

Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism: Racial Education from Reconstruction to the Progressive Era

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Abstract

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Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism: Racial Education from Reconstruction to the Progressive Era constructs a genealogy of racial education through pedagogies developed at manual training and industrial institutes, settlement schools, and in philosophies of racial liberal education that were founded in contexts of slavery and its aftermath, settler colonialism, and imperial war. By focusing on pedagogies of reading and writing developed at educational sites not usually examined together, the dissertation departs from much of the scholarship on education and assimilation to argue that racial education attempted to transform students deemed racially “primitive” into U.S. imperial subjects. It demonstrates how on one hand such pedagogies compelled students to adopt, perform, and desire the embodiment of dominant civilizational norms required for citizenship. On the other hand, it details how racial education simultaneously sought to hold students perpetually at a distance from civilizational embodiment by producing images of intellectual inferiority that were anchored in representations of their racial, gendered,

and sexual non-normativity. Indeed, racial education's images of students' intellectual limits, which were codified in policies, curricula, and founding documents and represented in school newspapers, photography, and fiction, made an imperial national order appear "rational" while also producing racial knowledge as "rationality." Investigating the often *ad hoc* pedagogies of reading and writing developed at a variety of educational sites, the dissertation expands scholarship on literature and empire beyond literary canon formation and in so doing creates new frameworks for approaching how written, visual, and performance texts created by teachers and students intervened in racial education's attempt to produce imperial subjects. It uses this approach to attend to the ways in which these often overlooked texts represent the limits of racial education while also referencing epistemologies of knowing, being, and feeling with the capacity to rupture imperial rationality.

For my mother,
Jocelyn Elizabeth Lampert

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Introduction—The Imperial Grammar of Civilization and Racial Education

In “Education as Conservative and Progressive,” a chapter in his landmark educational treatise *Democracy and Education* (1916), the philosopher, social scientist, and educator John Dewey distinguished his philosophy of progressive education from recapitulation theories of education by demonstrating how the latter were “conservative.” Frequently summed up by German zoologist Ernst Haeckel’s formulation “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny,” recapitulation posits a theory of biological growth in which children pass through earlier evolutionary forms of adulthood on the way to reaching maturity. Among other things, recapitulation allowed anthropologists and ethnologists to measure the adults of what they believed to be intellectually and culturally inferior human “races,” genders, and classes against the children of ostensibly “superior” groups.¹ One of the most famous proponents of recapitulation in the U.S. was a former professor of Dewey’s, the psychologist and educator G. Stanley Hall, who applied recapitulation to education and argued for child-centered education responsive to students’ “natural” development. Specifically, he believed that school curricula should create the conditions for white youth to have “proxy experiences” of the “world’s childhood” and in this way avoid the dangers of “precocity” that would result if evolutionary stages of development were skipped.² In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey represented his progressive theory of education to be fundamentally different from educational theories that took recapitulation as a model for childhood development. He argued that such theories were “conservative” because they remained oriented toward the past and made fallacious ideas about

¹ Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (Norton: New York/London: 1996), 143, 142-175.

² G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence, Vol. 1* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1904), xi.
<https://archive.org/details/adolescenceitps01hall>

biologically inherited traits the “limit of education.”³ Progressive education, by contrast, would “liberate the young from reviving and retraversing the past” (73). According to Dewey, progressive “reconstructive” education cultivated a scientific, objective standpoint that would allow new “perceptions” to transform students’ previous experiences and would therefore give them more rational control and direction over future actions. Rather than transport students to the past, the “function of educational subject matter” was “[t]o keep the process [of growth] alive, to keep it alive in ways which make it easier to keep it alive in the future” (75).

The split that Dewey mapped onto “conservative” and “progressive” education makes him a key figure within a genealogy of U.S. experiments with racial liberal education. Although a discussion of racism remains implicit within “Education as Conservative and Progressive,” an article Dewey published six years later titled “Racial Prejudice and Friction” demonstrates how Dewey’s progressivism racialized societies as primitive or “tribal” by arguing that they evidenced traits of “irrationality” associated with racial prejudice. Originally delivered as a lecture to the Chinese Social and Political Association after Dewey returned from a two year trip to China and Japan, “Racial Prejudice and Friction” used a social scientific standpoint to diagnose racism as the product of unthinking “instinct and habit” combined with the “instinctive aversion of mankind to what is new and unusual.” The “new and unusual” was exemplified for Dewey in particular by differences in skin color.⁴ Writing in the wake of World War I, Dewey argued furthermore that conservative irrationality cultivated on a national scale had produced the types of international “friction” that had led to the war. Dewey explained that the nations involved in the war had primarily faced a “problem of mutual adjustment,” operating under the

³ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Free Press, 1944), 74.

⁴ John Dewey, “Racial Prejudice and Friction,” *John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899-1924, Vol. 13: 1921-1922*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale/Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 242-243.

sway of “anti-stranger feeling” or “anti-foreigner feeling” (254, 245-246). Such “feelings” had operated as part of a general “prejudice,” which functioned to “cut [judgment] short” by giving free reign to “desire or emotion which makes us see things in a particular light and gives a slant to all our beliefs” (242). In approaching racism as a social disease characterized by a habitual, instinctual, and irrational emotionalism, Dewey had also managed by the end of the article to rationalize immigration restriction for Chinese and Japanese laborers in the U.S. while simultaneously advocating industrial capitalist development in Asia as a means of spreading modern “civilization” (252-254). “Racial Prejudice and Friction” thus evidences what black studies scholar Jodi Melamed calls racial liberalism, a “sea change in racial epistemology and politics” that retreated from overt white supremacy but still served racist state projects by “sutur[ing] an ‘official’ antiracism to U.S. nationalism.”⁵ Melamed traces racial liberalism to 1930s and 1940s reform movements that sought to alleviate the racial inequalities resulting from Jim Crow legislation by promoting philanthropy, social scientific research, and black arts and leadership rather than the radical transformation of the state. In her argument, reform efforts at “social engineering” were absorbed by the state after the “racial break” of WWII when global anticolonial movements made overt white supremacy increasingly untenable.⁶ “Racial Prejudice and Friction” is part of a larger body of Dewey’s work, which is discussed further in Chapter Four, that racialized what he believed to be “conservative” societies through gendered and sexualized representations of over-emotionalism. Such societies, which Dewey located both within and outside U.S. political boundaries, were represented as posing a threat to post-WWI processes of “rational” global “reconstruction” toward progressive democratic ideals. Dewey

⁵ Jodi Melamed, “The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism,” *Social Text* 89, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 2.

⁶ Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 18-23.

saw progressive education as part of a global, ostensibly democratic project to intervene in conservative societies prone to racial prejudice by cultivating an apparently neutral scientific “rationality” with the capacity to control insurgent anti-democratic behaviors and actions.

I begin with a discussion of Dewey’s racial liberalism for two reasons. First, Dewey’s racial liberalism serves as an entry point for demonstrating how thoroughly progressive theories of education were imbricated with an imperial grammar of civilization that not only made a U.S. imperial national order appear “rational” through interlocking representations of race, gender, sexuality, and class, but also produced racial knowledge *as* rationality. Dewey made clear in his wartime writings that progressive education was but one element of social reconstruction projects that should be carried out by the state. The immigration restriction that Dewey argued for in “Racial Prejudice and Friction” eventually materialized in the 1924 Johnson-Reed Immigration Act, which for the first time established quotas for European immigrants while simultaneously excluding Asians, including Chinese, Japanese, and Indians, from immigration to the U.S. Historian Mae Ngai argues that as an epistemological project the Johnson-Reed Act inaugurated a new “racial formation” in the U.S. in which Asians were racially marked as “alien citizens” who, whether or not they were immigrants, “remained alien in the eyes of the nation.”⁷ Significantly, the “alien” political subjects produced by the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act emerged out of a racial liberal culture that championed values of cosmopolitanism, pluralism, and tolerance, yet was also shaped by legislation like *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which in its declaration that whites and blacks could remain socially “separate but equal” before the law had legalized segregation by relegating racism to personal interactions and the realm of “sentiment.” Indeed, Dewey argued in “Racial Prejudice and Friction” that citizen laborers of the west coast were not

⁷ Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 8. As Ngai points out, Johnson-Reed was not the first immigration legislation to exclude groups of immigrants. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was an important precursor.

yet ready to accept Chinese and Japanese immigrants because of the animosity generated as wages were driven down by the ostensibly “lower standard of living developed in [Chinese and Japanese immigrants’] country of origin.”⁸ Elsewhere he had identified the figure of the Asian “coolie” with an “itinerant domesticity” that posed a transnational threat to modern industrial capitalist “civilization.”⁹ As Ngai points out, progressive era liberalism’s “assimilationist” pluralism functioned as a “strategy that recognized difference in order to efface it within the universality of liberal democratic politics.”¹⁰ At the same time that Dewey disavowed racial prejudice, his argument for progressive education in “Racial Prejudice and Friction” represented immigration restriction as a means to smooth the conflicts of labor agitation in the west over demands for cheap labor. It furthermore justified U.S. economic and political interventions in Japan and China. Since the 1890s, the U.S. had actively attempted to create an “Open Door” in China that would ameliorate economic depression at home by providing access to a mythical “China market” for surplus goods produced in the U.S. Although Dewey departed from advocates of the Open Door who wanted to prevent the industrialization of China in order to keep economic control over the region, his argument for intervention, particularly through mass education directed by “returned students” from China who had been schooled in the U.S., still represented the U.S. as a paternalist force for ushering democracy into the region as a means to solve the “Far East problem.”¹¹ Dewey was not himself a policy maker, yet his interventionist argument for the role progressive education could play in bringing “foreign” societies together through “mutual adjustment” demonstrates how his theory of progressive education was part and

⁸ Dewey, “Racial Prejudice and Friction,” 250.

⁹ See Chapter Four for a more comprehensive discussion of Dewey’s representation of Chinese laborers and “itinerant domesticity” as well what he called the U.S.’s “Far Eastern problem.”

¹⁰ Ngai, 234.

¹¹ See Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market: America’s Quest for Informal Empire, 1893-1901* (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1990).

parcel of a culture of U.S. imperialism. His argument evidences how progressive education was to function, in the words of postcolonial scholar Edward Said, as part of a national “ideological formation” motivating imperialist actions and policies that “include[ed] notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination.”¹²

Secondly, understanding how Dewey’s distinction between progressive and conservative is both racial and racializing is a starting point for intervening in genealogies of U.S. liberal education that trace the origins of racial liberal education to the progressive era. In education history and literary studies, racial liberal education is often studied apart from other race-based educational experiments. Instead of approaching U.S. racial liberal education primarily as a progressive era strategy to mediate the contradictions of industrial capitalism, *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* limns the imperial conditions of its emergence by approaching racial liberal education as part of a longer genealogy of state-sponsored experiments in race-based education forged in the wake of the Civil War. I distinguish race-based education from racial liberal education to define educational programs that sought to prepare students who were racialized as “primitive” for “life” as imperial subjects within the nation. Unlike racial liberal education, race-based education did not frame education as producing citizens. However, I argue that U.S. experiments in race-based education constitute part of the material history of racial liberal

¹² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 9. My interpretation of Dewey’s article in relationship to U.S. imperialism, particularly in China and Japan, departs from many scholars who have tended read the article in terms of anti-black racism in the U.S. While Dewey does mention anti-black racism in the article, his main focus is on anti-Asian racism in the U.S. along with the racial prejudice he sees as endemic to Japanese and Chinese societies. The omission of imperial context for Dewey’s article therefore simultaneously overlooks how Dewey’s progressive theory of education is imbricated with a liberal culture of U.S. imperialism in its conceptualization of “rationality.” See, for example, Jeff Frank, “Reconstructing Deweyan Growth: The Significance of James Baldwin’s Moral Psychology,” *Education and Culture* 29, no. 2 (2013); Shannon Sullivan, “From the Foreign to the Familiar: Confronting Dewey Confronting Racial Prejudice,” *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 18, no. 3 (2004); Thomas D. Fallace, “Was Dewey Ethnocentric? Reevaluation the Philosopher’s Early Views on Culture and Race,” *Educational Research* 39, no. 6 (August/ September 2010); and Thomas D. Fallace, “Repeating the Race Experience: John Dewey and the History Curriculum at the University of Chicago Laboratory School,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 39.3 (2009).

education. Dewey's progressive theory of "rationality" is part of an imperial grammar of civilization that was also evident in the race-based education produced at educational sites like the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute for southern blacks and the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, and I'd like to suggest that this grammar appears as well in contemporary debates about education and "civility" in the U.S.¹³ The distinction Dewey mapped onto progressive and conservative education obscures this historical relationship while at the same time making schools like Hampton and Carlisle, which operated according to many of the assumptions of recapitulation, appear as the "racist" counterpoint to progressive education.

Several education scholars have noted the "racist" or "ethnocentric" elements of Dewey's education theory, yet they have tended to recuperate his work by marginalizing its racist and racializing dualities (such as, for instance, the duality between "progressive" and "conservative" discussed above) as aberrations within an otherwise sound theory of democratic education.¹⁴ These dualities, however, are central to understanding the way in which racial liberal education in the U.S. has both actively participated in producing imperial culture and historically emerged as part of U.S. imperial projects, including slavery and its afterlife, settler colonialism, and imperial war. By considering the relationship between race-based and progressive experiments in

¹³ The Conclusion suggests how an imperial grammar of civilization appears in contemporary discourses of "civility," especially in higher education.

¹⁴ See, for example, Fallace, "Was John Dewey Ethnocentric?"; Fallace, "Repeating the Race Experience"; and Thomas D. Fallace, *Race and the Origins of Progressive Education, 1880-1929* (New York/London: Teachers College Press, 2015); Frank, "Reconstructing Deweyan Growth"; Sullivan, "From the Foreign to Familiar"; and Sam F. Stack, Jr., "John Dewey and the Question of Race: the Fight for Odell Waller," *Education and Culture* 25, no. 1 (2009). Education scholar Frank Margonis is one of the only scholars I have found who fundamentally questions whether or not Dewey's theory of progressive education could be recuperated for antiracist education. In an argument adjacent to the one I make here and in Chapter Four, Margonis argues that the idealized "student" and "classroom community" conceptualized in Dewey's educational theory were "European Americans," and he asserts that "it is not at all clear that a model student taken from dominant-group discourses would indeed serve a liberating goal for [...] African American students" (19). He explains: "Pedagogies rooted in a theory of the self (or a philosophical anthropology) are inescapably biased toward particular ways of being, that is, in favor of those students whose culture and circumstances best approximates that of the theoretically posited self" (37). See Frank Margonis, "John Dewey's Racialized Visions of the Student and Classroom Community," *Educational Theory* 59, no. 1 (2009).

education, *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* intervenes in scholarship produced by educational historians and literary studies scholars that approaches them separately, reproducing the binary that Dewey set up between “conservative” and “progressive” education. Education historian Lawrence A. Cremin’s foundational history of progressivism in education, for example, ignores race-based education produced at schools like Hampton and Carlisle. Although Cremin investigates the “progressive impulse” among educators in the late nineteenth century before progressive education officially took hold during WWI, he sees progressive education primarily as a response to industrialization and traces its popularization of manual training to Russian exhibits of manual labor at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial.¹⁵ As Cremin points out, manual education for Dewey was not, as it was for some early progressive educators, a response to industrial capitalists’ demands that schools produce better trained workers through a skills-based curriculum. Instead Dewey believed that manual education would function as part of a child-centered curriculum by unifying abstract book learning with everyday activities. Yet, the idea that manual education could function to shape students’ character was an idea produced as well in manual training programs at Hampton and Carlisle, which found their origins not at the Philadelphia Centennial but at missionary-run boarding schools in Hawai’i that were designed to teach indigenous Hawaiians how to survive the economic, political, and social changes wrought by U.S.-backed plantation capitalism. As discussed in Chapter Two, Hampton founder Samuel Chapman Armstrong reworked pedagogies of manual education developed at Hawaiian schools run by U.S. missionaries for Hampton’s black students *not* as a means to prepare them for industrial labor but as a means to discipline a racialized character “within,” which he believed

¹⁵ Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Knopf, 1964), 23-34.

threatened the post-Civil War social order developing in the U.S. South.¹⁶ While Dewey did not adhere to a biological theory of race, education historians like Thomas D. Fallace have demonstrated how his philosophy of progressive education recuperated racialized hierarchies of “civilization.”¹⁷ Fallace explains that Dewey’s educational philosophy relied on a neo-Hegelian “pragmatic historicism” in which “all cultures and races progressed naturally and organically through stages along a single, linear, hierarchical, evolutionary path toward a more socialized, integrated, and efficient future.”¹⁸ According to this pragmatic model of historical development, “Western civilization...just *happened to have* the most advanced culture.”¹⁹ Like Cremin, however, Fallace does not investigate the imperial dimensions of progressive education and thus stays within Dewey’s own racial liberal terms. Fallace argues that Dewey purged his educational theories of their “ethnocentrism” after WWI and that his theories therefore still have much to offer contemporary multicultural education. In Chapter Four, I demonstrate how Dewey’s philosophy of progressive education reworked ideas about “savages” and “slaves” in its conceptualization of social evolution and question more broadly the liberatory potential of Dewey-esque models of education.

Scholarship that takes a critical race approach to racial liberal education has demonstrated how its overt valuation of cultural relativity and pluralism remained bound to liberalism’s founding contradictions.²⁰ Tracing racial liberalism to the early twentieth century progressive

¹⁶ See also, C. Kalani Beyer, “The connection of Samuel Chapman Armstrong as Both Borrower and Architect of Education in Hawai’i,” *History of Education Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (Feb. 2007).

¹⁷ See Footnote 14.

¹⁸ Fallace, “Repeating the Race Experience,” 384.

¹⁹ Fallace, “Was Dewey Ethnocentric?,” 474.

²⁰ See, for example, Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006); Angela Y. Davis, “Gender, Class, and Multiculturalism: Rethinking ‘Race’ Politics,” *Mapping Multiculturalism*, ed. Avery F. Gordon and Christopher Newfield (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); David Kazanjian, *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Melamed, “The Spirit of Neoliberalism,”; Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*.

era, Melamed shows how an officially antiracist stance adopted by the state in the creation of liberal policies and laws has continued to produce racist forms of domination by flexibly revising and creating new racial subjects. She argues, “Racial liberalism not only polices the epistemological boundaries of what counts as a race matter by creating a discursive terrain that facilitates certain ways of posing and resolving questions, but it also constitutes the terms of social and moral authority by which alliances are constructed between classes and segments of [post-WWII] U.S. society.”²¹ In approaching the imperial dimensions of racial liberal education, *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* takes a longer historical view in order to investigate how racial liberal epistemologies of knowledge articulated with state imperial projects. This approach follows scholars like literary critic David Kazanjian who in *The Colonizing Trick* traces the contradictions of U.S. imperial nationhood through the articulation of liberal philosophies with material histories of slavery and colonization.²² In her investigation of contemporary liberal discourses of tolerance, political scientist Wendy Brown describes the legacy of the “colonial and settler-native encounter” along with other “postcolonial” encounters as the “constitutive outside to liberalism.”²³ Racial liberalism was not only an innovation within the theories of progressive thinkers and educators. Rather, it is my contention that it was also forged in the pedagogies of race-based education created, often on an *ad hoc* basis, as a form of counterinsurgency against what were represented to be students’ racially and sexually insurgent behaviors and ways of thinking. At the experimental schools I examine, pedagogies of reading and writing were developed alongside manual education to get students to manufacture representations of imperial subjection in public performances, such as parades, as well as fictional and non-fictional writing. These performances were important both for creating

²¹ Melamed, “Spirit of Neoliberalism,” 4.

²² Kazanjian, *The Colonizing Trick*.

²³ Brown, 8.

benevolent representations of the nation's imperial projects as well as for creating imperial subjects out of students deemed "foreign" within the nation.

The dissertation's focus on writing and performance not usually considered "literary" departs from scholarship in literary studies that has focused primarily on the production of literary canons or strictly "literary" curriculum in relationship to U.S. imperialism.²⁴ Literary critic Meg Wesling, for instance, examines the formation of a U.S. literary canon in the context of U.S. imperialism in the Philippines, which she explicitly differentiates from pedagogies of reading and writing developed at Hampton and Carlisle. She argues that unlike U.S. schools set up in the Philippines, Hampton and Carlisle sought primarily to "'rehabilitate' African American and Native American students not through literature but through labor."²⁵ Wesling is right to observe that Hampton and Carlisle didn't focus on teaching "literature." These schools explicitly argued against a classical literary curriculum for their students. Yet, I hope to demonstrate how these schools attempted to create imperial subjects precisely through actively denying students a "literary" education and by creating alternate pedagogies of reading and writing. In this way, *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* also intervenes in literary critic Tova Cooper's recent approach to experiments in race-based education at the end of the nineteenth century as "citizen education programs" that were located on the "conservative" end of the political spectrum.²⁶ Echoing Dewey's delineation between "conservative" and "progressive" education, Cooper approaches schools like Hampton and Carlisle as part of a conservative "assimilationist model of education"

²⁴ See, for example, Meg Wesling, *Empire's Proxy: American Literature and U.S. Imperialism in the Philippines* (New York: New York University Press, 2011). Although she doesn't examine imperialism, Tova Cooper's literary study of turn of the century education and assimilation focuses on autobiography. See Tova Cooper, *The Autobiography of Citizenship: Assimilation and Resistance in U.S. Education* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015). For the British imperial context, see David Lloyd, *Nationalism and Minor Literature: James Clarence Mangan and the Emergence of Irish Cultural Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); and Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

²⁵ Wesling, 8.

²⁶ Cooper, 5, 13-17.

at odds with “liberal and cosmopolitan models” of citizenship education because they sought to produce “a homogenous citizenry while simultaneously deemphasizing political engagement” (14-15). As will be discussed later on, approaching so-called “liberal” and “conservative” schools as citizen education programs elides the ways in which these schools functioned as part of U.S. imperial projects that sought to produce *imperial*—not *citizen*—subjects. Indeed, distancing students from classical literature was one of the ways in which race-based education sought to produce imperial subjects that were also held at a distance from national citizenship. By focusing on pedagogies of reading and writing, *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* opens up new ways for thinking about how literature, including but not limited to the literary arts of fiction and autobiography, was utilized as part of U.S. imperialism.

Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism argues that all the educational sites it examines actively participated within an imperial grammar of civilization, a racial epistemology and ontology of the body framed by historically specific discourses of “civilization” within laws, educational policies, and curricula as well as in photography, fiction, and other modes of cultural production that determined how particular modes of life and death were made legible and valued in dominant industrial capitalist society. In approaching how an imperial grammar of civilization produced U.S. imperial subjects, I follow black feminist theorist Hortense Spillers’s contention in “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book” that New World imperialism not only unleashed violent processes of colonization and slavery but also an epistemological violence that produced captive bodies by positing a racial ontology of the flesh. Spillers conceptualizes this epistemological violence as an “American grammar book” and observes that it functions by creating a grammatical split between “body” and “flesh.” Spillers demonstrates how the production of captive bodies involves systematic subjection through a “*theft of the*

body,” a forcible alienation from epistemologies of meaning that “converge” in a locus of the “biological, sexual, social, cultural, linguistic, ritualistic, and psychological.” The theft of the body results in the violent reduction of all that the body might mean to a racialized “flesh,” which Spillers defines as the grammatical “zero degree of social conceptualization.”²⁷ In her discussion of New World imperialism as the “historical ground” for the American grammar book, Spillers observes how slavery in particular produced a grammar of body and flesh by epistemologically “marking” the “captive body [to] render a kind of hieroglyphics of the flesh whose severe disjunctures come to be hidden to the cultural seeing by skin color,” and she questions whether this “phenomenon of marking and branding” might “actually ‘transfer’ from one generation to another, finding its various *symbolic substitutions* in an efficacy of meaning that repeat the initiating moments” (67). While not wishing to evacuate the historical specificity of Spillers’s American grammar book, I suggest that Spillers’ conceptualization of captive bodies and flesh offers a way to approach the production of imperial subjects at sites of race-based and racial liberal education taken up in the following chapters. In discussing the physical and epistemological “*theft of the body*” that occurs in the process of producing “captive bodies,” Spillers turns momentarily away from the grammatical production of the black female body to the “common historical ground” of the “socio-political order of the New World” as the “scene of *actual* mutilation, dismemberment, and exile” for “African and indigenous peoples” (67). I suggest that the slippage Spillers produces between New World colonization and slavery as well as between the grammatical production of captivity among enslaved Africans and indigenous peoples in the Americas creates an opening for investigating how the grammatical procedure Spillers conceptualizes might have been deployed across various imperial and colonial sites,

²⁷ Hortense Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” in spec. issue *Culture and Countermemory: The “American” Connection*, *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987), 67.

including experimental sites of race-based and racial liberal education, to produce imperial subjects. On one hand, what Spillers refers to as the American grammar book produces an epistemology of the flesh that continues to produce captive bodies at the “zero degree” of racialization for the U.S.’s material and rhetorical profit. On the other hand, however, the epistemology of the flesh contains within it the capacity to rupture this national grammar. It is precisely through producing captive bodies at odds with grammatical norms of civilization that the American grammar book also produces glimmers of its own destruction. As will be discussed in more detail below, Spillers suggests how such captive embodiments have the capacity “to break apart, to rupture violently the laws of American behavior that make such *syntax* [of capture] possible” and “to introduce a new *semantic* field/fold more appropriate to [this subject’s] own historical movement” (79).

Imperial Grammar of Civilization

Hortense Spillers’s conceptualization of an “American grammar book” provides a way to think against the dualistic binaries of progressive and conservative (or, “liberal” and “conservative”) that obscure how racial liberal education continues to produce racial hierarchies that it claims to disavow. More importantly, it offers a method for investigating how experiments in racial education, which were both racial liberal and race-based, contributed to making U.S. imperialism appear rational through representations of race, gender, sexuality, and class while also producing racial knowledge as rationality. In what follows, I excavate the educational dimensions of Spillers’s “American grammar book” for examining the relationship between experiments in racial education from the end of the Civil War to WWI and U.S. imperialism. Tracing Spillers’s genealogy of an American grammar book through this time period illuminates

how racial liberal education emerged as part of an *imperial grammar of civilization* that both influenced and was produced at race-based and racial liberal sites of education. My addition of the term *civilization* to Spillers's formulation marks the significant normative work that discourses of "civilization" accomplished in the time period from the Civil War to WWI. As historian Gail Bederman points out, civilizational discourse is contradictory and has been used in "multiple ways" to "legitimate different sorts of claims to power."²⁸ At the same time, she argues that by the 1890s it had "taken on a very specific set of meanings which revolved around three factors: race, gender, and millennial assumptions about human evolutionary progress" (25). Bederman explains that the popularization of Darwinian ideas of evolution by the latter part of the nineteenth century had exerted pressure on the dominant Christian protestant belief that history had a "cosmic purpose" leading toward the eventual perfection and redemption of humankind. Secular millennialism reconciled this religious *telos* with Darwin's contention that evolution was a random process by representing evolution as "working in history to perfect the world" (26). As discussed in Chapter One, this transformation is evident at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, where social scientific fields of anthropology, ethnology, and psychology overlapped with popular entertainment to represent civilizational achievement as something that could be apprehended, known, and measured through vision. The exposition was designed as a mass educational project and it actively sought to teach fairgoers that civilizational achievement could be perceived and known through a visual epistemology of knowledge in which physiognomic surfaces could be read for racial and sexual essences. Summed up in the fair's slogan, "To see is to know," the visual epistemology of knowledge promoted at the exposition was both *racial* and *racializing*. Fair organizers were influenced by methodologies produced in

²⁸ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 23.

the social sciences that attempted to evaluate the intellectual and civilizational capacities of different “races” by scrutinizing and measuring physical bodies. As Bederman points out, the civilizational achievement of racialized groups was believed to be visible in part through the appearance of sex differentiation in which greater differentiation was believed to indicate a higher order of civilization by conforming to white bourgeois gender norms (25). A racial epistemology of knowledge in which physiognomic surfaces could be read for racial and sexual essences thus also produced knowledge about the civilizational achievement of different “races.” At the same time, the exposition invited fairgoers to compare exhibits of racial groups to “see” the superiority of U.S. white civilization.

The World’s Columbian Exposition exemplifies how civilizational discourse functioned as an epistemological framing device for determining which bodies, behaviors, and modes of living were and were not fit for national “life.” The exposition was spatially organized, for instance, to keep the White City’s exhibits of U.S. civilizational achievement geographically uncontaminated by the spectacular entertainments and commercialism of the Midway Plaisance. As Bederman demonstrates, civilizational achievement in the White City was embodied in representations of white manhood, while, as I argue in Chapter One, the civilizational inferiority of the Midway Plaisance was embodied by orientalist representations of the “hootchy-kootchy” dances performed by Little Egypt on the popular Street in Cairo.²⁹ The temporally “primitive,” “savage,” and “barbaric” performances of the Midway, exemplified by Little Egypt’s dance, were highly regulated at the Exposition to contain the threat they ostensibly posed to representations of national civilizational progress while also appearing to invite forms of imperial discipline and governance. The Columbian Exposition exemplifies in microcosm how civilizational discourse reworked a temporality of religious millennialism for secular educational

²⁹ See Bederman, 31-41.

projects, including those discussed by the new proponents of scientific education who participated in the fair's educational congress. Civilizational discourse, however, also appeared as an epistemological frame at other educational sites that experimented with racial education. Philosopher Judith Butler uses the term "framing" to discuss how "life" is not only "known," or grammatically "legible," but also affectively "apprehended." Differentiating "life" from liberal concepts of individuality and personhood, Butler proposes that epistemological frames function in the context of U.S. imperial war to "differentiate the lives we can apprehend from those we cannot" by producing the "normative conditions for the production of the subject...such that our very capacity to discern and name the 'being' of the subject is dependent on norms that facilitate the recognition."³⁰ "Renewed" and reproduced over time in different contexts, epistemological frames distinguish grievable life in liberal states from modes of living that are ungrivable and therefore increasingly vulnerable to destruction. Butler argues furthermore that historically specific forms of racism "instituted and active at the level of perception" constitute epistemological frames by "produc[ing] iconic versions of populations who are eminently grievable, and others whose loss is no loss and who remain ungrivable," and this "distribution of grievability across populations has implications for why and when we feel politically consequential affective dispositions such as horror, guilt, righteous sadism, loss, and indifference" (24). Although Butler is discussing the U.S. War on Terror, her theorization of epistemological framing is useful for approaching the ways in which civilizational discourse was deployed by experiments in racial education to produce imperial subjectivities.

As discussed earlier, one of the primary interventions *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* makes in its approach to racial education is to argue that the race-based and racial liberal sites of education it investigates created imperial subjects. The race-based education programs of

³⁰ Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London/New York: Verso, 2009), 3.

Hampton and Carlisle, and in a different way, Dewey's experiments in racial liberal education were instead primarily concerned with, in the words of Hampton founder Samuel Chapman Armstrong, educating students for "life." Civilizational discourse framed how normative gender categories of "manhood," "womanhood," and "life" were apprehensible at different sites of education. Indeed, civilizational discourse mediated the grammar of body and flesh that Spillers argues produces captive subjectivities. The production of these subjectivities was an attempt to smooth over contradictions inherent to imperial nationhood. Borrowing Spillers' terms, students that were racialized as "primitive" or "savage" within dominant civilizational frames were subjected to forms of education that sought to capture them within a double bind in which they were compelled to perform desire for the normative "body" engendered within civilizational discourse while at the same time continuously disciplining a racialized "flesh," whose essentialized character held the *embodiment* of the normative citizen perpetually out of reach. It might even be more accurate, following black studies scholar Alexander Weheliye, to instead refer to the subjectification processes at work within experimental sites of racial education during this time as fleshly "desubjectivations."³¹ Spillers's captive flesh conceptualizes the imperial processes by which the captive body is opened to a "signifying property plus," a "layer of attenuated meanings," that contribute to the material and "rhetorical wealth" of the nation. Spillers names this process *pornotroping*, explaining that the "flesh," understood as the universalizing "zero degree" of "ethnicity," "enables a writer to perform a variety of conceptual moves all at once. Under its hegemony, the human body becomes a defenseless target for rape and veneration, and the body in its material and abstract phase, a resource for metaphor."³²

³¹ Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 110.

³² Spillers, 65-66.

The experimental sites of racial education examined in *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* both produced public representations of students and compelled students to produce public representations of themselves as captive bodies. Drawing upon the racial, gender, and sexual norms of civilizational discourse, these educational sites subjected students to epistemologically—and physically—violent processes of pornotroping. If the normative body of the citizen frames the universal genre of the “human,” then, as Weheliye observes, “Pornotroping...names the becoming-flesh of the (black) body and forms a primary component in the process by which human beings are converted into bare life.”³³ Produced within a national grammar as the “other” to the citizen subject, the captive flesh is held perpetually at a distance from civilizational norms and thus “becomes a source of irresistible, destructive sensuality” at the same time that it “reduces to a thing, becoming *being* for the captor.”³⁴ The flesh, in the words of Weheliye, produces the “black subject as not-quite-human,” and, according to Spillers, captures this subject within “cultural *vestibularity*.”³⁵ As Weheliye points out, Spillers’s conceptualization of pornotroping intervenes in marxist philosopher Louis Althusser’s theory of interpellation in which subjection occurs through the individual’s willing, spontaneous turn toward the “hail” of state ideology, which is exemplified for Althusser in the moment when an individual turns toward the police officer calling “Hey, you there!”³⁶ Weheliye explains that in the desubjectivation-as-subjectivation of pornotroping, “Louis A.’s ‘Hey you’ is replaced by whips, paddles, dungeons, chains, branding irons, large pots of boiling water, and other such instruments of torture.”³⁷ The epistemological violence of creating captive flesh is no less violent

³³ Weheliye, 90.

³⁴ Spillers, 67.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 67; Weheliye, 111.

³⁶ Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 174. For further discussion on Althusser’s theory of subjection as interpellation, see Chapter Three.

³⁷ Weheliye, 110.

than the repressive violence required to take captives for it is *through violence* that captive bodies are apprehended within the civilizational framing of the American grammar book.

Pedagogies of Imperialism examines how experiments in racial education attempted to materialize captive flesh at the borders of U.S. imperial projects. It therefore attends to the “shadow” figures that signify what Butler calls the “uncertain doubles” produced in normative productions of life and death.³⁸ While this doubled figure is “apprehended as ‘living,’” it does not appear as “life,” and as such “not only becomes the problem to be managed by normativity, but seems to be that which normativity is bound to reproduce” (7-8). At the sites of racial education I examine, these fleshly figures serve as the impetus for disciplining captive bodies. In Chapters Two and Three, I demonstrate how the figure of the “old man within” at Hampton and the “Indian mother” at Carlisle were represented in school newspapers, photography, and other official documents as threats to state imperial projects. At these race-based educational institutions, students were compelled to display in public performances, such as parades and drills, as well as published writing, photography, and mannered conduct that they were actively disciplining a racialized, “fleshy” essence, which appeared not only as “other” to national civilization but also as an insurgent threat to it. Dewey’s educational philosophy, which is discussed in Chapter Four, relied on anthropological and ethnological figures of “savages” and “slaves,” which he used to represent conservative societies and later reworked in his representations of “failed students” and “coolies.” While in Dewey’s model of progressive education students were not represented to be biologically bound to these figures, they nonetheless had to perform the transcendence of ways of life and ways of thinking associated with these racialized figures in order to demonstrate progressive “rationality.” In Chapter One, I suggest that these over-determined doubles shadowing the normative body produced within

³⁸ Butler, 7.

civilizational discourse be understood, riffing on William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as Sycoratic figures. Like Sycorax, the figure produced at epistemological borders of the social, political, and economic order that Prospero sets up on "his" island, these figures evidence imperial processes of pornotroping in which racialized and sexualized disorder appear to pose a continual threat to liberal "civilization." At the same time, the pedagogies of reading and writing developed at sites of racial education compelled students to desire the civilizational bodies they were prohibited from inhabiting.

Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism emphasizes the *imperial* dimensions of a national grammar of civilization in order to illuminate how the creation of captive flesh and bodies at experimental sites of racial education also produced imperial subjects for U.S. imperial projects. Spillers draws upon texts produced out of transatlantic slavery to demonstrate how the American grammar book's racialization of bodies and flesh can also be traced through to the 1960s "Moynihan Report," Patrick Moynihan's sociological study of the "Negro family" in the U.S. that pathologized the "'underachievement' of black males" as the symptom of an aberrant "matriarchal" family structure defined as "so far out of line with the *rest of American society*."³⁹ Made publicly legible *through the very terms* of racial and sexual violence grounded in a history of slavery that alienated the black female body from normative categories of gender, the black female body produced by the American grammar book is made vulnerable to ongoing symbolic and *physical* violence by being held perpetually at a distance in legal, academic, popular, and artistic texts from a normative national "culture." In her conceptualization of the American grammar book, however, Spillers produces a productive slippage by turning to "a common historical ground, the socio-political order of the New World." In turning momentarily away from the specific misnaming of black females in "Moynihan's fiction," Spillers argues that the

³⁹ Spillers, 65-66.

“socio-political order of the New World,” “with its human sequence written in blood, *represents* for its African and indigenous peoples a scene of *actual* mutilation, dismemberment, and exile.” It is *this* history of New World colonization and slavery that Spillers cites in order to begin theorizing the grammatical production of “captive bodies” through an epistemological and physical “*theft of the body*” (67). The slippage Spillers produces between processes of colonization and slavery and their outcomes for African *and* indigenous people in the New World opens up questions about how the imperial production of captive bodies within settler colonialism and slavery might function through overlapping yet distinct grammatical operations. Indeed, native studies scholar Mishuana Goeman seizes upon this opening in Spillers’s article in her own conceptualization of a “settler-colonial grammar of place,” operative within law, policy, and cultural texts, in which “[t]he classification of ‘Indian’ has had everything to do with [the] spatial occupation of land and bodies.”⁴⁰ In her reading of Dine, Muscogee, and Seminole artist Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie’s intervention in this settler-colonial grammar of place, Goeman emphasizes that European colonizers claimed indigenous lands through the grammatical production of native women’s bodies as “surfaces, inscribed with alignment to a messy nature, open to conquest.” She observes that the racial and sexual production of the violable native woman within a settler-colonial grammar of place functioned “to solidify Europeans’ place in the world as they met up with multiple different worlds” and argues that Tsinhnahjinnie’s work “recalls the coding of early Europeans who dehumanized Native people by creating a grammar of place that named and claimed the New World through the bodily inscription of Native women” (257). Instead of arguing for the primacy of slavery, colonization, or overseas imperialism in understanding an imperial grammar of civilization, I attempt to suggest the ways

⁴⁰ Mishuana R. Goeman, “Disrupting a Settler-Colonial Grammar of Place: The Visual Memoir of Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie,” *Theorizing Native Studies*, eds. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2014), 236.

in which these different imperial projects have comprised articulated processes that, at least in the case of racial education, have borrowed strategies from each other in the process of creating captive bodies. Carlisle founder Richard Henry Pratt, for example, explicitly reworked strategies of “natal alienation,” to borrow a term from sociologist Orlando Patterson, that were part of the Middle Passage in order to break his students from “tribal” affiliations and reconstitute them as civilized “Indians” who would, among other things, consent to land dispossession under legislation like the 1887 Dawes Act.⁴¹ Indeed, the sites of racial education I examine evidence the way in which racial epistemologies of knowledge and knowledge production about race circulated as imperial strategies of domination and counterinsurgency.

One of the primary ways that racial education attempted to create captive bodies was through pedagogies that compelled student performances of their distance from U.S. civilizational norms. In fiction and non-fiction writing, photography, and other public performances, students were tasked with providing evidence of the way in which racial education had transformed them for “life” within the nation. Hampton and Carlisle produced before-and-after photographs of students that demonstrated their conversion to national civilizational norms through sartorial transformation, while school newspapers published curated testimonies of students’ internalization of civilizational norms as well as accounts of their attempts to embark on their own educational civilizing missions. Dewey, like other social scientists working in the early twentieth century, saw fiction writing as a means to disclose information about native “cultures” as well as evidence of progressive growth toward developing a modern cosmopolitan standpoint.⁴² In each of these cases, students were compelled to perform civilizational gender norms to publicly embody the discipline of racialized fleshy character traits, including what were

⁴¹ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 38.

⁴² For more on Dewey and fiction, see Chapter Four.

believed to be tendencies toward “irrationality.” Racialized flesh appeared in these performances to demonstrate students’ distance from national civilization and their need for imperial oversight. In many cases, rigid performances of civilizational gender norms themselves signified students’ racial distance from citizenship. American studies scholar Laura Wexler indicates, for example, how the genre of sentimentalism, with its moral imperatives governing domestic organization, dress, cleanliness, and conduct according to the ideology of “separate spheres” for men and women, outlived its mid-nineteenth century popularity in fiction to persist as a “sentimental construct” within education and other reform institutions that “suppl[ied] the rationale for raw intolerance to be packaged as education.”⁴³ In her readings of photography, fiction, and curricula developed at Hampton and Carlisle, Wexler demonstrates how the strict Victorian codes of mid-nineteenth century civilizational discourse persisted as a means of disciplining students through pedagogies of “domestication” that would prepare them not for bourgeois citizenship but more often for labor as domestic servants. The “double-edged, double-jeopardy nature of sentimental perception” in which visual perceptions of domestic backwardness could be apprehended in surface representations of uncleanliness or gender disorder justified the “social control of marginal domestic populations” (105). Although white women could sometimes transgress these gender norms to signify their modernity as New Women, African American and indigenous women were subjected to an imperial grammar of civilization that represented transgressive sexuality as an essentialized property of racialized flesh. As Spillers argues of grammatical processes of pornotroping, the African American female lost at the “very least” access the dominant gender category of the “woman” within the slavery system. The domestic and manual training programs that appeared across sites of racial education, including boarding schools,

⁴³ Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 105.

manual labor and teaching institutes, overseas schools, and urban settlements, played an active role in the grammatical process of pornotroping. Racial education both produced and compelled representations of students' racialized otherness through the sexual and gendered transgression of civilizational norms at the same time that it created domestic and manual training programs designed as a pedagogical form of counterinsurgency against such transgressions. Indeed, at these sites of education a racialized politics of respectability materialized in educational programs designed to produce and police imperial subjectivities. Students did not perform civilizational respectability to gain access to white middle-class status, but instead to indicate they could *survive* within modern industrial society.⁴⁴

Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism traces an imperial grammar of civilization across multiple sites of racial education, including laws and policies, educational institutions, photography, fiction, and non-fiction. According to Spillers, the epistemological and physical violence that forges the captive body “[renders] a kind of hieroglyphics of the flesh whose severe disjunctures come to be hidden to the cultural seeing by skin color.”⁴⁵ In describing the grammatical production of captive flesh as a “hieroglyphic” production, Spillers indicates the ways in which the American grammar book shapes visual, written, and perceptual epistemologies of knowledge. At the same time, the hieroglyphic production of the captive flesh becomes a site for apprehending ruptural possibilities within an imperial grammar of civilization. While an imperial grammar of civilization creates epistemologies of captive flesh as national “rationality,” it also contains glimmers of its own rupture within the “shadow” figures it engenders. In her discussion of pornotroping, Spillers argues, “This materialized scene of unprotected female flesh—of female flesh ‘engendered’—offers a praxis and a theory, a text for

⁴⁴ For more on “uplift” as a black middle class ideology, see Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 1996).

⁴⁵ Spillers, 67.

living and dying, and a method for reading both through their diverse mediations” (67). The scene of the violent ungendering of the racialized female body does not result in absolute imperial domination but rather “engenders” a “text for living and dying” as well as a “praxis,” “theory,” and “method” for its apprehension. In other words, as discussed in Chapter One, the captive body created within an imperial grammar of civilization is a *phantasmagorical* objectification. This isn’t to say that this phantasmagoria isn’t also material. Spillers argues of the American grammar book, “We might concede...that sticks and bricks *might* break our bones, but words will most certainly *kill* us” (68). However, it does indicate the fragility of U.S. imperial projects, particularly through the ways in which these projects have remained beholden to the “rationality” of their racial epistemologies of knowledge and the knowledge they produce about race. *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* thus attends to grammatical interventions and ruptures within the written, visual, and performance texts it considers. It does this as an attempt to participate in a small way within what Spillers defines as a “project of liberation” that has “two passionate motivations”: “1) to break apart, to rupture violently the laws of American behavior that make such *syntax* possible, 2) to introduce a new *semantic* field/fold more appropriate to [the captive subject’s] own historical movement” (79)

Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism investigates an imperial grammar of civilization across multiple sites of racial education while also remaining attentive to ruptural interventions to this grammar by producing, to borrow from Said, “contrapuntal readings” of the texts it treats in order to trace “discrepant experiences” of U.S. imperialism across sites of racial education.⁴⁶ Each chapter reads texts that are often not taken up together in order to illuminate “structures of attitude and reference” that “appear in the cultural languages of literature, history, or ethnography, sometimes allusively and sometimes carefully plotted, across...works that are not

⁴⁶ Said, 30.

otherwise connected to one another or to an official ideology of ‘empire’” (50).⁴⁷ Taken as a whole, the dissertation additionally provides an entry point into analyzing the often overlooked contrapuntal relationship between race-based and racial liberal education by demonstrating how at different sites of racial education “various themes play off one another [...]; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes” (51). As such, it demonstrates how the “organized play” between disparate sites and experiences of racial education can be traced through an imperial grammar of civilization. At the same time, it remains attentive to the doubled way in which “epistemologies of captive flesh” can be interpreted. Instead of attempting to disclose alternate epistemologies of knowing, being, and feeling actively suppressed and eliminated within an imperial grammar of civilization, the dissertation instead indicates the referential points where they emerge and suggests their ruptural possibilities. In this way, it avoids participating in a mode of ethnographic reading that was *de rigueur* within sites of racial education in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

To trace the ruptural possibilities within written, visual, and performed texts, *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* traces some of the ways that civilizational discourse as an imperial framing device has been refracted within and across multiple genres of cultural production, including sentimentalism, realism, and romance. Instead of approaching these genres as labels to describe static groupings of texts with shared conventions or subject matter, they are instead approached for the way in which they framed historically specific iterations of civilizational discourse. Indeed, the ways in which these genres produce modes for framing bodies and flesh are only artificially different. In its focus on a variety of genres associated with U.S. imperialism,

⁴⁷ Said originally refers in the latter half of the quote to “structures of location and geographical reference.” I follow Amy Kaplan in understanding U.S. imperialism not primarily through a geographical model of core-periphery. See Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism departs from scholarship on education and imperialism produced within fields of postcolonial and American studies that has tended to focus on literary canon formation and the form of the *Bildungsroman* to theorize how literature both represented and was used within educational projects to create imperial subjectivities. Postcolonial scholar David Lloyd observes, for instance, that aesthetic education has utilized national literary canons to create idealized figures of the citizen as the “universal formal identity of the human.”⁴⁸ National literary canons compel individual subjection to state and capitalist relations of production by embodying a representation of the ideal citizen and demanding the “subjection of the reader to this canonical form, the alienation of his or her autonomy in the aesthetic work” (18-19). Postcolonial scholar Gauri Viswanathan argues that in the case of British imperial education in India, national literary canons represented an “ideal self and ideal political state,” which served as a “mask for economic exploitation.”⁴⁹ Following this line of investigation, literary critic Meg Wesling observes a similar function of literature as “mask” or “proxy” in discussing how a U.S. literary canon was forged as part of imperialism in the Philippines. Such scholarship has also tended to privilege the *Bildungsroman*, or novel of formation, because it dramatizes and compels the reconciliation of the individual to society by representing, in the words of Lloyd, “man as a producer of form and as producer, in particular, of the forms of himself.”⁵⁰ As discussed earlier, the sites of racial education taken up by *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* were not primarily citizenship training programs, nor did they teach “literature” as a means to compel students to identify as citizen subjects. Students at race-based educational institutions were denied classical literary training because it was thought that such an education would “exhaust” their racialized intellectual capacities. Instead pedagogies of reading and writing were designed to cultivate

⁴⁸ Lloyd, 6.

⁴⁹ Viswanathan, 3.

⁵⁰ Lloyd, 6.

students' desire for civilizational embodiment at the same time that it held them at a perpetual distance from it.

As I hope to show, genres of sentimentalism, realism, and romance participated in creating grammatical conventions of pornotroping by functioning as epistemological frames for representing “life” in the imperial nation. Extending Laura Wexler’s observation that sentimentalism functioned in the late nineteenth century as a general cultural and institutional “construct,” *Pedagogies of U.S. Imperialism* attends to how realism and romance also served to frame the civilization missions at sites of racial education. In their interplay and overlap, these genres participated in the grammatical production of captive flesh, and, as such, provide an entry point for apprehending ruptures within an imperial grammar of civilization. As Wexler argues, sentimentalism, for example, functioned as a mode of perception in literature and photography that constructed white civilizational superiority by producing racialized differentiations according to a normative ideology of domesticity. As she points out, sentimentalist modes of perception that “disparaged” native and African American ways of living because they did not appear normative within a bourgeois domestic frame overlapped with modes of documentary realism, especially within the cutting-edge technology of photography, that produced a type of commonsense “verisimilitude” between seeing and knowing.⁵¹ Within the texts I examine, imperial subjects performed bodily captivity through written and visual representations of their racial, gendered, and sexual distance from the embodiment of civilization, and by extension, citizenship. While always distanced from the embodiment of citizenship, representations of manliness or womanliness associated with civilized self-restraint indicated students’ counterinsurgent discipline of an insurgent flesh, which threatened to materialize in “irrational”

⁵¹ See Wexler, 103-106.

activities. In addition, race-based education often cultivated sentimental reading practices among students to get them to identify with U.S. imperial projects.

The teachers, administrators, and theorists of racial education, however, often imagined their work as a civilizational rescue mission that violated bourgeois codes of self-restraint and thus styled the work they were doing according to the conventions of romance. Embarking on the adventure of schooling students racialized as “primitive,” racial educators had a tendency to represent their work as a “thrilling escape from the routine and restriction of their ordinary lives,” including its civilizational gender norms.⁵² Carlisle teacher Marianna Burgess, for instance, played at transgressing bourgeois gender norms in her role as editor and writer for the school’s newspaper *Indian Helper*. The gender ambiguity and sexual predation of her editorial persona, the Man-on-the-Bandstand, contrasted with the strict gendered and sexual order imposed in prescriptive articles and stories written to help rescue Carlisle students from what she represented to be degenerate ways of living. In a different way, Dewey saw progressive educational missions among eastern European Jewish immigrants in New York’s Lower East Side and in East Asia as “revitalizing” endeavors. Indeed, the revitalization of contact with unfamiliar “cultures” was built into his theory of progressive education and democracy. As American studies scholar Matthew Frye Jacobson observes, a civilizational discourse of “barbarian virtues” in the latter nineteenth century contributed to U.S. imperial projects by making them appear as occasions for national revitalization.⁵³ Popular literature’s romantic revival therefore accompanied the idea that romantic encounters with “primitive” others contributed to national vitality. Literary critic Nancy Glazener explains, “Whereas realism

⁵² Nancy Glazener, *Reading for Realism: The History of a U.S. Literary Institution, 1850-1910*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 148.

⁵³ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).

promoted good citizenship through self-discipline and self-denial, the romance was imagined to offer an outlet for antisocial impulses and instincts comparable to the outlet provided by imperialist warfare and expansion.”⁵⁴ Through its valorization of ostensibly anti-modern figures like the child and “primitive” storyteller as “therapeutic” antidotes to the threat of over-civilization, romance styled imperialism as a rescue mission to “save” vital, primitive instincts before they were eliminated in processes of industrial modernization. However, as Glazener points out, these “instincts” “were not anciently discarded elements of the self [...]. Rather, the symbolic identities that romance readers tried on were wrested from real populations being subjected to distancing repression and discipline during the very era of the new romance’s promotion” (162-163). Representational conventions associated with sentimentalism, realism, and romance not only contributed to producing racialized epistemologies of knowledge but also in framing perceptions of what counted as life capable of surviving or even thriving within the conditions of modern industrial civilization. As such, grammatical interventions and ruptures within an imperial grammar of civilization are often perceptible as interventions to generic conventions of writing and reading associated with sentimentalism, realism, and romance.

⁵⁴ Glazener, 148.

Chapter One—The Glamour of Empire at the World’s Columbian Exposition

“If I understand rightly the spirit of the proposed exhibition, it is to show the history of our continent since its European occupation and its influence upon the history of the world. It is to expound, as far as may be, the steps of the progress of civilization and its arts in successive centuries, and in all lands up to the present time and their present condition; to be, in fact, an illustrated encyclopedia of civilization.”

--G. Brown Goode, *First Draft of a System of Classification for the World’s Columbian Exposition* (1893)¹

“...the thought that in four short months all this architecture and all this marvelous collection of all the treasures of industry and of art shall have vanished forever, like the insubstantial fabric of a vision, leaving not a rack behind? But the intelligence which has formed them, the genius which has fashioned them, the great ideas which are incorporated in them—these abide and shall abide forever and forever; and it is to these that you and I and every teacher address our work day by day. We work in that which is eternal and which shall never pass away.”

--James B. Angell, opening address for the Education Exhibit at the World’s Columbian Exposition²

At the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, James Burrill Angell, president of the University of Michigan, stood before the fair’s International Congress of Education to declare the universal significance of the new secular, scientific education that was becoming popular in the U.S. The exposition, which was organized during a national economic depression, celebrated the scientific, technological, and industrial modernization of the U.S. as the culmination of a world historical progress mission set in motion by Christopher Columbus’s transatlantic voyage to the New World.³ In his address, Angell claimed the fair’s mass educational mission for scientific education. He said that the fair’s White City, a miniature city of white, mostly neoclassical buildings that ostensibly housed the best artifacts of the “civilized” world, could be “enfolded” into the Education Exhibit’s mission, remarking, “for all art, and all sciences—what hope of progress have these, what hope of perpetuity have they, except as the

¹ George Brown Goode, *First Draft of a System of Classification for the World’s Columbian Exposition* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), 654. <https://archive.org/details/firstdraftofsyst00good>.

² U.S. Bureau of Education, *Education at the World’s Columbian Exposition* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896), 442.

³ Historical background of the World’s Columbian Exposition has primarily been drawn from Gail Bederman, “Remaking Manhood through Race and ‘Civilization’” in *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1995); David F. Burg, *Chicago’s White City of 1893* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976); James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago’s Utopias of 1893* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press); and Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

moral and intellectual discipline which we are engaged in cultivating is preserved?” (441). In his focus on how the White City’s exhibits and architecture represented universal, progressive, and scientific rationality, Angell’s remarks also reinforced the fair’s broader educational mission, which was encapsulated by exhibit organizer George Brown Goode’s aphorism, “To *see* is to know.”⁴ Goode drew from pedagogical innovations developed within scientific education to create a system of classification for fair exhibits that he believed would democratize civilized culture for the fair’s mass audience. One of the primary innovations in scientific education was the use of “object lessons,” which constituted a departure from restrictive pedagogies of book or rote learning toward pedagogies that taught empirical practices of observation and firsthand “experience.”⁵ As Goode put it in his *First Draft of a System of Classification for the World’s Columbian Exposition* (1893), the exposition, which would draw visitors “from every village in America,” was not organized merely to display the *products* of technological and industrial modernization but, above all, to teach the *ideas* behind them: “*The exhibition of the future will be an exhibition of ideas rather than of objects, and nothing will be deemed worthy of admission to its halls which has not some living, inspiring thought behind it, and which is not capable of teaching some valuable lesson.*”⁶ For Goode, the exposition’s object lessons would not only teach fairgoers the universal “ideas” behind displays of civilizational achievement; they would also bring fairgoers into national culture. Elsewhere Goode had described this educational process as “partition[ing] the territory of *Cultergeschichte*.”⁷

⁴ George Brown Goode, *The Museums of the Future* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 427. <https://archive.org/details/museumsfuture00goodgoog>.

⁵ See Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Knopf, 1964). viii-ix.

⁶ Goode, *First Draft of a System of Classification*, 649, 656 (Goode’s emphasis).

⁷ Goode, *The Museums of the Future*, 440.

Thus, the educational mission of the fair could be described as the attempt to universalize national culture as the height of global civilizational achievement. According to fair organizers like Angell and Goode, the fair was to cultivate among its mass audience of visitors a scientific standpoint that would reveal universal processes of civilizational growth exemplified by the modern industrial and technological achievements on display in the fair's White City, an idealized representation of the urban industrial future yet-to-come.⁸ To describe the universal significance of the fair's White City, Angell borrowed poetic language from William Shakespeare's 1611 play *The Tempest*. Lamenting the impermanence of the architecture and exhibits of the White City, which would be dismantled in six months time, Angell echoed the scholar-magician Prospero's famous soliloquy on the impermanence of his own power over the unnamed Atlantic island where he had found refuge from exile. Angell wonders whether at the end of "four short months," the White City's exhibits would "have vanished forever, like the insubstantial fabric of a vision, leaving not a rack behind?" and responds:

But the intelligence which has formed them, the genius which has fashioned them, the great ideas which are incorporated in them—these abide and shall abide forever and forever; and it is to these that you and I and every teacher address our work day by day. We work in that which is eternal and which shall never pass away.⁹

In his appeal to *The Tempest*, Angell attempted to universalize the methodologies of the new scientific education by representing them as part of an "eternal" "intelligence" and "genius." His citation of *The Tempest*, however, also unwittingly discloses the historical ground from which the Columbian Exposition gained such universal significance. Philosopher Sylvia Wynter identifies *The Tempest*, which was written in response to European exploration and discovery, as a "foundational" text that "enacts" the epistemological transformation of western European philosophies of the human produced out of imperial encounters with lands and peoples of which

⁸ For more on the utopian urban future represented at the Columbian Exposition, see Gilbert, *Perfect Cities*.

⁹ U.S. Bureau of Education, 442.

they had hitherto had no knowledge. According to Wynter, *The Tempest* performs the “mutational shift” from a religiously coded model of patriarchal civilizational hierarchy to a new secular hierarchy anchored primarily by a “*physiognomic* model of racial/cultural difference.”¹⁰ Although Prospero attributes his power over the Atlantic island to his mastery of the secular liberal arts, his orchestration of play’s main events appear over and over again not as the result of his superior education but of the violent, coercive power he exercises over Ariel and Caliban, the island’s native inhabitants. In Wynter’s argument, the play dramatizes how the patriarchal order anchoring religious hierarchies of civilization in Europe gave way to a *racialized* hierarchy of power in which Prospero *and* his daughter Miranda exercise dominion over the “hag-born whelp” Caliban, who they have enslaved through a combination of physical violence and forced education (1.:2: 283).¹¹ Angell’s citation of *The Tempest* in relation to the new scientific education, which both organized and was exemplified by the Columbian Exposition, indicates how the exposition might be approached as offering an imperial grammar of civilization, a racial epistemology and ontology of the body framed by, in the case the fair, a normative discourse of white, manly civilization that represented how particular modes of life and death were made legible and valued in industrial capitalist society.

In this chapter, I treat Chicago’s World’s Columbian Exposition as what Goode calls an “*illustrated encyclopedia of civilization*” to investigate how the fair participated in and actively “taught” an imperial grammar of civilization, especially through visual pedagogies popularized by the new scientific education.¹² I place “taught” in quotations because, as will be

¹⁰ Sylvia Wynter, “Beyond Miranda’s Meanings: Un/Silencing the ‘Demonic Ground’ of Caliban’s ‘Woman,’” *The Black Feminist Reader*, eds. Joy James and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting (Malden, MA/Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 112.

¹¹ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman (New York/London: Norton, 2004).

¹² Goode, *First Draft of a System of Classification*, 442. The way in which white women were strategically brought into imperial education at Indian boarding schools is discussed in Chapter Three.

demonstrated, exposition administrators and exhibitors were more concerned with creating a spectacle of civilization and, in so doing, shaping fairgoers' *perceptions* of U.S. civilization, than they were with teaching fairgoers anything like principles or theories of civilization. Several scholars have demonstrated how the Columbian Exposition and world's fairs more generally have supported imperialism. Fair historian Robert Rydell argues that U.S. world's fairs in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries participated in producing an "ideology of economic development" in which economic expansion, while "concentrated in fewer and fewer hands," held the promise of "eventual utopia."¹³ As "world's universities," expositions, according to Rydell, popularized scientific racism by "put[ting] the nations and people of the world on display for comparative purposes." The ostensibly scientific racial hierarchies of people displayed at world's fairs provided an ideological basis for state projects including the Spanish-American-Philippines War of 1898, settler colonialism, Jim Crow laws, immigration restriction, and laws and policies aimed at ordering masses of workers in industrial cities (4-5). As historian Gail Bederman has pointed out, the White City's exhibits represented, furthermore, the rational civilizational achievement embodied by the white, manly citizen subject.¹⁴ My focus on an imperial glamour of civilization at the fair emphasizes not only how the fair popularized scientific racism but also how its popularization of scientific education's visual epistemology of knowledge was grounded in New World imperialism. It examines how in the process of constructing an idealized "rational" subject through which fairgoers might envision themselves

¹³ Rydell, 5. Other works that treat imperialism at the fair include, Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*; Robert W. Rydell, Nancy E. Gwinn, and James Burkhart Gilbert, eds., *Fair Representations: World's Fair and the Modern World* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994); and Hazel V. Carby, "'On the Threshold of Women's Era': Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory," special issue "Race," *Writing, and Difference, Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985).

¹⁴ See the Introduction to Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*.

the exposition also produced imperial subjects through representations of bodies in racial and sexual excess of dominant civilizational norms.

In *Of Grammatology*, poststructuralist philosopher Jacques Derrida observes that the “idea of the book,” exemplified by the encyclopedia, within modern western philosophy signifies the “idea of a totality, finite or infinite, of the signifier,” always referring to a “natural totality.” In this way, the book also signifies the ostensibly universal rationality of the knowledge-producing subject, or *logos*. Derrida furthermore ascribes to the book a counterinsurgent function against the historical, contingent process of “writing.” In his words, the idea of the book is the “encyclopedic protection of theology and of logocentrism against the disruption of writing, against its aphoristic energy, [...] and against difference in general.”¹⁵ As an “*illustrated encyclopedia of civilization*,” the World’s Columbian Exposition produced representations of the white manly U.S. citizen as the *logos*, the universal subject of modern scientific rationality, through a tautological *visual* epistemology of knowledge that both relied on and produced racial hierarchies. The rational *logos* of the fair was embodied by the white, manly citizen subject. At the same time, fair organizers and exhibitors attempted to universalize the standpoint of this subject among a mass audience of fairgoers through visual pedagogies based on the idea that “to see is to know” and taught a racial reading practice in which physiognomic surfaces were read for evidence of essential identities that could, in turn, be valued according to the civilizational norms of modern industrial society. This visual pedagogy was a key part of the fair’s ostensibly democratic educational mission. As Goode put it in an article on “Museums of the Future,” “In this busy, critical, and skeptical age, each man is seeking to know all things, and life is too short for many words. The eye is used more and more, the ear less and less, and in the use of the eye,

¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 18.

descriptive writing is set aside for pictures, and pictures in their turn are replaced by actual objects.”¹⁶ Remarking that object lessons were already part of the new scientific “school-room,” especially in the use of the blackboard, he argued that the museum within a “democratic land” should not only reach “the professional man and the man of leisure” but should also be “adapted to the needs of the mechanic, the factory operator, the day laborer, the salesman, and the clerk” (427, 432). In its attempt to “democratize” U.S. civilization, the Columbian Exposition cultivated among fairgoers a visual epistemology of knowledge as racial spectacle.

Indeed, the Columbian Exposition did not primarily attempt to teach fairgoers a grammar of civilization by disclosing scientific principles of growth but instead sought to cultivate what I call a dazzling *glamour* of civilization.¹⁷ The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the term “glamour” to a “corrupt form of grammar,” which up until the Middle Ages had referred to both the scientific study of language as well as the arts of magic and astrology.¹⁸ My use of the term *glamour* emphasizes the magical, “fetishistic” component of scientific education that its proponents were always attempting to contain and elide. In his theorization of commodity fetishism, Karl Marx argues that the “mystical character,” or “fetishism,” of the commodity form arose from the transformation of use-value, which represented “definite social relations between men,” into a “fantastic...relation between things” in the capitalist process of exchange.¹⁹ Marx makes recourse to an analogy of how objects appear to the eye in order to elucidate how the “substitution” of the “social characteristics of men’s own labor” came to appear in the commodity form as the “socio-natural” or “objective characteristics of the products of labor

¹⁶ Goode, “Museums of the Future,” 427.

¹⁷ My use of the term “glamour” is suggested by writer and activist Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s phrase “glamour of slavery” in *Iola Leroy, Or Shadows Uplifted*. See Chapter Two.

¹⁸ “grammar, n.,” *OED Online*, December 2015, Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/view/Entry/80574?rskey=qxleIY&result=1&isAdvanced=false>

¹⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), 163.

themselves.” Marx contrasts the physical process in which light is transmitted to the “optic nerve” creating a “physical relationship between physical things” with the illusion that there is an “objective form of a thing outside the eye.” Marx thus proposes a duality between “real,” objective, and scientific epistemologies of knowledge and “fantastic” ways of knowing, which he compares to an anachronistic “fetishism” (165). The exposition’s attempt to teach a mass audience of fairgoers a scientific standpoint of empirical observation in which physiognomic surfaces could be read for racial and sexualized essences functioned as a type of “fetishism.” Instead of teaching scientific principles of civilizational development, the fair attempted primarily to cultivate a particular *feeling*—even a whole sensory experience—among fairgoers that the White City exemplified a universal process of civilization development. A glamorous experience of U.S. civilizational superiority created by the fair’s spatial layout and architecture, anthropological and ethnological exhibits, and textual materials, including souvenir books, pamphlets, and fiction, was often described by fairgoers as overwhelming the senses.

Fair organizers tried to delineate glamorous visual displays of civilizational achievement from commodity spectacles by drawing a boundary between the White City, which reportedly housed artifacts representing the best of the best of civilization, from the Midway Plaisance, or the fair’s commercial pleasure district. One of the primary ways that the exposition regulated its glamour of civilization was by creating an orientalized boundary between the White City and Midway Plaisance by representing the Midway as the exotic, “irrational” counterpart to the White City’s embodiment of civilized rationality. Whereas the White City’s displays of civilizational achievement were to showcase the objective, scientific “reality” of the superior technological and industrial advances produced by a white manly *logos*, fair administrators dismissed the Midway’s concessions as irrational, fantastical, and commercialized spectacles.

The counterpart to the exposition's production of the scientific *logos* was the figure of irrationality cut in the exotic, popular performances of the *danse du ventre*, or "belly dance," on the Midway's Street in Cairo. Appearing in excess of the White City's racial and sexual civilizational order, the *danse du ventre* simultaneously shocked and titillated the sensibilities of exhibitors and visitors with the gyrating hips and midsections of its dancers. Of particular notoriety after the fair was the dancer Little Egypt, a burlesque and vaudeville performer of the "hootchy kootchy" who was rumored to have gotten her start in the Midway's Egyptian Village. The name "Little Egypt," however, did not refer to one but rather several dancers, including Middle Eastern and North African, African American, and white U.S. dancers who performed after the fair was over. As such, Little Egypt didn't reference a "real" individual so much as an idea of irrationality with the apparent capacity to disrupt the fair's dazzling glamour of civilization with a racialized spectacle of sexuality. Indeed, Little Egypt was a figure whose orientalized display of sexuality marked the limits of scientific rationality, and, as such, appeared to invite imperial forms of discipline and governance both in the U.S. cities and abroad.

At the same time, I argue that performances of Little Egypt produced "fetishistic" epistemologies of knowledge that had the capacity to intervene in the exposition's dominant glamour of civilization. The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the word "fetish" to the anthropological writing of the European age of discovery to refer to "an inanimate object worshipped by preliterate peoples on account of its supposed inherent magical powers, or as being animated by a spirit."²⁰ In his conceptualization of commodity fetishism, Marx adopts the standpoint of the anthropological or ethnological scientist to dismiss the commodity's phantasmagorical or "mystical" representation of value. In disclosing the exposition's glamorous

²⁰ "fetish, n." *OED Online*, December 2015, Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/view/Entry/69611?rskey=pewzrL&result=1>

production of knowledge as racial spectacle, I repurpose Marx's concept of the fetish to describe how performances of the "hootchy kootchy," in *appearing* to the fair's "rational" viewers as exotic, irrational spectacle, were able to use "fetishism" as a veil to conceal epistemologies of knowledge that the exposition attempted to penetrate, discipline, and devalue. Little Egypt's dance, in other words, intervened in the exposition's glamour of civilization by playing to the rational spectator's desire that the dancer perform the racial and sexual excess of the white, manly *logos*. In so doing, her performances exposed the glamorous representations of civilization at the fair as fetishistic, or as phantasmagorical spectacle, by disrupting a reading practice in which bodily surfaces could be read for racial and sexualized essences. Little Egypt did not disclose an essentialized racial core in her performances but rather played to a dominant audience's desire for performances of racial and sexual excess. Returning to Angell's citation of *The Tempest*, Little Egypt might be thought of as a Sycoratic figure legible within the fair's "illustrated encyclopedia of civilization" through "pornotropic" representations of racial and sexual violability, or, in Spiller's terms, fleshly "metaphors of captivity and mutilation" traceable to a grammar of civilization produced within New World imperialism.²¹ Sycorax, the Algerian exile whose overtly sexualized power posed a continual threat to the racial, gendered, and sexual order that Prospero imposed on "his" island, is a composite figure of slavery, indigeneity, and migration. As the figure produced at the boundaries of Prospero's dream of rational order, Sycorax might also be thought of as the unnamed insurgent figure that posed a threat to Angell's and other fair organizers' dream that the exposition embody a universal "genius" of civilization. In her fetishistic production of knowledge, however, the Sycoratic figure of Little Egypt and her performances might also provide what Wynter calls the "demonic ground" beyond the standpoint of the scientific *logos* represented by the fair from which other epistemologies of knowledge

²¹ Spillers, 68.

could be constructed.²² I conclude the chapter by speculating on how students at race-based educational experiments who were featured as both students and living artifacts at the exposition might have encountered this figure and produced different knowledge of themselves and their place in the nation.

