plumage or impressive antlers in order to attract females (female choice).<sup>106</sup> Desire was a masculine trait, in this scenario, because it was always the male who initiated sexual pursuit and mating. (Here Victorian scientists were projecting Victorian notions of feminine sexual passivity onto animals.) Combat was a masculine trait because males fought one another in order to attract the female. Self-expression was a masculine trait because male animals developed elaborate bodily sex decoration (like wattles or manes) or engaged in elaborate courting dances and other ostentatious behavior in order to convince females to choose them for a mate.

As Gilman saw it, desire, self-expression, and combat were excellent characteristics—but only for sexual selection. When male sexuality was allowed to run rampant, coloring nonreproductive aspects of life, something was definitely wrong. When men wanted more sex than was necessary for reproductive purposes, for example, or when they engaged in mating behavior in nonsexual, “human” spheres of life, all civilization suffered. Modern civilization now found itself in precisely this desperate condition. Male sexuality had run amok and was now out of control, perverting all civilization. Men had claimed all civilization as theirs and had refused to allow women to participate in the so-called male sphere, which was actually the human sphere.<sup>107</sup> By excluding women's anabolic energy, men had warped nearly every aspect of civilized life. Excluding femininity was especially harmful because the female, unlike the male, was the race-type, and therefore closer to the true essence of humanity than the katabolic male. Only by restoring woman to her true position in the human sphere could civilization's excess masculinity be counteracted and the race be returned to normal.<sup>108</sup>

*The Man-Made World* documented a myriad of ways these excessive masculine sex-traits had perverted civilized institutions. For example, man's excessive tendency toward self-expression had perverted the arts, so that now the focus was on the artist himself, rather than on the artwork's beauty. The “ultra-masculine artist . . . uses the medium of art as ingenuously as the partridge-cock uses his wings in drumming on the log, or the bull moose stamps and bellows; not narrowly as a mate call, but as a form of expression of his personal sensations.”<sup>109</sup> Similarly, man's love of combat had led histo-

rians to study wars and conquest, instead of the more important topic of social history, “our racial life.”<sup>110</sup> Masculinity's perverse hold on ethics—and the excessive influence of the masculine passions of sex and combat—could be gauged by the popular proverb, “All's fair in love and war.”<sup>111</sup> Even religion had been distorted by man's tendency toward desire, combat, and self-expression.<sup>112</sup> “What has the male mind made of Christianity? Desire—to save one's own soul. Combat—with the Devil. Self-Expression—the whole gorgeous outpouring of pageant and display.”<sup>113</sup>

Economics, too, had been distorted by man's “basic spirit of desire and of combat”: “Long ages wherein hunting [for game] and fighting [over women] were the only manly occupations have left their heavy impress. The predatory instinct and the combative instinct weigh down and disfigure our economic development.”<sup>114</sup> As we saw in *Women and Economics*, the impulse to labor was feminine, stemming from mothers' need to provide for their children. Men could only be convinced to labor by depicting productive work as a struggle for dominance, a sort of prizefight: “to the male mind, the antagonist is essential to progress, to all achievement. . . . If you have not the incentive of [sexual] reward, or the incentive of combat, why work?” The debilitating result of this excessive masculinity in economics was cutthroat capitalist competition and class war.

What had caused the development of all this morbid masculinity? In *The Man-Made World*, Gilman blamed the same figure that she had in *Women and Economics*—the original primal rapist. The “great fundamental error” of the man-made world had been to make man, instead of woman, the sexual selector. This fundamental error originated when man assumed the illicit authority “to be the possessor of women, their owner and master, able at will to give, buy and sell, or do with as he pleases.”<sup>115</sup> Woman lost her intrinsic feminine ability to say yes or no to sex; and man developed his excessive sexuality. Making man the sexual selector was unnatural, however, because sexual selection was based on male competition and female choice. Femininity entailed the capacity to choose the fittest mate, but masculinity entailed no such skills. Females naturally selected males who possessed the greatest genetic qualifications for paternity. Males, on the other hand, saw sex in terms of competition, so they tended to breed indiscriminately. They chose females out of mere sex attraction, regardless of the effect on their offspring. They liked women fat, weak, and tiny—traits antithetical to racial advancement. Males' usurpation of feminine choice had thus caused the race to become physically degenerate.<sup>116</sup>

These evolutionary drawbacks of man-as-selector were epitomized in the



figure of the primal rapist. When man took on the essentially feminine function of sexual selection, he allowed his sexual desire to run rampant, and this excessive masculinity had led to racial devolution.

If there is a race between males for a mate—the swiftest gets her first; but if one male is chasing a number of females he gets the slowest one first. The one method improves our speed; the other does not. If males struggle and fight with one another for a mate, the strongest secures her; if the male struggles and fights with the female (a peculiar and unnatural horror, known only among human beings) he most readily secures the weakest. The one method improves our strength—the other does not.<sup>117</sup>

Gilman could envision only two possibilities. Either men obeyed the natural imperatives of sexual selection by fighting other men to win a woman's favor; or men fought women and raped them. One was natural; the other was original sin. (Believing desire to be an exclusively masculine sex characteristic, Gilman could not conceive of a scenario in which females competed sexually for males. She considered Freudianism perverted.) Woman must return to the natural position of sexual selector so that eugenic matings could become the rule, instead of the exception.<sup>118</sup> Man as sexual selector—as rapist—must be abolished:

Whereas Gilman had once been forced to choose between her race and her sex, *The Man-Made World* argued that men must now choose between their race and their sex. Masculinity, as it had evolved, was completely antithetical to racial advancement and higher civilization. As Gilman defined it, masculinity was not even human: civilized masculinity was the same as animal masculinity. Lust, egotism, and violence were its primary components. Among animals, lust, egotism, and violence were kept under control by female sexual selection, but among humans, overly sexual, quasi-rapist men had subjugated the female and allowed male sexuality to run amok. Male sexuality must be curbed to save the race from decadence and restore the true path of upward civilization.<sup>119</sup> Just as in *Women and Economics*, the original primal rapist, with his violence, egotism, and overwhelming sexual desire, remained the origin of absolute evil and racial decadence. The higher development of civilization depended on cleansing the world of the influence of the primitive male rapist.

Thus Gilman in 1909, like Ida B. Wells in 1894, mobilized a figure of unrestrained male passion to signify the absolute opposite of higher civilization. Like Wells she assumed that the unfettered lust and violence of this

unmanly figure would be anathema to her middle-class audience. Yet middle-class culture had changed in the fifteen years since Wells had returned triumphant from England, as Gilman would soon discover. So crucial to Gilman's analysis was this oppositional relationship between civilization and its nemesis, the primal savage rapist, that she was uncharacteristically flustered when antifeminist men began to champion the primal rapist as an expression of primitive virility and masculine dominance.

### Gilman Confronts "the Brute in Man"

By about 1912, a new and "savage" note began to sound more frequently in popular expressions of middle-class manhood. Increasingly, male power and authority were being described as wild, primitive, and not all endangered by overcivilized decadence. Theodore Roosevelt had returned in triumph from his African safari; Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan of the Apes* had been published; and Charlotte Perkins Gilman was forced to come to terms with a popular image of primitive masculinity which, like hers, was based on combat, egotism, and desire, but which, unlike hers, was seen not as a reproach to, but as a legitimate source of, male dominance.

The middle-class interest in masculine primitivism was, of course, hardly new in 1914. We have already seen it in Hall's interest in boyhood primitivism and in the figure of the "natural man" so pervasive in journalists' accounts of lynching. Gilman herself had criticized it twenty years earlier. In 1894, she had attacked two popular symbols of primal masculinity by linking them to racial primitivism. Prizefighting, she wrote, showed the decay of civilization, and she quoted a press report condemning a New Orleans prizefight as "a scene of savagery which would not have been out of place in the heart of Africa."<sup>120</sup> She also objected to descriptions of bodybuilder Eugene Sandow as "the perfect man." Perfect manhood, in her opinion, implied development of the higher racial faculties which made man civilized. "It is good to see a man strong, healthy, well-developed—all men should be that at least; but to make beauty, much more perfection, requires more than this. The Dahomeyan is strong, healthy and well-developed; so is the Esquimaux; so is the Apache; so is many a proud athlete of the ring and track. But beauty is more, far more."<sup>121</sup> It wasn't physical culture that bothered Gilman: she was a great advocate of physical fitness for both men and women. Rather the celebration of manhood as primitive violence and mere physicality seemed to her racially atavistic and hostile to the primacy of civilization. In a rare use



of the word, she even described prizefighting as lacking "manliness"—manliness, as we have seen, being commonly associated with "civilization."

Between 1894 and 1912, Gilman usually addressed the growing interest in primitive masculinity indirectly, if at all. Either she told origin stories depicting primitive man in the most unflattering light, as she did in *Women and Economics*; or she constructed primitive masculinity as the opposite of civilized advancement, as she did in *The Man-Made World*. Yet even as she wrote, a growing subcurrent in middle-class culture was constructing the capacity for selfish aggressiveness and sexual predation as an essential characteristic of the natural man. Many men who feared that excessive civilization was threatening American manhood continued to look to this "natural" masculinity for an antidote to effeminacy.

In a 1904 editorial in the *Woman's Journal*, Gilman attacked this figure of the natural man by likening him to the figure of the black male rapist. As we have seen in the Wells chapter, apologists for lynch mobs frequently asserted that the mobs were simply made up of "natural men" whose innate chivalry was so outraged by [alleged] black rapists that they were forced to lynch them. In this editorial, Gilman expressed only lukewarm opposition to lynching, but she vigorously attacked this idea of the innate chivalry of natural man. She insisted that it was not "natural" for men to protect women from rape, because it was entirely unnatural for women to lack the power to protect themselves, in the first place! Woman only began to need man's protection after the primal rapist had unnaturally subjugated her. By linking the "chivalrous" Southerner of the lynch mob—with his insistence on feminine dependence—to the original primal rapist, Gilman was implicitly likening the chivalrous white man to the unmanly "Negro rapist." In 1904, Gilman confidently assumed that this argument would be effective: no civilized white man would want to emulate the "Negro rapist," with his inferior and uncivilized lack of manhood.<sup>122</sup>

Gilman's confidence in the primacy of civilized manliness was misplaced, however. After 1912, she was forced to confront a more virulent figure of the natural man when antifeminist men began to glorify the primal savage rapist as a final answer to the woman suffragists. In 1911 militant English suffragists, led by Christabel Pankhurst, had declared a "Woman's War" on the male establishment, which culminated in 1912–14 with a systematic campaign of arson, vandalism, and destruction of private property. Horrified, the self-styled "civilized world" watched respectable upper- and middle-class Englishwomen smashing plateglass windows, fighting policemen, and going to jail. Antisuffragist men, distraught at the ostensibly oxymoronic

prospect of violent femininity, began to look to the ubiquitous "natural man" to claim for themselves an even more violent masculinity which could overpower these "unnatural" women—a masculinity rooted in the primitive.

Two of the most vocal spokesmen for this position, both eminent scientists, were Sir Almroth Wright and Dr. William T. Sedgwick. Gilman detested them both and repeatedly invoked them as examples of the worst sort of antifeminism. Wright, a respected British bacteriologist who was offended by the suffragettes' destruction of property, penned an especially nasty attack on them in March 1912 which was published as a three-column letter to the *London Times*. Wright's column caused such an uproar in Britain that the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage reprinted it as a pamphlet; Wright later expanded it into a full-length book, *The Unexpurgated Case against Women's Suffrage*. Accounts of the controversy and substantial excerpts from both letter and book were widely reported in the American press.<sup>123</sup>

Wright's most controversial assertions concerned men's right to use violence against women. Although chivalrous treatment of women was "of all the civilising agencies at work in the world . . . the most important," Wright opined, the feminists were mistaken if they assumed that respectful treatment was due women merely by virtue of their sex. Chivalry was a contract between men and women, and as such, could be broken. "When a man makes this compact with a woman, 'I will do you reverence, and protect you, and yield you service; and you, for your part, will hold fast to an ideal of gentleness, of personal refinement, of modesty, of joyous maternity, and [of] who shall say what other graces and virtues that endear woman to man,' that is chivalry."<sup>124</sup> If either sex broke this compact, all bets were off. When woman became violent, unrefined, ungrateful, or "when she places a quite extravagantly high estimate upon her intellectual powers," the contract was broken. Woman must then bear the brunt of unfettered masculine violence. One always wonders if the suffragist appreciates all that woman stands to lose and all that she imperils by resort to physical force. One ought not to have to tell her that, if she had to fight for her position, her status would be that which is assigned to her among the Kaffirs—not that which civilized man concedes to her."<sup>125</sup> While it was a centuries-old truism that civilized women were sheltered from the hard labor which savage women had to perform, Wright's reference to "Kaffirs"—black South Africans—was surely a veiled reference to the figure of the black male rapist. If white women convinced white men to abandon chivalry, white men would be free to assault women just as the "Kaffirs" did.

Gilman was taken aback when Wright and his supporters claimed this affinity with the violent primal rapist. Gilman, too, believed that masculinity consisted of desire, egotism, and violence, but she never expected civilized men like Wright to agree with her so unashamedly. Soon after the publication of Wright's *Unexpurgated Case*, Gilman warned her readers of a "note of . . . frankly sinister import" among the antisuffragists. Inexplicably, anti-suffragists were making arguments which seemed more comfortable in the mouths of the angriest feminists. "We are told that 'the brute in man' lies very near the surface and that women should have a care lest they tempt it too far and bring it forth in all its blind fury. If the suffragists themselves said this it would quite possibly be considered malicious and unfair, but it is said by the cautious editorial gentlemen who deprecate these violent maneuvers of bel-ligerent Englishwomen." Gilman tried to turn the "brute in man" argument back against the antisuffragists by accusing them of proving the feminists' point: men's brutal treatment of the imprisoned suffragettes provided yet another "addition to that long black list of grievances which are at last rousing some women to acts of violence."<sup>126</sup> Yet if antisuffragists didn't *mind* being called brutes—if masculine brutality became an argument against woman suffrage instead of for it—Gilman needed to rethink her position.

Soon after the *Unexpurgated Case* appeared as a book, Wright's veiled rape threat was repeated by the eminent American epidemiologist, Dr. William T. Sedgwick.<sup>127</sup> Sedgwick felt free to make his rape threat more explicit, possibly because in the United States, the popular discussion of the mythic black male rapist and the virtues of Southern lynching had already made the primal rapist a quasi-acceptable image of "natural man."

Speaking as a scientific expert—he was the head of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's department of biology and public health—Sedgwick rooted his argument in biology and, in a full-page *New York Times* interview, managed to employ all the antifeminist arguments Gilman most detested. Feminism was unscientific "biological bosh." Reproductive physiology fitted women to be only wives and mothers. Extreme sexual difference was the hallmark of advanced evolution.

In the evolutionary process that nature has been carrying on through untold thousands of years, the development has on the whole been toward a greater differentiation of two sexes. On some of the lowest rungs of life's ladder are amoeba and other microbes that reproduce by parthogenesis—i.e. by birth without the cooperation of male and female elements. [Gilman and Lester Ward

had celebrated these as the original females, giving birth with no need for male help.] On the top rung is mankind in which the differentiation of sex and the reaction of sex upon both mind and body become strikingly complete.<sup>128</sup>

Here was precisely the antifeminist biology Gilman had worked so hard to refute with her own biological theories and origin stories.

Pivotal for Sedgwick, as it had been for Gilman, was the figure of the original primitive rapist. Sedgwick's story of human origins, like Gilman's account of the fall of man, begins at the prehistoric moment when primitive man first discovered he could rape women. Gilman saw this as the original sin, warping human development from then on, but Sedgwick saw this primal rape as merely a compelling example of natural man's inherent power, savagery, and sexual aggression. As man evolved and became civilized, his innate savagery was tamed by pure romantic love, and he developed chivalry toward women. But this civilized chivalry, according to Sedgwick, was all that protected modern woman from the naked masculine aggression of the original primal rapist. "Let the so-called 'advanced' but really retrogressive women carry on their crusade for a generation or two more," Sedgwick warned. Let men and women meet as economic competitors. Let marriage die and free love run rampant. Let women get involved in the fierce struggle of political life.

Then will women indeed find that the knightliness and chivalry of gentlemen have vanished, and in their stead will arise a rough male power that will place women where it chooses. With all sense of chivalry, of tenderness, of veneration gone, and nothing but fleshly desire left, the status to which that masculine strength may relegate woman will be a subjection in fact, and not merely in theory. There is no dodging this hard, cold fact: man possesses always the brute strength; strip him of his chivalry, his tenderness and his respect for womanhood, and you leave naked, unfettered, and unashamed his more brutal appetites toward woman.<sup>129</sup>

If women continued to claim their own power, a "rough male power," rooted in primal masculinity, would rise up and effortlessly "place women where it chooses." Naked and unashamed, Sedgwick's primitive masculine rapist emerged from the distant moment of human origins to threaten modern feminists with the fate of their distant foremothers: a "subjection in fact" to man's most "brutal appetites."

As it always did in appeals to pure but corrupted origins, racial decadence loomed. "Any such state of affairs would mean a reversal of the whole social evolutionary process. As to what the ultimate outcome will be no one need be in doubt. The world is not long going to retrograde, but a single nation, a race, a civilization can." Racial decadence and the devolution of civilization threatened—for Sedgwick, as it had for Gilman. Here indeed was a threat to human evolutionary progress! Strip civilized man of his chivalry—his Christian, civilized manliness—and he would revert to the violent sexual brutality of his most distant forebear, to the masculine primitive. Manliness was merely a veneer over the natural man's essential violent masculinity, just as civilization was merely a veneer over his essential savagery. Sedgwick's return to the moment of human origins (and thus, to the essential truth about man) was not a return to Eden (as Gilman's was), but a menacing return to Chaos.

True to its classic form, however, Sedgwick's jeremiad held out a hope of salvation. If the race returned to the original intentions of evolution and biology, redemption and civilized advancement were certain. To escape racial decadence and the decline of American civilization, men must assert their dominance and force women to devote themselves to domesticity. "Long before any such sorry state of affairs becomes an actuality, man, seeing the things he most cherishes in danger of destruction, will firmly shut down on the Feminist activities, and putting the women back in their homes say: That is where you belong. Now stay there." Sedgwick's ultimate solution is thus Gilman's original problem: men imprisoning women in the home, exiling them from higher civilization.

Here in a nutshell was every argument Gilman most detested, yet they rested on her own views of masculinity. Sedgwick insisted that women's reproductive physiology precluded their participating in the wider civilization; that civilized advancement rested on the widest possible exaggeration of sexual differences; that woman belonged only in the home. At the same time, however, Sedgwick's premises about masculinity were disturbingly like Gilman's. Both agreed masculinity was composed of desire, egotism, and combat. Yet Gilman assumed men would be ashamed of that fact, while Sedgwick clearly relished modern man's kinship to the primal rapist. "There is a lot of the primitive in all of us, both men and women," he insisted; women enjoyed "being mastered," and men enjoyed "mastering" them.

Sedgwick's opinions touched off an extensive reaction in the United States, just as Wright's had in England. The *New York Times* praised Sedgwick for openly saying "things which have not been said before so plainly."<sup>130</sup> Feminists were less complimentary. Ida M. Metcalf wrote a letter to the editor

asking whether, in the combative "charming . . . future civilization" Sedgwick envisioned, "all men unable to hold their own against a prize-fighter will be forcibly subdued and held in subjection?" This was a low blow. In 1914, when Metcalf wrote, the most famous American prizefighter was the exiled but still undefeated Jack Johnson, and white men remained uncomfortably aware that prizefighting was an unstable way to assert white male dominance. "Apparently the dictum of science, as expressed by this prophet, is that we are evolving backward toward the ancestor we share with the gorilla," she continued.<sup>131</sup> Several professors of medicine and physiology called Sedgwick's opinions bad science: men and women were not as different as he suggested.<sup>132</sup>

Gilman devoted two articles to condemning Sedgwick's ideas. The first, a March 1914 article entitled "The Biological Anti-Feminist," failed to disarm Sedgwick's threat to unleash the primal rapist. It began by stressing the distinction between race and sex, in order to refute the primacy Sedgwick placed on sexual difference.<sup>133</sup> In the past, men had invoked the "convenient Hebrew legend" of Adam and Eve in order to avoid seeing the truth about woman, but today "they have learned that the rib-and-apple story can scarce be quoted as an account of real facts in human origin and conduct," so they invent other origin tales.<sup>134</sup> Instead of spurious religion, they now turned to spurious science for an explanation of origins—to the ridiculous story that sexual difference increased as evolution advanced. This was untrue. A biologist like Sedgwick ought to know that it was "the increase in race characteristics which accompanies the development of the higher orders," and not the increase in sex characteristics. Once again, Gilman had returned to the point she had made in *Women and Economics*: civilized women should be seen in terms of their race, not their sex.

Gilman moved on to address Sedgwick's claim that chivalry protected (in Sedgwick's terms) "all women—womenkind." Balderdash. It didn't protect nonwhite women, whose menfolk were barbarians or savages: "We will leave out savages—they have not evolved. We will leave out all Asia—it is not perhaps claimed for the Orient." Moreover, Gilman pointed out, chivalry didn't protect civilized white women, either, despite the fact that chivalry was, allegedly, an attribute of civilization. Gentlemen seduced women poorer and weaker than themselves; employers paid their factory girls starvation wages; men accosted women in the street. "Deeply ingrained in man's nature' indeed is this sweet tenderness," she jeered. Above all, chivalry must be a very poor thing if the moment woman varied from the demanded type, chivalrous man threatened wholesale rape. And Gilman quoted Sedgwick's bald assertion: "man possesses always the brute strength; strip him of his

chivalry . . . and you leave naked, unfettered, and unashamed, his more brutal appetites."<sup>135</sup>

Here was the main point—Sedgwick's threat to unleash the primal rapist, naked, unfettered, and unashamed, upon the feminists. Men like Sedgwick insisted this "Brute" was "natural man," an essential, animalistic, masculine primitive who lurked within all men. Gilman, however, insisted the "Brute" was *unnatural*—characteristic only of the excessive masculinity which the sexuo-economic relation had bred into human beings. Male animals were instinctively respectful of their females' "superior value . . . to the race" as mothers. "No other male animal uses the strength and pugnacity developed by sex-combat between males for the unnatural dominance of the female which distinguishes our species." This was a "morbid phase" in *human* development, alone. As evolution advanced, it would pass, along with all the other distortions of oversexed masculinity.

Yet Gilman closed her article on an uneasy note. If civilized men cheerfully threatened to unleash their savage "Brute"—if men could no longer be shamed out of acting like the primal rapist—what should women do? Must they remain at men's mercy, and was woman's advancement doomed? Gilman had no viable solutions. Halfheartedly, she suggested women should carry daggers and pistols to defend themselves.<sup>136</sup> Literal sex war was not a solution she cherished, however; she had long argued combat was a masculine, not a feminine, sex characteristic. Gilman thus winds up as she began—unsure how to refute men who, like Sedgwick and Wright, were proud to claim man was intrinsically violent, in order to discredit feminism. Her old arguments against overly powerful, sexually rapacious masculinity were useless against "the Brute in Man."

About a year later, perhaps realizing the futility of her previous strategy, Gilman took an entirely different approach, and tried to defang the Brute with humor. In a popular magazine article, "What the 'Threat of Man' Really Means," she completely and improbably reversed her long-standing characterization of masculinity, and denied that civilized man bore any resemblance at all to the savage rapist.<sup>137</sup> Man's threat to unleash upon the world the "Brute in Man" was not a serious threat, as she had once argued; it was merely "funny." Here was modern man, portraying himself as an animal, with brutal passions poised to strike down menacing feminists. "Where is the joke, you ask? The joke is at home with you—at the table, peacefully eating, with propriety and ease; in the parlor, sitting under the evening lamp, reading paper, magazine or book, perhaps reading aloud to you and the children. . . . It grew up at your knee and you put on its little first trousers, and

taught it how to button and unbutton them." Man a primitive rapist? Heavens, no! He was civilized, sitting in the parlor! Man a threat? Ridiculous! He was just a helpless little boy. Gilman could not have produced an image of man more benign—or more unlike all her previous images. Man was not a primal rapist, a figure of menacing sexuality. He lacked even the mastery to unbutton his own pants.

Gilman could not entirely jettison all her old arguments about masculinity. She conceded that men had sex characteristics that might, at first glance, appear alarming. Men were, to be sure, "more pugnacious than females, and more active . . . in their desires"; their fathers had left them a legacy of sexual excess which made it difficult for them to control their lusts. Yet now Gilman made light of this, suggesting that men could be taught to keep their primitive sexual impulses under control. "Even a Brute may be tamed and made useful, as the dog, for instance."

Yet there remained the niggling fear: What if man, unlike the dog, refused to be "tamed and made useful?" So Gilman reduced the threat to absurdity by taking it literally. "Now let us look at our joke from another standpoint. Suppose men really were as awful as they like to think." Suppose man really was a brute. "Man, run away with by his unbridled Brute, is supposed to fall upon [woman] promiscuous-like—a sort of Rape of the Sabines—in continuous performance." Precisely who would men rape? Most men are married—would they rape their own wives? Would they rape each other's wives? Would the other Brutish husbands stand idly by? Would they all desert their wives? Or would the Brutes all be bachelors, and their victims unmarried damsels? Would these damsels' brothers and fathers stand for it? Again, Gilman reduced the snarling Brute in Man to a small boy struggling to unbutton his pants: his grandiose plans were all very well, but the dear just wasn't being *practical*.