The New Scientific Education and the Glamour of Empire

Charles C. Bonney, the president of the World's Congress Auxiliary, opened the International Congress on Education, which gathered together prominent educators from around the world, by stating that the industrial, technological, and scientific advances of the modern era had generated so many new branches of learning that they had created an educational "emergency." In response to this "emergency," he saw "practical psychology," along with developments in kindergarten, manual, industrial, and higher education, giving rise to a new scientific system that would be based on "correct and eternal principles." The older "barbaric" education in the U.S. would be superseded by a system of education unified under a scientific episteme that "secured, in a rational order, that general knowledge which intelligent persons in all countries should possess." He declared, "The time has come to discriminate the universal from the particular, the requirements of all from the needs of a few, and form an educational system in which those discriminations will be preserved." The "discriminations" that would delineate the "universal," however, were constructed through an imperial grammar of civilization that distinguished modern scientific rationality from ostensibly pre-modern forms of irrationality through representations of the latter's racial, gendered, and sexual excess. Older religious and philosophical arguments for the moral value of popular education were not entirely replaced by scientific education but were instead transformed in light of methods and insights developed

²² For more on "demonic ground," see Wynter, 119-120.

within fields of anthropology, ethnology, and experimental psychology. Scientific educators were especially interested the ways that manual and physical education along with scientific methodologies could prepare students for modern industrial conditions of life.²³ Although manual education programs had been pioneered at race-based educational institutions like the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute for blacks in the U.S. South and the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, such institutions were located off the “thoroughfare” of the Columbian Exposition’s educational exhibit. While both schools had been promoted as secular models for shaping the character of black and native students racialized as “primitive” within the U.S., Hampton and Carlisle were not featured as part of the International Congress on Education nor the main educational exhibit. Selim H. Peabody, the Chief of the Department of Liberal Arts explained that while the “ruling idea” of the educational exhibit was to “offer the best opportunities for interesting comparison and critical observation,” an “exception” would be made for manual training institutes, which would be “easily accessible, but not on the thoroughfare.”²⁴ While Hampton and Carlisle developed pedagogies that were to function as a type of counterinsurgency against what the schools represented to be students’ insurgent racial characteristics, the new scientific education at the Columbian Exposition represented mainstream manual and physical education as a means to promote the healthy development of white

²³ In his history of progressive education, Lawrence Cremin distinguishes between the “progressive era” in education, which began in the early decades of the twentieth century, and the “progressive impulse” among educators during the late nineteenth century. I use the phrase “scientific education” to indicate an emergent form of progressive education at the Columbian Exposition since it is the term that these educators most often used to describe what they were doing. See Cremin, viii-ix.

²⁴ Selim H. Peabody, *The Educational Exhibit of the World’s Columbian Exposition* (Circular, World’s Columbian Exposition Department of Liberal Arts, Chicago, Illinois, 1892), 2-8.

children.²⁵ As such, the Columbian Exposition is a site to begin tracing the racialized split discussed in the Introduction delineating “progressive” from “conservative” forms of education.

In the schedule for the fifteen meetings included as part of the Columbian Exposition’s International Congress on Education, the congress organized by psychologist Granville Stanley Hall appeared to occupy a preeminent place in the program. His congress is the only one that includes a prefatory note, written by Hall, which emphasizes the importance of “child study” to modern education.²⁶ Hall, who at the time of the exposition was president of Clark University and editor of the *American Journal of Psychology*, is well known for applying recapitulation theories of growth developed within the burgeoning anthropological, ethnological, and archaeological sciences to education. Hall’s recapitulation theory of education relied on a model of child development in which “object lessons” would provide experiences of “primitive” racial stages needed in order for children mature properly, and, as such, his theories may have informed fair organizers like George Brown Goode, who attempted to make the Columbian Exposition an “*illustrated encyclopedia of civilization*” comprised of object lessons in civilizational growth. Historian Stephen Jay Gould defines the theory of recapitulation as part of the sciences of “biological determinism,” which he explains “claim[ed] that worth can be assigned to individuals and groups by *measuring intelligence as a single quantity*,” particularly through craniometry and other types of “psychological testing.”²⁷ As a theory of biological determinism, recapitulation created hierarchies by physically measuring the “*adults of inferior groups*” with the “*children of superior groups*,” and, more specifically, ostensibly “inferior” “races, sexes, and classes” against the “children of white males” (144). In his landmark study *Adolescence* (1904), which was

²⁵ I define race-based education as experimental educational programs that attempted to prepare students racialized as “primitive” for imperial subjectivity in the nation. This distinction is developed in the Introduction. Chapters Two and Three discuss counterinsurgent pedagogies in relation to Hampton and Carlisle, respectively.

²⁶ U.S. Bureau of Education, 435.

²⁷ Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (Norton: New York/London: 1996), 52.

published almost a decade after the Columbian Exposition, Hall explained that “the child and the race are keys to each other,” and, as such, finding ways to “coordinate” childhood development with the “development of the [white] race” would guard against threats to racial degeneration posed by modern industrial life.²⁸ Hall was especially concerned with what he believed was a uniquely American tendency toward “precocity,” which was due to an “urbanized hot-house life, that tends to ripen everything before its time” (xi). Left unchecked, precocity, evidenced especially by sexual precocity, could result in juvenile delinquency, vice, and physical illness because it prevented the individual child from recapitulating stages of racial evolution in the process of “natural” individual mental and physical development (xi). Since he believed that city children were especially in danger of skipping primitive stages deemed foundational to racial advancement, Hall argued that educators should create a school environment that could satisfy the “deep and strong cravings in the individual to revive the ancestral experiences and occupations of the race” (xi):

The teacher [of] art should so vivify all that the resources of literature, tradition, history, can supply which represents the crude, rank virtues of the world’s childhood that, with his almost visual imagination, reenforced by psychonomic recapitulatory impulses, the child can enter upon his full heritage, live out each stage of his life to the fullest, and realize in himself all its manifold tendencies. (xi)

The teacher’s job was to create “proxy experiences” with object lessons of “literature, tradition, history” in which students could have encounters with primitive life (xi). According to Hall’s scientific theory of education, an important place was given to literature and history as a means to creating encounters for students with the “crude, rank”—or pre-modern—“virtues of the world’s childhood.” The faculty of vision, which for Hall signified a type of sensory experience that included and went beyond eyesight, was also a key part of creating romantic encounters with

²⁸ G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence, Vol. I* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1904), viii.
<https://archive.org/details/adolescenceitps01hall>

the primitive. Although Hall published *Adolescence* after the Columbian Exposition, he had argued in his influential essay, “The Contents of Children’s Minds,” published for *The Pedagogical Seminary* in 1891, that children’s minds were not *tabula rasa* but developed through a “law of apperception” in which object lessons introduced in the classroom were learned by “perceiving” them in light of prior experiences at home. He warned that if educators did not accept that the “mind can learn only what is related to other things learned before,” then they would be “showing objects that require close scrutiny only to indirect vision,” which he likened to “talking to the blind about color.”²⁹ For Hall, then, scientific education was about organizing the *perceptions* of students as part of the process of teaching principles or ideas.

Hall’s theory of education relied on object lessons to provide “proxy experiences” for white children of racially primitive stages of development as a means to promote healthy maturation. Within his model of education, racially primitive behaviors and experiences would be contained within the bounds of the classroom and would therefore be prevented from leading to individual and societal racial degeneration. Historian Gail Bederman argues that the World’s Columbian Exposition exemplifies how contradictory representations of bourgeois manhood in the U.S. were constructed “in terms of both ‘civilized manliness’ and ‘primitive masculinity,’” mediated by a “powerful discourse of civilization.”³⁰ On one hand, civilized manliness appeared as the successful containment of atavistic desires, which, if left unchecked, posed a threat to the civilized social order. On the other hand, the conditions of modern industrial life were believed to threaten white racial health by leading to weakness and “nervelessness,” exemplified by the physically degenerative disease neurasthenia. As Bederman puts it in relation to Hall’s educational theory, “To wield manly power, one must possess both a male body and the racial

²⁹ G. Stanley Hall, “The Contents of Children’s Minds,” *The Pedagogical Seminary* 1, no. 2 (1891), 154.

³⁰ Bederman, 23.

ability to restrain masculine passions of that body” (85). Bederman observes that according to Hall, education therefore contributed to both “eradicating barbarism in foreign lands” while also “ruining schoolboys’ health in civilized countries” (90). While racially “primitive” groups needed to be restrained because they could never evolve to the advanced intellectual and moral level of white society, white male children had to recapitulate racially primitive stages of development in order to be “inoculated” against neurasthenia (97). While recapitulation was neither a unified theory nor a theory that all fair administrators self-consciously drew upon in their organization of the Columbian Exposition, it nonetheless serves as a useful civilizational frame to approach the several ways in which the exposition attempted to stage romantic—yet highly controlled—encounters with racially “primitive” peoples and artifacts as part of a broader educational mission to democratize national civilization by shaping the perception of its mass audience.

One way that scholars, architects, artists, and writers of the Columbian Exposition cultivated an imperial glamour of civilization that convinced fairgoers of the superiority of this rational subject was through orientalized figures of the “primitive.” A precedence for producing orientalized boundaries between civilization and barbarism can be found in the anthropological and ethnological sciences that scientific educators drew upon. Black studies scholar Scott Trafton explains that in the middle and late nineteenth centuries, anthropological and ethnological inquiries into the ancient origins of white civilization were imbricated in the U.S. with “Egyptomania,” including the field of Egyptology. Trafton demonstrates, for example, how founders of the American School of Ethnology George Robins Gliddon and Josiah Nott routed arguments about the racial superiority of white civilization through claims about the whiteness of ancient Egyptians. Trafton argues that new biological theories of race developed by mid-

nineteenth century ethnologists created analogies between the U.S. and ancient Egyptian civilization in order to stabilize the idea that human “races” were fixed and unchanging over time, and, as such, provided an “objectivist racialized discourse” that justified the system of racial slavery in the U.S.³¹ Additionally, he observes that the new ethnological sciences privileged a biological epistemology of “surfaces,” “external appearance,” and “aesthetics,” yet “because ‘black’ as an ontological property was so radically unstable in nineteenth-century America” the use of “craniometry, phrenology, and ethnological anatomy as sciences were concerned to produce a notion of essence that lay underneath the skin but was no less biological” (78). Although black American Egyptologists vehemently protested ethnological arguments that since the time of the Egyptians blacks “had never created or produced anything whatsoever of value,” the Columbian Exposition’s barring of black Americans from having their own exhibits or participating in the administration and planning of the fair officially silenced this perspective (50). As will be demonstrated, spectacles of the “primitive” at the Columbian Exposition alternated between images of “primitive” civilization domesticated for educational purposes as the “ancient” precursor to U.S. modernity and spectacles of “primitive” artifacts and peoples as irreducibly other or foreign to U.S. civilization.

In the methodological privileging of the visible relationship between a physiognomic “surface” and racial “essence” promoted by ethnology and anthropology, unveiling became a powerful metaphor across science, art, and entertainment for revelations of knowledge about human origins and ancient civilization. At the Exposition, displays of mummies were included within anthropological exhibits and fairgoers could have themselves measured in comparison to

³¹ Scott Trafton, *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 52, 47.

ideal “types” represented by sculptures of university students.³² Viewers may have been primed for such spectacles at public events where mummies were unbandaged to reveal the supposedly biological whiteness of Egyptians beneath.³³ Such performances claimed ancient Egyptian art and learning for whites, drawing an unbroken line between white European and American civilization and ancient civilization in the East. They also actively orientalized scientific knowledge production. Rational vision proceeded from the scientific standpoint of the white scholar penetrating eastern mysteries of civilization or removing the veil or bandages hiding the secrets of human origins. In a discussion of the popularity of the figure of Cleopatra concurrent with the development of the American school of ethnography, Trafton observes that widespread racial and sexualized images of the undressed Cleopatra were deployed to represent pleasure in the mastery of knowledge. He observes that that “representations of Cleopatra—as seductress, compulsive spender, or monstrous mother—placed her at the epicenter of nineteenth-century arguments over ‘female nature’ and American women’s roles,” while at the same time she emerged as a “figure of racialized controversy” by alternately signifying sexual purity associated with whiteness and sexual excess associated with both orientalism and stereotypes of black women developed within plantation slavery (179, 184). Trafton asserts that “like the layered and secluded mysteries she was often seen to represent,” the “greatest value” of the figure of Cleopatra “lay in her continuing status as an enigma, as a ghost in the phallogentric machine, as a racialized Rosetta stone, a permanent problem” that appeared to invite scientific unveiling (191).

As an illustrated encyclopedia of civilization, the Columbian Exposition attempted to cultivate among a mass audience of fairgoers the scientific standpoint of the rational subject, represented by the mature, white, male citizen subject in control—but not divested—of his

³² See Franz Boas, “Ethnology at the Exposition,” *Cosmopolitan* 15, no. 5 (September 1893), 609; and Rydell, 57.

³³ Trafton, 44.

masculine passions. The fair's spatial layout, exhibits, and textual materials, including guidebooks, fiction, and pamphlets, attempted to "democratize" the standpoint of the fair's representative rational *logos* by teaching a reading practice in which physiognomic surfaces could be penetrated by vision in order to reveal the secrets of civilization concealed beneath. This apparently scientific visual epistemology of knowledge, however, was what postcolonial scholar Edward Said would call *orientalist* by drawing upon a whole set of images, ideas, texts, and approaches about the "Orient" produced by the West in order to produce the rational standpoint of the "sovereign Western consciousness."³⁴ The images of orientalism at the fair contributed furthermore to the feeling or perception among fairgoers that they were exercising scientific rationality as they identified higher and lower forms of civilization at the fair. The orientalist point of view represented at the fair is evidenced in George Brown Goode's conceptualization of museum education, exemplified for him by the Columbian Exposition, in which, "To *see* is to know." Introducing this idea, Goode explained, "There is an Oriental saying that the distance between the ear and eye is small, but the difference between hearing and seeing very great. More terse and not less forcible is our own proverb, 'To *see* is to know,' which expresses a growing tendency in the human mind."³⁵ As the scientific counterpart representing a "growing tendency in the human mind," the phrase, "To *see* is to know," represented for Goode a rewriting of an "Oriental saying" to suit modern industrial society in the U.S.

Goode's division between "Oriental" and "Occidental" epistemologies of knowledge was reinforced at the Columbian Exposition by the spatial organization of the fairgrounds. Chicago architect Daniel Burnham, the exposition's director of works, attempted to underscore the White City's embodiment of civilizational advance by drawing a strict boundary between its ordered

³⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 8.

³⁵ Goode, "Museums of the Future," 427.

streets and the carnivalesque Midway Plaisance, a mile-long thoroughfare that extended from the stately courts of the White City toward Chicago's Jackson Park. The Women's Building marked, significantly, the boundary between the White City and the start of the Midway Plaisance, which hosted concessions including live villages from around the world, Hagenbeck's zoo, the first-ever Ferris Wheel, and a glass works, along with other entertainments. The White City displayed a visual history of manly civilizational development that began with classical learning, exemplified in the beaux-arts style favored by most of the White City's architects. The location of the Women's Pavilion on the boundary dividing the two areas symbolized the domestication of white women's civilizational achievements as part of the fair's manly display of white "civilization" at the same time that it registered the threat that women's movements posed to that order. As Bederman argues, the border space allotted to the Women's Building represented, to the consternation of its Board of Lady Managers, women's symbolic location on the boundary between "civilization" and "savagery." Despite women's attempts to display their contributions to "civilization," its location on the fairgrounds as well as journalistic accounts tended mainly, as a *New York Times* review explained, "to demonstrate the superiority of man."³⁶ Painted a dazzling white, the White City's buildings were adorned with elaborate Greco-Roman domes, columns, arches, and statuary, creating a visual link between classical knowledge and the cutting-edge displays of technological and industrial achievement housed within. The ambivalent symbolic location that Egypt occupied within the exposition's narrative of civilization was indicated by the architectural link created by the White City's stately obelisk on the central Court of Honor and the pair of obelisks that fronted the Midway's Temple of Luxor. At the fair, the obelisks signified Egypt's symbolic location both as a site of ancient learning as well as a site of orientalist spectacle. The White City's obelisk lent an ancient authority to the display of modern

³⁶ Bederman, 34-35.

technological and industrial innovations and perhaps contributed as well to the appearance that the White City represented a harmonious relationship that could exist between capitalist industrialization, higher learning, and the arts. While a significant portion of funding for the fair came from Chicago's Gilded Age capitalists, including Charles T. Yierkes, George Pullman, and Marshall Field, the architects and artists hired to construct the White City worked relatively autonomously.³⁷ This collaboration among artists and capitalists stood in stark contrast to recent and often-explosive labor uprisings in industrial cities, including Chicago (where the Haymarket Affair had occurred seven years prior), in which workers fought for better working conditions. Fair historian David F. Burg explains that the World's Columbian Commission's vice president described the White City's "magnificent structures," in what would become one of the "typical responses to the fair," as appearing to have been "evoked at a wizard's touch of Aladdin's lamp."³⁸ In evoking the universal, transhistorical rationality embodied by the educational White City, the obelisk might be said to have evoked in fairgoers a glamorous experience of the civilizational superiority of the U.S.

The spatial division that Burnham attempted to draw between the ethereal White City and Midway's pleasure district reflected a binary split in the way the two areas were imagined to function: the White City was for the higher education of visitors and the democratic spread of "civilization" while the Midway Plaisance was for the entertainment of visitors' baser desires. It is perhaps unsurprising that this boundary was reinforced at the Columbian Exposition through competing orientalist representations of "primitive" and "civilized" artifacts, performances, and people. Exhibits organized by the U.S. Department of Ethnology and Smithsonian Institute

³⁷ See Rydell, 42, on the "tug-of-war" between Gilded Age elites in New York City and Chicago over the location of the fair. See Gilbert, 78, 84-94, on Burnham's idea that the White City would represent a new democratic vision of the industrial city.

³⁸ Burg, 106.

contributed to the White City's visual history of civilization. Frederic Ward Putnam, the head of the Harvard Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, was hired to organize exhibits under the fair's Department M, which oversaw both the White City's ethnological and anthropological exhibits and the Midway Plaisance's concessions. Located in the White City's Anthropology Building, Putnam's exhibit displayed artifacts of "primitive" life alongside mannequins and living villages of indigenous peoples to teach fairgoers an object lesson about the universal development of civilization, especially how it played out on the "American continent."³⁹ In soliciting artifacts for his exhibit, Putnam declared that his aim was to present viewers with a "full and effective illustration...of the present status of American archaeology and ethnology."⁴⁰ Anthropologist Franz Boas, who assisted Putnam at the exhibit, outlined the exhibit's organization in an 1893 article for *The Cosmopolitan* titled "Ethnology at the Exposition." Boas explained in his article that the Anthropology Building sought to create a "systematic series of exhibits" divided into archaeological displays, ethnological displays, physical anthropological and experimental psychological displays, and his own special comparative exhibit on "the development of children," especially immigrant children, and the "anthropology of the North American Indians."⁴¹ Exhibit displays included mummies, a replica of cliff dwellings from Colorado with representative inhabitants, a "small colony of Indians," and primitive implements from South America.⁴² Boas also reportedly worked with another assistant, Joseph Jastrow, to measure visitors in comparison to ideal statues of students from Harvard and Radcliffe.⁴³ Although Putnam had attempted to create a "full and effective

³⁹ Rydell, 57.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Nancy L. Fagin, "Closed Collections and Open Appeals: The Two Anthropology Exhibits at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893," *Curator* 27, no. 4 (1984), 256.

⁴¹ Fagin, 257; Franz Boas, "Ethnology at the Exposition," *Cosmopolitan* 15, no. 5 (September 1893), 609.

⁴² Boas, 609.

⁴³ Rydell, 57.

illustration” of the science behind the universal development of civilization, the messy and overcrowded exhibit of peoples and artifacts indicates how the exposition created a hierarchy of civilization by conflating ancient Egyptian mummies, contemporary indigenous peoples and artifacts, and comparative psychological displays of children into an image of pre-modern “primitivism.”

While Burnham sought to hold the orderly White City aloof from the commercial entertainments of the Midway, the Midway, too, featured ostensibly educative displays of the “primitive,” including living villages from Africa, Asia, and South America and “authentic” buildings depicting the folksy past of “modern” Europe. While Burnham attempted to organize the Columbian Exposition fairgrounds to create a vision of order, or an illustrated encyclopedia of civilization, the binary divisions he imagined between the White City and Midway, enlightenment and entertainment, exhibit and spectacle, reality and fantasy were in practice blurred. The line between scientific education and for-profit spectacle, for example, was dissolved in the administration of the two areas. Although Fredric Ward Putnam’s Department M oversaw the Midway Plaisance, entertainer Sol Bloom was given control over the installation of concessions. Admitting Putnam’s qualifications for organizing the fair’s ethnological exhibits, Bloom reminisced in his autobiography that to have the “unhappy gentleman responsible for the establishment of a successful venture in the field of entertainment was about as intelligent a decision as it would be today to make Albert Einstein manager of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus.”⁴⁴ Bloom, however, did not dispute the educational possibilities presented by the Midway Plaisance. He had in fact contracted a “two-year exclusive right” to display an Algerian village he had seen at the 1889 Paris Exposition, attracted by what he

⁴⁴ Sol Bloom, *The Autobiography of Sol Bloom* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1948), 119.
<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89057092983;view=1up;seq=9>

thought would be the village's entertainment *and* educational value (108). As Bloom noted of the Algerian village, "The Algerians themselves were genuine beyond question, and what was really important was that they presented a varied entertainment that increased in excitement in proportion to my familiarity with it. . . . I was sure I could make a fortune with them in the United States" (107). The Algerian Village along with Cairo Street proved to be one of the most profitable concessions on the Midway. Its "Persian Palace of Eros" in particular played up the boundaries between reality and fantasy by featuring dancers who had been relatively popular in Paris to perform the *danse du ventre* in a gentleman's club environment that Scott notes was "more aligned with the back alleys of Paris and Chicago than with the educational and informative concept of most other villages."⁴⁵ Thus, as Columbian Exposition historian Robert Rydell points out, the "net result of [Putnam's and Bloom's] efforts was an alliance between entertainment and anthropology" that he observes was "replicated at other fairs."⁴⁶ To attract repeat visits to the fair, international parades and contests featuring Midway performers were regularly staged in the White City and sightings of dignified fairgoers cavorting with Midway dancers at international balls were reported by local newspapers.⁴⁷

The layout and exhibit structure of the Columbian Exposition attempted to materialize the ostensibly universal "intelligence" and "genius" of white manly civilizational achievement by domesticating, containing, and disciplining "irrationality," which was represented according to orientalist tropes of excess sexuality, rampant commercialism, and irrational fantasy. Within the fair's illustrated encyclopedia of civilization, the Midway Plaisance appeared as a "harem" space, which postcolonial scholar Inderpal Grewal defines as a "colonial 'phantasm,' as Malek Alloula calls it, of the incarcerated 'Eastern' woman, lacking freedom and embodying

⁴⁵ Scott, 192.

⁴⁶ Rydell, 63.

⁴⁷ See Scott 338, 339-346 (on international parades,) and 346-354 (on international balls).

submission and sexuality as well as an inaccessibility that colonial power hopes to penetrate.”

While Grewal acknowledges that specific representations of harem spaces differ depending on the colonial context, she argues that the usefulness of “harem” as a general term lies in indicating how tropes of the “harem” have functioned to “[enable] subject formation” as well as to “reveal the utilization of female incarceration as a regulative psychobiography” within colonialism.⁴⁸

She observes that the orientalist harem represented within contexts of European colonialism a space of “mystery,” “darkness,” “superstition,” and “despotism” that served as a threatening foil to European values of aesthetic as well as disciplinary “transparency” (26). To contain the threat that the harem as an unknown and irrational space represented to Europe, “physiognomy, or the practice of seeing qualities of character on the face, indicated the knowledge and power of the viewer who could scan the inside from the outside and the alignment of the inside with the outside” (27). Giving the harem a significant place within the modern “discourse of knowledge as power,” Grewal demonstrates how philosopher Michel Foucault’s theorization of discipline applies not only to the production of criminalized subjects within modern societies but also to the criminalizing of colonial subjects through racial and sexual representations of civilizational non-normativity.⁴⁹ Performers’ physical confinement to the Midway Plaisance was accompanied by a representational confinement. The Midway served to construct the rational *logos* embodied by the white, manly citizen subject by offering fairgoers a space where they could perform an imperialist fantasy of “penetrating” oriental mysteries by exercising a physiognomic reading practice in which the surfaces of performers’ bodies were read for a racial and sexual essence.

⁴⁸ Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 5. While Grewal focuses specifically on the “patriarchal forms of British colonialism,” I think that her observations about the way in which representations of the harem have contributed to constructing what Said calls “sovereign western consciousness” apply as well to the World’s Columbian Exposition.

⁴⁹ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995).

Indeed, performance studies scholar Gertrude M. Scott documents how in contrast to fairgoers, who were allowed relatively free reign to pop in and out of the Egyptian Village's structures once they paid the price of admission, many of the village's residents were confined to the fairgrounds. When venturing off the Midway, they continued to be treated as exotic spectacles by fairgoers, and they could often only enter Chicago under the supervision of concession managers.⁵⁰ This confinement registers larger social anxieties, supported by ethnological theories of the potential white racial "degradation" that could result from the social mixing of fairgoers and Midway performers. At the same time, the danger and mystery represented by the Midway's exhibits contributed to its appeal, particularly as a symbolic outlet for exercising masculine passions. Scott relates one particular incident reported by the press about an unnamed "Sheik" of Cairo Street who said he would convert to Christianity in order to win the hand of Blanch Wilson, a young secretary from Ohio working at the village. Despite the press's claim that Wilson had refused the Sheik's offer, Wilson was nonetheless fired by concession managers and offered escort out of Chicago. The article said that after her dismissal Wilson "fell into a 'swoon,'" a response that it was reported may have been caused by the Sheik's "hypnotic or mesmeric influence," and it invited visitors to witness firsthand the Sheik "tearing up and down the street moaning in sorrow and waving his hands in despair." While this sensational story was one of many that helped draw visitors to Cairo Street, it also evidences the way in which fair administrators and exhibitors used racialized representations of deviant sexuality to construct a rational *logos* at the fair. The physical confinement that many Midway villagers and performers experienced was accompanied by representations of sexual deviance that reinforced the boundaries of civilization constructed at the fair. Not only was Blanch Wilson forcibly removed from the fairgrounds to protect her (*white/blanc*) womanhood but the Sheik

⁵⁰ Scott, 166-173.

was transformed in the article into an emasculated spectacle of “moaning.” The press’s appeal to visitors to witness the Sheik’s “moaning” expresses the pleasure of pornotropic discipline on the Midway. In contrast to the modern white secretary working at Cairo Street, press reports of Cairo Street’s women villagers vacillated between fascination and disgust over the exotic *danse du ventre*, or “belly dance,” while speculating on the relative unfreedom (“slavery,” according to one article) of Muslim women evidenced by their use or not of the veil while in public spaces.⁵¹

As the news report over the prohibited romance between the “Sheik” of Cairo Street and Blanch Wilson indicates, the epistemological standpoint of scientific rationality that Columbian Exposition administrators and exhibitors attempted to cultivate among fairgoers was accompanied by textual materials, including news reports, souvenir books, pamphlets, and fiction, that sought both to make permanent the “lessons” presented at the fair while also providing an experience of the fair for audiences that could not physically attend. Although the spatial layout and exhibit structure of the Columbian Exposition demonstrate how the fair attempted to create an “illustrated encyclopedia of civilization” for a mass audience of fairgoers, texts produced at and about the fair comprise a particularly rich archive for investigating the imperial *glamour* that it cultivated. Many of these texts had an overtly pedagogical function and attempted to teach audiences not only the fair’s “object lessons” but also represented for readers how they were to feel and experience the fair.

Glamorous Reading Lessons

Upon finally reaching the Columbian Exposition, Meg and Robin McLeod, the twelve-year-old twin protagonists in children’s author Frances Hodgson Burnett’s novel *Two Little Pilgrim’s Progress: A Story of the City Beautiful* (1895) are entranced by the vision of the White

⁵¹ Ibid., 168-170.

City. The orphan twins had escaped their dour Aunt Matilda's farm, where they had been denied a formal education, by saving up money from domestic and farm labor to pursue an education at the fair. They decided to enter by way of the peristyle, which opened onto the fair's White City from Lake Michigan. Their first impression of the fair from the vantage point of the peristyle blends fantasy and reality into an "ecstasy" that language cannot represent. Giving a "queer little laugh" as she fails to describe the vision before her, Meg says to Robin, "Rob [...] perhaps we are *dead*, and have just wakened up." Explaining that the twins "were not dead," the text clarifies that they had been "breathless and uplifted by an ecstasy, but they had never been so *alive* before. It seemed as if they were in the center of the world, and the world was such a bright and radiant and beautiful place as they had never dreamed of."⁵² Transported to the "center of the world," the twins embark on an educational tour of the fair in which their romantic encounters with the exposition's visual displays provide lessons that culminate for them (as well as for the reader) in an understanding of themselves as representatives of a progressive "Young America." Appearing as the ideal fairgoers imagined by George Brown Goode, Meg and Robin treat the exposition as an illustrated encyclopedia of civilization, gleaning lessons about their participation within universal "genius" and "intelligence" among artistic, entertainment, and scientific displays, including the "strange, savage, or oriental faces" they encounter (185). Other Columbian Exposition pedagogical and souvenir texts contain similar accounts of the dazzling sensation produced from the point of view of the peristyle. Indeed, these texts modeled for readers how the White City was to be experienced by attempting to reproduce its *glamour*. Such glamorous representations of the White City performed the visual pedagogy encapsulated in Goode's, "To *see* is to know," which was based in an ostensibly scientific visual epistemology of

⁵² Frances Hodgson Burnett, *Two Little Pilgrim's Progress: A Story of the City Beautiful* (New York: Scribner's, 1895), 96. <https://archive.org/details/twolittlepilgri03burngoog>.

race as “rationality,” and extended the Columbian Exposition’s mass educational mission beyond the geographical site of the fair. The point of view from the peristyle produced the all-seeing perspective of the rational *logos*, embodied by the white, manly citizen subject, able to penetrate surfaces to perceive core racial and sexual truths beneath. While several intellectuals contested the racialized image of civilization created from this standpoint, their critiques often still utilized dominant grammatical representations of racial and sexual excess to distinguish “true” civilization from barbarism.

As already discussed, the visual epistemology of knowledge cultivated at the Columbian Exposition sought to democratize universal “intelligence” among a mass audience of fairgoers through object lessons that aimed primarily to produce *experiences* of rationality. The shortcut to rationality that exposition administrators and exhibitors attempted to create through visual displays comprised a tautology. Displays of civilizational achievement would express universal “genius” and “intelligence,” which, once fairgoers properly “saw” or perceived such “genius,” would provide a “true” scientific lesson in civilizational growth as well as fold them into a world-historical history of civilization. Fairgoers would in this process learn to see and experience themselves within the history of civilization on display. Yet, what was the historical *ground* of the standpoint of the rational *logos* built into the White City’s peristyle? Originating in ancient Grecian architecture, a peristyle was a colonnade designed to surround an inner courtyard or temple.⁵³ *Dream City: A Portfolio of Photographic Views of the World’s Columbian Exposition* (1893), a multi-volume souvenir book, explains that the White City’s peristyle was one of its prime attractions. A neoclassical arch on the Lake Michigan side of the White City’s central Court of Honor, the peristyle served as one of the main entrances to the exposition. While

⁵³ “peristyle, n. and adj.” OED Online. March 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/view/Entry/141086?redirectedFrom=peristyle&> (accessed April 23, 2016).

Dream City explains that the peristyle got its name from an earlier plan to erect columns around the fair's harbor, the "simpler and more beautiful" form that the peristyle took appears to have functioned more as an entrance onto the inner Court of Honor rather than as a private courtyard within the White City. According to the caption accompanying a photograph of the peristyle, the archway consisted of forty-eight Corinthian columns representing the "states and Territories of the Union" topped by a grouping of sculptures called the "Columbus Quadriga," which featured a "four horse chariot" flanked on either side by figures representing the "Genius of Navigation." These figures of universal "Genius" were taken from a triumphant history of European discovery in the New World and included Samuel de Champlain, Robert de La Salle, Juan Ponce de León, Hernán Cortés, and Hernando de Soto. Beneath these were "heroic figures" representing "Eloquence, Music, Navigation, Fisherman and Indian." Below statues of Columbus and other New World explorers, who stood triumphantly above figures of intellectual, artistic, and scientific dominion, including the "Indian," was an inscription suggested by the president of Harvard University on the educational mission of the fair: "Ye Shall Know the Truth and the Truth Shall Make You Free." The peristyle suggested to viewers a history of civilization that began in ancient Greece and Rome and was routed through European exploration before finding its final culmination in the U.S., represented by the synthesis of classical and uniquely U.S. iconography. While gesturing to an ancient past of civilization, the peristyle also featured cutting edge technology. *Dream City* explains that the peristyle remained a popular site for fairgoers at night because its promenade was illuminated by "incandescent lighting" and thus served as a prime location to watch the White City's nightly fireworks display.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ "The Peristyle," in *The Dream City: A Portfolio of Photographic Views of the Columbian Exposition, Portfolio No. 1* (St. Louis: N.D. Thompson Publishing Co., 1893), n.p.

According to *Dream City*, the peristyle was the only entrance to the fair from which the “architecture of the Exposition could be effectively judged.” In “The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Frankfurt School philosopher and critic Walter Benjamin describes architecture as “prototype” of modern forms of art, most notably film, which mediate mass perception.⁵⁵ Benjamin traces in his essay how technological shifts in the production of art simultaneously constitute perceptual changes. He observes that in modern industrial society the reproducibility of images, particularly in photography and film, coincided with the formation of mass society. In modern society ritual modes of perception suited to “auratic” artworks like the painting and based on the authenticity of the artwork, including both the singularity of its production and location, had transformed, according to Benjamin, into habituation. He describes these differences in perception as “polar opposites” of “distraction and concentration”: “A man who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it. He enters into this work of art the way legend tells of a Chinese painter when he viewed his finished painting. In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art” (239). Benjamin argues that the distracted absorption mediated by film was preceded by architecture, which instead of requiring the full attention of a viewer (like a painting) guides the senses of an audience toward habitual perceptions of which they are barely conscious. *Dream City*’s reproduction in photography of the peristyle, the architectural vantage point from which the exposition could be most “effectively judged,” reproduced as well, following Benjamin, a particular *perception* of the fair for the exposition’s mass audience. However, it also guided fairgoers in a ritual experience of the White City. Opening onto the White City from Lake Michigan, the peristyle recreated for visitors the transatlantic journey to the New World in which explorers, driven by an eternal “genius,” landed upon the shores of the

⁵⁵ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), 239.

unknown and created an orderly home out of the wilderness's chaos. It attempted to habituate viewers into what literary critic Mary Louise Pratt has called "imperial eyes," a colonial perspective traced to European travel writing from the age of discovery that constructed the "domestic subject" of European imperialism through representations of the "all-seeing man," which she uses as a "label for the European male subject [...] whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess."⁵⁶ As fairgoers entered the White City's inner Court of Honor, they were as well to become *en-tranced*, like Meg and Robin Mcleod, by a glamorous history of civilization rooted in the imperial encounter. They were not to judge this historical narrative but to experience a perspective of judgment, or to inhabit what Benjamin calls the standpoint of the critic, in which the White City's triumphant narrative of history appeared as the millennial fulfillment of "reality." Ritualistically entering the White City beneath the Columbus Quadriga, fairgoers were to experience the reproductions of famous European sculptures and artworks along with displays of technological innovation as the heights of civilizational achievement at the same time that they were to experience themselves as participants within the work of "genius." The ability to inhabit this particular standpoint, however, was limited by the extent to which fairgoers could experience the White City's vision of white, manly civilization as "real."

Dream City advertised on its title page that, along with its images of artistic, industrial, ethnological, and scenic "attractions," it provided readers with "authentic realistic impressions as received by the actual visitor." The souvenir book's pedagogical purpose was furthermore spelled out in a preface attached to each of its seven portfolios. *Dream City's* photographs were to "preserve for the people" the "lessons" taught by the fair in a "form at once portable, beautiful, and permanent." In the Introduction, Halsey C. Ives, chief of the exposition's

⁵⁶ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London/New York: Routledge, 1992), 7.

Department of Fine Arts, explained that the volume had been prepared especially to “present to the individual not fortunate enough to have visited the Fair a brief history and description of its varied beauties.”⁵⁷ The purpose of making widely available the exposition’s “noble lesson” of the “highest and best achievements of modern civilization” was furthermore to “stimulate the youth of this and future generations to greater and more heroic endeavor.”⁵⁸ Instead of magically allowing readers to “see” and “know” the lessons of civilization provided by the fair, *Dream City* explains that its captions would help guide readers so that “what the mind receives through the eye may be impressed upon the understanding.”⁵⁹ Ives furthermore invited readers to compare the contributions of the “greater and lesser countries,” noting that the work of U.S. artists proved the nation’s “right to be considered among the artistic achievements of the time.”⁶⁰ One of the ways *Dream City* shaped readers’ perceptions of the fair was through the photographic perspectives it provided on the White City and Midway Plaisance. Photographs of the White City tend to focus on individual works of art, landscapes, or artifacts as manifestations of universal “genius,” while photographs of the Midway feature close-ups of buildings and village performers to indicate the way in which they represent deviance from civilizational norms. The Midway performers featured in *Dream City* are represented among artifacts and architecture as objects to be viewed and judged from the “all-seeing” point of view of the peristyle. As already discussed, many of the Midway’s performers were physically confined to their villages and therefore were not permitted to take part in a ritualistic entrance into “civilization” by way of the peristyle. Yet

⁵⁷ Halsey C. Ives, Introduction to *The Dream City: A Portfolio of Photographic Views of the Columbian Exposition, Portfolio No. 1* (St. Louis: N.D. Thompson Publishing Co., 1893), n.p.

⁵⁸ Preface to *The Dream City*, n.p.

⁵⁹ Preface to *The Dream City: A Portfolio of Photographic Views of the Columbian Exposition, Portfolio No. 1* (St. Louis: N.D. Thompson Publishing Co., 1893), n.p.

⁶⁰ Ives, n.p.

even if they could, fairgoers had been trained to envision the performers' bodies as in excess of white civilizational norms.

In the ritualistic process of entering the White City via the peristyle, fairgoers were to enter into a state of what Benjamin might call a “distracted” perception of the art and artifacts on display. Several Columbian Exposition texts demonstrate how surface displays at the fair were to be read for essential lessons of civilizational development at same time that they modeled how fairgoers were to absorb representations of civilizational achievements produced by a universal rationality, or “genius,” as their own. Returning to Burnett’s *Two Little Pilgrim’s Process*, Meg Mcleod modeled for readers the way in which this distracted mode of perception depended upon a certain reading practice. Riffing on the language of “genius” that *Dream City* used to describe the peristyle, Burnett depicts Meg weaving stories out of the objects the twins encounter about magic “Genii,” led by the “Great Genius” or “Great Magician,” who built the exposition. In Meg’s allegory of the White City, each “Genius” had organized his workers to build a “Palace.” While Meg is aware that her tales are “fairy stories,” she remarks that they are at the same time “real.” She explains of the Great Genius’s White City that “the people who see it shall learn what the world is like” and, furthermore, it “will make them know what *they* are like themselves, because the wonders will be made by hands and feet and brains just like their own.”⁶¹ Burnett represents Meg’s reading practice as a type of unmediated encounter with the artifacts of civilization on display in the White City. The act of looking at the displays provides her with access to the “genius” expressed within, and Meg is able to communicate this “genius” in her fairy stories. It is through such encounters, furthermore, that Meg and Robin begin to recognize themselves within the civilizational *telos* on display and come to embody a future “Young America.” Described as the future “in embryo,” Meg represents an idealized “artist and epicure,”

⁶¹ Burnett, 98-99.

while Robin represents a budding “financier” (135, 7). Yet, the twins’ imperial journey through the peristyle, White City, and among the “strange, savage, or oriental faces” they encounter is key to their capacity to fulfill these domestic, national roles. While the twins journey to the fair as orphans, they leave as adoptees of John Holt, the wealthy manager of a modern agricultural empire, who figures in opposition to the outmoded Aunt Matilda. It is through their journey to the fair that the twins are restored to a domestic order, indicated in particular by the domestication of Meg’s fairy stories. Meg’s fairy stories function to domesticate the White City’s displays into a history of universal “genius,” but her unmediated access to the displays also indicate a threat by linking her too closely to the “strange, savage, or oriental faces” at the fair. In Holt’s home, Meg is restored to a patriarchal domestic order occupying a place, like the White City’s Women’s Building, on the border between the pre-modern and modern. Like the exotic curios from around the world that Holt displays in his mansion, Meg’s strange storytelling, which is likened to the tales of the *Arabian Nights*, is domesticated by Holt’s benevolent education.

While *Two Little Pilgrims’ Progress* modeled for readers a type of distracted reading practice to bring to the White City’s representation of universal civilization, it also offered a direct encounter with the primitive and, in so doing, attempted to reproduce for readers the twins’ own romantic encounters with the “strange, savage, or oriental” at the fair. The novel stages this encounter by employing the generic conventions of what critics have called the “romantic revival” in vogue at the end of the nineteenth century. Literary critic Nancy Glazener observes that romantic revival literature, which emerged in opposition to literary realism, represented a strand of anti-modernism that championed the “kind of manly martial ethic popularized by Theodore Roosevelt as pursuit of the ‘strenuous life’” and thus “cast itself

variously as a reaction against Victorian gentility, *fin de siècle* degeneration, the closing of the American frontier, and overcivilization.”⁶² Featuring characters like the primitive storyteller or bard and favoring mythic ancient sites, romantic revival literature, like Hall’s recapitulation theory of development, privileged experiences of the “primitive” as a source of national revitalization. Glazener argues, however, that the new romance’s preoccupation with “instinct” was not, as its proponents explained, representative of “anciently discarded elements of the self.” “Rather,” as she explains, “the symbolic identities that romance readers tried on were wrested from real populations being subjected to distancing repression and discipline during the very era of the new romance’s promotion” (162-163). It is in this way that romantic revival literature’s conventions for managing the “real” overlapped with multiple U.S. imperial projects in the late nineteenth century animated by the idea of “barbarian virtues,” or the belief that imperialist wars like ongoing wars on the “frontier,” Philippines, or Caribbean provided a revitalizing outlet that would preserve civilized masculinity.⁶³ The Mcleod twins’ journey to the Columbian Exposition is represented as a journey into a “mythic” imperial realm of universal “genius,” yet as children the twins presented for readers a romantic encounter with “primitive nature.” The twins’ journey models Hall’s recapitulation theory of education in which healthy development occurs on the cusp of “adolescence,” when white children were to satisfy their racially primitive “cravings” through “proxy experiences” of the “world’s childhood.” At the same time, their perceptions of the fair—particularly Meg’s fairy stories—offered readers an encounter with the racially primitive that mimicked romantic encounters with universal rationality provided by the White City.

⁶² Nancy Glazener, *Reading for Realism: The History of a U.S. Literary Institution, 1850-1910* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1997), 158.

⁶³ On “barbarian virtues” in relation to U.S. imperialism, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).

The conventions of romantic revival literature were especially suitable for mediating the object lessons in universal civilization created at the fair because it was able to transpose past, present, and future under a common vision of “rationality” as paradoxically “real.” Preeminent realist William Dean Howells in fact employed the trope of the romantic encounter with the “primitive” in his fictionalized account of the Columbian Exposition. While less sanguine than Burnett about the vision of a national future shaped by industrial and finance capitalism, Howells nonetheless used romantic conventions to represent encounters with the primitive as crucial to national development toward his utopian socialist vision of the future. Invited to attend the fair by none other than director of works Daniel Burnham, Howells published impressions of the exposition in *Cosmopolitan* from the standpoint of A. Homos, a traveler from the futuristic utopian society of Altruria (a riff on “altruism”). As he walks around the White City, Homos is overcome with emotion by how “at home” he feels among the neoclassical art and architecture, especially the peristyle. He sees transposed on its ancient Greek forms a utopian Altrurian future:

Of the effect, of the visible, tangible result, what better can I say, than that in its presence I felt myself again in Altruria? The tears came, and the pillared porches swam against my vision.... I was at home once more, and my heart overflowed with patriotic rapture in this strange land, so remote from ours in everything, that at times Altruria really seems to me the dream that Americans think it.⁶⁴

Like the Mcleod twins, Homos has a dazzling experience of the White City that modeled for readers how its displays of civilization were to be perceived. To Howells’s Altrurian traveler, the White City and the peristyle in particular are the expression of a collective work carried out by “capitalists and artists” in the “Altrurian spirit” (220-221). It reminds Homos of “some anniversary night of our own Evolution,” and he argues that the White City represented an “object lesson” of the “intelligence” that could result from labor “freely” given (222, 223). As a

⁶⁴ W.D. Howells, “Letters of an Altrurian Traveller,” *Cosmopolitan* 16, no. 1-6 (1893-94), 220. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hnychm;view=1up;seq=234>

“stranger,” Homos’s perception of the White City from the peristyle view appears as an authentic, trustworthy assessment of its civilizational superiority.

The socialist future that Howells envisioned in the orderly streets, militaristic policing, and neoclassical styles of the White City are contrasted with the “ordinary American enterprise” of the Midway Plaisance (222). To create this vision, Howells staged for readers an encounter with orientalist commercialism on the Midway, which they were to understand was part of the culture of business capitalism in the U.S. as well as an earlier stage of evolution toward the socialist future represented by the White City. Homos draws a distinction between the White City and Midway by claiming the “Fair City” for the “western world” and relegating the Midway to “the Orient.” Unlike the White City, where “everything is free,” on the Plaisance “everything must be paid for” and he observes it is “worse than American in some of the appeals it makes to the American public.” Dominated by the “lascivious dances of the East” and the “Persian and Turkish and Egyptian theaters,” Homos argues that the “Samoan or Dahomeyan in his hut,” the “Indian in his tepee,” and other “citizens of the Plaisance are not there for their health...but for the money there is in it” (222-223). While criticizing the fair’s representation of industrial capitalism as the height of civilizational achievement, Howells nonetheless created for readers an encounter with an earlier “primitive” version of the U.S. on the Midway to imagine a socialist utopia. The Midway and its “citizens” appear as foreign—indeed, “worse than American”—to Homos in contrast to the docile “crowd” of working class and farming fairgoers. Discussing his observations with a Bostonian banker, Homos muses on how for these hardworking fairgoers unable to afford the more lavish entertainments of the Midway Plaisance, “economic inequality is passively accepted as if it were a natural inequality” (228-229).

Accompanying Homos's discussion with the banker are illustrations of "human types" that appear to exemplify the different economic classes Homos observes among the fairgoing crowd. Arranged in diagonal and horizontal lines breaking up the main text of the letter, the illustrations show men and women in profile with hats, hairstyles, and facial hair representing their relative economic and social status. In the midst of these profiles is one that appears to represent an idealized neoclassical "type." The letter thus invites readers to adopt a standpoint that echoes the comparative ethnological approach utilized by Putnam and Boas in the Department of Ethnology exhibits to make visual distinctions among white working and leisure classes attending the fair. While Howells argues through Homos for the inherent equality among social classes attending the fair, the letter mobilizes distinctions between racial, gendered, sexualized "Orient" and white "western world" to illustrate his progressive vision of social equality. The social hierarchies that are dissolved in the profiles of white fairgoers are rearticulated in illustrations of the orientalized Midway. The illustrations of the Midway contrast with the orderly bird's-eye-view drawings of the White City. In one illustration, a Middle Eastern or North African man grins in front of what appears to be a Japanese building fronted with an Egyptian obelisk. Perhaps reproducing for the reader Midway buskers' invitations to watch what Howells termed the "lascivious dances" of the Orient, the illustration cultivates the dream of an egalitarian future out of the exotic otherness of the Midway. Howells's letter in fact racializes business capitalism as belonging to cultures foreign to the U.S. If the Egyptian-style obelisk and Greco-Roman style of the White City contributed to creating a fantastical vision of modern, socialist progress, the eastern dancers performing on the Midway create a racialized and sexualized vision of the chaotic culture produced by unregulated capitalism.

The imperial glamour of civilization constructed within Burnett's and Howell's fictionalized accounts of the Columbian Exposition was actively criticized by black and indigenous intellectuals who took aim at the fair's representation of racial whiteness as the biological criteria for citizenship within ostensibly universal "genius" and "intelligence." It wasn't, as Bederman asserts, that "men and women of color" were "absent from the White City."⁶⁵ Recent scholarly work on the Exposition has amply demonstrated the many ways in which African Americans and indigenous people participated in the White City's discussions and exhibitions.⁶⁶ Rather, official recognition of African American and indigenous participation within the fair's universal history of civilization was limited to the ways in which it signified an earlier, "primitive" stage of development already transcended by manly, white civilization. Confined to representing the racially "primitive" in contrast to the modern future represented by the White City, indigenous and African American intellectuals were less able to lose themselves in the fair's glamour of civilization. While taking aim at the exposition's spurious racial displays of African, black American, and indigenous "irrationality" and "immaturity," however, these intellectuals often reproduced the orientalist boundary that the exposition created to define the rational *logos* against an "irrational" racial and sexual excess.

While denied official representation at the fair, black intellectuals nonetheless spoke at the World's Congress of Representative Women and the Chicago Congress on Africa as well as hosted gatherings at the White City's Haitian Pavilion.⁶⁷ As famous orator and antislavery activist Frederick Douglass pointed out, exposition administrators favored spectacles of the

⁶⁵ Bederman, 35.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Ballard, "African-American Protest and the Role of the Haitian Pavilion at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair"; Hazel V. Carby, "'On the Threshold of Women's Era': Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory," in spec. issue "Race," *Writing, and Difference, Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985); Anna R. Paddon and Sally Turner, "African Americans and the World's Columbian Exposition," *Illinois Historical Journal* 88, no. 1 (Spring 1995); and Melissa Rinehart, "To Hell with the Wigs! Native American Representation and Resistance at the World's Columbian Exposition," *American Indian Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (Fall 2012).

⁶⁷ For further discussion on black participation in the White City, see Ballard and Paddon and Turner.

“primitive” African, exemplified especially by the Dahomey Village on the Midway, over displays of African American civilizational achievement since emancipation. In an 1894 speech on the “so-called, but mis-called, negro problem” delivered to an African Methodist Episcopal church in Washington, D.C., Douglass asserted that the “spirit of American caste” at the Columbian Exposition “made itself conspicuously felt against the educated American negro.”⁶⁸ Douglass lamented that the fair “was a grand ethnological lesson,” assembling “a large variety of peoples of all forms, features and colors, and all degrees of civilization,” but “as if to shame the educated negro of America, the Dahomeyans were there to exhibit their barbarism, and increase American contempt for the negro intellect.” Douglass in fact asserted, “All classes and conditions were there save the educated negro” (21). Several black intellectuals had petitioned fair administrators for representation at the fair, but they were denied not only a pavilion to showcase African American civilizational achievements but also official positions as representatives, organizers, and even clerks. While Douglass protested the ways in which African Americans were objectified at the fair as racially primitive, he did not contest the exposition’s attempt to create a “grand ethnological lesson” nor the “barbarism” of the Dahomeyans, which appears in his writing in contrast to the civilizational superiority of the Haiti Pavilion. Bederman points out the way in which the Dahomey Village’s display of “primitive” Africans relied on scrambling white bourgeois civilizational norms of gender. Visual and textual representations of the Dahomey Village featured men wearing grass skirts alongside manly “Amazon” women to signify uncivilized blackness.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Frederick Douglass, “Lessons of the Hour” (speech, Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C., January 9, 1894), 20. <http://antislavery.eserver.org/legacies/the-lessons-of-the-hour/the-lessons-of-the-hour-xhtml.html>

⁶⁹ For a discussion on the gendering of the Dahomey Village, see Bederman, 36.

As Douglass pointed out, the fair's overarching lesson was of white civilizational achievement, a lesson made through spectacles of Africans as "barbaric." Douglass famously teamed up with anti-lynching activist and journalist Ida B. Wells to create the pamphlet *The Reason Why the Colored American is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition* (1893), which featured a preface written in French, German, and English and was distributed for free to Haitian Pavilion visitors.⁷⁰ Not only did the pamphlet "make plain" the civilizational achievements of black Americans since emancipation, it also reversed the terms of the fair's dominant narrative of white civilizational progress by showcasing commonplace displays of barbarism in the U.S. against African American citizens and describing the White City as a "whited sepulcher."⁷¹ Wells in particular punctured the exposition's glamorous representations of the U.S.'s "moral grandeur" by compiling excerpts from her incendiary anti-lynching pamphlets along with photographs illuminating the spectacular violence perpetrated by white Americans against black bodies (3). Other chapters in the pamphlet exposed systematic injustices including the repeal of voting rights legislation, convict lease system, denial of adequate representation in courts, and lynch laws. Taking explicit aim at the fair's imperial glamour, Douglass claimed that "education and training" had blunted the "shock" of slavery among white U.S. citizens (10). According to Douglass, slavery had "possessed the power of blinding the moral perception, stifling the voice of conscience, blunting all human sensibilities and perverting the plainest teaching of religion," and he argued that although the slavery system had been officially abolished "its asserted spirit remains" (9). Countering the fair's dominant historical narrative of white civilizational progress traced through Greco-Roman antiquity and the European age of "discovery," Douglass routed an

⁷⁰ Ballard, 110.

⁷¹ Ida B. Wells, Frederick Douglass, Irvine Garland Penn, and Ferdinand L. Barnett, *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition*, ed. Robert W. Rydell (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 7, 9.

alternate history of revolutionary freedom through Haiti. In his speech dedicating the Haitian Pavilion, he argued that Haiti and not the U.S. was the “original pioneer emancipator of the nineteenth century”: “It was her one brave example that first of all startled the Christian world into sense of the Negro’s manhood.” It had been Haiti’s “mission” to “[teach] the world the danger of slavery and the value of liberty.”⁷² In addresses to the World’s Congress of Representative Women, black intellectuals and activists including Anna Julia Cooper, Fannie Barrier Williams, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper had furthermore envisioned a millennial women’s future constructed out of black women’s experiences in the U.S.⁷³ By showcasing the ways in which the U.S. had behaved as a “barbarian” nation against its black citizens, black intellectuals besieged images of black primitivism that fair exhibitors had used to create dazzling spectacles of white civilizational achievement.

African American intellectuals were not the only ones to protest images of the “primitive” employed in the Columbian Exposition’s history of civilization. In speeches, architecture, and a birch bark pamphlet, Potawatomi chief Simon Pokagon used dominant anthropological and ethnological representations of racial evolution to challenge the fair’s narrative of colonization as a history of national progress. Similar to Douglass, Pokagon protested racialized images of the “primitive” displayed at the fair. He published a booklet, *The Red Man’s Rebuke* (1893), on birch bark denouncing the “pale-faced race” as “usurpers” and

⁷² Frederick Douglass, “Lecture on Haiti” (speech, Haitian Pavilion Dedication, Chicago, Illinois, January 2, 1893). [http://thelouvertureproject.org/index.php?title=Frederick_Douglass_lecture_on_Haiti_\(1893\)](http://thelouvertureproject.org/index.php?title=Frederick_Douglass_lecture_on_Haiti_(1893))

⁷³ As black cultural studies scholar Hazel V. Carby demonstrates, these speeches exemplified the “collective production and interrelation of forms of knowledge among black women intellectuals” and in the process articulated a “theory of internal and external colonization.” Challenging equations made between civilization and manhood by both white fair administrators and black intellectuals like Douglass, these women, including Wells, illuminated how the systematic colonization of black women’s labor and bodies within the slavery system was linked to ongoing forms of U.S imperialism at home and abroad. Carby points out, for example, that Wells argued in her anti-lynching arguments that the accusation of rape used to justify lynching in the white press functioned to place black men “beyond the pale of human sympathy” while, at the same time, neglecting the systematic rape and assault of black women since slavery revealed how “womanhood” was a “term [that] included only white women; therefore to rape black women was of no consequence outside the black community.” See Carby, “On the Threshold of Women’s Era,” 269-270. A more detailed account of Harper’s exposition speech is given in Chapter Two.

declaring that the Potawatomi, the first inhabitants of the territory that now included Chicago, “have no spirit to celebrate with you the great Columbian Fair.”⁷⁴ In the booklet, Pokagon retold the story of Columbus’s “discovery” of the Americas as one of disinheritance inaugurating a deadly “cyclone of civilization” that swept westward, vanquishing native peoples, their land, and their culture (4). Calling the “discovery of America” a “funeral,” he catalogued abuses perpetrated against America’s native peoples, including the abrogation of treaties, stealing of land, spread of deadly diseases and alcohol, destruction of natural resources and animals, impoverishment, and forced reeducation. Although Pokagon sounds at times like a temperance reformer by denouncing the evils of “fire-water” and lauding the spread of Christianity by “pale-face” missionaries, his pamphlet ends abruptly with an apocalyptic scene in which the “Great Spirit,” speaking in both English and Potawatomi languages, puts white settlers on trial and finds all but a few of them guilty of stealing native lands, dealing corruptly, and introducing the “beverage of hell” to native peoples (5, 15). Pokagon’s pamphlet clearly challenges historian Frederick Jackson Turner’s famous “frontier thesis” by metaphorically transforming western colonization from a process for white settlers to claim a primitive racial “vitality” to an amoral “cyclone” of death and destruction for native peoples and whites alike. Pokagon’s presence at the fair, however, was more ambivalent. He was not only criticized by other Potawatomi for selling “interests” in tribal lands to whites and claiming personal fees from government treaty payments but also for delivering a much more welcoming speech to fairgoers on the exposition’s Chicago Day.⁷⁵ In this speech, Pokagon declared that in order to preserve the “race,” native children “must be educated and learn...the trades of the white man” so that they are able to “compete

⁷⁴ Simon Pokagon, *The Red Man’s Rebuke* (Hartford, MI: C. H. Engle, 1893), 1. <https://archive.org/details/redmanquotsrebu00Poka>

⁷⁵ John N. Low, “The Architecture of Simon Pokagon—In Text and on Display,” *Ogimawkwe Mitigwaki = Queen of the Woods*, by Simon Pokagon, ed. Philip J. Deloria (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 5, 7-8.

with the dominant race.”⁷⁶ Native studies scholar John Low argues, however, that despite Pokagon’s ambivalent message, his pamphlet as well as the birch wigwam he erected for the Midway’s American Indian Village must be read as acts of native survival that invoke native histories and memories at odds with the exposition’s overarching lesson of civilization, actively participating in the construction of Potawatomi “collective memory” in which “communal identities” continue to be forged.⁷⁷

Pokagon suggests that at least for some native visitors the ethnological exhibits of “primitive” peoples and objects positioned alongside displays of advanced technology conjured critical evaluations of the fair’s official narrative of progressive history. The challenge Pokagon’s pamphlet made to the exposition’s overarching narrative of history is perhaps registered in attempts at the time to change its title from *The Red Man’s Rebuke* to *The Red Man’s Greeting*.⁷⁸ Although Pokagon’s representation of the Potawatomi storyteller may be “inauthentic” stereotype, it nonetheless references ways of knowing at the fair that reroute exhibits through a standpoint that was critical of U.S. settler colonialism. Pokagon in fact models for readers a method of reading that actively works against the “glamorous” mode of seeing-as-reading promoted by George Brown Goode and other exposition administrators. He explains that Potawatomi children attending white schools “tell us that they read in your own histories” how native peoples were compelled to “take the war-path” as European powers sought “mastery in the new world,” and he follows this observation by demonstrating how colonial accounts written in the “day of Columbus” bear witness to the peacefulness of the indigenous peoples that the colonists encountered.⁷⁹ Appearing to take aim at the White City’s artistic renderings of Indians,

⁷⁶ Ibid., 9-10.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁹ Pokagon, 7-10.

Pokagon wrote that while “for years after the discovery of this country” native peoples had “stood before the coming strangers, as a block of marble before the sculptor ready to be shaped into a statue of grace and beauty,” the “block was hacked to pieces and destroyed” by the colonists’ “greed for gold” (10). *The Red Man’s Rebuke* demonstrates how alternate lessons of U.S. history might have been gleaned from the exposition’s representations of modern civilization forged through deadly encounters with the “primitive.” Similar to Douglass’s and Wells’s pamphlet, it thus comprises an exhibit attesting to epistemologies capable of puncturing the fair’s imperial glamour. As Low points out, instead of ultimately displaying that the Indian was indeed “vanishing,” the pamphlet and its birch bark pages evoke a living “context” of understanding in which objects are “not just things that occupy space” but instead have a “social, political, and cultural life and capital” providing “opportunities for Native women and men to make their own histories by using the past to ‘read’ the present.”⁸⁰

Despite the concerted effort made by Columbian Exposition organizers and exhibitors to keep a tight reign on the way in which the fair taught object lessons about white, manly civilizational superiority, the pamphlets and speeches of black and indigenous intellectuals at the fair demonstrate that the fair’s glamorous lessons didn’t “work” for all fairgoers. Visitors who found themselves grammatically distanced at the fair from full identification with the white, manly representations of the universal “genius” on display were less able to employ to “distracted” reading practices and experience the exposition’s dazzling glamour of civilization. At the same time, the work of Douglass, Wells, and Pokagon demonstrates how the history of European imperialism, which was represented in particular by the White City’s peristyle, was far from “past” for many visitors to the fair. Instead of representing European imperialism as a triumphant history of universal “genius” overtaking the globe, these intellectuals represented the

⁸⁰ Low, 13-14.

barbarism of whites in the imperial encounter. As Ballard points out of Douglass, however, intellectuals navigating objectified representations of themselves as racially primitive at the fair were acutely aware of the politics of constructing alternative individual and collective representations that would be “acceptable” to white audiences.⁸¹ The problem of articulating alternate identities legible within a dominant grammar of civilization often resulted in the disavowal of what appeared to be “primitive” behaviors that ultimately kept this imperial grammar intact. I do not wish to dismiss the important ways that black and indigenous intellectuals attempted to puncture an imperial glamour of civilization at the fair, but rather to emphasize how figures of primitive irrationality were constructed through imperialist representations of racial and sexual civilizational excess that rationalized forms of imperial domination as educative civilizing mission.

The Dance of Sycorax

Despite Frederick Douglass’s criticism that, “All classes and conditions were [at the Columbian Exposition] save the educated negro,” experimental race-based schools for the education of black American and native students in the U.S. were provided space by administrators for official exhibits. Located in the gargantuan Manufactures and Liberal Arts building flanking the White City’s central Court of Honor, the Hampton Agricultural and Manual Institute and Carlisle Indian Industrial School put together modest exhibits showcasing their schools’ success in preparing their African American and native students for participation in modern industrial society. In a move that was not too dissimilar from arguments made by African American and native intellectuals at the exposition, Hampton’s and Carlisle’s exhibits protested what they saw to be degrading representations of blacks and “Indians” as “primitives”

⁸¹ Ballard, 108.

incapable of civilizational achievement. Headed by white military men with experience in U.S. imperial contexts, these schools, however, did not go so far as to represent students as intellectually equal to whites. What they believed and hoped to showcase to exposition visitors was how manual education could be used as a tool of moral “uplift” with the capacity to gradually assimilate Hampton and Carlisle students into white civilization as farmers, manual laborers, and teachers. Although the new scientific education represented at and exemplified by the Columbian Exposition sought to incorporate manual education into mainstream mass education, manual education at Hampton and Carlisle had been developed as part of a disciplinary curriculum designed to make black and native students into imperial subjects who, by internalizing representations of their distance from normative white civilization, would consent to paternal U.S. governance as a means to direct them on a developmental pathway toward *eventual* citizenship.⁸² Instead of belonging to the vision of “Young America” represented in Burnett’s *Two Little Pilgrims’ Progress*, Hampton and Carlisle students participated in the fair as both students and living object lessons in civilizational transformation. Black and native students were displayed alongside crafts, lessons, and agricultural and industrial artifacts from the schools to showcase their value to U.S. society. As such, students were compelled to perform their civilizational transformation through dress and conduct. Acutely aware of the visual pedagogies promoted at the fair, Hampton and Carlisle peddled visual images of students in Victorian dress and provided performances of militaristic drills as evidence of students’ interior, moral transformations from racialized cultures of savagery. The commodified images of students displayed by Hampton and Carlisle, however, concealed the ways in which students experienced the exposition. While these schools sought to demonstrate their students’

⁸² See Chapters Two and Three for a more detailed discussion of the race-based pedagogies developed at Hampton and Carlisle, respectively.

civilizational transformation, accounts of the exposition published in school newspapers and memoir indicate that students often refused to perform the roles that Carlisle and Hampton had created for them. They suggest, furthermore, that for some students the exposition provided an escape from the civilizational script that Hampton and Carlisle—and the fair as a whole—attempted to instill. Although students were excluded from inhabiting the point of view of the rational *logos* exemplified by the vantage point of the White City's peristyle, their itineraries through the fair suggest an alternate educational route.

Students were in fact most certainly exposed to epistemologies at the fair that could have challenged the education they received at Hampton and Carlisle. These alternate epistemologies for imagining themselves in the world, I argue, might have been prompted not by teachers and intellectuals who attended the fair but from the commercial spectacles of “primitive” life created by Midway dances and, in particular, the “hootchy kootchy” dance that drew crowds of curious white onlookers to the Midway. While spectators were taught by exposition exhibits, architecture, and literature to view Midway performances, especially the “lascivious dances” of the “Orient,” through the lens of imperial desire, they were prohibited in adopting this standpoint from seeing the other ways in which these dances might communicate, particularly to non-white, non-European, and non-U.S. fairgoers. The career of Little Egypt, who after the fair was named the first performer of the “hootchy kootchy” on the Midway, through urban vaudeville and burlesque circuits after the exposition demonstrates how performance could become a vehicle for contesting the fair's dominant epistemology of knowledge, especially the physiognomic reading practice cultivated at the fair. In the play of veiling, performances of the “hootchy kootchy” had the capacity to cloak alternate epistemologies that ran counter to fair's visual epistemology of knowledge. I argue that performances of the “hootchy kootchy” concealed these alternate

epistemologies by strategically playing to fairgoers' dominant expectations to see racial and sexual excess in the dance. The alternate educational experience of Hampton's and Carlisle's students and, by extension, other fair participants who were excluded from the viewpoint of the fair's rational *logos* while also subjected to objectification and commodification under its racializing gaze suggest how the fair's "illustrated encyclopedia of civilization" was not the totalizing, universalist representation of civilization that it attempted to be.

Performances of the "hootchy kootchy" furthermore comprise what I call Sycoratic performances by dramatizing the embodiment of imperial subjectivity. These performances denaturalized the imperial glamour of civilization visually constructed at the fair between binaries of rational and irrational, fantasy and reality, primitive and modern, oriental and occidental. At the same time, these performances also gestured toward what philosopher Sylvia Wynter calls the "demonic ground" for epistemologies of knowing, being, and feeling foreclosed by the fair's over-representation of the standpoint of the rational *logos* embodied by the white, manly citizen subject. In her reading of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Wynter identifies the absence of "Caliban's woman," the "physiognomically complementary mate" from which another vantage point of the "human" might be possible, as the "ground" through which the play makes desirable the new physiognomic order of "racial/cultural difference" of the imperial, secular world represented by Prospero and Miranda.⁸³ Wynter describes the "vantage point" of Caliban's woman as offering a

... 'demonic model' outside the 'consolidated field' of our present mode of being/feeling/knowing, as well as of the multiple discourses, their regulatory systems of meaning and interpretive 'readings', through which alone these modes, as varying expressions of human 'life,' including ours, can effect their respective autopoiesis *as such* specific modes of being. (119)

⁸³ Wynter, 112, 114-116.

Drawing a parallel between this absented, silenced, and unrepresentable (within a dominant grammar) vantage point and the term “womanist” utilized by African American and Afro-Caribbean women, which “necessarily qualifies [dominant white] feminism” in its site at the “cross-roads” of national and imperial knowledge systems of gender and race, Wynter leverages the “situational ‘ground’” of Caliban’s woman as a site from which to generate a “new science of human discourse, of human ‘life’ beyond the ‘master discourse.’”⁸⁴ She describes such “situational ground” as the “systematic behavioural-regulatory role or function as the ontological ‘native/nigger,’ within the motivational apparatus by means of which our present model of being/definition-of-the-human is given dynamic ‘material’ existence” (120). As a figure that *animates*, or gives a “dynamic ‘material’ existence” to a dominant, over-represented ontological model of the “human” and its apparently scientific, rational standpoint, Caliban’s woman represents the “ground” from which this imperial epistemology and ontology of being, feeling, and knowing could be disrupted and recreated. Unlike Caliban’s woman, performances of the “hootchy kootchy” were legible within the Columbian Exposition’s “illustrated encyclopedia of civilization.” As such, I define the “hootchy kootchy” as a Sycoratic performance that figured the limits of the exposition’s representation of the rational *logos*. Cultural studies scholar May Joseph argues that in *The Tempest*, “Sycorax marks the outer limits of Europe’s knowledge of itself, geographically and in terms of governance.” Making “audible the epistemic and psychic rupture in the written, engraved, etched, and codified world” of Enlightenment’s geographies and statehoods, Sycorax, in Joseph’s argument, “explodes the space of Western knowledge with her grasp of a different epistemological magic.”⁸⁵ While Sycorax is not to be confused with

⁸⁴ Ibid., 110-11, 119-120, 122.