Then Gilman made a threat of her own, putting the Brute in his place like a benevolent mother outmonstrering her rampaging son at bedtime. "Listen, listen carefully, O Threatening Male! There is a Brute in women, too! Not so big a one perhaps, but still strong, not so fierce a one perhaps, but fierce enough. Do those who make this silly threat, this humorous, absurd, impossible threat, imagine that the women of to-day would submit to the Brute in Man like those same Sabines?" Civilized women were not weak or frightened—they would calmly refuse to put up with any such Brutish behavior.

So all was well, and the article ended reassuringly. "The Brute in man is not so ferocious as he thinks. It is there, and at times rebellious, but the Hu-

man in man is as much stronger than the Brute in man as a horse is stronger than his ancestral eohippus." Man had become civilized, as the tiny eohippus had become a horse. The primal rapist—the Brute in Man—was no danger to civilized woman.

Yet although Gilman dismissed Sedgwick and Wright's argument by ridiculing it, there are signs she remained disturbed at the direction new formulations of manhood were taking. For example, her suggestion that husbands and brothers would protect women from rape stood in stark contrast to her customary insistence that women needed no help from chivalrous men to protect themselves. Similarly, her depiction of man as a civilized dear contrasted with her usual definition of masculinity as combat, egotism, and desire.

Most tellingly, she made a major character in her 1915 novel *Herland*, Terry, represent the new type of man who celebrated his masculine "Brute."<sup>138</sup> The misogynistic Terry is lustful, egotistical, and combative.<sup>139</sup> More important, he remains an untamable threat. *Herland's* turning point comes when Terry attempts to rape the woman he loves, who has refused to allow him to "master" her. For this sin, Terry (like the primal rapist of *Women and Economics'* "Proem") is expelled from the Edenic Herland. Yet unlike the "funny" Brute in the *Pictorial Review* article, Terry remains proudly incorrigible, a Brutish, unrepentant primal rapist. Gilman depicts him sneering at the powerful women of Herland who had mastered him: "Sexless, episcene, undeveloped neuters! he went on bitterly. He sounded like Sir Almworth Wright." (And, lest the reference be missed, Gilman twice compares Terry to Wright.)<sup>140</sup> The fictional Herland could expel the Brute, but Gilman was aware that she and her contemporaries could not dispatch the figure of the thrillingly masculine primal rapist so easily.

Gilman had argued that woman was the race, and man was the sex; woman was civilization, and man was the savage. But Wright and Sedgwick had taken the cultural ground from beneath her feet. Both men were delighted to be considered "the sex" and the savage; as they saw it, this proved men had the inherent primal strength and potency to compel women to comply with their demands. They insisted that civilization could only continue its advance if women were forced to return to the home—forced to renounce their claims to the vote, to civic rights, to the masculine rights and privileges of civilization. Thus, as Wright and Sedgwick paradoxically described it, civilization itself depended on men's capacity for masculine savagery. It was because civilized white men retained the primal masculine violence of the savage rapist that Sedgwick and Wright saw a future for civilization.

In the final analysis, then, Wright and Sedgwick argued that civilized men's inherent capacity for masculine savagery was the ultimate legitimization of man's power over women, the final proof that man, but not woman, had the strength to dominate civilization. With an increasing number of middle-class men eager to see themselves in this light, Gilman's strategy of denigrating white men as unmanly and oversexed lost its power, and her critique of masculine dominance became ever less persuasive. By the 1920s, Gilman's critique of masculinity could barely get a hearing, while the middle class' fascination with the sexually uncontrolled masculine primitive had given power to new cultural figures like Rudolph Valentino's nostril-flaring, Englishwoman-kidnapping, lustful Arab sheik.

### Conclusion

From the beginning, Gilman's strategy for achieving woman's advancement had rested on the white supremacism of the civilization discourse. In order to fight the truly debilitating discourses of gender which had kept her mother poor and dependent, and which had forced her, as a young wife, to choose between marriage and productive work, or, as she saw it, between her sex and her race, Gilman had revised the way civilization positioned the categories of gender and race. In so doing, she made a powerful argument for woman's advancement, but one which addressed the advancement of only white, Anglo-Saxon women.

As a feminist theorist, Gilman was both brilliant and, from our perspective, deeply flawed. No woman of her time wrote with more insight about the very real barriers white women faced in their quest to participate productively in the world outside their homes. Few proposed more sweeping and innovative reforms to make that participation possible. Probably no feminist theorist of her day was more influential or convinced more American women to embrace the cause of women's advancement.

Gilman's rewriting of the civilization discourse was crucial to her success as a feminist theorist. Gilman fully understood both the ideological power and the material implications of the masculinist discourse of civilization. It legitimized excluding women from activities they were working hard to join and damaged women economically and psychically. She herself had suffered from it as a young woman, when she contracted the "neurasthenia" which she believed tortured her for the rest of her life. By rewriting civilization and making white women central to civilization's advancement, she believed she was removing a major obstacle to the advancement of both women and "the

race." In other words, she understood that "civilization," as a discourse, had material results on women's lives, and, by revising the ideology, she hoped to ultimately revise the practices.

Yet on a very basic level, Gilman was merely proposing to replace one kind of exclusion with another. White women's inclusion in civilization, under her scheme, was predicated on the exclusion of nonwhite men and women. According to Gilman, the key to understanding the legitimacy of women's claim for sexual equality was to understand that Anglo-Saxon women were, first and foremost, members of a superior race, and therefore equally able to participate in an advanced civilization. Civilized women had far more in common with civilized men than with primitive women of "lower" races. Therefore, white women must be able to participate in all the "racial" activities so necessary to the millennial quest for human evolutionary advancement. Writing in the tradition of the racist woman suffragists who argued that educated, refined white women deserved the vote far more than nonwhite men, Gilman based her feminism less on a liberal inclusiveness than on an insistence that the wrong criteria were being applied in civilization's exclusivity. "Let us in, but keep them out" was her true message.

For about twenty years, this racist feminism served Gilman and her followers very well. As Zona Gale put it, Gilman's theories "lit to energy many thousand of the unaware, the indolent, the oblivious, and made of them socially conscious beings."<sup>141</sup> Yet, ironically, by 1920, this racial basis of Gilman's feminism had contributed materially to its loss of effectiveness. It wasn't that white people rejected Gilman's racism: racism itself remained as strong as ever. Yet white women were realizing that it got them nowhere to claim that they were as civilized as men, because middle-class white men were increasingly uninterested in constructing male power in terms of advanced civilization and racial refinement. Instead, white men were defining male power in terms of the primal masculinity they shared with men of more primitive races. Men like Wright and Sedgwick enjoyed imagining themselves in terms of the combativeness, savagery, and sexual potency of the figure of the primitive rapist.

In this context, Gilman's old arguments in favor of women's advancement lost their effectiveness. White feminist women would get nowhere by comparing their advanced, civilized qualities to men's despicable primitive beastliness when antifeminist men were proudly claiming the figure of the primitive rapist was the original antifeminist who would rape the feminists into submission if they did not voluntarily return to domesticity. The middle class' new interest in primitivism as a source of masculinity weakened

Gilman's most important claim: that Anglo-Saxon men ought to see Anglo-Saxon women as racially akin to them, and to see this racial similarity as far more important than sexual difference. By 1920, some middle-class white men would take precisely the opposite position, finding an imagined kinship with African American men of the Harlem Renaissance precisely because they believed they found in them a common, primitive, cross-race, sexualized masculinity.<sup>142</sup> Harlem became, for many middle-class New Yorkers, an intriguingly exotic place of sexually exciting nightclubs. Most white American men, of course, remained unwilling to claim kinship with African Americans in the 1920s; yet as primitive masculinity became increasingly compatible with civilized manliness, Gilman's claim that white women were as civilized as white men—equally superior to the lower races—became increasingly irrelevant to middle-class formulations of male dominance.

By 1920, Gilman was being forgotten. It is perhaps not coincidental that as her analyses fell rapidly out of favor after World War I, she became increasingly convinced of two points: the dangers of unleashed sexuality, and the extreme importance of racial difference. She saw the 1920s' celebration of sexuality as a masculinity more excessive than any she had ever imagined, a masculinity which misguided women were foolishly emulating. Equally bad, the old racial distinctions—the bedrock of her claim for women's advancement—were being entirely ignored; the entire nation was being swamped by an influx of "inferior" races, and no one cared. Both, to her mind, were evidence that the essential values of "civilization" were being betrayed.<sup>143</sup> And she was right: by 1920 the civilization discourse she had studied as a girl had indeed lost much of its power.

Gilman's attack on male dominance had depended on the argument that the shared racial bonds between civilized men and civilized women far outweighed primitive, animalistic, sexual difference. She was therefore both lost and defeated when, in the 1920s, white men began to believe that nature intended men to dominate women, and that the proof lay in the "primitive, animalistic" sexual aggressiveness they believed civilized men shared with black men and Arab sheiks. Gilman's story suggests once again how tightly turn-of-the-century American culture interwove issues of gender and race.

## 5

Theodore Roosevelt: Manhood, Nation,  
and "Civilization"

In 1882, a newly elected young state assemblyman arrived in Albany. Theodore Roosevelt, assuming his first elective office, was brimming with self-importance and ambition. He was only twenty-three—the youngest man in the legislature—and he looked forward to a promising career of wielding real political power. Yet Roosevelt was chagrined to discover that despite his intelligence, competence, and real legislative successes, no one took him seriously. The more strenuously he labored to play "a man's part" in politics, the more his opponents derided his manhood.<sup>1</sup>

Daily newspapers lampooned Roosevelt as the quintessence of effeminacy. They nicknamed him "weakling," "Jane-Dandy," "Punkin-Lily," and "the exquisite Mr. Roosevelt." They ridiculed his high voice, tight pants, and fancy clothing. Several began referring to him by the name of the well-known homosexual Oscar Wilde, and one actually alleged (in a less-than-veiled phallic allusion) that Roosevelt was "given to sucking the knob of an ivory cane."<sup>2</sup> While TR might consider himself a manly man, it was becoming humiliatingly clear that others considered him effeminate.

Above all other things, Roosevelt desired power. An intuitive master of public relations, he knew that his effeminate image could destroy any chances for his political future. Nearly forty years before women got the vote, electoral politics was part of a male-only subculture, fraught with symbols of manhood.<sup>3</sup> Besides, Roosevelt, who considered himself a man's man, detested having his virility impugned. Although normally restrained, when he discovered a Tammany legislator plotting to toss him in a blanket, TR marched up to him and swore, "By God! if you try anything like that, I'll kick you, I'll bite you, I'll kick you in the balls, I'll do anything to you—you'd better leave me alone!"<sup>4</sup> Clearly, the effeminate "dude" image would have to go.

And go it did. Roosevelt soon came to embody powerful American manhood. Within five years, he was running for mayor of New York as the

"Cowboy of the Dakotas." Instead of ridiculing him as "Oscar Wilde," newspapers were praising his virile zest for fighting and his "blizzard-seasoned constitution."<sup>5</sup> In 1898, after a brief but highly publicized stint as leader of a regiment of volunteers in the Spanish American War, he became known as Colonel Roosevelt, the manly advocate of a virile imperialism. Never again would Roosevelt's name be linked to effeminacy. Even today, historians invoke Roosevelt as the quintessential symbol of turn-of-the-century masculinity.<sup>6</sup>

Roosevelt's great success in masculinizing his image was due, in large part, to his masterful use of the discourse of civilization. As a mature politician, he would build his claim to political power on his claim to manhood. Skillfully, Roosevelt constructed a virile political persona for himself as a strong but civilized white man.

Yet Roosevelt's use of the discourse of civilization went beyond mere public relations: Roosevelt drew on "civilization" to help formulate his larger politics as an advocate of both nationalism and imperialism. As he saw it, the United States was engaged in a millennial drama of manly racial advancement, in which American men enacted their superior manhood by asserting imperialistic control over races of inferior manhood. To prove their virility, as a race and a nation, American men needed to take up the "strenuous life" and strive to advance civilization—through imperialistic warfare and racial violence if necessary.

Thus, TR framed his political mission in terms of race and manhood, nationalism and civilization. Like G. Stanley Hall and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Roosevelt longed to lead evolution's chosen race toward a perfect millennial future. Yet Roosevelt harbored larger ambitions than either Hall or Gilman. Hall merely wanted to develop a pedagogy that would produce the "super-man." Gilman only wanted to revolutionize society by civilizing women. Roosevelt, on the other hand, yearned to be the virile leader of a manly race and to inspire his race to wage an international battle for racial supremacy. He hoped that, through this imperialistic evolutionary struggle, he could advance his race toward the most perfect possible civilization. This, for Roosevelt, was the ultimate power of manhood.<sup>7</sup>

#### Civilized Manliness and Violent Masculinity: Claiming the Power of a Man

From early boyhood, Roosevelt longed for the authority of a powerful man. Like the young G. Stanley Hall, young Roosevelt learned early that achieving



real manhood required serious attention and strenuous effort. The boy Teedie (as Theodore was called as a child) learned that male power was composed of equal parts kindhearted manly chivalry and aggressive masculine violence.<sup>8</sup>

On the one hand, Roosevelt grew up committed to Victorian codes of bourgeois manliness. He identified this Victorian moral manliness with his adored father, "the best man I ever knew. He combined strength and courage with gentleness, tenderness and great unselfishness. . . . He made us understand that the same standard of clean living was demanded for the boys as for the girls; that what was wrong in a woman could not be right in a man."<sup>9</sup> His father's unselfish, self-restrained manliness expressed itself, in part, through an upper-class sense of noblesse oblige: the senior Roosevelt devoted himself extensively to philanthropic activity, especially on behalf of New York's poor street urchins.<sup>10</sup> Yet Roosevelt's father also taught his son that this unselfish, charitable manliness implied a certain authority over the lower orders. On a trip to Italy, for example, he showed eleven-year-old Teedie a game of tossing broken pieces of cake into the open mouths of a crowd of hungry beggars. Teedie recorded the fun in his diary: "I fed them like chickens with small pieces of cake and like chickens they ate it. Mr. Stevens kept guard with a whip with which he pretended to whip a small boy. . . . For a 'Coup de Grace' we threw a lot of them in a place and a writhing heap of human beings."<sup>11</sup> Throughout his life, TR would cherish this Victorian ideology of moral manliness—strength, altruism, self-restraint, and chastity—and identify it with both the manful strength of his father and his own authority as a member of the upper class.

At the same time young Teedie was learning the virtues of unselfish, moral Victorian manliness, he was also attracted to a more violent masculinity. Like other exponents of "natural man," Teedie associated this sort of masculinity with "nature." One morning in 1865, when Teedie was about seven, he suddenly came upon the body of a dead seal, laid out on a slab in a Broadway market. The little boy was enthralled, and later described discovering the seal as an epiphany—the adventure which started him on his career as a naturalist. To the delicate, sickly boy, the dead animal seemed a tangible link to the aggressive, masculine world of boys' adventure novels. "That seal filled me with every possible feeling of romance and adventure," he recalled. "I had already begun to read some of Mayne Reid's books and other boys' books of adventure, and I felt that this seal brought all these adventures in realistic fashion before me."<sup>12</sup>

Why should a young boy see a dead animal as a representation of "ro-

mance and adventure"? To understand why Teedie associated dead animals, "nature," and manhood, we can look at Mayne Reid's *The Boy Hunters*; or *Adventures in Search of a White Buffalo*, one of Teedie's favorite books.<sup>13</sup> Reid's three young heroes are "hunter-naturalists" who travel alone from Louisiana to Texas to kill and skin an albino buffalo. On the way, they have many thrilling adventures: they are attacked by cougars, shoot antelope and cimmaron, kill an attacking grizzly bear, and finally face down hostile Indians. *The Boy Hunters*, then, is a traditional western adventure, in which white men (or boys) prove their manhood by fighting and vanquishing Indians and wild beasts.

To show how the boy hunters become men, Reid draws on two larger subthemes. First, *The Boy Hunters* draws unmistakably on a wider tradition of Western stories in which, as Richard Slotkin has shown, white heroes achieve manhood by becoming "like" Indian warriors, while nonetheless remaining unmistakably white. Indeed, the very quest for a white buffalo mentioned in Reid's title typifies this tradition: the boys hunt a buffalo, the stereotypical quarry of Indians, yet they hunt a buffalo which is rare and superior because it is white. Similarly, at the novel's climax, the boy hunters are on the verge of being tortured and executed by Indians when, suddenly, the boys are revealed to possess the long-lost pipe of Tecumseh's brother, who was a friend of their father's. Recognizing this as a basis for kinship with the boys, the Indians are filled with "astonishment as well as admiration for [their] courage."<sup>14</sup> Again the manly white boy hunters are both like and superior to the Indians. The boys' simultaneous kinship and superiority to the Indians implicitly tie them to the American national myth of the frontier, in which manly Indian fighters like Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett forge an American nation.<sup>15</sup>

Yet if Indian frontier mythology was one subtheme of *The Boy Hunters*—and one element of the romance Teedie saw in the dead seal—the masculine "naturalness" of violence was an even stronger subtheme. Reid laces his adventures with natural history lessons stressing how predatory "nature" was. He dramatizes this predation in "The Chain of Destruction," a chapter in which the boy hunters observe a virtual feeding frenzy: A hummingbird hunting for insects is killed by a tarantula, which is in turn killed by a chameleon, and so on. When the hero Basil shoots and kills the last creature, a thieving eagle, Reid italicizes the moral: "This was the last link in the *chain of destruction!*"<sup>16</sup> In nature, the large animals hunt the smaller—and man is the fiercest, most powerful animal of all.

"Eat or be eaten" was the lesson Mayne Reid drew from nature, but it is

not the only lesson one might draw from stories about animal life. "Nature" is a cultural construct, not a transparent fact to be reported. Reid's lesson about nature's violence enthralled the sheltered, sickly young Roosevelt, however. When he saw the body of the dead seal in the marketplace, he felt he had suddenly come face-to-face with a distant, romantic world of powerful and violent masculinity. He was fascinated. "As long as that seal remained there, I haunted the neighborhood of the market day after day." Emulating Lucien, the Boy Hunter who carried a notebook to annotate his observations, he returned to the market with a ruler and notebook, took a series of "utterly useless" measurements, and "at once began to write a natural history of my own, on the strength of that seal." He moved heaven and earth to acquire the dead seal's skull, with which he began a childish "Roosevelt Museum of Natural History" in his bedroom.<sup>17</sup> By playing at being a naturalist, young Teedie brought himself into imaginary contact with the aggressive, masculine nature he identified with the fictional Western frontier, where boys demonstrated their heroic masculinity by killing fierce animals and battling wild Indians.

Stories like Mayne Reid's "Chain of Destruction," depicting nature as red in tooth and claw, predisposed young Teedie to embrace Darwinism. By age ten the budding boy-naturalist had discovered Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and he soon became familiar with evolutionary theory.<sup>18</sup> *The Boy Hunters*, written seven years before Darwin published *Origin of Species*, was not in itself Darwinistic. While Reid's "chain of destruction" affirmed man as the apex of creation, it ascribed no cosmic meaning to man's superiority. But Darwinism provided a millennial purpose for Reid's chain of destruction—it was the engine which drove evolution. Like G. Stanley Hall and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Roosevelt believed that bitter evolutionary conflict allowed the fittest species and races to survive, ultimately moving evolution forward toward its ultimate, civilized perfection.<sup>19</sup>

From his earliest youth, then, Roosevelt's understanding of nature was tinged by the genre of the Western adventure story. As TR saw it, nature was brutal and primitive—a proving ground of manly prowess—as epitomized by conflict with bloodthirsty, lurking Indians. The sickly seven-year-old boy measuring the seal in the Broadway market is the earliest glimpse we have of the strenuous adult man who would slaughter African lions and elephants in the name of science and construct himself as a virile cowboy on the Western frontier.

Eighteen years after encountering the seal, now a budding young politician, Roosevelt was accused of effeminacy, and once again he constructed a

powerful male identity for himself in the terms of the Western adventure story. What better way to counter his Oscar Wilde image than to replace it with the image of the masculine Western hero? Although this was clearly a smart political move on TR's part, it was no cynical pose. Roosevelt had been enthralled by the masculine aggressiveness of Western fiction ever since he was a small boy reading *The Boy Hunters*. On his first trip to the Badlands in 1883, he was giddy with delight and behaved as much like a Mayne Reid hero as possible. He flung himself into battle with nature and hunted the largest and fiercest game he could find. As a child, he had been attracted to natural history as a displacement of his desire to be a Western hero. Now, shooting buffalo and bullying obstreperous cowboys, he could style himself the real thing.<sup>20</sup>

Although most of his biographers date his transformation into a "Western man" from his retreat to South Dakota following the tragic death of his wife in 1884, Roosevelt had already bought his ranch and begun to transform himself into a Western rancher while Alice Lee was very much alive. On his very first trip to the Badlands in 1883, Roosevelt—although chronically short of cash—committed himself to spending forty thousand dollars to buy a South Dakota cattle ranch. Financially this was a foolhardy and risky investment, as Edmund Morris has pointed out; yet politically it was a brilliant step to transform his image from effeminate dude to masculine cowboy.<sup>21</sup>

Alice's death completely devastated TR, but it also freed him to construct himself as a cowboy far more completely than he had previously planned.<sup>22</sup> Even in his grief, and during his temporary withdrawal from politics, Roosevelt made certain the folks back East knew he was now a masculine cowboy. On his way to take up "permanent" residence on his Dakota ranch in 1884, he gave a "final" interview to the *New York Tribune*.

It would electrify some of my friends who have accused me of representing the kid-glove element in politics if they could see me galloping over the plains, day in and day out, clad in a buckskin shirt and leather chaparajos, with a big sombrero on my head. For good healthy exercise I would strongly recommend some of our gilded youth go West and try a short course of riding bucking ponies, and assist at the branding of a lot of Texas steers.

Let no one think that TR remained a gilded youth or effeminate dude. He was now a denizen of (as he would later put it) "Cowboy Land."<sup>23</sup>

Six months later, Roosevelt was back in New York writing *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman*, the first of three books detailing his thrilling adventures as a

Western hero.<sup>24</sup> TR intended *Hunting Trips* to establish his new identity as a heroic ranchman. He even included his new “ranchman” identity in the title. But lest the reader miss the point, TR included a full-length engraved portrait of himself as ranchman opposite the title page.<sup>25</sup> Sans eyeglasses (which would mark his body as imperfectly evolved), TR stands in a woodland setting, wearing a fringed buckskin suit. His face is grave, restrained, resolute—manly—and he grips a long rifle. Yet, although he bears the weapons and manly demeanor of civilized man, he wears the clothing of savages.<sup>26</sup> Like the Boy Hunters tracking the albino buffalo, he is at once like the Indians and superior to them. Like the Mayne Reid adventure, *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* detailed TR’s exciting adventures hunting animals, as a participant in the violent chain of destruction he had read about as a boy. Now he, too, like the Boy Hunters, was publicly measuring the violent power of his own masculinity against the aggressive predation of “nature.”

TR’s second Western book, *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail*, published three years later, continued to portray him as a heroic and manly Western rancher, this time drawing more explicitly on the discourse of civilization. TR depicted ranchers like himself as pivotal characters in the evolutionary struggle between civilization and savagery—the struggle to establish the American nation. On the one hand, they embodied all the virtues of upright civilized manliness. A rancher “must not only be shrewd, thrifty, patient, and enterprising, but he must also possess qualities of personal bravery, hardihood, and self-reliance to a degree not demanded in the least by any mercantile occupation in a community long settled.”<sup>27</sup> Yet the rancher’s location on the frontier between civilization and savagery also allowed him to share the savage’s primitive masculinity: “Civilization seems as remote as if we were living in an age long past. . . . Ranching is an occupation like those of vigorous, primitive pastoral peoples, having little in common with the humdrum, workaday business world of the nineteenth century; and the free ranchman in his manner of life shows more kinship to an Arab sheik than to a sleek city merchant or tradesman.”<sup>28</sup> Like the traditional frontier hero, Roosevelt the ranchman possessed savages’ “natural” strength and vigor; yet he also retained the superior manliness of the civilized white man. By telling a few stories about his run-ins with Indians, in which only his own manly coolness and facility with a rifle saved his scalp, Roosevelt further cemented his new identity as a modern Western hero.<sup>29</sup>

TR’s efforts to transform his Jane-Dandy political image succeeded brilliantly. In 1886, when he ran for mayor of New York as the “Cowboy of the Dakotas,” even the Democratic *New York Sun* lauded his zest for fighting and



Fig. 12. Theodore Roosevelt constructs himself as a virile Western ranchman in this frontispiece from *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885). Courtesy of Cathy Carver.

his “blizzard-seasoned constitution” instead of ridiculing him as “Oscar Wilde.”<sup>30</sup> Throughout his political life TR would actively cultivate this political persona of masculine denizen of “Cowboy Land.”<sup>31</sup>

Yet Roosevelt’s ranchman identity was not a merely a case of cynical political packaging. It stemmed from Roosevelt’s understanding of the higher significance of his political leadership. Despite his single-minded quest for political power, TR never believed he craved power for its own sake. As he saw it, his political ambitions ultimately served the purposes—not of his own selfish personal advancement—but of the millennial mission to advance his race and nation toward a more perfect civilization.

### *The Winning of the West: Race War Forges the Identity of the Manly American Race*

At the same time that Roosevelt was engaged in constructing himself as a manly Western hero, he was also writing a history which explained the larger significance of his new frontiersman identity to the advancement of civilization. In *The Winning of the West*, an ambitious four-volume history of the late eighteenth-century American frontier, Roosevelt depicts the American West as a crucible in which the white American race was forged through masculine racial conflict. By applying Darwinistic principles to the Western tradition, Roosevelt constructed the frontier as a site of origins of the American race, whose manhood and national worth were proven by their ability to stamp out competing, savage races.<sup>32</sup>

Even in these scholarly historical tomes, Roosevelt invoked his own persona as a manly frontiersman to signify that he, himself, shared his race's virility, as well as its manly racial destiny.<sup>33</sup> At the very outset of *The Winning of the West*, TR makes his personal connection with the frontier explicit: "For a number of years I spent most of my time on the frontier, and lived and worked like any other frontiersman. . . . We guarded our herds of branded cattle and shaggy horses, hunted bear, bison, elk, and deer, established civil government, and put down evil-doers, white and red. . . exactly as did the pioneers."<sup>34</sup> This stretches the truth: Roosevelt never spent "most of his time" on the frontier. Even during the twenty-six months he considered himself a permanent resident of South Dakota, TR spent more than thirteen months in New York.<sup>35</sup> Yet, despite his limited time on the frontier, Roosevelt saw his own life-work in terms of the frontier history he was relating. Invoking his ranchman persona both explicitly and implicitly, Roosevelt used *The Winning of the West* to frame the larger significance of both his political career and his ambitions as a leader of the American nation.

Like Mayne Reid's *Boy Hunters* and other Western adventures, Roosevelt's *Winning of the West* told a story of virile violence and interracial conflict. Yet while the hero of the traditional Western adventure was a *man* whose race was implicitly white, the hero of Roosevelt's story was a *race* whose gender was implicitly male. The hero of *The Winning of the West* was the manly American race, which was born in violence on the Western frontier. Like many Victorian novelists, TR began his story by relating his hero's origins and parentage. Chapter 1, subtitled "Spread of the Modern English Race," describes the history of the English race, which TR saw as the American race's parent.<sup>36</sup> TR outlined the familiar Anglo-Saxonist history of the English race, as

it began in the forests of Germany, overran prehistoric Europe, and finally established itself as Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>37</sup>

*The Winning of the West* then narrates, in much greater detail, a similar origin tale for the American race as it began in the forests of Kentucky, overran the American continent, and began to establish itself as the great United States. The settlement of the American West, according to Roosevelt, echoed the establishment of ancient England in that a race of primarily Germanic descent reconstituted itself in an extended act of racial conquest. As Roosevelt saw it, this act of manly conquest established the American race as a race apart—a race different from its English parent.<sup>38</sup>

Americans belong to the English race only in the sense in which Englishmen belong to the German. . . . The modern Englishman is descended from a Low-Dutch stock, which, when it went to Britain, received into itself an enormous infusion of Celtic, a much smaller infusion of Norse and Danish, and also a certain infusion of Norman-French blood. When this new English stock came to America it mingled with and absorbed into itself immigrants from many European lands.<sup>39</sup>

TR made much of this point: The American race was not the same as the English race, since it had been reconstituted of new racial stock in the act of winning a new and virgin continent. Americans were literally of a different blood than the British. However, since most of the new, immigrant additions to English stock in America had come from the same superior Germanic and Celtic races that had long ago formed the British race (Germans, Scandinavians, Irish, and Dutch), the new American race retained all the superior racial traits of the older British race. In other words, the American race was a brand new race, but it shared both ancestry and "blood" with the English race. Long after he wrote *The Winning of the West*, Roosevelt continued to insist that Americans were a new and separate race.<sup>40</sup>

Yet although the manly American race was forged of various immigrant races, all of those contributing races were European. Black Americans played no part in TR's frontier history, nor did he consider them part of the American race. As he saw it, African Americans were racial inferiors whose presence in America could only damage the real (that is, white) American race. TR lambasted slave importers as "the worst foes, not only of humanity and civilization, but especially of the white race in America." Slave importation was not only "ethically aberrant," it was a biological crime because it encouraged non-eugenic interbreeding. Worse, the African race remained a prob-

lem in perpetuity. The inferior "negroes" could live peacefully with the superior whites for generations, unlike the Indians, who picked fights with the white man and thus could be killed off. In short, in constructing his racial hero, TR envisioned an American race that was exclusively white.<sup>41</sup>

*The Winning of the West* goes on to tell a story of racial origins in which the hero, the manly white American race, proves its manhood by winning a series of violent battles with inferior, savage Indians. Roosevelt depicts the violence of this frontier race war as the mechanism which forges the various groups of white European immigrants into one powerful, unified American race. Most of *The Winning of the West's* four volumes recount this race-forming warfare in loving detail.

The logic behind TR's story of heroic racial formation revolves around "civilization's" three basic aspects: race, gender, and millennialism. The millennial evolutionary imperatives behind nature's quest to develop the most perfect men and women demanded that white Americans and Indians, thrown together on one continent, compete to establish which race had the strongest, most powerful men. Warfare between the white man and the Indian was thus, as TR repeatedly put it, "inevitable."<sup>42</sup> Only virile, masculine combat could establish whose men were superior and deserved to control the land and its resources. But the outcome was never in doubt. The new American race, able to advance civilization to ever greater heights, was "predestined" to prevail against the barbarous Indians.<sup>43</sup> "It is a sad and dreadful thing that there should of necessity be such throes of agony and yet they are the birth-pangs of a new and vigorous people," sighed Roosevelt.<sup>44</sup> Thus, in the violence of race war, the manly American race was born.

Manhood was the key to the American frontiersmen's victory in this race war, just as it had been the key to Roosevelt's own frontiersman identity. "The west would never have been settled save for the fierce courage and the eager desire to brave danger so characteristic of the stalwart backwoodsmen." Like the heroes of Western novels, these virile frontiersmen were bold, resourceful and self-reliant.<sup>45</sup> "The young men prided themselves on their bodily strength, and were always eager to contend against one another in athletic games, such as wrestling, racing, jumping and lifting flour barrels."<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the men and women of the American race clung tenaciously to "natural" sex roles: "The man was the armed protector and provider, the woman was the housewife and child-bearer."<sup>47</sup> As TR described the virile backwoodsmen, in another context, they were "every inch men," whose manhood was essential to their racial character. "There was little that was soft or outwardly attractive in their character; it was stern, rude, and hard, like the

lives they led; but it was the character of those who were every inch men, and who were Americans through to the very heart's core."<sup>48</sup>

TR repeatedly contrasts the virile manliness of the Americans to the brutal unmanliness of the Indians.<sup>49</sup> Manhood was the essential characteristic of the American race, whereas Roosevelt's Indians "seemed to the white settlers devils and not men." These devilish nonmen "mercilessly destroyed all weaker communities, red or white" and "had no idea of showing justice or generosity towards their fellows who lacked their strength."<sup>50</sup> Manliness meant helping the weak; Indians attacked the weak. Therefore, Indians—like the Negro rapists in contemporary reports of lynching—were the opposite of manly. Indeed, Roosevelt repeatedly described Indians as brutal despoilers of women and children, invoking (like so many of his contemporaries) the ubiquitous cultural figure of the savage primitive rapist. According to Roosevelt, the white frontiersman

was not taking part in a war against a civilized foe; he was fighting in a contest where women and children suffered the fate of the strong men. . . . His sweetheart or wife had been carried off, ravished, and was at the moment the slave and concubine of some dirty and brutal Indian warrior, . . . seared into his eyeballs, into his very brain, he bore ever with him, waking or sleeping, the sight of the skinned, mutilated, hideous body of the baby who had just grown old enough to recognize him and to crow and laugh when taken in his arms. Such incidents as these were not exceptional.<sup>51</sup>

Roosevelt described this savage unmanliness in pornographic detail, lumping together every Indian atrocity he had ever heard of—events occurring years apart, in different parts of the country—so that it appeared that Indians were typically rapists and baby killers.<sup>52</sup> (In contrast, modern historians have found that rape was practically unknown among most Indian tribes.)<sup>53</sup> Drawing on the discourse of civilization, TR constructed his Indians in the same terms which were currently depicting African Americans as unmanly, congenital rapists.

Yet civilized manliness was not the only thing that made the American race superior to the barbarous Indians. The American frontiersmen also proved their racial superiority by the potency of their violent masculinity—their ability to outsavage the savages. Although the primitive Indians were powerfully violent foes, Roosevelt depicted the white frontiersmen's violence as even more powerful: "Their red foes were strong and terrible, cunning in council, dreadful in battle, merciless beyond belief in victory. The men of the

border did not overcome and dispossess cowards and weaklings; they marched forth to spoil the stout-hearted and to take for a prey the possessions of the men of might."<sup>54</sup> Again, the virile white man is both like the Indians and superior to them. The strength of the white Americans' violence proved them the most masculine of men and the most advanced of races.<sup>55</sup>

One might think that by regressing to brutal savagery, American men might be devolving toward a lower evolutionary stage, instead of advancing to a higher civilization. And Roosevelt conceded that, in the short run, this brutal race war was more likely to retrograde than to advance manliness and civilization. "A sad and evil feature of such warfare is that the whites, the representatives of civilization, speedily sink almost to the level of their barbarous foes, in point of hideous-brutality."<sup>56</sup> Yet, as Roosevelt saw it, this regression to savagery was only temporary and proved the Americans' racial superiority. Since the Indian men fought at the brutal level of savagery, it was they who forced the white men into equal brutality in order to prevail in the struggle for survival. The superior race needed to match their red foes' masculine savagery in order to win the war and safeguard the future of civilization.<sup>57</sup> Having met the savages on their own primitive ground and having proven themselves the fitter race and the better men, the American men could claim their continent and reclaim their place as the most advanced of civilized races. This temporary reversion to the primitive in order to build a more powerful civilization thus echoes G. Stanley Hall's pedagogical vision of a primitive boyhood giving civilized men the masculine power to resist overcivilization and develop into the super-man.

For, brutal as it was, this bloody war between red and white men had a higher purpose: it served the sacred interests of civilization. Here, Roosevelt's own political mission comes into sharper focus, and the meaning of his own frontiersman persona takes on a cosmic tint. The American race had a sacred duty to advance civilization by wresting the continent from the Indians and installing a higher civilization. Indeed, the white man's race war against the Indians was really a holy crusade for human evolutionary advancement.

The most ultimately righteous of all wars is a war with savages, though it is apt to be also the most terrible and inhuman. The rude, fierce settler who drives the savage from the land lays all civilized mankind under a debt to him. . . . It is of incalculable importance that America, Australia, and Siberia should pass out of the hands of

their red, black, and yellow aboriginal owners, and become the heritage of the dominant world races.<sup>58</sup>

This cosmic imperative rendered moot all lesser questions of morality. "Whether the whites won the land by treaty [or] by armed conquest . . . mattered comparatively little so long as the land was won. It was all-important that it should be won, for the benefit of civilization and in the interests of mankind."<sup>59</sup> Without such conquests, all human progress would cease and civilization itself would stop. "The world would have halted had it not been for the Teutonic conquests in alien lands; . . . the world would probably have gone forward very little, indeed would not have gone forward at all, had it not been for the displacement or submersion of savage and barbaric peoples as a consequence of the armed settlement in strange lands of the races who hold in their hands the fate of the years."<sup>60</sup> By killing the Indians, the virile American frontiersmen were unselfishly safeguarding the future advancement of all civilization.

Here, then, is the millennial importance of the race-making work of manly frontiersmen like Crockett, Boone, and, by implication, ranchman Roosevelt himself. By 1896, when Roosevelt published the fourth and final volume of *The Winning of the West*, he had embarked on his political career as an advocate of manly imperialism; and it might have appeared that his work as a scholarly historian was related only tangentially to his growing political prominence. Yet in *The Winning of the West*, Roosevelt had distilled the larger significance of both his political philosophy and his ambitions for the United States. As he saw it, history proved that manhood and race were integrally connected—almost identical—and the future of the American nation depended on both. History showed that, from the time the American race was born in violent racial conflict on the frontier, the American race had been superlatively manly. Indeed, superior manhood itself had allowed the American race to prevail against the Indians, win a continent, and build a mighty nation. Thus, America's nationhood itself was the product of both racial superiority and virile manhood.

But mere nationhood alone was not enough for Americans, according to Roosevelt, who (like Hall and Gilman) saw a cosmic importance in advancing evolution. Americans had a sacred duty to strive to develop the highest possible civilization. For Roosevelt, the mechanism of this human evolution came through a Darwinistic survival of the fittest. The American race must continue striving manfully to wrest the world's "waste spaces" from the infe-



rior races who were currently "cumbering" them. And if all domestic territory had been wrested from the savages, then American men must turn their attention overseas. Indeed, as Roosevelt originally envisioned *The Winning of the West*, its story would have continued until the Alamo fell in 1836. By concluding with a different racial foe, Roosevelt's history would have signaled that in his own time the American race needed to summon its manhood to face a new opponent in its struggle for racial expansion: the "semi-civilized" mestizo races of Latin America.<sup>61</sup> And who was more fit to lead American men in this fight than the modest, scholarly western ranchman who was so well versed in their racial history?

### The Meaning of the Strenuous Life

Roosevelt never had the time to write the two final volumes of *The Winning of the West*. Instead, he took up the mantle of his heroic Indian fighters himself, urging American men to embrace a virile imperialism for the good of the race and the future of all civilization. Beginning in 1894, unhappy with President Cleveland's reluctance to annex Hawaii, Roosevelt began to exhort the American race to embrace a manly, strenuous imperialism, in the cause of higher civilization.<sup>62</sup> In Roosevelt's imperialistic pronouncements, as in *The Winning of the West*, issues of racial dominance were inextricably conflated with issues of manhood. Indeed, when Roosevelt originally coined the term "the strenuous life," in an 1899 speech, he was explicitly discussing only foreign relations: calling on the United States to build up its army and to take imperialistic control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Ostensibly, the speech never mentions gender at all. Yet the phrase "the strenuous life" soon began to connote a virile, hard-driving manhood, which might or might not involve foreign relations, at all.

How did the title of an essay calling for American imperialism become a catchphrase to describe vigorous masculinity? To answer this question, we need to understand the logic behind Roosevelt's philosophies about American nationalism and imperialism. For Roosevelt, the purpose of American expansionism and national greatness was always the millennial purpose behind human evolution—human racial advancement toward a higher civilization. And the race that could best achieve this, perfected civilization was, by definition, the one with the most superior manhood.

### *The Dangers of Unmanly Overcivilized Racial Decadence*

It was not coincidental that Roosevelt's advocacy of manly imperialism in the 1890s was contemporaneous with a widespread cultural concern about effeminacy, overcivilization, and racial decadence. As we have seen with Hall and Beard, throughout Europe and Anglo-America intellectuals were worried about the emasculating tendencies of excessive civilization. Roosevelt shared many of his contemporaries' fears about the future of American manly power; and this gave his imperialistic writings an air of especial urgency.<sup>63</sup>

Although Roosevelt never despaired about the future of American civilization, he believed racial decay was distinctly possible. He warned the nation that overcivilized effeminacy could threaten the race's fitness to engage in the sort of race wars he had described in *The Winning of the West*. He fretted over "a certain softness of fibre in civilized nations, which, if it were to prove progressive, might mean the development of a cultured and refined people quite unable to hold its own in those conflicts through which alone any great race can ultimately march to victory."<sup>64</sup> Publicly, Roosevelt professed faith that the American race retained the superior manhood which had allowed it to wrest the continent from the Indians. He denied "that the martial type necessarily decays as civilization progresses."<sup>65</sup> Yet in his private letters Roosevelt conceded that he believed American racial decadence was distinctly possible.<sup>66</sup>

Whereas Hall had seen decadence in terms of a physical or biological evolutionary backsliding, and Gilman had seen it in terms of the growth of excessive sex traits, Roosevelt understood decadence in terms of the racial conflict through which he believed civilizations rose and fell. As he had shown in *The Winning of the West*, TR believed that manly racial competition determined which race was superior and deserved to control the earth's resources. A race which grew decadent, then, was a race which had lost the masculine strength necessary to prevail in this Darwinistic racial struggle. Civilized advancement required much more than mere masculine strength, of course; it also required advanced manliness. Intelligence, altruism, and morality were essential traits, possessed by all civilized races and men. Yet, as important as these refined traits were, they were not enough, by themselves, to safeguard civilization's advance and prevent racial decadence. Without the "virile fighting virtues" which allowed a race to continue to expand into new territories, its more civilized racial traits would be useless. If American men lost their



primal fighting virtues, a more manful race would strip them of their authority, land, and resources. This effeminate loss of racial primacy and virility was what Roosevelt meant by overcivilized racial decadence.

In order to help American men ward off this kind of racial decadence, Roosevelt wrote a series of articles exhorting American men to eschew overcivilized effeminacy. In 1893, for example, he suggested in *Harper's Weekly* that athletics might be one way to combat excess civilization and avoid losing Americans' frontier-bred manliness:

In a perfectly peaceful and commercial civilization such as ours there is always a danger of laying too little stress upon the more virile virtues—upon the virtues which go to make up a race of statesmen and soldiers, of pioneers and explorers. . . . These are the very qualities which are fostered by vigorous, manly out-of-door sports, such as mountaineering, big-game hunting, riding, shooting, rowing, football and kindred games.<sup>67</sup>

Elsewhere he urged men to take up politics in order to cultivate "the rougher, manlier virtues. . . . A peaceful and commercial civilization is always in danger of suffering the loss of the virile fighting qualities without which no nation, however cultured, however refined, however thrifty and prosperous, can ever amount to anything."<sup>68</sup> Decadence could only be kept at bay if American men strove to retain the virile fighting qualities necessary for a race of soldiers and pioneers.

This concept of overcivilized decadence let Roosevelt construct American imperialism as a conservative way to retain the race's frontier-forged manhood, instead of what it really was—a belligerent grab for a radically new type of nationalistic power. As Roosevelt described it, asserting the white man's racial power abroad was necessary to avoid losing the masculine strength Americans had already established through race war on the frontier. Currently the American race was one of the world's most advanced civilized races. They controlled a rich and mighty continent because their superior manhood had allowed them to annihilate the Indians on the Western frontier. If they retained their manhood, they could continue to look forward to an ever higher civilization, as they worked ever harder for racial improvement and expansion. But if American men ever lost their virile zest for Darwinistic racial contests, their civilization would soon decay. If they ignored the ongoing racial imperative of constant expansion and instead grew effeminate and luxury-loving, a manlier race would inherit their mantle of the highest civilization.

By depicting imperialism as a prophylactic means of avoiding effeminacy and racial decadence, Roosevelt constructed it as part of the status quo and hid the fact that this sort of militaristic overseas involvement was actually a new departure in American foreign policy. American men must struggle to retain their racially innate masculine strength, which had originally been forged in battle with the savage Indians on the frontier; otherwise the race would backslide into overcivilized decadence. With no Indians left to fight at home, then, American men must press on and confront new races, abroad.

#### *Imperialism: The Masterful Duty of the Manly Race*

From 1894 until he became president in 1901, Roosevelt wrote and lectured widely on the importance of taking up what Rudyard Kipling, in 1899, would dub "the White Man's burden." Kipling coined this term in a poem written to exhort American men to conquer and rule the Philippines. "The white man," as we saw in the Wells chapter, simultaneously meant the white race, civilization itself, and white males as a group. In "The White Man's Burden," Kipling used the term in all these senses to urge white males to take up the racial burden of civilization's advancement. "Take up the White Man's burden," he wrote, capitalizing the essential term, and speaking to the manly civilized on behalf of civilization. "Send forth the best ye breed"—quality breeding was essential, because evolutionary development (breeding) was what gave "the White Man" the right and duty to conquer uncivilized races.

Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness,  
on fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child.<sup>69</sup>

Like Teedie throwing cake in the mouths of hungry beggars, manly men had the duty of taking unselfish care of those weaker than themselves—to "wait in heavy harness" and "serve their captives' need." And by calling the Filipinos "half-devil and half-child," Kipling underlined the essential fact that whatever these races were, they were not *men*.

Roosevelt called Kipling's poem "poor poetry but good sense from the expansionist standpoint."<sup>70</sup> Although Roosevelt did not use the term "the white man's burden" in his writings on imperialism; he drew on the same sorts of race and gender linkages which Kipling deployed in his poem. TR's

speeches of this period frequently conflate manhood and racial power, and draw extended analogies between the individual American man and the virile American race.

For example, "National Duties," one of TR's most famous speeches, represents both American men and the American race as civilized entities with strong virile characters—in popular parlance, both were "the white man." Roosevelt begins by outlining this racial manhood, which he calls "the essential manliness of the American character."<sup>71</sup> Part of this manliness centered around individual and racial duties to the home. On the one hand, individual men must work to provide for the domestic needs of themselves and their families. On the other hand, the men of the race must work to provide for their collective racial home, their nation.<sup>72</sup> Men who shirked these manly homemaking duties were despicably unsexed; or, as TR put it, "the willfully idle man" was as bad as "the willfully barren woman."<sup>73</sup>

Yet laboring only for his own hearth and nation was not enough to satisfy a real man. Virile manhood also required the manly American nation to take up imperialistic labors outside its borders, just as manhood demanded individual men to labor outside the home: "Exactly as each man, while doing first his duty to his wife and the children within his home, must yet, if he hopes to amount to much, strive mightily in the world outside his home, so our nation, while first of all seeing to its own domestic well-being, must not shrink from playing its part among the great nations without."<sup>74</sup> It would be as unmanly for the American race to refuse its imperialist destiny as it would be for a cowardly man to spend all his time loafing at home with his wife. Imperialist control over primitive races thus becomes a matter of manhood—part of a male-only public sphere, which TR sets in contradistinction to the home.

After setting up imperialism as a manly duty for both man and race, Roosevelt outlines the imperialist's appropriate masculine behavior—or, should we say, his appropriate masculine appendage? Roosevelt immediately brings up the "big stick." It may be a cheap shot to stress the phallic implications of TR's imagery; yet Roosevelt himself explained the meaning of the "big stick" in terms of manhood and the proper way to assert the power of a man: "A good many of you are probably acquainted with the old proverb: 'Speak softly and carry a big stick—you will go far.' If a man continually blusters, if he lacks civility, a big stick will not save him from trouble; and neither will speaking softly avail, if back of the softness there does not lie strength, power."<sup>75</sup> Just as a manly man avoided bluster, relying instead on his self-evident masculine strength and power, so virile American men should build

a powerful navy and army, so that when they took up the white man's burden in primitive lands, they would receive the respect due to a masterful, manly race.

This imperialistic manliness underlay the virile power of both man and race; yet it was not self-seeking. It was intended only for the advancement of civilization. Therefore, Roosevelt insisted, Americans never directed their virile expansionism against any civilized race. "No nation capable of self-government and of developing by its own efforts a sane and orderly civilization, no matter how small it may be, has anything to fear from us."<sup>76</sup> Only barbarous nations incapable of developing "a sane and orderly civilization"—for example, the Hawaiians and the Filipinos—required the correction of the manly American race.

Unfortunately, Roosevelt conceded, this unselfish civilizing duty might well become bloody and violent. Civilized men had a manly duty to "destroy and uplift" lesser, primitive men, for their own good and the good of civilization: "It is our duty toward the people living in barbarism to see that they are freed from their chains, and we can free them only by destroying barbarism itself. The missionary, the merchant, and the soldier may each have to play a part in this destruction and in the consequent uplifting of the people."<sup>77</sup> Yet this unselfish racial uplift would be worth the bloodshed, even for the destroyed barbarians themselves. Both Indians on the Great Plains and the Tagalogs in the Philippines—at least, those who still survived—would be far happier after the white man had conquered them, according to Roosevelt.<sup>78</sup>

Roosevelt closed his speech by reiterating his analogy between the manful race and the race's men. By conquering and civilizing primitive races, the American nation was simply girding up its racial loins to be "men" of the world, just as they had long been "men" at home in the United States: "We gird up our loins as a nation, with the stern purpose to play our part manfully in winning the ultimate triumph; and therefore . . . with unfaltering steps [we] tread the rough road of endeavor, smiting down the wrong and battling for the right, as Greatheart smote and battled in Bunyan's immortal story."<sup>79</sup> In its imperialist glory, the virile American race would embody a warlike manliness, smiting down and battling its unmanly foes in the primitive Philippines. Were American men to be frightened from this work, they would show themselves, as TR put it, "weaklings."<sup>80</sup>

Roosevelt always considered imperialism a question of both racial and individual manhood. Privately, he scorned anti-imperialists as "beings whose cult is non-virility."<sup>81</sup> Publicly, he derided men who refused to take

up the white man's burden as decadent, effeminate, and enemies of civilization: "In the ages distant future patriotism, like the habit of monogamous marriage, will become a needless and obsolete virtue; but just at present the man who loves other countries as much as he does his own is quite as noxious a member of society as the man who loves other women as much as he loves his wife."<sup>82</sup> Like the advocates of free love, anti-imperialists professed a civilized high-mindedness, but their actions showed them as unmanly and weak as adulterers.