⁸⁵ May Joseph, “The Scream of Sycorax,” in *Nomadic Identities: The Performance of Citizenship* by May Joseph. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 129. While following Joseph’s observation that Sycorax signifies the limits of Western knowledge production in *The Tempest*, I depart from her argument that Sycorax

Caliban's woman, I argue that she cites/sites the possibility of her epistemological and ontological emergence *in the flesh*. The “hootchy kootchy” was a Sycoratic performance that reclaimed the commodified body from the exposition's imperial glamour of civilization to put other epistemologies of knowledge in motion. As such, I read the performance of “hootchy kootchy” at and beyond the fair as a text that discloses how the embodiment of racial and sexual “irrationality” compelled by the exposition contained within it the possibility to rupture the fair's imperial glamour of civilization. Hampton and Carlisle students' likely encounters with the “hootchy kootchy” suggest the way in which the fair may have served additionally as a material “ground” for circulating epistemologies—and embodiments—of knowing, being, and feeling that fell outside the peristyle view of the fair's rational *logos*.

Hampton's and Carlisle's exhibits took pains to draw a distinction between “their” students and the representations of barbaric or savage “primitives” on display as part of the Midway as well as the ethnological and anthropological exhibits. Historian Robert A. Trennert observes that the Indian Bureau also created an exhibit of native education as part of a “public relations campaign” to demonstrate to fairgoers the Bureau's relevance as an instrument of civilization.⁸⁶ Bureau Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan, however, worked closely with Putnam to organize an exhibit according to an ethnological method of racial comparison. He explained that in the exhibit “the new and the old can be sharply contrasted [...] and though the old may attract popular attention by its picturesqueness the new will impress the thoughtful with the hopefulness of the outlook and wisdom, as well as fairness, of extending to the weaker the

figures new nationalist possibilities. Wynter's conceptualization of “demonic ground” urges a more radical rethinking of forms of political, social, and economic organization.

⁸⁶ Robert A. Trennert, Jr., “Selling Indian Education at World's Fairs and Expositions, 1893-1904,” *American Indian Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (July 1987), 203.

helpful hand of the stronger race.”⁸⁷ Although Morgan had at first recruited Carlisle founder and president Richard Henry Pratt to help organize the Bureau’s exhibit, Pratt backed out in order to establish his own exhibit in protest of the Bureau’s collaboration with Putnam’s Department of Ethnology. Pratt vehemently objected to ethnological displays of Indians as “primitives,” believing that such representations failed to show the Indian’s capacity for civilization. Arguing that ethnological exhibits promoted Indian dependence on the government instead of instilling the values of self-support, Pratt explained in his autobiography that at the exposition, “Carlisle aimed and showed how to make acceptable productive citizens out of Indians and so end the need and expense of Bureau control through its system of exalting Indianisms.”⁸⁸ Pratt argued that evidence of civilizational transformation at the school could be observed in Sioux student Chauncey Yellow Robe, who helped out with the Carlisle exhibit and who was described by Pratt as a “fine specimen of gentlemanly manhood” (307). Although Hampton appears to have been less invested in the Columbian Exposition after the death of its president Samuel Chapman Armstrong in May 1893, which was also the month that the fair officially opened, its pedagogical aims were generally in line with Carlisle’s. Pratt had in fact consulted closely with Armstrong when planning his school for Indian youth.⁸⁹

Accounts of the Columbian Exposition published in Hampton’s and Carlisle’s school newspapers demonstrate how their living exhibits of students were designed to provide object lessons in the schools’ capacities to take the place of warfare and other overtly repressive forms of state domination as a means to “civilize” black and native students. Students were compelled to perform civilizational transformation in particular through displays of bodily discipline. The

⁸⁷ Quoted in Trennert, 204-205.

⁸⁸ Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: An Autobiography* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 303.

⁸⁹ For more on the relationship between Pratt and Armstrong, see Chapter Three.

Indian Helper, a newsweekly for Carlisle's students that also had a broader circulation among Carlisle's white supporters, explained that the school's preparations for the Columbian Exposition began well before the fair opened. In preparation for the sesquicentennial of Christopher Columbus's journey to the New World, Carlisle students participated in at least two parades to showcase the success of the school. An article on a parade by the "Carlisle Indian boys" that took place in October 1892 in Chicago argued that the "boys'" display of hard work and self-sufficiency had "moved the practical western heart" and made it the "best feature of the parade." It explained that the "tin-ware, the harness, the appetizing loaves of bread, all perched upon poles, and the other implements of WORK touched the right chord of people's hearts." The students' parade, which featured performances of military maneuvers along with symbols of their disciplined labor at the school, was described furthermore as the fulfillment of a civilizing mission inaugurated by Columbus among America's indigenous peoples. The article gushes, "Here were the descendants of the people who had welcomed Columbus and his followers so kindly, reduced to a mere handful, yet trying to soften the hearts of their conquerors and begging for that which they are entitled by all laws, human and divine—education, civilization, citizenship." Demonstrating Pratt's mission to "kill the Indian and save the man" among Carlisle's students, the article represents the school as enabling the civilizational rescue of its students "reduced to a mere handful" by teaching them how to participate in white civilization by cultivating self-discipline through "WORK." Students' willing consent to the school's civilizing mission is demonstrated by accounts of their cheerful shouts of, "Hoo rah ra! Hoo rah ra! Indian School, Carlisle, Pa."⁹⁰

⁹⁰ "The Carlisle Indian Boys in the Chicago Parade," *Indian Helper*, 8, no. 7 (Carlisle, PA), October 28, 1892, 1.

After the Columbian Exposition had opened, Carlisle's and Hampton's exhibits continued to sell the message that their schools could successfully assimilate students into white national society through manual labor. An article by the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* quoted at length in Hampton's monthly newspaper *Southern Workman*, opens by observing: "There is no exhibit that teaches such valuable lessons as that of the Negro and Indian schools of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, the Carlisle school, the Atlanta University, and Wilberforce." The article goes on to explain that in the artifacts produced by students in the course of industrial training, "one can see that the Negro and the Indian can be self supporting, and self sustaining...demonstrating the economic question of his race."⁹¹ It concludes with a quotation of the Hampton creed:

The aim of these schools is to make thrifty and industrious men and women who will radiate good influences among their people, to arouse respect for labor, to replace stupid drudgery with skilled hands, and to these ends to build up an industrial system, for the sake not only of self support and intelligent labor, but also for the sake of character.⁹²

Hampton's and Carlisle's manual labor curriculum was designed primarily to shape the character of students who had been racialized as "primitive." While these schools attempted to ensure the survival of black and native students within white civilization, this survival was predicated upon the elimination of students' identification with ways of living and being in the world that were associated with racial barbarism. Even though Hampton and Carlisle were symbolically located "off the thoroughfare" of the Columbian Exposition's main educational exhibit, references to their race-based methods of schooling nonetheless made their way into the work of educational scholars at the fair. Hall, for instance, implicitly critiqued schools like Carlisle for doing away with primitive "Indian industries," while Angell, in his speech before the International Congress

⁹¹ "Press Comments on the Hampton Exhibits," *Southern Workman* 22, no. 8 (Hampton, VA), August, 1893, 134.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 134.

on Education, cited black education in the South as an example of the new scientific education's social significance. He believed in particular what he saw to be the "Christianiz[ation] of the negro" as proof that innovations in manual and industrial training could be generally applied for the ostensibly democratic purpose of advancing civilization.⁹³ The general importance of manual training for the democratic development of society was later reworked in arguments for progressive education made in the early twentieth century by influential educators like John Dewey and formed the basis for some of the earliest instances of racial liberal education in the U.S.⁹⁴

Articles in the *Indian Helper* and *Southern Workman* also attest to how the fair's imperial glamour of civilization was worked into the schools' disciplinary assimilationist curricula. In reproducing for student readers the dazzling glamour of the fair's White City, these articles modeled how students were to experience the exposition's representation of white, manly civilizational achievement and attempted to instill a desire to inhabit the standpoint of its rational *logos*. A series of articles written by Carlisle teacher and *Indian Helper* editor Marianna Burgess explained how the fair's visual epistemology of knowledge overlapped with Carlisle's mission to instill in students "that *independence of thought and action* must be sought for and arrived at, if we would succeed at anything." Burgess modeled for students the fair's visual epistemology of knowledge by saying that at the fair, "I was *obliged* to depend on my own eyes and understanding" to make sense of its exhibits.⁹⁵ However, what Burgess describes for students is the "blazing whiteness," the "overpowering" and "inspiring grandeur," and "impression" of the

⁹³ U.S. Bureau of Education, 442.

⁹⁴ For more on Dewey's pedagogical theories, see Chapter Four. Dewey does not directly cite these schools, instead creating a narrative of education beginning in Greece and Rome, but he was aware of them, and as demonstrated here, these schools were on the minds of educational scholars thinking through a new scientific education. The split between racial liberal education from race-based educational experiments is discussed in more detail in the Introduction.

⁹⁵ Marianna Burgess, "Miss Burgess' Trip and First Impressions of the Big Fair," *Indian Helper* 8, no. 46 (Carlisle, PA), August 4, 1893, 1.

“magnitude of the fair” created by the White City (4). Burgess’s cliché descriptions of the overpowering whiteness of the White City, which was repeated in accounts of the exposition made by Hampton teacher Edith Armstrong about the White City’s “dazzle” in the *Southern Workman*, contradicts her earlier assertion that the exposition fostered “independence of thought and action” among visitors.⁹⁶ What her account instead reveals is the way in which the “dazzle” of the White City was to function pedagogically to instill in black and native students an awe for the White City’s representation of white, manly civilization that would cultivate their consent to live and work in as imperial subjects in the U.S.⁹⁷

Vignettes of Hampton and Carlisle student responses to the fair that were included in the *Indian Helper*’s and *Southern Workman*’s accounts reinforced a disciplinary mode of seeing and experiencing the fair. In a collection of “notes” on the exposition from the *Indian Helper*, Burgess juxtaposes the ignorant standpoint of a “man of a country” viewing the White City’s peristyle with the enlightened standpoint of the aforementioned Chauncey Yellow Robe. In contrast to the “country” man’s evaluation that the peristyle is “fur nuthin’ under the sun but show,” Burgess quotes Yellow Robe’s conversion into the exposition’s pedagogy of vision. Yellow Robe is reported to say, “When I first came, I walked hastily through the buildings and saw how big and beautiful they were, but there was so much I could not understand, it made me tired to look, and I did not see much. But now...I’m beginning to see and learn and understand.” Explaining that the White City’s “artistic work” must be “far beyond the intellect” of the “poor blind man,” Burgess reinforces Yellow Robe’s discussion of vision by writing that while the fair had at first “stupefied her senses,” each successive day had been an “eye-opener” and she “hop[ed] to have her eyes so wide open that they can never shut to things so high and

⁹⁶ Edith Armstrong, “Impressions of the Columbian Fair,” *Southern Workman* 22, no. 8 (Hampton, VA), August, 1893, 133.

⁹⁷ For more on Marianna Burgess and her writing in Carlisle’s *Indian Helper*, see Chapter Three.

ennobling.”⁹⁸ A vignette attributed to “An Indian Student at the Fair” in the *Southern Workman* exclaims: “‘But oh!’ I can’t describe what I have seen to you; it is far beyond the power of my pen to make even a beginning.”⁹⁹ Against the assessment made by the “country” man that the peristyle was “nuthin’ but show,” these articles modeled for students how they were to experience the “high and ennobling” expression of white civilization within the “dazzle” of the White City.

In addition to experiencing the exposition’s object lessons in civilization, students were also to perform civilizational transformation for Columbian Exposition fairgoers. Articles in the *Indian Helper* demonstrate how such performances differed from “primitive” performances of savagery on the Midway. A Miss Shaffner observes of the Midway’s exhibit of South Sea Islanders that they were “partly civilized,” explaining many had “converted to Christianity.” She saw their “partly civilized” status in “ceremonial dances” featuring performers that “were very agile, using almost every muscle of the body.” Accompanied by “harmonious singing,” these dances illustrated for Shaffner an example of the virtue of bodily discipline. She explains, “While we are just beginning to recognize the importance of training the body, these people whom we have regarded as ignorant and savage, have been working steadily along lines we would do well to follow.”¹⁰⁰ Shaffner’s positive appraisal of the “oriental” spectacle of discipline created by the South Sea Islanders provide a contrast to later articles by Burgess that described the “disgraceful” dances and parades that were put on by the Midway’s inhabitants. Burgess wrote both that “it is very refreshing to run down to the Midway Plaisance” when one grows “weary” of the White City’s “fairylane of beauty” at the same time that one’s “first visit to the Plaisance is enough to set the weak brain whirling.” She pops in to see a Dahomeyan “war

⁹⁸ M.B., “Catch Notes at the World’s Fair Exhibit,” *Indian Helper* 8, no. 47 (Carlisle, PA), August 11, 1893, 4.

⁹⁹ “Incidents of Indian Life at Hampton,” *Southern Workman* 22, no. 10 (Hampton, VA), October, 1893, 155.

¹⁰⁰ “Miss Shaffner Continues the World’s Fair Story,” *Indian Helper* 8, no. 43 (Carlisle, PA), July 14, 1893, 1.

dance,” haggles with the “queer people” of the oriental “bazaars,” and denounces the American Indian Village “where well-to-do civilized Indians have been hired to put on war paint and feathers to satisfy the gaze of a curiosity loving public.”¹⁰¹ In contrast to the “inauthentic” war dances of the American Indian Village, Pratt describes in his memoir how a trainload of Carlisle students, who had to each raise \$20 to fund their trip to the exposition (thereby proving their capacity for self-support), performed regular military drills on the fairgrounds to impress visitors with their moral self-discipline.¹⁰²

The orderly self-discipline that Carlisle and Hampton students were to display in military drills, Victorian dress, and other educational artifacts created an image of these experimental schools as successful civilizing institutions. However, students did not uniformly absorb the exposition’s object lessons in white civilizational superiority. In his memoir, Pratt explains that “[o]nly one mishap occurred” during Carlisle’s trip to the fair. He writes:

One of the Apache boys from the prisoners then in Florida persuaded one of the girls to take a ride on the lake in an Indian canoe he hired from the Indian camp. Neither of them had ever had such an experience. When some distance from shore, the canoe upset, and they were rescued with some difficulty—the girl was so far gone that it required a good deal of first-aid treatment to bring her back.¹⁰³

This vignette is remarkable for a number of reasons, but in particular for the revelation that at least a few Carlisle students actively made contact with performers in the various “Indian” villages at the exposition. Although Pratt identifies the “Indian camp” as the place where the students rented the canoe, his reference could have been either to the American Indian Village on the Midway or the living village organized by the anthropology exhibit in the White City. Elsewhere denigrating the “birch-bark canoes” and other “articles made of birch bark”

¹⁰¹ Marianna Burgess, “Midway Plaisance at the World’s Fair,” *Indian Helper* 8, no. 49 (Carlisle, PA), August 25, 1893, 4.

¹⁰² Pratt, 303.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 302.

characterizing the “Indian camp” as signifying the fair’s “spectacular exaggeration of the aborigine,” Pratt may have been referring to the Potawatomi exhibit in the American Indian Village, which included Pokagon’s birch wigwam (304). Scott demonstrates as well that by late summer, the exposition was staging international sports competitions, including canoe races among performers from “Prof. Putnam’s settlement,” the Dahomeyans, Turks, Egyptians, and other Midway residents, to attract visitors to the fair.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the two students were clearly behaving in violation of Carlisle’s strict code of conduct controlling interactions between “boys” and “girls” at the school by taking a canoe ride together alone.¹⁰⁵ At least for these two students, it appears that the fair was not merely an occasion to experience the glamorous superiority of white civilization but also a way to socialize with each other as well as other indigenous performers at the fair in ways that transgressed the strict social boundaries that Carlisle, and the fair at large, had attempted to discipline. Pratt follows his account of Carlisle’s visit to the fair with a discussion of student runaways, suggesting furthermore that students may have found at the fair an opportunity to imagine lives for themselves that ran athwart of Carlisle’s mission to transform them into docile landowning farmers. Upon leaving Carlisle, Luther Standing Bear, for instance, a former student of Burgess’s, joined Buffalo Bill Cody’s “Wild West Show” as a means to make a living and to travel in the U.S. and Europe.¹⁰⁶

Pratt’s vignette raises a number of questions about how Carlisle’s and Hampton’s students experienced the fair. What exhibits “attracted” them and what “lessons” did they learn as they walked through the White City and Midway Plaisance? How did they experience the

¹⁰⁴ Scott, 363.

¹⁰⁵ Chapter Three discusses how Carlisle’s educational program attempted to instill among native students patriarchal models of family, domesticity, and governance including a gendered division of labor.

¹⁰⁶ Luther Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux* (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 1975). See also Ryan Burt, “‘Sioux Yells’ in the Dawes Era: Lakota ‘Indian Play,’ the Wild West, and the Literatures of Luther Standing Bear,” *American Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (September 2010).

performances of “primitive” life on display in the various living villages? What might they have made of the fair’s transnational spectacles not only of their own ostensible “racial inferiority” but the “inferiority” of other “races” on display? Despite Carlisle’s and Hampton’s attempts to control the object lessons that students learned at the fair, a move that reflected the exposition’s broader mass pedagogical project, these attempts in disciplining students’ vision perhaps reveal more about imperial fantasies of knowledge and vision than they do about how students experienced the fair. Indeed, the exposition’s pedagogy of vision, a pedagogy that attempted to locate scientific rationality and perceptions of the “real” in an imperial glamour of civilization, was unraveled by Midway performers. The career of the Midway’s most famous performer, Little Egypt, demonstrates how Midway performers could have used the fair’s racial and sexualized commodification of their bodies in order to cultivate epistemologies of knowledge that resisted the fair’s slogan that “to see is to know.” The “hootchy kootchy” dance associated with Little Egypt deployed the orientalist dualities used to discipline boundaries between “civilization” and the “primitive” that organized visual rationality at the fair in order to claim the body in ways that actively countered the fair’s production of the non-normative racial and sexual excess of “primitive” bodies. A name that was retrospectively applied to Midway performers from the Algerian Village and Street in Cairo, “Little Egypt” refers not to a specific performer but rather to an orientalist figure that fair administrators and later urban vice committees sought to discipline for her overly sexualized “muscle dances.” Little Egypt was a transnational figure that appeared performing the “belly dance,” “hootchy kootchy,” burlesque striptease, and “Dance of the Seven Veils” on stages ranging in location from the Midway to urban red light districts to the opera.¹⁰⁷ Deploying the glamorous vision cultivated by the Columbian Exposition as a veil,

¹⁰⁷ On the influence of Little Egypt to burlesque and vaudeville, see Donna Carlton, *Looking for Little Egypt* (Bloomington, ID: IDD Books, 1994), 54-75; Jayna Brown, *Babylon Girls: Black Women Performers and the*

however, this figure was able to claim the body in ways that actively resisted the imperial glamour of civilization through which U.S. imperial projects were advanced in the late nineteenth century. As a Sycoratic figure, Little Egypt both figured a threat to the rational imperial order exemplified by the Columbian Exposition while at the same time mobilizing imperialist desires for orientalist, spectacular, glamorous performances of racial and sexual excess to signify ways of knowing, being, and feeling beyond a glamour of empire.

In *The Tempest*, it is through Sycorax that Prospero rationalizes his claim of imperial dominion over the island. Although Prospero describes Sycorax as an Algerian exile, she is a figure that also refracts histories of racial slavery, indigenous genocide, and colonization in the Americas. Prospero never reveals how he came to take control of the island from Sycorax, yet she looms as an omnipresent threat to Prospero's dominion. Reminding the enslaved sprite Ariel that he had not yet worked off his debt of bondage, Prospero recounts how the "blue-eyed hag," who had been "banished" from Algiers "[f]or mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible," had imprisoned Ariel in a "cloven pine." With her "earthy and abhorred commands," Sycorax represents in the play powerful "natural" forces that threaten to disrupt the social order that the scholar-magician Prospero has set up on the island (1.2: 261, 269-284).¹⁰⁸ Prospero's account of Sycorax's sexual power, exemplified not only by her imprisonment of Ariel in the "cloven pine," but also by the birth of her son Caliban, indicates the threat of "engulfment" that Anne McClintock observes European explorers projected onto the land and peoples they encountered

Shaping of the Modern (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2009), 101. Daphne A. Brooks and Susan A. Glenn discuss the influence of Little Egypt to "Salomania" in the U.S. See Daphne A. Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2006), 336; and Susan A. Glenn, *Female Spectacle: The Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 100.

¹⁰⁸ Shakespeare, 16.

on their voyages of “discovery” and which comprised part of the “porno-tropics” of empire.¹⁰⁹ Prospero contains the threat that Sycorax poses to his dominion over the island by making her into a figure of racial and sexual excess. His account figures her, to quote black feminist theorist Hortense Spillers’ account of the racial and sexual process of “pornotroping,” as a “source of irresistible, destructive sensuality” in making her into a “physical and biological expression of otherness.”¹¹⁰ In *The Tempest*, Sycorax is made legible as a criminalized, insurgent figure marking the boundary of civilization that Prospero has created to secure his own dominion as scholar-magician of the island. Legible through a racial and sexual misnaming of the “flesh,” Sycorax appears as a violable figure unfit to rule the island.

At the Columbian Exposition, Little Egypt and the *danse du ventre* figured the combined imperial fantasies and fears of fair organizers who attempted to universalize the rational order of U.S. “civilization.” The history of Little Egypt and *danse du ventre* demonstrate furthermore how the orientalist boundaries of “civilization” and “primitive” that animated displays of manly, white civilization were constantly over-spilling the exposition’s tidy borders. In his autobiography, Midway Plaisance organizer and concessionaire Sol Bloom reminisces about the popularity of the *danse du ventre* performed in the Algerian Village. Bloom explains it was “regrettable” that the reputation of the *danse du ventre*, which he describes as “ballet,” was sullied by reports that the “belly dance” on display was “salacious and immoral.” He argues furthermore that the dancer known as Little Egypt never set foot on the Midway Plaisance and that conflation between the *danse du ventre* and the “crude, suggestive dance known as the ‘Hootchy-Kootchy’” was not performed there. Distinguishing the *danse du ventre* of Cairo Street and the Algerian Village from the “hootchy-kootchy,” Bloom writes that “while sensuous and

¹⁰⁹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. (New York/London: Routledge, 1995), 27.

¹¹⁰ Spillers, 67.

exciting” the *danse du ventre* “was choreographic perfection, and it was so recognized by even the most untutored spectators. Whatever they had hoped to see, they were enchanted by the entertainment actually placed before them.” Bloom nonetheless admits that the “sullied” reputation of the *danse du ventre* at the fair made the “crowds pour in” and turned his concession into a “gold mine.”¹¹¹ Bloom’s definition of the dances of the Algerian Village as a “ballet” attempted to domesticate the dance for educative purposes at the same time that his discussion of the controversy surrounding the dance betrays that its attraction for fairgoers (and for his concession) was in its exhibition of a racial and sexual in excess of normative white civilization on display at the fair.

Widespread representations of Little Egypt and the *danse du ventre* conflated the historical specificity of dances and dancers into spectacles of transgression that appeared to invite imperial discipline and control. Performance studies scholars Gertrude M. Scott and Donna Carlton corroborate Bloom’s contention that Little Egypt was primarily a stage name that dancers used after the fair. The name was used by performers on Coney Island who profited off the sensation that the *danse du ventre* created at the Columbian Exposition and it became famous after the highly publicized police raid of a stag party dubbed by the press the “Awful Seeley Dinner.”¹¹² Scott and Carlton each point out that although recent popular and scholarly accounts of Little Egypt have tended to identify her as Fareda Mahzar Spyropoulos, a dancer from Damascus who performed on the Midway’s Street in Cairo and later married a Chicago restaurant owner, it is just as likely that she was the popular Coney Island dancer Fatima or the Algerian Ashea Wabe, the Little Egypt who performed a striptease at the infamous Seeley Dinner. In addition, Carlton suggests that Little Egypt could be considered the first “sex screen

¹¹¹ Bloom, 135-136.

¹¹² Bloom, 136; Scott, 195-213; Carlton, 54-83.

goddess.” After perfecting his kinetoscope in 1894, Thomas Edison created a kinetograph titled “Dance du Ventre” that featured a Madam Ruth, which, along with other early films of exotic dances of the Coney Island Fatima and other Little Egypts, was immensely popular.¹¹³ Little Egypt and the *danse du ventre* were primarily confined to burlesque and vaudeville stages but they also served as inspiration for performances of the “Dance of the Seven Veils,” a performance that was part of the transatlantic phenomenon of “Salomania” at the turn of the century.¹¹⁴ Historian Susan Glenn explains that performances of Salome’s “Dance of the Seven Veils,” which retold the Judeo-Christian story of the *femme fatale* who danced for her stepfather in return for the head of prophet John the Baptist, became popular in the U.S. at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although Salome had been a popular figure in nineteenth century European art and performance, especially with the production of playwright Oscar Wilde’s controversial *Salomé*, the first performance of the “Dance of the Seven Veils” staged at New York’s Metropolitan Opera House in 1907 was censored and the dance relegated to vaudeville as a type of “cooch” dancing associated with Little Egypt (100).

Whether appearing on vaudeville and burlesque stages as the “hootchy kootchy” or *danse du ventre*, the dance embodied a threat that invited imperialist discipline by vice commissions, police, and courts, a discipline often described with pleasure by the press. At the Columbian Exposition, the *danse du ventre* created public controversy—some of which may have been staged to generate more publicity and revenue—for violating the Victorian sensibilities of fair administrators. A letter written by the National Association of Dancing Masters of America published in *The New York Times* condemned the dance as “none other than a slightly modified version of orgy practiced and known in Spain as the ‘Chica,’ which was carried into that country

¹¹³ Carlton, 78.

¹¹⁴ Glenn, 100; See also Glenn, 96-125.

by the Moors.”¹¹⁵ De-authenticating the *danse du ventre* by challenging its Egyptian origins, the Dancing Masters of America also made it racially ambiguous. The letter sparked a controversy in which calls were made to close the Persian “Palace of Eros” in the Algerian Village and the revocation by the Board of Lady Managers of an invitation for the dancers to attend a reception at the Women’s Pavilion.¹¹⁶ No longer tied to an exhibit that offered visitors an “authentic” experience of Egypt, the dance simultaneously posed a threat to the Columbian Exposition’s pedagogical mission to teach fairgoers a visual epistemology of knowledge anchored by spectacles of orientalist racial and sexual excess while also inviting fairgoers to exercise the standpoint of the rational *logos* to make sense of the chaos she represented. In performing the dance off the Midway, both Farida and Fatima were subject to police raids for transgressing public moral codes.¹¹⁷ Accounts of “Little Egypt” and the *danse du ventre* that appeared in the late nineteenth century editions of the sensationalist *New York World* represent often farcical attempts made by police and courts in the city to stop performances of the dance. In their accounts of the dance, these articles delighted in producing scandalous accounts of the *danse du ventre* as well as in describing the discipline that dancers and promoters faced because of it.¹¹⁸ One article went so far as to attribute the police prohibition of the *danse du ventre* at the Miner’s Bowery Theatre to a police captain reading about an account of the dance published in an earlier edition of the *New York World*.¹¹⁹ If, as Carlton asserts, Little Egypt’s “hootchy kootchy” dance

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Scott, 196.

¹¹⁶ Scott, 197-198.

¹¹⁷ Carlton, 73; Scott, 209.

¹¹⁸ One account, “Dancing Girls Fined \$50,” describes the conundrum faced over whether or not to make a performer demonstrate the *danse du ventre* in a court of law. To the apparent consternation of the audience, the judge prohibited the dance in the courtroom. See, “Dancing Girls Fined \$50,” *The New York World*, Evening Edition (New York, NY), Dec. 6, 1893, 3.; “Same as the Midway,” *The New York World*, Evening Edition (New York, NY), July 11, 1894, 1.; “Danse Du Ventre in Town,” *The New York World*, Evening Edition (New York, NY), Apr. 13, 1894, 2.; “Danse Du Ventre Must Stop,” *The New York World*, Evening Edition (New York, NY), Apr. 13, 1894, 2.; “Arion Ball Gayety,” *The New York World*, Evening Edition (New York, NY), Feb. 16, 1895, 3.

¹¹⁹ “Danse Du Ventre in Town,” 2.

was the forerunner to burlesque striptease, it was a performance that revealed less about the dance's geographical or cultural origins than it did about the "porno-tropics" of U.S. imperialism. Collapsing ambiguous racial, cultural, and geographical origins, the "hootchy kootchy," like Little Egypt, reveals more about the imperialist desires of viewers to colonize the racial and sexual "mystery" she represented than about the dancers who performed it. Appearing in journalistic accounts as both an amoral dance to be stamped out by vice commissions as well as a titillating performance that eventually made its way from the burlesque theaters of urban red light districts to Broadway and film as the "Dance of the Seven Veils," the "hootchy kootchy" appeared to invite imperial knowledge and discipline.

As the itinerary of Little Egypt and *danse du ventre* suggest, it appears that very few of the performers who used the moniker "Little Egypt" or performed the dance was "authentically" Egyptian. Although Little Egypt and the "hootchy kootchy" collapse U.S. imperial desires into a spectacular performance of the epistemological, ontological, and physical violability of the racialized and sexualized female body, performers were also able to mobilize the commodification of the dance to advance epistemologies of knowing, being, and feeling beyond the all-seeing, all-knowing gaze of the imperial spectator. The dance could also serve as a veil that allowed what ethnic studies scholar Adria L. Imada describes as a "counter script" to the fair's dominant history of civilization to be publicly performed. Imada observes, for example, that while performances of the hula were commodified on the Midway, the hula repertoire performed by Hawaiian dancers was an "inalienable possession."¹²⁰ Like dances performed by other indigenous peoples on display at the fair, including Cody's "Wild West Show," the hula participated in the continuation of practices that had been forbidden by the U.S. imperial state

¹²⁰ Adria L. Imada. *Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire*. (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2012), 77. One *New York World* article describes a hula performance in town as essentially the same as the Midway's *danse du ventre*. See, "Same as the Midway," 1.

(74-75). Similarly, dancers of the Egyptian *ghawazi*, Algerian Ouled Nail, and Tunisian handkerchief dances, which were often conflated under the moniker *danse du ventre*, had a venue on the Midway Plaisance that was increasingly denied them elsewhere. Carlton explains that the *ghawazi*, for instance, was increasingly suppressed in colonial Egypt for its association with prostitution.¹²¹ As Imada demonstrates of the hula, white viewers' desire for these performances allowed the dances to survive imperialist disciplinary regimes that had attempted to eliminate them. Not only that but they sometimes offered opportunities for performers to "[immerse] themselves in urban and global worlds" as modern subjects (92). Imada illuminates the possibility for the formation of insurgent socialities among performers in a vignette she provides about bracelets from Egyptian Village "hootch-cootch" dancers given to traveling hula dancers from Hawai'i. Soldered onto their arms, these bangles became incorporated into hula dancers' own performances (95-96). The very fungibility that made Little Egypt and the "hootchy kootchy" into a racial and sexual signifier of irrationality appearing to invite imperialist governance, in other words, also provided a type of veil that concealed the formation of socialities that could have posed a threat to the imperial state.

Indeed, many performers of Little Egypt and the "hootchy kootchy" performed a type of "racial masquerade" that used veiling to challenge a dominant white audience's attempts to gain racial or sexual knowledge from the dance.¹²² Noting that *The Creole Show*, a burlesque revue advertised to "glorify the coloured girl" in the U.S., included a dance called "Fatima's Dance du Ventre" inspired by the Midway Plaisance, performance studies scholar Jayna Brown argues that in their version of the *danse du ventre*, the ostensibly authentic mixed race women in *The Creole*

¹²¹ Carlton, 44.

¹²² For a deeper discussion of "racial masquerade," see Chapter Four. The term is borrowed from Alys Weinbaum, "Racial Masquerade: Consumption and Contestation in American Modernity," in *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization*, ed. Alys Eve Weinbaum, Lynn M. Thomas, Priti Ramamurthy, et al. (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2008).

Show “embodied a nodal point, where the eroticized spectacles of imperial conquest, racial subjugation, and technological innovation were shown to be interdependent.” According to Brown, performers who took the name Little Egypt could layer “imperial subjecthoods” in the dance.¹²³ She observes that in *The Creole Show*, for example, the women on the stage signified to audiences both the “fungibility” of racial codification by embodying the historical contradictions of interracial sex in the U.S. while at the same time their orientalist performances “referenced the global reach of plantation economies and the transnational migratory patterns of exploited labor” (106, 102-103). Thus, on the one hand performers of “Fatima’s Dance du Ventre” played into the audience’s desire to experience the imperial glamour of civilization produced by the racy *danse du ventre*, while, on the other hand, the proliferation of imperial references they performed prevented the audience from gleaning essentialized racial and sexual knowledge from the dancers. Instead of allowing an audience to employ a visual epistemology of knowledge that would strip them to an essentialized core and thereby transform them into knowable entities to be managed, disciplined, or contained, the dancers in *The Creole Show* “expos[ed] race ‘typologies’ as conceptual categories bound by time and place” and by “moving in and among racialized roles, threw back onto the stage the power-based relational politics of their own accessibility and commodification” (125). Black studies scholar Daphne A. Brooks argues that black performer Aida Overton Walker’s performance of Salome’s “Dance of the Seven Veils” involved a similar play of veils. Brooks situates Walker’s performance within the nineteenth-century orientalist “veiled lady” trope in which “the veil, the idealized and clichéd colonial garment, is only worn to be removed, to be co-opted as an instrument spectacularizing the act of *uncovering*” (337). As discussed earlier, postcolonial scholar Inderpal Grewal demonstrates how the trope of the veil functioned as a metaphor for colonial knowledge

¹²³ Brown, 102.

production in which the all-seeing subject of knowledge penetrates the “mystery” and “darkness” of the unknown colonial space. Although Walker played to a white audience’s desire to enact the role of the rational *logos* that would “uncover” a racial and sexual essence by watching her performance of Salome, Brooks argues that Walker deployed the trope of the veil to create a “spectacularly visible opacity” (340). In “threaten[ing] to turn on its head the confession of race as well as sexuality,” Walker “choreograph[ed] uncharted territory for black women in performance by evading dominant culture’s impulse to ‘capture’ and fix black female bodies in the void of stillness” by “imagin[ing] a way both to break free of the bonds of self-imposed corporeal silence and to reject abject forms of sexual expression” (340-341). Walker, in other words, disclosed in her dance the inability of the audience’s gaze to *know* or claim authority over knowledge of the black female body. In Brooks’ words, Walker used the Salome performance to “rehistoricize her flesh” (335). Although the exposition’s pedagogy of vision was designed to cultivate an imperial glamour that taught fairgoers how “civilization” should look and feel by turning performers and objects into museum pieces, Little Egypt’s performances put these “artifacts” in motion by turning them into opaque “fetishes” and imbuing them with a life beyond the gaze of the white, manly rational *logos* represented by the fair.

**Chapter Two—Hampton Institute’s “English” Program and Insurgent Literacies in
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted***

In conceptualizing the notion of an “American grammar book,” or a national epistemology that produces “captive bodies” by positing a racial ontology of the “flesh,” black feminist theorist Hortense Spillers observes that epistemologies of the “captive body” are always in a “dynamic” flux that simultaneously produces a deadly stillness by reworking the terms of captivity. She explains:

Even though the captive flesh/body has been “liberated,” and no one need pretend that even the quotation marks do not *matter*, dominant symbolic activity, the ruling episteme that releases the dynamics of naming and valuation, remains grounded in the originating metaphors of captivity and mutilation so that it is as if neither time nor history, nor historiography and its topics, shows movement, as the human subject is “murdered” over and over again by the passions of a bloodless and anonymous archaism, showing itself in endless disguise.¹

Playing on the term “*matter*,” Spillers argues that the abolition of plantation slavery in the U.S. was a historical event that did not produce full black liberation but instead transformed the “dynamics of naming and valuation” that are part of epistemologies of captive bodies and flesh. It “mattered” forth new strategies for producing captive bodies through terms of “liberation.” Yet, Spillers argues that these strategies remained “grounded” in epistemologies of the “body” produced as part of New World imperialism. While the abolition of plantation slavery mattered a great deal, Spillers emphasizes that it did not do away with the “American grammar book.” In my readings of historical accounts of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, often named the first educational institute established for freedpeople in the South, and abolitionist and activist Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s pedagogical novel, *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted* (1892), education becomes a site of struggle over temporalities of sovereignty, development, and

¹ Hortense J. Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” *Diacritics* 17 no. 2 (1987), 68.

“freedom.” Although the *founding* of the Hampton Institute is often represented as a historical rupture inaugurating a transition from a condition of slavery in which enslaved men, women, and children had no access to formal education, including training in alphabetic literacy, to a new condition in which such education was available to “all,” this chapter attends to the way in which its pedagogies of reading and writing remained within the historical “ground” of New World colonization and slavery by attempting to produce black students as *imperial subjects* perpetually held at a distance from full citizenship, including the rights and privileges attached to its embodiment. Approaching Hampton’s literacy training as a part of a U.S. imperial culture, which postcolonial theorist Edward Said defines to include the “theory and attitudes” of imperial powers toward those they dominate, I read Hampton’s curriculum-making, institution-building, and education as imaginative acts that trope on styles of temporality—market rationality, “civilizing,” and apocalypse—that shaped pedagogies for reading, writing, and, ultimately, knowing the world, which carry with them often radically different ways of understanding “literacy” and “freedom.”² I begin by introducing three twentieth century accounts—broadly conceived—of Hampton’s founding to draw out how they rely on temporal conventions that shape understandings of the relationship between education and freedom after the Civil War.

A popular narrative of the Hampton Institute describes its founding as part of the project of “giving slaves freedom” begun during the Civil War. In this story the school took over from the Union army to fulfill the promise of emancipation. As the Union Army advanced across the South, the story goes, enslaved men and women fleeing plantations arrived to Fortress Monroe in Hampton, Virginia, to gain protection with Union soldiers. In 1861, General Benjamin Butler had declared Fort Monroe’s refugees “contraband of war” to protect them from the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, which compelled northerners to return runaways to their owners. Around the same

² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 9.

time, a free black woman named Mary Peake defied Virginia's 1819 slave code banning slave literacy by holding lessons for the "contraband" beneath one of Fort Monroe's sprawling oak trees. In 1863, the oak became the site of the "first southern reading" of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and the Butler School, as Peake's school became known, was one of the first schools established for blacks in the South. Eventually, the Butler School was incorporated into Samuel Chapman Armstrong's Hampton Institute to carry on Peake's legacy, and the oak was renamed the Emancipation Oak to stand as a "lasting symbol of education for all."³ The Emancipation Oak, whose sprawling branches now shade the entrance of Hampton University, persists as a symbol of freedom from bondage.

This version of the story is contested by historians, who demonstrate that Hampton Institute was not the first site of organized education for blacks in the South and point out that its founding should be understood in the context of other educational institutions, both formal and informal. Historians write that Mary Peake began teaching Hampton blacks—enslaved and free—to read and write well before the Civil War and held classes openly under Fortress Monroe's famous oak only after receiving support from the American Missionary Association in 1861 to teach 50-60 of the Hampton "contraband."⁴ The AMA sent several northern teachers south to begin teaching blacks during and after the Civil War and later established the Hampton Institute under the leadership of Freedman's Bureau agent Samuel Chapman Armstrong.⁵ Furthermore, black education historian James Anderson writes that while historical sources have often attributed the beginnings of black education in the South to Mary Peake, enslaved and free

³ "Hampton University: History," Hampton University, accessed December 12, 2013, <http://www.hamptonu.edu/about/history.cfm>.

⁴ Robert Francis Engs, *Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 45-65; James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill/London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 7; Hampton University.

blacks had established schools across the South before Peake's school.⁶ Anderson's claim follows historian and sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois's argument in *Black Reconstruction* (1935) that the founding of schools by formerly enslaved African Americans during Reconstruction forced the adoption of state-mandated free public education across the South.⁷

Though not conventionally thought of as "history," a third telling of black education in the South can be found in Alice Walker's 1976 novel *Meridian*. In the novel Walker imagines the political coming-of-age of Meridian Hill, a black civil rights worker, during and after the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer, a watershed moment in the antiracist liberation movements of the mid-twentieth century. In the novel, the Emancipation Oak is not a symbol of liberal progress—the story in which bondage gives way to freedom—but allegorizes unwritten, unspoken memories that have been "clipped out at the root."⁸ After the birth of a child and dissolution of her first marriage, Meridian attends Saxon College, an all-black women's college, in which the goal of rigid social training is to make students behave as if they were "*as chaste and pure as the driven snow*" (93, 95). The carceral landscape of the school is disrupted by the "Sojourner Tree," or "Music Tree."⁹ The Sojourner Tree, which tropes the Emancipation Oak, is a sprawling magnolia said to have been planted by an African-born slave, Louvinie. Louvinie planted the tree after her tongue was ripped out for telling a "masterpiece of fright" that by official accounts killed her master Saxon's "weak hearted" young son (33). Louvinie's only recorded testimony to this accusation was written by her master's daughter and is kept under glass in the Saxon library. In Africa, Louvinie's family's role was "the weaving of intricate tales

⁶ Anderson, 4-32.

⁷ W.E.B. Du Bois, "Founding the Public School," *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York/London: Free Press, 1998).

⁸ Alice Walker, *Meridian* (New York: Harcourt, 1976), 34. Subsequent page numbers for *Meridian* are given parenthetically.

⁹ On the "carceral landscape" of the plantation, see Walter Johnson, "The Carceral Landscape," *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University press, 2013).

with which to entrap people who hoped to get away with murder,” but “how they were able to do this they never had a chance to teach her” (31, 32). One wonders what kind of tale would have filled the boy with such fright, but the written testimony of the plantation owner’s daughter is all that is left, and Louvinie cannot prevent the suppression of her version of events that, like her tongue, has been “clipped out at the root” (34). Speechless Louvinie is able to retrieve her tongue, smoke it, and plant it at the foot of a “scrawny magnolia tree,” which grows huge branches with the power to hide Saxon students from accusations of sexual transgression. Meridian, hiding in the tree one hundred years later, is filled with a “sense of minuteness and hugeness, of past and present, of sorrow and ecstasy” (92). The Sojourner Tree, where students sing and find shelter, is a site of memory that contains—roots, trunk, and branches—the silenced tongue of Louvinie.

The Sojourner Tree’s silenced story, which persists in the novel through song, collective memory, and the vitality of the ancient magnolia, allegorizes another version of the history of black education and freedom that escapes official sites of memory contained in libraries and written archives. In Walker’s fictional telling, the Sojourner punctures the temporal conventions of the progress narrative embedded in stories of the Emancipation Oak by representing Louvinie’s violent silencing as well as the lost epistemological framework of her relatives that may have allowed her to stop the accusers who “hoped to get away with murder” (31). Following black studies scholar and poet Fred Moten, the Sojourner might be thought of as performing the “phonic substance” of the Emancipation Oak by opening up an “abundance of affirmation,” which is represented in Walker’s novel by the protection the Sojourner offers from institutional attempts to discipline and criminalize students by regulating sexual norms, against a dominant vision of black liberation that continues to silence and negate epistemologies of the “body” in

excess of racializing civilizational norms.¹⁰ The Sojourner represents the presence of what I call *insurgent literacies*—ways of knowing and reading, of speaking and telling that must be forgotten, stamped out, or ripped out because they have the capacity to threaten the social order, to depose the master or the master’s son. Walker suggests that the history of black education in the South should be read not only as the story of “education for all” but also as a history of counterinsurgency bent on quelling a threat of familial and national disorder, which the knowledgeable slave had long embodied for northern and southern whites.

In this chapter I offer contrapuntal readings of narratives of black education in the South following the Civil War. While Chapter One employs Said’s methodology of the “contrapuntal perspective” to describe the historical relationship between race-based education and the new progressive scientific education exemplified at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, this chapter takes a contrapuntal approach to interpret “the massively knotted and complex histories” of black education in the South by focusing on representations of temporality. In an essay on “time and revolution in African America,” slavery historian Walter Johnson argues that understanding historical processes like “imperialism” and “revolution” requires attention to the “clash of temporalities” that comprise “lived histories.”¹¹ Imperial and colonial domination, as well as resistance and revolt, involve conflicts not only over who gets to write history but how temporality is imagined. Johnson writes, “The history of time is one of continual contest: a history of arguments about history; of efforts to control events by controlling the terms of their description; of situated and sometimes violent acts of synchronization; of forcible re-education, resistant appropriation, and everyday negotiation; of conflicts in which time itself was a

¹⁰ Fred Moten, “Black Mo’nin,” *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2003), 64-65.

¹¹ Walter Johnson, “Time and Revolution in African America: Temporality and the History of Atlantic Slavery,” in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity*, ed. Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 198, 204.

dimension of contest.”¹² I examine founding documents produced by Samuel Chapman Armstrong, president of the Hampton Institute, to investigate how Hampton’s curriculum of racial uplift both shaped and was shaped by temporal conventions subtending liberal ideas of “freedom” circulating in the U.S. during the latter half of the nineteenth-century. While debates surrounding models of black education are usually staged through black educator Booker T. Washington’s and Du Bois’s heated debates, I demonstrate how Armstrong created an “only English” curriculum that in its attempt to assimilate black students on the condition that they absorb a “rational” worldview supporting the economic, political, and social order of the New South simultaneously attempted to produce imperial subjects through the perpetual deferral of freedom. Within Hampton’s literacy curriculum, the future *possibility* black citizenship became dependent upon the adoption of a worldview in which black freedom involved continual racialized self-discipline. Approaching education from an imperialist standpoint developed during his boyhood in Hawai’i, Armstrong sought to create an “English” curriculum with the capacity to discipline what he saw as the disorderly character of the Institute’s students, investing learning to read and write “pure English” as a necessary step toward assimilation, national order, and a deferred future of citizenship. Although Hampton was not the most popular black educational institution of its time, it became widely influential as the Hampton model became funded and replicated across the South—most famously at Washington’s Tuskegee Institute.¹³

¹² Ibid., 205.

¹³ Anderson writes that the Hampton model had wide support from presidents and industrial capitalists such as Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Andrew Carnegie, Collis P. Huntington, John D. Rockefeller, and Julius Rosenwald. See Anderson, 72-78. The Hampton model of industrial education was replicated throughout the South through financial support from the John F. Slater Fund, Peabody Fund, and Phelps-Stokes Fund, which were run by northern and southern philanthropists and business leaders. See Anderson, 66, 86-94. The Phelps-Stokes Fund set up a Booker T. Washington Institute modeled on Tuskegee in Liberia in 1927. See “History of Phelps Stokes in Africa,” Phelps-Stokes Program for African and Freedom Endowment, accessed December 16, 2013. <http://www.programs4africa.org/who-we-are/pafe-creation>

I read Frances E.W. Harper's *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted* in relationship to Hampton's "only English" curriculum to demonstrate how it invokes insurgent practices of reading, writing, and knowing the world, largely cultivated among black women activists, to claim an apocalyptic, emancipatory freedom in the Jim Crow era. Harper was not insulated from the discourse of racial uplift cultivated in the national press and institutionalized at Hampton Institute, but I argue that her novel attempts to remember more capacious understandings of freedom in danger of being buried under mainstream, liberal ideas of freedom. The pedagogy she imagines through *Iola Leroy* is part of a political attempt to usher in a radical, anti-imperial "women's era" that requires styles of reading and writing that counter Hampton's disciplinary "English" education.

"He is what his past has made him": The Hampton Institute and Temporalities of "Uplift"

Samuel Chapman Armstrong's "The Founding of the Hampton Institute," which was originally written for an 1890 retrospective on the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, combines temporal conventions of civilizational progress, national development, and religious redemption to tell the story of Hampton's educational mission.¹⁴ Armstrong, who became Hampton Institute's president in 1868, remembers how Hampton came to be his life's work. Armstrong led a "colored regiment" during the Civil War, and he recalls that the "day-dream of the Hampton School" first came to him while stopping "one beautiful evening on the Gulf of Mexico." The location for the school became clear to him while working as a Freedman's Bureau agent in Hampton, Virginia, after the war. In this coastal town, Armstrong "found an active, excellent work" begun by the American Missionary Association under the direction of

¹⁴ Samuel Chapman Armstrong, "The Founding of Hampton Institute" in *Old South Leaflets, Vol. 6* (Boston: Directors of the Old South Work, 1904).

Mary Peake, who oversaw the daily education of “over fifteen hundred children” in the Union barracks of Fortress Monroe. It was after coming across Peake’s “Butler School” that he began to envision the mythical, national significance of Hampton, Virginia, as a site for his school. Recalling a colonial past, Armstrong imagined that it was within Hampton’s vicinity that the “first pioneer settlers” and slaves had landed, where “Powhatan reigned” and the “first Indian child was baptized.” More recently, it was at Fortress Monroe where the Union army had “revolutionized naval warfare” and where a new “centre of prospective great commercial and maritime development was being built.” Finally, it was the location where the victorious Union army could claim to have extended freedom to the former slaves: It was “here,” Armstrong writes, “freedom was first given the slaves by General Butler’s famous ‘contraband’ order.” When the AMA took over the Butler School, purchased an old plantation, and asked Armstrong if he would head the creation of a new school for the freedpeople, Armstrong recalls, “I replied, ‘Yes.’ Till then my own future had been blind: it had only been clear that there was a work to be done for the ex-slaves and where and how it should be done.”¹⁵

In his recollection of Hampton’s founding, Armstrong appeals to the historical “ground” of slavery, settler colonialism, and industrial modernization in the U.S. Returning to Johnson’s argument that the history of slavery should be approached as a “lived history...produced out of the clash of contending temporalities,” it becomes clear that Armstrong references a variety of temporal frameworks to narrate Hampton Institute’s “founding.”¹⁶ Armstrong tells the story of Hampton as a quasi-spiritual calling to a life’s work, the continuation of a European civilizing mission begun with the “conversion” of the Algonquians, a potential center of industrial development, and, finally, as a symbol of freedom from bondage. He believed that Hampton

¹⁵ Ibid., 524-526.

¹⁶ Johnson, 204.

Institute continued the work begun by General Butler of “giving slaves freedom” by transforming army barracks and plantation into a school. “Its work,” writes Armstrong, “with that of other like schools, is on the line of Providential purpose in ending the great struggle as it did,—the redemption of both races from the evils of slavery, which, while to the Negro educative up to a certain point was a curse to the country.”¹⁷ For Armstrong, Hampton was a divinely ordained mission to “redeem” both whites and blacks from the “evils of slavery.”

The temporal conventions Armstrong uses to tell the story of Hampton Institute are also embedded in its pedagogic mission. He writes:

The thing to be done was clear: to train selected Negro youth who should go out and teach and lead their people, first by example and by getting land and homes; to give them not a dollar that they could earn for themselves; to teach respect for labor; to replace stupid drudgery with skilled hands; and, to these ends, to build up an industrial system, for the sake not only of self-support and intelligent labor, but also for the sake of character. And it seemed equally clear that the people of the country would support a wise work for the freedmen. I think so still.¹⁸

Hampton Institute would take over from the incomplete “education” of slavery by training black youth in the values of self-help, skilled labor, property ownership, and work-discipline as a means to both educate formerly enslaved men and women out of the “stupid drudgery” of slave labor and as a strategy to “build up an industrial system.” As a normal institute, Hampton’s curriculum would focus primarily on training “selected Negro youth” to “go out and teach and lead their people,” spreading Hampton’s gospel of self-help across the South. For Armstrong, Hampton’s pedagogical mission was to bring students out of the degraded past of slavery and into the temporality of the modern industrializing nation. And, he believed that he could do this work by developing students’ “character.”

¹⁷ Armstrong, 529.

¹⁸ Ibid, 525.

The developmental temporality Armstrong envisioned and attempted to institutionalize at Hampton was not the “homogenous, empty time” characterizing “horizontal” social relations that historian Benedict Anderson ascribes to the modern nation form.¹⁹ Rather, Armstrong hitched a millennial temporality of redemption and salvation to a modern temporality of national political and economic reordering. He explained that the “‘Boys in Blue’ did a fearful but necessary work of destruction,” and the “duty of the hour is construction, to build up” the nation not only through “commercial development” but also through the “great constructive force” of the “Christian teacher.”²⁰ Armstrong saw the school as the primary institute of “creative destruction” with the capacity to destroy a shameful, archaic past of slavery through a redemptive process of pedagogical “construction” that would form the bridge between a premodern past and modern industrial present. In relying on a split temporality that cloaked black students in a “past” of bondage and drudgery, Armstrong represented them as imperial subjects that, borrowing from Said, “*require* and beseech domination.”²¹ Although the Fourteenth Amendment extending citizenship to African Americans had been adopted in 1868, the same year as Hampton’s founding, Hampton’s educational program took a gradualist approach that made education appear as a process that would *eventually* bring black students into the “present” civilization of the modern, industrializing nation by shaping their moral character.

The temporality Armstrong attached to Hampton’s educational program institutionalized his ideas of racial “uplift.” Armstrong’s vision of racial uplift anticipated and shaped what black studies scholar Kevin Gaines calls the assimilationist strand of late nineteenth-century uplift ideology. According to Gaines, uplift ideology circulating among African Americans was

¹⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London/New York: Verso, 2006), 24.

²⁰ Armstrong, 528.

²¹ Said, 9.

structured by two contradictory discourses: one associated with the “antislavery folk religion of the slaves” referencing “personal or collective spiritual—and potentially social—transcendence of worldly oppression and misery,” and the other responding to dominant public discourse on the “Negro problem” that sought social mobility and “racial solidarity” through the construction of a black middle class consciousness. This latter discourse emphasized progressive era ideas of “self-help, racial solidarity, temperance, thrift, chastity, social purity, patriarchal authority, and the accumulation of wealth.”²² Armstrong found the limits of uplift in what he believed to be the inherited racial characteristics of his black students. His understanding of his students’ racial characteristics was informed, furthermore, by his missionary experiences in Hawai’i. “The Founding of Hampton Institute” begins not with a recollection of Hampton but with memories of Armstrong’s upbringing in Hawai’i as the child of missionary parents. Armstrong was born in 1839 on the island of Maui eight years after his parents, Richard and Clarissa Armstrong, had arrived as missionaries with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). In his biography of Samuel Armstrong, Francis Engs explains that while ABCFM missionaries eschewed the “worrisome topic of human bondage” to instead establish ““true’ religion throughout the world,” Richard Armstrong became troubled by the widespread genocide of indigenous Hawaiians.²³ Political scientist Noenoe K. Silva attributes the “mass death” of the Kanaka Maoli to contact with European foreigners who came to the islands as missionaries, explorers, whalers, and merchants, and who introduced foreign plants and animals to Hawai’i’s ecosystem along with diseases like tuberculosis, whooping cough, and influenza.²⁴ The rapid

²² Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill/London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 1-2.

²³ Robert Francis Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited: Samuel Chapman Armstrong and Hampton Institute, 1839-1893* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 9.

²⁴ Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2004), 24.

death of the Kanaka, however, is also attributed to the “Great Māhele,” which, despite missionaries’ claims not to deal in earthly affairs, was engineered in large part by U.S. missionaries to destroy Hawai’i’s land tenure system and transform the land into salable tracts of private property instrumental for sugar plantations.²⁵

Engs observes that Richard Armstrong’s response to what Silva calls the “mass death” of the Kanaka was to develop a brand of “Practical Christianity” that could meet what he believed to be the spiritual and secular needs of indigenous Hawaiians.²⁶ It was for this purpose that Richard, anticipating his son Samuel’s work at Hampton, obtained a position under Kamehameha III overseeing the creation and administration of over 500 schools in Hawai’i that he thought would save the Kanaka by teaching them how to survive under the material conditions of the māhele and plantation capitalism. He explained:

If depopulation here is to be arrested; if the vices which are consuming the natives are to be eradicated; if an indolent and thriftless people are to become industrious and thrifty; if Christian institutions are to be perpetuated, the work must be accomplished...in the education of the young.²⁷

Richard Armstrong did not see the māhele as creating the conditions for the genocide of indigenous Hawaiians, but rather saw “depopulation” as a matter of an “indolent and thriftless people” not yet suited to the “industry” and “thrift” that sugar plantations required. Engs explains that Richard Armstrong was not worried about the unfair distribution of land, which benefitted white foreigners, but “by the fact that the few remaining Hawaiian commoners had little idea of how to utilize their new land.”²⁸ The inability to survive under what Armstrong thought to be superior conditions of property ownership and plantation capitalism (he even tried—unsuccessfully—to start his own sugar plantation) is represented as being due to the racial

²⁵ Ibid., 39-43, 49.

²⁶ Engs, *Educating*, 13.

²⁷ Quoted in Engs, *Educating*, 11.

²⁸ Ibid., 9.

characteristics of indigenous Hawaiians. Though other ABCFM missionaries were troubled by Richard's decision to take a secular post as minister of education under Kamehameha III, Richard believed that "Practical Christianity" would be a way to target the *character* of indigenous Hawaiians in order to teach them how to survive the material conditions of plantation capitalism.

At the beginning of "The Founding of the Hampton Institute," Samuel Chapman Armstrong recalls observing his father's work as minister of education in Hawai'i:

It meant something to the Hampton School, and perhaps to the ex-slaves of America, that from 1820-1860, the distinctively missionary period, there was worked out in the Hawaiian Islands the problem of the emancipation, enfranchisement, and Christian civilization of a dark-skinned Polynesian people in many respects like the negro race.²⁹

Understanding Armstrong's view of his black students and Hampton's program of racial uplift requires examining how he imagined the relationship between a "dark-skinned Polynesian people" and the "negro race" in the former plantation slavery system of the U.S. South.

Armstrong writes that "while high above the plane of heathenism," native Hawaiians "could not, under the circumstances, keep up to a high level of conduct. The 'old man' in them had pretty much his own way." He argued that the ABCFM missionary program of teaching moral conduct through Christianity wasn't successful because of an atavistic "'old man' within" that would cause Hawaiians to backslide. Indigenous Hawaiians did not display the proper conduct of Christian civilization because they continued to "live all in one room" in "houses without partitions," and their "easy-going tropical ways, after centuries of licentious life, made virtue scarce." Echoing his father's doctrine of "Practical Christianity," Samuel Armstrong explained that the missionaries' error had been to "preach the gospel" rather than to "organize living."³⁰ Of

²⁹ Armstrong, 521.

³⁰ Ibid., 522.

course, for Richard Armstrong, organizing living had meant preparing students to survive under the new conditions of plantation capitalism.

Samuel Chapman Armstrong further secularized and adapted his father's educational mission among indigenous Hawaiians for black students by attempting to create a race-based educational program at Hampton backed by a "scientific" theory of race. He explained:

The missionary plan in Hawaii had not, I thought, considered enough the real needs and weaknesses of the people, whose ignorance alone was not half the trouble. The chief difficulty with them was deficient character as it is with the Negro. *He is what his past has made him.* The true basis of work for him and all men is the scientific one,--one recognizing the facts of heredity and surrounding all facts of the case.³¹

According to Armstrong, missionary education had been unsuccessful both because it had not been guided by theories of racial heredity and had not proceeded in a "scientific" fashion that recognized fully enough the biological limits of heredity. Historian George M. Frederickson identifies Armstrong's racial thinking with a "new paternalism" prevalent in the post-Reconstruction South that used education to advocate a "program for Negro uplift" that sought to keep blacks in their ostensibly natural place by confining their geographical, social, political, and economic movement.³² Reconstruction historian Eric Foner demonstrates furthermore that while some of the first schools set up for blacks in the South during the early years of Reconstruction were committed to black equality, what would become the "Hampton philosophy," which "divorc[ed]...schooling from the ideals of equal citizenship," became ascendant across the New South after the Reconstruction era and in light of national disillusionment with it.³³ Defining the biological racial limits of black students through the figure of the "old man within," Armstrong attempted at Hampton to bring the "man" out of his students through a manual education

³¹ Ibid., 525-526, my emphasis.

³² George M. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 210.

³³ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Perennial, 2002), 146-7.

program that would discipline the “old man within,” who had the capacity to disrupt a character disposition amenable to the economic order developing in the New South through “idleness” and a “lack of thrift.” He modeled Hampton’s education program on the Hilo Boarding and Manual Labor School, observing that while Lahainaluna Seminary’s program of teaching the “higher branches” might “[turn] out more brilliant scholars,” a manual training program on the model of Hilo Boarding and Manual Labor School turned out “less advanced but more solid men.”³⁴

One of Armstrong’s former classmates at Williams College in Massachusetts remembered, “General Armstrong never stopped viewing the world as it looked from the front door of the missionary house in which he was raised.”³⁵ Armstrong’s view of racial uplift recycled tropes of the Christian civilizing mission by ascribing racial inferiority to the Hawaiian “people” and projecting them onto the “Negro race,” representing a refusal to conform to Christian standards of conduct as the “scientific... fact” of inherited character “deficiency.” Armstrong’s gradualist model of racial uplift, institutionalized in Hampton Institute’s curriculum, was designed to “lift” black students out of an anachronistic “past” of bondage into the “present” of a national industrial temporality by providing a “scientific” education. Hampton’s race-based educational program was therefore not, ultimately, about preparing black students for *equal* citizenship with whites but about preparing them for survival within the post-Civil War nation until they reached a stage of racial maturity suited for citizenship. The gradualist temporality of uplift that Armstrong ascribed to his students articulated an imperialist worldview to a nationalist project of racial education by turning liberal ideas of “civilization,” coded in Christian norms, into the basis for modes of racial domination. Hampton’s educational

³⁴ Armstrong, 522. For more on the connection between Lahainaluna Seminary, Hilo Boarding School, and Hampton Institute, see C. Kalani Beyer, “The Connection of Samuel Chapman Armstrong as Both Borrower and Architect of Education in Hawai’i,” *History of Education Quarterly* 47, no.1 (2007): 23-48.

³⁵ Quoted in Engs, *Educating*, 13.

program thus actively participated within an imperial grammar of civilization that attempted to produce black students as imperial subjects by representing a biological intellectual distance between them and the figure of the white citizen subject. Echoing recapitulation theories of racial intellectual development, Armstrong relegated black students to a *deferred* temporality in relationship to the “present” of modern industrial civilization by arguing that their mental capacities would be “exhausted” by a classical higher education curriculum. According to this logic, students must *wait* to catch up with white Anglo-Saxon evolutionary development; they must possess racial maturity, evidenced through conformity to norms of white civilization, before being qualified to exercise full citizenship rights.

The race-based education that Hampton provided therefore attempted to cultivate in black students dominant civilizational norms as a means to control the racial “old man within.” Hampton’s educational program institutionalized the temporality of deferral he ascribed to his black students in part through a manual training program designed to discipline student character, preventing them from developing “vanity” through study that would ill-prepare them for agricultural and manual labor. In his first report to Hampton’s Trustees (1870), Armstrong explained that the “character” and “needs” of the freedpeople required a system “which shall be at once constructive of mental and moral worth, and destructive of the vices characteristic of the slave.”³⁶ A program of manual training, which Armstrong had identified as so successful at the Hilo Boarding School, was put into place, he explained, not to “pay in a *money* way” but in a “*moral* way”: “It will make them men and women as nothing else will.”³⁷ As a normal school, the Hampton Institute’s primary aim was to create teachers, but manual labor was meant to alleviate student poverty and, more importantly, to “make” men and women of the freedpeople

³⁶ Armstrong, 529.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 526.

through a “compulsory waking up of the faculties.”³⁸ Students attending Hampton were required to follow a regimented schedule that included set hours for manual labor per day. Manual labor was a strategy for disciplining character, which was liable to corruption by the “old man within,” and students who did not comply were sometimes subjected to more overt disciplinary punishment in Hampton’s on-site jail.³⁹

Along with its manual education program, Hampton enforced civilizational norms of gender and sexuality among students through domestic training that attempted to “organize living.” It was important to Armstrong that students leave their former homes to live and board at Hampton, and he imagined his relationship to his students through images of filial relations. To fully inculcate Hampton’s civilizing mission required separation from “cabins,” which represented a “degraded past” of slavery because they did not conform to the ideal domestic organization of the bourgeois Anglo-Saxon home. Before-and-after photographs taken by Frances Benjamin Johnston for the Paris Exposition of 1900 demonstrate how the idea of racial discipline intersected with Victorian ideologies of domesticity and patriarchal gender roles. The successful inculcation of discipline was demonstrated for Armstrong through a gendered organization of the home, including a gendered division of labor, proper hygiene, and separate social spaces for men and women. Additionally, he invited his students to refer to him as “father” or “general,” demonstrating an overlap between hierarchical social structures of military

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 530.

³⁹ Engs, *Educating*, 107. Anderson reports that students deemed most deficient in “moral earnestness” were subject to a “Daily Order of Exercises,” which included morning inspection at 5:45 a.m., breakfast and prayer from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 a.m., a full program of work and study during the day, supper and evening prayers from 6:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Students in the “night school,” who were too poor to pay Hampton’s tuition, earned their way into regular classes by laboring all day at the school and reserving studies for 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Even among regular students, graduation rates were low. One estimate puts it at one in ten students. See Anderson, 54-55, 58, 74. This organization of student time, especially to perform drudge work, bears similarity to the highly structured time of plantation slavery. See Johnson, “Time and revolution,” 205-206; and Johnson, “The Carceral Landscape,” 209-243.

regiment, plantation, family, and school.⁴⁰ Postcolonial scholar Anne McClintock argues that the metaphor of the family projected onto nineteenth-century institutions served the purpose of both “sanctioning social hierarchy within a putative organic unity of interests,” including the subordination of women to men. Projecting a naturalized and timeless image of family onto the school allowed for its organizational structure to appear as a “naturally contained hierarchy within unity: paternal fathers ruling benignly over immature children.”⁴¹ Hampton’s domestic training demonstrates how liberal norms of civilization became the basis at Hampton for reproducing racial and gendered social hierarchies by appealing to their ahistorical “naturalness.”

The secular, scientific program of race-based education that Armstrong created at Hampton was not insulated from critique. Armstrong wrested Hampton away from the American Missionary Association by replacing its board of trustees with his own, which included business leaders like railroad tycoon Collis P. Huntington who could help fund the Institute. Black educators and leaders criticized Hampton Institute on the basis that it provided nothing more than a secondary education and not a very good one at that, since students did not have enough time to devote to either learning skilled industrial trades or academic subjects. They also publicly objected to the racial segregation among faculty and students observed at the school.⁴² Several students criticized Hampton for providing only rudimentary training in industrial skills; some even organized a petition of protest in 1887.⁴³ Interesting among these examples is a student,

⁴⁰ Engs, *Educating*, 79, 106-107. Laura Wexler looks at sentimentalism beyond literary form to examine how its moral imperatives, including norms governing domestic organization, dress, cleanliness, and conduct, became the “rationale for raw intolerance to be packaged as education” institutionalized at the Hampton Institute (105). See Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill/London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 105. For a reading of the complex gender and racial politics surrounding Frances Benjamin Johnston’s photographs of Hampton Institute, see Wexler’s chapter, “Black and White and Color: The Hampton Album” in *Tender Violence*, 126-176.

⁴¹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, (New York/London: Routledge, 1995), 45.

⁴² Anderson, 61-66.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 60.

William Adams, formerly a worker in Hampton's printing office, who protested that he was not learning skills that would help him become employed in the printing business and vowed never to return. Adams was angered precisely because he was forced, contradicting Armstrong's aims, to do the drudge work of printing without learning trade skills.⁴⁴ James Anderson argues that there was a parallel network of black schools in the South—many of them located in Sabbath Schools—that provided a more robust education. These schools, however, were largely undocumented.⁴⁵

“Only English” Education: The Hampton Model and Imperial Pedagogies of Reading and Writing

Despite mixed receptions to the Hampton Institute's model of black education, industrial capitalists and political leaders found the Hampton model amenable to the social, political, and economic order under construction in the post-Reconstruction New South not only because, in the words of James Anderson, it created a program of “schooling for second-class citizenship,” but also because it provided a model of *imperial* education that placed blacks in a position of intellectual inferiority appearing to require perpetual political, economic, and social dominance by whites. The naturalized temporality of deferred citizenship that Armstrong attached to Hampton students articulated liberal ideas of freedom circulating in the postwar era with the reproduction of racial and gendered social hierarchies that reinforced a white supremacist political, economic, and social order. While Hampton's manual training program has been roundly criticized, Hampton did require an academic course of study for the majority of its

⁴⁴ Engs, *Educating*, 135. See also Anderson, 59.

⁴⁵ Anderson, 10.

students.⁴⁶ In this section I read the curricular design for Hampton alongside its monthly publication, the *Southern Workman*, to demonstrate how its program for teaching reading and writing, combined with its manual training program, created a *counterinsurgent* model of literacy training aimed at controlling student resistance to the economic and political order developing in the Jim Crow South and also producing students as imperial subjects in need of white governance. Hampton's program for teaching reading and writing became a strategy for controlling what Armstrong called the atavistic "old man within," which could disrupt social order through labor strikes, demands for reparations, or claims to full citizenship rights. Its program for reading and writing became a model later adapted for the racial education of "Indians" at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School discussed in Chapter Three.

In his "First Report to the Trustees of Hampton Institute" (1870), written two years after Hampton's founding, Armstrong introduced the school's curriculum in "its threefold aspect," which included "industrial, moral and intellectual, and disciplinary, or administrative" branches. As demonstrated earlier, the aim for this curriculum was to prevent the "vanity" that he believed came with higher education to instead be "constructive of mental and moral worth, and destructive of the vices characteristic of the slave." The "vices characteristic of the slave" that Armstrong thought must be destroyed included "improvidence, low ideas of honor and morality, and a general lack of directive energy, judgment and foresight," which "disable" the ex-slave as he "enters upon the merciless competition incident to universal freedom."⁴⁷ The antebellum plantation, which required back-breaking labor, was transformed into a site of idleness and leisure that had not equipped the freedpeople for the "merciless competition" of the capitalist

⁴⁶ The only exception to this was the night school, which did not require academic study for students. James Anderson emphasizes Hampton's primary purpose as a normal school but still focuses mostly on Hampton's manual curriculum. No historians or critics of the Hampton Institute that I have found focus on explicating its "English" curriculum.

⁴⁷ Armstrong, 529.

market of labor and goods—here, equated with “universal freedom.” Armstrong attempted to institutionalize in Hampton’s educational program the temporality of deferral he ascribed to his black students. Combining the temporality of deferral with the “merciless competition” of the free market created a discourse of “freedom,” education, and discipline that black studies scholar Saidiya Hartman calls the “burdened individuality of freedom.” The “burdened individuality of freedom” refers to a narrative of liberal freedom circulated in pedagogical manuals and domestic handbooks that made black citizenship conditional on paying off the “debt” of emancipation, signified by the wounded body of the white Union soldier, by entering into labor contracts.⁴⁸ In these manuals and handbooks, the freedpeople were made *responsible* for earning full citizenship rights by learning proper attitudes toward labor, hierarchical racial relations between blacks and whites, and patriarchal domestic and gender roles.

The second volume of *Southern Workman* expands on the relationship set up in the Report between “freedom,” education, and morality in a discussion of poverty. An anonymous editorial, possibly written by Armstrong, explained that universal education could be justified “purely as a matter of economy.” Citing an 1870 report by the Washington Commissioner of Education, the article states:

The statistics of crime show beyond question that a large proportion of the criminals and paupers who prey upon society, have failed in their youth to receive the education which would have enabled them to earn an honest livelihood and to appreciate their own powers for good and evil; and, as this class, whose members consume without producing, is by far the most costly class in the community, the liberal education of the masses not only increases the ability of all industrious working men but also decreases their expenses...for whose support...citizens, are directly taxed.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America*. (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997),121.

⁴⁹ *Southern Workman* 1 (Hampton, VA), February 1872.

In the article, poverty is turned into the moral failing of “consuming without producing.” The “liberal education of the masses” could remedy this social and economic burden to “citizens” by teaching the morality of capitalist work-discipline, which the poor ostensibly needed to “earn a proper livelihood.” The article, however, also betrays anxiety about the capacity of the poor to refuse to enter labor contracts or, even worse, to strike. The report cited in the article argues that universal education would not only make the working classes “more industrious” and in less need of managerial supervision but also that it would make laborers “less dissipated,” less-inclined to “join in unreasonable and unseasonable strikes,” and finally “less liable to become an expense to the commonwealth.”⁵⁰ Written in the context of the Panic of 1873 and worker strikes, the article represents universal “liberal” education as the key to preventing laborers from striking or refusing to enter into labor contracts.

Historian Amy Dru Stanley argues that after the Civil War the labor contract became a metaphor for freedom distinguishing the modern society of contract from the anachronistic past of the plantation slavery system in which social relations were determined by status. She explains that the contract mediated the “central paradox of emancipation,” which “[nullified] the buying and selling of chattel slaves while consecrating the market as a model of social relations among free persons.”⁵¹ Antislavery debates reworked the relationship between contract and freedom in various ways immediately preceding the Civil War, while “recessive” strands of antislavery rhetoric imagined freedom and emancipation more radically by refusing to equate “freedom” with freedom-to-contract. At the same time that “contract” became a dominant metaphor of “freedom,” slavery became disassociated from the plantation system of the “past” to become metaphoric of relations of bondage associated with capitalist wage labor. This

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), ix.

metaphoric operation made it possible for bondage and “unfreedom” to appear as the *refusal* to enter into wage contract, and Stanley points out that liberalism thus became the basis to pass vagrancy laws in both North and South forcing workers to sell their labor in the free market.

Hampton Institute shared the worldview of freedom-as-contract not only in its manual training program but also by measuring student development on the basis of the successful inculcation of values of work discipline and “free” market. Race-based education at Hampton Institute, as represented in Armstrong’s writing and the *Southern Workman*, made it what black cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall calls a site of *articulation*, where “race” becomes “the articulating principle of the social, political, and ideological structures, and where the capitalist mode is sustained by drawing, simultaneously, on what have been defined as both ‘free’ and ‘forced’ labor.”⁵² By defining the racial limits of education—represented as the point of “exhaustion” of its students mental capacities—Hampton was complicit with larger national attempts to confine the freedpeople to subordinate economic and political roles in the nation.

Armstrong’s understanding of freedom and education were refracted across Hampton Institute’s curriculum in both its manual training and intellectual branches of study. For Armstrong, manual and intellectual education were complementary to “draw out a complete manhood” in students by making “the needle, the broom, the wash-tub, the awl, the plane, and the plough become the allies of the globe, the blackboard, and the textbook.” The goal of intellectual and moral education, in particular, was not to produce “brilliant scholars,” as Lahainaluna Seminary produced, but instead Armstrong writes, “The end of mental training is a discipline and power not derived from so much knowledge as from the method and spirit of the student.” Armstrong eschewed study of the classics, explaining that an “English course

⁵² Stuart Hall, “Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance” in *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, ed. Houston A. Baker et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 18.

embracing reading and elocution,” including “the mother tongue and its literature” would “exhaust the best powers of nineteen-twentieths” of Hampton’s students.⁵³ Instead, Hampton’s “English course” had a more disciplinary aim. Armstrong explained in his report to the trustees:

Our students can never become advanced enough in that time [three years attending Hampton] to be more than superficially acquainted with Latin and Greek. Their knowledge would rather tend to cultivate the conceit than to fit them for faithful educators of their race, because not complete enough for them to estimate its true value. *The great need of the Negro is logic, and the subjection of feeling to reason*; yet in supplying his studies we must exercise his curiosity, his love of the marvelous, and his imagination as a means of sustaining his enthusiasm.⁵⁴

While training in the classics—the “mother tongue”—would only increase the vanity of Hampton’s students, Hampton’s “English” curriculum would discipline the emotion of its students by teaching them to subordinate “feeling” to “reason” and “logic.”

Excess “feeling” became the mark of the “old man within,” or the emotion that might lead to a strike, while “logic” and “reason” represented its successful containment. In “The Founding of the Hampton Institute,” Armstrong explained that he was inspired by the Hilo Boarding School’s educational program because it produced the “best teachers and workers” among indigenous Hawaiians. Applying this model to Hampton, he wrote, “Hence came our policy of teaching *only English* and our system of industrial training at Hampton.”⁵⁵

Emphasizing an “only English” curriculum for the freedpeople, who ostensibly already knew “English,” seems at first like a strange suggestion for Armstrong to make. However, it becomes clearer what Armstrong means by this comparison when turning to the *Southern Workman*, Hampton’s monthly newspaper, published in-house by Hampton students.

The Hampton Institute began publishing the *Southern Workman* in 1872 to circulate Armstrong’s educational philosophy and raise money for the Institute. The paper was modeled

⁵³ Armstrong, 531-532

⁵⁴ Ibid., 532, my emphasis.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 522, my emphasis.

after *Ka Hae Hawaii* (or, *The Hawaiian Flag*), a Hawaiian language newspaper published by Hawai'i's Department of Public Instruction but, as Noenoe K. Silva points out, was “controlled behind the scenes” by Samuel Armstrong’s father, Richard, who was minister of education under Kamehameha III. One of the first things ABCFM missionaries did when they arrived to the Hawaiian islands was to convert spoken Hawaiian language into a written alphabet, and the first Hawaiian language newspaper was produced out of Lahainaluna Seminary. Silva argues that missionary-run newspapers in Hawai'i were tools of surveillance and social control to “assist in the progress of plantation/colonial capitalism, to control public education, to mold government into Western forms and control it, and to domesticate Kanaka women.”⁵⁶ *Ka Hae Hawaii*, which Samuel Armstrong briefly edited in place of his father, approached its Hawaiian readership as “children” by presenting “basic descriptions of foreign countries and people written in a fashion similar to children’s encyclopedia articles.”⁵⁷ The newspapers became a means for missionaries to attempt to inculcate white protestant values of civilization under the cover of the Hawaiian language, espousing heterosexual gender roles, temperance, and preaching against the hula.

This strategy, however, backfired with the publication of a Hawaiian-controlled newspaper, *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika* (*Star of the Pacific*), which actively resisted the message presented in missionary newspapers. *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika* bested the missionaries’ use and control of Hawaiian language by using the newspaper as a venue to publish songs and stories. Silva writes of the controversy surrounding one article in particular, “He Mele Aloha no ka Naauao,” which she translates as “a song of affection for education/civilization,” that used indigenous figurative language of love and sex to praise education. Missionary response to the praise of civilization through the language of sex, published in Hawaiian, lambasted the

⁵⁶ Silva, 55.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 61-63.

transcribed song as “obscene, worthless words, something to contaminate/defile the minds of the people...tempting the evil desires of the people.”⁵⁸ The transcribed song’s figurative language escaped missionary surveillance of written Hawaiian. Silva explains: “The simple act of claiming the power of print for themselves was enough to outrage the missionaries, who considered themselves the teachers and parents of the Kanaka, whom they thought of as childlike and in constant need of surveillance, supervision, and instruction.”⁵⁹ Samuel Armstrong would have been aware of the *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika* debacle when creating Hampton Institute’s “only English” curriculum.⁶⁰

Southern Workman follows the format of missionary newspapers like *Ka Hae Hawaii*. Its inaugural issue, for instance, invokes a childlike audience by including a biographical sketch of Abraham Lincoln, a sermon on temperance, profiles of different states, and a “Children’s Department” with nursery stories, songs, and pictures.⁶¹ Later issues include sketches of different countries and cities around the world, including Hawai’i, and extensive coverage of Philadelphia’s 1876 Centennial Exposition. *Southern Workman* also contains correspondence from its readers as well as letters from former Hampton students, who were compelled to write letters after graduation that were then published—usually without explicit consent—in the paper. In addition to serving as a venue for circulating evidence of Hampton Institute’s success, the *Southern Workman* was meant to be used a pedagogical tool in the classroom. In an article titled “Newspapers in Schools,” an anonymous author wrote that amid the current fad for using newspapers like the *New York Evening Post* and *Tribune* as educational texts, Hampton Institute

⁵⁸ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 67.

⁶⁰ Engs writes that Samuel Chapman Armstrong kept in close contact with ABCFM missionaries and their children in Hawai’i throughout his life—many of which became ranchers and plantation owners on the islands. Armstrong referred to them the “cousins” and wrote to them as the Cousins’ Society. See Engs, 21, 159-168.

⁶¹ *Southern Workman* 1 (Hampton, VA), January 1872.

could claim “precedence” as one of the first educational institutes to use newspapers as reading content in the classroom. The article explained that for the last seven years the *Southern Workman* “has been used in all its reading classes above the primary,” yet it cautions that “due care” should be taken in selecting newspapers for pedagogical use. It commends the *Post* for “keep[ing] well to the standards it sets up for such a paper ‘one which writes wholesomely of wholesome things, and uses pure English.’” The *Southern Workman* is recommended on similar grounds as reading material for “colored normal schools and colleges,” especially collected articles on the political economy by T.T. Bryce and the “sanitary series” of the Hampton Tracts.⁶²

In the context of Hampton Institute’s “only English” curriculum and the *Southern Workman*’s injunction to teach “pure English,” “English” came to signify more than just words, syntax, and grammatical rules, although it refers to these aspects of language, too. “Pure English” stood for proper content delivered in the realistic style of journalistic or encyclopedic writing. It is connected to subsuming “feeling” to “logic” or “reason,” both through content and a realist mode of writing that presented factual and moral information as a window onto “reality.” Of course, as American studies scholar Amy Kaplan argues, realist writing *produces* reality despite its attempt to make language appear to disappear as its representational medium.⁶³ What subsuming “feeling” to “reason” entailed in the *Southern Workman* becomes clearer in the articles on political economy written by T.T. Bryce and collected for use in the classroom. Bryce’s articles on “Free Trade and Tariff,” “Money,” “Labor,” and “Capital” attempted to make the “science” of these concepts clear to a “colored” audience. The first article begins: “To the colored men, the questions concerning ‘free trade’ and ‘tariff’ must be novel and confusing

⁶² *Southern Workman* 8 (Hampton, VA), September 1879, 90. This article on the educative function of the *Southern Workman* is pointed out by James Anderson. See Anderson, 50.

⁶³ Amy Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

among measure.”⁶⁴ Bryce attempts to clear up the “confusion” of these concepts by explaining the scientific basis for each according to the “natural laws” of supply and demand regulated by the free market. While trying to remain unbiased—merely stating “facts”—Bryce argues that free trade and free markets are the most natural, and therefore healthiest, forms of political economy. He extends the metaphor of the natural laws regulating the free market to education, arguing that it is “unwise to put the nation into an educational hot-house and force its growth” in the same way that it is unwise to favor protectionist tariffs.⁶⁵ The *natural* and *rational* operation of the free market is emphasized in the article on “Labor.” “Labor,” Bryce declares, “does not hire itself out to capital, nor does capital hire labor, *for love*; not a bit of it—each one looks for some gain from the use of the other, and ever seeks the largest possible gain.”⁶⁶ Labor is not about sentiment, or *feeling*. Instead the “market price” for labor is determined by impersonal “natural” forces—“love has nothing to do with exchanges”—where “self-interest is the only guide.”⁶⁷ If Bryce’s article serves as an example of what the *Southern Workman* meant by education through “pure English,” then “English” stands for an affective education that would prevent students from mistaking labor for love, or that would keep them from attempting to strike or do anything else that would stand in the way of “scientific” rationality of the free market system.

In holding up Bryce’s articles as an example of “pure English,” the *Southern Workman* attributed to “English” a set of values that complemented Hampton Institute’s normal and industrial curriculum, including self-help, free market liberalism, and patience in the wait for full citizenship rights. Like the temporality of deferral marking Hampton’s black students, the free

⁶⁴ *Southern Workman* 7 (Hampton, VA), September 1878, 66.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁶⁶ *Southern Workman* 7 (Hampton, VA), October 1878, 77.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

market system is represented as governed by laws of growth and development that should not be tampered with. While “English” signified these liberal free market values, it also demanded conformity to the conventions of journalistic realism in student letters as evidence of the successful suppression of “feeling,” which was aligned with the “old man within,” to “reason,” which was aligned with market rationality. The *Southern Workman* attempted to demonstrate the success of Hampton’s “English” and manual training program in a March 1876 edition through a series of letters collected from Hampton graduates. The special issue introduces the letters as a window onto the “real conditions” of the South. “Written for their teachers and not intended for publication,” these letters were to evidence a “freedom of expression” as students “simply tell what they see.” The letters also take the style of missionary testimonies written from the field as they document the attempt to carry out Hampton’s civilizing mission to remedy “deficiency of character” across the South.⁶⁸

While the audience is told that the letters evidence “free expression,” they were in fact carefully curated to demonstrate the successful assimilation of Hampton’s former students to its civilizational values and serve as a form of surveillance regulating the type of writing that students could publish, or make public, about Hampton. The letters are framed by editorial comments that explain how each exemplifies both the success of students’ civilizing mission as well as the “relapse into barbarism” in certain parts of the South, including intemperance, corrupt preachers, and “illiteracy.”⁶⁹ However, the letters published in the *Southern Workman* attest less to the “real conditions” of the South than to the literary conventions Hampton expected from its former students. One letter in particular betrays Hampton’s expectations that letters evidence a particular form and style. Included in the issue, the editorial comment explains, to draw attention

⁶⁸ *Southern Workman* 5 (Hampton, VA) March, 1876, 18.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

to the “dark side of negro life in the South,” the letter writer describes the horror of coming across a “drunken frolic” at the schoolhouse. The anonymous writer continues: “The General has several times asked me to write letters for publication, of the condition and habits of the people there, but (I hate the word) I *can't* write a letter of that kind, for when I write I am apt to say that which rests most strongly on my mind.” The writer hasn’t written earlier because the proper *form* of the letter limits what Hampton students can say as well as how they can say it. Despite what may have been written in a letter unconstrained by Hampton’s conventions for letter writing, this particular letter ends up appearing to support the Hampton model by reinforcing that the South is a missionary field for Hampton graduates. “I sometimes have tears, as I have to-night, with these thoughts,” writes the author. “We had better not go to Africa to find work.”⁷⁰

These letters were meant to evidence the success of the Hampton Institute in inculcating its values among Hampton’s students, teaching them to control irrational feelings that might have made former students forget their allegiance to the Hampton mission. Readers were meant to detect how a “short course of instruction” at Hampton could result in the “free expression” of former students.⁷¹ But, what was the style of language that Hampton Institute had replaced with “English”? Along with its collections of pamphlets and tracts, the *Southern Workman* offered new subscribers “a neat pamphlet entitled ‘Cabin and Plantation Songs, as Sung by the Hampton Students,’ containing 82 pages of original negro music with words in dialect.”⁷² Thomas P. Fenner’s preface to the songbook narrates the publication of these songs as a rescue mission meant to save the “wonderful music of bondage” before it completely disappeared with the South’s modernization. The dialect marking the songs represents their foreignness as distinct from the “pure English” advocated by the *Southern Workman*. Fenner explains the difficulty of

⁷⁰ Ibid., 19.

⁷¹ Ibid., 18.

⁷² Ibid., 18. This advertisement is common among several volumes of *Southern Workman*.

transcribing these songs: “The tones variable in pitch” used by the singer are “of course impossible to explain in words, and to those who wish to sing them, the best advice” is to “*Study the rules as you please; then—go listen to a native.*” The language marked by dialect represented a “music of bondage” that had the potential to be developed from “degradation” to “maturity” through written transcription.⁷³

In *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, dialect was used to signify the racial limits of language use. To Fenner, the music represented a “past” of bondage to be developed as part of the “common property” of the nation.⁷⁴ The audience is told, however, that even dialect cannot capture in writing the full experience of these songs. Left out of written notation is excess emotion, which cannot be translated into standard conventions of writing. Fenner writes:

The inspiration of the numbers; the overpowering chorus, covering defects; the swaying of the body; the rhythmical stamping of feet; and all the wild enthusiasm of the negro camp-meeting—these evidently can not be transported to the boards for public performance.⁷⁵

The “wild enthusiasm” of the songs, represented through stamping feet and swaying bodies, cannot be reproduced in “public performance.” It is significant that these songs do not appear in the *Southern Workman*, for like the songs transcribed in the Hawaiian-controlled *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika*, they represent a style of expression unsuitable for the civilized national “present.” Fenner’s approach to the songs combined elements of romantic racialism, which ascribed an aspect of sublimity to the songs’ performance, with the moralistic claim that they represented the “degradation” of past bondage, which made them only suitable if domesticated.⁷⁶ Writing and

⁷³ Thomas P. Fenner, “Preface to the Music,” in *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, 3rd edition, ed. Thomas P. Fenner et al. (New York/London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1901), iv.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, iv.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, iii.

⁷⁶ Frederickson identifies “romantic racialism” as a strand of racial thinking in which “the Negro was a symbol of something that seemed tragically lacking in white American civilization.” Frederickson, 108.

written notation are here, as in the *Southern Workman*, a strategy to represent successful discipline of the “old man within” through the medium of “English.”

For Samuel Chapman Armstrong, “pure English” signified both demonstrations of proficiency in the conventions of standardized English and evidence of an internalized worldview—a whole epistemology—for reading, writing, and knowing the world. “English” was a metaphor for civilized self-discipline that marked the restraint of the atavistic “old man within” by evidencing, through the conventions of standard English, the sublimation of excess “feeling” to “logic” and “reason.” Demonstrations of “pure English” in the *Southern Workman*’s letters from former students were counter-posed with the language of “bondage” represented by *Cabin and Plantation Songs*’ racialized, gendered mark of dialect, which signified as well the limits of “rational” writing. Performances of “pure English” among students signified a desire for the conventional standards of disembodied national citizenship and the free market’s demand for abstract labor. On the other hand, the dialect of “bondage” signified a quickly disappearing “past” and an anarchic excess of emotion. Representations of both “pure English” and the dialect of the songs were mediated by standard grammatical conventions that stood not just for grammatical rules but also the limits of civilized speech. Both produced imperial subjects distanced from the civilizational status of the white citizen subject through what Spillers might call the fleshly production of racialized speech. Grammar, in this sense, refers to the rules that join words and sentences into meaning as a marker of regulated affect, which makes possible the articulation of the marks of “pure English” with the dialect of slavery. It regulated both what was suitable for public circulation and what must be hidden from view. At the same time, however, the production of racialized flesh through representations of “pure English” and dialect can also be read, following Spillers, for the ways they signify beyond the grammatical production of

captive—and what I emphasize are imperial—subject positions. What Fenner registers as the *Cabin and Plantation Songs*' distance from “pure English” can also be read to evidence what Moten calls “radically exterior auralty” that had the potential both to “disrupt” grammatical productions of racial domination and attested to alternate grammars, or alternate epistemologies of knowledge, which schools like Hampton had actively tried to stamp out among students by representing their over-emotional irrationality vis-à-vis white civilizational norms.⁷⁷ It is to the survival of such insurgent epistemologies that this chapter now turns.

Iola Leroy and the Glamour of Slavery

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's novel *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted* (1892) invokes insurgent practices of black female pedagogy to teach its audiences to “read aright” in the dawning Jim Crow era.⁷⁸ The novel responds to Hampton Institute's counterinsurgent model of intellectual training aimed at constraining the “old man within” and equating freedom with “free labor” by calling forth insurgent forms of reading and writing, passed on by slave and free black women, to claim emancipatory freedom in the present. By siting her novel's target audience in the black Sunday school, Harper locates the book's pedagogical project not at an official site of education but within the “parallel system” of African American controlled education in the postwar South.⁷⁹ In his introduction, William Still writes that in “casting about for an interesting, moral story-book, full of practical lessons,” black Sunday school students “will not be content to be without ‘Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted.’”⁸⁰ *Iola Leroy*'s insurgent pedagogy, however, operates beneath the surveillance of the dominant white press and reading publics by referencing

⁷⁷ See Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 6.

⁷⁸ Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, *Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted* (Boston: Beacon, 1987).

⁷⁹ Anderson, 10.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

histories and practices not necessarily legible to white audiences. Appearing to align with dominant progressive ideas of racial uplift, *Iola Leroy* was well received by the white press and went into a third printing by 1895.⁸¹ The novel, however, re-writes dominant ideas of racial uplift to restore their historically insurgent potential—a vital project given that knowledge produced about “race” to justify plantation slavery was being reworked to legitimate U.S. imperialism in the South and across the western “frontier.”

Harper was sixty-seven when she published *Iola Leroy* and was already widely known as a poet, lecturer, essayist, and activist. Born in 1825 to free black parents in Baltimore, Harper attended her uncle’s school, William Watkins Academy for Negro Youth, and “pledged [herself] to the Anti-Slavery cause” after the Compromise of 1850, which included the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act and forced the closure of her uncle’s school.⁸² Harper worked as a teacher across the northeast, observed the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia, and began her career as an abolitionist lecturer and essayist in the early 1850s. After the Civil War, Harper toured the South, recording her observations in *Sketches of Southern Life*, which would form the basis for the southern “folk” characters represented in *Iola Leroy*.⁸³ Returning north, Harper began organizing Sunday Schools and eventually became the director of the American Association of Education for Colored Youth.⁸⁴ Like other black woman activists, Harper experienced double constraints placed on her as a public *woman*, often figured as “manly” for trespassing into public discourse, as well as popular representations of black women as innately immoral and sexually lascivious. For Harper, these stereotypes had material consequences in the way black women were treated in and excluded from the white women’s movement. When, for example, Harper

⁸¹ Hazel V. Carby, Introduction to *Iola Leroy; Or, Shadows Uplifted* (Boston: Beacon, 1987), xi.

⁸² Quoted in Frances Smith Foster, Introduction to *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Reader* (New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, 1990), 7.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 12-13, 20.

⁸⁴ Carby, xvi.

learned that Susan B. Anthony opposed the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment on the basis that white women deserved the franchise before black men, she joined Frederick Douglass and other black women to protest Anthony's racist argument, which leveraged *race* to make political gains for white women. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Harper took a more active role in the black clubwomen's movement, working as a member of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) alongside Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells, and Victoria Earle Matthews.⁸⁵

For Harper there was little distinction between her public activism and fiction writing. In a critical introduction to *Iola Leroy*, black cultural studies scholar Hazel V. Carby writes, "The political analyses of black women intellectuals" were not only "disseminated through their organizations" but were also "incorporated into fiction that was regarded as a weapon in this movement for social change."⁸⁶ Despite Harper's popularity in the late nineteenth century, critic Valerie Palmer-Mehta argues that Harper's feminist theory remains to be fully excavated.⁸⁷ Carby explains that *Iola Leroy* was all but relegated to oblivion in the twentieth century; despite its initial popularity in the 1890s, the novel wasn't republished until 1971. She attributes this decline in popularity to Harper's didactic, sentimental style, which fell out of favor with the first generation of African American literary critics who were attempting to distance themselves from the 1890s discourse of racial uplift.⁸⁸ An obituary for Harper written by W.E.B. Du Bois says, "She was not a great singer, but she had some sense of song; she was not a great writer, but she wrote much worth reading."⁸⁹ In her biography of Harper, Frances Smith Foster attempts to soften accusations of aesthetic failure by suggesting, "In another time and place, Harper might

⁸⁵ Carby, xv.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, xv.

⁸⁷ Valerie Palmer-Mehta, "We are All Bound Up Together," in *Black Women's Intellectual Traditions: Speaking Their Minds*, ed. Kristin Waters et al. (Burlington, VT: University of Vermont Press, 2007), 192.

⁸⁸ Carby, xi-xii.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Foster, 25.

have chosen to brood and reflect patiently over her literary efforts,” since “her biographers agree that she had an early thirst for knowledge, a love of beauty, and a talent for composition.”⁹⁰ On the other hand, Carby writes that while the “‘new’ black aesthetic” of the 1960s saw the importance of integrating art and politics, Harper’s work was denounced for having the “wrong politics: for standing in an assimilationist tradition rather than a nationalist one.”⁹¹ Much of the more recent criticism of *Iola Leroy* has remained within these terms: either taking Harper to task for using conventions of sentimental fiction to advocate black assimilation to white bourgeois norms or by demonstrating how her use of sentimentality makes subversive claims for black female agency. Either way, most critics tend to agree that the novel’s sentimental style works at cross-purposes to Harper’s political aims.⁹² Kevin Gaines even argues that *Iola Leroy*, like other

⁹⁰ Ibid., 28.

⁹¹ Carby, xiii.

⁹² Many literary critics situate *Iola Leroy* within a tradition of sentimental writing by white women and see Harper’s deployment of the sentimental genre as compromising the novel’s political aims. See Barbara Christian, “Shadows Uplifted” in *Black Women Novelists: the Development of a Tradition, 1892-1976* by Barbara Christian (Westport, CT/London: Greenwood Press, 1980); James Christmann, “Raising Voices, Lifting Shadows: Competing Voice-Paradigms in Frances E.W. Harper’s *Iola Leroy*,” *African American Review* 34, no. 1 (2000), 5-18; Carla Peterson, “Further Liftings of the Veil: Gender, Class, and Labor in Frances E.W. Harper’s *Iola Leroy*,” in *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism*, ed. Elaine Hedges et al. (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Cassandra Jackson, “‘I Will Gladly Share with Them My Richer Heritage’: Schoolteachers in Frances E.W. Harper’s ‘*Iola Leroy*’ and Charles Chesnut’s ‘*Mandy Oxendine*,’” *African American Review* 34, no. 4 (2003), 553-568; Deborah E. McDowell, “‘The Changing Same’: Generational Connections and Black Women Novelists,” *Literacy, Popular Culture, and the Writing of History*, special issue of *New Literary History* 18, no. 2 (1987), 281-302; Lori Robison, “An ‘Imperceptible Infusion’ of Blood: *Iola Leroy*, Racial Identity, and Sentimental Discourse,” *Genre* 37 (Fall/Winter 2004), 433-460; Vashti Lewis, “The Near-White Female in Frances Ellen Harper’s *Iola Leroy*,” *Phylon* 45, no. 4 (1984), 314-322.

Others argue that Harper uses sentimentalism “subversively.” See Elizabeth Ammons, “Breaking Silence: *Iola Leroy*” in *Conflicting Stories: American Women Writers at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* by Elizabeth Ammons (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Claudia Tate, “Allegories of Black Female Desire; or, Rereading Nineteenth Century Narratives of Black Female Authority” in *Changing Our Own Words: Essays on Criticism, Theory, and Writing by Black Women*, ed. Cheryl A. Wall (New Brunswick/London: Rutgers University Press, 1989); Michael Borgstrom, “Face Value: Ambivalent Citizenship in ‘*Iola Leroy*’” in *The Curse of Caste*, special issue of *African American Review* 40, no. 4 (2006), 779-793; John Ernest, “From Mysteries to Histories: Cultural Pedagogy in Frances E.W. Harper’s *Iola Leroy*,” *American Literature* 64, no. 3 (1992), 497-518; Sarah Robbins, “Frances Harper’s Literacy Program for Racial Uplift,” in *Managing Literacy, Mothering America: Women’s Narrative on Reading and Writing in the Nineteenth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004); and Sarah Robbins, “Gendering the Debate over African Americans’ Education in the 1880s: Frances Harper’s Reconfiguration of Atticus Haygood’s Philanthropic Model,” *Legacy* 19, no. 1 (2002), 81-89.

Critics have also situated *Iola Leroy* as a response to realism. See Marilyn Elkins, “Reading Beyond Conventions: A Look at Frances E.W. Harper’s ‘*Iola Leroy*, or *Shadows Uplifted*,”” in *Women Writers of the Realistic Period*, special issue of *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910* 22, no. 2 (1990), 44-43; Debra J.

novels by black clubwomen, unwittingly supported late nineteenth century U.S. imperialism by borrowing from the racist “language of civilizationist ideology” to argue for black assimilation on the basis of a “metaracist” discourse of class differentiation.⁹³ However, I take up Palmer-Mehta’s call to investigate more carefully Harper’s work by situating it within collective practices and knowledge making done by black clubwomen at the turn of the century.

I argue that Harper was neither stooping to a mass audience nor simply espousing an assimilationist program of racial uplift in *Iola Leroy*. Rather, following Carby, I demonstrate how Harper wrote *Iola Leroy* as a “weapon” to transform society. The novel teaches its audience how plantation slavery gave rise to a way of reading and knowing the world that reworked the ostensibly “past” bondage of slavery for the industrial nationalist Jim Crow “present.” Harper challenged the imperialist temporality of deferral characterizing assimilationist discourses of racial uplift, like the model devised at Hampton Institute, to reveal how public opinion continued to devalue black life for national profit. Calling upon the experiential knowledge of her Sunday school audience, Harper used representations of maternal genealogy to locate a counter-narrative

Rosenthal, “The White Blackbird: Miscegenation, Genre, and the Tragic Mulatta in Howells, Harper, and the ‘Babes of Romance,’” *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 56, no. 4 (2002), 495-517.

There is also growing criticism on *Iola Leroy*’s treatment of racial “passing” and its representations of the Civil War. On “passing,” see Borgstrom; Robison; Julie Cary Nerad, “Slippery Language and False Dilemmas: The Passing Novels of Child, Howells, and Harper,” *American Literature* 75, no. 4 (2003), 813-841. On war, see Don Dingleline, “‘The Whole Drama of War’: The African American Soldier in Civil War Literature,” *PMLA* 115, no. 5 (2000), 1113-1117; Elizabeth Young, “Warring Fictions: *Iola Leroy* and the Color of Gender,” *American Literature* 64, no. 2 (1992), 273-297.

Some of the most interesting recent criticism of the novel has moved away from evaluating the extent to which Harper has “failed” in her political project to take up how *Iola Leroy* represents the public/private distinction, state power, and citizenship. See Patricia Bizzell, “Chastity Warrants for Women Public Speakers in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction,” *Rhetorics Society Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2010), 385-401; Phillip Brian Harper, “Private Affairs: Race, Sex, Property, and Persons,” *GLQ* 1 (1994), 111-133; and Lauren Berlant, “The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Harriet Jacobs, Frances Harper, Anita Hill,” in *Subjects and Citizens: Nation, Race, and Gender from Oronoko to Anita Hill*, special issue of *American Literature* 65.3 (1993).

I follow Hazel V. Carby in situating *Iola Leroy* within black women’s writing and organizing work in the nineteenth century. See Carby, Introduction; and Hazel V. Carby, “Of Lasting Service for the Race: The Work of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper,” in *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Novelist* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁹³ Kevin K. Gaines, “Black Americans’ Racial Uplift Ideology as ‘Civilizing Mission’: Pauline E. Hopkins on Race and Imperialism” in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan et al. (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1993), 437, 450.

of freedom within a history of insurgent knowledge making and education by black women, enslaved and free, and invoked a tradition of uplift that preceded popular versions circulating in the late nineteenth century. Finally, the dialogic form of the novel invited readers who could “read aright” the novel’s allegory of insurgent knowledge and practices into the conversations it stages and invoked this collective work to claim emancipatory freedom in the novel’s present.

Iola Leroy contains two interlocking story lines. The novel begins with the story of a group of enslaved men and women in North Carolina who defect to the Union Army as “contraband” of war, but this story is interrupted by the tale of Iola Leroy, a light-skinned “mulatta” borne of a white planter and his wife, a former slave. Iola, who had been raised in ignorance of her mother’s status, is sent to a northern boarding school until her father dies of Yellow Fever and a scheming uncle remands her, her mother, and siblings into slavery. Iola is rescued from her owner by the Union army, and her storyline intersects with that of the runaway slaves as they work for the Union during the war and as they begin to reunite with family and build lives for themselves after. Criticism of *Iola Leroy* that locates the novel within an assimilationist tradition often takes Iola to be the novel’s central protagonist, a light-skinned character pandering to white female readers and serving as an exemplary teacher—an agent of uplift—of the freedpeople. Harper is here criticized for the “quaint” dialect she puts into the mouths of the Gundover “folk” and the Victorian norms she attempts to inculcate in her audience via Iola.⁹⁴ However, this surface reading of *Iola Leroy* overlooks how styles of speaking and reading represented in the novel undercut dominant civilizational discourse by thematizing the relationship between national public opinion and the perpetuation of bondage.

⁹⁴ Carla Peterson makes this observation as well, noting that even feminist critics tend to approach Iola as the “unitary subject of knowledge and consciousness” of the novel. See Peterson, 98.

The novel begins, in fact, by representing two paradigms of reading to create a distinction between national public “literacy” and styles of reading and writing cultivated by black men and women within plantation slavery. “Mystery of Market Speech and Prayer-Meeting” opens toward the beginning of the Civil War around the time of General Benjamin Butler’s “contraband” order. The chapter exposes the limits of public reading practices through the representation of a “phraseology” invented by enslaved men and women “to convey in the most unsuspected manner news to each other from the battle-field.”⁹⁵ In the public market, enslaved characters appear to perform and speak according to state laws and social custom, yet beneath the surveillance of whites patrolling the market they communicate actionable intelligence about the war. Robert Johnson, taught to read as the “pet animal” of his mistress, speaks in code to Thomas Anderson, a slave at another plantation, about the war in what appears to be an everyday conversation about the freshness of butter (7). Despite slave codes outlawing teaching slaves alphabetic literacy, Robert is able to intercept information about the war from newspapers and communicate it to Tom for further transmission among a wide network of the enslaved by veiling this communication as “market speech.” When the butter is fresh, the Union army is advancing. The “broad smiles” and “apparently careless exterior,” which conform to white representations of slaves, hides, according to the narrator, “an undercurrent of thought which escaped the cognizance of their masters” (8, 9).

The performance in the public market carries over into the pseudo-private walls of plantation households as well. After returning from the market, Robert meets Aunt Linda, an enslaved cook and lead organizer of clandestine “prayer-meetings,” in the kitchen and begins to tell her about what he’s gleaned from the newspapers. Linda, however, rebuffs his attempts to enlighten her: “Oh sho, chile,” said Linda, ‘I can’t read de newspapers, but ole Missus’ face is

⁹⁵ Harper, 9. Subsequent citations for *Iola Leroy* in this section are given parenthetically.

newspaper nuff for me” (9). Linda then tells him about Jinny’s feigned sympathy when consoling the mistress about confederate losses and Jake’s performances of “skylarking,” appearing to have a “thimbleful of sense,” as he listens for war news at the post office (11). The “circus,” as Linda calls it, of Jinny’s and Jake’s performances both “read” and “write” information about the war in styles that escape white surveillance for insurgent behavior and expand systems of reading and writing beyond alphabetic literacy (11). These performances made use of dominant stereotypes to mask styles of communication occurring beneath the gaze of whites. In the novel, such styles of reading and writing—eavesdropping, reading faces, speaking in code—knit together a counterpublic of enslaved men and women that meets at prayer-meetings in the swamps and forms a network across states, “outwitting the vigilance of the patrollers and home guards” that attempt to enforce codes against slave gatherings (13). In these meetings, information about the war is turned into actionable intelligence that informs decisions to run away to the Union army as it approaches.

The “market speech” and “prayer-meeting” in *Iola Leroy* represent two styles of reading, writing, and communicating that form two publics: a national public and slave counterpublic, which has developed strategies to escape surveillance by the former. “Market speech” and “prayer-meeting” also refer to two epistemologies: one that views freedom through property relations and the other that imagines a more capacious, emancipatory freedom.⁹⁶ The marketplace is not only where slaves buy produce but is also the site of the auction-block, where humans are “read” as chattel property to be bought and sold. Toward the end of the chapter, the

⁹⁶ Literature scholar and social theorist Michael Warner writes that “publics” are textually mediated, comprised of the self-reflexive circulation, citation, and performance of particular styles of writing and speaking. The styles and conventions characteristic of a hegemonic public gain normative authority to regulate what can appear as “public” and what must be relegated to the “private” realm out of public view (42). On the other hand, “counterpublics” form with an awareness of subordinate status to a dominant public and attempt to transform the norms of a dominant public by creating their own styles and conventions of speech. Warner argues that counterpublics are therefore future oriented, “world-making” projects (115). See Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone, 2005).

narrator explains that the “Nation”—North and South—colluded with the practice of reading humans as “chattel” through the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, which “remanded” runaways to bondage (13-14). The narrator explains that those acting according to this law, however, are subject to an “undiscerning folly” that reads national law as just and the Civil War as a battle over states’ rights (14). Aunt Linda, on the other hand, sees the Civil War according to a different “vision.” After telling Robert about Jinny’s and Jake’s performances, she says, “But, somehow, Robby I rarely b’lieves dat we cullud folks is mixed up in dis fight. I seed it all in a vision” (12). Slaves are not marginal, passive bystanders to the war, but are at its center. Telling Robert to come to the next prayer meeting to share information, she says, “Mark my words, Bobby, we’s all gwine to git free. I seed it all in a vision, as plain as de nose on yer face” (13). Linda’s spiritual vision sees in the Civil War the possibility of apocalypse: a complete reorientation of vision that would result in emancipatory freedom from slavery. She understands the war according to the temporality of a revolutionary “present,” not deferred emancipation. Her prayer meetings are gatherings where enslaved men and women communicate and plan insurgent escapes.

It might at first appear that Harper’s distinction between “market speech” and “prayer-meeting” echoes Armstrong’s distinction between “rational” journalistic writing and the excess emotion and spirituality of “cabin and plantation songs”; the former circulated to create a national public to which enslaved men and women might gain access after the war, while the latter belonged to a dying “past” of bondage. Harper concludes “Market Speech and Prayer-Meeting,” however, by representing public opinion as a spell holding the whole nation in thrall. After describing the Fugitive Slave Act as part of the “undiscerning folly” of those who, thinking

they are abiding by just laws, are “dealing their deadliest blow at the heart of the Nation,”

Harper’s didactic narrator explains the root of this failure to read or “discern”:

But slavery had cast such a glamour over the Nation, and so warped the consciences of men, that they failed to read aright the legible transcript of Divine retribution which was written upon the shuddering earth, where the blood of God’s poor children had been as water freely spilled. (14)

Plantation slavery is represented as having given rise to a way of reading, writing, and knowing that makes it impossible to “read aright the legible transcript of Divine retribution,” which is linked to Linda’s apocalyptic vision of revolutionary freedom in the present. National styles of reading and writing—“civilized” alphabetic literacy and the mode of rationality it signifies—cannot discern this “legible transcript” of justice because it comprises the laws and customs that have “written” chattel slavery, perpetuating the symbolic and material violence of the plantation slavery system. Harper begins the novel with the “glamour of slavery” to show how public opinion participates in reconfiguring forms of racial bondage in the dawning Jim Crow era. The “glamour”—borne of the slavery system’s epistemology for reading, writing, and understanding the world—is furthermore a *hermeneutic* for interpreting the novel that complicates how its subversive pedagogical potential is understood. Harper, in fact, wrote her own “phraseology” into the novel, and what readers are able to “discern” in the text depends on the experiential knowledge they bring to it.⁹⁷ Understanding Harper’s vision of “uplift” depends on the extent to which readers are able to read the histories of embodiment and historical figures referenced in the novel.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ My use of the term “experiential knowledge” departs here from the way in which psychologist G. Stanley Hall understood prior experiences in “The Contents of Children’s Minds.” Whereas for Hall the prior experiences that students brought to bear on new material was biologically determined, Harper, I argue, is attempting to invoke particular memories and histories of embodiment that run counter to dominant historiographies of slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and their aftermath.

⁹⁸ Foreman, Christmann, and Ernest make similar arguments, however I focus on explicating how these historical allusions refer to alternate ideas of “uplift” formulated by black activist women generally neglected by literary critics.

As discussed in Chapter One, the *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the etymology of “glamour,” which means “magic, enchantment, spell,” to a “corrupt form of grammar.”⁹⁹ “Glamour” reworks the magical inflection of “grammar,” which comes from the Latin *artimaire* and is linked to both *artem magicam* and *artem mathematicam*.¹⁰⁰ Historical uses of “grammar” express this double inflection. The term has shuttled between referring to the “scientific” study of grammar, such as syntax, prosody, and etymology, and study of the “arts” of language, including allusion and figures of speech as well as magic and astrology. The magical inflections of “grammar” take on a visual meaning in “glamour,” which began to appear in the 17th century as synonymous with enchantments and spells. Allan Ramsey’s 18th century use of the term in *Glossary to Poems* explains: “When witches, wizards, or jugglers deceive the sight, they are said to cast a *glamour* o’er the eyes of the spectator.” To “cast a glamour,” therefore means, at least in part, to “deceive the sight.” This dual inflection of grammar/glamour is in keeping with Karl Marx’s conceptualization of “commodity fetishism” in *Capital, Volume One*.¹⁰¹ In his investigation of how universalizing concepts of equality, freedom, and citizenship become joined, or “articulated,” with overdetermined embodiments of race, literary critic David Kazanjian makes recourse of Marx’s theorization of the commodity form’s transformation of value. To explain this articulation of universalism and particularity, Kazanjian explicates the reworking of value in the commodity form to demonstrate how ostensibly “free” labor *appears* as the ground for the abstract equality of citizenship while at the same time the figure of the citizen takes on a “fetishized universal abstraction” that conceals its constitutive “substantial particularity.” In Marx’s famous section in *Capital* on “commodity fetishism,” social relations

⁹⁹ See the Introduction and Chapter One for fuller explications of the terms “grammar” and “glamour.” “Glamor,” *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁰⁰ “Grammar,” *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁰¹ See Chapter One for further analysis of “glamour” in relation to Marx’s conceptualization of “commodity fetishism.”

mimic the shadow play of the “phantasmagoria,” a nineteenth century trick lantern meant to deceive the sight. Kazanjian argues that Marx’s analysis of the “fetish character of the commodity” demonstrates that particularity is not “obliterated” under the value form, but that it “re-forms particularity into a haunted, or to use Althusser’s term, overdetermined substantiality.”¹⁰² This “phantasmagoric form” of social relations, according to Kazanjian, smooths out contradictions between the ostensibly egalitarian nation form and U.S. imperial practices, including colonization and slavery.

Hortense Spillers names this phantasmagoria of social relations the “hieroglyphics of the flesh” produced by the “American grammar book.” In describing the epistemologically violent processes accompanying New World colonization and slavery, Spillers argues that at the very moment the “body” is “reduced to a thing,” signifying ontological “being” in the process of capture, it also becomes “the source of an irresistible, destructive sensuality,” which, in turn, becomes a “mark of otherness” and “translates into a potential for pornotroping.”¹⁰³ Reduced to a thing, or a commodity, the captive body is abstracted both from indigenous epistemologies of the body as well as from the dominant epistemologies grounded in the “cultural fictions” of the captor (72). Thus, Spillers argues that within the conditions that produce the “*theft of the body*,” “gender difference” is lost as the “female body and male body become a territory of cultural and political maneuver, not at all gender-related, gender-specific” (67). Spillers questions:

We might well ask if this phenomenon of marking and branding actually “transfers” from one generation to another, finding its various *symbolic substitutions* in an efficacy of meanings that repeat the initiating moments? As Elaine Scarry describes the mechanisms of torture [Scarry 27-59], these lacerations, woundings, fissures, tears, scars, openings, ruptures, lesions, rendings, punctures of the flesh create the distance between what I would designate cultural *vestibularity* and *culture*, whose state apparatus, including

¹⁰² David Kazanjian, *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 20.

¹⁰³ Spillers, 67.

judges, attorneys, “owners,” “soul drivers,” and “men of God,” apparently colludes with a protocol of “search and destroy.” (67)

As already discussed, I take Spillers’s conceptualization of the captive body to describe as well the racial and sexual production of imperial subjects held at a perpetual distance from citizenship through their epistemological relegation to a “vestibular” location on the borders of dominant “culture.” Exiled beyond the “confines of the domestic,” the captive body, exemplified in Spiller’s argument by the “enslaved offspring,” became “under the press of a patronymic, patrifocal, and patriarchal order the man/woman on the boundary” caught within an “enforced state of breach [as] another instance of vestibular cultural formation where ‘kinship’ loses its meaning, *since it can be invaded at any given and arbitrary moment by the property relations*” (72, 74). Denied, by definition, the protection conferred to bodies that could claim normative gender categories, captive bodies become legible within a dominant grammar of civilization *through their distance* from these categories, a distance produced and regulated through courts of law, religious institutions, schools, the press, and among citizen subjects—a whole “state apparatus” that “apparently colludes with a protocol of ‘search and destroy.’”¹⁰⁴ It is in this way that the captive body is *colonized*, made perpetually open to “invasion.” Pornotroping, or the writing of racial and sexual excess onto the captive body as part of its “hieroglyphic” production, opens the physical body to state-sanctioned forms of sexual violence as it continually enforces the “vestibularity” of the imperial subject. The *glamorous* forms that this subject took in the late

¹⁰⁴ By including both juridical branches of the state and their representatives, including plantation “overseers,” and religious officials, or “men of God,” as part of a “state apparatus,” Spillers puts into question the distinction that marxist philosopher Louis Althusser makes in “Ideological and Ideological State Apparatuses” between “ideological” institutions, like churches, schools, and families, from “repressive” state apparatuses, including the courts, military, and police. In so doing, she illuminates how while Althusser’s ISAs might function to secure “consent” to domination among citizen subjects, they also serve a *repressive* function for imperial subjects always positioned at a distance from citizenship, for it is *through* violence that such subjects are publicly legible. This normative legibility is, furthermore, enforced and protected by the state, enfolded into its apparatus. See Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press), 1971.

nineteenth century include popular representation of the black female body through figures of the “tragic mulatta” or “mammy.” Originating in plantation slavery, these stereotypes functioned to hide exploitation, including the systematic state-sanctioned rape of slave women, to make plantation relationships appear benevolent and familial while also scaffolding dominant representations of the pure, chaste, and leisurely white southern “lady.”¹⁰⁵

In *Iola Leroy*, Harper anticipates Spiller’s conceptualization of the “American grammar book” by dramatizing a “glamour of slavery,” which despite the abolition of plantation slavery and Reconstruction amendments “mattered” forth new strategies for producing captive bodies through terms of “liberation” that remained “grounded” in the epistemologies of captive body and flesh produced within plantation slavery. Iola “awakens” to the “glamour cast over the Nation” as she transitions from the status of “free,” which for her appears as the ability to claim patriarchal protection through law and custom as a young white woman, to “slave,” which denies her claim to either and simultaneously opens her body to systematic violability. At the same time, however, as Iola undergoes the transformation from person to commodity, she learns to see—to “read aright”—“glamorous” representations of protected white womanhood and manly chivalry. Her “education” within slavery is not, as Armstrong represented slavery’s educative function, a lesson in the civilizational norms of the white bourgeois family. Instead, her education within slavery forces her to re-conceptualize heteropatriarchal romance and family as part of a “glamour” that perpetuates and conceals ongoing forms of racial bondage and violence. The novel thus demystifies the “natural” heteropatriarchal family, which appeared as the apotheosis of civilization, by revealing how its logic of gender relied on representations of racial hierarchies conceived within slavery. Harper suggests furthermore that glamorous representations of the heteropatriarchal family function metaphorically on a national scale to

¹⁰⁵ For a lucid explanation of these stereotypes and their origins within the slavery system, see Christian.

justify violence and disfranchisement of African Americans at the same time that it animates new forms of imperialism, including colonizing missions abroad and across the western “frontier.” As such, the novel adopts the standpoint of vestibularity in order to, borrowing from Spillers, “[offer] a counter-narrative to notions of the domestic.”¹⁰⁶ It dramatizes how at the same time that the state uses “*psychic* and *physical* violence” to produce captive bodies, “This materialized scene of unprotected female flesh—of female flesh ‘engendered’—offers a praxis and a theory, a text for living and dying, and a method for reading both through their diverse mediations” (67). It is this reading method, a reading method capable of puncturing the “glamour of slavery,” that *Iola Leroy* attempts to teach.

The story of Iola’s “awakening” is given as a memory that interrupts Dr. Gresham’s first marriage proposal, which occurs while Iola is working as a war nurse for the Union army. In “The Mystified Doctor,” the northern born Dr. Gresham tells Robert Johnson—now a Union soldier—of his growing love for Iola but his “mystification” when he observes her leaning over to kiss a wounded black soldier. He describes her as “one of the most refined and lady-like women I ever saw,” yet he is puzzled by moments when her face is “pervaded by an air of inexpressible sadness” and “it seems as if a whole volume was depicted on her countenance” (57). Johnson dispels Gresham’s “mystery” by explaining to him that she had previously been enslaved. Far from discouraging Gresham, this revelation “awakened within him a desire to defend and protect her through all her future life” and he sees in Iola “his ideal of the woman whom he was willing to marry” (58-59). When he proposes to Iola, however, his “deep sympathy” results in an appeal for her to “bury her secret in his Northern home, and hide from his aristocratic relations all knowledge of her mournful past” (59-60). Aroused by the “deep

¹⁰⁶ Spillers, 72. Spillers argues of the production of the captive body: “This materialized scene of unprotected female flesh—of female flesh ‘engendered’—offers a praxis and a theory, a text for living and dying, and a method of reading both through their diverse mediations” (67).

pathos” of Iola’s former bondage, Gresham’s solution to her perceived sadness is to offer to bury, or forget, Iola’s past in the marriage bond. Iola recognizes, however, that Gresham’s outpouring of “manhood and chivalry” is not only impossible but re-constitutes racial and gendered forms of bondage under slavery (59).

Iola herself was once enthralled by the “beautiful day-dreams” of marriage—“pictures of noble deeds; of high heroic men, knightly, tender, true, and brave” (110). However, she is awakened from these daydreams by her experiences of slavery. The “whole volume” that Gresham sees but cannot read on Iola’s face is told over the course of four chapters that interrupt Gresham’s proposal. Readers are given the story of the romance and marriage between Iola’s white plantation-owning father, Eugene Leroy, and his slave, Marie, whom he educates, manumits, and marries. Eugene’s desire to protect Marie, which parallels Gresham’s own attempt at chivalric saving, ends disastrously when he dies and a scheming cousin nullifies the marriage, remanding Marie and her three children, including Iola, to slavery. Significantly, Iola learns of the change in her status while at a northern school in a chapter called “School-Girl Notions.” The chapter opens with Iola countering a schoolmate who criticizes the Fugitive Slave Act. Iola replies by describing the plantation slavery system through the metaphor of benevolent family relations: “I love my mammy as much as I do my own mother, and I believe she loves us just as if we were her own children” (97).

Iola is soon “awakened” from these “school-girl notions” when she is taken by her uncle’s lawyer, Louis Bastine, on a train south to be “inventoried with the rest of the property” (101). Her awakening occurs when dreams of her family are disrupted by a sudden kiss from Bastine:

In her dreams, she was at home, encircled in the warm clasp of her father’s arms, feeling her mother’s kisses lingering on her lips, and hearing the joyous greetings of the servants

and Mammy Liza's glad welcome as she folded her into her heart. From this dream of bliss she was awakened by a burning kiss pressed on her lips, and a strong arm encircling her. Gazing around and taking in the whole situation, she sprang from her seat, her eyes flashing with rage and scorn, her face flushed to the roots of her hair, her voice shaken with excitement, and every nerve trembling with angry emotion. (103)

Literary critic Lauren Berlant reads this as the moment when Iola realizes that as a slave she is “disenfranchised of her sensations.” Iola’s angry sensations no longer entitle her to the protection of the “father”—either Eugene Leroy or the state—but instead, as Berlant argues, “[increase] her value on the market.”¹⁰⁷ Iola is un-gendered, illegible to law and public opinion as a “woman,” and therefore without claim to protection. Iola realizes that her “angry emotion,” signified by her “flushed face” and “flashing” eyes, no longer entitles her to public or private claims of protected womanhood. She has been moved outside the realm of legal protection and beyond the pale of public appeals made on behalf of sensation or sentiment. As a slave, Iola is subject only to the “law” of the market. Replying to an associate’s question about the “shame” of enslaving Iola, Bastine replies, “I don’t like the job, but I never let sentiment interfere with my work” (100-101). To Bastine, Iola’s “flush” marks a commodifiable “beauty,” which is worth “\$2000 any day in a New Orleans market” (99). Subject to market rationality, Iola can no longer use sentiment to appeal to public justice because she is no longer legible as a “woman” whose “angry emotions” are taken seriously.¹⁰⁸

Far from appealing to “sentiment” as the key to rallying against slavery, Harper demonstrates that slavery’s logic of property was insulated from appeals to feeling or sensation because it operated according to a capitalist imperative to abstract sentiment from market transactions: “business is business.” As such, Gresham’s feelings of “deep pathos” and chivalric

¹⁰⁷ Berlant, 556-557.

¹⁰⁸ George Sanborn argues that *Iola Leroy* subverts sentimentality by deploying tropes of “flushing” and “paling” to signify “passion” and “vital energy” instead of white modesty or beauty. See George Sanborn, “Mother’s Milk: Frances Harper and the Circulation of Blood,” *ELH* 72, no. 3 (2005), 691-715.

manhood are a false basis for justice on Iola's behalf because they mirror the market logic of abstraction, making the burial of Iola's past the *condition* for marriage and the citizenship-by-proxy it would provide her. Harper's pedagogical project is not the same as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). She is not attempting to teach her audience to "feel right" but to "*read* aright"—to read *through* a national "glamour" that offers protected citizenship to Iola only on the condition that she bury or forget her experiences of enslavement and her mother, whose "blackness" makes her legally a slave.¹⁰⁹ Burying Iola's "past" would not alter a state-backed representational system that exiled slaves from the realm of civilization by turning them into chattel property. When the novel returns to Gresham's proposal, Iola explains there are "barriers" between them that she "cannot pass" (109). Instead of representing her previous enslavement or racial identity as *private* obstacles that can be overcome by chivalrous love, Iola demonstrates that Gresham's offer to help her "pass" as white would ultimately fail in the project of creating lasting justice. It would do nothing to alter a national representational system—a national "glamour"—that makes the disavowal of blackness the condition for citizenship. Furthermore, marrying Gresham would only repeat the logic of *partus sequitur ventrum*, which formed the legal basis for forbidding interracial marriage. While chivalrously promising to protect Iola, Gresham cannot fathom the thought that his and Iola's children might appear black. His promise thus repeats a national grammar that makes blackness antithetical to citizenship.

Contrary to Gresham's sentimental attachment to overcoming and burying the "pathos" of Iola's history, Iola explains that her experiences in slavery have formed the pedagogical basis for future work. She explains to Gresham, "Thoughts and purposes have come to me in the

¹⁰⁹ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York/London: Norton, 1994), 385 The best critique of *Iola Leroy* and genre is Gabrielle P. Foreman, who argues that the novel's allusions to radical histories, which would only be known to readers already familiar with these histories, subvert the "transparency" foundational to genres of both historical and sentimental fiction. See Gabrielle P. Foreman, "'Reading Aright': White Slavery, Black Referents, and The Strategy of Histotextuality in *Iola Leroy*," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 10, no. 2 (1997), 327-354.

shadow I should have never learned in the sunshine” (114). Iola’s experiential learning under slavery, unlike her northern education, shape her decision to “cast my lot with the freed people as helper, teacher, and friend” after the war (114). Iola explains that after the “fiery ordeal” of slavery, “I feel that my mind has matured beyond my years. I am a wonder to myself” (114). Gresham’s proposal to try to make chivalrous love overcome a past of bondage in his union with Iola echoes the collusion of northern and southern interests to unify the nation by distancing the modern nation from a shameful “past” of slavery. After the war, Iola and her family experience racial discrimination in the north that prevents them from renting houses, receiving jobs, and attending nearby churches. When Gresham proposes to Iola again after the war, she responds that the “aristocracy of color” forged in the nation under plantation slavery still saturated public opinion, forming a “barrier” that she chooses *not* to forget or overcome. In fact, marriage is an inadequate model for justice because it trades one type of ownership for another. This becomes clear in Gresham’s second proposal when he asks Iola: “Are you not free at last to share with me my Northern home, free to be mine as nothing else on earth is mine?” (230).

Iola’s refusal to see a solution in a marriage that would force her to bury her history, deny her mother, and submit to the ownership of a white husband is, like her understanding of Gresham’s marriage proposal, not merely a private decision. Harper demonstrates how a publicly acceptable interracial marriage, which would require Iola to disavow her history to live as a white woman, is metaphoric of national assimilation of the formerly enslaved blacks on the grounds that they disavow their struggles for emancipatory freedom. At the same time that Iola refuses to “live under a shadow of concealment,” she criticizes the postbellum nation’s refusal to accept as full citizens the “best and bravest colored man who bared his breast to the bullets of the enemy during your fratricidal strife” (233). The disavowal of the black Union soldier from

national citizenship, including the franchise, buried the role that enslaved soldiers played in the struggle for freedom and is linked to ongoing imperial violence. While Aunt Linda earlier saw the war as a war for emancipatory freedom, Iola here recognizes that the war is being publicly reconceived as a war of “fratricidal strife” between northern and southern interests.

The relationship between the “glamour” of slavery and ongoing U.S. imperialism is linked in the novel to paradigms of education. In a conversation between Robert Johnson, who is now a Union soldier, and white Col. Robinson and Capt. Sybil, Sybil explains why the nation had not issued the Emancipation Proclamation before the war: “Slavery...had cast such a glamour over us that we have acted somewhat as if our national safety were better preserved by sparing the cancer [of slavery] than by cutting it out” (132). Robinson explains that in the North the question of emancipation was delayed by “political and racial questions,” while Sybil says that the “rank and file” of the confederate army is “largely composed of a mass of ignorance, led, manipulated, and moulded by educated and ambitious wickedness” (132). According to Sybil poor whites in the South had been convinced by the “educated and ambitious” that their loyalties belonged with white plantation owners. Here the “glamour” of slavery is something that does not belong solely to the slavery system but can be manipulated to preserve the interests of the ruling class in the post-emancipation nation. The discussion turns, in fact, toward how the plantation slavery system utilized enforced ignorance combined with training in Christianity to create the conditions for a counterinsurgent slave “education” that would prevent enslaved men and women from fighting for freedom. Robert Johnson and Sybil discuss how this system worked through the forced removal of enslaved Africans from their social and physical environment to “hem them in on the plantations, and surround them with a pall of dense ignorance” (134). Sybil continues: “...[I]n dealing with the negro we wanted his labor; in dealing with Indian we wanted

his lands. For one we had the weapons of war; for the other we had the real and invisible chains, the coercion of force, and the terror of the unseen world” (134).

In this meditation on the comparative “weapons” used to enslave Africans and colonize native land, Sybil and Robert demonstrate how slavery’s “education” was part of this *counterinsurgent* weaponry, keeping slaves in bondage through physical coercion and the “invisible chains” of white Christianity. Robert explains how religion has been used as an educative tool for slavery: “...[A] man is in a tight fix when he takes his part, like Nat Turner or Denmark Vesey, and is made to fear that he will be hanged in this world and burned in the next” (135). The education arising from slavery was not, as Armstrong would have it, a continuation of education into freedom; rather, the education of slavery used enforced ignorance and white religion—the spiritual-moral basis of white bourgeois “civilization”—to keep enslaved men and women from claiming emancipation on their own terms. Robert’s affirmation of the “old time religion” developed within slavery is an affirmation of an insurgent black consciousness kept “awake” during slavery by a counterpublic that, like Linda’s “prayer-meeting,” was forced to communicate underground. Understanding that the “grammar” and “glamour” of slavery did not end with emancipation and the Civil War, Harper’s goal with *Iola Leroy* was nothing less ambitious than to awaken her readership to how the “glamour of slavery” continued to pervade national public opinion and participate in the systematic devaluation of black life.

Mother Tongue and Insurgent Literacies

For Samuel Chapman Armstrong, teaching “English” meant more than instruction in alphabetic literacy. Hampton Institute’s intellectual curriculum attempted to institutionalize a pedagogy of racial uplift that made restraining an imagined atavistic “old man within” the

condition for assimilating Hampton's black students into an *eventual*, deferred citizenship. The "education of slavery," which he thought taught a measure of work-discipline, was to be completed by Hampton Institute's manual and moral education, including an "English" program that attempted to sublimate insurgent histories, knowledges, and experiences of slavery to a "rational" view of freedom as free labor. In contrast, Armstrong believed that studying the "mother tongue and its literature," or Latin, Greek, and the classics, would "exhaust the best powers of nineteenth-twentieths of those who would, for years to come, enter the institute."¹¹⁰ Armstrong's "mother tongue" used the figure of the patriarchal "mother" to naturalize Hampton Institute's racial boundaries of education. The "mother" of the classical language arts was also "mother" of a civilized literature to which his African American students did not belong.

The figure of the "mother" in *Iola Leroy* signifies quite differently. Harper is usually criticized for participating in a discourse of racial uplift that made educated black elites agents of "civilization" among the ignorant black masses. The "mother" in *Iola Leroy*, however, signifies a collective figure as well as an alternate educational paradigm in which insurgent strategies of reading, writing, and knowing were passed on. It might be said that Harper's "mother tongue" draws on the educative labor of the slave mother to demonstrate the ongoing necessity of insurgent literacies in the postbellum era. Harper invokes the "mother" as educator through references to black female activists in the past and in the novel's present working to claim emancipatory freedom. Harper's invocation of a heteroglot black mother punctures Iola's representativeness as mother-par-excellence in the text as well as dominant stereotypes of the "mammy." Excavating Harper's vision of racial uplift involves understanding how she understood the educative work of mothering.

¹¹⁰ Armstrong, 532.

Kevin Gaines locates Frances E.W. Harper's vision of racial uplift in the tradition of radical antislavery demands for inalienable black rights but argues that her "moral vision of racial uplift" ultimately and unwittingly colluded with northern and southern industrialists by representing racial uplift through "social Darwinian conceptions of racial struggle."¹¹¹ Harper's pedagogy of uplift in *Iola Leroy*, in other words, unwittingly supported Hampton Institute's curriculum of racial uplift. Gaines argues elsewhere that Harper adopts the "language of civilizationist ideology" in *Iola Leroy* by "[invoking] social Darwinism" to represent postbellum black struggle as a contest between "stronger and weaker races" that would result in either "domination or uplift."¹¹² Adopting this language even as she attempted to use it as a political weapon ultimately compromised Harper's—and other black social leaders'—anti-imperialist aims. Gaines argues that this discourse had "devastating consequences for the lives of black Americans," and, furthermore, that it "marked a compromised, *metaracist* antiracism that, needless to say, was not incompatible with the aims of empire or white domination in the South."¹¹³ In this section, I offer a more sustained reading of the vision of uplift presented in *Iola Leroy*. Gaines's suggestion that *Iola Leroy* remains bound to a pro-imperial "metaracism" is based on a reading of the novel that ignores its dual storylines and takes Iola's arguments about racial struggle to be the novel's monologic argument for uplift. I do not deny that Harper did in fact use Iola and other characters as mouthpieces to write her own ideas about uplift into the text—ideas that participated in the dominant language of "civilization"—but I argue that situating the novel within *collective* movements for racial justice by black women demands a rethinking of Harper's pedagogy of racial uplift and its significance for anti-imperialist critique. What emerges out of this reading is a vision of uplift as an ongoing, collective, and cross-class

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

¹¹² Gaines, "Black Americans' Racial Uplift Ideology as 'Civilizing Mission,'" 438.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 450.

practice with the insurgent aim of claiming emancipatory freedom for the present. Harper, I argue, exposed the limits of her own views of racial uplift by undermining Iola's ultimate authority in the text and drawing her Sunday school audience into the conversations it stages by activating their own memories of captive embodiment.

Harper's representations of speech in *Iola Leroy* have provoked much critical discussion over her vision of uplift. Many critics have interpreted the ending of the novel with a *conversazione* among elite educated blacks and Iola's "passionless" marriage to the light-skinned black Dr. Latimer as evidence of the novel's ultimate argument that an elite group of African Americans were responsible for ushering the black masses into dominant "civilization." Others have interpreted Harper's representations of dialect in her black "folk" characters to indicate an "essential spirituality" that invokes uplift's roots in black folk religion's claims for divine justice.¹¹⁴ However, I argue that Harper's representations of standard English and folk dialect do not represent a choice between two kinds of universal speech: one rooted in white bourgeois "rationality" and another in an essentialized black spirituality. Rather it is the dialectical relationship forged between these styles of speaking and their references to histories and memories, which are more or less "readable" to various audience members, that begin to conjure an insurgent black counterpublic. Furthermore, the novel imagines the relationship between these modes of speech through a long, largely unwritten history of black female organizing that preceded both progressive and late nineteenth-century African American notions of uplift. It is *this history* that audiences had to learn to read if they were to access the insurgent pedagogical potential of the novel, and it is *this history* that Harper represents Iola refusing to bury in a marriage to Dr. Gresham.

¹¹⁴ On dialect and class differentiation, see Christmann, Ernest, Carby, Elkins, and Jackson. On Iola's "passionless" marriage, see McDowell, DuCille, Bizzell, Sanborn, and Phillip Harper. Sanborn and Harper point out that criticism of Iola's passionless marriage tend to rely on narrow, heteropatriarchal norms of romantic love.

Significantly, Iola's refusal of Gresham in *Iola Leroy* is given in the same breath as her commitment to find her mother at the war's end: "Oh, you don't know how hungry my heart is for my mother!...When I see her I want to have the proud consciousness that I bring her back a heart just as loving, faithful, and devoted as the last hour we parted."¹¹⁵ For Iola, choosing to find her mother is simultaneously the affirmation of an alternative educational paradigm. The last meeting between Iola and Marie before they are sold away from each other forces Iola to rethink her education so far. In the same chapter as Iola's "awakening," titled "School-Girl Notions," Iola meets with Marie and demands how those who call themselves "Christians" can be involved in the "downright robbery" of denying Iola her personhood, paternal inheritance, and rights to her mother and siblings (106-107). Marie replies that she has not learned Christianity from corrupt whites but from her own experiences in the "humble cabins" of the slaves. She says:

"My dear child, I have not learned my Christianity from them [whites]. I have learned it at the foot of the cross, and from this book," she said, placing a New Testament in Iola's hands. "Some of the most beautiful lessons of faith and trust I have ever learned were from our lowly people in their humble cabins." (107)

Iola's choice to find her mother is a refusal to live under the "glamour" of slavery, represented as the "day-dream" that justice can be found in the burial of her "past" in marriage to Gresham, to instead "cast her lot" with the ex-slaves (114). Marie represents the "humble cabins" not as sites of ignorance but alternate sites of education. Harper makes a distinction in "School-Girl Notions" between two paradigms of education that echo the two paradigms of reading and writing that begin the novel. Iola's northern education does not "awaken" her from the "glamour" of slavery; her experiences of slavery do. And, it is this education that is important for claiming freedom in the postbellum era.

¹¹⁵ Harper, 117.

Iola uses strategies of reading and writing cultivated in the slavery system to find her family, which allows her, as Carby explains, to simultaneously “‘discover’ a black community previously unknown to her.”¹¹⁶ The once-clandestine prayer meetings become after emancipation sites for formerly enslaved men and women to find family members, but they are also represented as sites to discuss important matters such as the vote, temperance, work, gender roles, and political representation important in the dawning Jim Crow era. Harper drew on popular literary conventions of black dialect to represent the speech of the Gundover “folk,” but Carby explains that, unlike most representations of black speech, the purpose of this “poorly written” dialect was to “indicate illiteracy”: “The language Harper invented for them [the Gundover ‘folk’] was based on an authorial sense of error and deviation from the assumed norm; it was not an attempt to describe the inherent qualities, cadence, and tone of the freedmen’s speech.”¹¹⁷ Harper’s use of dialect was not the attempt, as in Hampton Institute’s *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, to preserve the language of “bondage” nor, as Carby points out of *Clotel*, was it used to portray the freedpeople as “buffoons”; instead it marks Iola’s social distance from the experiences of the freedpeople. This transcription of social difference echoes Harper’s own social distance as an educated northern black woman born “free” who traveled widely across the South working among freedpeople after the war. Iola’s and Robert’s use of standard English indicates their alphabetic literacy, but also, according to Carby, a position of intellectual leadership vis-à-vis those who were formerly enslaved on the Gundover plantation. This position mirrored Harper’s own relationship to the Southern freedpeople.