An unmanly, anti-imperialist race was as despicable as an unmanly, anti-imperialist man. As TR saw it, overly peaceful races were like unsexed decadents who refused to breed, whereas expansive races left heirs, just as fathers left sons. "Nations that expand and nations that do not expand may both ultimately go down, but the one leaves heirs and a glorious memory, and the other leaves neither."<sup>83</sup> As TR saw it, the only way to avoid effete, unmanly decadence—on the part of either race or man—was to embrace virile imperialism.

In short, racial health and civilized advancement implied both manhood and imperialism. An effeminate race was a decadent race; and a decadent race was too weak to advance civilization. Only by embracing virile racial expansionism could a civilization achieve its true manhood. This, as TR saw it, was the ultimate meaning of imperialism.

#### *The Rough Rider: The War Hero Models the Power of a Manly Race*

Roosevelt was not content merely to make speeches about the need for violent, imperialistic manhood. He always needed to embody his philosophy. The sickly boy had remade himself into an adventure-book hunter-naturalist; the dude politician had remade himself into a heroic Western rancher. The 1898 outbreak of the Spanish-American war—for which he had agitated long and hard—let Roosevelt remake himself into Colonel Roosevelt, the fearless Rough Rider.

Reinventing himself as a charismatic war hero allowed Roosevelt to model the manful imperialism about which he had been writing for four years. TR became a walking advertisement for the imperialistic manhood he desired for the American race. Indeed, from the moment of his enlistment until his mustering out four months later, Roosevelt self-consciously publicized himself as a model of strenuous, imperialistic manhood. In late April 1898, against all advice, Roosevelt resigned as assistant secretary of the navy and enlisted to fight in the just-declared war on Spain. Aged thirty-nine, with an

important subcabinet post, a sick wife, and six young children, no one but Roosevelt himself imagined he ought to see active service. Roosevelt's decision to enlist was avidly followed by newspapers all over the country. Several editorialized against his enlistment, saying he would do more good for the war effort as assistant secretary of the navy. Roosevelt enlisted nonetheless and lost no opportunity to publicize his reasons to friendly newspapers. As he explained to the *New York Sun*, it would be unmanly—hypocritical—to allow other men to take his place on the front lines after he had agitated so strenuously for war. "I want to go because I wouldn't feel that I had been entirely true to my beliefs and convictions, and to the ideal I had set for myself if I didn't go."<sup>84</sup> Embracing the glare of publicity, TR demonstrated to all that when a member of the manly American race took up the white man's burden, he risked his life willingly and joyously, for the good of civilization.

Roosevelt, commissioned at the rank of lieutenant colonel, raised a volunteer cavalry regiment which he described as "peculiarly American."<sup>85</sup> It was designed to reflect Americans' masculine racial power as well as their civilized manly advancement. TR accepted only a fraction of the host of men who tried to enlist in his well-publicized regiment. Most of those he accepted were Westerners—rough cowboys and frontiersmen, the heirs and descendants of the masculine Indian fighters who had been forged into the American race on the Western frontier. But, to emphasize the American race's civilized superiority to the Spanish enemy, TR also enlisted several dozen young Ivy League college graduates, many of them athletes. These Harvard and Yale men, presumably the beneficiaries of the race's most advanced moral and intellectual evolution, represented the ever-advancing heights of civilization to which the manly American race could aspire. The regiment's combination of primitive Western masculinity and advanced civilized manliness dramatized the superior manhood of the American race. They would undoubtedly whip the pants off the inferior Latin Spaniards, and show Americans the glories of imperialistic manhood.

The press, fascinated by the undertaking, christened the regiment "Roosevelt's Rough Riders."<sup>86</sup> Roosevelt's heroic frontiersman identity thus came full circle, as he no doubt intended. As Richard Slotkin has pointed out, the term "Rough Riders" had long been used in adventure novels to describe Western horsemen. Thus, by nicknaming his regiment the "Rough Riders," the nation showed it understood the historical connections Roosevelt always drew between Indian wars in the American West and virile imperialism in Cuba and the Philippines.<sup>87</sup>

But lest anyone miss the connections he was trying to draw between con-

tinued manhood and racial expansion, Roosevelt made certain the press, and thus the public, remained fully informed about the Rough Riders' doings. He encouraged several journalists to attach themselves to the regiment throughout its sojourn in Cuba and even rounded up an interested motion-picture crew.<sup>88</sup> The public avidly followed the newspaper reports of the Rough Riders' masculine cowboy heroics, manly collegiate athleticism, and overall wartime heroics.

Roosevelt, himself, was the core of the Rough Riders' popularity—he embodied the whole manly, imperialistic enterprise. Like his Western recruits, Roosevelt was both a masculine cowboy-hero and (by reputation and association, although not in reality) an Indian fighter. But TR was also a civilized Harvard man, manfully sacrificing his life of ease and privilege to take up the white man's burden and do his duty by the downtrodden brown Cubans. His widely reported, dashing exploits, including the heroic charge up "San Juan" Hill, proved the American race's violent masculinity had lost none of its potency since the bygone days of the Western frontier. According to Edmund Morris, when Roosevelt returned from the war he was "the most famous man in America."<sup>89</sup>

After his mustering out, TR the politician continued to play the role of virile Rough Rider for all he was worth. In November, he was elected governor of New York, campaigning as a war hero and employing ex-Rough Riders to warm up the election crowds. By January 1899, his thrilling memoir, *The Rough Riders*, was appearing serially in *Scribner's Magazine*. And in 1900 his virile popularity convinced Republican party leaders that Roosevelt could counter Bryan's populism better than any other vice-presidential candidate. Roosevelt had constructed himself and the Rough Riders as the epitome of civilized, imperialistic manhood, a model for the American race to follow. His success in modeling that imperialistic manhood exceeded even his own expectations and ultimately paved the way for his presidency.

#### "The Strenuous Life"

On April 10, 1899, Colonel Roosevelt stood before the men of Chicago's elite, all-male, Hamilton Club and preached the doctrine of "The Strenuous Life." As governor of New York and a fabulously popular ex-Rough Rider, he knew the national press would be in attendance; and though he spoke at the Hamilton Club, he spoke to men across America. With the cooperation of the press and at the risk of his life, TR had made himself into a national hero—the embodiment of manly virtue, masculine violence, and white American

racial supremacy—and the antithesis of overcivilized decadence. Now he urged the men of the American race to live the sort of life he had modeled for them: to be virile, vigorous, and manly, and to reject overcivilized decadence by supporting a strenuously imperialistic foreign policy. When contemporaries ultimately adopted his phrase "the strenuous life" as a synonym for the vigorous, vehement manhood Roosevelt modeled, they showed they correctly understood that his strenuous manhood was inextricably linked to his nationalism, imperialism, and racism.

Ostensibly, "The Strenuous Life" preached the virtues of military preparedness and imperialism, but contemporaries understood it as a speech about manhood. The practical import of the speech was to urge the nation to build up its army, to maintain its strong navy, and to take control of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines. But underlying these immediate objectives lay the message that American manhood—both the manly race and individual white men—must retain the strength of their Indian-fighter ancestors, or another race would prove itself more manly and overtake America in the Darwinian struggle to be the world's most dominant race.

Roosevelt began by demanding manliness in both the American nation and American men. Slothful men who lacked the "desire and power" to strive in the world were despicable and unmanly. "We do not admire the man of timid peace. We admire the man who embodies victorious effort."<sup>90</sup> If America and its men were not man enough to fight, they would not only lose their place among "the great nations of the world," they would become a decadent and effeminate race. Roosevelt held up the Chinese, whom he despised as the most decadent and unmanly of races, as a cautionary lesson: If we "play the part of China, and be content to rot by inches in ignoble ease within our borders," we will "go down before other nations which have not lost the manly and adventurous qualities."<sup>91</sup> If American men lacked the manly fortitude to go bravely and willingly to a foreign war, the race would decay, preached TR, the virile war hero.

In stirring tones, the Rough Rider of San Juan Hill ridiculed the overcivilized anti-imperialists who had lost the "great fighting, masterful virtues." Lacking the masculine impulse toward racial aggression and unmoved by virile visions of empire, these men had been sapped of all manhood.

The timid man, the lazy man, the man who distrusts his country, the over-civilized man, who has lost the great fighting, masterful virtues, the ignorant man, and the man of dull mind, whose soul is incapable of feeling the mighty lift that thrills stern men with em-

pires in their brains—all these, of course shrink from seeing the nation undertake its new duties; shrink from seeing us build a navy and an army adequate to our needs; shrink from seeing us do our share of the world's work. These are the men who fear the strenuous life. . . . They believe in that cloistered life which saps the hardy virtues in a nation, as it saps them in the individual.<sup>92</sup>

Like "cloistered" monkish celibates, these "over-civilized" men "shrink, shrink, shrink" from carrying the "big stick." Dishonorably, they refused to do their manly duty by the childish Filipinos. Had the United States followed these anti-imperialists' counsel and refused to undertake "one of the great tasks set modern civilization," Americans would have shown themselves not only unmanly but also racially inferior. "Some stronger, manlier power would have to step in and do the work, and we would have shown ourselves weaklings, unable to carry to successful completion the labors that great and high-spirited nations are eager to undertake." As TR saw it, the man, the race, and the nation were one in their need to possess virile, imperialist manhood.<sup>93</sup>

Then TR got down to brass tacks, dwelling at length on Congress' responsibility to build up the armed forces.<sup>94</sup> After again raising the specter of Chinese decadence, which American men faced if they refused to strengthen their army and navy, Roosevelt stressed America's duty to take up the white man's burden in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. If the American race was "too weak, too selfish, or too foolish" to take on that task, it would be completed by "some stronger and more manful race." He ridiculed anti-imperialists as cowards who "make a pretense of humanitarianism to hide and cover their timidity" and to "excuse themselves for their unwillingness to play the part of men."<sup>95</sup>

"The Strenuous Life" culminates with a Darwinian vision of strife between races for the "dominion of the world," which only the most manful race could win.

I preach to you then, my countrymen, that our country calls not for the life of ease but for the life of strenuous endeavor. . . . If we stand idly by . . . then the bolder and stronger peoples will pass us by, and will win for themselves the domination of the world. Let us therefore boldly face the life of strife, resolute to do our duty well and manfully.<sup>96</sup>

American men must embrace their manly mission to be the race which dominates the world. Struggle for racial supremacy was inevitable, but the most

manful race—the American race—would triumph, if it made the attempt. Its masculine strength was proven by military victories over barbarous brown races. Its manly virtue was evident in its civilized superiority to the primitive childish races it uplifted. White American men must claim their place as the world's most perfect men, the fittest race for the evolutionary struggle toward a perfect civilization. This was the meaning of "The Strenuous Life."

We can now answer the question, "How did the title of an essay calling for American dominance over the brown races become a catchphrase to describe virile masculinity?" Roosevelt's desire for imperial dominance had been, from the first, intrinsically related to his views about male power. As he saw it, the manhood of the American race had been forged in the crucible of frontier race war; and to abandon the virile power of that violence would be to backslide toward effeminate racial mediocrity. Roosevelt wanted American men to be the ultimate in human evolution, the world's most powerful and civilized race. He believed that their victory over the Indians on the frontier proved that the American race possessed the racial superiority and masculine power to overcome any savage race; and he saw a glorious future for the race in the twentieth century, as it pressed on toward international dominance and the perfection of civilization. The only danger which Roosevelt saw menacing this millennial triumph of manly American civilization came from within. Only by surrendering to overcivilized decadence—by embracing unmanly racial sloth instead of virile imperialism—could American men fail. Thus, American men must work strenuously to uphold their civilization. They must refuse a life of ease, embrace their manly task, and take up the white man's burden. Only by living that "strenuous life" could American men prove themselves to be what Roosevelt had no doubt they were—the apex of civilization, evolution's most favored race, masterful men fit to command the barbarous races and the world's "waste spaces"—in short, the most virile and manly of men.

In later years, as Americans came to take international involvement for granted and as imperialism came to seem less controversial, the phrase "the strenuous life" underwent a subtle change of meaning. Always associated with Roosevelt, it came to connote the virile manhood which he modeled for the nation as imperialistic Western hero and Rough Rider—the peculiar combination of moral manliness and aggressive masculinity which he was able to synthesize so well. As Roosevelt's presidency wore on, Americans grew accustomed to taking up the white man's burden, not only in the Philippines, but also in Cuba, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. The "strenuous life" came to be associated with any virile, manly effort to accomplish

great work, whether imperialistic or not.<sup>97</sup> Yet on a basic level, "the strenuous life" retained TR's original associations with the evolutionary struggle of the American race on behalf of civilization. "The strenuous life," as it came to be used, meant the opposite of "overcivilized effeminacy." Or, as Roosevelt summed it up himself in his *Autobiography*, the man who lives the strenuous life regards his life "as a pawn to be promptly hazarded whenever the hazard is warranted by the larger interests of the great game in which we are all engaged."<sup>98</sup> That great game, for Roosevelt, was always the millennial struggle for Americans to perfect civilization by becoming the most manly, civilized, and powerful race in the world.

### "Civilization" in the White House: Race Policy and Race Suicide

In 1901, Theodore Roosevelt finally grasped the ultimate manhood which he had sought for so long: to be the preeminent manly leader of the virile American race. As president, TR believed his duty was to usher the manly American nation ever closer to the racial preeminence and perfect civilization he had long predicted for it. Not surprisingly, then, considerations of manhood, race, and "civilization" shaped many of Roosevelt's presidential policies.

Internationally, as Frank Ninkovich has so eloquently shown, Roosevelt relied on the ideology of civilization to frame his foreign policy. Ninkovich refutes those historians who see TR as engaging in realpolitik or upholding balances of power between the European nations, and argues that TR's concern was always to uphold the interests of "civilization." Or, as Secretary of State Elihu Root summed up TR's diplomatic objectives, Roosevelt always "viewed each international question against the background of those tendencies through which civilization develops and along which particular civilizations advance or decline." As we have already seen in his pre-presidential speeches, TR believed that manhood required civilized nations to pacify and rule savage and barbarous nations. The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine stemmed directly from this ideology of manly, civilized stewardship of the savage and barbarous races.<sup>99</sup>

As Roosevelt described it in his *Autobiography*, this diplomacy of "civilization" was essentially a diplomacy of manliness. "In foreign affairs, the principle from which we never deviated was to have the Nation behave toward other nations precisely as a strong, honorable, and upright man behaves in dealing with his fellow-men."<sup>100</sup> Like the manly man, the manly nation kept

its promises, fearlessly faced down strong, civilized nations, and was patient with weak, barbarous ones.<sup>101</sup> For example, Roosevelt wrote that the Monroe Doctrine was intended to apply, not to "civilized commonwealths" like Canada, Argentina, Brazil, or Chile (all with large white populations), but only to uncivilized "tropical states" which (like unmanly men) were too "impotent" to do their own duty or defend their own independence.<sup>102</sup> Yet always behind this upright moral manliness lay the virile masculine potency of the race's capacity to wield "the big stick."

President Roosevelt's belief in manly civilization shaped his domestic policies, too, especially regarding interracial relations. His actions toward both Japanese immigrants and African Americans were shaped by his longstanding assumption that when men of different and incompatible races lived together, they would battle until one race reigned supreme, just as they had on the American frontier.<sup>103</sup> Yet although TR believed that African American and Japanese men both presented a racial challenge to white American men, his policies toward the two races differed because, as he saw it, the two races had attained different degrees of civilization.

Roosevelt believed that "Negroes" were the most primitive of races—"a perfectly stupid race."<sup>104</sup> As he had written in *The Winning of the West*, he always believed that their very presence in the United States was a tragic but irreversible historical error.<sup>105</sup> Black Americans were somewhat less backward than "Negroes" anywhere else in the world because they had extensive contact with civilization in the United States. Yet even so, Roosevelt warned, it might take "many thousand years" before "the descendant of the Negro" in the United States evolved to become even "as intellectual as the [ancient] Athenian."<sup>106</sup>

The disparity in racial capacity between black and white threatened the nation with race war, since the "fundamental . . . fact of the conflict between race and race" at such different evolutionary points inevitably led men into racial violence.<sup>107</sup> TR deplored such racial violence as uncivilized and made headlines in 1903 and 1906 by denouncing lynching. (He also repeated uncritically the myth that African American men had catalyzed those lynchings by raping white women, thus reinforcing widespread belief in black men's lack of manliness.)<sup>108</sup> Yet, although he deplored lynching, Roosevelt assumed racial violence was all but inevitable when men of such dissimilar races lived together.<sup>109</sup>

Thus Roosevelt saw the "Negro Problem" as a question of male power. The men of the masterful white American race had an irresistible evolutionary imperative to assert control over any race of inferior men in their midst.

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The Negro race was, unfortunately, permanently resident in the United States. Racial violence was thus a natural and inevitable part of manhood in a racially diverse society. Yet this posed another problem, because violence was itself barbarous and incompatible with a highly advanced civilization.

The only way to solve this dilemma, Roosevelt believed, was to focus explicitly on manhood. Because race difference was extreme and inescapable, the only solution was to pretend races did not exist, and invoke a democratic individualism which would allow each man (however racially unequal) to compete as a man. As he wrote to Albion Tourgée,

I have not been able to think out any solution of the terrible problem offered by the presence of the negro on this continent, but of one thing I am sure, and that is that inasmuch as he is here and can neither be killed nor driven away, the only wise and honorable and Christian thing to do is to treat each black man and each white man strictly on his merits as a man, giving him no more and no less than he shows himself worthy to have.<sup>110</sup>

Racial strife was unavoidable; racial inequality a terrible and immutable fact. The only solution was to trust to manhood and natural selection, allowing each man to compete fairly, as a man facing other men, regardless of race. If any African American man proved himself as manly as white American men in fair competition, he should be given an equal chance.

In other words, where African Americans were concerned, Roosevelt substituted an individual contest between men—the democratic merit system—for a collective contest between men—race war. To carry out this substitution, Roosevelt made ostentatious efforts to appoint blacks to federal positions, though he always complained qualified black candidates were inordinately difficult to find. (Historians note, however, that these appointments dwindled markedly as time passed.)<sup>111</sup> But although Roosevelt championed the right of individual, superior black men to compete with white men, he was confident that the Negro race, as a whole, was so far inferior to the white American race that no real evolutionary challenge would ensue.<sup>112</sup>

He was less confident about the Japanese. He believed them “a great civilized power of a formidable type, and with motives and ways of thought which are not quite those of the powers of our race.”<sup>113</sup> Because Japanese men were civilized, they were serious contenders for evolutionary supremacy and could pose a threat to white Americans’ manly dominance. After all, they too had proven their masculinity through imperialistic race war, defeating the Russians in 1904, as the American frontiersmen had defeated the

Indians. Yet, however advanced, Japanese civilization was nonetheless both inferior to and incompatible with white American civilization.

Thus, it would be extremely dangerous to allow Japanese men to immigrate freely into the United States. On the one hand, the less civilized Japanese men were less manly and so willing to work for lower wages than American men. On the other hand, the Japanese were somewhat civilized and so were desirable and competent workers. Here was a particularly dangerous situation: If Japanese workingmen were allowed to settle in the United States, they could emasculate American men as breadwinners. Roosevelt thus believed “the California Legislature would have had an entire right to protest as emphatically as possible against the admission of Japanese laborers, for their very frugality, abstemiousness and clannishness make them formidable to our laboring class.”<sup>114</sup> “Frugal” and “abstemious,” the civilized but inferior Japanese men were willing to settle for a lower standard of living, and would force wages down, ruining American men’s ability to provide for their families. Allowing Japanese men to immigrate and compete with white American men would thus be, as TR put it, “race suicide.”<sup>115</sup>

In order to avoid this masculine racial competition, with its threat of race suicide, Roosevelt stood firm on proscribing all permanent Japanese immigrants, although temporary Japanese visitors—for example, students and tourists—would be acceptable.<sup>116</sup> The men of such totally different and unassimilable civilizations, living side by side, must inevitably compete in the daily struggle for economic survival and eventually battle for control of the American land and resources. “To permit the Japanese to come in large numbers into this country would be to cause a race problem and invite and insure a race contest.”<sup>117</sup> It was therefore essential “to keep the white man in America . . . out of home contact with them.”<sup>118</sup> America must remain a white man’s country.<sup>119</sup>

TR’s views on manhood and civilization thus shaped his presidential policies toward both African Americans and Japanese immigration, but in contrasting ways. Because TR believed African Americans, already resident in the United States in large numbers, were generally primitive and inferior, he was willing to make a virtue of necessity by allowing black men to compete with white American men on an equal basis. He believed that if natural selection took its course, African American men would be weeded out as unfit, and the manly white American race would remain supreme. Japanese men, however, were civilized, and thus formidable, manly competitors. To allow natural selection to work—to allow Japanese men to compete, as men, with white American men—would be dangerous to the white American race’s su-



premacv. "Civilized" Japanese men, thus, should be excluded, while "primitive" African American men should be allowed to compete.<sup>120</sup>

Allowing Japanese immigration was not the only way the white American race could commit race suicide, however. Roosevelt was even more worried about a similarly suicidal racial tendency: native-born white Americans' falling birth rate. In his warnings about racial decadence, Roosevelt had always insisted that women's reluctance to breed was as dangerous to the race as men's reluctance to fight. Either way, a race would lose power and allow inferior races to surpass it in the Darwinistic quest for global supremacy.

Although historians today usually think of race suicide purely in terms of the birthrate controversy, the issue was tied to a host of broader fears about effeminacy, overcivilization, and racial decadence. The term "race suicide" was first coined in 1901 by sociologist Edward A. Ross. In his address "The Causes of Race Superiority," Ross raised all the fears of decadent manhood that had been so often evoked throughout the 1890s.<sup>121</sup> In terms reminiscent of the "neurasthenic paradox," Ross warned that the same manly virtues which had once allowed the "Superior Race" to evolve the highest civilization now threatened that race's very survival. He delineated the racial characteristics which had made white Americans superior to all other races—self-reliance, foresight, the ability to control their passions—in short, manliness. Yet, Ross argued, when faced with competition from less manly, racially inferior immigrants, these manly traits would prove the superior race's undoing. As it competed with these immigrants, the "very foresight and will power that mark the higher race dig a pit beneath its feet."<sup>122</sup> The superior race's manly self-denial gave it the drive to provide a rising standard of living for its children. But when manly white men competed for a livelihood with their racial inferiors, the inferior men, able to survive on less, would drive down wages; and the superior race's standard of living would decline. Unwilling to sire children they could not provide for, the superior American men would have fewer and fewer children. Thus manfully controlling their emotions, American men would "quietly and unobtrusively eliminate" themselves.<sup>123</sup>

Race suicide thus expressed the ultimate racial nightmare—impotent, decadent manhood. In Ross' vision, the same manly traits which allowed a superior race to develop the most advanced civilization would leave it unable to compete with more primitive, less manly races. Civilized races' *manliness* thus threatened to destroy their *virility*. Again, we get the dynamic of the "neurasthenic paradox": Victorian manliness is both the hallmark of an advanced civilization and a threat to civilization's future. Manly sexual self-

control was an excellent trait—proof of civilized advancement—but, taken too far, it would lead to the downfall of civilization and the ultimate unmaning of American manhood.

Roosevelt shared Ross' concern about the dangers of a falling birthrate.<sup>124</sup> TR had first voiced concern about the birthrate in 1894, about the same time he began to worry about national decadence and to agitate for a more vigorous imperialism. "Unquestionably, no community that is actually diminishing in numbers is in a healthy condition; and as the world is now, with huge waste places still to fill up, and with much of the competition between the races reducing itself to the warfare of the cradle, no race has any chance to win a great place unless it consists of good breeders as well as of good fighters," he warned.<sup>125</sup> In the midst of chronicling the manly American race's heroic conquest of savage Indians, the author of *The Winning of the West* fretted that "the warfare of the cradle" could undo the warfare of the frontier. There was no point in wresting the world's "waste spaces" from the primitive races if the frontiersmen's heirs simply refused to breed! Throughout the 1890s, in his published writings on the imperialistic duty of the manly race and in his private correspondence, TR raised the specter of race suicide.<sup>126</sup>

Roosevelt was not alone in his concerns. In the early 1890s, many commentators were wringing their hands about dwindling white birthrates, and pointing to the 1890 census to show that the native-born white birthrate had taken a sudden drop.<sup>127</sup> Yet although the birthrate was indeed dropping, as the alarmists claimed, this was nothing new. The birthrate had been dropping steadily ever since national statistics began to be kept in 1790; as early as 1843, Americans had been commenting on it.<sup>128</sup> What was new in 1890, however, was the growing debate about whether civilization was growing decadent and effeminate.

The race suicide controversy, then, was (like neurasthenia) one of many ways middle-class men addressed their fears about overcivilized effeminacy and racial decadence. Throughout the 1890s, elite American commentators bemoaned the falling birthrate, often blaming women's colleges or the new immigration.<sup>129</sup> Historians, following these sorts of articles, sometimes suggest increased immigration and new demands for women's rights explain these panicked fears.<sup>130</sup> Yet it would probably be more accurate to suggest that TR and his contemporaries saw both immigration and women's advancement, as well as the falling birthrate, as part of a wider threat to their race, manhood, and "civilization."