Instead of leveraging the social distance she represented through dialect to represent Iola and Robert as intellectual leaders of the black masses, as Carby suggests, I argue that Harper

¹¹⁶ Carby, “Of Lasting Service,” 77.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

exposed the limits of standard—or in Armstrong’s words “pure”—English and the “civilized” worldview it signified for grasping the deadly “glamour” of slavery. Those who were formerly enslaved at Gundover were not an ignorant mass to be passively uplifted by a proto-“Talented Tenth” but teachers in their own right. The experiential knowledge their dialect signifies carries with it the insurgent potential to disrupt slavery’s “glamour,” and conversations about the nation’s failed promises and their refusal to accept the terms of a deferred citizenship, including contract labor and assimilative education, create a counter-narrative to dominant ideas of liberal freedom. As Iola and Robert find out what Linda and Daniel have been doing since the war, Linda explains her refusal to contract her labor to her former mistress as a domestic servant along with her refusal to learn to read. “I tell yer, Robby, dese white folks don’t know eberything,” she explains to Robert (155). Linda refuses to occupy the role of the “mammy,” the position of domestic servant available to her after the war. Similarly, Uncle Daniel, who is a preacher before and after the war, refuses to learn theology. Echoing Marie’s emphasis of the importance of experiential knowledge, Daniel rebukes Robert for his presumption that he needs formal theological training: “Look a yere boy, I’s e been preachin’ dese thirty years, an’ you come yere a tellin’ me ’bout studying your ologies. I larn’d my ’ology at the foot ob de cross. You bin dar?” (168). Demanding whether Robert—the newspaper-literate former slave—has been at the “foot ob de cross,” Daniel emphasizes the importance of knowledges developed under slavery while also calling attention to the class difference between Robert and himself. Linda’s and Daniel’s refusal to read constitutes a refusal as well to submit to conventional standards of reading, writing, and knowing the world (both spiritually and secularly) that would force them to assimilate to a national glamour complicit with plantation slavery and post-bellum forms of racial bondage.

Instead of representing Iola's and Robert's alphabetic literacy or northern education as superior to the Gundover "folk," Harper distinguished between the ways of reading, writing, and knowing the world that each entailed. Critics are right to point out the heavy-handed lectures on temperance delivered to Linda and Daniel by Iola and Robert, but beneath the surface of these lectures, which clearly reference progressive era discourse, there are a series of references to histories that may have been less familiar to a white reading public but perhaps more familiar to Harper's black Sunday school audience. Harper references a collective history of black women's organizing by invoking the names of antebellum antislavery activists as well as the names of contemporaries working for justice in the 1880s and 1890s. As literary critic Gabrielle P. Forman points out, the name Linda, for example, appears to invoke Linda Brent, or Harriet Jacobs, the author of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, while Iola's grandmother's name, Harriet, might refer to Harriet Tubman, the famous soldier, activist, and Underground Railroad worker. Harper also invokes the work of fellow black clubwoman and friend Ida B. Wells in the name "Iola," which was Wells' penname.¹¹⁸ Invoking the names of slave and free black female activists and representing them as Iola's foremothers emphasizes the importance of the collective, heteroglot work of black women to claim freedom. In addition, Iola's memories of racialized and sexual embodiment provide the ground for a reading practice with the capacity to rupture a dominant grammar of "liberation" and ask how family, belonging, and protection might be reimagined.

Harper destabilizes a monologic reading of the novel in part by making her characters reference a long history of black women's organizing before and after emancipation. Joining these characters together in a shared maternal genealogy, Harper invokes a theory of "mothering" and "motherhood" as educative practice that actively *remembers* insurgent practices of freedom, including group consciousness building, growing out of black women's particular

¹¹⁸ See Foreman, 340-341.

struggles against sexual and racial forms of oppression. To Gaines's analysis of uplift ideology, we must add a third strand: the work of black women, slave and "free," to claim freedom. The difficulty of accessing this third strand of uplift is that it is a history that has not been written down. Feminist historians, many taking a cue from the work of black feminist scholar and activist Angela Y. Davis, have taken important steps to excavate this history. In "Reflections on the Black Women's Role in the Community of Slaves," Davis intervenes in popular, damaging representations of the black "matriarch" to reflect on the insurgent practices of enslaved women.¹¹⁹ Davis starts from the "dialectic of oppression" black women were subjected to in the slave system, including the reduction of the enslaved female body into a means of sexual reproduction and the patriarchal structures of both white and African societies, and argues that claiming motherhood was an insurgent practice. She speculates that the enslaved black woman's insurgency comprised the everyday practices of resisting her systematic dehumanization (and commodification) through rape or separation from her children and therefore went unrecorded. Discussing references to women slaves in Herbert Aptheker's historical work on slave revolts, Davis argues that enslaved women were in a position to claim a role as the "caretaker of the household of resistance": "It will be submitted that by virtue of the brutal force of circumstances, the black woman was assigned the mission of promoting the consciousness and practice of resistance."¹²⁰ Resisting the everyday dehumanization of slavery by claiming her children and sovereignty over her own body was an insurgent practice that threatened slavery's logic of human property.

Feminist historian Anne Firor Scott intervenes in dominant historiographies of the black clubwomen's movement to "[probe] the inner workings" of the voluntary associations they

¹¹⁹ Angela Y. Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves" in *The Angela Y. Davis Reader*, ed. Joy James (Malden, MA/Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 113, 118.

formed. She finds that these associations were neither “pale copies” of the white clubwomen’s movement nor were they secondary to movements for racial justice founded by black men.¹²¹ She writes that black women began organizing immediately after emancipation and in the wake of the Freedman’s Bureau’s demise to create a “distinct black infrastructure,” including schools, health centers, orphanages, and other welfare organizations for formerly enslaved men and women.¹²² Creating these alternate institutions (many later co-opted by state governments) and organizing black women around labor and wages, black clubwomen created their own version of “self-help,” which, while seeking the “elusive respectability” of the “dominant culture,” emphasized the importance of working across class lines to transform the “whole structure of race relations.”¹²³ Scott argues that black women active in voluntary associations “laid much of the groundwork for the civil rights movement.”¹²⁴ Historian Stephanie J. Shaw argues furthermore for an interpretive framework situating black women’s organizing after the war within “internal traditions of the African-American community.” She argues that the “history of ‘voluntary associations’ among African-Americans indicates a historical legacy of collective consciousness and mutual associations” among black women.¹²⁵ Shaw demonstrates how black clubwomen actively cultivated a “group consciousness” of “self-help, community development, and racial uplift” across boundaries of class and familial status that continued in postbellum activism among black women, slave and free.¹²⁶ (19). The practices of “self-help” Scott and Shaw identify are not derivative of dominant discourses of racial uplift but a response to everyday conditions of bondage.

¹²¹ Anne Firor Scott, “Most Invisible of All: Black Women’s Voluntary Associations,” *The Journal of Southern History* 56.1 (1990), 3-4.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 5, 8.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

¹²⁵ Stephanie J. Shaw, “Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Colored Women,” *Journal of Women’s History* 3.2 (1991), 11.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

The work of these historians brings into view a radical strand of uplift ideology rooted in long, mostly unwritten, histories of black women's organizing that have been eclipsed by histories of white women's activism or debates over the "New Negro" dominated by black men. Harper's own work, it will be remembered, faced near burial beneath criticism that it ventriloquized, in one way or another, dominant ideas of racial uplift circulating in the national public sphere. However, by invoking a genealogy of radical black women and staging conversations between middle-class and "folk" characters, Harper emphasized the *collective* and *ongoing* work of uplift. Harper was less concerned with transmitting a particular ideology of racial uplift than she was in preserving insurgent practices of freedom. When, in his second attempt to persuade Iola to be his wife, Gresham says that Iola will become "disillusioned" when southern black students forget her, as, indeed, many of the white northern teachers became, Iola replies that it doesn't matter whether or not her students remember her. Gresham argues that Iola's "education has unfitted her for life among them" (235). Iola replies, however, that it was the labor of her father's slaves that made possible her northern education. She asks: "What matters it if they do forget the singer, so they don't forget the song?" (234-235). The full meaning of what Iola means by "song" can be found in a chapter titled "Flames in the School-Room," which depicts Iola's work as a teacher in the South. When the black students tell a white preacher, who has asked them to identify the cause for the "achievements" of white-controlled industry, that white industry depended on the stolen labor of slaves, they find their schoolhouse in flames the next day. In response, Iola and the school children raise their voices in song (40). Iola's choice to work for the freedpeople is a decision to refuse to forget that it was slavery that made possible the nation's prosperity and shaped its public opinion.

Harper ended *Iola Leroy* with a *conversazione* among elite black intellectuals, whose discussion takes up topics including African colonization, education, “civilization,” and global histories of imperialism. In the midst of the *conversazione*, Iola gives a talk on the “Education of Mothers.” Harper here referenced her own work on the role of mothers as educators. In an essay called “Enlightened Motherhood,” Harper echoes the speech she gave at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exhibition to declare:

The work of mothers is grandly constructive. It is for us to build above the wreck and ruin of the past more stately temples of thought and actions. Some races have been overthrown, dashed in pieces, and destroyed; but to-day the world is needing, fainting, for something better than the results of arrogance, aggressiveness, and indomitable power. We need mothers who are capable of being character builders, patient, loving, strong, and true, whose homes will be an uplifting power in the race.¹²⁷

Like Armstrong, Harper emphasized the necessary education of “character,” however she does not name the patriarchal state or white missionary as the overseer of this education. Rather, she locates this education within the “work of mothers.” While Harper may appear to reference nineteenth-century ideologies of white Republican motherhood, she invokes a genealogy of black women activists in *Iola Leroy*—including Tubman, Jacobs, and Wells—whose aim, like Aunt Linda’s, was an apocalyptic transformation of society. Harper’s conception of racial uplift and “self-help” appeals not to Samuel Chapman Armstrong or Booker T. Washington, his most famous pupil and public figure of the “Atlanta compromise,” but instead to black women activists, like Ida B. Wells. In her 1892 anti-lynching tract *Southern Horrors*, Iola’s namesake concludes with a section on “self-help.” Wells argues that African Americans must take action against the indiscriminate lynching of black men—often wrongly accused of rape or other violations of white womanhood—by speaking out, striking, boycotting white products, and

¹²⁷ Frances E.W. Harper, “Enlightened Motherhood” (1892) in *A Brighter Coming Day*, ed. Frances Smith Foster (New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, 1990), 292.

making sure the “Winchester rifle” is given a “place of honor in every black home.”¹²⁸ In her speech at the Columbian Exhibition, “Woman’s Political Future,” Harper identified in the “present age” a movement toward “broader freedom, an increase of knowledge, the emancipation of thought, and a recognition of the brotherhood of man” that included women.¹²⁹ In both “Woman’s Political Future” and “Enlightened Motherhood,” the dawning “women’s era” Harper imagined invoked an apocalyptic emancipation from patriarchal “arrogance, aggressiveness, and indomitable power.” This emancipation was *not* sited in a dominant patriarchal vision of white motherhood but—as *Iola Leroy* suggests—within the insurgent practices of black woman activists. With *Iola Leroy* Harper taught her audience a reading practice with the capacity to rupture the post-emancipation “glamour of slavery” by providing the epistemological tools necessary to decolonize the captive body. She modeled for readers how the captive body could be turned inside out to *remember* the grammatical production of captivity at the edges of normative civilization.

¹²⁸ Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892) in *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*, ed. Jacqueline Jones Royster (Boston/New York: Bedford, 1997), 68-72.

¹²⁹ Frances E.W. Harper, “Women’s Political Future” (1893) on *Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project*, accessed December 12, 2013, <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/harper-womens-political-future-speech-text/>.

Chapter Three—“Kill the Indian (Mother), Save the Man”: Lessons and Counter-Lessons in Genocidal Reading at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School

In a famous speech delivered at the Annual Conference of Charities and Correction in 1892, Lieutenant Richard Henry Pratt discussed Carlisle Indian Industrial School’s method for preparing native students for U.S. citizenship. Founded in 1879 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the Carlisle School was a model for secular, off-reservation boarding school education. Pratt believed that in order to be qualified for citizenship, native students had to be separated from the influence of the “tribe” and “saturated” with white civilization. He opened his speech by declaring:

A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with this sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.¹

Pratt, in other words, did not object to the state’s genocidal project to eliminate “Indians”; rather, he objected to the state’s *method* of Indian elimination. By the time he founded Carlisle, Pratt had served in both the Civil War and in frontier campaigns to subdue what the War Department referred to as “Indian hostiles.” But, while Pratt criticized outright Indian massacre, he believed that worse than murder were state policies separating Indians from white civilization by keeping the reservation system intact. Pratt explained to his audience that the Indian was not “born an inevitable savage...[but] a blank, like the rest of us.” He continued: “Transfer the savage-born infant to the surroundings of civilization, and he will grow to possess a civilized language and habit” (268). To support his point, he told the audience to take a lesson from the institution of slavery. Acknowledging that slavery was “horrible,” Pratt argued that it had effectively prepared

¹ Richard H. Pratt, “The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites,” *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indian,” 1880-1900*, ed. Francis Paul Prucha (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260-261.

blacks for citizenship by cutting them off from “cannibalism in darkest Africa,” immersing them in white civilization, and teaching them English and habits of industry (263). In short, Pratt imagined the Indian boarding school as functioning in a similar way to the Middle Passage. By converting native students to the norms of white civilization, Pratt hoped that Carlisle would emancipate the “man” by killing the racial “Indian” within.

One of the ways Carlisle attempted to “kill the Indian” within its native students was through a pedagogy of what I call *genocidal reading*, a reading method that supplemented the state’s legal and military colonization of indigenous lands and peoples by attempting to interpellate native students as imperial subjects. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Carl Schurz, who had helped Pratt found Carlisle as part of a broader effort to solve the nation’s “Indian problem,” had declared in 1881 that native peoples were faced with a “stern alternative: extermination or civilization.”² As anthropologist Patrick Wolfe explains, a settler colonial “logic of elimination” transformed in the late nineteenth century with the official “demise of the frontier.”³ Although the U.S. by no means turned away from warfare in its dealings with native peoples, “elimination turned inwards, seeking to penetrate the tribal surface to the individual below, who was to be co-opted out of the tribe, which would be depleted accordingly, and into White society” (399). The Bureau of Indian Affairs represented secular race-based education for “Indians” as a benevolent alternative to warfare since these schools focused on dissolving tribal sovereignty by “civilizing” what were represented to be the backward “tribal,” family, and domestic orders of native peoples. Carlisle’s secular civilizing mission among native youth accompanied legislation like the 1887 Dawes General Allotment Act, which, in promising

² Quoted in David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 15.

³ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006), 387.

allotments of land to individual families, sought to transform natives into civilized property-holders while simultaneously opening reservation lands up to white settlement. Despite Pratt's claim that Carlisle's civilizational training would prepare native students for citizenship, Carlisle's pedagogy of genocidal reading attempted to create imperial subjects through a dual-identification process. Students were taught to see themselves in images of "primitive Indians" manufactured by the school at the same time that they were to identify as "civilized Indians" on the pathway toward *eventual* citizenship. Carlisle interpellated students as imperial subjects by using reading as a means to get them to internalize dominant grammatical representations of "Indianness" created in legislation like the Dawes Act as part of a core identity, or what might be termed an identity of the "flesh," while also cultivating a desire for U.S. citizenship performed through the outward adoption of patriarchal norms of the "civilized" white bourgeois family.⁴

Carlisle's pedagogy of genocidal reading was part of an educational program that attempted to interpellate native students as imperial subjects by cultivating their desire to inhabit white civilizational norms of bourgeois family and domesticity and, by extension, a desire for paternalistic governance by the colonial state. Carlisle represented itself in photography, journalism, government documents, and fiction as a surrogate institutional family and employed nineteenth century tropes of family and domesticity to make Indian education appear as a benevolent civilizing mission. In a discussion of the Carlisle Institute, native studies scholar Mark Rifkin argues that policies to train students in a liberal heterosexual "division of labor between husband and wife" were structured furthermore as a "romance plot in which the abandonment of indigenous kinship networks, patterns of residence, and forms of communal

⁴ Here I am thinking of the way that Hortense Spillers theorizes "flesh" as the "zero degree of social conceptualization." Spillers' discussion of the "flesh" is elaborated in the Introduction. See Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," in spec. issue *Culture and Countermemory: The "American" Connection*, *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987), 67.

identification appears as self-evidently desirable exchange of ‘degraded’ traditional society for the marital bliss and private homeownership portrayed as constitutive of civilized life.”⁵ He describes U.S. attempts to legislate heteronormativity among native peoples as a “key part of the grammar of the settler state” and explains that “more than regulating sexual object choice and gender expression,” compulsory heterosexuality comprised an “ensemble of imperatives,” including “family formation, homemaking, private property holding, and the allocation of citizenship,” and that the “interpellation” of “Indians as a non-white population” occurred through the “presumption of heterocouplehood as the atom of social life.”⁶ Rifkin demonstrates not only how U.S. imperial policies toward native peoples contributed to idealizing the “privatized single-family household as the national ideal of the late nineteenth century” but also how it attempted to construct publicly legible “Indians” by translating indigenous lifeways into a liberal grammar of family and domesticity.⁷ The “romance plot” that Rifkin identifies as structuring institutions like Carlisle, however, was not only about convincing students to accept liberal norms of family and domesticity through promises of “marital bliss” and property ownership. Indeed, as I argue in this chapter, Carlisle’s interpellation of its native students as imperial subjects involved getting students to internalize violent forms of discipline toward what the school represented as a sexually deviant racial “Indianness” as well as cultivating their desire to emulate liberal forms of family and domesticity. As such, it attempted to create what native studies scholar Andrea Smith, borrowing from native psychologist Eduardo Duran, has called a “soul wound” among its students that can be tied to boarding school legacies of sexual and other

⁵ Mark Rifkin, “Romancing Kinship: A Queer Reading of Indian Education in Zitkala-Sa’s American Indian Stories,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12, no. 1 (2006), 29.

⁶ Mark Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 37.

⁷ Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?*, 5-6.

forms of physical violence.⁸ Despite attempts by the U.S. government to represent Indian education as a benevolent alternative to repressive violence, Indian boarding schools incorporated sexual violence, corporeal punishment, and jailing into their educational programs.

Genocidal reading was a key part of repressive discipline at Carlisle aimed at transforming the “backward” domesticity of native students while also getting them to form a passionate attachment to white civilization, and along with it, U.S. law. Carlisle’s pedagogy of genocidal reading is exemplified in two boarding school stories “How an Indian Girl Might Tell Her Story if She Had the Chance” (1889) and *Stiya: A Carlisle Girl at Home* (1891) written by Marianna Burgess, a white Carlisle teacher, who also edited the school newspaper *Indian Helper*. In Burgess’s boarding school stories, which were widely distributed among Carlisle supporters and students, Burgess claimed to present the true story of a “Carlisle girl” who must resist the domestic teaching of her mother in order to continue on “up the hill of Right” after returning home to the Pueblo. While the stories sought to provide documentary evidence to Carlisle supporters and critics of the school’s success in transforming native students into civilized “Indians” on the pathway to citizenship, they also modeled how reading could be used as a means to “kill the Indian” within. Given to Carlisle students returning home, the stories functioned as a handbook demonstrating how to remain loyal to Carlisle’s teaching as well as spread white civilization among family and tribe. Genocidal reading’s dual-identification process is exemplified by the protagonist’s disgust toward her “Indian mother,” whose domestic habits are made responsible for mass death among the Pueblo, and her simultaneous desire to emulate her white “school-mother,” who teaches her how to “be a woman.” It is through displacing the

⁸ Andrea Smith, “Soul Wound: The Legacy of Native American Schools,” *Amnesty International Magazine*, March 26, 2007, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/node/87342>.

responsibility for genocidal violence inward onto self and tribe by way of the Indian mother that Burgess's stories attempted to inflict a "soul wound" in Carlisle students.

In an attempt to instill guilt in students as a means to stage Carlisle's civilizational rescue, Burgess's stories also serve as artifacts that document how strategies of subjection that marxist philosopher Louis Althusser calls "interpellation" developed at Indian boarding schools and functioned as part of a settler colonial strategy of Indian elimination. In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Althusser uses the term "interpellation" to theorize subjection as a material practice. In brief, he argues that subjection occurs when the individual recognizes, or misrecognizes, himself as a subject within the ruling ideology of the state.⁹ As philosopher Judith Butler points out, one of Althusser's crucial interventions was to theorize the process of mastery as simultaneously constituting a process of subjection.¹⁰ In Althusser's example of the school, the mastery of a particular skill set is simultaneously the mastery of the "know-how" necessary to occupy a specific social role, thus perpetuating asymmetrical power relations in capitalist societies by making individuals participants in their own subjection. Butler adds, however, that Althusser's religious metaphors of interpellation stage the process of interpellation as the *willing* appropriation of guilt.¹¹ Put crudely, in order for interpellation to "work," one must identify as a "sinner" in order to identify as "saved." It is in their attempt to instill student readers with guilt or responsibility for settler violence that Burgess's stories try to inflict a "soul wound." The genocidal reading modeled in Burgess's stories attempted to interpellate native students by making internalized guilt a requirement for proving their civilizational capacity for U.S.

⁹ See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Toward an Investigation)," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* by Louis Althusser, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

¹⁰ See Judith Butler, "Conscience Doth Make Subjects of Us All," spec. issue *Depositions: Althusser, Balibar, Macherey, and the Labor of Reading*, in *Yale French Studies*, no. 88 (1995). For Althusser's discussion of ideological work of bourgeois education, see Althusser, 152-157.

¹¹ Butler, 8-9.

citizenship. Yet, as I will demonstrate, the stories' interpellative structure also provides an unexpected opportunity to unsettle their organizing logic.

Using metaphors of adoption that refracted the legal status of "Indians" as "wards" of the state, Pratt imagined Carlisle as a surrogate family that would turn "savage" Indian children into "Carlisle boys and girls."¹² Carlisle's institutional "family" would function to break students' tribal affiliation and replace it with "loyalty to stars and stripes."¹³ In particular, the figure of the white woman teacher as surrogate "mother" to native children made Carlisle's education program, and by extension settler colonial projects like the Dawes Act, appear as good mothering. At the same time, the institutionalization of patriarchal domesticity at schools like Carlisle mediated white women's increased influence in the male-dominated "public sphere" as they entered the labor force in gendered roles as teachers and administrators. Carlisle's representations of its white female teachers as surrogate "mothers" to its native students was reinforced by late nineteenth century racial science that represented white women as "mothers of the race" responsible for collective civilizational development and advancement.¹⁴ Women's experiences working as teachers at race-based educational institutions for Indian students, however, attest to the failure of this civilizing mission. As such, I read Burgess's boarding school stories as representing a desire on the part of the white schoolteacher for emulation by native students that they were generally denied in practice.

The chapter ends with a reading of Yankton Sioux writer and activist Zitkala-Ša's boarding school narratives, "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an

¹² For an analysis of Indians as "wards" of the state in the context of U.S. imperialism and nation building, see Priscilla Wald, "Terms of Assimilation: Legislating Subjectivity in the Emerging Nation," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, eds. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1993): 59-84.

¹³ Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," 269.

¹⁴ See Louise Michele Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Indian Girl,” and “An Indian Teacher Among Indians,” published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1900. Zitkala-Ša’s stories intervene in an imperial grammar of civilization that sought to make “Indians” legible to the state through white civilizational terms of family and domesticity by actively remembering the process of interpellation at Indian boarding schools like Carlisle. In commissioned before-and-after photographs as well as in fiction like Burgess’s, Carlisle attempted to circulate evidence of the school’s capacity to convert native students to white civilization. These texts’ before-and-after temporal structure, however, erased the material process of “conversion” that native students underwent in the course of their education. By contrast, Zitkala-Ša’s boarding school narratives produce memories of the violent interpellative pedagogies of imperial subjection at Indian boarding schools to demonstrate the ways in which representations of native students produced by schools like Carlisle manufactured images of U.S. benevolence to justify ongoing imperialism. Instead of providing a more “real” representation of native peoples, Zitkala-Ša takes aim at patriarchal ideologies of family and domesticity that imbued mothers with a “natural” capacity to pass on a racial and cultural identity to their children. In reworking romantic tropes of the Indian storyteller and primitive child, she demonstrated how what appeared as real native identity in the white press was compelled performance.

Mothers, Orphans, Wards: Domesticating “Indians” for Post-Emancipation Settler Colonialism

Abolitionists regarded the Civil War as more than a Union victory. Historian Francis Paul Prucha writes that many former abolitionists viewed the Civil War as a moral victory over slavery that would “recover for the Christian nation the uprightness—in its own eyes and the

eyes of the world—it had lost by clinging to the monstrous practice of human bondage.”¹⁵ The Civil War resulted in abolitionist hegemony and the task to reconstruct the war-torn nation while at the same time unleashing forces of industrial capitalism that required land and natural resources. Many former abolitionists took up new reform causes and, unlike during the antebellum period, increasingly partnered with the state to implement moral change.¹⁶ Indian reformers, who met annually at Lake Mohonk as the “Friends of the Indian” shaped policies that mediated the contradiction between upholding an image of the reconstructed nation purged of slavery’s evils and the economic need for western territories and resources.¹⁷ In this context, domestic ideology became a key “mechanism” for articulating settler colonialism’s “logic of elimination” with postwar abolitionist hegemony. A main difference in domestic ideology between antebellum and postbellum eras was that “domestic labor” was increasingly professionalized and the site of “domesticity” increasingly institutionalized. Indian boarding schools, which proliferated as the state’s solution to the “Indian problem,” were sites where domestic ideology was shaped, legitimated, and contested in the process of making settler colonialism appear consistent with postwar “emancipation.” Similarly, teaching in Indian schools became increasingly coded as feminized, “domestic” labor subject to civil service examinations and bureaucratic oversight. Domesticity, once confined to private homes and organizations, like churches, became a key way to legitimate secular state incursion into native homes.

Prucha marks Ulysses S. Grant’s 1869 “Peace Policy” as a significant point of departure in the state’s approach to the “Indian problem.” The Peace Policy signified the state’s ostensible shift from policies of warfare and frontier homicide to remove natives from land to more

¹⁵ Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 479.

¹⁶ See Lori D. Ginzberg, “The Moral Eye of the State,” *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the 19th-Century United States* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1990): 174-213.

¹⁷ Prucha, 480.

“benevolent” policies focused on assimilation. Grant responded to Indian reformers’ postwar criticism of the government’s Indian policies by partnering with missionaries to set up reservation schools, exercise oversight of corrupt Indian agents, and “civilize” natives by teaching them to become property-holding farmers. Prucha argues that the Peace Policy largely represents a *symbolic* rather than fully realized shift in government policy. The military was deployed to enforce reservation borders and quell resistance among “Indian hostiles” who refused to live within these borders and give up practices like hunting for agriculture. The post-Civil War period of U.S. policies toward the “Indians” in fact contained some of the bloodiest battles and massacres of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ Perhaps the greatest innovation of the Peace Policy was to represent continued colonization of native lands and resources through the domestic metaphor of “adoption.” Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Jefferson Morgan, who was instrumental in systematizing Indian boarding school education, said that the “essential idea of [the Peace Policy] was that the Government more fully than ever before was to recognize the Indians as its wards, towards whom it was to act as a guardian, treating them as orphan and dependent children, not with harshness, severity, and military subjection, but with kindness, patience, gentleness, and helpfulness.”¹⁹ Morgan’s assessment of the Peace Policy in terms of “adoption” reflects the state’s definition of native tribes as “domestic dependent nations” within the U.S.²⁰

Richard Henry Pratt’s founding of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School was significant in part because Pratt wrested the educational civilizing mission away from semi-private missionary

¹⁸ Prucha 481-482.

¹⁹ Quoted in Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 40.

²⁰ Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall denominated the Cherokee “domestic dependent nations” in relationship to the U.S. in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831). See Wald, 68.

control and made Carlisle into a model of state-supported, secular “Indian” boarding school education. Pratt relied on late nineteenth century tropes of family and domesticity in order to make his educational experiment appear consistent with postwar images of the modern nation as guarantor of “freedom,” and to legitimate the transfer of responsibility for native education from missionaries to secular off-reservation boarding schools. Pratt first conceived of his program for native re-education while he was deployed by the War Department to “Indian Territory” in command of a “colored regiment” of cavalry troops to subdue “Indian hostiles.” In the aftermath of the Red River War, Pratt took charge of seventy-two Kiowa, Comanche, and Cheyenne prisoners that he was told could not be brought to trial for war crimes since it was “ruled that a ‘state of war could not exist between a nation and its wards.’”²¹ Unable to prosecute the prisoners, Pratt became their jailor in 1875 and transported them to the Fort Marion Barracks in St. Augustine, Florida. At Fort Marion, Pratt experimented with “civilizing” the prisoners by giving them military dress, dividing them into “companies” in charge of keeping order over each other, employing them in collecting and polishing small collectible shells—or “sea beans”—found on the Florida coastline, and soliciting “enthusiastic” local white women to teach English and Sunday school classes (116-127).

From the beginning, Pratt used representations of patriarchal domesticity to make his educational experiment appear as a departure from old policies of warfare to benevolent, consensual forms of native assimilation into white civilization. White women were key figures used to signify this shift due to their supposedly inherent maternal capacity for “civilization work.” A chapter on “educational programs” in Pratt’s memoir *Battlefield and Classroom*, which is essentially an extended apology for Carlisle, features descriptions of “domestic” education at

²¹ Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: An Autobiography* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 105.

Fort Marion written by well known bishop Benjamin Whipple and abolitionist author Harriet Beecher Stowe. In an article for the *New York Daily Tribune*, Whipple described a scene of Indian “transformation.” After observing that Fort Marion prisoners were as “desperate Indian warriors as ever carried the tomahawk and rifle,” he explained:

Some devoted Christian women became their teachers in a school. They are beginning to read and write. They have learned the Lord’s prayer. They sing very sweetly several Christian hymns. I was never more touched than when I entered this school. Here were men who had committed murder upon helpless women and children sitting like docile children at the feet of women learning to read. Their faces have changed. They have all lost that look of savage hate, and the light of a new life is dawning in their hearts. (163)

Whipple used sentimental conventions to depict the visible transformation of the Indian prisoners as they sat like “docile children” at the feet of white women. The woman teachers appear as the prisoners’ mothers, who were cultivating in them the “civilized” arts of English language and Christianity. Stowe’s essay, which precedes Whipple’s, observed the “constant family affection” among the reformed prisoners (157). The effect of white women’s domestication of the prisoners was to extend as well to the reader who, like Whipple, was supposed to be “never more touched” than by this scene of the white women’s benevolent conquest of Indian “hearts.”

As the nineteenth century wore on, the U.S. increasingly partnered with reformers calling themselves “Friends of the Indians” to colonize indigenous land and extend its jurisdiction over native peoples through laws and policies that represented colonization as a benevolent rescue mission. The 1887 Allotment of Lands in Severalty Act, or Dawes Act, sought to break up native governing structures and communal landholding on reservations by allotting plots of land to individual family units. Reformers believed that land ownership would prepare “Indians” for citizenship by cultivating liberal values of individualism and self-sufficiency, which would in theory wean the nation’s “wards” off of the need for government support. In particular, the Act attempted to cultivate among natives “civilized habits of life” by dividing portions of land among

individuals according to a white patriarchal family structure, including forcing Indians to adopt family names so that the state could track land inheritance.²² Allotted lands were to be held in trust by the U.S. government and excess territory sold off for white settlement with proceeds going to Indian education.²³ Ethnologist Alice Cunningham Fletcher, whose observations among the Omaha were instrumental to the formulation and passage of the Dawes Act, argued for the Act by saying that the “combined influence of the chiefs and agency system” kept Indians in the “irresponsibility of perpetual childhood.” Under the break-up of reservation lands and native governance, “the individual would be set free and become the inheritor of his own labor, and the important point in social advance would be gained by having the legal family established.” Echoing recapitulation theories of racial development promoted within the American school of ethnology, Fletcher believed that enforcing a patriarchal domestic structure among native peoples would “free” them *not* from white settlers but from the “perpetual childhood” of life on reservations.²⁴

The institutionalization of patriarchal family and domesticity at Indian boarding schools like Carlisle involved training students in gendered divisions of labor and authority. Among Indian reformers, white women in particular were charged with the capacity to educate both native youth and adults in white, bourgeois civilizational norms. In her essay “Manifest Domesticity,” American studies scholar Amy Kaplan observes that the mid-nineteenth century “‘cult of domesticity’ or ‘ideology of separate spheres’ . . . held that woman’s hallowed place is in the home, the site from which she wields the sentimental power of moral influence.” She argues,

²² U.S. Congress, *An Act to Provide for the Allotment of Lands in Severalty to Indians on the Various Reservations*, 49th Cong., 2nd sess., *OurDocuments.gov*.
<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=50&page=transcript>

²³ See Prucha, 667-669.

²⁴ Quoted in Newman, 126. For more on recapitulationist theories of racial development, see the Introduction and Chapter One.

however, that domestic ideology also mediated the “interdependence of home and empire” in the antebellum U.S., explaining that, “*Domestic* has a double meaning that links the space of the of the familial household to that of the nation, by imagining both in opposition to everything outside the geographical and conceptual border of the home.”²⁵ In the mid-nineteenth century, women were charged with the task of policing the moral boundaries of the home and self. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, women were still generally considered to be the moral keepers of “civilization,” however this role took on an increasingly *racial* function. Historian Louise Newman writes that late nineteenth century racial science represented women as “mothers of the race,” or “racial conservators,” tasked with the social and biological duty of racial advance. It became permissible for women to perform “civilization work,” like teaching, outside the domestic confines of the home because it was labor that was gendered female. Newman argues that evolutionary social theory made women into keepers of civilizational advance by virtue of their gender at the same time that it allowed *white* women to exercise moral authority over black and native women by representing them as superior mothers by virtue of their *race*.²⁶

Newman argues that white women Indian reformers in particular defined themselves and their domestic civilizing mission by drawing upon images of “inferior” Indian womanhood. While white women were seeking greater influence and authority outside of the narrow bounds of the patriarchal domestic sphere, they paradoxically sought this expanded role for themselves on the basis of “bringing patriarchy”—the very patriarchy they were often attempting to

²⁵ Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” in *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 24-25.

²⁶ Newman, 117. Other scholars have also observed this shift. See, for example, Jacobs, and Andrea Smith, “Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide,” in *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge MA: South End Press, 2005), 7-33; and Andrea Smith, “Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change,” *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2005), 116-132.

escape—to “uncivilized” women. Newman explains that after the passage of the Dawes Act, white woman Indian reformers increasingly saw the “Indian problem” as a “woman question.” She quotes Amelia Quinton, president of the Women’s National Indian Association (WNIA), who said in 1888:

There is a sense...in which the Indian Question must become more and more a woman question. When all legal rights are assured, and all fair educational facilities provided, the women and children of the tribes will still be a sacred responsibility laid upon the white women of the land. The true civilization that begins with the child and the home must come through women’s work. (117)

White women were imbued with racial authority as “superior mothers of the race,” tasked with the responsibility to bring patriarchal domestic training to racially “inferior” mothers. Indian women were represented as inferior mothers standing in the way of racial advance and eventual Indian “emancipation.” Historian Margaret D. Jacobs observes that along with viewing native men and women as belonging to a “child race,” white women reformers tended to see native women as “squaw drudges” who labored as the “degraded slaves of their cruel and lazy men.” Indian women were represented as “dirty” and as “instigators of sexual immorality,” while their homes, clothes, and bodies were read for visible signs of immorality.²⁷ Newman explains that to rescue Indian women from racial “slavery,” white women reformers like Amelia Quinton and Alice Cunningham Fletcher believed that they needed to be “given the gift of patriarchy, with all the protection it afforded” (119).

Representing native women as inferior was part of a colonial grammar of domination that had sought to “eliminate” Indian women through intermarriage, murder, or patriarchal subdual. The idea that white women were superior “mothers of the race” might be thought of an

²⁷ Jacobs, 118, 126-127. See also Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1978); Devon A. Mihesuah, *American Indians: Stereotypes and Realities* (Atlanta: Clarity, 1996); Smith, *Conquest*; and Newman. Indian women were also stereotypically represented as “Indian princesses,” although this representation seems to be less common among white women Indian reformers.

epistemological ungendering of native women as “mothers” within the grammatical terms of white civilization. While still invested with the capacity to instill native civilization among her children, the figure of the Indian mother as “squaw” or “drudge” made native mothering appear as a degraded practice that could only lead to slavery or death, thereby making unrecognizable any meaningful type of education among her children. Native studies scholar Andrea Smith emphasizes that gender and sexual violence has long functioned as a “tool of genocide” in colonial conquest.²⁸ Native women, she argues, were represented as “bearers of a counter-imperial order” and therefore “pos[ed] a supreme threat to dominant culture” (15). According to Smith, rape, murder, and other forms of sexual violence were central to European and U.S. colonization of land and resources. She explains, “The project of colonial sexual violence establishes the ideology that Native bodies are inherently violable—and, by extension, that Native lands are also inherently violable” (12). Historian Albert L. Hurtado’s work on the “intimate frontiers” of U.S. colonial conquest confirms that by the 1850s colonization had had a genocidal impact on native women.²⁹ While white settler women “reproduced at heroic rates” on the “frontier,” death rates for native women exceeded those for native men by the mid-nineteenth century. He attributes some of these deaths to outright murder but many more of them to syphilis, which he describes as the “one physiological result of Indian and white sexual relations that seems to have been universal.”³⁰ Represented as “squaws” by Indian reformers, native women threatened the state’s civilizing mission because of their perceived capacity to socially and biologically reproduce unassimilable Indians. As a figure relegated outside patriarchal norms of family and domesticity, the Indian mother represented a racial threat to the inevitable

²⁸ Smith, “Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide.”

²⁹ Albert L. Hurtado, “When Strangers Met: Sex and Gender on Three Frontiers,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 17, no. 3 (1996): 52-75; and Albert L. Hurtado, “Settler Women and Frontier Women: The Unsettling Past of Western Women’s History,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 22, no. 3 (2001): 3.

³⁰ Hurtado, “When Strangers Met,” 66.

extension of white civilization and U.S. governance across the continent. Functioning as what postcolonial scholar Anne McClintock calls a “boundary marker” of empire, the Indian mother signified a line between civilization and savagery that had to be eliminated in order for European and American colonists to gain control of indigenous lands.³¹

The maternalist turn in U.S. laws and policies aimed at native peoples after the Civil War was part of an attempt to conceal the continuation of violent processes of colonization and native genocide by making settler colonialism appear as the benevolent gifting of patriarchal civilization to racially inferior peoples “enslaved” to “tribal tyranny.” As part of this post-emancipation shift in settler colonialism, race-based experiments in Indian education like Carlisle represented schools as institutional “families” adopting the children of an “orphan” race into the fold of white civilization and, by extension, state jurisdiction. To make the imperial education of native students appear as part of an emancipatory project, Carlisle transposed abolitionist metaphors of emancipation onto settler colonialism to signify the *racial* enslavement of “Indians” to uncivilized governance, domestic, and family structures. This ostensibly backward social order was presided over by the figure of the unassimilable “Indian mother.” Returning to Pratt’s speech to the Conference of Charities and Correction, which opened this chapter, we might say that Pratt aimed at Carlisle to eliminate the influence the Indian mother to “save the man” in native students and, in so doing, to “emancipate” the race from the perceived threat of her influence. As indicated in his speech, Pratt’s framing of Indian education at Carlisle as an emancipatory civilizing mission was not merely rhetoric but also shaped Carlisle’s education program. Working closely with Samuel Chapman Armstrong, the president of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute discussed in Chapter Two, Pratt developed several

³¹ See Anne McClintock, “The Lay of the Land,” in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York/London: Routledge, 1995): 21-74.

strategies to produce what sociologist Orlando Patterson has called “natal alienation” in order to replicate among native students the profound alienation that the Middle Passage had had for enslaved Africans and thereby “saturate” native students in white civilization at Carlisle. Although Pratt was not attempting to enslave native students, several rituals performed at Carlisle, including forced renaming, haircutting, military drilling, gendered division of labor, prohibition of native languages, and jailing, were designed to sever—and thereby “emancipate”—native students from ties to a native civilization. The capstone of Carlisle’s attempt to replicate the Middle Passage was its famed “outing” system, which attempted to completely remove native youth from the influence of the “tribe” by “scattering” them among white farms for one to two years through hiring out their labor.³² While Pratt believed that a Carlisle education would qualify native students for eventual U.S. citizenship by eliminating racial Indianness, Carlisle might be better understood, again in the terms of Patterson, as attempting a type of “social death” in which native students experienced a “secular excommunication” from both native and white civilization and were thus caught in limbo as imperial subjects requiring paternal governance by the U.S.³³

The institutionalization of white women’s “civilization” work at Carlisle along with the broader professionalization of white women’s labor as teachers and administrators in the Indian service served to conceal the ongoing violence of settler colonialism by making the state appear innocent. Carlisle appeared as a semi-private institution engaged in the virtuous work of secular civilizational training and racial uplift. The white “school-mothers” employed at Carlisle were part of a strategy to interpellate native students as imperial subjects consenting to U.S. settler colonialism and the state’s paternal governance. However, this process of interpellation, which I

³² Adams, 157.

³³ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1982), 5.

discuss in the next section, was not without contradiction for white women or the native youth they were tasked with reforming. For white women, teaching in Indian boarding schools often did not live up to their desires for greater independence, and they often found themselves dealing with a patriarchal bureaucratic structure that sought to exploit them and their labor. Many native youth refused to identify with images of “civilized savages” offered them at institutions like Carlisle and often actively resisted boarding school education.

School-Mother: Images of Domestic Order and Genocidal Reading

From the beginning of his educational “experiment” with prisoners at Fort Marion, Richard Henry Pratt had been engaged in a public relations campaign over “Indian” representation. Pratt tussled with Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Jefferson Morgan over public exhibitions of Indians produced by ethnographers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s Wild West Show for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Carlisle’s display at the Exposition attempted to illustrate the school’s ability to take students “into civilization and citizenship.” Pratt explains in his memoir, “Carlisle’s exhibit showed how the Indian could learn to march in line with America as a very part of it, head up, eyes front, where he could see his glorious future of manly competition in citizenship and be on equality as an individual.” Pratt believed that the Exposition’s ethnographic exhibit and Cody’s spectacular show “keep the nation’s attention and the Indian’s energies fixed upon his valueless past, through the spectacular aboriginal housing, dressing, and curio employments it instituted.” According to Pratt, the “exposition camps said to the Indians: ‘You may have some of our education, but not enough to enable you to become one of us. You are to remain a separate and peculiar people, and continue under our Bureau supervision.’” For Pratt, the Carlisle exhibit was

to demonstrate to white publics that Indians could be “civilized” and that any attachment to “past” ways of life could be eradicated through education. “Indians” could become “equal” with whites if they disavowed “aboriginal, housing, dressing” and other “curio employments.”³⁴

In Carlisle’s exhibit at the Columbian Exposition, Pratt demonstrated to visitors that education could civilize “Indian” students by displaying numerous portraits of them according to an imperial grammar of civilization. In Carlisle’s photographs at the exhibit, students appeared in bourgeois Victorian or military dress.³⁵ One photograph of the exhibit shows Carlisle students in military dress standing at attention beside shelves filled with books and other artifacts of education. An American flag draped above the exhibit is so large that it dwarfs the display below. There are no artifacts, or “curios,” of native life in the Carlisle exhibit; instead visitors might notice the difference in Carlisle’s display from the other Exposition exhibits of the U.S.’s native peoples. Despite his criticism of ethnographic or other spectacular displays of “Indians” at the Exposition, Pratt himself was not above using exoticized and romantic images of “Indians” in order to prove to skeptics Carlisle’s ability to “civilize” its students. Carlisle in fact commissioned several sets of before-and-after portraits of students to demonstrate their transformation from “uncivilized primitives” to “civilized savages.” These portraits were circulated in Pratt’s letters to government officials and reservation agents as well as sold in school newspapers. American studies scholar Lonna M. Malsheimer explains that in these portraits, “Transformation of the body stands in for transformation of the soul; transformation of dress and demeanor for transformation of identity” (56).

³⁴ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 303. For more on Carlisle’s role at the World’s Columbian Exposition, see Chapter One.

³⁵ A photograph of the exhibit can be found in Lonna M. Malsheimer, “‘Imitation White Man’: Images of Transformation at the Carlisle Indian School,” *Studies in Anthropology of Visual Communication* 11, no. 4 (1985): 69.

To show viewers this “transformation,” Carlisle made use of the visual rhetoric of family portraiture to demonstrate student “civilization.” Malmshemer argues that “after” portraits of Carlisle students conform to middle-class white conventions of self-representation. Portraits were staged by the photographer and feature the subject looking head-on at the camera surrounded by props typical for the period. Malmshemer explains that the portraits reflect Carlisle training by “express[ing] an ideology of propriety and complete bodily control” (59). “Before” portraits of students also feature the subject staring head-on at the camera in a “controlled” pose, but these portraits show students in exotic “Indian dress,” including feathers, blankets, and other artifacts of native life. These “before” portraits borrow from ethnographic realist photography that was becoming popular among ethnographers and tourists in the last decades of the nineteenth century by capturing students as the “categorical types they were purported to depict.”³⁶ Carlisle’s before-and-after portraits participate in what American studies scholar Laura Wexler calls the “double-edged, double-jeopardy nature of sentimental perception with the social control of marginal domestic populations.”³⁷ According to Wexler, the “imperial project of sentimentalism” made images of white middle-class domesticity the litmus for civilization, and, while extending “humanity” to its “objects of compassion” by offering identification with white domesticity, it also foreclosed full belonging by positing irrevocable difference. Those who “did not have, could not get, or had been robbed of their ‘homes’” would be “irredeemably dehumanize[ed]...in the eyes of those who came from ‘homes,’” and this would “leave them open to self-hatred and pressure to alter their habits of living in order to present themselves as if they too might lay claim to a proper ‘domestic’ lineage” (101). As native

³⁶ Matthew J. Martinez and Patricia C. Albers, “Imaging and Imagining Pueblo People in Northern New Mexico Tourism,” in *The Framed World: Tourism, Tourists, and Photography*, eds. Mike Robinson and David Picard (Farnham/Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 43.

³⁷ Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill/London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 105.

studies and American studies scholars Susan Bernardin, Melody Graulich, et al. point out, photographs of Indians participated in the colonization of indigenous lands and peoples by serving as “social currency” that “underwrote imperial expansion, funded scientific inquiry, and lured investigators, visitors, and sightseers to western destinations.”³⁸

While attempting to showcase the civilizational conversion of native students into “Carlisle boys and girls,” the temporal structure of Carlisle’s before-and-after portraits attest to the school’s grammar of civilization organizing the school’s educational program. Even though school and teachers were absent from before-and-after portraits, Wexler argues that the portraits served a disciplinary function by charting out the proper course of education. In a set of before-and-after photographs featuring three young girls arrived at Hampton Institute (which also educated native students for a time), Wexler argues that the “after” portraits reconstitute the girls “not just as imitation white girls but as white girls of particular kind” (112). The “after” portraits attempted to “imprint” their subjects with images of middle-class Victorian womanhood. These images of middle-class domesticity, however, are contradicted by schooling aimed at training female students to labor not in their own homes but in the homes of others (105). Even though Carlisle is absent from before-and-after portraits, it is not difficult to imagine the “school father” or “school mother” standing beside the photographer helping to compose each scene and elicit the proper facial expressions. Conforming to conventions of *family* portraiture, these photographs suggest to white viewers Carlisle’s ability to “adopt” its “Indian” students into its institutional “family.”

³⁸ Susan Bernardin, Melody Graulich, et al. “Introduction. Empire of the Lens: Women, Indians, and Cameras,” *Trading Gazes: Euro-American Women Photographers and Native North Americans, 1880-1940*, eds. Susan Bernardin, Melody Graulich, et al. (New Brunswick: Rutgers U.P., 2003), 12-13.

As Wexler suggests, Carlisle's before-and-after photographs not only served as *evidence* of the school's ability to convert native students to white civilization but also indicate the *method* by which Carlisle sought to cultivate internal transformation. In what follows, I demonstrate how Carlisle attempted to interpellate students into identification with the Carlisle "family" and, by extension, state governance as imperial subjects through a dual-identification process with both its "before" and "after" images of native identity. Although Carlisle circulated "before" photographs of students to signify a civilizational past with which they no longer identified, I argue that the school's educational mission in fact relied on getting students to identify *simultaneously* with "before" and "after" images as a means to cultivate self-discipline of a racial Indianness within. In his theory of interpellation, marxist philosopher Louis Althusser demonstrates how subjection to the state relies not only on coercive forms of state repression, such as military or law, but also on ideological institutions like school, religion, and family that compel willing consent to the state by getting the individual to recognize, or misrecognize, the self within the state's ruling ideology. Using the example of "Christian religious ideology," Althusser demonstrates how ideology functions according to a "speculary...mirror-structure" by "interpellating individuals as subjects in the name" of God, or the "Unique and Absolute Subject." Subjection works in this example when the individual undergoes conversion by seeing the self as a little-"s" subject reflected in the "name" of the "Absolute Subject."³⁹ While recognition of the self within the capital-"S" Subject is the desired "after" of interpellation, this process also requires a "before." As philosopher Judith Butler points out, Althusser's theory of subjection as interpellation "appears to presuppose a prior and unelaborated doctrine of conscience." Butler demonstrates how Althusser's example of interpellation as Christian conversion (as well as his example of the police officer's "hail") presumes on the part of the

³⁹ Althusser, 180.

individual a “readiness to accept guilt” and posits, furthermore, “an original guilt” that would respond to the call of the Christian God’s offer to assuage it.⁴⁰ Carlisle’s secular civilizing mission attempted to cultivate students’ identification with *both* “before” and “after” images of education because it needed to create within students a guilty conscience that would recognize a need for rescue or for absolution in the process of a Carlisle education. The interpellative structure of Carlisle’s education thus also contained within it the grounds for its own destruction. If Carlisle students did not find themselves “guilty” of civilizational transgression, then their adoption of aspects of white civilization would not necessarily be because they found it to be civilizational superior. Nonetheless, Carlisle’s attempt to get students to identify with images of an inferior racial Indianness in its “before” photographs while simultaneously cultivating in them a desire for white civilization modeled by “after” photographs attempted to produce native students as U.S. imperial subjects. The destination represented for students in the “after” photographs was not U.S. citizenship but rather an image of white mimicry that for white audiences was recognizably, borrowing the terms of postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, “*almost the same but not white.*”⁴¹

One of the ways that Carlisle attempted to carry out its dual-identification process was through a pedagogy of what I call genocidal reading, a reading practice represented in two assimilation stories written by Carlisle teacher and newspaper editor Marianna Burgess. Burgess’s stories modeled for students how reading could be a means to discipline a racial Indianness within and also attempted to cultivate in native students guilt, shame, and hatred for native civilization represented by the figure of the Indian mother. The first story, “How an Indian Girl Might Tell Her Own Story if She Had the Chance” (1889), was published in Carlisle’s

⁴⁰ Butler, 8.

⁴¹ Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” in *The Location of Culture* (London/New York: Routledge, 1994), 128.

newsweekly the *Indian Helper*, which billed itself as a “letter from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School to Boys and Girls.” Unlike Carlisle’s other main publication, the *Red Man*, the *Indian Helper* targeted a student audience and featured news, advice on manners and morals, reports of misbehavior, updates on former students, and games and stories. Printed in-house by Carlisle students, the paper had a circulation of twelve thousand by 1898.⁴² “How an Indian Girl Might Tell Her Own Story” is written from the first-person perspective of Mollie, a reformed “Carlisle girl,” and follows the obstacles she faces as she tries to carry out Carlisle’s domestic civilizing mission among family and Pueblo after returning home. The primary obstacle she faces is her “Indian mother.” Mollie continually resists her Indian mother’s urging to return to native life by using reading as a means to adhere to the domestic training of her white Carlisle “school-mother.” Burgess’s story was so popular with the *Indian Helper*’s audience, which included white readers, that in 1891 Riverside Press published it as a novel. The plot of the novel is identical to Burgess’s original story, however there are a few key changes. The novel’s protagonist was renamed Stiya and the novel retitled *Stiya: A Carlisle Girl at Home*. In addition, Burgess concealed her own authorship under the gender-ambiguous pseudonym “Embe,” wrote a new preface, and included several photographs from Carlisle and her travels recruiting students among the Pueblo to illustrate events in the story. *Stiya* was widely distributed to Carlisle students to function as a proxy “school-mother” for students returning home. In both versions of the story, Burgess claimed that the stories were based off of the composite experiences of real “Carlisle girls” and was therefore “true.”

Like Carlisle’s before-and-after portraits, Burgess’s assimilation stories served the dual purpose of proving Carlisle’s educational civilizing mission to skeptics while also getting

⁴² Jacqueline Fear-Segal, “Man-on-the-Bandstand: Surveillance, Concealment, and Resistance,” in *White Man’s Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation* (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 207.

students to identify with representations of ideal “Carlisle boys and girls.” The stories used the rhetoric of “adoption” to interpellate students into the Carlisle “family”: “Indian” students were represented as children to white “school-mothers,” who were, in turn, under the authority of the “school father” representing the authority of the War Department of the “Great Father” or “Grandfather” in Washington. Mollie/Stiya willingly internalizes the teaching of her white “school-mother” while eliminating the influence of her Indian mother in order to signify her conversion to white civilization. However, Mollie/Stiya’s disavowal of her mother and identification with white civilization does not result in citizenship but rather imperial subjection. This imperial subjection is evident in part in the instability of Mollie/Stiya’s name within the stories. While Burgess originally named her protagonist Mollie to indicate her conversion to white civilization, the change in the protagonist’s name to Stiya in the novelized version indicates the core racial difference that separates Stiya from full citizenship within white civilization. Nevertheless, Mollie/Stiya’s identification with her “school-mother” leads her to break with “tribal tyranny” and replicate the school-mother’s domestic civilizing mission, which eventually leads to her family’s willing adoption into the national “family.” Scenes of reading in the stories model for students a dual identification process. Mollie/Stiya uses reading as a means to willingly absorb of the “school-mother’s” lessons to “be a woman” at the same time as she also models reading as a means of internalizing guilt and violence toward an “Indian” self and Indian mother. I argue that this latter model of reading comprises Carlisle’s attempt to inflict what Andrea Smith calls a “soul wound.”⁴³

⁴³ Smith, “Soul Wound.” Smith discusses at length here and elsewhere the relationship between settler colonialism, boarding schools, and sexual violence. Her boarding school project is an attempt to gather narratives of abuse at schools in the U.S. that have gone unreported or have been intentionally covered up. Canada has documented abuses at its “reservation schools,” and Smith argues that the same needs to be done in the U.S. She situates this, furthermore, as an international human rights issues (hence, publishing in the *Amnesty International Magazine*).

Smith borrows the term “soul wound” from native psychologist Eduardo Duran to describe the destruction of native culture and language through boarding schools and other child removal policies along with their legacies of sexual violence. She writes that “embedded” within the wound of the destruction of native culture “is a pattern of sexual and physical abuse that began in the early years of the boarding school system” and continues into the present (2-3). Duran uses the term “soul wound” to indicate the way in which the “epistemic violence” of colonization has resulted in intergenerational trauma. He argues in particular that the use of sexual violence within the process of colonization be understood as a “collective raping process of the psyche/soul of the both the land and the people.”⁴⁴ In this way, Smith’s and Duran’s use of the term “soul wound” is quite similar to what Nell Irvin Painter calls “soul murder.”⁴⁵ Painter borrows the term “soul murder” from psychologist Leonard Shengold to examine slavery’s legacies of “violent and/or sexual ‘abuse’” and “deprivation” on both black and white Americans in the 1990s (7-8). Painter cautions against examining the “psychological costs” of slavery in order to produce arguments that slavery produced “psychologically crippled adults,” but she maintains the importance of investigating the historical “conjunction” of physical abuse and slavery “in the hope that its history can endow our times with an understanding of our past that will today be usable” (11, 6). Painter’s concept of “soul murder” powerfully describes the interrelationship between values cultivated under slavery and “American family values” (9). She points out, for example, that “submission and obedience” were key values for patriarchy, religion, and slavery. Examining the interrelationship of the values embedded in these institutions sheds light on imperialism’s dialectic of consent and control, or the relationship between violence and consent in Indian boarding school attempts to subject students to school

⁴⁴ Eduardo Duran, *Healing the Soul Wound: Counseling with American Indians and Other Native Peoples* (New York/London: Teachers College Press, 2006), 7-9, 21.

⁴⁵ Nell Irvin Painter, *Soul Murder and Slavery* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1995).

and state. Marianna Burgess's two stories model for Indian students ongoing gendered violence against the "self" through depictions of violence against the figure of the "Indian mother." However, these scenes of violence against the Indian mother also allegorize how both affective discipline and physical abuse were strategies used to subject students at Carlisle.

Relatively little is known about Marianna Burgess outside of her publications as manager of Carlisle's printing press, but the few accounts that do exist demonstrate her role as Carlisle "school-mother." From Pratt's brief mention of Burgess in his memoir, we learn that Burgess came to Carlisle from the Pawnee Indian Agency school run by the Society of Friends under Grant's Peace Policy.⁴⁶ Another mention of Burgess appears in Luther Standing Bear's narrative *My People the Sioux* (1928).⁴⁷ Standing Bear, who was an Oglala Lakota chief, writer, and performer, was among the first students to attend Carlisle in 1878, and he remembers his first class with Burgess where, speaking through an interpreter, she instructed students to take new names (137). Renaming students and recording these names in official school and government records was one strategy Indian boarding schools used both to interpellate students into new identities as "civilized Indians" and create a means of keeping track of property by creating a patriarchal lineage.⁴⁸ In Standing Bear's class, Burgess wrote a series of English names on the board and, without explaining what they meant, instructed students to point to the names they wanted. Those names were then sewn onto the back of students' shirts until they and their teachers had learned them. While Standing Bear says that he maintained affection for Burgess, he also writes realizing early on that boarding school was an attempt to turn students into "imitation white men" (141).

⁴⁶ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 232.

⁴⁷ Luther Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux* (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 1975).

⁴⁸ On naming, see Adams, 108-112.

While everyone at Carlisle knew that Burgess managed the printing press, confusion reigned over who edited the paper. The *Indian Helper* enigmatically stated that the editor of the paper was “The-man-on-the-bandstand.” Boarding school historian Jacqueline Fear-Segal argues that the Man-on-the-bandstand refers implicitly to Pratt, who could often be seen lounging on Carlisle’s bandstand. The bandstand provided an all-encompassing view of the school grounds, and this all-seeing perspective was amplified by the Man-on-the-bandstand’s claim that he knew everything that went on at the school.⁴⁹ The Man-on-the-bandstand kept order by reporting things he saw within the pages of the *Indian Helper*, but his true identity was never revealed. Responding to a reader’s request to reveal the Man-on-the-bandstand’s identity, a poem published in the *Indian Helper* explains he is, “Just any one, truly, who happens to see/ A thing worthy of note,” and cautions, “Have care what you tell, or else you may find/ The Man-on-the-stand is yourself.”⁵⁰ Fear-Segal argues that the Man-on-the-bandstand functioned as a figure of panoptical surveillance meant to inculcate self-discipline in Carlisle students, “an active component in Carlisle’s program, working to substitute *his* creed and code for values and beliefs the children learned at home” (207). In reality, the Man-on-the-bandstand was Burgess’s creation. Fear-Segal argues, however, that it is important not to see Burgess and the Man-on-the-bandstand as one and the same. The Man-on-the-bandstand was a male persona that allowed Burgess to harness the patriarchal authority of the institution to authorize her editorship of the *Indian Helper*. As Fear-Segal explains, the Man-on-the-bandstand was a “constructed persona, claiming more ubiquity and power than Marianna Burgess could ever hope for” (210). In the classroom, Burgess could play the role of “school mother” with domestic authority as superior “mother of the race” to civilize her students; when entering a more public role as newspaper

⁴⁹ On the significance of the bandstand, see Fear-Segal, 213-218.

⁵⁰ *Indian Helper* 5, no. 15 (Carlisle, PA), Nov. 29, 1889, 1.

editor, she could maintain a gendered division of labor by concealing herself behind the figure of the Man-on-the-bandstand and through him exercise greater power and control. By maintaining a gendered division of labor between “school mother” and “editor,” Burgess was able to draw boundaries between the benevolent role of the school mother and the more overt discipline of the Man-on-the-bandstand.

In the September 20, 1889, issue of the *Indian Helper* a new story appeared called “How an Indian Girl Might Tell Her Own Story if She had the Chance.” The story was authorized by the Man-on-the-bandstand as “fact.” Its paragraph-length preface states, “The facts as given below are known by the Man-on-the-band-stand to be true, and in substance, the experience is similar to that of many an Indian girl whom he knows about.”⁵¹ The story was published in serial installments over the course of thirteen issues of the *Indian Helper*, and the second installment of the story supports its veracity by claiming it to be “founded on Actual Observations of the Man-on-the-bandstand’s Chief Clerk.”⁵² The story’s veracity is also constructed in the *Indian Helper* by news reports that appear in the centerfold of each issue. Installments of “How an Indian Girl Might Tell Her Own Story” were printed on the first and fourth pages of the *Indian Helper* and news reports were sandwiched between installments on pages two and three. Burgess’s story innovates on the structure of Carlisle’s before-and-after portraits by presenting its protagonist, Mollie, at the end of her Carlisle education as an ideal “after” portrait of the “Carlisle girl” and narrating her interactions with her mother and father, who implicitly represent Mollie’s life “before” Carlisle. Mollie exists within a future temporality of Indian progress up the “hill of Right,” while “backwardness” is mapped onto the reservation. At the same time, what is elided

⁵¹ *Indian Helper* 5, no. 5 (Carlisle, PA), Sept. 20, 1889, 1.

⁵² *Indian Helper*, 5, no.6 (Carlisle, PA), Sept. 27, 1889, 1.

from the story—as well as from Carlisle’s before-and-after photographs—is the process of Mollie’s acculturation or “transformation” into “Carlisle girl.”

“How an Indian Girl Might Tell Her Story” and *Stiya* are pedagogical texts that modeled for students how they were to behave once they returned home from Carlisle, but the text also modeled for students how they were to behave as readers. Both stories attempted to “stamp” students with new identities as “Carlisle boys and girls” by modeling for student readers an absorptive mode of reading associated with both sentimental and biblical reading practices. After returning to the Pueblo, Mollie/Stiya goes to a store to spend the money she has earned through Carlisle’s “outing” system on domestic accouterments, such as new washtubs, a bed, table and chairs, and clothes irons. The storekeeper asks Mollie/Stiya if she has been away to school, and when Mollie/Stiya replies that she has, the storekeeper says: “Do you know I can tell a Carlisle girl whenever I see one?... Carlisle is stamped on their very faces. I see it in every movement. They hold their heads up when they speak English and are not so timid that they cannot say what they want.”⁵³ Mollie/Stiya’s transformation into a “Carlisle girl” is “read” in her tone and style of speech, outer appearance, and conduct. This fictional encounter is accompanied in the *Indian Helper* by a newsy update on a former Carlisle student, Maria, who had recently returned to Laguna, New Mexico. It is likely that Maria, like Mollie/Stiya, is Pueblo and, like the fictional character, had a mother who “objected” to her return to Carlisle even though the paper states that Maria “wished much to return.” The report continues: “Maria is one of Carlisle’s noble girls who carries the right stamped in her every act as she moves among friends and acquaintances” (3). Carlisle students were to display their internal transformation in their outer appearance and behavior in a way that would be immediately perceptible to sentimental readers familiar with how proper “boys and girls” were to appear. Like the printing press, which stamped these reports

⁵³ *Indian Helper*, 5, no. 9 (Carlisle, PA), Oct. 18, 1889, 1.

and stories onto the pages of the *Indian Helper* every week, Carlisle was attributed with the capacity to stamp students with the legible mark of transformation.

Student readers were expected to identify with Mollie/Stiya and absorb the story's moral lessons. This absorptive method of reading is described in the text as Mollie/Stiya's willing adoption into the Carlisle "family" as she forsakes the upbringing of her "Indian mother" for her white "school-mother's" domestic teaching. Both stories begin with Mollie/Stiya's return home and her "disgust" with her family. At first excited by a trip home after five years at Carlisle, Mollie/Stiya "confesses" that she is "shocked" by the sight of her parents when she disembarks from the train. She cries, "'My father? My mother?'...I had forgotten that home Indians had such grimy faces," and runs back into the arms of the "school-mother" that has accompanied her on the journey home.⁵⁴ The school-mother admonishes her to "be a woman!" and return to her mother (4). Mollie/Stiya is later repulsed by the food her mother prepares, her method of dishwashing, and the absence of a dining table. Accompanying her mother to wash clothes, she thinks the water is "too dirty to wash clothes in" and muses: "Is it much wonder that [the Indians] get fevers and diphtheria and other horrible diseases that visit unclean communities of people? It is any wonder they die off by the hundred...?"⁵⁵ Burgess authorized the reversal of the mother-child relationship in the text by representing Mollie/Stiya's mother according to nineteenth century images of the native woman as "squaw," whose inferior motherhood was made responsible for the destruction and death of the "tribe."

It is through the internalization of her white "school-mother's" teaching that Mollie/Stiya is able to resist the urge to run away from her family and finds the will to embark on a domestic civilizing mission. The first night she is home, Mollie/Stiya's tossing and turning is accompanied

⁵⁴ *Indian Helper* 5, no. 5 (Carlisle, PA), Sept. 20, 1889, 1.

⁵⁵ *Indian Helper*, 5, no. 6 (Carlisle, PA), Sept. 27, 1889, 1.

by a back-and-forth conversation she has with herself about whether or not her Carlisle education has done her any good. The voice that is loyal to Carlisle wins out as Mollie/Stiya declares to herself, “We *must* learn to feel disgust for these things. If we have no disgust for them we will never try to make them better.” She finally resolves: “I must make home more pleasant.”⁵⁶ Again, her “school-mother’s” command to “be a woman” steels Mollie/Stiya’s resolve to “civilize” her family by converting them to patriarchal domesticity. In another moment of worry, Mollie/Stiya demonstrates to readers how the *Indian Helper*, and by implication the novel *Stiya*, is to function as a proxy school-mother. Worried by her father’s temporary disappearance and her mother’s irritation that she has washed the dishes, Mollie/Stiya “loses herself” in reading old issues of the *Indian Helper* she has packed in her trunk. “I *thought* I would be glad to have you in my home,” she says to herself. “I really believed I kissed the papers, I was so pleased to have them at that lonely hour of the night. I sat down by the fire, and for an hour lost myself reading over what we had done at Carlisle in years gone by.”⁵⁷ Literary critic Janet Dean notes that the kisses Mollie/Stiya bestows on the papers echo her earlier embrace of the white school-mother and argues, “The newspapers become literal stand-ins for Stiya’s white teachers, reinforcing her affiliation with white culture and her disgust for Native American life.”⁵⁸ For Dean, this “scene of reading” models a sentimental reading practice that seeks to cultivate students’ identification with white lifeways at the same time that it forecloses the possibility of “selfhood.” Mollie/Stiya must continually “lose herself” in reading Carlisle literature or memories of her school-mother in order to “separate her from Native identity” (216). She never fully becomes a replication of her

⁵⁶ *Indian Helper*, 5, no.7 (Carlisle, PA), Oct. 4, 1889, 1.

⁵⁷ Embe [Marianna Burgess], *Stiya, a Carlisle Indian Girl at Home* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside, 1891), 108.

⁵⁸ Janet Dean, “Reading Lessons: Sentimental Literacy and Assimilation in *Stiya: A Carlisle Indian Girl at Home* and *Wynema: A Child of the Forest*,” *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 57, no. 3 (2011): 215-216.

school-mother but can only become, riffing on Luther Standing Bear, an *imitation* school-mother.

Less discussed by critics is a scene of reading that contradicts the willing, benevolent model of absorptive reading represented above. The model of consensual reading representing Mollie/Stiya's willing adoption of white patriarchal civilization is accompanied by another scene of reading that authorizes gendered violence against the Indian mother. At the climax of Burgess's story, Mollie/Stiya converts her parents to a patriarchal division of domestic authority and simultaneously gets them to refuse the "tyrannical" authority of the Pueblo governor. At the center of this conversion is domestic violence against the Indian mother. A few days after returning home, a village crier announces that the governor has ordered a dance, an event "too bad to even *think* about."⁵⁹ Mollie/Stiya refuses her mother's command to get into "Indian clothes" for the dance by appealing to her father and declaring, "Is this the way my liberty is to be taken from me? Having been educated out of and away from this superstition am I still to be a slave to it?" The mother replies, "The white folks have taught you to disobey," and "cri[es] and talk[s] at such a rate and with voice so monotonous and pitched so high" that neighbors gather round.⁶⁰ Mollie/Stiya's disobedience transforms into daughterly duty, however, when her father assumes patriarchal authority by taking her side. When the mother, following the governor's orders, attempts to force Mollie/Stiya into her cousin's dress, the father cries, "Woman!...what are you doing?," and leaps at the mother, giving her a "forcible shove" into the house. The scene continues: "He went in after her, shut the door, and I could hear him 'reading law' to her as the white folks would say, while she moaned and talked back in such a manner as it is only possible for an uncivilized Indian woman to do under proper conditions" (4). "Reading law" describes the

⁵⁹ *Indian Helper*, 5, no. 11 (Carlisle, PA), Nov. 1, 1889, 1.

⁶⁰ *Indian Helper*, 5, no. 12 (Carlisle, PA), Nov. 8, 1889, 1.

moment when Stiya's father finally takes on the role of patriarch in a way legible to "white folks." The mother's moaning and crying represents "uncivilized" utterances, an appeal to "uncivilized" law, and justifies the father's intervention to impose patriarchal order. After he names her "woman" and "reads law" to her, the Indian mother becomes obedient and sides with the father and Mollie/Stiya against the governor.