Roosevelt's personal dismay about the falling birthrate remained relatively private until 1903 when, as president, he allowed a letter expressing

his fears about race suicide to be published. In October 1902 Roosevelt had written author Bessie Van Vorst, praising her *The Woman Who Toils*, an exposé of the hardships faced by women factory workers, then running serially in *Everybody's Magazine*. Van Vorst scarcely mentioned the birthrate, but she did suggest that factory girls liked the independence of wage work and thus were in no hurry to marry. This elicited a Rooseveltian tirade against race suicide. Possibly hoping to bolster sales, Van Vorst obtained TR's permission to reprint his letter as a preface to her book. Thus the nation became acquainted with Roosevelt's views, and the phrase "race suicide" came before the general public for the first time.<sup>131</sup>

"You touch upon what is fundamentally infinitely more important than any other question in this country—that is the question of race suicide, complete or partial," TR wrote. Denouncing the selfish wish to live for individual pleasure, TR called instead for "the strong racial qualities without which there can be no strong races"—courage, high-mindedness, unselfishness. The absence of these sorts of virtues showed a reprehensible inability to consider the good of the race and was a symptom of "decadence and corruption in the nation." A man or woman who, considering only his or her own individual convenience, deliberately avoided having children was "in effect a criminal against the race, and should be an object of contemptuous abhorrence by all healthy people." Men must be "ready and able to fight at need, and anxious to be fathers of families," just as women must "recognize that the greatest thing for any woman is to be a good wife and mother." Refusing to bear children was the same sort of racial crime as refusing to fight for racial advancement; for no matter how refined its civilization, a race which refused to fight or breed was doomed to racial extinction.<sup>132</sup> In short, Roosevelt, like Edward Ross, painted race suicide as a disease of excessive civilization—potentially the greatest danger facing the American race—yet, he insisted, the danger could be overcome. The masterful American race could regain its manly primacy through willful procreative effort.

Roosevelt's warning caught the attention of the American public and popularized "race suicide" as both a term and a problem.<sup>133</sup> Genteel magazines across the country carried letters and editorials commenting on the president's stand. *Popular Science Monthly*, for example, agreeing that "it is surely a serious problem when the more civilized races tend not to reproduce themselves," published sixteen letters and articles on race suicide between 1903 and 1905.<sup>134</sup>

Elite magazines' discussions mostly revolved around how to keep civilization manly and powerful. Many commentators accepted Roosevelt's argu-

ment and wrung their hands over civilization's future. Some complained that less civilized races outbred the native-born whites.<sup>135</sup> Others claimed a decadent love of luxury was sapping white Americans' will to sacrifice for their children. Some fretted that the white American race, like an overbred hybrid, had simply become sterile.<sup>136</sup> The anti-imperialist *Nation* agreed that a negative birthrate heralded national decadence, but it turned race suicide into an argument against TR's imperialism, suggesting that "a people who cannot bring to maturity an average of more than nineteen children to twenty parents ought not to think of having colonies and of civilizing inferior races."<sup>137</sup> Although feminists objected that TR's pronouncements limited women to earning their "right to a footing on earth by bearing children and in no other way," and questioned "the note of savagery that rings in [TR's] voice when he discusses war and 'race suicide,'" they had little impact on the national debate.<sup>138</sup>

Outside the genteel press, however, the race suicide debates developed unexpectedly into a new and respectable way to celebrate masculine sexuality. In April 1903, only two months after his letter was published, Roosevelt embarked on a Western speaking tour and was delighted to discover that the public now saw him as a patron saint of large families: "I found to my utter astonishment that my letter to those Van Vorst women about their excellent book had gone everywhere, and the population of each place invariably took the greatest pride in showing off the children."<sup>139</sup> Always the resourceful publicist, TR grabbed the chance to encourage the American race to breed. In St. Paul, Minnesota, Mayor R. A. Smith of Washington County presented TR with a picture of a local couple, their nine children, forty-eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. "That is the stuff out of which we make good American citizens," TR enthused.<sup>140</sup> In South Dakota, Roosevelt hailed the large numbers of children who attended his appearances, repeatedly declaring "that he was glad to see that the stock was not dying out."<sup>141</sup> In Redlands, California, Roosevelt joked, "The sight of these children convinces me of the truth of a statement just made to me by Gov. Pardee, when he said that in California there is no danger of race suicide. You have done well in raising oranges, and I believe you have done better raising children."<sup>142</sup> Throughout TR's presidency, Americans deluged the White House with letters and photographs of their large families, receiving in reply presidential letters of congratulations.<sup>143</sup>

In these exchanges Roosevelt and his audience affirmed the potency of their civilization by affirming the sexual power of American manhood. By repeatedly invoking multitudes of rosy, white, native-born children, these

cries of "No race suicide here!" joyfully reassured men that white American manhood was not growing decadent or overcivilized—just look what American paternity could produce! As these humorous protestations multiplied, they took on a ritual quality. At one typical interchange in 1905, Roosevelt was preparing to address the Society of Friendly Sons of St. Patrick at Delmonico's in New York when he was handed a telegram. During the course of the banquet one of the diners, Peter McDonnell, had become a grandfather, and his son Robert had cabled him the good news. TR jocularly announced that "as a sop to certain of my well-known prejudices," he had been shown the telegram, and he then read it aloud to the assembled Friendly Sons. "Patrick just arrived. Tired after parade. Sends his regards to the President. . . . No race suicide in this family." According to the *New York Times*, "Pandemonium resulted. Men yelled and laughed and waved flags and behaved like boys on a lark." When the enthusiasm quieted down enough for TR to continue, he cried out, glass in hand, "And gentlemen, I want you to join with me in drinking the health of Patrick, Peter, Robert, and above all, of the best of the whole outfit, Mrs. McDonnell, the mother." More pandemonium ensued. The Friendly Sons howled their delight, ritually reaffirming their collective joy in healthy paternity, while "Mr. Roosevelt sat back in his chair and witnessed the proceedings with a broad, lasting smile."<sup>144</sup> As TR beamed down on the ecstatic gathering, the message was clear. Overcivilized effeminacy be damned—they were men.

This episode typifies these ritual calls of "No race suicide here!" Characteristically, only men took part in these interchanges. Not only was the Friendly Sons banquet all male, for example, but the telegram announcing "No race suicide in this family!" was written by the father to the grandfather, who passed it to the President. In the earlier examples, Mayor Smith and Governor Pardee, respectively, told TR there was "no race suicide" in their bailiwicks. These mutual affirmations that all present were palpably virile can be seen as ritualized claims by men to manhood.

When motherhood comes up in these protestations of "no race suicide here," the tone shifts to a more holy note, designating women as different, purer, and outside the conversation. Mrs. McDonnell, in TR's toast, is "the best of the outfit." No reason need be specified—the goodness of mothers was an unquestioned Victorian verity. But in the context of this public affirmation of male sexual potency, reverence for pure, passionless womanhood reaffirmed its *difference* from virile manhood. Furthermore, the tone of the "no race suicide here" exchanges was just ribald enough to implicitly exclude respectable women from taking part. The humorous, pleasurable allu-

sions to male sexual potency, veiled and proper though they were, marked the discussion as masculine.

It is probably no coincidence that at the same time TR began speaking publicly about race suicide, his letters and writings began to evince a new tone of awestruck veneration of mothers' goodness. "The pangs of childbirth make all men the debtors of all women" became a new catchphrase in his letters and speeches. "The woman who has had a child . . . must have in her the touch of a saint," he avowed.<sup>145</sup> While Roosevelt had always subscribed to conventional Victorian views of womanhood, this vocal, humble reverence for motherhood was new. Perhaps he needed to reaffirm that good women were not sullied by contact with male sexuality but became, as mothers, far purer than any carnal man could ever understand. He may well have been ambivalent about unleashing so much new public affirmation of male sexuality. Roosevelt had long been prudish about any public expression of sexuality—he considered Chaucer "altogether needlessly filthy," for example.<sup>146</sup> Unlike some of his contemporaries (for example, Gilman's nemeses, William T. Sedgwick and Almroth Wright), Roosevelt never showed any interest in fortifying masculinity by praising the primal savage rapist. In his discussion of race suicide, Roosevelt came as close as he ever would to publicly praising male sexuality as an intrinsic aspect of powerful masculinity.

The race suicide discussion which Roosevelt catalyzed made it possible, for the first time since the eighteenth century, for respectable American men to publicly celebrate male sexuality. Throughout the nineteenth century, middle-class men had relegated the expression of male sexuality to a shadowy position in the private domain. Publicly, respectable men praised manly self-control and sexual restraint. But now—as the Sons of Saint Patrick's whoops and hollers showed—male sexuality could be lauded openly as a public service. And in the context of widespread cries of "overcivilized effeminacy" and men's interest in remaking manhood, this new acceptance of male sexuality took on added resonance. This widespread discussion of race suicide between 1903 and 1910 probably facilitated the development of modern ideologies of gender, in which sexual expressiveness became a hallmark of healthy manhood or womanhood.<sup>147</sup> Perhaps no public figure but Roosevelt, with his combination of manly civilized morality and violent frontiersman masculinity, could have raised male sexuality in a way at once so direct and so acceptable. Once again TR had succeeded in combining manliness (morality) and masculinity (sexuality). Not everyone could stomach the combination. Humorists, especially, had a field day ridiculing the

incongruity of the dignified president making official pronouncements praising sex.<sup>148</sup> Yet, nonetheless, in the context of the race suicide danger, male sexuality could be seen in a new and eminently respectable light.

The key to reconciling male sexuality with the wider public good, in this way, was the imperative to achieve white racial supremacy. As popularly understood, Darwinism held that natural increase was a necessary component of the survival of the fittest. A race proved its evolutionary fitness by overrunning other races—by both outfighting and outbreeding them. Rising fecundity was thus a proof of racial superiority. Yet the census had shown that native-born, white Americans' birthrate was declining. White American men thus had the responsibility to marry and father multitudes of children in order to reverse this trend and keep the American race superior. It was this racial imperative, as understood through popularized Darwinism, that justified the new public celebration of male sexuality. G. Stanley Hall would soon describe the male orgasm as the "annunciation hour" of holy evolution, just as TR would continue to describe the siring of many healthy children as a public service. No longer was the power of middle-class manhood constructed primarily in terms of keeping masculine sexual passion under firm, willful control. In this light, male sexuality became a most important factor in maintaining race supremacy. Under the terms of the race suicide debates, expressive male sexuality was not an unmanly loss of self-restraint—it was a patriotic racial duty.

In defining "race suicide," Ross had posed a paradox—the same paradox that Beard had posed in his description of "neurasthenia." Civilized, self-restrained manliness was simultaneously the defining characteristic of white racial supremacy and its undoing. The same manly traits which had made white Americans the superior race now prevented them from maintaining their birthrate and led to overcivilized racial decadence. Roosevelt's particular way of understanding this relation of manhood to white racial supremacy provided a solution to Ross' paradox, just as Hall's ability to find primitive masculinity in civilized boyhood had provided a solution to Beard's. White Americans' civilized manliness and racial supremacy would be saved by rehabilitating primitive masculine sexuality. American men would remain as manly as ever, except now they would celebrate their sexual potency rather than merely restrain it. The "masculine"—in the guise of a vigorous sexuality—would come to the aid of the "manly" and safeguard the future of the American race. "No race suicide here!"

### The Fantasy Incarnate: Into the Pleistocene

In 1908, having rashly promised not to run for a third term, Roosevelt was forced to consider what came after his presidency. Throughout his life, he had sought to embody the most superior manhood—to be the supreme leader and president of the manly American race. Now that this glorious achievement had come and gone, TR tried to resign himself to abdicating his manly racial leadership. Yet the millennial logic of civilization held that if a man didn't press forward with the quest to perfect his manhood, he would weaken and grow less manly. Could TR find anything to top the manly racial leadership of the presidency? Or had he himself, like an overcivilized race, evolved as far as he could, and did he now face devolution and decadence? If he could no longer be president, what must he do to embrace the "strenuous life"?

Although nothing could ever top the presidency, TR spent his first year after leaving office doing the next most virile thing he could imagine: traveling back in time to the period when primitive man first appeared on earth. That was the way Roosevelt characterized his eleven-month safari to Africa. From the moment Roosevelt first considered taking an African hunting trip, he saw his vacation as a visit to the primeval past: "I cannot say how absorbed I was in your account of that wonderful river voyage through a primeval world," TR wrote an acquaintance traveling in Africa, in 1904. "Think of the 20th Century suddenly going back into the world as it was when the men of the unpolished stone period hunted the mammoth and the woolly rhinoceros! My dear sir, when I get through this work, whether it is a year from now or five years from now, if I have the physical power and you still desire me, I shall most certainly accept for that trip into equatorial Africa."<sup>149</sup> By projecting pure primitivism onto Africa, Roosevelt constructed it as a place where Stone Age men battled large, fierce animals—where he could fully savor both the advancement of his own superior civilized manliness, and the violent power of his primitive masculinity.<sup>150</sup> This view was not unusual: even Victorian anthropologists saw Africa as a land arrested in the Stone Age.<sup>151</sup> Thus, TR was confident that in Africa he would travel to the moment of human origins and relive the primitive, masculine life of his most distant evolutionary forefathers.

In some ways, then, this trip reversed the logic of Roosevelt's political ambitions. From the time he began writing *The Winning of the West*, Roosevelt's prime objective had been to move his race forward, toward a perfect civilization. In this context, the trip to "Stone Age" Africa might seem a sudden re-

versal, as TR cast his vision backward toward savagery, to the time and place where human evolution first began. Yet, on another level, his African vacation was a perfect way to cap Roosevelt's political career. For, having led his manly race forward as far as he could, the virile president now could time-travel back to the moment of human origins, in order to gain a broader perspective on the evolutionary meaning of his manly racial leadership. This larger evolutionary significance of TR's safari was also suggested by the presence of his twenty-year-old son Kermit. TR's manful son, whose bravery and prowess Roosevelt repeatedly praised in his written account of the trip, affirmed TR's virile reproductive role in the American race's evolution toward the ultimate civilization.

Perhaps the most pleasurable aspect of TR's time-traveling vacation was the way it allowed him to concentrate on the power of his own masculinity. For, as Roosevelt and his contemporaries imagined the primitive past, it was above all characterized by the purest form of primal, violent masculinity—in contrast to the overcivilized present, threatened by decadent effeminacy. By traveling to the ancient past and sharing the bloody pastimes of his primitive ancestors, TR hoped to reexperience their pure, essential masculinity. Where other men of his time fantasized about primal savage rapists, Roosevelt's fantasies of primal masculine violence were about, not sex, but fights to the death between superior and inferior species.

Officially, Roosevelt's safari was a scientific expedition to collect zoological specimens for the Smithsonian Institution, not a vacation to provide bloody diversion for an ex-president. Stung by earlier allegations that he was a "game butcher," Roosevelt took great pains to assure the public that his aims were purely scientific.<sup>152</sup> Yet pristine science and violent masculinity had always been linked for Roosevelt. At age fifty Roosevelt knew far more about biology than he did as a young boy measuring the dead seal in the marketplace. Yet he still saw nature in terms of "kill or be killed"; he saw wild animals as links in a violent chain of destruction. These Darwinistic views of animals were so important to Roosevelt that in 1907 he had embroiled himself in a most unpresidential public squabble with several popular nature writers. He condemned them for depicting animals in non-Darwinistic terms—for suggesting that weaker animals could prevail in contests with stronger, or that animals possessed advanced, human traits. "Certain of their wolves appear as gifted with all the philosophy, the self-restraint, and the keen intelligence of, say, Marcus Aurelius," he jeered.<sup>153</sup> Manliness in wolves? Absurd! If animals possessed the highest traits of civilized man, hunting would be the murder of brother creatures, instead of the pleasurable reenactment of the Darwinian law of survival of the fittest.

In short, Roosevelt believed his African hunting trip was a return to the primitive past, where he could relive his earliest ancestors' violent Darwinistic masculinity. This was not the first time TR had constructed his manhood in a violent place of "origins." As a young man, he had claimed his manhood on the Western frontier, which he saw as the place where the manly American race was originally forged in bloody conflict with the savage Indians. Now, at age fifty, he had gone even further back in time, to the place of origins—not of the American race—but of the human race itself. Once again, he could construct his manhood by reenacting the white man's evolutionary combat with the primitive, thereby experiencing true masculinity in its purest, most powerful form. Experiencing, as if for the first time, the primal power of his own superior masculinity, far from the enervating decadence of modern civilization—what could be more pleasurable for the leader of the manly race?

*African Game Trails*, Roosevelt's account of his hunting trip, explicitly situates his hunting adventures in the ancient world of his own Stone Age ancestors. Roosevelt even titled his first chapter "A Railroad through the Pleistocene." (The Pleistocene is the epoch, a million years ago, when humans first appeared on earth.) As Roosevelt described it, in modern Kenya life for both "wild man and wild beast, did not and does not differ materially from what it was in Europe in the late Pleistocene." TR insisted that this comparison was "not fanciful"—that African people and African animals "substantially reproduce the conditions of life in Europe as it was led by our ancestors ages before the dawn of anything that can be called civilization."<sup>154</sup>

These primitive conditions, as TR imagined them, were fraught with masculine violence. Nature, in Pleistocene Africa as in prehistoric Europe, was a primal hotbed of cruelty and interspecies violence, where primitive men battled teeming multitudes of huge and terrible wild beasts. Africa today, according to Roosevelt, still swarmed with fierce animals closely akin to the prehistoric monsters his own Stone Age ancestors once battled in Europe.

The great beasts that now live in East Africa were in that by-gone age represented by close kinsfolk in Europe. . . . African man, absolutely naked, and armed as our early paleolithic ancestors were armed, lives among, and on, and in constant dread of, these beasts, just as was true of the [European] men to whom the cave lion was a nightmare of terror, and the mammoth and woolly rhinoceros possible but most formidable prey.<sup>155</sup>

In this primitive epoch "the white man" could measure the power of his civilized manhood against both men and beasts who were as savage and fierce as

the ones his own caveman ancestors had encountered: TR expected his interactions with both wild men and wild beasts of the Pleistocene to prove that, although he was civilized, he shared his ancestors' masculine prowess.

Yet although TR saw African men and African beasts as equally primitive, he related to their evolutionary primitivism in different ways. Roosevelt measured his manhood against that of African men by comparing their "primitiveness" to his glorious, civilized manliness. As he saw it, African men were weak, backward, and childlike—barely men at all. (Again we encounter the unmanly savage children of Hall's "racial pedagogy.") For example, he described his safari's porters as "strong, patient, good-humored savages, with something childlike about them that makes one really fond of them. Of course, like all savages and most children, they have their limitations. . . . They are subject to gusts of passion and they are now and then guilty of grave misdeeds and shortcomings; sometimes for no conceivable reason, at least from the white man's standpoint."<sup>156</sup> Charming but limited, these adult African men were like children. They had never evolved the civilized manliness which allowed the white man to restrain his gusts of passions. TR developed a great paternalistic fondness for these "children," and described their dances, songs, and chants—some composed in his honor—as charming juvenile antics.<sup>157</sup> By constructing African men as primitive children, TR constructed himself, in contrast, as a manly civilized paternalist, in much the same mold as G. Stanley Hall's manly racial pedagogue. When they took to calling him "Bwana Makuba," meaning "the chief or Great Master," Roosevelt was delighted, and proudly repeated the title several times in his book.<sup>158</sup> This daily adulation from the crowds of African porters—two hundred sixty were needed to carry the safari's gear—reinforced TR's view of himself as the manly white man, civilized and superior to the primitive childlike savages.<sup>159</sup>

To construct himself as the white man, emissary of civilization in the African jungle, Roosevelt required a few essentials; and sixty of the "childlike" porters were assigned to carry this equipment for Roosevelt's daily use.<sup>160</sup> Always a voracious reader, TR brought sixty pounds of books on safari, mostly the classics.<sup>161</sup> As he read Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, or Longfellow under the African skies, he could ponder the glorious civilized accomplishments of his manly race at the same time he was visiting its Pleistocene past. Roosevelt also brought a portable bath tub, so that he could take daily hot baths, after which he would retire to drink his tea and eat his imported gingersnaps.<sup>162</sup> Books, bathtub, tea, and gingersnaps all provided concrete evidence that the Bwana Makuba upheld manly civilized values like

cleanliness and the worth of enduring literature. He was thus superior to the savage porters who, TR presumed, lacked the ability to appreciate these finer things, and were fit only to lug them across East Africa.

Similarly, to commemorate his own position as the mighty former leader of a manly race, Roosevelt brought a large American flag, which flew at night over his capacious tent. TR noted that this flag "was a matter of much pride to the porters, and was always carried at the head or near the head of the march." This, TR implied, demonstrated the Africans' childlike reverence for both the American race and the American nation.<sup>163</sup> TR must have found it appropriate that the "childlike" Africans would revere the flag, symbol of the American nation: after all, TR's own brand of imperialistic nationalism was framed explicitly in terms of his race's manly duty to dominate and control childlike savages.

Yet although Roosevelt depicted Pleistocene African men as childlike and unthreatening, he depicted Pleistocene African animals as exceptionally strong and dangerous. This underlined his own masculine prowess in being able to kill them. Primitive man's violent and masculine life, as TR imagined it, had been filled with intense and unrestrained emotion, now lost to civilized man. In Africa, however, this passionate masculinity retained its primal purity.

Watching the game, one was struck by the intensity and the evanescence of their emotions. Civilized man now usually passes his life under conditions which eliminate the intensity of terror felt by his ancestors when death by violence was their normal end. . . . It is only in nightmares that the average dweller in civilized countries now undergoes the hideous horror which was the regular and frequent portion of his ages-vanished forefathers.<sup>164</sup>

Hunting in the Pleistocene wild, Roosevelt believed, let him bravely face down the "hideous horror" of the eat-or-be-eaten struggle for survival which his Stone Age ancestors had faced. Here he could experience the pure, original emotions of primal masculinity. Like G. Stanley Hall, TR found in the violence of the primitive a safe way to relive the "hot life of feeling" which civilization had denoted "unmanly."

Roosevelt personally killed 269 mammals during his safari, including thirteen rhinos, eight elephants, seven hippos, seven giraffes, and nine lions. At the end of *African Game Trails*, he lists each kill, modestly insisting "we did not kill a tenth, nor a hundredth part of what we might have killed had we been willing."<sup>165</sup> In killing hundreds of animals and depicting this car-



nage as restrained behavior, Roosevelt was able to paint himself as simultaneously the ultimate in civilized manly restraint and in primitive masculine prowess. These kills, many of which he describes, allowed Roosevelt to imagine that he possessed the primal masculine virility of his primitive Stone Age ancestors, civilized man that he was.

Only once, in Roosevelt's account, did anything challenge Roosevelt's fantasy of himself as the masculine hunter and manly Bwana in the primal place of racial origins. In eastern Kenya, sixty Nandi warriors were brought in to show Roosevelt how they spear-hunted lion. At first, TR was enthralled: here was the pure, primordial masculinity he had journeyed to the Pleistocene to encounter. The Nandi, TR explained, were a savage, warlike tribe who, scarcely tamed, found civilized British rule "irksome." They were gloriously masculine—"splendid savages, stark naked, lithe as panthers, the muscles rippling under their smooth dark skins." Armed with only one spear each, the Nandi warriors flushed out a "magnificent" lion, "in his prime, teeth and claws perfect, with mighty thews, and savage heart."

Roosevelt waxed lyrical in his description of the ensuing Darwinistic struggle between two consummately primal creatures: the perfectly masculine Nandi, and the matchlessly feral lion. The lion's "life had been one unbroken career of rapine and violence; and now the maned master of the wilderness, the terror that stalked by night, the grim lord of slaughter, was to meet his doom at the hands of the only foes who dared molest him." The hunt itself was a "wild sight," as the Nandi gradually surrounded the lion until—as the lion charged—they speared and killed him. Then, raising their shields over their heads, the warriors chanted a victory song and marched around the dead lion. "This savage dance of triumph," TR wrote, "ended a scene of as fierce interest and excitement as I ever hope to see." What could inspire fiercer interest than a fight between Pleistocene man and a primitive monster, battling to see which was fitter to survive? Here was the essence of primal masculinity.<sup>166</sup>

Indeed, TR was so taken with this drama of primal masculinity that the next day he proposed to repeat it—with one small cast change. Now, Roosevelt wanted to kill the lion *himself*, and to employ the Nandi warriors as mere beaters. After all, he had journeyed to Africa to experience this primal masculine violence himself, not merely to watch savage Africans do it. By repeating the lion hunt, using yesterday's primal warriors as today's subservient beaters, TR could savor the peerless power of his violent masculinity.

Unfortunately for Roosevelt, however, the Nandi warriors refused to cooperate. Lion hunting meant manhood to the Nandi as much as to Roosevelt, it turned out—the more so now that the British colonizers had forbidden

them to hunt lion without special permission.<sup>167</sup> Yet, much as they longed to hunt lions, the Nandi men absolutely refused to hunt for Roosevelt unless all agreed that only they be permitted to kill the lion. This permission to hunt in the white man's presence was highly unusual on safaris; generally Africans were permitted to kill only animals that were about to maul a white.<sup>168</sup> Roosevelt had agreed to these conditions for the first hunt, although he had found it a "sore temptation" to break his manly word to the Nandi and shoot the lion himself. But he had no interest in attending any more lion hunts unless he, himself, would be the mighty hunter. TR's terse, one-sentence summary of this incident suggests his frustration with the Nandi's absolute refusal to let him be the virile lion killer.<sup>169</sup> Despite cajolery, arguments, maybe even threats, the Nandi went home and TR continued his Pleistocene vacation without them.