Several meanings of "reading law" are condensed in this scene. In her initial refusal to support Mollie/Stiya's disobedience, the mother simultaneously allies herself with the Pueblo governor against U.S. sovereignty and, by arguing with the father, assumes a position of authority that is anti-patriarchal. She is figured as *the* obstacle to Carlisle's state sanctioned civilizing mission, and her very defiance of patriarchal order appears to authorize the father's violence. Writing as the Man-on-the-bandstand's "chief clerk" in the *Indian Helper*, Burgess ends "How an Indian Girl Might Tell Her Story" by arguing it is a "cruel system that throws a young school girl, unprotected, back into a nest of vileness, to be governed by superstitions and outrageous customs of by-gone days" and hopes that "brighter days" may come when the education of the "Indian child" will eradicate native "home conditions" and bring all into the "United States tribe."⁶¹ Writing *Stiya* as "Embe," Burgess prefaces the novel by saying she hopes the novel shows that Indian education indicates how one day "home conditions will be so changed that there will be no more tribal tyranny, but all will be under the protection and enjoy the privileges of our good Government."⁶² Burgess articulates in these framing statements the relationship between patriarchal domesticity and U.S. governance, or patriarchal and state law, in both "protecting" womanhood and emancipating Indians from "tribal tyranny." Getting natives to adopt patriarchal domesticity, as discussed above, was believed to be a way for the state to

⁶¹ *Indian Helper*, 5, no. 18 (Carlisle, PA), December 20, 1889, 4.

⁶² *Stiya*, Preface.

legitimately claim land for white settlement through legislation like the Dawes Act. The familial triangulation of repressive state, “benevolent” educational institutions, and “Indian wards” represented here is implicitly authorized by a “law” of universal human development that inscribes racial inferiority through a civilizational grammar of domesticity.

In “How the Indian Girl Might Tell Her Story” and *Stiya*, student readers were presented with two images with which to identify. As “Carlisle boys and girls,” students were supposed to see themselves as Mollie/Stiya whose manner and dress “stamp” her with the Carlisle seal of approval. They were also, however, to see themselves in the image of “home slavery” Burgess constructed. It is this latter image that was designed with the express purpose of inflicting what Andrea Smith calls the “soul wound.” In *Stiya* in particular, students were expected to identify with ethnographic photographs of Pueblo included in the text but only insofar as they learned “disgust” and “hatred” for native life and, thus, disgust and hatred for any sense of “self” associated with it. The internalization of violence that Burgess’s stories attempted to instill in its student readers is represented as an ongoing, gendered process of “beating out” the Indian (mother) within. In response to the earlier storekeeper’s query as to whether Mollie/Stiya will ever again wear “Indian clothes,” Mollie/Stiya replies that she would never display her ingratitude to the U.S. government for her education. She says, “I mean to beat out the Indian ways if such a thing is possible and I believe it *is* possible.”⁶³ Mollie/Stiya’s resolve to “beat out the Indian ways” in herself is tested in a gruesome scene where she and her family are ordered by the governor to be whipped for disobeying his orders to attend the dance. In contrast to her mother’s “screaming,” Mollie/Stiya withstands the pain by remembering that as a “Carlisle school girl” she has “stood for the RIGHT.”⁶⁴ She declares aloud: “But I CAN endure it, yes, and

⁶³ *Indian Helper*, 5, no. 9 (Carlisle, PA), Oct. 18, 1889, 4.

⁶⁴ *Indian Helper*, 5, no. 14 (Carlisle, PA), Nov. 22, 1889, 1.

I WILL endure it. Strike me again; hit harder, you cruel man!” (1, 4). In this scene, Mollie/Stiya’s “beating out” of “Indian ways” had made it possible for her to endure the whipping without “screaming” like her mother. Burgess uses a scene of whipping that would be familiar to ex-abolitionist sentimental readers, except she makes slavery appear as a *racial* condition inherent to the Pueblo.

To reinforce how Carlisle’s civilizing mission is akin with the project “emancipating” slaves into freedom, Burgess transforms Mollie/Stiya’s father into a “black” wage laborer at the end of the story. After the whipping, Mollie/Stiya’s father resolves to adopt patriarchal domestic order by saving up to buy a house and moving the family to the nearby town of Seama, where a “white lady” schoolteacher has reformed the Indians who live there.⁶⁵ One day, the father surprises Mollie/Stiya and her mother by returning home from a coal mine where he had decided to contract his labor and is covered with black soot. At this moment, Mollie/Stiya’s former disgust with her father is replaced by “pride” in the father’s black face and hands: “Why, how black your face is, and hands!” Mollie/Stiya exclaims (109). After explaining his scheme to save money, Mollie/Stiya thinks, “And to think that it was *my father* talking such good common sense... I did not see his Indian dress now. Not even his coal-black face disturbed me” (112). A visit from some Carlisle teachers to the family’s new home confirms its proper domestic order, and Burgess’s story ends with Mollie/Stiya’s gratitude for her Carlisle domestic training: “And, indeed, I have never regretted having braved the first hard steps that led me out of the accursed home slavery and made me a free woman” (115). Mollie/Stiya’s father emerges from “home slavery” to wage labor; his “black face” and “Indian dress” of little consequence in the dutiful performance of “free labor” as family patriarch.

⁶⁵ *Stiya*, 98.

In the scenes of reading represented in “How an Indian Girl Might Tell Her Story” and *Stiya*, Burgess modeled two modes of reading that authorized violence against the figure of the Indian mother. Sentimental reading distances Mollie/Stiya from the domestic influence of her mother by absorbing her into memories of her Carlisle “school-mother,” while the father’s “reading law” imposes patriarchal law on the family by forcing the mother into a role of obedient submission. Both modes of reading attempt to negate the Indian mother’s influence and represent her capacity to reproduce racial “Indianness” in her children as the primary threat to establishing national domestic order. She appears as “mother of the race” leading her family to disease and death and therefore in need of domestic training by the superior white “school-mother.” Throughout Burgess’s stories, Mollie/Stiya demonstrates her willing adoption into the Carlisle and national “family” through her allegiance to her absent school-mother, however Mollie/Stiya’s experiences at Carlisle with the school-mother are elided from the text. Like the before-and-after portraits of Carlisle students, readers do not witness the process of assimilation Mollie/Stiya undergoes at Carlisle. They see the “before,” represented by the Indian mother, and the “after,” represented by the Mollie/Stiya, but they do not see the in-between. I’d like to end my reading of Burgess’s assimilation stories by demonstrating how this elision in the text opens it up to critical, unintended readings.

Read against the grain, Burgess’s assimilation stories are an allegory for the Carlisle education process. The violent tactics used to subject the Indian mother to patriarchal authority are similar to strategies of subjection employed by Carlisle. Furthermore, Mollie/Stiya’s resistance toward her Indian mother echo strategies of resistance used by boarding school students against their white school-mothers. Along with dormitories and classrooms, Carlisle, like other Indian boarding schools, had a jail for resistant students and many Indian schools

routinely resorted to whipping to maintain order.⁶⁶ One of the most common reasons for student punishment was “speaking Indian.” In 1890, the Indian Office declared that pupils who spoke native languages instead of English must be “properly rebuked or punished for persistent violation of this rule.”⁶⁷ White women schoolteachers were often the ones in the position to enforce this rule. Adams reports an instance of teacher Minnie Braithwaite Jenkins, who “laid thirty-five kindergartners—‘like little sardines’—across tables, whereupon she spanked them for speaking Mohave” (141). He also reports of a Navajo woman who remembered a similar experience of being lined up and whipped by her boarding school matron for picking apples. The woman recalls, “[The matron] told us to pull down our blankets and lie on our stomachs. She had a wide strap in her hand. She began whipping us one by one, and we screamed with agony” (122). Andrea Smith argues that the abuses perpetuated at Indian boarding schools, including sexual abuse, have not begun to be fully investigated in the U.S.⁶⁸ While Carlisle literature makes white women “school-mothers” appear as objects of desire to students, numerous accounts of whipping and other forms of physical and psychological punishment suggest that this desirability is a fiction.

I interpret Burgess’s use of pseudonyms as a means of both shoring up the patriarchal authority she lacked as a white woman as well as a means of creating the white woman schoolteacher’s and school’s innocence in the context of everyday boarding school violence. As Amy Kaplan demonstrates, the nineteenth century domestic civilizing mission was as much about regulating the “foreign” in self and home as it was about extending the boundaries of “women’s sphere” beyond the narrow limits of the home. By constructing Carlisle’s and her own benevolence in her assimilation stories, Burgess draws a boundary between the apparently

⁶⁶ Adams, 124-125.

⁶⁷ Adams, 140.

⁶⁸ See Smith, “Soul Wound,” and “Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide.”

innocent civilizing mission of the Indian boarding school and the violence of frontier settlement. However, laboring as a white woman in the Indian service was not a role without contradictions. David Wallace Adams writes that most women employed by the Indian service to teach in boarding schools were single women in their late twenties from western states.⁶⁹ Many of these women worked as schoolteachers for the cause of racial “uplift,” but many others decided to work in boarding schools to make money, escape patriarchal restrictions on their labor, or to pursue adventures. Working within patriarchal institutional bureaucracies, however, put white women in positions that were often “completely discouraging.”⁷⁰ Not only was the labor incredibly taxing, but schoolteachers frequently faced a tyrannical administrative structure and were often left vulnerable to unwanted sexual advances by Indian service employees. The sexual vulnerability that white women experienced at Indian boarding schools was shared by native students. Phoenix Indian School teacher Estelle Aubrey Brown recalls, for instance, physically rebuffing the sexual advances of an “Inspector X,” who revealed to her that one of the reasons he took the appointment at the school was to “learn at first hand the sexual attractions of Indian girls.” She relates, “He hoped to find some girls at our schools who had learned to do something besides knit.”⁷¹ One wonders whether or not the fantasy of assimilation Burgess constructs in her stories might not also be a way to imagine herself in a benevolent, mothering role that she could not in reality inhabit.

The boundaries Burgess tried so carefully to create between Carlisle and Pueblo, school-mother and Indian mother, domestic order and disorder, collapse under closer scrutiny. Despite Burgess’s attempt to make the white school-mother into an innocent figure of student desire, the

⁶⁹ Adams, 82-94.

⁷⁰ Patricia A. Carter, “‘Completely Discouraged’: Women Teachers’ Resistance in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, 1900-1910,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 15, no. 3 (1995): 53-86.

⁷¹ Adams, 92.

elision of Mollie/Stiya's boarding school experience creates a gap that student readers may have filled with their own memories of the boarding school. In fact, Burgess's assimilation stories are full of oblique references to the repressive violence of boarding school education. Read against the grain, the stories appear to be a boarding school narrative in reverse. Native writers, including Zitkala-Ša, Francis LaFlesche, and Luther Standing Bear, wrote boarding school narratives that feature similar tropes of the assimilation process: the long train ride away from home; the shock of unfamiliar dress, food, and customs; outbreaks of illnesses, such as tuberculosis, that often resulted in death; and the disillusionment with educational programs that did not prepare them adequately for vocations, or, alternately, prepared them for jobs that were unavailable to them. Students did not passively absorb boarding school education. They ran away, set fire to buildings, attacked teachers, surreptitiously spoke native languages, and used what they learned in school for their own purposes.⁷² Burgess's assimilation stories held up a partial mirror to its student readers that allowed them to see their position within the boarding school script in a much more complex way than the stories represent. We must ask at whose hands students would have remembered the violence depicted in Burgess's assimilation stories. Who would they remember brandishing a switch? How would they remember what Pratt called the "feel" and "touch" of citizenship that Carlisle attempted to instill? Read as a boarding school narrative in reverse, Burgess's assimilation stories reveal the dialectic of consent and control that the patriarchal civilizing mission entails. They may ultimately reveal more about Burgess's desires as she navigated the contradictions of a white woman "school-mother" in a patriarchal institution than the "success" of Carlisle.

⁷² For accounts of student resistance, see Adams, 209-238.

Indian Mother: Rewriting the Figure of the Mother

The most famous response to *Stiya: A Carlisle Girl at Home* comes from Pueblo writer Leslie Marmon Silko's account of the book in her essay "Books: Notes on Mixtec and Maya Screenfolds, Picture Books of Preconquest Mexico."⁷³ She prefaces her essay by explaining how books have played a part in the role of conquest by representing to colonizers images of Indians that "soothe the collective conscience of white Americans." "*Books were and still are weapons in the ongoing struggle for the Americas,*" she writes. "*The subtext of such stereotypical portrayals [of Indians as 'drunks' and 'child abusers'] is: Take the children, take the land; these Indians are in no condition to have such precious possessions*" (155). Silko situates the production and distribution of *Stiya* within a longer history of the elimination of native libraries by European colonizers and the imposition of U.S. laws of land and sovereignty in books. Both Silko's Grandma A'mooh and Aunt Susie attended Carlisle Indian Industrial School, and she writes that *Stiya* was the cause of the "only big quarrel" between mother and daughter-in-law (161). In Silko's telling of the story, *Stiya* was published and distributed by the U.S. War Department in 1881 as a piece of propaganda to "inoculate [Carlisle Indian School graduates] against their 'uncivilized' families and communities" (163). As avid readers who Silko credits with instilling the importance of reading in her family, Grandma A'mooh and Aunt Susie argued over whether *Stiya* should be preserved or destroyed. Grandma A'mooh "told Aunt Susie the only place for this book was in the fire, and she lifted the lid on her cookstove to drop in the book," but Aunt Susie "believed the *Stiya* book was important evidence of the lies and the racism and bad faith of the U.S. government with the Pueblo people." *Stiya* enters into Silko's fictional cosmology as Grandma A'mooh maintains the "book's lies should be burned just as witchcraft

⁷³ Leslie Marmon Silko, "Books: Notes on Mixtec and Maya Screenfolds, Picture Books of Preconquest Mexico," in *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997): 155-165.

paraphernalia is destroyed” (164).⁷⁴ The quarrel ends when Aunt Susie takes advantage of her position as daughter-in-law and asks Grandma A'mooh to give her her copy of the book (165). Silko's account of *Stiya* suggests how other former Carlisle students may have received the book and demonstrates how “books have been the focus of a struggle for the control of the Americas from the start” (165).

Indian boarding school students took part in this struggle by writing narratives that turned a critical eye on the U.S. system of boarding school education. Native studies scholar Robert Warrior argues that boarding school narratives are “contrapuntal” records of the simultaneous processes of imperialism and resistance. They record the “generationally cumulative” effects of boarding school trauma at the same time that they demonstrate how students seized writing in ways that made the boarding school education their own.⁷⁵ Yankton Sioux writer Zitkala-Ša's trio of stories about Indian boarding school education, “Impressions of an Indian Childhood,” “The School Days of an Indian Girl,” and “An Indian Teacher Among Indians,” have increasingly received critical attention for their pointed critiques of the boarding school system. These stories, which were published in three editions of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1900 and later collected as part of Zitkala-Ša's *American Indian Stories* (1921), are loosely autobiographical accounts of the author's reservation childhood, boarding school education, and work as a teacher for Carlisle. I argue that the stories intervene in a settler colonial grammar of family, domesticity, and governance that sought to make native peoples legible to the state by imposing patriarchal civilizational norms through laws and policies as well as through state-backed Indian education.

⁷⁴ In *Ceremony* and *Storyteller*, Silko develops the idea of the “witchery.” See Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (New York: Penguin, 1986); and Leslie Marmon Silko, *Storyteller* (New York: Arcade, 1981).

⁷⁵ Robert Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 119-120, 125. Despite Warrior's reading of boarding school narratives as “contrapuntal,” he describes Zitkala-Ša's writing as “assimilationist,” an evaluation that I attempt to complicate in my reading of her boarding school stories.

While several critics have argued for the important ways in which Zitkala-Ša's boarding school stories call into question Indian boarding schools' secular civilizing mission, Zitkala-Ša's stories are often read as autobiographical narratives disclosing the importance of a maternal education for retaining native culture and identity in the face of U.S. colonization.⁷⁶ Although the stories valorize the native protagonist's childhood education from her mother, this valorization is complicated by the ambivalent relationship the protagonist has with her mother at the conclusion of the narratives. I argue, in fact, that Zitkala-Ša's boarding school stories intervene in a reading practice that would seek to make the protagonist representative of "civilized," "native," or even "bicultural" identities. Instead of arguing that Zitkala-Ša discloses a "true" identity to her white *Atlantic Monthly* audience, I follow critics who have attended to Zitkala-Ša's deployment of language in order to demonstrate how her stories disidentify with commonplace images of savage *and* civilized "Indians."⁷⁷ Zitkala-Ša's representation of the figure of the Indian mother takes aim at the dual-identification process of genocidal reading by demonstrating how one of

⁷⁶ See, for example, Dorothea M. Susag, "Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin): A Power(full) Literary Voice," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 5, no. 4 (1993); Jane P. Hafen, Introduction to *Dreams and Thunder: Stories, Poems, and The Sun Dance Opera*, ed. Jane P. Hafen (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); Catherine Kunce, "Fire of Eden: Zitkala-Sa's Bitter Apple," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 18, no. 1 (2006); Margaret R. Reynolds, "Mother Times Two: A Double Take on a Gynocentric Justice Song," *Cultural Sites of Critical Insight*, ed. Christa Davis Acampora (Albany: State University of New York, 2007). Even literary critic Ruth Spack's examination of "bicultural identity" in Zitkala-Ša's boarding school narratives tends toward focusing on the way in which the stories perform the work of constructing a knowable native identity. While focusing on Zitkala-Ša's navigation of English in the boarding school stories, the claim Spack makes about bicultural identity is taken to an extreme by literary critic Ron Carpenter, who, conflating the stories' protagonist with Zitkala-Ša, claims that in the narratives, "Zitkala-Sa's Yankton ancestors are not as significant as the bicultural context in which she lives" (6). Carpenter evacuates Zitkala-Ša's boarding school stories of their critique of settler colonialism by arguing that in them Zitkala-Ša "integrat[ed] her bicultural resources in a text that stitches red and white together." See Ruth Spack, "Re-Visioning Sioux Women: Zitkala-Sa's Revolutionary American Indian Stories," *Legacy* 14, no. 1 (1997); and Ron Carpenter, "Zitkala-Sa and Bicultural Subjectivity," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 16, no. 3 (2004).

⁷⁷ These critics include, Susan Bernardin, "The Lessons of a Sentimental Education: Zitkala-Sa's Autobiographical Narratives," *Western American Literature* 32, no. 3 (1997); Barbara Chiarello, "Deflected Missives: Zitkala-Sa's Resistance and Its (Un)Containment," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 2, no. 17 (2005); Cari Carpenter, "Detecting Indianness: Gertrude Bonnin's Investigation of Native American Identity," *Wicazo Sa Review*, 20, no. 1 (2005); Ryan Burt, "'Death Beneath this Semblance of Civilization': Reading Zitkala-Sa and the Imperial Imagination of the Romantic Revival," *Arizona Quarterly* 66.2 (2010); Deborah L. Madsen, "The Making of (Native) Americans: Suturing and Citizenship in the Scene of Education," *Parallax* 17, no. 3; and Rifkin, "Romancing Kinship."

the main “products” of Indian boarding schools was not assimilated Indians but *representations* of assimilation that manufactured images of the post-emancipation settler nation as guarantor of “freedom.” Indeed, Zitkala-Ša’s stories suggest that the U.S. *needed* Indian boarding schools in order to legitimate the ongoing project of colonization. The stories demonstrate how native students, as the raw material of the boarding school’s secular civilizing mission, were trained to mirror U.S. benevolence back to itself in the context of U.S. imperialism. Zitkala-Ša performs “before” and “after” images of native assimilation produced at Indian boarding schools in order to represent the violent interpellative process of Indian education. In the process, she also challenges patriarchal ideologies of motherhood that represented white and native mothers as “mothers of the race” with the capacity to transmit civilization to children. Instead of representing maternal kinship as a relationship of identification, Zitkala-Ša reimagines it as a process of remembering a shared history of settler colonial practices of “writing” the native female body.⁷⁸

During her life, Zitkala-Ša played a variety of what often appeared to be contradictory roles. She spent time as concert violinist, writer of stories and legends, Indian activist, and teacher. Originally born Gertrude Simmons in 1876 on South Dakota’s Yankton reservation, Zitkala-Ša kept the surname “Simmons,” the name of her mother’s ex-husband, until a falling out with her brother led her to take the name Zitkala-Ša, or “Red Bird.” Zitkala-Ša’s life was punctuated by U.S. wars against native peoples. The Battle of Little Bighorn took place the year of her birth while the massacre at Wounded Knee happened while she was away at boarding

⁷⁸ My argument here departs from literary critic Jessica Enoch, who approaches Zitkala-Ša’s boarding school narratives as “resisting the script” of Carlisle’s educational program. Unlike Enoch, I emphasize how Carlisle’s educational program relied on a dual-identification process that sought to cultivate native students’ identity with images of *both* native “savagery” and “civilization.” I am also not convinced that Zitkala-Ša’s boarding school stories “resisted” Carlisle’s educational program through “multilingualism.” See my comments on Spack’s reading of “bicultural subjectivity” in the narratives in footnote 76. Jessica Enoch, “Resisting Scripts: Zitkala-Sa and the Carlisle Indian School,” *Refiguring Rhetorical Education: Women Teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/a Students, 1865-1911* by Jessica Enoch (Southern Illinois University Press, 2008).

school. While she wrote scathing critiques of the Indian boarding school system in her *Atlantic Monthly* stories, Zitkala-Ša excelled as a student at White's Manual Labor Institute, an Indian boarding school run by Quaker missionaries in Indiana, and even worked briefly as teacher for Richard Henry Pratt at the Carlisle Institute. When she was a student at Earlham College, Zitkala-Ša won an award for representing the school in a state oratorical debate—an event re-told in “The School Days of an Indian Girl.” Zitkala-Ša left Carlisle in 1899 to enroll in the Boston Conservatory of Music and was welcomed among Boston artists and literati. After marrying Raymond T. Bonnin (also Yankton Sioux) in 1902, she and Bonnin moved to Utah, where Zitkala-Ša helped develop a reservation community center, collaborated on an opera based on the Sun Dance, and worked alternately for the Society of American Indians and National Council of American Indians.

At the time her work began to be published in the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's*, two of the premier publications of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, eastern society was fascinated by the public figure of Zitkala-Ša. An April 1900 issue of *Harper's* enthused over her in a column called “Persons Who Interest Us”:

A young Indian girl, who is attracting much attention in Eastern cities on account of her beauty and many talents, is Zitkala-Sa, . . . Zitkala-Sa is of the Sioux tribe of Dakota and until her ninth year was a veritable little savage, running wild over the prairie and speaking no language but her own. . . . She was also published lately in a series of articles in a leading magazine. . . which display a rare command of English and much artistic feeling.⁷⁹

Harper's draws on contrastive images of uncivilized primitive (“veritable little savage. . . speaking no language but her own”) and civilized savage (“rare command of English and artistic feeling”) to represent Zitkala-Ša as the ideal “Indian girl.” Literary critic Ruth Spack demonstrates how portraits of Zitkala-Ša taken by well-known photographers such as Fred

⁷⁹ Quoted in Dexter Fisher, foreword to *American Indian Stories* (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), vii.

Holland Day, Gertrude Käsebier, and Joseph T. Keiley, which echo conventions of Carlisle's "before" and "after" photographs of Indian assimilation, represented Zitkala-Ša alternately in native and Victorian dress and appeared to confirm her evolution from primitive savagery to civilized eloquence. Zitkala-Ša's written work and performance, however, suggest that she deployed these images to suit her own purposes.⁸⁰ Indeed, some of the best criticism on Zitkala-Ša's boarding school stories has demonstrated the way in which Zitkala-Ša deployed popular generic conventions of sentimentalism and romance to play to her white audience's expectations that her narratives disclose an authentic "Indian" identity. Literary critic Ryan Burt, for example, situates Zitkala-Ša's *Atlantic Monthly* fiction in the context of the journal's publication of romantic revival literature, which he argues revved up its audience's "zeal for imperialism" in the Caribbean and Pacific theaters during the 1898 Spanish-American War by making imperialism appear as a means to revitalize an over-civilized national culture. He argues that Zitkala-Ša disrupted this imperial zealotry by "playing Indian," or writing to the *Atlantic* audience's taste for romantic revival tropes like the "tribal storyteller" and "primitive child," in order to "undercut" a "paternalist imperial" culture. Burt argues that in reversing the civilizational narrative of boarding school education, Zitkala-Ša's stories create a "reverse bildungsroman" that drew on her audience's predilection for anti-modernist representations of a "primitive," "strenuous life" in order to question whether or not imperial quests would result in national revitalization or "death." Romantic revival literature participated in what native studies scholar Philip Deloria calls the "inversion" of representations of "Indians" at the turn of the twentieth century. For much of the nineteenth century, negative representations of "primitive"

⁸⁰ On photography of Zitkala-Ša see Ruth Spack, "Zitkala-Ša, the *Song of Hiawatha*, and the Carlisle Indian School Band: A Captivity Tale," *Legacy* 25, no. 2 (2008): 211-224. Spack discusses how Zitkala-Ša's performance in a Carlisle production of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* (1855) countered attempts to "capture" her after she launched critiques of the school in her Indian boarding school stories.

Indians “exterior” to white civilization had contrasted with positive images of Indian assimilation. Deloria argues, however, that by the end of the nineteenth century primitive Indianness began to appear as a salve to modern industrialization by “represent[ing] authentic reality in the face of urban disorder and alienating mass society,” while “Indians who had assimilated into modern society were now negative Others [that] could only reflect the savagery and degradation of that world back into American eyes.”⁸¹

Famous reformer and public persona Helen Keller, who Zitkala-Ša met during her time in Boston, framed Zitkala-Ša’s *American Indian Stories* through this romantic lens. Thanking Zitkala-Ša for the stories, she writes in a letter prefacing the book, “Like all folk tales they mirror the child life of the world. There is a note in them of wild, strange music.”⁸² Despite Keller’s framing of *American Indian Stories*, Zitkala-Ša in her boarding school narratives thwarts reader attempts to discover in her protagonist an essential “primitive” Indian identity at the same time that she plays with her white audience’s fascination with a vital “primitive instinct” necessary for national revitalization. The first section of Zitkala-Ša’s “Impressions of an Indian Childhood” is titled, significantly, “My Mother.” Throughout this first story, Zitkala-Ša plays with representations of the “mother of the race” not only to reverse conventional images of Indian motherhood but also to challenge her audience’s ability to identify a “real” Indian essence with the protagonist. Zitkala-Ša’s first representation of her protagonist’s mother tropes on commonplace descriptions of the wailing or moaning Indian woman, such as Burgess’s representation of the “Indian mother” in *Stiya*. In first-person narration, the protagonist describes

⁸¹ Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 73-74. Deloria argues that the new romantic literature of the late nineteenth century put readers in touch with a “primitive” instinct believed to be fundamental to national progress and often justified imperial activity as necessary for national revitalization. For more on the significance of the “primitive” to American identity in the late nineteenth century, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign People at Home and Abroad, 1876-1971* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).

⁸² Zitkala-Ša, *American Indian Stories* (New York: Dover, 2009), vi.

joining her mother at the river, noting that her mother was often “sad and silent” with “full arched lips...compressed into hard and bitter lines” and “shadows” beneath her “black eyes.”⁸³ The daughter notices the mother’s tears and asks why she has been crying, but instead of divulging the reason, the mother says the daughter “must never talk about my tears,” and requests, “Now let me see how fast you can run today.” Looking back from her present vantage point on this past moment, the narrator recalls: “...I was as free as the wind that blew my hair, and no less spirited than a bounding deer. These were my mother’s pride,—my wild freedom and overflowing spirits. She taught me no fear save that of intruding myself on others” (1). Although the mother is crying and “silent” in this first scene, she does not fully conform to the image of the Indian mother who reproduces the condition and disposition of “slavery” in her children. Instead, the “mother’s pride” is the daughter’s “wild freedom and overflowing spirits.” The daughter is represented as inheriting “freedom” from her mother; she does not require “emancipating” from “tribal tyranny.”

As the narrative continues, the daughter in fact undergoes a maternal education that would appear admirable to a late nineteenth century audience. From her mother’s “lessons in beading,” the daughter is trained in hard work, individuality, and artistic judgment. Along with learning the “set forms” for beadwork, the daughter is allowed to try out “original designs.” The narrator recounts: “The quietness of her [the mother’s] oversight made me feel strongly responsible and dependent upon my own judgment. She treated me as a dignified little individual as long as I was on my good behavior” (7). Zitkala-Ša sets up the boarding school experience yet to come by representing the very qualities this education was to instill as already a part of the “Indian child’s” maternal education. While this representation of maternal education might play to the *Atlantic* audience’s belief that a progressive education would instill individualism, Zitkala-

⁸³ Zitkala-Ša, 1.

Ša represents the protagonist's disidentification with her mother. The narrator recalls that after lessons she and her friends "delighted in impersonating our own mothers," but this mimicry is not to be confused with unconscious identification. As the boarding school narratives continue, the daughter consistently disobeys or goes against her mother's wishes. The point of the daughter's childhood education is in large part that she has learned how to maintain control of her own capacity to imitate. While her childhood leaves her with several important lessons and "impressions," it does not *impress* her in the way that Burgess imagined texts could stamp students as "Carlisle boys and girls." Several critics have read Zitkala-Ša's representation of maternal education as a valorization of native education and, in particular, maternal education in native societies.⁸⁴ However, the protagonist's consistent disidentification both with her maternal education *and* the education she later receives at the boarding school intervene in patriarchal ideologies of the "mother of the race" as "racial conservators."

Throughout the boarding school narratives, the daughter disidentifies with her mother and white schoolteachers as she attempts to come to terms with a growing "ambition for Letters" (16). The protagonist's mother appears to offer a romantic anti-modernist critique of settler colonialism, explaining how it has produced imitation manhood among the Dakota. The mother's critique, however, is not to be confused with Zitkala-Ša's own critique in the stories. Early on in "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," we find that the mother's tears are caused by a history of land dispossession and death at the hands of the encroaching "palefaces." She describes the white colonists in terms of imitation manhood. Responding to the daughter's question, "Who is this bad paleface?," the mother says, "My little daughter, he is a sham,—a sickly sham! The bronzed Dakota is the only real man" (2). The mother's response here confirms an anti-modern critique of white civilization by positing a "primitive masculinity" in the Dakota man. Despite

⁸⁴ See footnote 76.

her hatred of the “palefaces” and her belief that his education proffers “white man’s lies,” she concedes to her daughter’s naïve request for a missionary education, seeing it as “tardy justice” for a “large debt of stolen lands.” She continues: “[My daughter] will need an education when she is grown, for then there will be fewer real Dakotas, and many more palefaces” (17). The mother’s decision to finally let her daughter go east to boarding school echoes arguments made by Indian reformers that education might save Indian children from inevitable extermination at the hands of white settlers. Her vacillation between rage and compliance toward white settlers, however, makes her into a figure of vulnerability in the stories. In “An Indian Teacher Among Indians,” the daughter finally returns to her mother’s home, which consists of both a wigwam and a log cabin. The narrator reflects: “My mother had never gone to school, and though she meant always to give up her own customs for such of the white man’s as pleased her, she made only compromises” (39). While the mother tries to exercise control over which of the “white man’s” ways she will accept and reject, the daughter sees her making only “compromises.” The mother is not in control of *how* she imitates or performs white customs.

The importance of the ability to control images of the “Indian” emerges in “The School Days of an Indian Girl” and “An Indian Teacher Among Indians.” Tempted by missionary stories of “big red apples” at their eastern boarding school, the daughter pleads with her mother and brother Dawée, who has already been away to boarding school, to let her go with them (15). Almost immediately after going with the missionaries, the daughter experiences a physical and psychological uprooting as the boarding school attempts to domesticate her. On the “iron horse,” the “fair women, with tottering babies on each arm, . . . scrutinized the children of absent mothers,” and upon reaching the “large whitewashed room” of the school, the protagonist is tossed in the air by a “rosy-cheeked paleface woman” (19-20). The narrator recalls, “My mother

never made a plaything out of her wee daughter. Remembering this I began to cry aloud” (20).

She cries for her mother and brother but “the ears of the paleface could not hear me” (21).

The “scrutinizing” gaze of the white women the protagonist encounters makes her into a motherless child, an orphan. Instead of seeing white women as surrogate mothers, however, the young protagonist finds comfort in an older girl, who “talked to me in my mother tongue and seemed to soothe me” (21). Reversing images circulated by institutions like Carlisle and Indian reformers, the protagonist represents education as a form of “capture” and violation that relies on attempting to instill in native children fear and hatred of a primitive “Indian” identity. The protagonist explains that boarding school made her as “frightened and bewildered as the captured young of a wild creature” (18).

In representing the protagonist’s temptation by the missionaries’ promise of “big red apples,” Zitkala-Ša retells the Judeo-Christian story in Genesis of “original sin” when Eve, the ur-mother of humankind, eats fruit from the forbidden tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden. Rather than seeing this imagery to primarily represent the protagonist’s earlier life with her mother as an edenic existence untouched by settler colonialism, I interpret Zitkala-Ša’s retelling of this story as an intervention in interpellative methods of Indian boarding school education.⁸⁵ Carlisle’s pedagogy of genocidal reading attempted to get native students to identify as *both* savage and civilized “Indians” as a form of self-discipline that would compel native students to feel guilt and hatred toward a racial Indianness within. The female schoolteachers in Zitkala-Ša’s boarding school narratives use linguistic and physical violence to attempt to eliminate what they perceive to be the “Indian” within native students and replace it with English language, white domestic training, and Christian “superstition.” Zitkala-Ša’s citation of Genesis represents how the boarding school’s interpellative method of education involved sexual violence as a form of

⁸⁵ See Kuncze, “Fire of Eden.”

racial self-discipline. The protagonist's initial temptation to attend boarding school to taste the red apples quickly turns to anguish. In the "Snow Episode," students are forbidden from falling into the snow to "see our own impressions," and their disobedience results in a severe beating at the hands of a white schoolteacher (23). The children, who cannot yet speak or understand English, are told by a playmate to say "No" in response to any question asked by the angry teacher. Unable to understand when the teacher asks, "Are you going to obey my word next time?," one student is "whipped" with a shoe until "the poor frightened girl shrieked at the top of her voice" (24). In the "White Man's Devil," the protagonist has begun to learn English and is taught by a "paleface woman" the "white man's legend" of a devil that would torture disobedient schoolchildren (25-26). Terrified, the young girl has a nightmare that the devil is chasing her around her mother's house. Her mother is able to save her, however, because she is unafraid of the devil and it does not speak the mother's language. In revenge, the girl scratches out the devil's eyes in the teachers' biblical storybook (26-27). The boarding school stories do not represent the protagonist's willing desire for white civilization but instead demonstrates how the boarding school's attempts at interpellation involved repressive violence.

Despite the protagonist's resistance to missionary education, the boarding school succeeds in creating a spiritual distance between her and her mother. Instead of resulting in the assimilation of the young girl, however, this education results in the protagonist recognizing a type of kinship with her mother that does not rely on white ideologies of maternal reproduction. One of the daughter's first experiences at the school is a haircutting, a strategy of "natal alienation" that is represented as a violation of her "spirit." Dragged to a chair while "kicking and scratching wildly," the narrator remembers the event:

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blade of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit.

Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities.... And now my hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder. (23)

The haircutting is a deep violation of the daughter's "spirit," a "soul wound" meant to separate her irretrievably from "Indian" identity. David Wallace Adams writes that haircutting was commonly one of the first strategies by boarding schools to begin transforming native students into proper "boys" and "girls."⁸⁶ The long hair of the boys violated Victorian gender norms, while the long hair of girls was thought to be "dirty" and unhygienic. However, many native students associated haircutting with mourning. Pratt recalls how one Carlisle student made use of this association to give voice to the violation of forced haircutting. During one of the first nights that the Carlisle School was in operation, a male student that had earlier refused to have his hair cut by female teachers walked into the center of the school, sheared his own hair, and began wailing. Students in surrounding dormitories joined the wail until silenced by Mrs. Pratt and other schoolteachers worried that the students would rouse the suspicion of local townspeople.⁸⁷

The haircutting scene in "The School Days of an Indian Girl" echoes the profound mourning of Carlisle students at their forced subjection to this violent, gendered practice. In this scene, the protagonist recognizes her domestic captivity as "only one of many little animals driven by a herder" (23). Unlike the screams and moans of the Indian mother in Burgess's assimilation stories, which were meant to indicate the mother's inferiority, moaning/mourning gains meaning in Zitkala-Ša's boarding school narratives as record of colonial land dispossession and psychological domination. Instead of disclosing an authentic native identity or education in her boarding school stories, Zitkala-Ša's representation of moaning/mourning in the boarding school stories attests to what literary critic Deborah L. Madsen, following poststructuralist

⁸⁶ On haircutting, see Adams, 100-103

⁸⁷ See Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 232.

philosopher Jacques Derrida, calls a “wound” that creates “intertextuality” at the site of education by “refusing the hermeneutic suturing that would normalize the silenced, dehumanized Native body.”⁸⁸ Instead of disclosing a native identity, the moaning/mourning emanates from the boarding school’s attempt to inflict a “soul wound” and calls below the register of the “ears of the paleface.” In a section titled “Iron Routine,” Zitkala-Ša uses the metaphor of industrial machinery to describe the boarding school’s attempt to manufacture docile students. The “iron routine” of the school’s “civilizing machine” combined with the protagonist’s upbringing to “suffer in silence” rather than protest results in the protagonist’s acquiescence to schooling (27). She links the death of one of her friends from illness and neglect to the religious “superstition” inculcated by white woman schoolteachers. The “hard-working, well-meaning, ignorant woman” teaching religion is represented as proffering captivity and death in “chains which tightly bound my individuality like a mummy for burial.” Recalling this scene, the narrator muses on “Indian nature.” Instead of defining it as “primitive” essence passed socially and biologically from mother to daughter, she returns to the sound of moaning.

The moaning/mourning does not signify the “uncivilized” utterance of “Indian” nature but rather “melancholy” memory:

The melancholy of those black days has left so long a shadow that it darkens the path of years that have since gone by. These sad memories rise above those of smoothly grinding school days. Perhaps my Indian nature is the moaning wind which stirs them now for their present record. But, however tempestuous this is within me, it comes out as the low voice of a curiously colored seashell, which is only for those ears that are bent with compassion to hear it. (28)

The narrator defines “Indian nature” not as racial essence but as a “moaning wind” that “stirs” memories of the “smoothly grinding school days.” The protagonist’s moaning is the memory of how the school attempted to *produce* in order to eliminate “Indian nature” in native students.

⁸⁸ Madsen, 42.

Paradoxically, this moaning allows the memories to be “recorded” within the stories but remains hearable only to those “with compassion to hear it.” The moaning is outside of transcription; it cannot be captured in Dakota or English languages. It is, furthermore, not a sound limited to human characters. On the train ride to the eastern boarding school, the protagonist sees telegraph poles pass by her window. She remembers similar telegraph poles “planted by white men” by her mother’s house and recalls, “Often I had stopped, on my way down the road, to hold my ear against the pole, and, hearing its low moaning, I used to wonder what the paleface had done to hurt it” (20). The “low moaning” of the telegraph pole is heard on a register below or outside of its official transmissions.

The telegraph poles extending over western frontier lands transmitted news of frontier battles as well as the transportation of native children to boarding schools. Pratt recalls the “dense crowd of people” gathering at rail stations as he took native prisoners east to Fort Marion.⁸⁹ As discussed earlier, his quarrel with news accounts of the prisoners, and later Carlisle’s students, was that they didn’t represent their subjects as “civilized Indians.” A stock figure in news accounts was the “wailing” Indian woman. In *Battlefield and Classroom*, Pratt describes the “loud wailing of the Indian women” as he departed east with the prisoners.⁹⁰ The local Carlisle, Pennsylvania, newspaper, the *Valley Sentinel*, describes how white crowds assembled to witness the first students arrive at Carlisle. The paper records the “uncivilized” dress of the students, and reports that the night prior to leaving for the school, “about 3000 savages...kept up a constant howling throughout the night.”⁹¹ In the literature produced out of frontier colonization, the wailing Indian woman justified the process of bringing patriarchal domestic order to the “frontier.” By severing the link between moaning and the figure of the

⁸⁹ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 111-112.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁹¹ Quoted in Malmshemer, 57.

Indian woman, Zitkala-Ša makes it into a sound of mourning that emanates from the edges of the colonial project. The telegraph poles, like Zitkala-Ša's protagonist, have been uprooted and are forced to transmit messages of Indian subjection to white settlers.

As the protagonist continues her education, she becomes "civilized" by learning English and a stranger to her own mother, whose "wailing among the barren hills which held the bones of buried warriors" indicates her "grieving" for the lost daughter (31). In spite of her "mother's displeasure," the daughter returns East for more schooling, but her eloquent command of English does not gain her acceptance among her schoolmates. Chosen to represent her school in an oratorical contest, the protagonist attempts to "weave a magic design which promised me the white man's respect" (32). When she delivers her speech, however, she sees in the crowd a "large white flag, with a drawing of most forlorn Indian girl on it" with the word "squaw" printed in "bold black letters" beneath (33). The protagonist's mastery of English does not provide her release from images of the "squaw," and her "ambition for Letters" does not set her free from the captivity of the boarding school's "civilizing machine." The school, however, profits from its "representative" Indian student. The oratorical competition Zitkala-Ša describes in "The School Days of an Indian Girl" retells a story from Zitkala-Ša's own days as a student at Earlham College. The school's paper, *The Earlhamite*, published Zitkala-Ša's poetry and articles as well as the full text of a speech given at an oratorical contest where, like her protagonist, Zitkala-Ša was faced with the image of a "squaw" displayed on a flag in the audience.⁹² Zitkala-Ša represents the press to be deeply bound up with colonial projects of native subjection and land dispossession. The protagonist wins one of the prizes in the contest, but she is left with "a hunger in my heart" and an image of her mother "holding a charge against me" (34).

⁹² Davidson and Norris, xvi.

Zitkala-Ša makes the connection between Indian education and colonization clear in the final section of “An Indian Teacher Among Indians” called “Retrospection.” It is from this retrospective perspective that the narrator launches her harshest critique of boarding school education by arguing that its primary aim was to mirror back to an imperial state the ostensibly “benevolent” necessity of its violent colonization of native lands and peoples. She indicates that the “after” condition of boarding school students was not necessarily assimilation but a critical standpoint of the boarding school system borne out memories of the violent education process. After the protagonist leaves college, she becomes a schoolteacher for an Indian boarding school modeled on Carlisle and finally visits her mother. Both mother and daughter have changed; the daughter is now in ill health from the strains of her education, and the mother lives a life of “compromises” punctuated by intense hate for encroaching white settlers. In the narrator’s final image of the mother, she is launching what the daughter believes to be a futile curse toward the fires of white dwellings in the distant night (40). Returning to the school, the protagonist is in “no mood” to look for the “latent good in [her] white co-workers” and resigns from the school to follow her own “long course of study” (42-43).

The narrator returns to images of modern industrialization to make her final evaluation of boarding school education. Looking back on her experience as boarding school student and teacher allows the narrator to “see it from a distance, as a whole,” and she remembers how “civilized peoples” visited the boarding school and “forgot their relative social ranks in an ignorant curiosity.” Seeing the “children of savage warriors so docile and industrious” made the white visitors “satisfied”: “[T]hey were educating the children of the red man! They were paying a liberal fee to the government employees in whose able hands lay the small forest of Indian timber” (43). She comes to understand that the main purpose of boarding school education was

not to “civilize” the savage, or, to quote Pratt, to make native children “equal” to whites.⁹³

Instead boarding school education was for white educators, administrators, and other curious spectators to manufacture out of native children a unifying image of themselves and their own benevolence at the same time that they used images of native children to capture and keep them “docile.”

The revelation that the final product of the “civilizing machine” is in fact *images* of native subjection leads to the narrative’s final question. While many may “boast of their charity to the North American Indian,” the narrator says that “few” will “[pause] to question whether real life or long-lasting death lies beneath this semblance of civilization” (43). Whites are just as beholden, as captive, to the “semblance of civilization” as native children made to produce images of that “civilization.” Up until this point readers have been offered images of the “noble savage,” native freedom, primitive masculinity, and even backward motherhood that they could assimilate into a romantic vision of civilizational advance. By suggesting that these images are nothing but “semblances” that may conceal imminent death, Zitkala-Ša has the last laugh over her white audience. The protagonist explains that “for the white man’s papers,” she gave up the “healing in trees and brooks” as well as her mother: “Like a slender tree, I had been uprooted from my mother, nature, and God” (42). Returning to the image of the telegraph pole, Zitkala-Ša returns as well to its “low moaning,” the sound of mourning that could not be heard on registers of written or spoken language. What remains through the proliferation of “semblances” in the stories is the sound of this “moaning,” the “record” of the imperialist’s desire to remake the world according to his own image.

Chapter Four—The “false life of fictionalizing”: John Dewey’s Imperialist Philosophy of Democratic Education and the Writing of “Returned Students”

In a series of articles written for *The New Republic* after the U.S. decided to enter World War I, progressive reformer, philosopher, and educator John Dewey argued that American involvement in the war should be guided by a rational commitment to securing global peace. Announcing that the decade of easy progressivism was over, Dewey publicly supported Woodrow Wilson’s pronouncement that U.S. entry into the war against Germany was an opportunity to “make the world safe for democracy.”¹ Dewey argued that the war was just if it led to the creation of international peace, and he believed that the U.S. was uniquely situated to create this peace. Americans, he argued, possessed a “businesslike national psychology” that contrasted to the nationalist “crowd-hypnotism” overtaking Europe.² In an article titled “The Conscription of Thought,” however, he argued that the U.S.’s unique national psychology was threatened by the emergence of an over-emotional “mass-psychology.”³ Deploring the public condemnation of anti-war protestors, Dewey listed “vague unlocalized anxiety and fear,” “quick and easy accessibility to rumor,” and “scandal mongering” as symptoms of a national “attack of war nerves” (128). Dewey maintained that rational, intellectual action required “emotional unity,” but warned that an imbalance of emotionalism could threaten U.S. moral authority by undermining its historical “toleration” of different opinions and beliefs (128-129). As will be discussed later, Dewey’s psychological diagnosis of cultural processes was part of his growing belief in the active role that “scientific” social research could play in world affairs. In the case of

¹ Woodrow Wilson, Speech to Sixty-Fifth Congress, 1 Session, Senate Document No.5, in *History Matters*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4943/>. See John Dewey, “Conscience and Compulsion,” in *The New Republic* (New York: Republic Publishing Company), Jul. 14, 1917, 297-298.

² John Dewey, “What America Will Fight For,” in *The New Republic* (New York: Republic Publishing Company), Aug. 18, 1917.

³ John Dewey, “Conscription of Thought,” in *The New Republic* (New York: Republic Publishing Company), Sep. 1, 1917, 128.

the U.S., as elsewhere, he believed that emotionalism without the guidance of “free,” rational intellect had the capacity to compromise the creation of democratic, global peace.

In “The Conscription of Thought,” Dewey conceptualized the over-emotionalism of “war psychology” as *conscription*. He likened an “attack of war nerves” to the forcible conscription of rationality to war hysteria. The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces “conscription” to the Latin *conscriptio*, which meant “written record,” particularly public treatises, registers, and censuses, before referring to forms of military enlistment.⁴ Dewey argued that succumbing to mass war psychology could impede the U.S.’s ability to write peace policies that would secure worldwide democracy. He explained, “Absence of thought, apathy of intelligence, is the chief enemy to freedom of mind” (129):

Now our American effective participation in the war is much more likely to be hampered by lack of those ideas which can spring only from discussion, only from spread of knowledge and enlightenment of belief.... For the ultimate American participation should consist not in money nor in men, but in the final determination of peace policies.... (129)

War hysteria threatened the “freedom of mind” authorizing the U.S. to take a leading role in international affairs after the war. A national “conscription of mind” to war nerves would not only threaten the spread of global democracy but also posed a threat to the U.S.’s world-historical significance as writer and guarantor of peace. Dewey argued that without a unity of intellect and emotion, the U.S. might “[miss] the great experience of discovering the significance of American national life by seeing it reflected in the making of the life of the world.... [and] the creation of a united America” (130). In short, Dewey saw WWI as an opportunity to increase the U.S.’s political influence in the world because the U.S. represented the intellectual “freedom” necessary for democracy.

⁴ “Conscription,” in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Although Dewey eventually became disillusioned with Woodrow Wilson and the war as a peace-making endeavor, his later articles maintained that the U.S. had a central role in play in spreading democracy globally. Instead of war, Dewey carved out a central place for progressive education as an institutional mechanism to overcome both international and domestic conflicts. In this chapter, I investigate how Dewey's wartime writings participate in a new iteration of liberal imperialism in which a U.S. history of tolerance authorized "benevolent" U.S. intervention in "foreign" societies in the U.S. and abroad. While Dewey argued against imperial aggression by the U.S. and European states, he never lost a reformist faith that social research could influence state policies for a greater good, evidenced by the reports he submitted to the government based on research into "foreign" societies in the U.S. and abroad.⁵ I argue that the political reportage Dewey produced during and after WWI evidences—indeed, materializes—his belief that social scientific research provided a "rational" basis for U.S. political, economic, and social interventions in world affairs. Across his writings, progressive education in particular is imbued with the capacity to cultivate a free, rational standpoint that Dewey believed could lead to democratic evolution on a global scale. As I show in previous chapters, "experimental" race-based education in the U.S. was deeply informed by imperialist boundaries between the domestic and foreign. Dewey's writings, however, made progressive education a global model for education.

I begin by examining Dewey's widely influential *Democracy and Education* (1916) as a wartime text in order to explore its philosophy of education in the context of U.S. political and economic expansion. As Woodrow Wilson's war speeches demonstrate, the U.S. justified

⁵ Dewey's government report on the Polish study, a social research project into Philadelphia's Polish immigrant neighborhood, will be discussed later in the chapter. Biographer Jay Martin writes that after his trip to Japan and China, Dewey worked to help disburse funds for the Boxer Indemnity Scholarships and submitted reports to the government after his travels to Turkey. Jay Martin, *The Education of John Dewey: A Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 325, 338-339.

entrance into WWI as a benevolent, democratic project, yet participation in the war also offered the U.S. opportunities for global political influence and economic expansion. I argue that Dewey's philosophy of democratic education participated in what black studies scholar Jodi Melamed observes as an early twentieth century shift toward "racial liberalism," which she defines as a "racial epistemology and politics" that "sutured an 'official' antiracism to U.S. nationalism."⁶ Theorizing "culture" as a process of evolutionary social growth, Dewey represented the U.S. as an example of democratic cultural processes by conscripting histories of colonization and slavery to a narrative of national tolerance and "adaptation." Unlike many of his contemporaries, Dewey did not attribute what he saw to be U.S. civilizational superiority to its biological "racial" traits. However, his theory of cultural growth still functioned to racialize social groups by measuring the value of social change according to dualities he constructed between slavery, savagery, and civilization. Refined in the context of world war, Dewey's philosophy of democratic education not only advanced U.S. nationalism by developing an official antiracist stance but also U.S. imperialism by making imperialist interventions, especially in East Asia and toward immigrants to the U.S., appear as part of a national mission to promote global democracy. Although Dewey criticized imperialism in the U.S. and elsewhere, his philosophy of democratic education still functioned as part of a new racial imperialist project in the post-WWI U.S.

Much recent scholarship on John Dewey has attended to the "racist" or "ethnocentric" elements of his philosophy of democratic education, but there has been a tendency to recuperate

⁶ Jodi Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism," *Social Text* 89, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 2. For more background on racial liberalism in the progressive era, see Jodi Melamed, Introduction to *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

Dewey's work for multicultural pedagogy.⁷ In this chapter, I demonstrate how the racial liberal standpoint that Dewey develops in his philosophical and political writings on education supported racial imperial projects in the U.S. precisely in the way that they theorize processes of democratic growth. The racism present within Dewey's work on education, in other words, is not an aberration that can be separated from his overall philosophy of democratic education. By showing instead how racism is worked into the bones of Dewey's progressive educational philosophy, I hope to suggest the ways in which racial liberal education continues to operate within the racist framework of democracy and freedom that Dewey theorized.⁸ I begin by demonstrating how *Democracy and Education* racializes cultural processes as "savage" and "slave" through a careful examination of Dewey's citational references. As a philosophical text, *Democracy and Education* situates its theory of democratic education within a genealogy of liberal and classical philosophy through the explicit citation of canonical works. This referential density, however, is supplemented by casual, apparently commonsense references to savage and slave societies that go un-cited. Savages and slaves, I argue, function as limits to Dewey's theory of free, rational thought. In fact, the academic, scientific author is able to conscript un-cited histories of colonization and slavery to the philosophical text precisely through denying savages and slaves intellectual, historically agential thought. Writing, in particular, is seen to delineate "civilized" from "savage" societies. The boundaries Dewey constructed between "civilized" and "savage," as, for example, between "intellect" and "emotion," are foundational to his philosophy of democratic education. They supported the imperial expansion of the U.S. by promoting cultural change insofar as it conformed to an "evolutionary" process culminating in scientific,

⁷ See Footnote 14 in the Introduction.

⁸ In *Represent and Destroy*, Melamed demonstrates how the racial liberalism developed in the early twentieth century was reworked by the state throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century, especially at educational institutions, to create new racial categories as a way to direct resources within historical contexts of global capitalist restructuring.

capitalist rationality. I take the citational absences in *Democracy and Education* as an opening to explore other possibilities for education that Dewey was unable to see in his work.

In the remainder of the chapter, I pursue Dewey's ideal subject of progressive education through the figure of the "returned student," which appears in articles he wrote for *The New Republic* and *Asia* as well as in a volume, *Letters from China and Japan*, written during a trip to East Asia after WWI. In brief, the "returned student" represents a subject who has left the limitations of his or her social group and, in the process of education, synthesized the best elements of former and newly learned social habits to construct new social possibilities. The "returned student" becomes in Dewey's writing *the* figure of global democracy. In the political reportage, travelogues, and scholarly essays that comprise Dewey's Asia writings, the social boundaries Dewey constructs to mobilize his theory of education and democracy are fleshed out in encounters between the "West" and "Far East." The orientalist arguments about democracy and education that emerge in Dewey's writing crucially depend on the authority of the "returned student" Dewey continually cites—but never names—in his articles. Like Dewey's references to savages and slaves in *Democracy and Education*, this figure functions to supplement Dewey's arguments about global democracy and education. The "returned student," however, does not signify a pre-democratic "past" but the promise of a progressive, democratic "future." Invested with the capacity to "bridge" social boundaries by adopting a rational, scientific standpoint learned through progressive education, the "returned student" represents the process of evolutionary social growth. While this figure goes unnamed in Dewey's writing, I take this absence, as with the absent citational references to savage and slave societies in *Democracy and Education*, as an occasion to investigate relationships Dewey had with two "returned students": Hu Shih and Anzia Yeziarska.

Hu and Yeziarska studied with Dewey under very different circumstances, but Dewey sought to enlist both in his mission to spread progressive education within “foreign” societies. In particular, Dewey saw each student’s relationship to writing as symptomatic of genuine democratic change. In the case of Hu Shih, a Chinese student who studied under Dewey at Columbia and later took on an influential role in the May Fourth student uprisings in China, Dewey took Hu’s involvement with the New Culture and literary reform movements as evidence of China’s democratic “awakening.” As a successful “returned student,” Hu represented an apolitical, “cultural” agent of democracy abroad. Before his trip to Asia, Dewey attempted to get another student and former romantic flame, Anzia Yeziarska, a Polish Jewish immigrant to the U.S., to write fiction as a means of fostering national democratic growth. In both cases, Dewey saw writing as an expression of cultural growth and measured democratic transformation according to modernist literary values. While Dewey attempted to conscript both students to the ostensibly benevolent project of spreading democracy globally, his writing—and theirs—betrays the *anti*-democratic appropriation involved in such a project. I conclude with a reading of Yeziarska’s novels *Salome of the Tenements* (1923) and *All I Could Never Be* (1932). *Salome of the Tenements* is one of the many pieces of fiction that rehearses her relationship with Dewey, and I argue that the novel’s appropriation of Dewey-esque orientalism uses shame to trouble the conscriptive work enabled by Dewey’s “returned student.” *All I Could Never Be*, the last novel Yeziarska published during the interwar years, challenges the idea that writing could create transformative social change.

Savages and Slaves

In November 1900, John Dewey's close friend, Jane Addams, a progressive reformer and social researcher, opened a Labor Museum at her newly established settlement Hull House. In her history of the settlement, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910), Addams recounts the genesis of the museum in an encounter she had with an Italian immigrant woman living near the settlement. Discouraged by what appeared to be a social conflict between first generation immigrants and their more "Americanized" children, Addams recalls walking down Polk Street and catching a glimpse of an Italian woman spinning. Suggesting to Adams a "model for one of Michelangelo's Fates," the woman took pride in holding out her work for Addams to see.

Addams writes:

It seemed to me that Hull-House ought to be able to devise some educational enterprise which should build a bridge between European and American experiences in such a wise to give them both more meaning and a sense of relation. I meditated that perhaps the power to see life as a whole is more needed in the immigrant quarter of a large city than anywhere else....⁹

As an "educational enterprise," the Labor Museum sought to instill in immigrants and Hull House visitors the "power to see life as a whole" by visually illustrating the historical "evolution" of capitalist industry. Beginning with the production of textiles, the Museum exhibited "primitive" spinning tools and artifacts, including Navajo looms as well as blankets and baskets from the Philippines; charts and maps depicting the development from spindle to modern steam-power in different locations around the world; and live demonstrations by local immigrant women of national production techniques.¹⁰ The success of the Labor Museum's mission was evident for Addams in the new pride that immigrant children displayed for the handiwork of their parents. She writes that the Labor Museum "pointed out the possibilities" at

⁹ Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: Signet, 1961), 156.

¹⁰ *First Report of the Labor Museum at Hull House* (Chicago: 1901).

Hull House “of demonstrating that culture is an understanding of the long-established occupations and thoughts of men, of the arts with which they have solaced their toil.”¹¹

John Dewey was deeply indebted to Jane Addams’ work at Hull House for both his “experimental” Laboratory School (or “Dewey School”) at the University of Chicago and his own theories of democracy and education. In *School and Society* (1899), which originated as a series of public lectures Dewey gave on the Laboratory School, he argues that the ideal school would cultivate “a positive enlargement of life, a wider, freer, and more open outlook upon it.”¹² Criticizing the isolation of schools from the “everyday life” of students, Dewey presented diagrams illustrating the organization of a school that functioned in “organic” unity with the world outside. While Addams is not explicitly cited, Dewey puts an “industrial museum” at the center of the school. Using, like Addams, the example of textile production, Dewey explains that in workshops, students would learn about the methods and materials to produce textiles, the historical evolution of textile production, the “landscapes and scenes” of different modes of production, and, finally, the “more perfect forms of textile work” along with literature showing the “idealized representation of the world-industries” (78-79). Dewey aimed to unify in his ideal school the separation between vocational and liberal arts schooling. In his ideal school, the practical, vocational learning done on the first floor would be distilled into artistic, theoretical significance in art studios, laboratories, and the museum on the second floor. Dewey explains: “This union [of vocation and arts] is symbolized by saying that in the ideal school the art work might be considered to be that of the shops, passed through the alembic of library and museum into action again” (78). In other words, the museum would function pedagogically to distill for students the unity between abstract learning and “everyday life.”

¹¹ Addams, 59.

¹² John Dewey, *School and Society*, Revised Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900), 108.

For Addams and Dewey, the labor or industrial museum had the potential to transform—even emancipate—the perspective of students by changing their understanding of the historical “evolution” of industrial capitalist modes of production. The name Addams and Dewey gave to this transformation in standpoint was “culture.” Similar to Addams’ statement that “culture is an understanding of the long-established occupations and thoughts of men,” Dewey writes of the ideal school:

Where we now see only the outward doing and outward product, there, behind all visible results, is the readjustment of mental attitude, the enlarged and sympathetic vision, the sense of growing power, and the willing ability to identify both insight and capacity with the interests of world and man. Unless culture be a superficial polish, a veneering of mahogany over common wood, it surely is this—the growth of imagination in flexibility, in scope, and in sympathy, till the life which the individual lives is informed with the life of nature and society. When nature and society can live in the schoolroom, when the forms and tools of learning are subordinated to the substance of experience, then shall there be an opportunity for this identification, and culture shall be the democratic password.¹³

“Culture,” for Dewey, was not an exclusive possession of the ruling classes but rather named the “democratic” process through which individuals, newly conscious of the unity of experience, “readjust[ed] their mental attitude” to the broader social “interests of world and man.” Dewey’s and Addams’ theorizations of “culture” as a process that produced a “wider,” “freer” standpoint differed from each other in one key way. Addams remained committed to the idea that social work and the educational contact it produced between different social groups comprised the primary method to produce cultural transformation. Addams’ Labor Museum aimed to bring the various industrial classes of Chicago into a meaningful contact that would enlarge their perspective. Dewey, on the other hand, believed that the principles of *evolutionary science*

¹³ Dewey, *School and Society*, 56.

applied to education would provide the key to democratic, cultural change.¹⁴ Dewey's Laboratory School was primarily what historian Louis Menand calls a "*philosophy laboratory*."¹⁵ Dewey used scientific experimentation in education at the Laboratory School to build a philosophy of intellectual freedom and education.¹⁶

The educational writings by Dewey and Addams presented above indicate an emergent racial liberalism within twentieth century progressivism. Promoted by publications such as *The New Republic*, the progressive liberalism of the early twentieth century increasingly saw "tolerance" and "cosmopolitanism" as key to spreading democracy in the U.S. and abroad. Not everyone, however, subscribed to progressive liberalism's faith in tolerance to bring about a peaceful social "readjustment" as part of national culture. While Dewey and Addams saw educating European immigrant textile workers, for example, as a means to "free" workers from the drudgery of the textile industry, many radical activists in these industries were arguing that class division would only be ameliorated through socialist economic and political transformation. Indeed, the early twentieth century was a time of frequent labor disruptions, particularly in the garment industries. In the fall of 1910, an estimated 40,000 garment workers in Chicago joined a "general strike" among workers in New York that resulted in greater labor unionization among the garment industries, including the founding of the Amalgamated Clothes Workers of America, and led to strikes through the 1920s.¹⁷ Socialist labor activists, many of them eastern European

¹⁴ In *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, Addams describes looking down from an omnibus in East London and realizing that formal schooling would not help her serve the poor. She writes: "This is what we're all doing, lumbering our minds with literature that only serves to cloud the really vital situation spread before our eyes" (45).

¹⁵ Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001), 320.

¹⁶ I don't want to overstate this difference. Both the Labor Museum and industrial museum featured similar exhibition styles. The First Report on Hull House, for example, states that the Museum "calls upon the analytic powers of mind to work back from the complicated to the primitive and to see the two in historical relation," thus providing "something of the freedom of observation and power of comparison which travel is supposed to give" (Report 12). For Dewey, the educational process served a similar function, as discussed later in this section.

¹⁷ Susan A. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 169-170.

Jewish and Italian immigrant women, demanded a restructuring of society that wasn't confined to the realm of "culture."¹⁸ For Dewey and Addams, however, strikes exemplified the type of explosive social conflict that impeded the gradual process of social readjustment, or "reconstruction," that would result from progressive education.

Dewey's widely influential philosophy of education, *Democracy and Education*, is based off of Dewey's earlier educational experiments at the Laboratory School, but it re-contextualizes *School and Society*'s theory of intellectual freedom for a world embroiled in conflict on an international scale. In *Democracy and Education*, the progressive school is represented as the primary institution capable of ameliorating worldwide social conflicts produced by industrialization, technological modernization, nationalism, migration, and world war. As in *School and Society* Dewey theorized culture as a process in which social divisions could be transcended, yet he applied this process on a world-historical scale to encompass the present world war as well as histories of colonization and imperialism. In a key chapter, "The Democratic Conception in Education," Dewey writes:

Every expansive era in the history of mankind has coincided with the operation of factors which have tended to eliminate distance between peoples and classes previously hemmed off from one another. Even the alleged benefits of war, so far as more than alleged, spring from the fact that conflict of peoples at least enforces intercourse between them and thus accidentally enables them to learn from one another, and thereby to expand their horizons. Travel, economic and commercial tendencies, have at present gone far to break down external barriers; to bring peoples and classes into closer and more perceptible connection with one another. It remains for the most part to secure the intellectual and emotional significance of this physical annihilation of space.¹⁹

In many ways, *Democracy and Education* can be seen as a text that attempts to "secure the intellectual and emotional significance" of processes of warfare, colonization, and imperial histories of "discovery" and "exploration" through its philosophy of democratic education.

¹⁸ Ibid., 179.

¹⁹ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Free Press, 1944), 86.

Dewey's philosophy theorizes a universal process of education that works analogously to world warfare in its capacity to break down social barriers and eventually cultivate a new universal, intellectual standpoint that would make explosive conflicts—like war—unnecessary. Eventually Dewey would change his perspective on war as a socially progressive process, but his philosophy of education would take its place as a means to assimilate conflicting social groups into democratic, global unity.

I argue that the universal, global provenance Dewey gives to progressive education comprises a new iteration of U.S. imperialism. Although *Democracy and Education* argues for the universality of progressive education, it nonetheless makes the case for the world-historical significance of the U.S. as an example of democratic assimilation. Dewey argues that the “development of commerce, transportation, intercommunication, and emigration” in the U.S. had “forced the demand for an educational institution which shall provide something like a homogeneous and balanced environment for the young” (21). As discussed earlier, Dewey understood U.S. history as a process of assimilation and tolerance authorizing the national significance of the U.S. in the construction of global peace. It is precisely *Democracy and Education*'s iteration of liberal tolerance as motor of social evolution that authorizes a new imperial, racial project. In what follows, I illuminate the imperial dimensions of *Democracy and Education* by paying close attention to the referential structure of the text. *Democracy and Education* is a philosophical text, and as such, Dewey situates its argument within a genealogy of liberal and classical educational philosophies through explicit citations. References to what Dewey calls “savages” and “slaves,” however, scaffold Dewey's philosophy. Yet, his references to savages and slaves go un-cited, functioning as common knowledge in the text. Savages and slaves appear in *Democracy and Education* as both empirical referents to social groups that

constitute modern, democratic society's "past" as well as contemporary threats to modern democracy emergent within a new industrial capitalist social order.

I demonstrate, however, that as common-knowledge, un-cited historical referents, savages and slaves have little basis in empirical "reality" but instead function as figures Dewey *conscripts* within his philosophy in order to *supplement* his universal philosophy of democratic education. Savages and slaves are in Dewey's philosophy subaltern by definition; they are foreclosed from the capacity for philosophical writing. Dewey enlists these figures to his philosophy to demonstrate the democratic necessity of progressive education on a global scale. They mark the boundary of democratic "civilization"—democracy's exterior, threatening "other"—that must be posited in order to be transcended in the process of education. Savages and slaves represent social figures representative of conservative and static societies that, by definition, cannot possess intellectual freedom, and are therefore maladapted to modern, industrial life. Savages and slaves are, in other words, *racial* figures that represent who will survive—and who will not survive—modern life. Furthermore, Dewey is able to conscript, or to write and enlist, these figures to his philosophy of education as a global, democratic force precisely because these figures are ontologically foreclosed from the ability to use language philosophically. Put differently, savages and slaves function in *Democracy and Education* as supplements to Dewey's philosophy of democratic education because they do not have access to the ability to manipulate language in ways that promote social growth and development. They are, by definition, un-citeable. Like the industrial museum, the philosophical text embodies the universal subject of democratic education. In *Democracy and Education*, the philosophic text itself is racialized as a marker of civilization—something that will be crucial to understanding Dewey's relationship with former students Hu Shih and Anzia Yezierska.

In the first part of *Democracy and Education*, Dewey builds a theory of democratic education that culminates in the chapter, “The Democratic Conception of Education.” The inquiry into the natural origins of education that occupies the first part of the book shifts to a question of *value*. Dewey explains in “The Democratic Conception of Education”: “Any education given by a group tends to socialize its members, but the quality and value of the socialization depends upon the habits of the group. Hence, once more, the need of a measure for the worth of any given mode of social life” (83). The “measure of worth” Dewey develops involves measurement of a social group’s collective social “habits” according to two criteria of democratic functioning. First, the social group must be organized around *common interests* and must not exclude certain social classes or groups from participation within the common “life” of the whole, and, secondly, the social group must not *isolate* itself from other groups (85-86). According to Dewey, only societies that function according to these democratic principles could cultivate the intellectual freedom necessary to direct progressive social growth by eliminating maladaptive social habits. Throughout *Democracy and Education*, Dewey criticizes a pantheon of classical and liberal philosophers for failing to understand education as a mechanism of social growth that, as an ongoing, adaptive process, has no predetermined outcome except the cultivation of greater social unity.

The primary intervention Dewey makes in the liberal and classical philosophies of education he cites is to theorize democratic education as the continual adaptation to physical and social environments. This continual evolutionary adaptation would result in “social reconstruction,” however since physical and social environments are constantly changing, the precise result of democratic education could not be known in advance. In “The Democratic Conception in Education,” Dewey criticizes several influential educational philosophers for

failing to measure up to his “democratic” criteria of social growth. Plato, for example, is criticized for theorizing liberal education as the exclusive possession of a leisure class, thereby excluding the laboring classes from the process of “culture” or determining the common interests of the social group (88-91, see also 254-261). Skipping ahead several centuries, eighteenth century liberal philosophers—Jean-Jacques Rousseau chief among them—are criticized for romanticizing the “natural” education of the “individual” at the cost of theorizing the individual’s fundamental role within a social group. Over-emphasis on liberating the “individual” from artificial social conventions left no mechanism for making social change (91-93). In their emphasis on the education of pre-determined “faculties,” Enlightenment philosophies upheld class divisions by training students for “specialized skills.” German philosophers, such as German educational philosopher Friedrich Froebel and philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, on the other hand, privileged the ideal model of the nation-state and therefore theorized education as *passive* assimilation to the state rather than an adaptive, creative, open-ended process (56-60, see also 93-99). For Dewey, progressive education was emancipatory insofar as it cultivated a universal standpoint among students that would make them better able to direct society toward increased assimilation and adaptation by freeing them from social limitations. The motor of this social evolution would be the adaptation produced out of encounters across boundaries of class, race, and belief as well as adjustment to changing industrial conditions.

In the genealogy of educational philosophy Dewey constructed, he continually points out the social and conceptual schisms, or “dualities,” that make various philosophies antagonistic to democracy. Intellectual freedom involved the transcendence of these dualities—and, especially, the duality between philosophy and practice that relegated “philosophy” to the realm of the “cultured,” non-laboring classes. In *Democracy and Education*, methods of inquiry produced out

of the “new psychology” are crucial to “freeing” the intellect from these stultifying dualities. Dewey explains the significance of the new psychology most clearly in *School and Society*. He writes, “Earlier psychology regarded the mind as a purely individual affair in direct and naked contact with the external world.” The new psychology, on the other hand, tends to “conceive individual mind as a function of social life.”²⁰ Dewey attributes the innovations in the new psychology to the hereditary and evolutionary sciences. The former made it clear that individuals’ mental and physical capacities were “an inheritance from the race,” or “a capital inherited by the individual from the past and held in trust by him for the future.” The latter demonstrated that the individual was a result of the “outworkings” of “humanity”: “it developed in an environment which is social as well as physical” (90). As Menand points out, the “mind” became something for new psychologists, such as Dewey and his predecessor William James, that had a physical as well as spiritual basis and could therefore be studied by laboratory science. The “mind” was liberated from the exclusive domain of metaphysical philosophy.²¹ By unifying theory and practice, *Education and Democracy* thus attempted to intervene in the “very nature of philosophy.” In a chapter on the “philosophy” of education, Dewey writes, “Philosophy might almost be described as thinking which has become conscious of itself—which has generalized its place, function, and value in experience.”²² Put another way, Dewey found a way to make the philosophical text *exemplary* of intellectual freedom. “Conscious of itself,” philosophy informed by the new psychology unified theory and practice, or “intellect” and “experience,” by knowing its “place, function, and value in experience.”

Performing evolutionary psychology’s unification of “matter” and “spirit,” *Education and Democracy*, as a philosophical text *emancipated* from the traditional duality of philosophy

²⁰ Dewey, *School and Society*, 90.

²¹ Menand, 259-260.

²² Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 326.

and experience, was to embody the intellectual standpoint of democratic education. In this way, philosophic writing was made to function as an emblem of democratic, or as Dewey names it in *Democracy and Education*, “civilized” society. The text’s transcendence of the duality between “philosophy” and “experience” was to make it representative of democratic processes. However, and perhaps ironically, *Democracy and Education*, is fundamentally *limited* by the central role that divisions and dualities play within its theory of democratic education. As discussed earlier, Dewey’s theorization of democracy relied upon a distinction of value between “democratic,” or “progressive,” and “conservative” societies. If emancipated philosophic writing was representative of “civilized,” “democratic” societies, then it was the very incapacity for such writing that represented what Dewey calls “savages” and “slaves.” And, it was this very incapacity that made them unciteable within the philosophical text. Despite, or even because of, their very subalternity to the philosophical text, savages and slaves figure as external others and dangerous threats to democratic society. As I will demonstrate, these figures are therefore foundational to *Democracy and Education*. Dewey conscripted these figures to his philosophy of democratic education as supplements in order demonstrate its value.

Savages and slaves function as conceptual supplements to *Democracy and Education*’s theory of intellectual freedom. In a close reading of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Confessions*, poststructuralist philosopher Jacques Derrida ascribes to supplementarity four functions that I will use to parse the conceptual relationship of savages and slaves to Dewey’s philosophy of democratic education. Derrida explains that for Rousseau the supplement functions within the dispossession of the “longed-for presence” of “natural” speech and the paradoxical reappropriation of this lost presence through the artificial, representational act of writing.²³

²³ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 141, 141-143.

Rousseau, in other words, must make recourse to writing in order to recover the lost “presence” of natural language, even though writing threatens to corrupt speech through its artificiality as a second-order and less immediate form of communication. Derrida observes that it is within this problematic that writing functions as a *supplement* to “natural” reason. First of all, writing is supplemental in that it makes a crucial addition to speech; “it diverts the immediate presence of thought to speech into representation and the imagination” (144). Secondly, however, the artificiality of writing is dangerous because it poses a threat to natural language. Derrida explains that for Rousseau writing “is the addition of a technique, a sort of artificial and artful ruse to make speech present when it is actually absent. It is a violence done to the natural destiny of the language....” (144). Third, since the supplement is additive and attempts to restore a presence that is lacking, it also functions “*in-the-place-of*” or “substitutes” by “sign and proxy” the unrecoverable absence of presence within speech (145). Finally, as a substitute, sign, and proxy, the supplement always occupies an “exterior” position: “the supplement is *exterior*, outside of the positivity to which it is super-added, alien to that which, in order to be replaced by it, must be other than it” (145). Derrida does not limit the function of the supplement to Rousseau’s understanding of writing; rather it is any representation, sign, image, or artificiality that enables reason to proceed precisely *through* the founding absence—or silence—of natural, originary presence.

Democracy and Education begins with a general theory of education. Dewey defines education as process through which all social groups transmit “life,” or the “whole range of experience, individual and racial,” to immature members.²⁴ In fact, education in Dewey’s formulation is completely continuous with social life: “Society not only continues to exist *by* transmission, *by* communication, but it may fairly be said to exist *in* transmission, *in*

²⁴ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 2-3.

communication” (4). “Conservative” and “progressive” societies, however, are differentiated by the extent to which they meet Dewey’s democratic criteria. The intellectual freedom of progressive societies has resulted in greater civilizational complexity, which, Dewey argues, has also resulted in the necessity for a system of formal schooling within these societies. He explains that formal schooling originates when “social traditions are so complex that a considerable part of the social store is committed to written symbols” (19). Within Dewey’s paradigm of evolutionary social progress, however, writing is not merely a medium to transmit information from one generation to another; rather, in progressive societies, it allows the “one who hears or reads to rehearse imaginatively the activities in which [the subject matter] has its use” (16). Progressive societies follow the laws of evolutionary social growth by becoming more “complex”—more intellectually “free” to direct social change—as they continually adapt to changes in the social and physical environment. The concepts of savages and slaves function as supplements to Dewey’s principles of evolutionary growth.

Savages and slaves serve different supplemental functions within Dewey’s theory of democracy, yet each references both racially marked social groups, which represent democracy’s “past,” as well as contemporary racialized threats to democratic society. It will be remembered that Dewey’s criteria for democratic societies were that they must function according to a “common interest” and avoid “isolation” from other social groups. Savages appear in *Democracy and Education* as representations of conservative societies isolated from other social groups. Dewey explains that, as in all social groups, language functions in savage societies for the purpose of “joint activities” (15). However, savage societies are exteriorized from civilization because they do not use language “imaginatively,” or in a way that cultivates intellectual freedom. Instead, language limits savages to perpetuating social habits of little value to social

progress. Dewey gives the example of a “warlike tribe” in which membership requires the display of war behavior “at the expense of others” until “mental habitudes are assimilated to those of [the] group” (14). In the case of the “warlike tribe,” war is not fought for the purpose of establishing democratic “peace” but for the perpetuation of more war. Assimilation in savage societies functions passively and conservatively. In another example, Dewey paints a colonial scene. Asking readers to imagine a “savage tribe” living on a “desert plain,” he writes that the tribe “adapts itself,” however, “its adaptation involves a maximum of passive acquiescence, and a minimum of active control...” (47). By contrast, a “civilized people enters the scene,” and instead of adapting their habits to the constraints of the physical environment, they “adapt” by introducing irrigation and the domestication of plants and animals (47-48). Dewey writes: “The savage is merely habituated; the civilized man has habits which transform the environment” (48). As conservative, passive societies, savage societies’ language use is limited to mere “physical stimuli,” an example of which is the “Choctaw grunt” (15-16).

Slaves, on the other hand, represent groups excluded from the “common interest” of society. Dewey explains, “Plato defined a slave as one who accepts from another the purposes which control his conduct. This condition obtains even where there is no slavery in the legal sense. It is found wherever men are engaged in activity which is socially serviceable, but whose service they do not understand and have no personal interest in” (85). Citing Aristotle later on, Dewey writes that women were also traditionally classed as slaves, or as “instrumentalities of production and reproduction” without access to the “free and rational life” they labored to produce (253). Among slaves, furthermore, “social intercourse” and communication were not “free,” and slaves were therefore characterized by an “absence of mind, and corresponding distortion of emotional life” (85). In Dewey’s writing slaves refer to a general category of

persons that, in the words of sociologist Orlando Patterson, existed in a state of “social death,” since without a “socially recognized existence outside of [the] master,” they became “social nonperson[s].”²⁵ Yet, figures of savages and slaves in Dewey also refer to a history of plantation slavery and abolition in the U.S., which Menand argues was forefront in the minds of pragmatist thinkers like Dewey.²⁶ In representing democracy’s pre-modern “past” in *Democracy and Education*, slaves refer as well to a contemporary threat to democracy: the creation of an industrial class of slave labor. Criticizing the “scientific management of work,” Dewey argued that scientific management’s focus on increasing the efficiency of labor through calculations of muscle movements did nothing to “enlist the intelligence” of workers (85). Unlike savages, who remained “savage” because of their social isolation, slaves emerged from “a cleavage in society between a learned and an unlearned class, a leisure and laboring class” (255). In industrial capitalist society, this division was represented by the “employer” class, a new leisure class, which had access to liberal education designed to stimulate the intellect and a new class of workers trained only for industrial labor. Dewey argued that the great problem of this class division was the fact that “the great majority of workers have no insight into the social aims of their pursuits and no direct personal interest in them. The results actually achieved are not the ends of *their* actions, but only of their employers” (260). Slaves, in short, were cordoned off from any intellectual life that would allow them to exercise control as free agents over their labor. They were subject instead to industrial mechanization, to the subordination of intellect to labor.²⁷

²⁵ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1982), 5.

²⁶ See especially Part I of Menand’s *The Metaphysical Club*.

²⁷ This argument echoes Samuel Chapman Armstrong’s, which is discussed in Chapter One. To wit, Armstrong argued that slavery, as a mode of production, precluded slaves from intellectual life necessary for meaningful historical agency.

Within Dewey's theory of democratic education savages represented social isolation and slaves represented social cleavage. Both figures, however, were ontologically foreclosed from rational, free intellect and were subsequently racialized through the incapacity for philosophical writing—the measure of intellectual reason. Since these figures were defined by their *lack* of intellectual language use, they functioned as signs or supplements of democracy's exteriorized other. Excluded from the philosophical genealogy of "civilized" society that Dewey constructed through numerous citational references of educational philosophers from Plato to Hegel, savages and slaves could not be cited because they had produced nothing of intellectual value. The native societies in the U.S. to which "savages" referred were characterized by unwriteable language—like the aforementioned "Choctaw grunts." However, savages posed a contemporary threat to democracy in social groups like cliques, or even certain types of families, that remained isolated from the life of the larger social group. Slaves, similarly, indicated the threat of the reemergence of slavery in modern society through despotism and industrial class conflict (84-86). The concepts of savages and slaves functioned to draw the boundary of democratic "civilization" that through war, colonization, and education must be transcended. They animated the democratic process of "culture" while remaining fundamentally subaltern to its processes.

Savages and slaves were conscripted to Dewey's philosophy of democratic education as the conceptual boundary markers of intellectual freedom. Dewey wrote and enlisted them to his theory of democratic education to demonstrate its value. Like the Navajo looms or the baskets of the Philippines in Jane Addams' Labor Museum or the courses in "primitive" weaving at the Laboratory School, savages and slaves functioned as artifacts that cultivated "a positive enlargement of life, a wider, freer, and more open outlook upon it."²⁸ They were nonetheless necessary in Dewey's theory to the cultivation of intellectual freedom, a universal standpoint

²⁸ Dewey, *School and Society*, 108.

capable of directing democratic social growth. Dewey wrote in *Democracy and Education*, “To formulate the significance of an experience a man must take into conscious account the experiences of others. He must try to find a standpoint which includes the experience of others as well as his own.”²⁹ In the process of democratic education, the student had to alienate himself from social limitations in order to seek a wider, more universal perspective. In the social scientific and political writings discussed in the next section, Dewey fleshed out the process of social “transcendence” theorized in *Democracy and Education* through interactions with two students—Hu Shih and Anzia Yezierska—that figured, at different times, as ideal subjects of democratic education. While the former appeared to “succeed” and the latter to “fail,” Dewey saw the emancipation of each from the intellectual bondage of savagery and slavery through *writing*.

The Returned Student and the Educational Open Door

“The commercial open door is needed. But the need is greater that the door be opened to light, to knowledge and understanding. If these forces will not create a public opinion which will in time secure a lasting and just settlement of other problems, there is no recourse save despair over civilization.” –John Dewey, “The Parting of Ways for America,” *The New Republic*, November 9, 1921.³⁰

“I have neglected the emotions; meditating alone through the night, I have all but become a cold-blooded man of the world.” –Hu Shih, quoted from a diary kept at Cornell University.³¹

In the spring of 1919, John Dewey and his wife, Alice Chipman Dewey, embarked on a tour of Japan and China while Dewey was on sabbatical from Columbia University. What was originally supposed to be a vacation to restore Alice’s health (she suffered from bouts of severe

²⁹ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 227.

³⁰ John Dewey, “The Parting of Ways for America,” in *The New Republic* (New York: The Republic Publishing Company), Nov. 9, 1921, 317.

³¹ Quoted in Jerome B. Grieder, *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance: Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 40.

depression) quickly turned into an educational odyssey for the Deweys.³² At the behest of former students, the Deweys visited schools across Japan and China, gave lectures, and wrote extensively about their travels in both letters and articles. Dewey extended his sabbatical from Columbia and didn't return to the U.S. until 1921. While most accounts of Dewey's travels focus on his influence upon Japan and China, I investigate how Dewey's philosophy of education and global democracy were authorized by the observations he made on his trip.³³ The articles John Dewey published in *The New Republic* and *Asia* along with letters collected and published by the Deweys' daughter, Evelyn Dewey, as *Letters from China and Japan* (1920) represent a shift in John Dewey's writing from philosophy to what historian Louis Menand describes as a pragmatist approach to the "issues of his time."³⁴ As discussed in the previous section, Dewey distinguished his philosophy of democracy from classical and liberal philosophy by theorizing the mechanism—rather than the outcome—of democratic change. Dewey's trip to Japan and China gave him the opportunity to try out the theory of rational social adaptation and evolution he developed in *Democracy and Education*. By chance, Dewey arrived in China shortly before the May Fourth student uprising, of which the immediate context was the ceding of the province of Shandong to Japan in the Treaty of Versailles signed by the warring nations of WWI. This event in particular became a living "laboratory" for Dewey to test his philosophy of cultural transformation by mapping it onto relations between the "West" and "Far East."

³² See Martin, 306-310.

³³ Several works detail Dewey's influence in Japan and China, particularly in China. See, for example, Martin's account of the Deweys' trip, 310-327. See also Barry Keenan, *The Dewey Experiment in China: Educational Reform and Political Power in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1977), Robert W. Clopton and Tsuin-Chen Ou, Introduction to *John Dewey: Lectures in China, 1919-1920*, translated and edited by Robert W. Clopton and Tsuin-Chen Ou (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1973). Jessica Ching-Sze Wang's research begins to create an alternate framework for understanding how Dewey's trip influenced his philosophy by demonstrating how Dewey's lectures and publications were diversely received in China. See Jessica Ching-Sza Wang, *John Dewey in China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

³⁴ Menand, 360.

As discussed earlier, Dewey's philosophy of democratic evolution was mobilized by conceptual and social "dualities." Progressive education fostered democratic growth by creating the conditions in which these dualities could become the motor of evolutionary adaptation through the eventual transcendence of the limits they placed on the intellect. In Dewey's writings on Japan and China, the borders that he had drawn in *Democracy and Education* were mapped onto a global scale as borders between the "West" and "Far East." The border he created between "West" and "Far East" was simultaneously a political boundary marking out different regions of the world, a cultural boundary marking off differences of group "psychology," and, importantly, a boundary distinguishing genuine democratic evolution from artificial representations of progressive liberalism. In short, Dewey's Asia writings constructed an orientalist theory of global democracy that racialized, gendered, and sexualized the boundaries between the West and Far East. As with the figures of savages and slaves, Dewey's mobilization of gender shuttled between referring to racially marked social groups (*oriental* women) and more abstract threats to global democracy (the unguided emotionalism of China's masses). Postwar global democracy would come about through the transcendence of these boundaries and the unification of "West" and "Far East" under an intellectual cosmopolitanism. Growing disillusioned with Woodrow Wilson's contention that warfare could be used to spread global democracy, Dewey argued in his Asia writings for the U.S. to cultivate global democracy by financing progressive education and capitalist industrialization abroad. I argue that far from unifying "West" and "East," Dewey's educational "open door" supported postwar U.S. imperialism by drawing trans- and intra-national boundaries of "democratic" civilization through orientalist representations of *Democracy and Education's* savages and slaves. Dewey's map of

global democracy, in turn, authorized U.S. economic and political expansion abroad under the moral authority of protecting democracy.

In the previous section, I left open the question of the ideal student produced in Dewey's philosophy of democratic education. Dewey's Asia writings posit the figure of the "returned student" as the ideal subject of progressive education, a figure that represented the promise of future democratic social evolution on a global scale. The "returned student" refers in Dewey's writings to students from Japan and China who studied at U.S. universities and then "returned" home to positions of political or intellectual leadership. Convinced that he was witnessing a democratic "intellectual awakening" in China and disillusioned with what he perceived to be Japan's "artificial" liberalism, Dewey developed the global significance of the "returned student" most frequently in his writings on China. As a successful product of progressive education in the "West," the "returned student" had internalized methods of disinterested, rational thinking and was therefore capable of guiding the social evolution of the Chinese "masses" toward democracy. Dewey saw this process of intellectual guidance exemplified in the New Culture movement, or what he called the Young China movement, which was a cultural and political movement led in part by "returned students" that claimed a key role in China's May Fourth uprising. Significantly, Dewey saw this movement as evidence of a genuine "intellectual awakening" in China. He wrote in an article for *The New Republic* that the Young China movement was genuine because "it was not a political movement." Rather, he explained, "It was the manifestation of a new consciousness, an intellectual awakening in young men and young women who through their schooling had been aroused to the necessity of a new order of belief, a new method of thinking."³⁵ In particular, Dewey saw the authenticity of democratic growth in the New Culture movement's promotion of "literary revolution," which promoted vernacular

³⁵ Dewey, "The Sequel of the Student Revolt," 382.

writing and introduced western texts to a Chinese reading public through journals like *New Youth*, or *La Jeunesse*, as well as through its emphasis on progressive education. Since Dewey believed that “returned students” represented genuine social growth, he argued in his writing for their recognition as the new political representatives of China.

Conceptually, the figure of the “returned student” functioned in Dewey’s writing as a “native informant,” which proved his philosophy of democratic education and therefore supported his argument for the global expansion of progressive education. Postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak traces the “native informant” to the discipline of ethnography but argues that it also emerged as a figure enabling the “‘universal’ narratives” produced by modern European philosophers.³⁶ Even when the “native informant” appears as “fully self-present voice consciousness,” Spivak writes that this figure “*is a blank*” that is nonetheless “generative of a cultural identity that only the West (or a Western-model disciple) could inscribe.” As a figure “generative of a text of cultural identity,” the “native informant” was necessary to universal philosophies of “Man” while, at the same time, functioning as a “name for that mark of expulsion from the name of Man—a mark crossing out the impossibility of ethical relation” (6). The “returned student” served as another figure of “conscriptio” in Dewey’s writings. Like the savages and slaves that appear in *Democracy and Education*, “returned students” are never explicitly named in Dewey’s writings, however his writing is peppered with references to conversations with “returned students,” which lend veracity to his ethnographic observations about Japanese and Chinese “culture” and support policy recommendations made to his U.S. audience. As such, this figure lent crucial support to Dewey’s representation of the U.S.’s role in foreign affairs after WWI. The “returned student” functions in Dewey’s writings to “script” the

³⁶ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 6, 8.

legitimation of U.S. global hegemony. This figure was part of what in “The Conscription of Thought” he called “the great experience of discovering the significance of American national life by seeing it reflected in the life of the world....”³⁷ As evidence of progressive education’s success, the “returned student” served as a proxy of western progressive liberalism, acting as a historical agent to spread democracy abroad by creating an “open door” to progressive education in Asia. The “returned student” also anticipated the figure of the “model minority” in the U.S. In Dewey’s Asia writings, the “returned student” serves a disciplinary function both in the U.S. and Asia by reinforcing boundaries against threats of conservatism and anti-democratic forces represented by the “yellow peril,” especially the transnational threat posed by “coolies.”³⁸

During WWI, Dewey began to see the role of the social scientist in a new light. In an article for *The New Republic* called “A New Social Science” Dewey argued that the social sciences could no longer afford to merely research and describe “laws” of evolution but had to take an active role in managing social crises produced by the war.³⁹ The economic, political, and social upheaval caused by the war had demonstrated to Dewey that “it takes a detailed intelligence, not mere desire, however praiseworthy, to manage society in an emergency” (294). What the world needed was above all the rational direction of political affairs to prevent the potential disaster of “miscellaneous evolution” or “miscellaneous revolution” after the war (292).

³⁷ Dewey, “Conscription of Thought,” 130.

³⁸ In *America’s Asia*, Colleen Lye argues that while the “model minority” has generally been tracked to 1960s political movements, it served an important ideological function in turn-of-the-century cultural production. She writes, “the yellow peril and model minority are best understood as two aspects of the same, long-running racial form, a form whose most salient feature, whether it has been made the basis for exclusion or assimilation, is the trope of economic efficiency.” See Colleen Lye, *America’s Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5. While Dewey’s representations of “returned students” link up to Dewey’s ideas about the role of industrialization in evolutionary social change, the figure of the “returned student” cannot be reduced in his writing to a figure of “economic efficiency.” As will be demonstrated, this figure represents first and foremost the intellectual guidance needed to promote global democratic growth. For a brilliant historicization of the figure of the “coolie,” see Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

³⁹ John Dewey, “A New Social Science,” in *The New Republic* (New York: The Republic Publishing Company), Apr. 16, 1918, 293-294.

More concretely, Dewey did not want to see foreign affairs dominated by either the imperial greed of the Allied powers or chaotic upheaval instigated by “Bolshevists,” Marxists, socialists, or other revolutionary nationalist groups. Dewey’s Asia writings exemplify the new, more active direction that Dewey imagined the social sciences should take after the war. As indicated in the quote starting this section, Dewey saw his Asia writings as an active force in shaping U.S. public opinion toward a progressive, pragmatic approach to world affairs. Indeed, some argue that Dewey’s wide influence in the U.S. during the first part of the twentieth century had more to do with his popular—rather than philosophical—writing.⁴⁰ Dewey published several articles about his trip to Asia in *The New Republic*, the U.S.’s premier progressive publication, and in *Asia*, a progressive monthly that was originally founded in 1898 by the American Asiatic Association to “facilitate the interchange of views” among those with a vested interest in the “development of commercial enterprise in the Far East.”⁴¹ In general, Dewey’s articles for *The New Republic* created condensed arguments for how the U.S. should participate in affairs of the “Far East,” while his *Asia* articles are comprised of lengthier ruminations on democratic evolution and “Chinese psychology.” Evelyn Dewey’s compilation of John and Alice Dewey’s letters to their children in *Letters from China and Japan* charts the Deweys’ changing understanding of China and Japan. An advertisement for the *Letters* in *Asia* described them as a “revealing glimpse of the relations between China and Japan which give more real inside information of affairs in the Far East than can be obtained from books or news dispatches.”⁴² In all of his Asia writings, Dewey wrote from the standpoint of an objective social researcher whose ideas “evolve” and

⁴⁰ See Mary V. Dearborn, *Love in the Promised Land: The Story of Anzia Yezierska and John Dewey* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 166-170.

⁴¹ *Asia* 1, no. 1 (New York: Asia Publishing Company), Jul. 25, 1898, 1.

⁴² *Asia* (New York: Asia Publishing Company), Aug. 1920, 730.

therefore conform more accurately to the “real” state of affairs in Japan and China as he gained new experiences in each country.

In his Asia writings, Dewey constructed the standpoint of the objective social researcher by representing his visit to Japan and China as an educational tour. He authorized his observations and policy recommendations by representing them as products of an evolving perspective produced out of contact with Chinese intellectuals and the New Culture movement. He starts an article for *Asia*: “To the student of political and social development, China presents a most exciting intellectual situation.” While the student may have “read in books the account of the slow evolution” of “governmental institutions,” Dewey explains, “He finds in China an object lesson in what he has read.”⁴³ Like Dewey’s Laboratory School, China was represented as a laboratory of evolutionary “political and social development.” In the *Letters*, a letter that appears to be written by John Dewey remarks, “We agreed that never in our lives had we begun to learn as much as in the last four months.” In particular, he explains that observing China’s May Fourth uprising had presented “almost too much food to be digestible.”⁴⁴ Dewey’s “digestion” of these events, however, was aided by ongoing observation of and contact with the New Culture movement. Dewey explicitly distanced himself from foreign visitors who insisted upon viewing China within a “pattern” of historical development modeled on the “West.”⁴⁵ Instead, the perspective Dewey exemplifies in his Asia writings overlaps with the adaptive “scientific standpoint” he theorized in *Democracy and Education*, a standpoint that attempted to “[include] the experience of others as well as his [the student’s] own.”⁴⁶ Further on in his article

⁴³ John Dewey, “The New Leaven in Chinese Politics,” in *Asia* (New York: Asia Publishing Company), Apr. 1920, 267.

⁴⁴ John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey, *Letters from China and Japan*, ed. Evelyn Dewey (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1920), 204-205.

⁴⁵ John Dewey, “Chinese National Sentiment,” in *Asia* (New York: Asia Publishing Company), Dec. 1919, 1237.

⁴⁶ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 227.

for *Asia*, he supported his observations on China's "intellectual awakening" by explaining how his own point of view had "evolved" over time. He writes that the visitor to China goes through three "successive stages": irritation over China's apparent need for cultural and political reform, acquiescence to the slow pace of "evolution" in China, and, finally, if not "arrested" in the second stage, apprehension of "signs of an intellectual awakening" in China. Dewey confirmed the expanded, synthetic scope of his observations by explaining to readers that his standpoint accorded with that of the New Culture movement. He explains, in fact, that what he called Young China had also passed through the foreign visitor's "three stages" of approach to Chinese social evolution and, finally, "has now settled down to constructive efforts along lines of education, industry, and social reorganization."⁴⁷

The ostensibly disinterested, objective standpoint that Dewey adopted in his Asia writings, however, ultimately conforms to the process of progressive education that he theorized in *Democracy and Education*. In other words, Dewey limited the influence of China and Japan on his writing to representative "intellectuals" who already conformed to his model of evolutionary education. Dewey's Asia writings participate in a long genealogy of European orientalism in which, as postcolonial scholar Edward Said puts it, the study of the "Orient" is "based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged."⁴⁸ Said argues that orientalist scholarship relies on a "flexible *positional* superiority" in which the "Western" scholar never "[loses] the relative upper hand" (7). The theory of democratic evolution that Dewey postulated in *Democracy and Education* was insulated from any serious challenge from political, economic, and social processes taking place in Japan and China. By positioning himself as a social

⁴⁷ Dewey, "The New Leaven in Chinese Politics," 271.

⁴⁸ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 8.

scientific researcher in Asia, Dewey never gives up the “positional superiority” to generate “real” observations. Historian Henry Yu traces the general tendency in University of Chicago sociologists of using travel to Asia and Asian immigrant communities in the U.S. in order to “understand America as a *modern nation* through the construction of the primitive or premodern other against which it was differentiated.”⁴⁹ The “American Orientalism” of the Chicago School of sociologists produced modern progress against the backdrop of “Oriental stagnation” by representing the U.S. as a “modern civilization that...built upon a consciousness that encompassed all cultures.” Conforming to Dewey’s theory of democratic evolution, the New Culture movement expressed for Dewey a *universal* process of cultural transformation apprehensible to the social researcher. Dewey represented Chinese evolution, however, against the backdrop of threatening conservative, anti-modern tendencies endemic to Chinese and Japanese “cultures.” In his Asia writings, the process of “culture” Dewey theorized in *School and Society* and *Democracy and Education* hardened to describe discrete cultural groups organized as historical national identities.

Dewey represented China’s “intellectual awakening” as a democratic force for modern industrialization, institutional reform, and social change that had to contend with the “scale” of Chinese “civilization’s” slow historical movement.⁵⁰ Instead of producing easily perceptible change, the social, economic, political, and environmental upheavals within China had resulted in a slow evolution hard to detect for the “foreign interpreter” with a “mind adapted to the quick tempo of the West.”⁵¹ In articles for *Asia*, Dewey diagnoses the slow evolution of China as part

⁴⁹ Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 86-87.

⁵⁰ See John Dewey, “Transforming the Mind of China,” in *Asia* (New York: Asia Publishing Company), Nov, 1919, 1103-1108; and John Dewey, “What Holds China Back,” in *Asia* (New York: Asia Publishing Company), May 1920, 373-377.

⁵¹ John Dewey, “Transforming the Mind of China,” 1103.

of a national “psychology” produced by the historic split between the masses and ruling classes as well as the density of the Chinese population. In “Chinese National Sentiment,” Dewey argues that the relative isolation of Chinese masses from political and economic affairs produced a “static equilibrium” that absorbed the upheaval of natural disasters and rebellions into the “established order of Heaven or Nature.”⁵² This “moral” and “internal” stasis was furthermore endemic to Chinese “civilization” (1239). Similarly, Dewey argues in another *Asia* article, “What Holds China Back,” that the collective “Chinese mind” was symptomatic of a “psychology of the crowd” produced through the “extraordinary and long-continued density of populations.”⁵³ Institutional reforms therefore tended to be “swallowed” or “absorbed” because China’s “face-to-face crowded existence” created a “thick civilization” maintained by reducing social “friction” (375). Dewey’s articles about China maintained that Chinese society was “naturally adaptive” but argued that its social, political, and economic environment made its social evolution slow moving. Dewey described the mechanism of social evolution in China as *laissez-faire*, or a stifling “live and let live” attitude produced in “response to crowded conditions” (374).⁵⁴

Dewey did not represent China as immovably “static,” but its “over-crowded” conditions and “backward” institutions had produced slavish social “habits” inimical to social growth (377). According to Dewey, China needed intellectual leadership provided by “returned students” in order to guide its *laissez-faire* evolution. If China’s “intellectual awakening” did not take hold (and for Dewey it was not inevitable that it would), then it was in danger of foreign control, especially by imperial Japan, or the “miscellaneous evolution” of uneducated Chinese masses.

⁵² John Dewey, “Chinese National Sentiment,” 1238-1239.

⁵³ Dewey, “What Holds China Back,” 373.

⁵⁴ Dewey’s use of *laissez-faire* in this article is not identical to *laissez-faire* as applied to political economy in the U.S.

Either of these outcomes could result in a “Bolshevikized Asia” or a “Japanized-Militarized China” that would prevent worldwide “democratization” while exacerbating the U.S.’s “Far Eastern ‘problems.’”⁵⁵ Although Dewey avoided popular rhetoric of the “yellow peril” used to whip up support for laws restricting Asian immigration in the U.S., he represented the Chinese masses as the threat—as well as the key—to Asian democracy and industrial development. More specifically, he represented the illiberal treatment of women and the proliferation of “coolies” as transnational threats to Asian democracy by producing a disordered, “itinerant” domesticity within Japanese and Chinese societies.

Many of the letters John and Alice Dewey wrote home are filled with descriptions of the “backward” treatment of women in Japan and China. Alice frequently lectured publicly on women, particularly on women’s education and, at one point, she accepted requests from Japanese women who wanted to accompany the Deweys back to New York so they could study in the U.S.⁵⁶ While Alice experimented with Japanese women’s dress, she resisted behaving according to what she perceived to be Japanese and Chinese domestic standards for women and took delight in transgressing gender norms. In letters written about a “Geisha party” in Japan, Alice writes home about her pleasure in being the “first woman in history” to attend an event normally reserved for men, while John remarks that he thinks Japanese men consorted with geishas “because they are tired of their too obeyful wives and their overdocity” (129, 142). John Dewey attributed the “clammifying process” undergone by Japanese women to Japan’s “overcultivated” civilization. In China, on the other hand, John and Alice observed the “backward” treatment of women through practices like foot-binding, but they saw the participation of women in the May Fourth uprising as evidence of China’s democratic

⁵⁵ See Dewey and Dewey, 166-169; and John Dewey, “American and Chinese Education,” in *The New Republic* (New York: The Republic Publishing Company), March 1, 1922, 17.

⁵⁶ Dewey and Dewey, 71.

“awakening” (209, 220-221). Dewey makes the contrast he observed between the Chinese and Japanese treatment of women clear in a letter written from Shanghai shortly after arriving in China:

The East is an example of what a masculine civilization can be and do. The trouble I should say is that the discussions have been confined to the subjecting of the women as if that were a thing affecting the women only. It is my conviction that not merely the domestic and educational backwardness of China, but the increasing physical degeneration and the universal political corruption and lack of public spirit, which make China such an easy mark, is the result of the condition of women. There is the same corruption in Japan only it is organized.... So while Japan is strong where China is weak, there are corresponding defects there because of the submission of women—and the time will come when the hidden weakness will break Japan down. (161-162)

For John Dewey, China appeared as the future of the “masculine civilization” of the East despite its “subjection” of women. Dewey saw social progress in China evidenced in women’s participation in strikes and the New Culture movement’s advocacy of birth control, and women’s participation in the May Fourth uprising demonstrated for Dewey that China was on the way toward evolving democracy.⁵⁷ In Japan, on the other hand, the “submission of women” appeared as a threat to Japanese democracy. Whereas China could reverse its “domestic and educational backwardness” through the emancipation of women, Japan, in Dewey’s argument, appeared on the path of “degeneration” that would lead to “break down.”

In Dewey’s Asia writings the threat of reproducing a backward social order through the submission of women was bound up with the transnational threat of “coolies.” As historian Moon-Ho Jung demonstrates, the figure of the “coolie” in the U.S. imagination was intertwined with post-emancipation debates surrounding free and enslaved labor in an era of increasingly free trade. “Coolies” in the U.S. simultaneously represented an “industrious labor force to hasten slavery’s demise” and an “inferior race” that “[epitomized] the cruelty of coerced labor.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Dewey, “What Holds China Back,” 377.

⁵⁸ Jung, 5.

Indeed, the “coolies” in Dewey’s writing represent a “slavishness” that could spread throughout Asia if China was not assisted in gaining national control over processes of industrialization and international trade. Dewey made references to “coolies” in Japan and the U.S., but his most sustained discussion of “coolies” was in relation to China. He argued that “coolies” posed a threat to democratic change in China because they represented a maladaptation to industrialization. In a letter home, Dewey recounts a question Alice asked about why “coolies” pulling “rickshas” in the sun don’t wear hats. Dewey explained to her, “It’s either survival of the fittest or inheritance of acquired characteristics.” The coolie’s “adaptation to every kind of physical discomfort,” however, had produced not progress but an “itinerant domesticity.”⁵⁹ In another letter, Dewey observes that poverty produced a backward morality among coolies. Told by an official about “coolies” stealing scrap metal, Dewey writes, “The privation of life sets up an entirely new standard for morals. No one, it appears, can be convicted for stealing food in China” (271-272). The “itinerant domesticity” and backward morality of the “coolies” represented a transnational threat that might have evoked for Dewey’s U.S. audience labor debates surrounding “coolies,” in particular Japanese labor, on the West Coast of the U.S.⁶⁰ Like the Deweys’ representations of subservient Asian women, “coolies” represented the threat of “miscellaneous evolution”—or even “degeneration”—that might act as a counter-force to global democracy without progressive intervention in the “Far East.”

In several articles for *The New Republic*, Dewey used patriarchal language of gender and sexuality to argue for U.S. intervention in the moral development of the “Far East.” By gendering and sexualizing the boundaries between “democracy” and “conservatism,” Dewey

⁵⁹ Dewey and Dewey, 257.

⁶⁰ Dewey makes oblique reference to laborers from Japan and China in the U.S. in a few of his *New Republic* articles. This image might also evoke images of Chinese laborers working U.S. railroads or sugar plantations and the Chinese Exclusion Act.

carved out a place for “returned students” to act as proxy “heroes” of global democratization while simultaneously racializing democracy. While “coolies” and the submission of women represented for Dewey internal threats to Chinese evolution, Japanese imperialism posed the primary threat from outside. During the war, Japan issued its Twenty-One Demands to China, which included Japanese demands for control over the province of Shandong, access to natural resources and railways, and formal influence over China’s police and finance. The May Fourth uprising and mass boycotts of Japanese products were organized in response to Japan’s imperial incursions in China, specifically its demand for the cession of Shandong from Germany at the Paris Peace Conference. In all his Asia writings, Dewey sought to correct widespread U.S. views that Japan’s apparent adoption of western technology and liberalism authorized it to take control in China. He wrote in *The New Republic*, for instance, that traveling from Japan to China “almost seems as if one were living in a dream; or as if some new Alice had ventured behind an international looking-glass where everything is in reverse.”⁶¹ Dewey used a combination of ethnographic description and photography to flesh out the “reversal” between Japan and China in his *Asia* articles, arguing that while Japan may have appeared to adopt western liberalism, it was China that was in the throes of psychological, democratic transformation. Japan’s contact with the West had resulted in its merely “borrowing” accouterments of western life while maintaining its “traditional aims and moral ways.”⁶² Dewey says, in fact, that Japan’s “civilization” had historically “borrowed” heavily from China (1104). For China, however, the “Boxer Convulsion” is marked in Dewey’s writing as a key event in Chinese history when contact with the “forces of western life” made China “adapt” and “adjust herself to the requirements imposed by the activities of western peoples” (1103). Dewey argued furthermore that this “adaptation,”

⁶¹ John Dewey, “On Two Sides of the Eastern Sea,” *The New Republic* (New York: Republic Publishing Company), Jul. 16, 1919, 346.

⁶² Dewey, “Transforming the Mind of China,” 1104.

which reminded him of the early U.S. republic, was integral to China's historical development as a nation that had, unlike Japan, "evolved, not borrowed, her civilization" (1104, 1105).

Dewey likened Japan's display of liberalism to political theater, an elaborate masking of conservative, imperial desires in China behind a visage of western-style liberalism. In their letters from Japan, the Deweys write about excursions to Japanese theaters, outings to buy Japanese art and dolls, and elaborate meals. Upon arriving in China, John Dewey is reminded of Detroit and after a month in Beijing remarks, "It's a wonder we were ever let out of Japan at all." Contrasting Japan and China, Dewey observes that Japan's country and treatment of visitors is "beautiful": "Deliberate deceit couldn't be one-tenth as effective; it's a real gift of art."⁶³ The natural "artistic knack" of the Japanese transfers into politics. Dewey writes, "They are the greatest manipulators of the outside of things that ever lived. I realized when I was there that they were a nation of specialists, but I didn't realize that foreign affairs and diplomacy were also such a specialized art" (255). In several articles for *The New Republic*, Dewey represented the U.S. and Japan as locked in a "duel" over moral influence in China. He describes Japan during the war as "mistress of the field" in Asia, allowed by the Allied powers to "consummate" dubious and "secret" alliances with imperialist foreign powers.⁶⁴ China, by contrast, is described as having assigned to "Japan the role of despoiler and to America the role of rescuer." He explains that China saw a "heroic legend" in the "image of a powerful, democratic, peace-loving America, devoted to securing international rights and justice" (111). Represented as locked in a "duel" with sly "mistress" Japan, the "virile" U.S. had the "opportunity" to rescue the damsel in distress by intervening financially and educationally in China. Dewey states forcefully in another

⁶³ Dewey and Dewey, 147, 255.

⁶⁴ John Dewey, "The International Duel in China," *The New Republic* (New York: Republic Publishing Company), Aug. 27, 1919, 110.

article for *The New Republic*, titled “The Far Eastern Deadlock”: “The key to peace in the Far East exists at the present time in America.”⁶⁵

The gendered and sexualized map of democracy and conservatism that Dewey projects onto the “West” and “Far East,” however, betrays its own participation within a play of masks. Like other orientalist scholars before him, Dewey was ultimately unable to apprehend the “East” outside of what Edward Said calls the “closed field” of orientalist myths, representations, and scholarship.⁶⁶ Said argues that orientalist scholarship which has made the “East” known, or legible, to the “West,” is supplemented by a long tradition of myths and stories about the “Orient” that function to discipline and define—or “Orientalize”—Asia (67). He compares this process of orientalizing to an elaborate “staging” (63) in which “the idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. . . . The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe” (63). Although Dewey attempted to inhabit a “universal” standpoint of objective, scientific rationality, he took a distinctly *orientalized* standpoint to global democracy after the war. His ambivalent representations of the political and cultural “arts” of Japan as both “beautiful” and dangerously duplicitous draw upon orientalist tropes of Japan that American studies scholar Mari Yoshihara writes were all the rage in U.S. cities like New York in the early twentieth century.⁶⁷ In the early 1900s, Puccini’s operatic production of *Madame Butterfly* at Castle Square and the Metropolitan Opera reached New York audiences, as did other successful orientalist plays like Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Mikado*. In their letters, the Deweys delight in attending Noh theater performances, known for their elaborate masking, and

⁶⁵ John Dewey, “The Far Eastern Deadlock,” *The New Republic* (New York: Republic Publishing Company), Mar. 16, 1921, 71.

⁶⁶ Said, 63.

⁶⁷ Mari Yoshihara, *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 78.

in seeing the actor Ganjiro, who they remember from a play called *Bushido* produced in New York.⁶⁸ In his political articles written for *The New Republic*, Dewey casts the U.S. in the role of virile hero-rescuer of China, saving the innocent proto-democracy from the sly, promiscuous Japanese empire, yet the most elaborate mask Dewey employs in his own political theater is that of the “returned student.”

The *genuine* development of democracy in China is contrasted to the *artificiality* of liberalism in Japan in Dewey’s Asia writings, yet democracy in China is represented as immature and feminized. It exists among the masses as a “feeling” but is not yet guided by an intelligent rationality capable of directing its hitherto *laissez-faire* evolution toward the creation of democratic institutions, including, importantly, progressive schools. Dewey explains in *The New Republic*: “Although democracy [in China] is articulately held only by a comparative handful who have been educated, yet these few *know* and the dumb masses *feel* that it alone accords with the historic spirit of the Chinese race.”⁶⁹ In an important article titled “American and Chinese Education,” Dewey clearly outlines the role that “returned students” should play as intellectual, cultural, and political leaders of democracy in China. The immediate occasion for the article was a visit to the U.S. by a Chinese delegation, which Dewey accuses of failing to “represent” the authentic “voice” of “Chinese national sentiment.” The article is framed by a conversation Dewey said he had had with a Chinese student educated in the U.S. and active in the May Fourth uprising. Dewey explains to readers that the student attributed the delegates’ failure of adequate representation to their American missionary education, which the student argued, “had produced a rather subservient intellectual type, one which [the student] characterized as slavish.”⁷⁰

American missionary schools cultivated a “slavish” intellect by exporting U.S. education to

⁶⁸ Dewey and Dewey, 88, 103.

⁶⁹ Dewey, “The International Duel in China,” 112.

⁷⁰ Dewey, “American and Chinese Education,” 15.

China without adapting it to Chinese social conditions. In particular, Dewey saw missionaries' focus on English language training as preparing Chinese students for "subordinate positions in foreign managed industries," thus "[training] commercial, political, and religious compradores" (17). Dewey argued that instead of supporting missionaries, the U.S. should extend support to the New Culture movement's educative efforts. Dewey saw the movement's efforts as "genuine" because he believed that it favored apolitical cultural evolution over direct political action. He writes: "[Young China] is democratic, but its democracy is social and industrial; there is little faith in political action and not much interest in government changes except as they may naturally reflect changes in habits of mind." Instead of direct political intervention, the New Culture movement favored "cultural transformation" through education: "There is nothing which one hears from the lips of representatives of Young China of today as that education is the sole means of reconstructing China" (16). Unlike American missionaries, Young China did not want to "copy" or "imitate" U.S. educational institutions. Instead, according to Dewey, it sought to synthesize Chinese "culture" with western scientific education in order to build a new system of progressive education suited to China's social and environmental conditions (16-17).

In "American and Chinese Education," Dewey begins to outline how "returned students" would function to create an educational "open door" in China that would guide its industrial, political, and social "growth" along democratic lines. As a rhetorical figure, the "returned student" functions as a "native informant" in Dewey's writing that lends moral authority to U.S. interventions in Japan and China. Dewey emphasizes that he is not qualified to judge the events taking place in China: "There are not many non-Chinese who know enough to judge the situation and I do not count myself among the few who can judge" (15-16). However, he argues that the view expressed by the unnamed "returned student" in the article "expresses a belief that is

widely and increasingly held in China” (16). Dewey masks his argument for U.S. intervention in China and Japan with the figure of the “returned student,” who represents the authentic “voice” of China. By intervening in China, the U.S. would be supporting its “genuine” democratic growth. It would fulfill the promise Woodrow Wilson made during the war to “make the world safe for democracy.” In a letter written from Shanghai, Dewey says, “I didn’t ever expect to be a jingo, but either the United States ought to wash its hands entirely of the Eastern question...or else it ought to be as positive and aggressive in calling Japan to account for every aggressive move she makes.”⁷¹ He explained it was “sickening” that the U.S. had allowed Japan to maintain so much power in China, engaging in “talk about the open door, when Japan has locked most of the doors in China and got the keys in her pocket” (179). In “American and Chinese Education,” Dewey argues that the U.S. needed to take an active role in promoting democracy in China by supporting the New Culture movement, sending “well trained foreigners” to help set up progressive schools with laboratories and libraries, acting aggressively with Japan, and encouraging industrial development.⁷² Dewey concludes that this work “will not be done for the sake of the prestige or commerce of the United States but for the sake of the troubled world of which China and U.S. are integral parts. Build up a China of men and women of trained independent thought and character, and there will be no Far Eastern ‘problems’ such as now vex us” (17).

Dewey’s Asia writings deployed the figure of the “returned student” as a mask that made U.S. intervention in China appear welcome, benevolent, and part of the natural, evolutionary growth of global democracy. The “returned student” was an occasion for Dewey to write a new script for the role of the U.S. in the world as intellectual, moral guide. The educational open door

⁷¹ Dewey and Dewey, 179.

⁷² Dewey, “American and Chinese Education,” 17.

that Dewey imagined, however, was deeply intertwined with imperialist Open Door policies the U.S. had promoted since the late nineteenth century, which were part of attempts to create an economic empire in China by “opening” its markets to U.S. goods.⁷³ According to Dewey, the U.S. had a “great chance” after the war to invest capital in the industrialization, or “reconstruction,” of China. “Returned students,” he explained, would “supply a definite nucleus for administrative cooperation” in this endeavor.⁷⁴ As he writes in an article for *Asia*, it was ultimately the “introduction of modern industrial methods,” including mining, railroads, and manufacturing, which he believed the New Culture movement supported, that would produce in China “habits that will lessen the importance and appearances of ‘face’, and increase the importance of objective consequences and facts.”⁷⁵ Progressive education would work hand-in-hand with industrialization to promote democratic evolution in China. For Dewey, the U.S.’s involvement in this project would be exercised primarily through supporting “returned students” and would therefore be immune to charges of imperialism.

Dewey’s conscription of the “returned student” for the moral battle of democracy in the “Far East” created a feedback loop in his Asia writings. As products of progressive education in the West, “returned students” appear as the true representatives of democratic evolution in the “Far East.” The ostensibly independent, objective standpoint produced by a scientific education distinguished “returned students” from the “slavish” thinking of peers educated at American missionary schools and feminized masses who “feel”—but do not “know”—democracy. “Returned students” are represented in Dewey’s Asia writings as the legitimate intellectual guides of democratic development. But, *who* were the “returned students” that Dewey referenced

⁷³ For more on U.S. imperialism and the Open Door, see Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market: America’s Quest for Informal Empire, 1893-1901* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967).

⁷⁴ John Dewey, “The American Opportunity in China,” in *The New Republic* (New York: Republic Publishing Company), Dec. 3, 1919, 16.

⁷⁵ Dewey, “What Holds China Back,” 377.

in his writings? While Dewey refused to name the “returned student” he refers to in “American and Chinese Education,” he might have been thinking of Hu Shih, a former student he advised at Columbia University. Born in 1891 in Anhui Province, Hu applied for a Boxer Indemnity Scholarship in 1910 and completed his dissertation at Columbia University under Dewey. Dewey’s trip to China was in many ways enabled by Hu. As a professor at Beijing National University and key participant in the New Culture movement, Hu arranged several of Dewey’s visits at universities across China, acted as his interpreter, published articles about him, and, due to his own growing influence, secured large crowds for Dewey’s lectures.⁷⁶ Hu’s leading role in the New Culture movement (especially its “literary revolution”), his attraction to Dewey’s scientific method of experimentation, his outspoken advocacy of women’s rights, and his public espousal of gradual and educational democratic “evolution” in China make him appear to be an ideal “returned student.” Historian Jerome Grieder points out, however, that Hu not only differed with Dewey as to how cultural transformation would come about but also that Hu grew increasingly alienated from the Chinese revolutionary movement (71, 120). While Dewey saw “returned students” as *representative* of the New Culture movement and democratic transformation among Chinese masses, Hu’s story complicates the leadership role that Dewey assigned to “returned students.”

Skeptical of direct political agitation, Dewey saw the New Culture movement as representative of genuine democratic growth in China because it sought to create social change through cultural transformation. He saw the student movement and literary revolution in China as evidence of this transformation. As “spontaneous” movements, they evidenced for Dewey the “manifestation of a new consciousness, an intellectual awakening in the young men and young women who through their schooling had been aroused to the necessity of a new order of belief, a

⁷⁶ Grieder, 121-122.

new method of thinking.”⁷⁷ Hu was one of the founders of the “literary revolution” in China. He began publishing in the primary journal of the New Culture movement, *New Youth*, while he was still a student in the U.S., and his 1917 publication of “tentative proposals” for literary revolution were reproduced in several revolutionary publications in China.⁷⁸ Hu argued against education in classical Chinese literary forms, believing that literature written in the vernacular was more representative of the real lives of the Chinese masses. Vernacular writing would serve an educative function by popularizing new progressive ideas among the masses, and the new literature that arose in the vernacular would be evidence of China’s evolutionary growth (79, 84-85).

In a supplement for a 1918 *Peking Leader* titled “A Literary Revolution in China,” Hu explained to an Anglophone audience that classical literature was a “dead literature”: “It is obvious to all critical observers that the literature of modern China does not represent the real life of the nation: it is mostly imitative of the literature of the past.”⁷⁹ Hu asserts, moreover, that classical literature represented a form of intellectual enslavement. Bound by the “shackles of classical imitation and contentless formalism,” classical literature represented stagnation (105). Hu argues:

If we truly wish to give China a literature which shall not only be expressive of the real life and thoughts of our time, but also be an effective force in the intellectual and social reforms, we must first emancipate ourselves from the fetters of a dead language which may have once been the fitting literary instrument for our forefathers, but which certainly is not adequate for the creation of a living literature of our own times. (105)

New Youth attempted to cultivate a cosmopolitan consciousness in its readers by reprinting excerpts from western philosophical, cultural, and literary texts that were carefully selected for

⁷⁷ John Dewey, “The Sequel of the Student Revolt,” 382.

⁷⁸ Grieder, 76.

⁷⁹ Hu Shih, “A Literary Revolution in China,” in *A Collection of Hu Shih’s English Writings*, ed. Chih-p’ing Chou (T’ai-pei shih: Yüan liu ch’u pan kung ssu, 1995), 103.

their social and political messaging.⁸⁰ Hu also experimented with writing literature, publishing several poems in the vernacular as well as a play, “The Greatest Event in Life: A Farce in One Act,” which dealt with traditional Chinese marriage customs. Grieder argues that Hu saw the literary “revolution” as an integral part of China’s “evolutionary” growth (84). Unable to speak local languages, Dewey relied on “returned students” as translators and liaisons during his trip. Although Dewey figures the New Culture movement in his Asia writings as the genuine representative of Chinese democracy, his understanding of the New Culture movement and the literary revolution may very well have been limited to interpretations provided by “returned students” like Hu Shih. Hu’s publications on literary revolution and evolution in China preceded Dewey’s trip and anticipate several of Dewey’s arguments about China’s “intellectual awakening.” What Dewey’s articles did not—or perhaps could not—convey was the political and social complexity of the revolutionary movement taking place in China. The feedback loop Dewey created in his articles produced a myopic perspective on Chinese revolution that was blind to its anti-imperial strands.

The story of Hu’s participation in the New Culture movement provides alternate ways to understand China’s revolution and begin to unravel Dewey’s argument for U.S. intervention in China to support “returned students.” Grieder writes that even within the literary revolution, Hu grew increasingly alienated from his peers. Hu’s commitment to gradual, evolutionary change was contested by colleagues favoring the more immediate overthrow of “old-fashioned scholars” (85-86). Hu’s split with fellow scholars such as Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, who became communist leaders, is exemplary of what Grieder describes as Hu’s “estrangement” from those in the revolutionary nationalist movement who saw direct action as a valuable tactic in overthrowing China’s “warlord” regime (70-71). Historian Joseph T. Chen argues, furthermore,

⁸⁰ Grieder, 90.

that nationalist leaders like Hu, who saw the New Culture and May Fourth movements to be identical, did not acknowledge the crucial differences between the movements nor the influence the May Fourth movement exercised on the New Culture movement after 1919. Chen explains that the New Culture movement was primarily an intellectual movement that sought to “awaken” the Chinese masses by advocating a break with China’s past and advocating the “wholesale Westernization and modernization” of Chinese culture.⁸¹ In contrast, Chen argues that the May Fourth movement should be regarded as a popular movement organized by the Chinese “people,” representing a broad, diffuse base that did not consist primarily of Beijing students nor an intellectual elite (6-13). Calling for the “‘elimination of traitors’ from within and the ‘resistance to foreign powers’ from without,” these leaders, according to Chen, sought to expel *all* imperialist intruders—including the U.S.—from China and looked to China’s past as a source of “*admiration and respect*” not “*negation*” (18). Grieder writes that Hu grew increasingly distant from a younger generation of revolutionaries toward the end of his life. While Hu served as an ambassador to the U.S. and remained a popular lecturer with U.S. audiences, young revolutionaries began to view Hu’s close ties to the U.S. and his insistence on gradual revolution as reasons for distrust. A 1948 article on the May Fourth movement went so far as to condemn him as a “compradore scholar” for the West.⁸² Hu eventually fled Beijing when Mao Zedong’s “New Democracy,” which actively sought to discredit his work, took power during the same year and Hu was “semi-exiled” in the U.S. for the remainder of his life (308-312).

The story of Hu’s participation in the New Culture movement and May Fourth uprisings opens up alternate interpretations of revolutionary events foreclosed in Dewey’s Asia writings. Dewey, however, continued throughout his life to advocate for the globalization of progressive

⁸¹ Joseph Chen, *The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai: The Making of a Social Movement in Modern China* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1971), 17.

⁸² Grieder, 307-308.

education in articles written for *The New Republic* on Turkey, Mexico, and the U.S.S.R., where he traveled as a scholar and, in the case of Turkey and Mexico, as an educational advisor and teacher. Biographer Jay Martin writes that after his trip to Japan and China, Dewey grew increasingly disillusioned with progressive reform in the U.S. and his “educational vision and his political understanding broadened beyond American boundaries to include the world.”⁸³ The arguments Dewey constructed in articles on his later travels for the expansion of progressive education abroad resonate with his Asia writings. In an article titled “The Problem of Turkey,” Dewey concludes his argument for liberal reform in Turkey by making an explicit analogy with China. Admitting that the comparison between the two countries may seem “silly,” he nonetheless argues that China and Turkey “have the same problem of transformation, a change which can be effected only from within however much it may be required by external [foreign] relations.”⁸⁴ Of course, his observations amidst the “fog” and “confusion” of an unfamiliar place are cleared up by conversations with a U.S.-educated local.⁸⁵

The “Failed” Returned Student

“Well, thou hast seen thy God, Jokanaan, but me, me, thou didst never see. If thou hadst seen me thou wouldst have loved me. I, I saw thee, Jokanaan, and I loved thee.”—Salomé in Oscar Wilde’s *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act*⁸⁶

“What a relief to give up the false life of fictionalizing her experiences—turning herself inside out into words.”—Anzia Yeziarska, *All I Could Never Be*⁸⁷

John Dewey’s travels to the Far East were revitalizing. Before leaving, Dewey had confessed to a Columbia colleague that he “had grown a little ‘stale.’” In a letter written shortly

⁸³ Martin, 336.

⁸⁴ John Dewey, “The Problem of Turkey,” *The New Republic* (New York: The Republic Publishing Company), Jan. 7, 1925, 163.

⁸⁵ John Dewey, “Foreign Schools in Turkey,” *The New Republic* (New York: The Republic Publishing Company), Dec. 3, 1924, 41. For more on “fog,” see Dewey, “The Problem of Turkey,” and John Dewey, “From a Mexican Notebook,” *The New Republic* (New York: The Republic Publishing Company), Oct. 20, 1926, 240.

⁸⁶ Oscar Wilde, *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act* (London/New York: John Lane Company, 1912), 80.

⁸⁷ Anzia Yeziarska, *All I Could Never Be* (New York: Brewer, Warren, and Putnam, 1932), 125.

after his return, Dewey wrote that the whole experience had “renewed” him: “Nothing western looks quite the same any more, and this is as near to a renewal of youth as can be hoped for in this world.”⁸⁸ As biographer Mary Dearborn points out, however, Dewey’s trip to Japan and China was not merely a matter of intellectual revitalization. Dewey escaped to the Far East shortly after making a personally unsuccessful foray into another “east”: New York City’s Lower East Side. After relocating to Columbia in 1904, Dewey continued his active involvement in the settlement movement, working with Columbia’s University Settlement, Greenwich House, and Lillian Wald’s Henry Street Settlement. He lectured frequently on immigrant education and began working on efforts to unionize high school teachers (84-88). Dearborn argues that Dewey’s interest in immigrant education, his growing popularity in scholarly and radical intellectual circles, and his work organizing for teachers’ rights eventually put him in contact with a woman who would become one of his most promising students. In pursuit of a teaching position that would give her the time and financial resources to write fiction, Anzia Yeziarska, a young teacher from the Lower East Side, followed the advice of her mother and went straight to the top—straight to John Dewey—to appeal for a better job (107). Shortly after this meeting, Dewey and Yeziarska began a love affair that ended in Dewey’s flight to California and then Asia, attempting to cut off contact with Yeziarska for the rest of his life. Although Dewey initially saw immense promise in his relationship with Yeziarska, she eventually posed a threat not only to his personal life but also the theory of democracy he believed could transform the world.

Born in Polish Russia around 1880, Yeziarska and her family immigrated to New York’s Lower East Side in 1893 to escape pogroms in czarist Russia. Like many Jewish immigrant families from eastern Europe, Yeziarska’s family struggled with poverty once they reached the

⁸⁸ Quoted in Dearborn, 163.

“New World.” Yeziarska worked in sweatshops to support her family, but as a teenager, she separated from her family and put herself through school to try to escape her parents’ poverty. In 1901, she won a scholarship to attend Columbia’s Teachers College where she learned “domestic science” from progressive educators. While Yeziarska’s scholarship enabled her to obtain work as a teacher, it also left her disgusted with the settlement movement’s domestication project. During this time, Yeziarska often lived in settlement houses, including the socialist Rand House, a settlement where Dewey was listed as a member of the faculty. In the 1910s, Yeziarska forged friendships with several radical women, including Rose Pastor Stokes, who was involved with socialism and labor activism, and Henrietta Rodman, who experimented with new feminist ways of living. Dearborn writes that Yeziarska struggled personally to make such a life for herself (75). In 1910, she married her first husband, Jacob Gordon, who she divorced because she said publicly that she favored a “spiritual relation” over a sexual one and, soon after, married his friend Arnold Levitas. Shortly before meeting Dewey, she separated from Levitas and left her only daughter, Louise, in his care so that she could support herself while trying to write fiction.⁸⁹

Dewey’s and Yeziarska’s short-lived love affair unraveled during a research study that Dewey conducted on a Polish immigrant neighborhood in Philadelphia from the fall of 1917 through the summer of 1918. The Polish study was the brainchild of Albert Coombs Barnes, a businessman who often sat in on Dewey’s Columbia classes. Barnes saw the study as an opportunity to test on a group of immigrants the theories of democratic social growth Dewey presented in *Democracy and Education*.⁹⁰ For the study, Dewey assembled his top graduate students along with Barnes and a Mrs. A. Levitas to determine the “conditions and forces”

⁸⁹ For more on Yeziarska’s biography, see Dearborn, *Love in the Promised Land*; Louise Levitas Henriksen, *Anzia Yeziarska: A Writer’s Life* (New Brunswick/London: Rutgers University Press, 1988); and Anzia Yeziarska, *Red Ribbon on a White Horse* (New York: Persea, 1950).

⁹⁰ Martin, 279.

preventing the development of “free and democratic life” among the Poles.⁹¹ Mrs. A. Levitas was Anzia Yeziarska, who audited Dewey’s Ethics and Education class along with Barnes. By the time Dewey asked Yeziarska to participate in the study, they had already begun a love affair that, while likely never physically consummated, was intensely emotional for them both. Dewey encouraged Yeziarska’s passion for writing by buying her her first typewriter and sending her love poetry. In one poem, “The Blossoming Wilderness,” which Yeziarska frequently quoted in her fiction, the speaker invests the relationship with his lover with immense symbolic importance and represents their love as the dawning of a new world.⁹² In her employment with the Polish study Yeziarska’s job was to study “conditions affecting family life and women,” but she ultimately refused to submit a report, angry at the social research methods employed by the research team as well as Dewey’s growing coldness toward her.

Yeziarska protested what she saw to be the study’s objectification of the Polish immigrants that it was ostensibly attempting to serve through social research. While it initially attracted the scrutiny of the Justice Department, which spied on the researchers’ correspondence, Dewey managed to publish the study’s research findings in both an article for *The New Republic*

⁹¹ John Dewey, *Conditions Among the Poles in the United States: A Confidential Report* (Philadelphia: 1918), 2.

⁹² Jo Ann Boydston edited and published Dewey’s lost poetry in 1977. She explains that Dewey had never intended to make his poetry public. Unknown to Dewey, a Columbia University librarian had scrupulously collected the poetry from Dewey’s desk and wastebasket and turned it over to the Columbiana Collection after Dewey’s death. Dewey’s second wife, Roberta Dewey, took possession of the poetry after she learned of its existence, and it remained tied up in the Roberta Dewey Estate until transferred to the John Dewey Foundation in the early 1970s (ix-xi). Yeziarska frequently quoted from “The Blossoming Wilderness” in her fiction. Its last stanza reads:

And I from afar shall see,
As one watching sees the star
Rise in the waiting heavens,
And from the distance my hand shall clasp yours,
And an old world be content to go,
Beholding the horizons
Tremulous with the generations
Of the dawn.

John Dewey, *The Poems of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 5.

and a 1918 report to the Intelligence Office, *Confidential Report of Conditions Among the Poles in the United States*.⁹³ In the Intelligence Office report, Dewey quotes Barnes in stating that the aim of the report was to “eliminate forces alien to democratic internationalism and to promote American ideals in accordance with the principles announced by President Wilson” (2). Instead of bringing about democratic relations between the researchers and their subjects, however, Yeziarska wrote in a letter to critic William Lyon Phelps that the researchers’ reports revealed to her “the deep, unutterable gulf between the professors who were analyzing the Poles and the Poles who were being analyzed.”⁹⁴ At the same time, Dewey got cold feet about his relationship with Yeziarska and cut off all communication with her, demanding that she return his letters and poetry. In an account of her experience with the study published in her semi-fictional autobiography, *Red Ribbon on a White Horse* (1950), Yeziarska represents her role in the Polish study in a scene where she is employed as a stenographer for the Dewey-esque character John Morrow. In this scene, Yeziarska gains employment by successfully transcribing a dictation from Morrow. Attracted to a story Yeziarska shares with him about her experiences working in a sweatshop, Morrow asks Yeziarska to take him on a tour of the East Side “ghetto,” which he sees as “exotic.” Yeziarska writes, “My Old World was so fresh and new to him it became fresh and new to me” (109). Morrow’s observation, which Yeziarska also writes into another novel, *All I Could Never Be*, indicates that Dewey may have experienced in Yeziarska’s Lower East Side a similar opportunity for revitalization that he later found in Japan and China (55). In *Red Ribbon on a White Horse*, the relationship with Morrow sours after Yeziarska refuses his sexual advances. The gulf between the two characters becomes unbridgeable and the relationship ends

⁹³ See John Dewey, “Autocracy Under Cover,” in *The New Republic* (New York: Republic Publishing Company), Aug. 24, 1918, 103-106.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Dearborn, 125.

with Morrow calling Yeziarska “an emotional, hysterical girl,” who had “exaggerated” his “friendly interest” (116).

The fiction that Yeziarska published after the Polish study repeatedly represents the failed relationship with Dewey as emblematic of the U.S.’s failure to live up to its democratic promise. With the 1920 publication of *Hungry Hearts*, a collection of short stories, Yeziarska was heralded by critics as a “sweatshop Cinderella” and sold the film rights for her stories to Samuel Goldwyn. By the 1930s, however, Yeziarska’s popularity waned with critics who had grown tired of her immigrant stories.⁹⁵ Similar to John Morrow, the Dewey character in *Red Ribbon on a White Horse*, critics often evaluated her later fiction as immature, repetitive, and over-emotional (156-157). In this section, I explore the idea that Yeziarska refused in her fiction to play the role of stenographer, or “native informant,” for those, including John Dewey, who wanted her fiction to tell a progressive story of assimilation. By refusing to submit a report for the Polish study, Yeziarska chose not to adopt the “rational,” scientific standpoint of the social researcher or provide inside information about Philadelphia’s Polish immigrants. Instead of occupying the role of the “returned student,” who would turn a scientific eye onto her “native” social world, Yeziarska chose instead to fictionalize her experiences with social researchers and the settlement movement. In novels and short stories that rehearse the failed relationship with John Dewey, Yeziarska deconstructs the racial, gendered, and sexualized dualities that animated Dewey’s theory of democracy by performing their limits. Yeziarska repeatedly stages her relationship with Dewey through opposing characters: the exotic, vital Jewish immigrant and the cold, rational Anglo-Saxon social scientist or settlement worker. I argue that by telling this story over and over again, Yeziarska’s fiction exhausts Dewey’s theory of global democracy and ultimately suggests that writing was inadequate to the task of racial representation and

⁹⁵ See Dearborn, 156.

intercultural “bridging” that early social researchers had charged it with. It is in this way that Yeziarska ultimately refused conscription as a successful “returned student” to Dewey’s theory of democracy and posed a personal and professional threat to his work as spokesperson for democratic education after the war.

The first and last novels that Yeziarska published during the interwar years stage her relationship with Dewey as a critique of the democratic possibilities of intercultural and cross-racial synthesis. Yeziarska’s first novel, *Salome of the Tenements* (1923), uses the figure of Salome, the biblical femme fatale who danced for her king in exchange for the head of John the Baptist, to critique the social researcher’s figuration of the Jewish love interest and object of charity as the orientalized, exotic supplement to his puritan rationality. On the surface, the novel re-tells the love story of Yeziarska’s friend, Polish immigrant and socialist activist Rose Pastor. Pastor’s marriage to the wealthy philanthropist Graham Phelps Stokes, who was involved with the University Settlement, was narrated in the press as a “fairy tale of ‘Democracy.’”⁹⁶ The marriage eventually dissolved when Pastor Stokes grew more committed to socialism and critical of her husband’s growing conservatism during WWI. *Salome of the Tenements* uses the story of Rose Pastor Stokes to stage the failed romance between Yeziarska and Dewey. In the novel, Sonya Vrunsky, a reporter for the *Ghetto News*, “vamps” social researcher and settlement worker, John Manning, by attempting to “mould herself into the form he desired” and “act the part he approved.”⁹⁷ For Manning, marriage to Sonya represents the opportunity to “pioneer a new race of men” in the consummation of her “oriental mystery” and his “Anglo-Saxon clarity” (108). The “interracial” marriage falls apart, however, as Sonya feels increasingly imprisoned by the pressure Manning places on her to conform to the “mould” in which he had cast her.

⁹⁶ Rose Pastor Stokes, *“I Belong to the Working Class”: The Unfinished Autobiography of Rose Pastor Stokes*, ed. Herbert Shapiro and David L. Sterling (Athens, GA/London: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 101.

⁹⁷ Anzia Yeziarska, *Salome of the Tenements* (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 73.