With this brief but irritating exception, Roosevelt's African trip allowed him to fully live out his self-image as the ultimate in white manhood, the apex of evolution—which perhaps qualifies his trip as the ultimate in fantasy vacations. Time-traveling back to the Pleistocene allowed TR to position himself as wielding simultaneously the manly power of civilization and the masculine power of the primitive. On the one hand, he was a white man visiting the Stone Age, the manly Bwana Makuba, whose unquestioned civilized superiority allowed him to command the army of "childlike" native men who served him on safari. On the other hand, he was the Mighty Hunter, a man of the powerful American race, whose masculine force allowed him to pit his manhood against fierce, primitive wild animals proving that he had lost none of the virility of his primal ancestors. In both cases, he was reinforcing his identity as "the white man" by forging it anew in the crucible of the primitive, violent place of racial origins. The pleasure of the expedition, then, lay in the way it positioned TR as the ultimate in powerful, civilized manhood, by counterposing him to the African "primitive." And the cultural meaning TR drew from the expedition was based on the same discourse he had invoked in *The Winning of the West*, "The Strenuous Life," and his fulminations against race suicide. Always, TR linked the power of a race to its manhood, the power of manhood to race, and the power of both to "civilization."

### Conclusion

Theodore Roosevelt is often invoked as turn-of-the-century America's prime example of a new and strenuous manhood. This chapter has attempted to

show that one cannot understand Theodore Roosevelt's evocation of powerful manhood without understanding that, for Roosevelt, race and gender were inextricably intertwined with each other, and with imperialistic nationalism. In an era when traditional ideologies of manhood were being actively renegotiated, Roosevelt reinvigorated male authority by tying it to white racial supremacy and to a militaristic, racially based nationalism.

Theodore Roosevelt was not a representative American man. He was privileged and powerful, and some of his views were surely idiosyncratic. Yet, as we have seen, his impulse to remake male power by linking it to racial dominance using the discourse of civilization was not unusual. In diverse ways throughout the United States, men who felt the loss of older ideas of male authority—who feared that Victorian manliness was no longer enough to explain the source and workings of male power—turned to ideas of white supremacy. Men's power was growing murky. But the white man's power, the power of civilization, was crystal clear. And as race became interwoven with manhood through discourses of civilization, Americans' assumptions about manhood moved ever closer to what twentieth-century men would recognize as "masculinity."

From the early 1890s, Roosevelt worked diligently to show American men how this racially based male power worked, and to urge them to claim that power for themselves, both as individual men and as a nation. *The Winning of the West* invited American men to see themselves as a masculine race of Indian fighters. Roosevelt's 1890s advocacy of manly imperialism, in speeches like "The Strenuous Life" and "National Duties," promised American men they could achieve virile power if only they took up the white man's burden. As president, his fulminations against race suicide rehabilitated public celebrations of male sexuality, in the interest of keeping American manhood strong, potent, and able to outbreed the world's inferior races.

Americans fearful about the dwindling potency of Victorian manhood found Roosevelt's formulations of racially dominant manhood exhilarating. For many, Roosevelt himself came to embody the essence of powerful manhood.<sup>170</sup> In 1900, *New York World* columnist Rose Coghlan insisted approvingly (if improbably) that TR was as thrillingly masculine as a primal rapist: "a first-class lover," TR would "come at once to the question, and, if the lady repulsed him, bear her away despite herself, as some of his ancestors must have done in the pliocene age."<sup>171</sup> According to Mark Sullivan, TR was "the outstanding, incomparable symbol of virility in his time."<sup>172</sup>

As Roosevelt's formulations of manhood gained popular attention, they began to take on a life of their own, beyond TR's intentions. For example,

where TR's own version of his African safari stressed both manliness and masculinity, popular accounts stressed a far more vulgar and salacious masculinity. A number of fictionalized versions of Roosevelt's safari hit the market before TR could get *African Game Trails* into print. In these unauthorized versions, enterprising journalists fed the public's appetite for stories of violent, sexualized masculinity. The subtitle of Marshall Everett's *Roosevelt's Thrilling Experiences in the Wilds of Africa Hunting Big Game* promised to describe Roosevelt's *Exciting Adventures . . . Mingling with the Savage People, Studying . . . Their Curious Marriage Ceremonies and Barbarous Treatment of Young Girls and Women*.<sup>173</sup> This titillating invocation of "barbarous" African sexual practices hinted at the masculine figure of the primal rapist, who remained implicit in any story of African masculinity, even though TR did not intend this. Unlike TR, Everett stressed masculine sexuality; he discretely but definitely peppered his book with photos and etchings of bare-breasted African women.<sup>174</sup> Everett's depictions of Roosevelt's violent exploits as a mighty hunter are more heroic than TR's; his unmanly African men, more cartoonish. For example, while Roosevelt described bagging his first hippo as an exercise in patience and marksmanship, in Everett's version, Roosevelt is charged by a maddened herd of hippos, kills two huge hippos in short order, and single-handedly clubs the rest of the herd off, as his comical "native" companions cower and shriek.<sup>175</sup> Roosevelt had seen Africa as a place of origins, where the white man could prove his superior manhood by reliving the primitive, masculine life of his most distant evolutionary forefathers. The popular press agreed, but their formulations used Roosevelt's distinguished persona to legitimize a more vulgar celebration of both the aggression and the sexuality they associated with primitive masculinity.

Over the next several decades, middle-class constructions of male power would become firmly based on the violence and sexuality of this journalistic version of primitive masculinity. Roosevelt had worked long and hard to revitalize American manhood by predicating it on white racial dominance. While TR would have detested these new middle-class ideologies of sexualized masculinity, his actions—and the actions of those he influenced—helped produce modern twentieth-century ideologies of powerful American manhood.

## NOTES

### Chapter One

1. Al-Tony Gilmore, *Bad Nigger! The National Impact of Jack Johnson* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1975), 41; Randy Roberts, *Papa Jack: Jack Johnson and the Era of White Hopes* (New York: Free Press, 1983), 99. Both books provide excellent broader discussions of Johnson's life and cultural importance.
2. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 31.
3. Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 25-6; Elliott J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prizefighting in America* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 218, 238-9.
4. Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 26.
5. Jack London, *Jack London Reports: War Correspondence, Sports Articles, and Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. King Hendricks and Irving Shepard (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), 264.
6. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 85-6.
7. "Is Prize-Fighting Knocked Out?" *Literary Digest* 41 (16 July 1910): 85.
8. "A Review of the World," *Current Literature* 48 (June 1910): 606.
9. "The Psychology of the Prize Fight," *Current Literature* 49 (July 1910): 57.
10. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 114.
11. On the riots, see Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 59-73; "Is Prize-Fighting Knocked Out?" 85; Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 108-9.
12. *New York Herald*, 5 July 1910, quoted in Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 65-6.
13. "Is Prize-Fighting Knocked Out?" 85.
14. Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 75-93.
15. Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 14; Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 74-5.
16. See, e.g., "Reflections on a Suicide," *New York Times*, 14 September 1912, 12.
17. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 146; "Mob Threatens Johnson," *New York Times*, 20 October 1912, 12.
18. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 138-54; Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 95-116.
19. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 158-219; Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 117-33.
20. Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 148.
21. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Recent Prizefight," *Outlook* 95 (16 July 1910): 550-1.
22. Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 81, 108.
23. Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 18. A number of important recent theoretical articles have thoughtfully considered the relation between race and gender in history. They include Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham,

"African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17 (December 1992): 251-74; Iris Berger, Elsa Barkely Brown, and Nancy A. Hewitt, "Symposium—Intersections and Collision Courses: Women, Blacks, and Workers Confront Gender, Race, and Class," *Feminist Studies* 18 (Summer 1992): 283-326; and Gerda Lerner, "Reconceptualizing Differences Among Women," *Journal of Women's History* 1 (Winter 1990): 106-22. Two fine articles utilizing these sorts of approaches are Laura F. Edwards, "Sexual Violence, Gender, Reconstruction, and the Extension of Patriarchy in Granville County, North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 68 (July 1991): 237-60; and Ruth Feldstein, "I Wanted the Whole World To See': Race, Gender and Constructions of Motherhood in the Death of Emmett Till," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

24. For a cross-cultural anthropological discussion, see David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990).

25. For two otherwise very useful examples, see Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), and Jeffrey P. Hantover, "The Boy Scouts and the Validation of Masculinity," in *The American Man*, ed. Elizabeth H. Pleck and Joseph H. Pleck (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 285-302.

26. Peter G. Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Sex Roles in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 70.

27. Two examples of this approach are Michael C. Adams, *The Great Adventure: Male Desire and the Coming of World War I* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1990); and Filene, *Him/Her/Self*. For debates over whether or not there was a "masculinity crisis," see, for example, Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 69-93; Michael S. Kimmel, "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity in Historical Perspective," in *The Making of Masculinities*, ed. Harry Brod (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 121-54; Margaret Marsh, "Suburban Men and Masculine Domesticity," *American Quarterly* 40 (June 1988): 165-86, and Clyde Griffen, "Reconstructing Masculinity from the Evangelical Revival to the Waning of Progressivism: A Speculative Synthesis," in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 183-204.

28. Two fine examples of this approach are Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), and Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

29. For a more complete discussion of this approach to gender, see Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987), 1-30. See also Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1978); Denise Riley, *Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History* (New York: Macmillan, 1988); Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); and Joan W. Scott, "Experience," in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), 22-40.

30. Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 14; Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 74.

31. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 66-7, 160-1.

32. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 124-6.

33. Jack Johnson, *Jack Johnson is a Dandy: An Autobiography* (New York: Chelsea House, 1969), 22; Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 185-214.

34. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 54-67, 122.

35. For an excellent treatment of agency and gender, see Poovey, *Uneven Developments*.

36. See, for example, Joe L. Dubbert, "Progressivism and the Masculinity Crisis," in *The American Man*, 303-20; Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 69-93; John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s," in *Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 73-102; Kimmel, "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity," 121-54; and James R. McGovern, "David Graham Phillips and the Virility Impulse of the Progressives," *New England Quarterly* 39 (1966): 334-55.

37. Marsh, "Suburban Men and Masculine Domesticity," 165-86; Griffen, "Reconstructing Masculinity," 183-204.

38. Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Although *Family Fortunes* discusses English, and not American, middle-class formation, many of the authors' observations, especially about the importance of manliness in class formation, are applicable to the United States.

39. Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 138-91, 298-310; Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978).

40. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 83-151, 116-27; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 71-192; Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977).

41. On character, see Warren I. Susman, "Personality and the Making of Twentieth-Century Culture," in Susman, *Culture as History* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 273-7; David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

42. On "manliness" see Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 108-13; Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 70-1; Charles Rosenberg, "Sexuality, Class and Role in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Quarterly* 35 (May 1973): 131-53; *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); and Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). For an excellent analysis of the final demise of Victorian ideologies of self-restrained manliness in the 1920s, see Christina Simmons, "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression," in *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*, ed. Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989) 157-77.

43. Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 207-8; Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 140-2.
44. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 165-85.
45. Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 73; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (New York: Vintage, 1955), 218.
46. Blumin, *Emergence of the Middle Class*, 290-5; Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 70-3.
47. Lewis A. Erenberg, *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 33-59; John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978).
48. Gail Bederman, "The Woman Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough": The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-1912 and the Masculinization of Middle-Class Protestantism," *American Quarterly* 41 (September 1989): 435-40.
49. Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984): 620-47, especially 628-30, and *The Moral Framework of Public Life: Gender, Politics, and the State in Rural New York, 1870-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 24-55.
50. On immigrants and nativism, see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), and Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963), 287-309.
51. Strike statistics in Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Politics in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 80; work force statistics from Mary Beth Norton et al., *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States*, vol. 2: *Since 1865*, 2d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), A-20.
52. [Gaius Glenn Atkins], "The Right and Wrong of Feminism: A Sermon Preached at the Central Congregational Church, Providence, R.I.," (Providence, 1914), 15.
53. On the woman's movement, see Mari Jo Buhle, *Women and American Socialism, 1870-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 49-103; Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1987); Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 3-68.
54. George M. Beard, *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1881); F. G. Gosling, *Before Freud: Neurasthenia and the American Medical Community, 1870-1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); John S. Haller, Jr. and Robin J. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 3-43; T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Anti-Modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), 49-57; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic, 1993), 185-93; Tom Lutz, *American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991).
55. George Chauncey, Jr. "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War I Era," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Duber-

- man, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., (New York: Meridian, 1989), 313-5; John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 225-7.
56. Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Donald J. Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality, 1880-1910* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983).
57. Green, *Fit for America*, 242.
58. Green, *Fit for America*, 213, 242-50.
59. Theodore Roosevelt, "Value of an Athletic Training," *Harper's Weekly* 37 (23 December 1893): 1236.
60. See Carnes, *Secret Ritual*.
61. Hantover, "The Boy Scouts," 285-302; and see Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy*.
62. Green, *Fit for America*, 182-215.
63. Albert J. Beveridge, *The Young Man and the World* (New York: Appleton, 1905).
64. Michael S. Kimmel, "Men's Responses to Feminism at the Turn of the Century," *Gender and Society* 1 (September 1987): 261-83.
65. Victoria Bissell Brown, "The Fear of Feminization: Los Angeles High Schools in the Progressive Era," *Feminist Studies* 16 (Fall 1990): 493-518.
66. Henry James, *The Bostonians* (New York: Modern Library, 1965), 343, quoted in Kimmel, "Contemporary 'Crisis,'" 146.
67. Marsh, "Suburban Men," 165-86.
68. Bederman, "The Women Have Had Charge," 432-65.
69. Gorn, *Manly Art*, 129-45; Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 57-64; Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1869* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 76-100; Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 257-64.
70. Erenberg, *Steppin' Out*, 33-59.
71. Gorn, *Manly Art*, 194-206.
72. Higham, "Reorientation," 78-9.
73. Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 251.
74. Marsh, "Suburban Men," 181 n. 4, corroborates my observations.
75. *The Century Dictionary: An Encyclopedic Lexicon of the English Language* (New York: Century, 1890), s.v. "masculine," "manly."
76. Vance, *Sinews of the Spirit*, 8-10; E. Anthony Rotundo, "Learning about Manhood: Gender Ideals and the Middle-Class Family in Nineteenth-century America," in *Manliness and Morality*, 37-40, 43-6.
77. *The Century Dictionary*, s.v. "masculine."
78. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "masculinity." The only usage it cites earlier than 1860 is from 1748 and explicitly says the word is French. The earliest use I have found of the noun "masculinity" is a passage from an 1854 novel, which describes a beautiful and sensuous woman as "a tribute to masculinity." Elizabeth Oakes Smith, *Bertha and Lily: Or The Parsonage of Beech Glen, a Romance* (N.Y.: Derby, 1854), 211.

Thanks to Lyde Sizer for this reference. The adjective "masculine," of course, was a much older word: the oldest definition cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from Chaucer in 1374.

79. Chauncey Goodrich and Noah Porter, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* by Noah Webster, LLD (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam, 1890), 505. Two dictionaries which omit "masculinity" are James Stormonth, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1885), and *An American Dictionary of the English Language* by Noah Webster (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam, 1847).

80. Gorn, *Manly Art*, 179-206.

81. For fine examples of other possibilities, see Donna Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-36," in *Primate Visions*, 26-58; Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); and Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

82. A few words need to be said about the way I am using the term "race." Like gender, race is a way to metonymically link bodies, identity, and power. Its connection to bodies, however, is perhaps more tenuous than that of gender. While men's and women's reproductive systems are not as dualistically opposite as our culture represents them, at least reproductive organs do exist. Race, however, is purely a cultural sign. (See essays in "Race," *Writing, and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986].) Most anthropologists deny that any pure racial differences or strains can even be identified. Thus, race, like gender, is a way to naturalize arrangements of power in order to depict them as unchangeable when, in fact, these arrangements of power are actually socially constructed and thus historically mutable. In short, this study's assumption is that race does not exist in nature but only as a cultural construct.

83. Rowland Berthoff, "Conventional Mentality: Free Blacks, Women, and Business Corporations as Unequal Persons, 1820-1870," *Journal of American History* 76 (December 1989): 753-84.

84. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991).

85. James Oliver Horton, "Freedom's Yoke: Gender Conventions among Antebellum Free Blacks," *Feminist Studies* 12 (Spring 1986): 55; James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, "Violence, Protest, and Identity: Black Manhood in Antebellum America," in *Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community*, ed. James Oliver Horton, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 80-96.

86. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass An American Slave* (1845; New York: New American Library, 1968), 82.

87. David Walker, "David Walker's Appeal: 1828," in *Chronicles of Black Protest*, ed. Bradford Chambers (New York: New American Library, 1968), 56; emphasis in the original.

88. Jim Cullen, "'Is a Man Now:' Gender and African-American Men," in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 76-91.

89. On the early history of the *National Geographic*, see Philip J. Pauly, "The World and All That Is in It: The National Geographic Society, 1888-1918," *American*

*Quarterly* 31 (Fall 1979): 516-32, esp. 527-8. For insightful discussions of the concept of the primitive at the turn of the century, see Haraway, *Primate Visions*, 26-58, and Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellect, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 26-33.

90. Major P. H. G. Powell-Cotton, "A Journey through the Eastern Portion of the Congo State," *National Geographic Magazine* 19 (March 1908): 157. See also Phillips Verner Bradford and Harvey Blume, *Ota: The Pygmy in the Zoo* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

91. Quoted in Stuart Anderson, *Race and Rapprochement: Anglo-Saxonism and Anglo-American Relations, 1895-1904* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981), 25.

92. Rotundo, "Learning about Manhood," 40-2. See also Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 227-32.

93. See Carnes, *Secret Ritual*.

94. Amy Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire: The Embodiment of American Masculinity in the Popular Historical Novel of the 1890s," *American Literary History* 3 (December 1990): 659-90.

95. "The Real Domestic Problem," *Atlantic Monthly* 103 (February 1909): 287; and see 286-8.

96. For other discussions of the meaning of "civilization" at the turn of the century, see David Axeen, "'Heroes of the Engine Room': American 'Civilization' and the War with Spain," *American Quarterly* 36 (Fall 1984): 481-502; Nancy F. Cott, "Two Beards: Coauthorship and the Concept of Civilization," *American Quarterly* 42 (June 1990): 274-300; Frank Ninkovich, "Theodore Roosevelt: Civilization as Ideology," *Diplomatic History* 10 (Summer 1986): 233-45. E. Anthony Rotundo also discusses the part of "civilization" in remaking manhood: yet he erroneously assumes that civilization was always coded feminine (*American Manhood*, 251-5).

97. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1; Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, trans. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1972). Some outstanding recent examples of histories using this sort of methodology are Robert C. Allen, *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Haraway, *Primate Visions*; Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990); and Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*.

98. George W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution*, (New York: Free Press, 1968), 112-32, esp. 114, 121-2. For an excellent and exhaustive analysis of the history and development of the discourse of civilization, see George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987). On ideas of civilization in an early American Indian-European context, see Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965).

99. For a discussion of the eighteenth-century roots of this idea, see Rosemarie Zagari, "Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother," *American Quarterly* 44 (June 1992): 192-211, esp. 203-5.

100. Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 144-8.



101. Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); James H. Moorehead, *American Apocalypse: Northern Protestants and National Issues, 1860-1869* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978).

102. Darwinism's reception in the United States is discussed in Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955); Robert C. Bannister, *Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979); and Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Darwin in America: The Intellectual Response* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1976).

103. For a fine discussion of the Victorian view of the teleological implications of human history from a somewhat different angle, see Christina Crosby, *The Ends of History: Victorians and "The Woman Question"* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

104. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," in *Pamphlets and Leaflets by W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (White Plains, N.Y.: Kraus Thompson, 1986), 2-4.

105. *The Century Dictionary*, s.v. "masculine." For similar discussions of Victorian ideologies of middle-class manhood as a moral ideal to be achieved, see Charles E. Rosenberg, "Sexuality, Class and Role in Nineteenth Century America," *American Quarterly* 35 (May 1973): 131-53; and Rotundo, "Learning about Manhood," 33-51.

106. Quoted in Russett, *Sexual Science*, 148. See also Russett, *Sexual Science*, 130-55; and Mrinalini Sinha, "Gender and Imperialism: Colonial Policy and the Ideology of Moral Imperialism in Late Nineteenth-Century Bengal," in *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1987), 218-9.

107. Russett, *Sexual Science*, 143-8.

108. "A Happy Marriage," *Literary Digest* 41 (9 July 1910): 78.

109. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 106.

110. Zagari, "Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother," 204.

111. John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990); Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

112. Quoted in Virginia C. Meredith, "Woman's Part at the World's Fair," *Review of Reviews* 7 (May 1893): 417.

113. James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 41-2.

114. Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 38-71. My discussion of the racial aspect of the fair draws heavily upon Rydell's excellent analysis. On the cultural meaning of the Columbian Exposition, see also Gilbert, *Perfect Cities*, 75-130; Kasson, *Amusing the Million*, 17-28; and Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America*, 208-34.

115. *The Century Dictionary*, s.v. "manly."

116. "The World's Columbian Exposition—A View from the Ferris Wheel," *Scientific American* 69 (9 September 1893): 169.

117. *Chicago Daily Inter Ocean*, 26 April 1893, supplement; cited in Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 249, n. 19.

118. Jeanne Madeline Weimann, *The Fair Women* (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1981), 31. For a good, brief overview of the Woman's Pavilion, see Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 128-34.

119. Weimann, *Fair Women*, 36.

120. *Ibid.*, 51-2.

121. *Ibid.*, 52, 260.

122. *Ibid.*, 232-4.

123. *Ibid.*, 233-4; 260-1.

124. Quoted in *ibid.*, 259.

125. Weimann, *Fair Women*, 152. While the map shows some smaller structures, these were service buildings, not buildings housing exhibits.

126. "Exhibits Which Prove That the Sex is Fast Overhauling Man," *New York Times*, 25 June 1893, quoted in Weimann, *Fair Women*, 427. For a similar assessment, somewhat more humorously patronizing, see M. A. Lane, "The Woman's Building, World's Fair," *Harper's Weekly* 36 (9 January 1892): 40.

127. Russett, *Sexual Science*, 54-77.

128. For lists of Midway attractions, see map in "Opening of the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, May 1, 1893," *Scientific American* 68 (6 May 1893): 274-5; "Notes from the World's Columbian Exposition Chicago 1893," *Scientific American* 68 (27 May 1893): 323.

129. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 61-2.

130. Quoted in *ibid.*, 65. Gilbert rightly points out that non-ethnic exhibits mixed among the exotics might have kept some fair-goers from seeing the Midway in terms of the progress of human racial evolution; but even he concedes that the organizers did plan the Midway as "a unitary exhibit of ethnic variation tied together by concepts of evolution and movement through stages of civilization" (Gilbert, *Perfect Cities*, 109). And as the *Chicago Tribune* quote suggests, many fair-goers did see the Midway in these terms.

131. "Sights at the Fair," *Century Magazine* 46 (5 September 1893): 653.

132. For contemporary commentary on this dynamic, see "The World's Columbian Exposition—A View from the Ferris Wheel," 169; and Frederic Remington, "A Gallop through the Midway," *Harper's Weekly* 37 (7 October 1893): 996.

133. "Wonderful Place for Fun," *New York Times*, 19 June 1893, 9. On the Dahomans' reputation as the most primitive savages at the fair, see Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 66.

134. Elliot M. Rudwick and August Meier, "Black Man in the 'White City': Negroes and the Columbian Exposition, 1893," *Phylon* 26 (Winter 1965): 354-5; Ann Massa, "Black Women in the 'White City,'" *Journal of American Studies* 8 (December 1974): 319-37; Weimann, *Fair Women*, 103-5, 110-23; and F. L. Barnett, "The Reason Why," in *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition*, [ed. Ida B. Wells] (Chicago, 1893), 63-81.

135. Rudwick and Meier, "Black Man," 354.

136. Massa, "Black Women," 319-37.

137. Weimann, *Fair Women*, 269; photo on 122.
138. Rudwick and Meier, "Black Man," 357.
139. Quoted in Weimann, *Fair Women*, 393.
140. Quoted in Weimann, *Fair Women*, 404.
141. Wells and Douglass' letter is reprinted in "No 'Nigger Day,' No 'Nigger Pamphlet!'" *Indianapolis Freeman*, 25 March 1893, 4. Unfortunately Wells and Douglass were unable to raise funds to cover printing full translations into four languages. Only the introduction was translated, into French and German.
142. [Ida B. Wells], "Preface," in *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition*, no page number.
143. Frederick Douglass, "Introduction," in *ibid.*, 2.
144. *Ibid.*, 3.
145. *Ibid.*, 10-11.
146. *Ibid.*, 12. Although Wells and Douglass were both partisans of women's equality, they accepted "manly" as a synonym for "civilized." This was not because they themselves identified civilization with men, but because they understood that hegemonic discourses of civilization marginalized African Americans by denigrating their manhood. Therefore, their antiracist version of civilization strategically mobilized "manliness" in the interest of rewriting the relation between civilization and race.
147. Douglass, *The Reason Why*, 9. Lest this sound like Douglass lacks respect for Dahomans, note that American cartoonists leapt to draw unflattering depictions of impossibly thick-lipped Dahoman men, clad (like women) only in brief grass skirts, necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. See Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 53, 54, 70.
148. *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, ed. Alfreda M. Duster, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 117.
149. Arthur Ruhl, "The Fight in the Desert," *Collier's* 45 (23 July 1910): 13.
150. Quoted in Gilmore, *Bad Nigger!* 35.
151. Quoted in *ibid.*
152. Ruhl, "Fight in the Desert," 13.
153. Clippings in Scrapbook 50, Alexander Gumby Collection, Special Collections Division, Columbia University, New York, New York.
154. Jack London, *Jack London Reports*, 277-8.

## Chapter Two

1. Ray Stannard Baker, "What is a Lynching? A Study of Mob Justice, South and North," *McClure's Magazine* 24 (February 1905): 429.
2. Ida B. Wells, *A Red Record*, reprinted in *On Lynchings* (1895; Salem, N.H.: Ayer, 1987), 98.
3. "British Anti-Lynchers," *New York Times*, 2 August 1894, 4.
4. "An Idyll of Alabama," *New York Times*, 30 December 1891, 4. See also "The Cartwright Avengers," *New York Times*, 19 July 1893, 4.
5. Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Bantam, 1984), 27-29; Bettina Aptheker, *Woman's*

*Legacy: Essays on Race, Sex, and Class in American History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 67-8; Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage, 1981), 191-2.

6. Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 117, 183-4. Williamson says this proclivity to rape began to be discussed "in and after 1889." This doesn't mean that excessive male sexuality hadn't been associated with African American men before 1889. Winthrop Jordan asserts that as far back as the early modern period, Europeans had asserted that Africans were especially licentious; and that, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, white Americans had argued that black men desired white women (Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812* [New York: Norton, 1977], 32-43, 151-62, 398-9). Other scholars, however, have pointed out that the notion that black male sexuality posed a threat to white women took force only after the Civil War. See especially Martha Hodes, "Wartime Dialogues on Illicit Sex: White Women and Black Men," in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 230-42, and Martha Hodes, "The Sexualization of Reconstruction Politics: White Women and Black Men in the South after the Civil War," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3 (1992): 402-17.

7. "Some Fresh Suggestions about the New Negro Crime," *Harper's Weekly* 48 (23 January 1904): 120-1; [T. Thomas Fortune], "The Rape Racket," *New York Freeman*, 20 August 1887, 2; Frederick Douglass, "Why Is the Negro Lynched?" in *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, ed. Philip S. Foner, 4 vols. (New York: International, 1955), 4:491-523.

8. For statistics, see James Elbert Cutler, *Lynch Law* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1905), 170; and Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade against Lynching, 1909-1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 6.

9. Edward L. Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the Nineteenth-Century South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 236-55, esp. 250; Williamson, *Crucible of Race*, 111-39.

10. LeeAnn Whites, "Rebecca Latimer Felton and the Wife's Farm: The Class and Racial Politics of Gender Reform," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 76 (Summer 1992): 368-72.

11. Nell Irvin Painter, "'Social Equality,' Miscegenation, Labor, and Power," in *The Evolution of Southern Culture*, ed. Numan V. Bartley (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 47-67.

12. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "'The Mind That Burns in Each Body': Women, Rape, and Racial Violence," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 335. On Southern white men's projection of repressed sexuality onto black men, see also Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 148; and Trudier Harris, *Exorcising Blackness: Historical and Literary Lynching and Burning Rituals* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1984), 14-28.

13. I will be discussing only Northern views of lynching in this chapter. Although at times Northerners' opinions of lynching, civilization, and manhood were echoed

in racial recapitulation, see G. Stanley Hall to William A. White, 11 December 1912, in Hall Papers, box 26, folder 9, and G. Stanley Hall to Robert M. Yerkes, 18 May 1915 in Hall Papers, box 26, folder 10.

121. See, for example, G. Stanley Hall, "Eugenics: Its Ideals and What It Is Going To Do," *Religious Education* 6 (June 1911): 152-9, and "Make Humanity Better by Controlling Unfit, Says President Hall," *Boston Sunday Post*, 29 October 1911.

122. Hall, *Adolescence*, 2:722.

123. *Ibid.*, 1:vii-viii.

124. *Ibid.*, 2:648-748. See also G. Stanley Hall, "The Relations between Lower and Higher Races," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 2d ser., 17 (January 1903): 4-13, much of which Hall incorporated into *Adolescence*.

125. Hall, *Adolescence*, 2:649.

126. *Ibid.*

127. *Ibid.*, 2:659-60.

128. *Ibid.*, 2:748.

129. *Ibid.*, 2:714-9.

130. Memo of courses taken by Grace Lyman, written by G. Stanley Hall, in Hall Papers, box 25, folder 8.

131. Programs in Hall Papers, box 16.

132. See, for example, G. Stanley Hall, "The Undeveloped Races in Contact with Civilization," *Bulletin of the Washington University Association* 4 (1906): 145-50; G. Stanley Hall, "How Far Are the Principles of Education along Indigenous Lines Applicable to American Indians?" *Pedagogical Seminary* 15 (1908): 365-9; and G. Stanley Hall, "A Few Results of Recent Scientific Study of the Negro in America," *Proceedings, Massachusetts Historical Society*, 2d ser., 19 (1905): 95-107.

133. "Stanley Hall to Sec. Root," *Boston Transcript* (7 March 1906).

134. "Final Word is Not Yet," *Worcester Telegram*, (18 March 1906). For a collection of news clippings on Hall's activities with the Congo National Reform Association, see his Collected Works at Clark University.

135. Quoted in "Opens Field of Thought," *Worcester Telegram*, (21 January 1906).

136. Hall, *Adolescence*, 2:651; on woman the domesticator of feral man, see also 1:224-5 and 2:116-7, 299, 372-3, and 375.

137. Hall, *Adolescence*, 2:93.

138. *Ibid.*, 2:93.

139. Stephen Jay Gould has noted strong connections between recapitulation theory and Freud's ideas, which may well have made them especially interesting to Hall. Freud was himself a recapitulationist, and his ideas of children's developmental stages were surely influenced by recapitulation. See Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 155-64; for Hall's interest in Freud, see Ross, *G. Stanley Hall*, 368-94; and Saul Rosenzweig, *Freud, Jung, and Hall the King Maker: The Historic Expedition to America* (1909) (Seattle: Hogrefe and Huber, 1992).

140. G. Stanley Hall, "How Rage, Anger and Hatred Help Us to Success," *Boston*

*ican*, 15 August 1915, Feature section, p. 4.  
not clear whether two of the captions were quotes from Hall. I cannot  
in the accompanying newspaper article. They certainly sound like Hall,

however, and are probably in the complete address from which the newspaper article is excerpted, G. Stanley Hall, "Anger as a Primary Emotion and the Application of Freudian Mechanisms to Its Phenomena," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 10:81-87. The third quote is from this address.

#### Chapter Four

1. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Our Place Today," in *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Nonfiction Reader*, ed. Larry Ceplair (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 55. Emphasis in original.

2. See, for example, Eliza Burt Gamble, *The Evolution of Woman* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1893); Otis Tufton Mason, *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture* (New York: Appleton, 1894); Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Woman, Church and the State: and a Historical Account of the Status of Woman through the Christian Ages, with Reminiscences of the Matriarchate* (Chicago: Kerr, 1893); Anna Garlin Spencer, *Woman's Share in Social Culture* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1912); Catherine Gasquoine Hartley, *The Age of Mother Power: The Position of Women in Primitive Society* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1914); and Harriet B. Bradbury, *Civilisation and Womanhood* (Boston: Register, 1916). See also Nancy F. Cott, *A Woman Making History: Mary Ritter Beard through Her Letters* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991), 25-7.

3. Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), 40-1; Carl Degler, "Introduction to the Torchbook Edition," *Women and Economics*, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), xiii.

4. Gary Scharnhorst, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Bibliography* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1985). I have relied heavily upon this excellent and comprehensive bibliography in researching this chapter. Scharnhorst has also written a sensitive monograph on Gilman's writings, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (Boston: Twayne, 1985).

5. Scharnhorst, *Bibliography*, 99-100.

6. Annie L. Muzzey, "The Hour and the Woman," review of *Women and Economics*, *Arena* 22 (August 1899): 443; Mary A. Hill, "Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Feminist's Struggle with Womanhood," *Massachusetts Review* 21 (Fall 1980): 503.

7. Both quoted in Hill, "Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Feminist's Struggle," 503.

8. Polly Wynn Allen, *Building Domestic Liberty: Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Architectural Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 50-3; *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Nonfiction Reader*, ed. Ceplair, 7; Mary A. Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: The Making of a Radical Feminist, 1866-1896* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 172-3; Hill, "Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Feminist's Struggle," 517; Ann Lane, *To "Herland" and Beyond: The Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (New York: Meridian, 1990), 255-6, 294. One excellent exception is Susan S. Lanser, "Feminist Criticism, 'The Yellow Wallpaper,' and the Politics of Color in America," *Feminist Studies* 15 (Fall 1989): 415-41.

9. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "A Suggestion on the Negro Problem," *American Journal of Sociology* 1 (July 1908): 78-85. See also Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Immigration, Importation, and Our Fathers," *Forerunner* 5 (May 1914): 117-9; Charlotte

Perkins Gilman, "Let Sleeping Forefathers Lie," *Forerunner* 6 (October 1915): 261-3; and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Is America Too Hospitable?" *Forum* 70 (October 1923): 1983-9.

10. Gilman, "A Suggestion on the Negro Problem," 80-1.

11. On racism as endemic in the nineteenth-century white woman's movement, see Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Vintage, 1981), 30-86, 110-49; Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978); Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Bantam, 1984); Gerda Lerner, "Black and White Women in Interaction and Confrontation," in *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 94-111; Louise Michele Newman, "Laying Claim to Difference: Racial Ideology of the U.S. Woman's Movement, 1870-1920" (Ph.D. diss, Brown University, 1992).

12. Of course, her name was not Gilman until 1900. As a child, she was known as "Charlotte Perkins." After her first marriage to Charles Walter Stetson, in 1884, she was called "Charlotte Perkins Stetson" until her second marriage to George Houghton Gilman, in 1900. In the interest of clarity, however, I will anachronistically call her by the name most people know her by today, "Gilman," for the discussion of her adult life, and call her "Charlotte" as a child.

13. The following biographical account draws deeply on Mary A. Hill's excellent biography, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: The Making of a Radical Feminist, 1860-1896*.

14. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography* (1935; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 8-9.

15. Mari Jo Buhle, *Women and American Socialism, 1870-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 53-69.

16. Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 30-2.

17. Gilman, *Living*, 19, 27; Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 41-2. Although Hill suggests that Gilman's lack of education was nothing extraordinary, noting that four years of total schooling was the national average in 1870, it seems likely that had financial woes not intervened, Thomas and Charlotte would have had more schooling than they did. Mary Perkins herself had been "well educated" as a girl (Gilman, *Living*, 7); and Frederick Perkins—indeed, the whole Beecher clan—valued education highly. When Mary Perkins received a bequest from an aunt when Charlotte was about fourteen, she immediately spent it on good schools for the children, a fact that suggests that if more money had been available, Gilman would have received a more extensive primary education (Gilman, *Living*, 27).

18. Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 19; Gilman, *Living*, 37.

19. Gilman, *Living*, 36-7.

20. George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 150-64, 169-86.

21. G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*, 2 vols. (New York: Appleton, 1904), 2:213, 455; 727.

22. On *Popular Science Monthly*, see *Men's Ideas/Women's Realities: "Popular Science," 1870-1915*, ed. Louise Michele Newman, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985).

23. Gilman, *Living*, 37.

24. Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 28-30.

25. See, e.g., Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973; New York: Norton, 1976); Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977), 126-59.

26. Gilman, *Living*, 39.

27. *Ibid.*, 42.

28. *Ibid.*, 39.

29. See Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman* 44-120. Hill devotes three chapters to explicating the youthful struggles between what Gilman called her "two opposing natures" (74)—or, as Hill describes it, between the masculinity which she associated with her father's public achievement and the femininity which she associated with her mother's domesticity.

30. Quoted in Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 74. Emphasis in original.

31. Quoted in Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 94.

32. Gilman, *Living*, 83.

33. Quoted in Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 115.

34. Gilman's fictionalized version of her neurasthenic breakdown, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, is well known. The following discussion is drawn mostly from her autobiography and analyzes the way Gilman herself interpreted her breakdown in light of her subsequent feminist interpretations of "civilization."

35. Gilman, *Living*, 89.

36. *Ibid.*, 91.

37. *Ibid.*, 95. On Charlotte's fears of brain disease, see also the quote from her diary in Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 148.

38. F. G. Gosling, *Before Freud: Neurasthenia and the American Medical Community, 1870-1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 55.

39. George M. Beard, *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1881), vi, 96, 137. The other four developments—which mostly applied to middle-class men in their business capacities—were steam power, the periodical press, the telegraph, and the sciences.

40. Hall, *Adolescence*, 1:511-2; 2:639.

41. Mitchell himself believed that higher education was fine for women with large reserves of nervous energies, but extremely dangerous for women with any nervous deficiencies—and this would have included the hysterically depressed Gilman. See S. Weir Mitchell, *Doctor and Patient*, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1888), 147-54.

42. Gilman, *Living*, 95.

43. On the rest cure, see Gosling, *Before Freud*, 109-16, and S. Weir Mitchell, *Fat and Blood: An Essay on the Treatment of Certain Forms of Neurasthenia and Hysteria*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1883).

44. Gilman, *Living*, 96. See also Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Why I Wrote 'The Yellow Wallpaper?'" in *The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader: "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Other Fiction*, ed. Ann J. Lane (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 19-20.

45. Gilman, "Why I Wrote 'The Yellow Wallpaper?'" 20.

46. Gilman, *Living*, 96.
47. In 1899, Gilman referred to recapitulation theory in a Minneapolis lecture: see "Things As They Are," *Minneapolis Sunday Times*, 19 November 1899, and "Things As They Are," *Minneapolis Journal*, 20 November 1899; copies of both in Charlotte Perkins Gilman Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College. See also Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Social Service* (pamphlet) (Warren, Ohio: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1907?). These references show up after her breakdown, but she read so widely before she got sick that she undoubtedly knew about recapitulation theory, which was a well-known part of Darwinism.
48. Gilman's fictionalized version of her neurasthenic breakdown, "The Yellow Wallpaper," is pervaded with primitivist racial imagery, as Susan Lanser has shown. It is surely no accident that Gilman describes the remote house in which the heroine is imprisoned as "a colonial mansion," or that the wallpaper of the locked nursery was yellow—the skin color of the "barbarous" residents of the locked Asian harems so anathematized by feminists. See Lanser, "Feminist Criticism," 427–34.
49. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Home: Its Work and Influence* (New York: Charlton, 1903).
50. Charlotte Perkins Stetson [Gilman], *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1898), 155–6; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The 'Nervous Breakdown' of Women," *Forerunner* 7 (August 1916): 202–6.
51. Gilman, *Living*, 97.
52. *Ibid.*, 104.
53. See Scharnhorst, *Bibliography*.
54. Gilman, "Our Place Today," 53–5 (emphasis in original).
55. Scharnhorst, *Bibliography*, 99–101; Degler, "Introduction," xiii.
56. Quoted in Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 331.
57. Gilman, *Women and Economics*, 2–3.
58. *Ibid.*, 5.
59. *Ibid.*, 46.
60. *Ibid.*, 207; see also 59.
61. *Ibid.*, 73, 24–5.
62. Hall, *Adolescence*, 2:568–9.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Gilman, *Women and Economics*, 31.
65. *Ibid.*, 30.
66. *Ibid.*, 31–9, 58–9.
67. *Ibid.*, 35.
68. *Ibid.*, 23–5, 72–5.
69. *Ibid.*, iii–v, 58–75, 122–45.
70. *Ibid.*, 60.
71. *Ibid.*, iii.
72. *Ibid.*, iv.
73. "Woman as a Factor in Civilization," [Newspaper report on Gilman's lecture of the same title], *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 11 December 1904.

74. Gilman, *Women and Economics*, 60.
75. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Two 'Natural Protectors,'" *Women's Journal*, 29 October 1904, 346.
76. Gilman, *Living*, 39–40.
77. Gilman, *Women and Economics*, 61–5.
78. *Ibid.*, 69–72.
79. *Ibid.*, 72.
80. *Ibid.*, 74.
81. *Ibid.*, 127.
82. *Ibid.*, 129; emphasis added.
83. *Ibid.*, 134.
84. *Ibid.*, 142.
85. *Ibid.*, 146.
86. *Ibid.*, 140.
87. *Ibid.*, 146–7.
88. Gilman's speech paraphrased in "Woman as a Factor in Civilization"; see also "Women Half Civilized," *New Orleans Times Democrat*, 11 December 1904.
89. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "A Suggestion on the Negro Problem," 78–85.
90. Gilman, *Women and Economics*, 339.
91. *Ibid.*, 332, 339.
92. Quoted in Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 202. By 1896, the complete absence of evidence to support these claims of frequent primitive rape made some anthropologists question them (Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 202–4).
93. Lester F. Ward, "Our Better Halves," *Forum* 6 (November 1888): 266–75; Lester F. Ward, *Pure Sociology* (New York: Macmillan, 1903), 290–416, esp. 313–23.
94. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Comment and Review," *Forerunner* 1 (October 1910): 26.
95. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Man-Made World, or Our Androcentric Culture" (New York: Charlton, 1911), 24.
96. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Masculine, Feminine, and Human," *Woman's Journal*, 16 January 1904, 18; emphasis in the original.
97. Gilman, *The Home*, 290.
98. Gilman, "Masculine, Feminine, and Human," 18; emphasis in the original.
99. Gilman, *Man-Made World*, 15.
100. *Ibid.*, 22.
101. *Ibid.*, 28; see also, e.g., 29, 58.
102. Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson, *The Evolution of Sex* (London: Walter Scott, 1889). For Gilman's statement of her debt to *Evolution of Sex*, see Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 265–6; and Gilman, *Living*, 259. For an explicit use of Geddes and Thompson's theories in *Man-Made World*, see, e.g., 78–9.
103. Geddes and Thompson, *Evolution of Sex*, 267.
104. Jill Conway, "Stereotypes of Femininity in a Theory of Sexual Evolution," in *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 140–54.
105. Gilman, *The Man-Made World*, 28–9.

106. Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 80. On sexual selection, see Russett, *Sexual Science*, 78-101.

107. Gilman, *Man-Made World*, 23-24.

108. *Ibid.*, 255-6.

109. *Ibid.*, 85-6.

110. *Ibid.*, 90-3.

111. *Ibid.*, 141-2.

112. *Ibid.*, 137-41.

113. *Ibid.*, 202.

114. *Ibid.*, 234.

115. *Ibid.*, 52.

116. *Ibid.*, 29-34, 48-60.

117. *Ibid.*, 30.

118. *Ibid.*, 68-9. This was Gilman's essential position on the question of eugenics: return woman to the position of sexual selector, and all would be well for the race. See also Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Primal Power," *Forerunner* 4 (November 1913): 297; and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "What May We Expect of Eugenics?" *Physical Culture* 31 (March 1914): 219-22. Gilman's view of human sexual selection was somewhat different from that of male scientists. Darwin and most biologists who believed in sexual selection believed that humans differed from all other animals, in that among humans it was natural for males to be the sexual selectors, while among animals, females were sexual selectors. As Cynthia Russett notes, this was an awkward position for them because, in other respects, these scientists assumed that what was "natural" for animals was also "natural" for humans (Russett, *Sexual Science*, 83-6).

119. Gilman, *Man-Made World*, 259.

120. [Charlotte Perkins Stetson], "The Review," *Impress* 2 (22 December 1894): 2.

121. [Charlotte Perkins Stetson], "Editorial Notes," *Impress* 1 (June 1894): 1.

122. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Two 'Natural Protectors,'" *Woman's Journal* 36 (29 April 1904): 65.

123. Sir Almroth Wright, "Suffrage Fallacies: Sir Almroth Wright on Militant Hysteria," *London Times*, 28 March 1912, 7-8; Sir Almroth E. Wright, *The Unexpurgated Case against Woman Suffrage* (London: Constable, 1913); "Feminism behind the Suffrage War," *New York Times*, 28 March 1912; Editorial, "Doctrine and Word Both Venerable," *New York Times*, 29 March 1912, 12; "Militant Women Break Higher Law," *New York Times*, 31 March 1912, sec. 3, p. 2; "Physician Who Killed the English Suffrage Bill," *New York Times*, 5 May 1912, sec. 3, p. 3; "A Famed Biologist's Warning of the Peril in Votes for Women," *Current Literature* 53 (July 1912): 59-62; "The 'Inferiority' of Women," *Literary Digest* 47 (8 November 1913) 865-6.

124. Wright, *Unexpurgated Case*, 19; emphasis in the original. For a brilliant explication of the larger cultural ramifications of this ideology of contract between man and woman, see Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988). According to Pateman, liberal political theory presumes that before men replace a state of nature with a civil society by binding themselves to a

"social contract," they make a sexual contract. This sexual contract excludes women from the social contract. Instead, it binds women to provide services to man, in return for male protection. Although this view of the social contract is a new contribution to twentieth-century political theory, it would have come as no news to Wright or Sedgwick. Both presumed precisely such an agreement. If women abrogated the sexual contract, they warned, so would men. By breaking the sexual contract, women would by necessity break the social contract, which was predicated upon the sexual contract. Without a social contract, men would revert to a state of nature and become once again the natural man, the savage rapist.

125. Wright, *Unexpurgated Case*, 58; see also 32-5, 48-57, and Wright, "Militant Hysteria," reprinted in *Unexpurgated Case*, 81-4.

126. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Brute in Man," *Forerunner* 4 (December 1913): 316-7.

127. George MacAdam, "Feminist Revolutionary Principle is Biological Bosh," *New York Times*, 18 January 1914, sec. 5, p. 2. This seems to have been Sedgwick's only major foray as an antifeminist activist. After this controversy, he seems to have devoted himself once again to his career in public health. According to the *Dictionary of American Biography*, he is remembered today as an early advocate of chlorinated water and pasteurized milk, and for his achievements in sewage disposal.

128. *Ibid.*

129. *Ibid.*

130. Editorial, "Feminism and the Facts," *New York Times*, 19 January 1914, 8.

131. Ida M. Metcalf, Letter, "The Rule of Brute Force," *New York Times*, 25 January 1914, sec. 3, p. 4. See also Helen Kendrick Johnson, "Two Suffrage Setbacks," *New York Times*, 21 January 1914, 8.

132. "Indignant Feminists Respond to Prof. Sedgwick," *New York Times*, 15 February 1914, sec. 5, p. 4; C. A. Woodward, "A Case For Feminism," *New York Times*, 22 January 1914; 10. See also "The 'Brute in Man' as an Argument against Feminism," *Current Opinion* 56 (May 1914): 370-1.

133. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Biological Anti-Feminist," *Forerunner* 5 (March 1914): 64-7.

134. *Ibid.*, 64.

135. *Ibid.*, 66.

136. *Ibid.*, 67; see also "Mrs. Gilman Calls Science to Witness," *New York Times*, 9 April 1914, 10.

137. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "What the 'Threat of Man' Really Means," *Pictorial Review* 16 (June 1915): 2.

138. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (1915; New York: Pantheon, 1979).

139. *Ibid.*, 142.

140. *Ibid.*; for another mention of Wright, see 130 (misspelling of "Almwroth" in original).

141. Zona Gale, "Forward," in Gilman, *Living*, xlv.

142. Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 84-136.

143. See, for example, Gilman, *Living*, 316-9, 323-4, 329-30; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Vanguard, Rearguard, and Mudguard," *Century* 104 (22 July



1922): 348-55; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Parasitism and Civilized Vice," in *Woman's Coming of Age: A Symposium*, Ed. Samuel D. Schmalhausen and V. F. Calverton (New York: Liveright, 1931), 110-26; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Is America Too Hospitable?" in *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Nonfiction Reader*, ed. Ceclair, 288-95; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Unity is Not Equality," *World Unity* 4 (August 1929): 418-20.

### Chapter Five

1. This biographical discussion of Roosevelt's career as assemblyman draws primarily on Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Ballantine, 1979), 159-202, 227-70.
2. Mark Sullivan, *Our Times: The United States 1900-1925* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), 2:226-9; Morris, *Rise*, 162; David McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 256.
3. Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984): 620-47, esp. 628-30; Paula Baker, *The Moral Framework of Public Life: Gender, Politics, and the State in Rural New York, 1870-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 24-55.
4. Morris, *Rise*, 166.
5. *Ibid.*, 349-53.
6. See, e.g., Peter G. Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Sex Roles in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 69-93, 71, 73; Joe L. Dubbert, *A Man's Place: Masculinity in Transition* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979) 131-3; and Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport and American Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 235-8.
7. For a fine discussion of many of the same themes from a slightly different angle, see Donna Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-36," in *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 26-58.
8. On this sort of middle-class "boy culture," see E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic, 1993), 31-55.
9. Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography* (1913; New York, De Capo Press, 1985), 7.
10. *Ibid.*, 10; McCullough, *Mornings*, 28-9.
11. *Theodore Roosevelt's Diaries of Boyhood and Youth* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 122-3.
12. Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 14; McCullough, *Mornings*, 115; and Morris, *Rise*, 46.
13. Captain Mayne Reid, *The Boy Hunters; or Adventures in Search of a White Buffalo* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1852); Paul Russell Cutright, *Theodore Roosevelt: The Making of a Conservationist* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 5.
14. Reid, *Boy Hunters*, 363.
15. Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American*

*Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1973); and Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985).

16. Reid, *Boy Hunters*, 90-114, 120, emphasis in the original; see also McCullough, *Mornings*, 116.
17. Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 15.
18. McCullough, *Mornings*, 116.
19. Darwin himself, of course, was far less eager to embrace violence as the engine of evolutionary progress than some of his "Darwinistic" followers.
20. On Roosevelt's first trip west, see Morris, *Rise*, 202-25. Tom Lutz's otherwise excellent *American Nervousness* suggests that Roosevelt was sent west "on the advice of his doctor for his asthmatic neurasthenia" (Tom Lutz, *American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History* [Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1991], 63; see also 79). This seems questionable. Roosevelt did suffer from asthma; but doctors believed asthma was a lung disorder, not a nervous disorder, and they did not associate it with neurasthenia. Moreover, I have found no evidence in Roosevelt's letters that he ever consider himself neurasthenic, nor that any of his physicians ever diagnosed him as neurasthenic. None of Roosevelt's biographers mention any diagnosis of neurasthenia. Thus, despite Roosevelt's real bouts with ill health, it seems unlikely that anyone ever linked his health problems with neurasthenia.
21. Morris, *Rise*, 222-3.
22. On Alice Lee's death, see Morris, *Rise*, 221-5, 284-5.
23. Interview, *New York Tribune* (28 July 1884), quoted in Morris, *Rise*, 281. For "Cowboy Land," see Theodore Roosevelt, "In Cowboy-Land," *Century* 46 (June 1893): 276-84; and Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 94-131.
24. Morris, *Rise*, 297.
25. Theodore Roosevelt, *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1885), frontispiece.
26. In *The Winning of the West*, Roosevelt would describe this costume as "in great part borrowed from [the frontiersman's] Indian foes." See Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, 4 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1889-96), 1:114-5.
27. Roosevelt, *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (New York: Winchester Press, 1969), 7.
28. *Ibid.*, 6.
29. *Ibid.*, 102-4.
30. Morris, *Rise*, 349-53.
31. See, for example, "The President Talks on the Philippines," *New York Times*, 8 April 1903, 3; "Mr. Roosevelt Sees a Cowboy Festival," *New York Times*, 26 April 1903, 1; and "President Calls for a Larger Navy," *New York Times*, 23 May 1903, 2.
32. For a discussion of the search for origins as a means to legitimize the present by inventing a lost, pure form of something, see Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1977), 139-64, esp. 139-45.
33. Roosevelt, *Winning*, 1:xiv. For other discussions of *The Winning of the West*, which properly define it as a story of racial origins, see Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore*

*Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 54-67; Morris, *Rise*, 462-5; and especially Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 42-51, and Richard Slotkin, "Nostalgia and Progress: Theodore Roosevelt's Myth of the Frontier," *American Quarterly* 33 (Winter 1981): 608-37.

34. Roosevelt, *Winning*, 1:xiv.

35. See Morris, *Rise*, 270-342.

36. Roosevelt, *Winning*, 1:1.

37. Roosevelt is drawing on Anglo-Saxonist historiography here, but he never uses the term "Anglo-Saxon" because he believed it was historically imprecise and did not take into account the subsequent, positive race-mixing after the eleventh century (Roosevelt to Thomas St. John Gaffney, 10 May 1901, in *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, ed. Elting E. Morison et al., 8 vols. [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954], 3:76). Roosevelt preferred the term, "the English speaking races," because it seemed to him more precise, and because it allowed him to speak of races in the plural, showing that the Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British were multiple, related, but different races. On Anglo-Saxonism, see Stuart Anderson, *Race and Rapprochement: Anglo-Saxonism and Anglo-American Relations, 1895-1904* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981), 11-73.

38. Roosevelt, *Winning*, 1:1-27.

39. *Ibid.*, 1:20-1.

40. See, for example, Roosevelt to Finley Peter Dunne, 23 November 1904, in *Letters*, 4:1040-1; Roosevelt to Edward Grey, 18 December 1906, in *Letters*, 5:528-9. Some historians might ask whether Roosevelt means "nation" when he says Americans made up a new "race." Yet when discussing the origins of the "American race," *The Winning of the West* so blatantly refers to "racial" origins, "racial" traits and minglings of "blood" it is impossible not to understand that Roosevelt is referring explicitly to race. Roosevelt also insisted the European colonists had evolved into the manly American "race" well before they began to form the American nation; Roosevelt, *Winning*, 1:108-9. On the connections between concepts of "nation" and "race" during the period, see Dyer, *Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*, 28-30.

41. Roosevelt, *Winning*, 3:28-9; 1:8.

42. *Ibid.*, 1:87; 3:40, 326.

43. *Ibid.*, 3:1.

44. *Ibid.*, 3:176.

45. *Ibid.*, 1:124.

46. *Ibid.*, 1:117.

47. *Ibid.*, 1:113.

48. Theodore Roosevelt, *The Life of Thomas Hart Benton* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1887), 21. In a letter to Francis Parkman, Roosevelt described this chapter as containing "an idea of the outline I intend to fill up" in *Winning of the West*. Roosevelt to Francis Parkman, April 23, 1888, in *Letters*, 1:140.

49. Roosevelt, *Winning*, 1:106.

50. *Ibid.*, 1:69.

51. *Ibid.*, 1:94-5 and 1:95 n.

52. Slotkin, "Nostalgia and Progress," 623-34.

53. John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 8-9.

54. Roosevelt, *Winning*, 1:110.

55. *Ibid.*, 1:192-3.

56. *Ibid.*, 3:46.

57. *Ibid.*, 2:230-1.

58. *Ibid.*, 3:45-6.

59. *Ibid.*, 3:44.

60. *Ibid.*, 3:175-6.

61. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 51.

62. Morris, *Rise*, 471. The earliest explicitly pro-imperialist article Roosevelt published that I can identify was a letter in the *Harvard Crimson* (2 January 1896), in *Letters*, 1:505. But his private letters show Roosevelt was identifying foreign policy as his dominant interest as early as 1894 (see Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 27 October 1894, in *Letters* 1:408-9).

63. See, for example, Theodore Roosevelt, "The Monroe Doctrine" (1896), in *American Ideals and Other Essays, Social and Political* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), 2:58-9. See also Theodore Roosevelt, "Phases of State Legislation," *Century Magazine* 39 (April 1885): 825, for hints of earlier concerns about decadence.

64. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Law of Civilization and Decay," *Forum* 22 (January 1897): 579.

65. Roosevelt, "Law of Civilization," 588-9.

66. For private expressions of Roosevelt's ambivalence on this matter—his deep fears that racial decadence was possible, combined with his faith that the American race was still strong and virile—see Roosevelt to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, 11 August 1899, in *Letters*, 2:1051-3, and Roosevelt to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, 16 March 1901, in *Letters*, 3:14-6. For other published expressions of his fears of decadence, see, e.g., Theodore Roosevelt, "Professionalism in Sports," *North American Review* 151 (August 1890): 191; and Theodore Roosevelt, "Manhood and Statehood," in *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (1901: St. Clair Shores, Mich.: Scholarly Press, 1970), 254-7.

67. Theodore Roosevelt, "Value of an Athletic Training," *Harper's Weekly* 37 (23 December 1893): 1236.

68. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Manly Virtues and Practical Politics," *Forum* 17 (July 1894): 555.

69. Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," in *The Five Nations: The Works of Rudyard Kipling*, 30 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1903), 21:78.

70. Quoted in Willard Gatewood, *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 183. See also 183-6 for a fine discussion of African Americans' scathing parodies and reactions to Kipling's poem.

71. Theodore Roosevelt, "National Duties," in *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (1901; St. Clair Shores, Mich.: Scholarly Press, 1970), 280.

72. *Ibid.*, 282.

73. *Ibid.*, 281.

74. *Ibid.*, 287.

75. *Ibid.*, 288.

76. *Ibid.*, 291.  
 77. *Ibid.*, 293-4.  
 78. *Ibid.*, 292-6.  
 79. *Ibid.*, 296-7.  
 80. *Ibid.*, 296.  
 81. Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 19 January 1896, in *Letters*, 1:509.  
 82. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Monroe Doctrine," 2:51. For other instances where Roosevelt linked patriotism to monogamous marriage, and internationalists to unmanly adulterers or free-lovers, see Roosevelt to Osborne Howes, 5 May 1892, in *Letters*, 1:279, and Theodore Roosevelt, "What Americanism Means," *Forum* 17 (April 1894): 199.  
 83. Theodore Roosevelt, "Expansion and Peace," in *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (1901; St. Clair Shores, Mich.: Scholarly Press, 1970), 37. See also Roosevelt, "National Duties," 285-6.  
 84. Roosevelt to Paul Dana [editor of the *New York Sun*], April 18, 1898, in *Letters*, 2:817.  
 85. Quoted in Morris, *Rise*, 673. Due to lack of transport space, the horses (except for those of Roosevelt and his superior officers) had to be left behind in Florida, so the cavalry became infantry. The image of Rough Riders on horseback remained, however—crucial for the regiment's cowboy image. Cowboys, after all, rode horses, and did not slog through the mud on foot.  
 86. Morris, *Rise*, 614. For the full story of the Rough Riders, see Morris, *Rise*, 615-61.  
 87. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 79-87; see also 101-6.  
 88. Morris, *Rise*, 629.  
 89. *Ibid.*, 665. Roosevelt's charge, of course, was really up Kettle Hill; see *ibid.*, 650-6.  
 90. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," in *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (1901; St. Clair Shores, Mich.: Scholarly Press, 1970), 1-2.  
 91. *Ibid.*, 6.  
 92. *Ibid.*, 7.  
 93. *Ibid.*, 9-10.  
 94. *Ibid.*, 10-16.  
 95. *Ibid.*, 17, 18.  
 96. *Ibid.*, 20-1.  
 97. See, for example, "Mr. Roosevelt's Views on the Strenuous Life," *Ladies' Home Journal* 23 (May 1906): 17.  
 98. Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 54. The quote is taken from the chapter entitled, "The Vigor of Life," which Roosevelt says is a synonym for "The Strenuous Life" (52).  
 99. Frank Ninkovich, "Theodore Roosevelt: Civilization as Ideology," *Diplomatic History* 10 (Summer 1986), 221-45; Elihu Root, "Roosevelt's Conduct of Foreign Affairs," in Theodore Roosevelt, *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*, National Ed., 20 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 16:xiii; quoted in Ninkovich, "Civilization as Ideology," 223.  
 100. Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 398-9.  
 101. *Ibid.*, 516-7.

102. *Ibid.*, 520-1.  
 103. Although Roosevelt was dubious about the southern and eastern European immigrants' ability to assimilate into the American race, political considerations prevented him from supporting immigration legislation as strong as he would have preferred. Still, he believed that within a few generations, the best specimens of these European races could be absorbed into the white American race—unlike the Japanese and African Americans, whom he believed would always remain unassimilable. On Roosevelt and European immigration, see John R. Jenswold, "Leaving the Door Ajar: Politics and Prejudices in the Making of the 1907 Immigration Law," *Mid-America* 67 (January 1985): 3-22, and Dyer, *Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*, 129-34.  
 104. Theodore Roosevelt, "National Life and Character" (1894) in *American Ideals and Other Essays, Social and Political* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), 1:109. For a comprehensive discussion of Roosevelt's ideas about African Americans, see Dyer, *Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*, 89-122; and George Sinkler, *The Racial Attitudes of American Presidents* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), 341-73.  
 105. Roosevelt to Albion Winegar Tourgée, 8 November 1901, in *Letters* 3:190; Roosevelt, *Winning*, 3:28-9.  
 106. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Negro in America," (4 June, 1910) in *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*, Memorial Ed., 24 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 14:194; Roosevelt, "National Life and Character," 110-1.  
 107. Roosevelt to Ray Stannard Baker, 3 June 1908, in *Letters*, 6:1047-8.  
 108. For Roosevelt's official condemnations of lynching, always tying the crime of lynching to the Negro rapist, see Theodore Roosevelt, "Address at Unveiling of Frederick Douglass Monument, at Rochester, June 10, 1899," in *Public Papers of Theodore Roosevelt, Governor, 1899[-1900]* (Albany: Brandow, 1900), 322-35; "President Denounces Mob Lawlessness," *New York Times*, 10 August 1903, 1; "Roosevelt for Reform of the Criminal Law," *New York Times*, 26 October 1905, 5; and Theodore Roosevelt, "Sixth Annual Message" (1906), in *Works*, Memorial Ed., 17:411-5.  
 109. Roosevelt to Charles Henry Pearson, 11 May 1894, in *Letters*, 1:376-7.  
 110. Roosevelt to Albion Winegar Tourgée, 8 November 1901, in *Letters*, 3:1901; see also Roosevelt to Lyman Abbot, 10 May 1908, in *Letters*, 6:1026.  
 111. Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 345-55.  
 112. Roosevelt to Charles Henry Pearson, 11 May 1894, in *Letters*, 1:376-7.  
 113. Roosevelt to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, 16 June 1905, in *Letters*, 4:1233-4.  
 114. Roosevelt to George Kennan, 6 May 1905, in *Letters*, 4:1169.  
 115. Roosevelt to James Wilson, 3 February 1903, in *Letters*, 3:416.  
 116. Roosevelt to William Kent, 4 February 1909, in *Letters*, 6:1503. See also Theodore Roosevelt, "The Japanese Question," in *Works*, National Ed., 16:289; originally published in the *Outlook*, 8 May 1909.  
 117. Roosevelt to Philander Chase Knox, 8 February 1909, in *Letters*, 6:1511. See also Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 392-3, 396.  
 118. Roosevelt to Arthur James Balfour, 5 March 1908, in *Letters*, 6:963.  
 119. For a fuller discussion of Roosevelt's views on the Japanese, see Sinkler, *Racial Attitudes*, 320-31, and Dyer, *Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*, 135-9.  
 120. Sinkler argues Roosevelt believed in a "great rule of righteousness": treat all

men according to their merits, and let all men compete on equal terms. The above discussion attempts to refute that type of argument by showing that Roosevelt believed in such competition only when he was certain that the white American race would prevail (Sinkler, *Racial Attitudes*, 317-8).

121. Edward A. Ross, "The Causes of Race Superiority," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 18 (July 1901): 67-89.

122. *Ibid.*, 86.

123. *Ibid.*, 88.

124. For a good catalog of Roosevelt's views on race suicide, see Dyer, *Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*, 143-67. See also Sinkler, *Racial Attitudes*, 337-40.

125. Roosevelt, "National Life and Character," 2:117.

126. Roosevelt, "Kidd's Social Evolution," *North American Review* 61 (July 1895): 97, 109; Roosevelt, "The Law of Civilization and Decay," 579, 586-7, 588-9; Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," 3-4. Roosevelt to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, 5 August 1896, 29 May 1897, 13 August 1897, all in *Letters*, 1:554, 620-1, 647-9; and Roosevelt to Helen Kendrick Johnson, 10 January 1899, in *Letters*, 2:904-5.

127. John S. Billings, "The Diminishing Birth-Rate in the United States," *Forum* 15 (June 1893): 467-77; Francis A. Walker, "The Great Count of 1890," *Forum* 11 (June 1891): 406-18; Francis A. Walker, "Immigration and Degradation," *Forum* 11 (August 1891): 417-26.

128. Louise Michele Newman, ed., *Men's Ideas/Women's Realities: "Popular Science," 1870-1915* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985), 107.

129. See, e.g., Grant Allen, "Plain Words on the Woman Question," in *Men's Ideas/Women's Realities*, ed. Newman, 125-31; originally published in *Popular Science Monthly* 36 (December 1889); and Walker, "Immigration and Degradation," 417-26. For overviews of the race suicide agitation, see Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York: Penguin, 1976), 136-58; and Newman, *Men's Ideas/Women's Realities*, 105-21.

130. See, e.g., Gordon, *Woman's Body*, 137-42, 148-57; Newman, *Men's Ideas/Women's Realities*, 107-12; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 146-8.

131. Bessie and Marie Van Vorst, *The Woman Who Toils: Being the Experience of Two Ladies as Factory Girls* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1903), 1-2; for the uncut letter, see Roosevelt to Bessie Van Vorst, 18 October 1902, in *Letters*, 3:355-6. This was the beginning of Roosevelt's public attack on race suicide, not his March 1905 speech to the National Congress of Mothers, as Linda Gordon has suggested in *Woman's Body*, 136-7, 142.

132. Roosevelt to Bessie Van Vorst, 18 October 1902, in *Letters*, 3:355.

133. It seems probable that Roosevelt's efforts can be credited with putting Ross' term "race suicide" into popular usage. Besides Ross' article coining the term, I have found no articles using the term "race suicide" published before February, 1903, when Roosevelt's letter was published; but the term was used extensively in the following months, and repeatedly described as a new term, associated with Roosevelt. See W. R. MacDermott, "The Suicide of the Race," *Westminster Review* 159 (June 1903): 695, and "Race Suicide," *Independent* 55 (21 May 1903): 1220.

134. "The Question of the Birth Rate," *Popular Science Monthly* 62 (April 1903): 567. For a complete list, see *Men's Ideas/Women's Realities*, ed. Newman, 121-2.

135. See, e.g., A. C. R., "Race Preservation," *New York Times*, 7 June 1903, 14. Actually, while the birthrate of African Americans was somewhat higher than that of white Americans, it was falling far more rapidly. See *Men's Ideas/Women's Realities*, ed. Newman, 120.

136. "Race Suicide," *Independent* 55 (May 21, 1903): 1220-1; "Topics of the Times: Presenting a Few of the Facts," *New York Times*, 1 May 1905, 8.

137. "The Question of the Birthrate," *Nation* 76 (11 June 1903): 469.

138. Reason vs. Instinct [pseud.], "No Fear of 'Race Suicide,'" *New York Times*, 4 March 1903, 8. See also Lydia Kingsmill Commander, "Has the Small Family Become an American Ideal?" *Independent* 56 (14 April 1904): 837-40.

139. Roosevelt to John Hay, 9 August 1903, in *Letters*, 3:549.

140. "No Race Suicide There," *New York Times*, 8 April 1903, 3.

141. "The President's Busy Day," *New York Times*, 7 April 1903, 2.

142. "President in California," *New York Times*, 8 May 1903, 3.

143. "Mr. Roosevelt's Views on Race Suicide," *Ladies' Home Journal* 23 (February 1906): 21; Roosevelt to Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Bower, 14 February 1903, in *Letters*, 3:425; "Roosevelt Thanks a Father," *New York Times*, 21 July 1904, 5.

144. Theodore Roosevelt, "Americans of Irish Origin," *Works*, National Ed., 16:39-40; "Roosevelt Praises the Hardy Irish," *New York Times*, 18 March 1905, 1.

145. Roosevelt to Hamlin Garland, 19 July 1903, in *Letters*, 3:520-1 is the earliest earliest example of the "birth pangs" phrase I could find. For other examples, see Theodore Roosevelt, "The American Woman as a Mother," *Ladies' Home Journal* 22 (July 1905): 4; "Roosevelt Repeats Hymn to Methodists," *New York Times*, 17 May 1908, sec. 2, p. 8.

146. Roosevelt to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, 3 May 1892, in *Letters*, 1:277. See also Roosevelt to Thomas Raynesford Lounsbury, 28 April 1892, in *Letters*, 1:275, and Roosevelt to Owen Wister, 27 April 1906, in *Letters*, 5:222.

147. For a wider discussion of this transformation, see Christina Simmons, "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression," in *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*, ed. Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 157-77.

148. "Mr. Roosevelt's Views on Race Suicide," *Ladies' Home Journal* (23 February 1906): 21. See also, e.g., *The Foolish Almanack for the Year of 1906 and the Fifth since the Discovery of Race Suicide by President Roosevelt* (Boston: Luce, 1905) especially entries opposite March 15 and September 9; and William M. Gibson, *Theodore Roosevelt among the Humorists: W. D. Howells, Mark Twain, and Mr. Dooley* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980), 28, 57.

149. Roosevelt to Leigh S. J. Hunt, 11 February 1904, in *Letters*, 4:725. Hunt, a wealthy American who had made his money investing in Asia and Africa, ultimately financed Roosevelt's safari, along with Andrew Carnegie and Oscar Straus.

150. On the cultural meaning of "darkest Africa," see Patrick Brantlinger, "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent," in "Race,"

*Writing, and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 185-222.

151. See George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 185.

152. Theodore Roosevelt, "A Scientific Expedition," *Outlook* 91 (20 March 1909): 627-8, and Theodore Roosevelt, *African Game Trails: An Account of the African Wanderings of an American Hunter Naturalist* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 3, 14-15. The safari, which included three Smithsonian naturalists, did furnish hundreds of animal skins for the Smithsonian. Donna Haraway has brilliantly analyzed how natural history museums of this period attempted to stem social decadence by exhibiting stuffed animals; and surely Roosevelt hoped the animals he had killed and sent to Washington would ultimately teach that sort of lesson. See Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy," 26-58.

153. Roosevelt, "Nature Faker," *Everybody's Magazine* 17 (September 1907): 429. See also Edward B. Clark, "Roosevelt on the Nature Fakirs," *Everybody's Magazine* 16 (June 1907): 770-7. For background on the Nature Faker controversy, see Ralph H. Lutts, *The Nature Fakirs: Wildlife, Science and Sentiment* (Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum, 1990), and Matt Carmill, "Getting at the Heart of the Wild Things," *Natural History* (February 1991): 67.

154. Roosevelt, *African Game Trails*, 2.

155. *Ibid.* For other assertions that Africa was still as it was in the Pleistocene or Stone Age, see *African Game Trails*, 10-12, 18, 105, 378, and 418-9; Roosevelt to George Otto Trevelyan, 19 June 1908, in *Letters*, 6:1089; and Theodore Roosevelt, "Wild Man and Wild Beast in Africa," *National Geographic Magazine* 22 (January 1911): 19.

156. Roosevelt, *African Game Trails*, 94-5.

157. See, e.g., Roosevelt, *African Game Trails*, 258-60.

158. At least, that was what Roosevelt was told "Bwana Makuba" meant! Roosevelt, *African Game Trails*, 119, 260, 504, 506.

159. For the number of porters, see *Letters*, 7:13 n.

160. *Ibid.*

161. Roosevelt, *African Game Trails*, 29, 569-70.

162. *Ibid.*, 349.

163. *Ibid.*, 95; photo on 21.

164. *Ibid.*, 239.

165. *Ibid.*, 532-4.

166. *Ibid.*, 406-10.

167. *Ibid.*, 407.

168. Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy," 51.

169. Roosevelt, *African Game Trails*, 414.

170. Kathleen Dalton, "Why America Loved Theodore Roosevelt: Or Charisma Is in the Eyes of the Beholders," *Psychohistory Review* 8 (Winter 1979): 20-1.

171. "Rose Coghlan's Vivid Pen-Picture," [*New York?*] *World*, 22 June 1900, quoted in Morris, *Rise*, 728.

172. Sullivan, *Our Times*, 2:235.

173. Quoted in *Letters*, 7:85.

174. Marshall Everett [pseud. Henry Neil], *Roosevelt's Thrilling Experiences in the Wilds of Africa Hunting Big Game* (Chicago? 1910), 179-82; and see pictures of bare-breasted women on 44, facing 113, facing 144, 197, 199.

175. Everett, *Roosevelt's Thrilling Experiences*, 154-5. Compare to Roosevelt, *African Game Trails*, 142-6, 254-60.

## Conclusion

1. For an exhaustive biography, see Irwin Porges, *Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), from which the following biographical discussion is drawn.

2. *Ibid.*, 9-115.

3. *Ibid.*, 156, 722.

4. Robert W. Fenton, *The Big Swingers* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 58.

5. Porges, *Edgar Rice Burroughs*, 796, 798-9; Leonard Maltin's *TV Movies and Video Guide*, ed. Leonard Maltin et al. (New York: Signet, 1988), 1051.

6. Quoted in Porges, *Edgar Rice Burroughs*, 132.

7. A number of fine articles have been written about the cultural meaning of *Tarzan of the Apes*. Indeed, *Tarzan's* importance to American culture is suggested by the variety of approaches scholars have taken in discussing it. Eric Cheyfitz has used *Tarzan* to investigate how difficult it has been for U.S. foreign policy to "translate" the meanings of other cultures into its own. ("*Tarzan of the Apes*: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century," *American Literary History* 1 [Summer 1989]: 339-66). David Leverenz has located *Tarzan* as one of a long series of American cultural heroes who represent the last gasp of an endangered overcivilized manhood in his excellent essay, "The Last Real Man in America: From Natty Bumppo to Batman," *American Literary History* 3 (Winter 1991): 751-81. Marianna Torgovnick's rich reading of *Tarzan of the Apes* in *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 42-72, stresses its hidden subversiveness. She makes the excellent point that Burroughs' novel does not need to be interpreted as monolithically ethnocentric, racist, and sexist. On the one hand, the young *Tarzan* is willing—eager—to consider and learn from apes and other "natural" beings. Torgovnick reads this as an openness to cultural relativism which undermines Burroughs' overtly ethnocentric message. However, another reading is possible: in light of the turn-of-the-century popularity of recapitulation theory, one might also read *Tarzan's* openness to ape culture as Burroughs' depiction of *Tarzan's* recapitulation of more primitive evolutionary stages (see below). Similarly, Torgovnick suggests that the masculinist message of *Tarzan's* white male superiority is undermined by *Tarzan's* initial confusion about his identity, and the fact that this confusion is only mitigated by encounters with Africans and women. I agree that these sorts of encounters with "others" imply a variety of "anxieties" which could potentially undermine *Tarzan's* overt racist, sexist message. However, as I read it, these anxieties tend to heighten the reader's pleasurable anticipation of their resolution. *Tarzan* himself might appear insecure, but the narrative always promises that he will ultimately