Yeziarska draws a parallel between Manning's attempt to domesticate Sonya and the social researcher's attempt to domesticate, or "Americanize," Polish immigrants living in the Lower East Side. Sonya's open sexuality poses a threat to the image of rational, Anglo-Saxon respectability that Manning and his settlement use to justify their social mission. At the end of the novel, Sonya realizes that the labor of aesthetic production—not scientific research—will result in the democratic transcendence of racial and class boundaries. While several critics have applauded what they see to be the radical potential of the novel's theory of aesthetic production, I argue that *Salome of the Tenements*' somewhat optimistic conclusion about art is questioned by Yeziarska's last novel from the interwar years, *All I Could Never Be* (1932).⁹⁸ Yeziarska wrote the novel, which dramatizes Yeziarska's experience with the Polish study, in place of the report she refused to submit.⁹⁹ While *Salome of the Tenements* ends with a vision of democratic transcendence within the realm of aesthetic production, *All I Could Never Be* questions the

⁹⁸ On the report, see Dearborn, 124-125. Articles by Botshon, Mikkelsen, Edmunds, Okonkwo, and Goldstein read *Salome of the Tenements*, especially the novel's representation of the "Sonya model" dress at the end, as theorizing Yeziarska's own perspective on aesthetic production. Of these, Mikkelsen's article is the only one that examines the aesthetic theory presented in *Salome of the Tenements* alongside aesthetic theories developed by John Dewey and other contemporary pragmatists. She therefore finds, as other critics do not, that Yeziarska's aesthetic theory in the novel is not necessarily as "radical" (Goldstein), "transformative" (Edmunds), or "authentic" (Botshon, Okonkwo) as some critics would argue. Goldsmith and Conklin are less sanguine about the novel's aesthetic politics, recognizing the overlap of its aesthetic theory with a progressive politics of respectability. None of these critics examine the aesthetic theory represented in *Salome of the Tenements* alongside *All I Could Never Be* as I do here. I argue that, taken together, these two novels show how Yeziarska used fiction as a medium to work out an aesthetic theory of democracy that changed over time as her work was increasingly commodified as "immigrant fiction." See Lisa Botshon, "The New Woman of the Tenements: Anzia Yeziarska's *Salome*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 56, no. 2 (2010); Ljiljana Coklin, "Between the Orient and the Ghetto: A Modern Immigrant Woman in Anzia Yeziarska's *Salome of the Tenements*," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 27, no. 2 (2006); Susan Edmonds, "Between Revolution and Reform: Anzia Yeziarska's Labor Politics," *Modernism/modernity* 18, no. 2 (2011); Douglas J. Goldstein, "The Political Dimensions of Desire in Anzia Yeziarska's 'The Lost Beautifulnes' and *Salome of the Tenements*," *Studies in American Fiction* 35, no. 1 (2007); Ann Mikkelsen, "From Sympathy to Empathy: Anzia Yeziarska and the Transformation of the American Subject," *American Literature* 82, no. 2 (2010); and Christopher N. Okonkwo, "Of Repression, Anxiety, and the Speakerly Dress: Anzia Yeziarska's *Salome of the Tenements*," *MELUS* 25, no. 1 (2000).

⁹⁹ See Dearborn 125. Dearborn cites a letter Yeziarska wrote to critic William Lyon Phelps on the study: "The 'scientific approach' of these sociology professors seemed to me so unreal, so lacking in heart and feeling.... At the end of the study, it seemed to me they knew less about the Poles than when they began. When they started out, they knew they didn't know, but after a few months of investigation they had cut the Poles into little sections, which they pigeon-holed and tabulated into [sic] sociological terms. They began turning out reports that seemed to bring out to me the deep, unutterable gulf between the professors who were analyzing the Poles and the poles who were being analyzed."

ability of art to transform social conditions. It is perhaps unsurprising that it took Yeziarska eighteen years to publish another work of fiction.

Salome of the Tenements critiques Dewey's scientific theory of liberal democracy through its story of failed romance while simultaneously developing an aesthetic theory of democracy, or "democracy of beauty." The novel draws attention to the performative nature of Dewey-esque liberal democracy through Sonya's attempt to play the role that Manning had cast for her in his drama of social uplift. Yeziarska deploys orientalist tropes of the exotic East—the same tropes Dewey applied to Japan and China in his Asia writings—to represent Sonya's performance of Manning's desire. Alternating between exotic *femme fatale* and passive subject of paternal care, Sonya dons "oriental" dress that attracts Manning by conforming to his image of her as the "primitive," emotional supplement to the Anglo-Saxon social researcher's "cold" scientific rationality. Sonya's later refusal to play the foil to Manning's moral authority unmasks his scientific theory of democracy as an "unreal" illusion that has more of a basis in the desires of social researchers than empirical reality. At the end of the novel, Manning, whose name cleverly puns on "man," is stripped of his mask of scientific rationality and salvific superiority when his apparent embodiment of universal, intellectual rationality is shown to be a performance. Manning does not embody the standpoint of the universal "man," but is instead revealed to have been performing Anglo-Saxon masculinity, or "man"-ing, the whole time. It is only after Sonya shames Manning into seeing his own contradictory performance that Sonya and Manning are able to recognize each other's "common humanity." In place of Manning's scientific theory of democracy, Sonya cleaves at the end of the novel to a new lover and new aesthetic theory of democracy that locates the transcendence of racial and class boundaries in the labor of artistic creation.

Salome of the Tenements reinforces this theory by performing its inclusion within a transcendent realm of universal art. Contrary to popular critics who pigeonholed the novel as representing a particular “racial” experience in the U.S., the novel references literary figures from Shakespeare to Don Quixote in order to transgress the racial and gendered categories that critics used to evaluate the artistic value of Yeziarska’s writing as well as to perform its inclusion within a transcendent realm of universal art. In particular, Yeziarska’s explicit reference to Salome situates the novel within a transnational network of modernist artists who from *fin de siècle* Europe onward had deployed the figure of Salome as part of what literary critic Petra Dierkes-Thrun calls a “modernist aesthetics of transgression.” Focusing primarily on Oscar Wilde’s representation of Salomé in his controversial play *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act* (1912), Dierkes-Thrun argues that Wilde’s *Salomé* attempted to replace “traditional metaphysical, moral, and cultural belief systems” with “utopian erotic and aesthetic visions of individual transgression and agency.”¹⁰⁰ Although Salome had featured as a common figure in nineteenth century European art, historian Susan Glenn explains that “Salomania” didn’t reach the U.S. until the beginning of the twentieth century. While performances of Salome were first confined to the popular vaudeville stage, Glenn demonstrates how Salome functioned as an “open text,” “an important vehicle of female self-expression” and “malleable tool for playing out the anxious comedies of gender and race” (97, 99). By the time Yeziarska published *Salome of the Tenements*, the popular Salomania of the pre-WWI period had given way to new performances on Broadway and in film that had both elevated Salome to the realm of high art and attempted to make her into a feminist figure. In *Salome of the Tenements*, Yeziarska used the “open text” of Salome to develop a utopian aesthetic vision through a dress Sonya designs, the “Sonya model,”

¹⁰⁰ Petra Dierkes-Thrun, *Salome’s Modernity: Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetics of Transgression* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 2.

which transgresses racial and class boundaries of modern womanhood by making beauty “democratic.”¹⁰¹ It is this same utopian, universalist theory of aesthetic democracy that Yeziarska later questioned in *All I Could Never Be*.

As demonstrated earlier, Dewey conscripted figures of the savage, slave, and “returned student” to his theory of global democratic education. Abstracted from the multiple histories of their production, these figures supplement Dewey’s theory of democracy by propping up its representation of scientific rationality, the method by which savages and slaves could evolve progressive social habits. *Salome of the Tenements* illustrates the way in which Dewey conscripted these figures to his theory of democracy through Sonya Vrunsky’s struggle to exercise control over the dualist representations of rationality and irrationality that the Dewey-esque character, John Manning, hoists onto their relationship. Irresistibly drawn to each other during an interview Sonya conducts on Manning’s philanthropic work for the *Ghetto News*, Sonya and Manning plan a second meeting at a Russian restaurant in the Lower East Side. As he waits for Sonya to arrive, Manning reflects on the “heroic longings” he has had since his boyhood. Manning envisions his relationship with Sonya as a means to transcend the “handicap” of wealth that has kept him aloof from “the people” in his settlement work. In Sonya, Manning sees the “naked soul of her race shining in her eyes”: “Through her he would yet touch the pulse of the people. [...] Within her lay the power to make articulate his life’s purpose” (32). Manning does not question his perception that Sonya is representative of her “race,” and, since he takes her to be an authentic representative of the Lower East Side, Manning believes the image she enthusiastically paints of him in her *Ghetto News* article: “The face of Lincoln, the soul of St.

¹⁰¹ Susan A. Glenn, *Female Spectacle: The Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2003), 96-125. Black studies scholar Daphne Brooks also provides background on the racial, gender, and sexual politics of U.S. Salomania. See Daphne A. Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2006), 281-342. Chapter One of this dissertation discusses Salome in relationship to performances of Little Egypt.

Francis, an American Tolstoy” (32). Manning’s own authenticity as a settlement worker is confirmed by Sonya’s representation of him, and because of this, he sees in her an opportunity to “articulate his life’s purpose.” Appearing to speak for her people, Sonya can prove Manning’s life’s work in a way that Manning himself cannot.

Manning’s longings to be the salvific hero are mirrored back to him as reality in Sonya’s *Ghetto News* article. What Manning doesn’t see in this mirror play is that he is participating in a marriage scheme choreographed by Sonya. While Manning does not question that he can see in Sonya the “naked soul of her race,” Sonya demonstrates an inchoate understanding of the power she can exercise over Manning by performing a starring role in his drama of social uplift. After her first interview with Manning, Sonya determines that marriage to him will be her ticket out of the “ghetto” and into a “higher,” more “beautiful” life. Desperately searching for a “simple” dress to wear to their next meeting among the gaudy ready-mades of Essex Street, Sonya is driven by her “great, consuming passion for beauty” to Jacques Hollins’ exclusive fashion house on Fifth Avenue (22). Born Jaky Solomon, Hollins is a Russian Jewish immigrant who worked his way from the ghetto sweatshops to the fashion houses of Paris and into a position as preeminent fashion designer for New York’s wealthy women. Believing that an “artist transcends his race,” Hollins “passes” as a French designer in order leave the social confines of the ghetto. Like Manning, Hollins sees an opportunity for self-fulfillment in Sonya. In a chapter significantly titled “The Democracy of Beauty,” Sonya appeals to their shared hunger for beauty and convinces him to design her a dress free of charge. When Sonya dons the dress he has created, Hollins remarks, “You, Sonya, are my first real work of art” (27). Sonya rhapsodizes on Hollins’ generosity: “All I want is to wear silk stockings and Paris hats the same as Mrs. Astorbilt, and then it wouldn’t bother me if we have Bolshevism or Capitalism, or if the

democrats or republicans win. Give me only the democracy of beauty and I'll leave the fight for government democracy to politicians and educated old maids" (27). For Sonya, beautiful clothes are a means to transcend the social ghettoization that keeps her poor and "dumb." She explains to Hollins that "poets" can write love poetry to their beloved: "But a dumb thing like me—I got no language—only the aching drive to make myself beautiful" (30). Sonya desires an aesthetic experience of democracy—"the dazzling, shimmering shine beyond reach"—but, at this point in the novel, she sees Hollins' dress as a means to attain "democratic" access to a beautiful life through a marriage to Manning.

Sonya believes that by willingly conscripting herself to Manning's theory of democracy, she will gain access to a life that is not only free from poverty but also aesthetically fulfilling. The dress Hollins designs for Sonya offers her the opportunity to "pass" as a member of the respectable poor by appealing to Manning's modern taste in beauty. Hollins transforms Sonya into an "Esther, dazzling the King of the Persians" (28). He constructs the dress according to "simple lines" in a "nun-like gray" of "sheer silk" (28-29). Along with the dress, he provides her with luxurious "silken undergarments" and a "snug-fitting turban of dove's breasts" that "seemed poised for flight" (29). As literary critic Ljiljana Coklin points out, Yeziarska uses orientalist imagery in *Salome of the Tenements* to "[establish] a link between an empowered immigrant woman and a liberated New American Woman."¹⁰² Hollins' dress reflects an orientalist design in vogue among modern women who could afford "simple," stylish clothes in the 1920s and reflects Sonya's desire to be perceived as a "modern," cosmopolitan woman. Literary critic Alys Eve Weinbaum conceptualizes the "primitivist" fashion popular among women in the interwar years as "racial masquerade," a sartorial performance of racial "otherness" that confirmed the

¹⁰² Coklin, 136.

wearer's whiteness through the ability to don and, crucially, remove racial "masks."¹⁰³ She argues that racial masquerade comprised a "racist cosmopolitanism" by signifying the wearer's cosmopolitanism precisely by distancing herself from the "racial 'otherness'" she performed (128). Along with constituting the wearer's racial identity, racial masquerade signified affiliation with a class of women who could afford the cosmetics and dress needed to "mask." American studies scholar Mari Yoshihara argues that embracing East Asian commodities, including dress, "suggested a liberating potential for white, middle-class women whose rights and opportunities were limited by their gender yet whose racial, class, and national identities made the world come to them in the form of commodities."¹⁰⁴ Appearing in a "vision of grey," Sonya succeeds in pleasing Manning's aesthetic taste for modern dress at their second meeting. Manning experiences "a wave of magnetism" when he sees Sonya, while Sonya experiences the dress as an "expression of herself" that feels like "being free from the flesh of her body, released from the fetters of the earth" (33).

Hollins' dress offers Sonya an aesthetic release from the tawdry ready-mades that would make her appear to Manning as "an object for charity and education, only fit to be uplifted" (41). The dress allows Sonya to perform a sleight-of-hand in which she can appeal to Manning's modern taste by appearing to exercise a genuine, "natural" beauty that was difficult for a working-class, Jewish immigrant woman to embody. And, for a while, Sonya's masquerade appears to work. After agreeing to a third meeting with Manning in her tenement room, Sonya realizes that she needs new furniture and paint to convince him that she is "a lily blooming out of an ash-can" (57). Wielding the dress as a "weapon," Sonya convinces her stingy landlord

¹⁰³ Alys Eve Weinbaum, "Racial Masquerade: Consumption and Contestation in American Modernity," in *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization*, ed. Alys Eve Weinbaum, Lynn M. Thomas, Priti Ramamurthy, et al. (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2008), 120-121.

¹⁰⁴ Yoshihara, 17.

Rosenblat to repaint the tenement walls by “dazzling” him with the “air of uptown,” and she gets the pawnbroker Honest Abe to advance her a hundred dollars for new furniture in exchange for five hundred due upon marriage to Manning (48-49; 60, 63-64). When Hollins visits Sonya’s room, he is “amazed” by Sonya’s outward display of “culture and refinement” because it so perfectly confirms his theory of social uplift. Remarking on Sonya’s “selective taste,” Manning exclaims that she is perfectly representative of the “directness” and “unscheming naturalness” that attract him to the immigrants of the Lower East Side (73). He exclaims to Sonya: “You are the personification of what I mean. [...] You represent poverty—toil, and it is beautiful, because unveiled by any artifice” (74). Instead of proposing marriage, Manning proposes that Sonya join the settlement work as his secretary because she conforms to the virtuous representation of beauty-in-poverty that the settlement seeks to display. Manning states: “The service I feel called upon to render the East Side is to teach the gospel of the Simple Life. [...] I try to make my settlement house an exhibit of what I mean” (75). Like myths of the “Orient” in Europe’s construction of a “modern,” civilized identity, the Lower East Side functions for Manning as a “theatrical stage” that he uses to confirm a scientific theory of democracy. Conforming to the image of the “lily blooming out of an ash-can,” Sonya appears in Manning’s eyes to be proof of the theory that scientific domestic training would lift East Siders out of the cultural degradation of poverty, and he wants Sonya to teach other immigrants “how to achieve inexpensive beauty” (75).

While Sonya’s performance appears to remove her from an economy of charity in which she appears as an “object” of uplift, she unwittingly finds herself “imprisoned” in the role of “[making] articulate” Manning’s “life purpose” (32). The aesthetic transcendence that Sonya experiences when wearing the dress is not matched by Manning’s perception of her. When

Sonya wears the dress, she is likened by Hollins to the biblical heroine Esther and feels free from the “flesh of her body” (28, 33). Esther, a Jewish orphan, used her beauty to persuade the Persian king to make her his wife and wields her position to prevent the king from waging genocidal war against the Jews. Unlike Esther, Sonya finds herself unable to appeal to Manning on behalf of the Lower East Side. Instead, she finds herself trapped into continually performing the racial, gendered, and sexualized dualities that mobilize Manning’s theory of democracy and social uplift. Sonya’s masquerade appears victorious when Manning proposes marriage, however she soon discovers the terms by which their marriage must exhibit Manning’s theory of democracy. At a wedding reception that includes guests from both Manning’s bourgeois family and the Lower East Side, Manning explains to Sonya, “This is *our* reception, my dear—our opportunity to show the world that all social chasms can be bridged with human love and democratic understanding” (119-120). For Manning, the democratic “elimination of artificial class barriers” will occur through social intercourse. He chastises the skeptical Sonya for continually “harp[ing] on class differences, as if you wanted me to lose faith in my work” (120). To her horror, however, Sonya soon discovers that Manning’s theory of democracy requires her to embody the racial, gendered, and sexual “other” to his cold, Anglo-Saxon rationality. Despite Sonya’s display of “natural” beauty and innocence, Manning has fevered dreams in which he is John the Baptist and she is Salome, “who lured and drew him with the dazzling color of her voluptuous dancing” (101).

Yeziarska illustrates the sexual politics of Manning’s theory of democracy through Sonya’s failure to use the image of Salome to her ultimate advantage. As Weinbaum demonstrates, the “modern girl” in the U.S. was a racialized figure whose performance of racial “otherness” shored up her whiteness. If, as Dierkes-Thrun argues, the modernist figure of Salome

represented new “erotic and aesthetic visions of individual transgression and agency,” Yeziarska’s *Salome* demonstrates how participation in this aesthetic vision was limited by perceptions of racial otherness.¹⁰⁵ Unlike the modern girls discussed by Weinbaum, Sonya, like Jacques Hollins, could “pass” as “white” or Anglo-Saxon if she possessed wealth. However, Sonya’s masquerade depends on Manning’s perception of her as racially “other,” because Manning is attracted to Sonya precisely because of her “racial” difference. The relationship with Sonya is invigorating for Manning. At their second meeting, Manning experiences a new “potency”: “Till now, he had been sterile—impotent. [...] Their combined personalities would prove a titanic power that would show the world how the problems of races and classes, the rich and the poor, educated and uneducated, could be solved” (38). The relationship with Sonya reinforces Manning’s belief that democracy could be achieved through social (and sexual) intercourse, yet it depends, like Dewey’s theory, on heroically overcoming a series of animating dualities. Yeziarska demonstrates in *Salome of the Tenements* how these dualities function to imprison Sonya within racial stereotypes of Jewish women as exotic, over-emotional, and more sexually “free” than Anglo-Saxon women. For it is Manning’s perception of Sonya’s racial otherness—her racial embodiment of *Salome*—which fires not only his intellectual but also his sexual attraction to her.

Sonya is trapped by her marriage into performing the racial, sexual supplement to Manning’s Anglo-Saxon rationality, and Yeziarska illustrates how embodying Manning’s theory of democracy requires continual discipline into paternalist “Anglo-Saxon” gender roles. While the “nun-like gray” of Hollins’ dress showed Manning that the poor could conform to “simple,” chaste standards of modern beauty, Sonya’s desire for Manning is repeatedly described in terms of fire and flames. She gazes at herself in the mirror and sees a “planet on fire rushing toward a

¹⁰⁵ Dierkes-Thrun, 2.

darker star with which she must merge to complete their double destiny” (65). Sonya, however, is unable to mobilize her own desire for Manning into the aesthetic transcendence she longs for. Before their marriage, Manning takes Sonya to his family estate in Greenwold for a weekend. For him, sex with Sonya entails giving in to the “overwhelming madness to thrust civilization aside, tear the garments that hid her beauty from him, put his hands over her naked breasts and crush her to him till she surrendered.” Yet, he is simultaneously “terrified at his own relapse into the primitive” (106). The threat to “civilization” that Sonya embodies for Manning undergirds the promise that their relationship symbolizes the coming of a new democracy. After “the Miracle,” Manning remarks that it is because they “come from opposite ends of civilization” that they “fuse so perfectly”: “Are we not the mingling of the races? The oriental mystery and the Anglo-Saxon clarity that will pioneer a new race of men?” (108). Although Sonya mocks Manning’s utopian vision and is quietly happy over her “victory,” she soon finds that Manning must continually discipline the “primitive” threat she embodies to his rational “civilization.” In a moment after their marriage when Manning feels that Sonya’s embrace is distracting him from work, he shames Sonya by glaring at her: “His look of cold scrutiny stabbed through Sonya, disrobed her of her human charm. In that one critical flash, she felt herself stark naked” (114). She asks, “Have I no shame? [...] Am I only an East Side savage—a clinging female dragging him down from his higher life?” (114). Yeziarska describes Manning’s shaming through the language of “disrobing.” Manning does not seek to cover a shameful nakedness; rather he strips her of her “human charm” and, in this way, shames her into the role of “East Side savage.”

Yeziarska extends the critique of Manning’s and Sonya’s “democratic” marriage to Manning’s settlement work. Sonya realizes that the sexual politics of shame disciplining her into the role of “East Side savage” are at work in the settlement’s domestic training program. At first

forgetting the “bitter, biting, galling shame” of her own experiences in institutions of social uplift, Sonya experiences the “romance” of Manning’s settlement as his new wife (43, 132). Her feelings change, however, when confronted with Manning’s “scientific” approach to social service. Manning chastises Sonya for her “over-emotional” desire to transform the Lower East Side through “love and beauty” (133-134). He explains: “I have had social experts make for me a scientific survey of the needs of the neighborhood, and one by one we meet those needs on the plane of reason” (134). Sonya grows increasingly disgusted as she observes domestic classes on how to make a “milkless, butterless, eggless, cake” and overhears instructors shocked to find one of their subjects at home “secretly cooking chicken!” (134-135). Another instructor excludes a “Carmen type factory-girl” from a co-ed dance for wearing too much rouge (136). She retorts: “Where should we get our red cheeks—from the fresh air and sunshine in the shop? We got to take our redness from a box” (137). Like marriage to Manning, the settlement does not offer democratic transcendence but rather disciplines the Lower East Side’s working-class women into conforming to its image of the “worthy poor” (135). Its scientific approach attempts to keep East Siders content with their poverty; it does nothing to actively change it. Even worse, Sonya realizes that through their scientific research the settlement workers are lying to themselves about the good they are doing in the Lower East Side (136). Significantly, Sonya confronts Manning about the settlement after a scene in which he rapes her. Growing deeper in debt to Honest Abe, Sonya longs to confess the deal to Manning but grows silent and aloof around him. One night, while reading Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, Manning looks at Sonya’s sleeping figure beside him and feels a moment of “paternal pity,” which is disrupted by a “vivid flash of imagination” of Sonya’s naked body under the covers (144). Sonya thinks that yielding to Manning’s touch will allow her to divulge her secret debt, but instead sex becomes “an invasion

of her soul” (145). When she turns to him afterward, she finds Manning falling sleep and feels their “thwarted love in her wounded, quivering body”: “Her flesh was raw and hurt by the insult of his incapacity for love” (146). Angry, shamed, and disillusioned, Sonya erupts in rage at Manning the next morning and accuses him of subjecting her and the Lower East Siders to his “unreal” democratic visions.

In Sonya’s angry rebuke to Manning, Yeziarska unmasks the claims to “scientific” rationality used to justify Manning’s Dewey-esque theory of democracy. Sonya reveals that Manning’s “democratic” work objectifies those it seeks to serve, turning them into currency in scientific reports that make his philanthropic and theoretical work appear “real.” In this scene, Yeziarska strikes at the heart of scientific research’s claim to universal rationality by demonstrating how it relies on illusions and performances—its own racial masquerade. When Manning innocently asks whether Sonya plans to work at the settlement that day, Sonya retorts: “Settlement business ain’t work. It’s only a make-believe, a fake. Your settlement is a lie, like all settlements are lies” (147). She calls the settlement’s research reports, “fit for jokes in comic papers” and part of the “whole show-off of uplift work” (148). Revealing the debt to Honest Abe, she argues that she may have “lied” but she never “cheated”: “I am a liar. But you are a cheat. You go around preaching democracy and the brotherhood of man. But you don’t want my people. You never loved me for me, myself” (149). When Manning brings up the “kisses and embraces” of the night before, Sonya says, “It was the murder of love. The kind of love a man goes to a street-woman for. I don’t sell my love. I give it” (150). Echoing Salomé’s final soliloquy in Wilde’s *Salomé*, Sonya argues that Manning never really saw *her* but only a reflection of his own piety.¹⁰⁶ Condemning Manning’s work as a “fake,” Sonya argues that it has “cheated” her and other East Siders by transforming them into objects of charity whose primary

¹⁰⁶ See the quote opening this section and Wilde, 78-81.

purpose is to reflect the settlement workers' benevolence to themselves and the world. Sonya's accusations that Manning "never loved" her or "her people" are confirmed when, finding out that Sonya's debts to Honest Abe were made in his name, Manning spits, "My name in the hands of *that Jew!*," and icily declares that he will pay off the debt in cash, saying, "Your Jew won't refuse cash" (151). Sonya's performance is over: "At last the curtain was down. There was no revelation, no flame—only the pale flicker of a burnt-out star, only the winter coldness of a sterile race" (146).

While Yeziarska unmasks Manning's social scientific theory of democracy as illusory and "unreal," she develops in its place an aesthetic theory of democracy in which the act of artistic production enacts the transcendence of racial and class boundaries. The transcendent union that was promised in Sonya's marriage to Manning is transferred to dress making. After leaving Manning, Sonya is spurned by her former friends in the Lower East Side for "vamping" and marrying a Christian in order to climb the social ladder (158). Remembering her longing for beauty, Sonya finds work in a textile factory and eventually convinces the owner to let her design a dress, the "Sonya model," which confirms the "democracy of beauty" that Sonya seeks. Sonya gazes at the finished dress and feels the "completest emotion she had ever known." She tells the dress, "They all said I was a faker—a vamp. They said I was Salome wanting the heads of men, but you know I was only seeking—seeking for the feel of the beautiful" (170). The Sonya model is "simple" like Hollins' dress, yet it is "designed for all women" and is affordable enough for the working class (171). At the end of the novel, Sonya has taken Hollins as her new lover and is engaged with him in the "real work" of aesthetic production (174). In the novel's final scene, Sonya appears victorious once again when she shames Manning into recognizing their common "humanity" (182). Bursting in on her with Hollins, Manning's "savage passion" is

aroused and he exclaims, “You—you—you’re mine. [...] Oh, my beautiful, maddening Jewess!” while ripping her dress and exposing her breast (181). Unlike the rape, Sonya’s scorn “[strips] him naked” and “expos[es] him to himself” (181). Confronted with Manning’s “primitive” behavior, Sonya and Manning see each other not as “gentleman and East Side girl” but as “human beings driven by bitter experience to one moment’s realization of life” (182). In the lines that conclude the novel, Sonya triumphantly declares: “It’s only we who die, but the spark of love, the flash of beauty from eye to eye, the throb from heart to heart goes on and on forever” (184).

Sonya’s aesthetic theory of democracy, which promises the transcendence of social boundaries in the realm of artistic production and consumption, is reinforced in *Salome of the Tenements* by its self-conscious positioning within a wide network of canonical texts. As already discussed, Yeziarska compares Sonya to biblical characters, like Esther and Salome, who used beauty and performance to get what they wanted from powerful men in patriarchal societies. In other parts of the novel, Yeziarska compares Sonya’s journey to Don Quixote and makes references to Shakespeare and Robert Browning. I argue that these largely undeveloped references to canonical literature perform the novel’s location within “western” and “Hebraic” literary canons and evince, as many recent critics have pointed out, a self-consciously modernist aesthetic. Like Sonya, Yeziarska attempts to mobilize these literary canons as foundations from which artistic creation could forge a new universal aesthetic experience. Writing appears as a means to reach the “heights” of aesthetic transcendence. During her second meeting with Manning, Sonya feels in his presence the desire to speak for her “race”:

The gift of a thousand tongues possessed her. Her pulses leaped. An unwonted fluency surged from her lips as she leaned toward him—this man from the other world, in whose presence the *Welschmerz* of her race found voice. “I am a Russian Jewess, a flame—a

longing. A soul consumed with hunger for heights beyond reach. I am the ache of unvoiced dreams, the clamor of suppressed desires. I am the un-lived lives of generations stifled in Siberian prisons. I am the urge of ages for the free, the beautiful that never yet was on land or sea.” (37)

Just as contact with Sonya revitalizes Manning’s scientific theory of democracy, Sonya’s contact with Manning fills her with a longing to voice the “*Welschmerz* of her race,” to speak for the “un-lived lives of generations,” and, in so doing, to articulate a new “freedom” and “beauty.” While several of the novel’s more recent critics have argued for the “resistant” or “transformative” potential of its modernist aesthetic, I argue that the aesthetic vision Yeziarska develops in *Salome of the Tenements* is not so different from Dewey’s theory of democracy.¹⁰⁷ Like Dewey’s theory of democracy, it, too, is animated by racial dualities to anchor its utopian vision of aesthetic transcendence. To mark her difference from a culture of Anglo-Saxon “rationality,” Sonya must articulate herself in opposite, racially and culturally “other” terms as a “Russian Jewess—a flame, a longing” possessed by an overflow of emotion that the Anglo-Saxon “lacks.” When she separates from Manning, Sonya realizes that “just as fire and water cannot fuse, neither could her Russian Jewish soul fuse with the stolid, the unimaginative, the invulnerable thickness of this New England puritan” (147). The aesthetic theory of democracy developed in *Salome of the Tenements* remains bound to the same animating dualities as Dewey’s theory of democracy. In fact, it seems as though it would fulfill Dewey’s desire for Yeziarska to write fiction as a “native informant” to her “race” and its modern transformation in the ghettos of the U.S.

When it was published in 1923, *Salome of the Tenements* received critical reviews that approached it precisely as a novel giving voice to a particular racial standpoint and evaluated its literary merit on whether or not Yeziarska’s characters were “true to type.” A scathing review of

¹⁰⁷ See footnote 97.

the novel written by Louise Maunsell Field for the *New York Times* argues that while Yeziarska created a “real” character with Sonya, she “faltered” and “fumbled” with her representation of Manning. Sounding like one of Yeziarska’s bourgeois characters from Manning’s and Sonya’s wedding reception, Fields writes that Sonya, “an illiterate, hot-blooded little savage,” is “real to us in her ignorances and her crudities, her idealization for Manning and her ardent amorousness, her flaming desires and her complete egoism, her craving for luxuries and beautiful clothes.” She argues that the literary value of *Salome of the Tenements* is in offering the presumably Anglo-Saxon, bourgeois reader the “point of view of this Russian Jewess,” which serves as a veiled warning to philanthropists and social workers that they may only receive “resentment of...inferiority” and “envy of...education and good breeding ascribed to the ‘American born’” from those they try to serve.¹⁰⁸ In a review of the novel for the *New York Tribune*, W. Adolphe Roberts also sees in Sonya a “genuine” character. In fact, he evaluates *Salome of the Tenements* as a “work of art” for the unique representations of all its characters. Taking on the standpoint of the Manning character, Roberts says because of his own “Franco-Celtic blood,” the novel “excites” and “fascinates” him in its display of Sonya Vrunsky, “the most vivid East Side Jewess.”¹⁰⁹ Just as Sonya could not escape Manning’s racialized desire, Yeziarska, it appears, could not escape the racial stereotyping of literary reviewers. Instead of experiencing aesthetic transcendence, Yeziarska found her writing commodified as “immigrant fiction” and evaluated according to the standards of realism.

Yeziarska was increasingly faced with reviews like these as she published novels into the late 1920s and early 1930s. Her final novel of this time period, *All I Could Never Be* (1932), questions the aesthetic theory of democratic transcendence put forth in *Salome of the Tenements*

¹⁰⁸ Louise Maunsell Field, review of *Salome of the Tenements*, in *The New York Times* (New York, NY), Dec. 24, 1922, 22.

¹⁰⁹ W. Adolphe Roberts, “Hungry Souls,” in *New York Tribune* (New York, NY), Dec. 17, 1922, 26.

by performing the limits of fiction writing to create democratic change. Instead of dressmaking, Yeziarska takes up the capacity of fiction writing to create genuine democratic transformation. The first part of *All I Could Never Be*, which Yeziarska wrote in place of the report she never submitted to Dewey's Polish study, fictionalizes her experience working with Dewey and his graduate students in Philadelphia. Like Manning, the Dewey-esque character Henry Scott sees an opportunity to "articulate his life's purpose" through Fanya Ivanowna, the novel's Polish Jewish protagonist. Enraptured by a speech Scott gives at a local settlement, Fanya visits Scott at his office and offers him a manuscript—"All my twenty-three years are in these pages"—to contribute to a "study of the Polish immigrant" he is conducting (36). Scott's pleasure at receiving Fanya's "personal history" for the study sets off an exchange of writing between them. Fanya sends Scott poetry and he, surprisingly, responds with his own. Like Yeziarska, Fanya is invited to work as a researcher for the Polish study and grows disillusioned with Scott, the graduate student researchers, and the study as a whole.

The letters and poems that Scott sends to Fanya develop a modernist theory of literature that echoes Dewey's own belief that genuine democratic evolution would take place in the realm of "culture." In fact, the most significant poem Scott sends to Fanya quotes verbatim from Dewey's poem "The Blossoming Wilderness." It re-words a line that Fanya had sent to Scott: "Generations of stifled words—reaching out to you—aching for utterance—dying on my lips unuttered—" (41). Scott's revision reads:

Generations of stifled words, reaching out *through you*
 Aching for utterance, dying on lips
 That have died of hunger,
 Hunger not to have, but to be.

Generations as yet unuttered, dumb, inchoate,
 Unutterable by me and mine
 In you I see them coming to be,

Luminous, slow-revolving, ordered in rhythm.
 You shall not utter them; you shall be them.
 And from out thy pain
 A song shall fill the world. (43)

In Scott's revision, Fanya's words, which echo Sonya's desire to speak the "unlived lives of generations," become the authentic, representative voice of "generations" and her writing a vehicle of unmediated access to a world that remains "unutterable" for Scott. For Scott, Fanya's writing is an expression of her ontological truth, the very essence of her "being." In a letter to Fanya, Scott writes: "You are beautifully communicative in simply being. You *are*, but you don't yet fully know that you are. [...] And perhaps I can have the great happiness of helping you to a realization that *you are*, and *what you are*" (60-61). Modernist critic Rita Felski argues that early twentieth century social scientists often represented the differences between the sexes as a difference between "nature" and culture. Women were believed to have a pre-modern, "primitive," and unmediated relationship with the natural world.¹¹⁰ Scott's poem binds Fanya to unmediated expression not only through gender but also through "race." Fanya is burdened to speak for the history, the "generations," of her "race," which is incontrovertibly "other" to Scott's own historical experience. Sounding like Sonya in *Salome of the Tenements*, Scott tells Fanya that he hopes writing for the Polish study will "stimulate" her fiction writing: "And your writing is your real life, Fanya. Everything changes and passes away. But art endures; because art is the marriage of the personal and the eternal" (68).

Fanya's critique of the Polish study and eventual rejection of fiction writing is simultaneously a rejection of the role of "native informant." She refuses to speak for a particular racial experience, realizing that it only serves to confirm sociological theories that she cannot accept. In an outing into the Polish neighborhood that the researchers are studying, Fanya meets

¹¹⁰ Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 54.

a man who questions the research project. He asks: “But why all this fancy language? [...] Will it help us to get jobs? I want work” (92). Fanya is subsequently “shamed out of her eloquence” and grows increasingly outspoken about her criticism of the social researchers’ approach to their subjects. Confronting Scott about the study, she declares: “Well, what have we got? Words—words—words. We have been awfully busy—with—with nothing—” (109). Scott responds that she is “hysterical” (109). In her research into sociology’s early reliance on literary material, including the life narratives of subjects under investigation, literary critic Carla Cappetti argues that social scientists were “historically important agents in the process that turns cultures into *literatures*.”¹¹¹ Sociologists relied on life histories and life narratives to glean information about social interactions, bringing “sociology closer to literature than hard science” (32). Yeziarska’s representation of the Polish study in *All I Could Never Be* illuminates the *fictionality* of the social researcher’s scientific reports. Fanya pleads with the researchers: “But it seems to me to read about people you want to know is different from knowing them, as looking at the picture of an apple is different from the taste and feel of a real apple. Go out and meet the Poles—” (81). Like Yeziarska, Fanya becomes a successful writer after she leaves the Polish study but finds her success to be a “prison—an island of sterile emptiness” (123). She discovers that like social researchers, her critics and fans want her to commodify the “immigrant experience” for their consumption. Speaking at a college, she realizes the audience wanted from her “the story of poverty they had read about in her novels”: “Six hundred college men and women, with their curious, sensation-seeking eyes, imprisoned her in their appraisal till she felt like a puppet in a play” (115). Fanya’s decision to “give up the false life of fictionalizing her experiences—turning herself inside out into words” is a refusal to speak for “generations” (125).

¹¹¹ Carla Cappetti, *Writing Chicago: Modernism, Ethnography, and the Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 31.

By the time Yeziarska published *All I Could Never Be*, critics had grown tired of what they saw to be her repetitive immigrant stories. It didn't help that the novel appeared unfocused, meandering from Fanya's experience with the Polish story, to giving up writing to find work in the factories and shops of the Lower East Side, to a final escape to a New England town where she falls in love with a homeless Jewish immigrant. The novel dramatizes the final failure of fiction writing to lead to democratic experience, and Fanya's final retreat from New York and a life of "fictionalizing her experiences" parallels Yeziarska's own move away from writing during this time. However, *All I Could Never Be* also serves as a powerful critique of Dewey's theory of democracy. In *Salome of the Tenements*, the Dewey character is shamed out of his performance of rationality when confronted with his own "primitive" desires. Instead of attaining intellectual "freedom," he is shown in the novel to be bound to the dualistic racialized, gendered, and sexualized conceptualizations of rationality and emotionalism that he had theorized in his philosophy of democracy and education. It is questionable whether or not Dewey ever read Yeziarska's novels. Yeziarska recounts visiting him once at his office to find the pages of the novel she had sent him still uncut.

Yeziarska's fiction, particularly *All I Could Never Be*, demonstrates how progressive conceptualizations of a pluralist and "tolerant" liberal democracy could be mobilized for new racial imperial projects. Black studies scholar Jodi Melamed traces the U.S.'s formal adoption of antiracism to the WWII "racial break," which, borrowing from critical race theorists Michael Omi and Howard Winant, she uses to describe how global anticolonial and antiracist movements made official white supremacy untenable while also "[giving] rise to a new worldwide racial project, formally antiracist" in which "liberal-capitalist modernity...revises, partners with, and

exceeds the capacities of white supremacy without replacing or ending it.”¹¹² Dewey’s philosophy of democratic education anticipates the formally antiracist stance adopted by the state in the postwar era by conceptualizing “culture,” and by extension cultural production, as a site of authentic democratic growth in opposition to more radical forms of political and social transformation. Melamed argues that the state’s adoption of racial liberalism as a new ethical norm simultaneously ignored demands made by global anticolonial and antiracist movements for the equitable redistribution of resources while also giving rise to new racial categories deployed to maintain their unequal distribution. In increasingly making “culture” the site where racism would be addressed and ameliorated, the state adopted the *terms* of antiracist movements while leaving racial capitalist projects intact. Yeziarska’s dramatization in *All I Could Never Be* of Fanya’s refusal to continue writing fiction intervenes within an emergent racial liberalism that Dewey was formulating in his philosophy of democratic education. Although Yeziarska generally avoided radical labor activism, her fiction nonetheless intervenes in progressivism’s imperial grammar of civilization. Taking leave of a “false life of fictionalizing her experiences—turning herself inside out into words,” Yeziarska, like her character Fanya, took leave as well of a philosophy of democratic education in which an apolitical “culture” appeared as the primary ground for social transformation.

¹¹² Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 6-7.

Conclusion—The Law of the Law of Civility

*Occasionally it is interesting to think about the outburst
if you would just cry out—*

To know what you'll sound like is worth noting—

--Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*¹

The contradictions of racial liberal education that emerged as part of progressive philosopher John Dewey's theory of democratic education have in one way or another remained a part of mainstream U.S. education into the twenty-first century.² Perhaps the most visible and recent eruption of these contradictions has been the student activism as part of the Black Lives Matter movement at U.S. colleges and universities during the fall of 2015. While not wishing to make the early twentieth and early twenty-first centuries appear continuous in ways that they are not, I conclude by suggesting how contemporary education remains grounded in U.S. imperialism. As discussed in Chapter Four, Dewey's theorization of "culture" employed terms of pluralism, tolerance, and cultural "adaptation" while at the same time positing racial, gendered, and sexualized dualities in order to animate an ostensibly universal process of democratic growth. Finding its philosophical ground in figures of savages and slaves divorced from U.S. imperial histories of slavery, colonization, and warfare, Dewey's philosophy of democratic education wasn't all that different from the theories of race-based education created at schools like the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute and Carlisle Indian Industrial School. All of them racialized marginalized students' epistemologies of knowing, being, and feeling as insurgent forms of "irrationality," which posed a threat to the civilizational codes

¹ Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Minneapolis: Gray Wolf Press, 2014), 69.

² Recent scholarship on the contradictions of racial liberalism in higher education include, Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Mara, eds., *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and its Pedagogy of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); and Jodi Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism," *Social Text* 89, no. 4 (Winter 2006).

naturalizing U.S. imperialism. In conclusion, I suggest how a contemporary discourse of “civility” in U.S. higher education functions as what I have been calling an imperial grammar of civilization. In using liberal terms of “diversity,” “inclusivity,” and “tolerance” as a means to manage and discipline insurgent epistemologies, the language of “civility” codes bodies and speech attached to these epistemologies as racialized threats to academic freedom and citizenship. Working from poet Claudia Rankine’s intervention within this imperial grammar of civilization, which is not limited to higher education, I demonstrate how the discourse of civility has functioned as a form of imperial counterinsurgency in two cases: the formal case made by University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign against comparative indigenous studies scholar Steven Salaita and the unofficial case made by scholars, university administrators, and journalists against Black Lives Matter student activists. I conclude by speculating on the ground for a different educational founding.

Lyric

appeal, v.

Etymology: <Old French *apele-r* to call <Latin *app-*, *adpellāre*, to accost, address, call upon, also in Law ‘to appeal to, to impeach,’ a secondary form of *adpellēre* to drive to, direct (a ship) towards, land upon. Compare the history of *aboard* and *accost*, both of which similarly passed from the sense of ‘land upon,’ to ‘make up to, address, speak to.’³

Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014) begins with an appeal, or a summons, to the lyric genre. The colon in the title at first appears to open *citizen* toward a definition. Read in this way, the contents of the citizen or, perhaps, the embodiment of citizenship would somehow be comprised of “an American lyric.” But, how does a *lyric*, a poetic genre, define the “citizen”? In ancient Greece *κῶλον* (in Latin, *cōlon*) was the word for “limb”

³ “appeal, v.,” *OED Online*, March 2016, Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/view/Entry/9545?rskey=glX3zs&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid>

and when applied to grammar described a particular “member or clause of a sentence.”⁴ As such, the punctuation mark of the colon, or the “:”, might be better understood not as a gate opening outward onto a definition but as a joint articulating limbs embodied by the sentence or grammatical unit. The question then becomes how is *citizen* articulated with or through *an American lyric*? How is this articulation embodied? Where is it sited and how does it move? *Citizen: An American Lyric* sites its appeal among these questions. It could have started its inquiry into the grammatical embodiment of citizenship by appealing to juridical documents that shape the political boundaries of the citizen. In its appeal to the lyric, *Citizen: An American Lyric* does not turn away from the juridical genre of the citizen; rather, it summons the genre of the lyric to expose how its rules of address, which appear to regulate the domain of the artistic, private, and emotional, function to body forth the citizen through racial and racializing epistemologies of the human form. In so doing, *Citizen: An American Lyric* attempts a grammatical intervention not only in the laws governing the genre of the lyric but also in laws of civility that govern the legibility of racialized bodies and utterances. It issues a call or a “cry” from the edges of these genres, a call that echoes beyond the boundaries of the text as an appeal to other epistemologies of the body.

What is the law of the lyric? In his influential 1833 essay “What is Poetry?,” liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill attempted to find the “natural law” of poetry. Although Mill doesn’t use the term “lyric,” his essay is still referenced as a foundational text for approaching the genre of the lyric.⁵ Mill begins by stating that his goal is not to “coerce and confine Nature to the bounds of an arbitrary definition, but rather to find the boundaries which she herself has set, and

⁴ “colon, n.2,” *OED Online*, March 2016, Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/view/Entry/36513?rskey=Hf3P2w&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid>

⁵ Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins, General Introduction to *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 3.

erect a barrier around them.”⁶ Mill knows that in looking for the natural laws governing poetry, he appears to be embarking on a scientific project. Yet, he explains that his primary interest is not in questions “fact” or “science” (344). Mill wants to find out how poetry produces a universal human form, the essentialized kernel of humanity that articulates the private individual to a social totality. What he believes differentiates poetry from other types of address is its representation of and appeal to “feeling.” He explains, “The poetry is not in the object itself, nor in the scientific truth itself, but in the state of mind in which the one and the other may be contemplated” (347). The poetic “mind” makes use of its training in “intellectual culture” to transform individual emotions and experiences into a universalized “language” of feeling that in turn summons these same feelings for its audience (349). This process of transformation begins with poets making inward “observations of themselves” where they find “one highly delicate and sensitive specimen of human nature, on which the laws of human emotion are written in large characters, such as can be read off without much study.” In giving language to the “laws of human emotion,” the poet calls out to poetic readers (346). As with writers of poetry, poetic readers are distinguished from other readers for the perception of universal feelings that poetry “recalls” in them. Mill explains that poetry “is interesting only to those to whom it recalls [sic] what they have felt, or whose imagination it stirs up to conceive what they could feel, or what they might have been able to feel, had their outward circumstances been different” (345-346).

For Mill, the laws of poetry that govern personal forms of address nonetheless serve a public function. Aimed at the private realm of emotions and feelings, poetry “conceives” common feelings and in so doing engenders a publicly legible first-person subject. Mill differentiates poetry’s representations of “impassioned truth” from “eloquent” appeals made

⁶ John Stuart Mill, “Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties,” *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume I: Autobiography and Literary Essays*, ed. John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger (Toronto/Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 344.

directly to a public audience, observing that while “eloquence is *heard*; poetry is *overheard*.” Unlike eloquence, Mill explains, “Poetry is feeling confessing itself to itself, in moments of solitude, and embodying itself in symbols which are the nearest possible representations of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet’s mind” (348). Poetry’s *embodiment* of ostensibly universal feeling, which in another edition of the essay Mill described as feeling “bodying itself forth in symbols,” is therefore unsullied by the pressures exerted on language by the exigencies of the “outward and every-day world,” the world of historical movement and change (348, 349). Preserving the boundary around the private domain of poetry, Mill likens poetry to a soliloquy performed in public: “It may be said that poetry which is printed on hot-pressed paper and sold at the bookseller’s shop, is a soliloquy in full dress, and on the stage” (349). Yet, even though poetry circulates as a print commodity there must be “no trace of consciousness that any eyes are upon [it]” in order for it to remain poetry according to “natural law” (349). Mill argues, in fact, that the law of poetry not only governs “the language of words” but also “intersect[s] the whole domain of art” (350). The process of poetic transformation in which individual feelings become universalized in the poem “by bodying itself forth in symbols” is, according to Mill, a process of maturation and growth into intellectual “culture” (349). The most powerful “symbol” embodied by poetry is the “I,” a subject position that articulates with the collective social body. The individual is joined with society through a process of maturation characterized by development into inward contemplation. Mill argues that while children and “nations in the earliest ages” have a “passion” for storytelling, the feelings represented in the stories they create and enjoy “are the simplest our nature has.” The natural law of poetry thus distinguishes not only the superior taste of artists and audiences excited by poetry into a perception of universal human nature but also “mature” “nations” from those that are “rude,”

simple, and childlike (345). These latter individuals and nations are ruled by the passions, unable to use their scientific, rational minds to universalize their feelings and emotions in poetic forms.

Mill's inquiry into the natural laws of poetry is thus simultaneously an inquiry into the symbolic language of human nature, which he locates in a personal, private, feminized domain regulated by a masculine, intellectual "mind." The law of poetry that he "finds" regulates the way in which feeling is expressed in public. Put another way, Mill's law of poetry is also a law of civility that governs public and private modes of addressability according to civilizational norms. According to Mill, poetry's engendering of a first-person subject simultaneously conceives this subject as a member, or citizen, of "mature" nations. This subject has been described as the "lyric I," or the "*historically indeterminate*" "speaker," in poetry.⁷ *The Lyric Theory Reader*, which was published by Johns Hopkins University Press the same year that *Citizen* was released, introduces the lyric as the dominant genre of poetry taught in U.S. universities (6). Although *lyric* is traced to an ancient Greek "song of the lyre," the editors of *The Lyric Theory Reader* contend that the lyric was popularized as a genre of academic reading and writing by the mid-nineteenth century New Criticism (1, 4). The editors explain how the ubiquity of the lyric genre in U.S. universities has contributed to a reading practice that appears very similar to the one described by Mill. They elaborate, "A fictional person of all times and places, the first-person speaker of the lyric could speak to no one in particular and thus to all of us" (5). The first-person address of the lyric "I" appears, like Mill's poet, to express universal feelings and emotions that call beyond historical constraints to the reader properly trained to perceive them. This perception on the part of the reader, in turn, confirms the reader's membership within a broader intellectual culture.

⁷ Jackson and Prins, 5.

In Mill, the genre of the lyric therefore functions as a law of addressability, yet it is not “universal.” It governs modes of address that articulate membership in the nation by regulating how emotions and feelings publicly appear in proper “civilized” forms. The lyrical address appears to embody the “laws of human emotion” of those with the intellect to perceive and express them in language. According to Mill, it is in this way that the laws governing the lyric as a form of address intersect with the embodiment of citizenship. The lyric represents the highest form of human nature and defines a natural mode of belonging as a “citizen” within civilized societies. As poststructuralist Jacques Derrida observes, however, while the law of genre invokes or even commands “purity,” the law of the law of genre is “impurity.” He explains that the principle governing generic boundaries not only between artistic genres but also between “genres” of nature (*physis*) and the arts (*techne*) is a “principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy.” He questions, “What if there were, lodged within the heart of the law itself, a law of impurity or a principle of contamination? And suppose the condition for the possibility of the law were the *a priori* of a counter-law, an axiom of impossibility that would confound its sense, order, and reason?” In regulating the legal or the “pure,” the law of the law of genre also regulates “a sort of participation without belonging—a taking part of, without having membership in a set.”⁸ Derrida uses the “*genre-clause*” to describe the movement, or articulation, of this inclusion/exclusion. Using the metaphor of a “floodgate” (in French, *écluse*) to conceptualize the movement of the genre-clause, Derrida explains that it functions as a type of “closure” that “excludes itself from what it includes.” At the very same time, in “[p]utting to death the very thing that it engenders, it cuts a strange figure; a formless form, it remains nearly invisible, it neither sees the day nor brings itself to light” (65-66). Even as it attempts to make

⁸ Jacques Derrida, “The Law of Genre,” trans. Avital Ronell, in spec. issue *On Narrative, Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1980), 59.

legible the eternal, pure, universal laws of human emotion, the law of genre “engenders” or “cuts a strange figure” at the edge of the law. Following Derrida, the lyric would not only regulate the articulation of a lyric “I” through an appeal to universal human emotions. It would also move to surround unregulated “passion,” the *a priori* “impurity” that it attempts to contain, and in the process it would “cut a strange figure” “nearly invisible” within the genre’s framework.

What would this “strange figure” sound like? The ostensibly universal appeal to the emotions that the lyric attempts to engender in the “I” is given in *Citizen: An American Lyric* a historical location. It requires landing upon a different shore. *Citizen: An American Lyric* discloses the grammatical production of the citizen as lyric “I” within the “metaphoric ground” of New World imperialism that literary theorist Hortense Spillers conceptualizes with the “American grammar book.” At the same time, it asks after the utterance of the “strange figure” “cut” by the law of lyrical embodiment. Spillers, it will be remembered, uses the American grammar book to refer to violent epistemologies unleashed during New World imperialism that produce “captive bodies” held at a perpetual distance from embodying the form of the human through a racial ontologization of the “flesh.” She gives the grammar book a “dynamic” motion, observing:

[T]he ruling episteme that releases the dynamics of naming and valuation, remains grounded in the original metaphors of captivity and mutilation so it is as if neither time nor history, nor historiography and its topics, shows movement, as the human subject is ‘murdered’ over and over again by the passions of a bloodless and anonymous archaism, showing itself in endless disguise.⁹

In the production of captivity, the body becomes the metaphoric ground for “dynamic” processes of “naming and valuation” that produce the condition of captivity. It is this grammatical recognition of the captive body *through* violence that also warrants ongoing physical and

⁹ Hortense Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” in spec. issue *Culture and Countermemory: The “American” Connection*, *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987), 68.

epistemological violence to the “human flesh.” The captive body produced within the American grammar book, however, also sites a ruptural possibility or a “counter-law”—what Spillers calls “a praxis and a theory, a text for living and dying, and a method for reading both through their diverse mediations” (67).

In *Citizen: An American Lyric*, Rankine dis-closes the border that a lyrical law of addressability draws between the realm of the artistic and the political-historical. *Citizen* not only demonstrates how the grammatical production of the lyric “I” summons racial violence against black bodies but also suggests how the “strange figure” cut at the edges of its law might issue a counter-appeal. Instead of issuing forth from the standpoint of the lyric “I,” *Citizen* makes its appeal using the “you” form. Sometimes this “you” issues forth in the second person to make a direct address to the audience. More often, it moves ambiguously between addressing a specific self with specific memories and a general third-person. Slipping between an address to the self and an appeal to a self in the general third-person form, the “you” of *Citizen* might appear to conform to the lyric’s law of addressability in its demand for a soliloquy performed in public. Yet, this “you” rarely transforms into a self-possessed “I.” Instead it circles around the construction of the lyric “I,” appearing to remain caught within its grammatical summons. The “you” doesn’t reveal the essential core of a “human nature” but instead illuminates how the lyrical appeal functions as a racialized summons. The “you” represented in *Citizen* issues forth from within the American grammar book to illuminate the regulation of a “sort of participation without belonging” through what Spillers names a “hieroglyphics of the flesh,” or “cultural seeing by skin color.” This hieroglyphics of the flesh both erases a “human subject” while also making the racially coded flesh hyper-visible, making the body perpetually open to the

metaphoric operations of naming and valuation that produce captivity.¹⁰ *Citizen*'s "you" form of address shows how the "American grammar book" functions through a series of "bad calls" to produce captive bodies—an operation that has deadly effects. This is one way to approach the unfinished list of names that comprises the memorial "In Memory of" black men murdered by the police.¹¹ The national grammar's epistemological violence, which summons captive flesh and bodies as the racialized "other" to a universalized human form embodied by the citizen, functions to code black male bodies as threats to the human form it attempts to engender. This coding occurs in the domain of the ostensibly private—the realm of personal relationships, emotions, and feelings—as the systematically produced counterpoint to the apparently egalitarian, juridical laws of citizenship: "because white men can't/ police their imaginations/ black men are dying" (135). The violent appeal that summons the black body as a public threat cannot, however, erase the memories of its embodiment. At one point, *Citizen* gives the metaphoric capture of the racialized body a "yes, and" grammatical form: "You are reminded of a conversation you had recently, comparing the merits of sentences constructed implicitly with 'yes, and' rather than 'yes, but.' You and your friend decided that 'yes, and' attested to a life with no turn-off, no alternative routes [...]" (8). While the grammatical construction of the citizen produces captive bodies and flesh through a metaphorical operation that repeats the violent "theft of the body" over time, this grammatical operation also functions as a type of counterinsurgency that attempts to contain memories attesting to the historical—instead of universal—production of the human form embodied by the citizen: "Yes, and the body has memory" (28). To appeal to these memories is to threaten the foundations of the American

¹⁰ Ibid., 67.

¹¹ Rankine, 134.

grammar book by re-siting it within a history of New World slavery, which Spillers describes as its “beginning,” or a “rupture and radically different kind of cultural continuation.”¹²

What might this counter-appeal sound like? *Citizen* seems to offer an example in its exposition of the several “bad calls” tennis player Serena Williams has been subject to in the course of her career. Instead of functioning as a self-contained example of how tennis—or the realm of sports—produces captive flesh and bodies, this “example” erodes the boundary between realms of sports, entertainment, and juridical law to reveal how such “bad calls” function according to a law of addressability that distinguishes “civil” modes of expressing emotion and feelings from an excess over-emotionalism. *Citizen* shows how Williams’s anger at bad calls appeals to memories of grammatical embodiment that challenge an American grammar book’s claim to universality, or the idea that it is sited in an eternal realm sequestered from history. The threat that this anger poses to the American grammar book is contained by media representations of Williams’s anger as uncivilized, “insane” rage. In *Citizen*, Williams is represented as occupying in tennis a “historically white space,” “hemmed in as any other black body thrown against our American background” (25, 32). Her success, her very “presence,” poses a threat to this space and she is repeatedly subject to bad calls made by umpires who penalize her for infractions that they claim to have objectively seen. After one of these calls, made during a “critical” match, Williams responds: “I swear to God, I’m going to take this ball and shove it down your fucking throat, you hear that? I swear to God!” (29). *Citizen* reveals that instead of redressing the umpire’s error, the Grand Slam Committee fined Williams \$82,500 and put her on two years of probation for her uncivil behavior. In a moment of exposition, *Citizen* explains that the Grand Slam Committee’s decision cannot be understood merely in terms of the immediate “context” of the match:

¹² Spillers, 68.

In any case, it is not difficult to think that if Serena lost context by abandoning all rules of civility, it could be because her body, trapped in a racial imaginary, trapped in disbelief—code for being black in America—is being governed not by the tennis match she is participating in but by a collapsed relationship that had promised to play by the rules. Perhaps this is how racism feels no matter the context—randomly the rules everyone else gets to play by no longer apply to you, and to call this out by calling out “I swear to God!” is to be called insane, crass, crazy. Bad sportsmanship. (30)

The grammatical law of addressability that produces captive bodies and flesh at the edges of the representative human form of the “citizen” operates not only on the tennis court but also in courts of law. As such, Williams’s angry call echoes beyond the tennis match. Her appeal to another umpire, when she demands, “Aren’t you the one that screwed me over last time here? [...] Yeah, you are. Don’t look at me. Really, don’t even look at me. Don’t look my way. Don’t look my way,” swells beyond the tennis match. It appeals to an imperial history that unleashed an American grammar book as a racial and racializing epistemology of the body. As opposed to spectacles of black anger, or “commodified anger,” that function to contain the threat that black anger poses to universalized representations of humanity, *Citizen* ruminates on the “anger built through experience and quotidian struggles against dehumanization every brown or black person lives simply because of skin color.” It considers how this anger might comprise a “type of knowledge” that “both clarifies and disappoints.” Although this anger comprises an assertion of “presence,” or embodied memory, against the “erasure” of such a history, it is “accompanied by a visceral disappointment [...] in the sense that no amount of visibility will alter the ways in which one is perceived” (24). Williams’s “outburst” or “call” is criminalized within an American grammar of citizenship before it is even uttered.

Citizen intervenes in the American grammar book’s civilized law of addressability by siting the grammatical production of ahistorical, universalized representations of a human form, bodied forth in the utterance of the lyric “I,” as part of the historical production of captive bodies

and flesh. Instead of performing the gathering together of a universalized human nature engendered by the lyric “I,” *Citizen* gives the ingathering of the lyric “I” the motion of a hurricane. The cohesive standpoint of the lyric “I” is likened to the eye of a storm that simultaneously gathers strength from the “original metaphors of captivity and mutilation” of New World slavery while at the same time attempting to disavow the historical production of its motion. In Part V, the “you” form of address spins between accusation, self-address, and open appeal dis-closing the power of the “I” as a “pronoun barely holding the person together” (71). Instead of a cohesive, universal “symbol,” the “you” in these pages “give[s] back the lack” projected onto the black body: “You hold everything black. You give yourself back until there’s nothing left but the dissolving blues of metaphor” (70). In the antagonistic back-and-forth between the “I” attempting to forge a “Brahmin first person” and a figure of the “lack,” which at one point commands that the “first person” be “drag[ged][...] out of the social death of history,” there is an appeal made to “excess emotion.” In what follows, the temporality of today dissolves into yesterday, sky into sea, and dawn into dusk as the “you” attempts to climb into the eye of a storm. *Citizen* sites the lyric “I” within the “eye” of the storm of the Middle Passage. In response to the utterance that the spinning address of the “you” is the site of a “strange dream, a strange reverie” is the reply, “No it’s a strange beach; each body is a strange beach, and if you let in the excess emotion you will recall the Atlantic Ocean breaking on our heads” (73).

The citizen “body” here lands upon a different shore, a shore that perhaps finds a visual counterpart in *Citizen*’s reproduction of the J.M.W. Turner painting of the *Slave Ship* (circa 1840) printed at the end of the text. In the page facing the reproduction, *Citizen* offers an image that magnifies the detail from the bottom right corner of the painting and is given the title *Detail of a Fish Attacking Slave*. In “What is Poetry?,” Mill cites Turner as a “poetic” painter who did

not paint “*mere* landscape,” or a simple picture faithful to its natural object, but rather who “unites the objects of the given landscape with whatever sky, and whatever light and shade,” to “enable those particular objects to impress the imagination most strongly.”¹³ In short, Turner’s paintings are believed by Mill to address universal human emotion divorced from the contingencies of history (“*whatever* sky,” “*whatever* light and shade”). In the *Slave Ship*, a storm gathers along the edges of the painting: the white-caps jostling the ragged slave ship toward the smudge of gray clouds on the left edge of the painting are counterposed with the motion of fish swirling around a leg sinking below the painting’s lower right edge. The rising or descending of the red sun blurs the boundaries of water and sky into a choppy roiling that draws the eye beyond the gathering (or dissipating?) storm toward a point of white light in the middle of the painting. Lifting the eyes beyond the storm, is this light the space of time where, following Mill, the spectator is to pause, perhaps blink or sigh, to gather together a self? Is this the place where the spectator is to transform the chaos of the storm into a feeling able to be possessed, a feeling that re-calls the self to a “real” place outside the events depicted by the painting, to an experience of citizen subjecthood? What would it mean to climb into the eye of the storm? What utterance might issue forth from *there*? *Citizen*’s magnified detail of the painting suggests that this sighting/siting of the universal, which produces, gathers together, and “bodies forth” the lyric “I,” lands upon the “strange beach” of the dismembered body disappearing beneath the blue of the painting’s right edge. This limb ringed by a broken chain, a member yet not belonging, represents both a violent physical and epistemological dismemberment always part of the in-gathering, or re-collection, of the lyric “I.” Confronting the law of addressability that attempts to engender this lyric “I,” or to, in Derrida’s words, “bring it to the light of day,” *Citizen*

¹³ See Mill, footnote y—y, 352.

commands: “Drag that first person out of the social death of history, then we’re kin./ Kin calling out the past like a foreigner with a newly minted ‘fuck you’” (72).

What appeal issues forth from the edges of this frame? What might it sound like? How does it move?

Tweet

“Academics are usually eager to contest censorship and deconstruct vague charges of vulgarity. When it comes to defending Israel, though, anything goes. If there’s no serious moral or political argument in response to criticism of Israel, then condemn the speaker for various failures of ‘tone’ and ‘appropriateness.’ Emphasis placed on the speaker and not on Israel. A word becomes more relevant than an array of war crimes.”

—Steven Salaita, “Why I Was Fired”¹⁴

The law of addressability governing civil speech lands upon other shores. On August 1, 2014, Phyllis M. Wise, Chancellor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, notified comparative indigenous studies scholar Steven Salaita that she would not recommend him to the board of trustees for a tenured appointment in the university’s American Indian Studies department. Salaita had already resigned from a tenured position as associate professor in Virginia Tech’s English department after accepting an offer from UIUC in October 2013, which had been approved by the university’s Provost, dean of the college of liberal arts and sciences, AIS department, and Chancellor Wise, for an appointment as associate professor. When he received Chancellor Wise’s letter, Salaita had already submitted syllabi for courses he was to teach in the fall and was in the middle of making preparations to move. Chancellor Wise justified what appeared to be a hasty decision, which she made without consulting the dean of LAS, chair of AIS, or other faculty who had recommended Salaita for the position, as “humanitarian” since she knew that Salaita was in the process of moving. The immediate reason she gave for firing

¹⁴ Steven Salaita, “Why I Was Fired,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 5, 2015.

Salaita was a series of tweets he had posted over the summer that she believed called into question his “professional competence,” especially in his capacity to teach.¹⁵ Salaita had posted the tweets in response to a fifty-one day Israeli military assault in Gaza that killed over 2,000 Palestinian Gazans, including 500 children.¹⁶ He has said that the controversy surrounding these tweets, which used emotional language and included profanity, began with a July 21, 2014, article on news website *The Daily Caller* that disparaged UIUC as “continu[ing] its bizarre quest to employ as many disgusting scumbags as possible by acquiring the services of Steven Salaita, a leading light in the movement among similarly obscure academics to boycott Israel.”¹⁷ It was later revealed that Chancellor Wise had also been receiving pressure from university donors who disapproved of Salaita’s hiring.¹⁸ In the widespread backlash to Salaita’s firing among scholars, proponents of academic freedom, and those involved in the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against Israel, Chancellor Wise issued an open statement justifying her actions as protecting academic freedom at UIUC. She argued that as Chancellor it was her “responsibility” to assure that UIUC remained an “inclusive” place where “education [...] starts with our willingness to search for answers together—learning from each other in a respectful way that supports a diversity of worldviews, histories, and cultural knowledge.” It wasn’t, she contended, Salaita’s “opinions” on Israel that spurred the firing but rather his uncivil mode of address, which posed a threat to UIUC students. She stated that all students, including Jewish and Palestinian students, must “feel confident” that debates with faculty would proceed in a “civil, thoughtful

¹⁵ For a summary and timeline of UIUC’s case against Salaita, see Henry Reichman, Joan Wallach Scott, and Hans-Joerg Tiede, “Academic Freedom and Tenure: The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign,” Washington, D.C.: American Association of University Professors, 2015. <http://www.aaup.org/report/UIUC>

¹⁶ Michael Rothberg, “The Salaita Case, One Year Later,” *Inside Higher Ed*, July 31, 2015. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/07/31/essay-salaita-controversy-after-one-year-and-continuing-concerns-about-academic>

¹⁷ Salaita, “Why I Was Fired.”

¹⁸ Rothberg, “The Salaita Case, One Year Later.”

and mutually respectful manner”: “Most important, every student must know that every instructor recognizes and values that student as a human being.”¹⁹

Chancellor Wise’s appeal to her “responsibility” as a university administrator to protect academic freedom at UIUC invokes questions posed by Derrida on how laws of addressability are invoked to govern academic speech in a paper he gave in April 1980 for Columbia University Graduate School’s centenary. In “Mochlos, or The Conflict of the Faculties,” Derrida returns to deconstructing the law of the law of genre governing modes of addressability by taking up philosopher Immanuel Kant’s theorization of academic freedom at the modern university in *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798), a text that Derrida cites as a “kind of dictionary and grammar” of the “contradictory discourses” at the university.²⁰ Derrida’s paper begins with the question of responsibility, or “the summons, the call to responsibility,” that appears embedded within the concept of the university. For Derrida, the question of “*what*” and “*whom*” is represented by the university as well to “what and whom” the “*we*” of the university is accountable is a question bound up with the way the university represents—indeed, performs—academic “responsibility,” including through the regulation of language (83). The concept of the university that Kant attempts to “formalize” in *The Conflict of the Faculties* appeals to a law of addressability governing who both “inside” and “outside” the university has the responsibility and right to represent “truth.” Derrida points out that Kant’s conceptualization of the university was written in response to a letter from King Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia that had “reproached” the philosopher for “having behaved in a manner impardonable, literally ‘irresponsible’” for the ideas he had published in *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason* (86). In *The Conflict of the*

¹⁹ Quoted in John K. Wilson, “Chancellor Phyllis Wise Explains the Firing of Steven Salaita,” *Academe Blog* (blog), August 22, 2014. <https://academeblog.org/2014/08/22/chancellor-phyllis-wise-explains-the-firing-of-steven-salaita/>

²⁰ Jacques Derrida, “Mochlos, or The Conflict of the Faculties,” trans. Richard Rand and Amy Wygant, in *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 90.

Faculties, Kant, in Derrida's terms, appeals to the "purity of the law" to formalize the philosophy faculty as a site properly governed by reason by giving the specific laws regulating "border conflicts" both among faculties "inside" the university as well as between the university and "outside" pressures exerted upon it by the state, business, and civil society (93). For Kant, the philosophy faculty not only has the right to function autonomously because it, unlike other faculties, is solely responsible to reason, but it also has an "ethico-juridical" right to determine "truth" beyond the university since it is not beholden to "outside" interests (90). The university, which finds its highest representation for Kant in the philosophy faculty, is thus described as functioning semi-privately vis-à-vis the state and its activities, including its language use, are represented to be *autonomous*. As Derrida observes, however, Kant must represent the university as a *fait accompli* in order to make *The Conflict of the Faculties* appear as a "constative" description of laws that already function to regulate the university as an institution (90). In deconstructing the grammar of the university that Kant lays out, Derrida demonstrates how "the paradoxical" structure of the "limits" Kant draws "distinguish sets that are each time somehow in excess of themselves, covering each time the whole of which they should figure only a part or sub-set." This "intestine division and folding" that everywhere "parasites" and erodes the legal boundaries that Kant sets up to protect the autonomous functioning of the university, and particularly the philosophy faculty, is described by Derrida as a type of "invagination" (106). Kant's delimitations of the university's "inside" and "outside" double back on themselves to form pockets that erode the boundaries he attempts to formalize in order to protect the university's apparent right to autonomy. Derrida reveals that the laws Kant describes cannot in actuality protect the autonomy of the university because they are always already eroding and shown in the last instance to depend on the state's suspension of its own power in allowing the

university to exercise its “ethico-juridical” responsibility. In short, Kant’s formalization of academic freedom at the university in *The Conflict of the Faculties* might be best understood as a type of performance that makes it appear as if the university functions semi-autonomously vis-à-vis the state as an institution primarily responsible to reason or truth.

Although Chancellor Wise’s statement appeals to a responsibility to protect academic freedom at UIUC, her decision to fire Salaita was roundly condemned for violating the free speech of faculty, bypassing proper channels of due-process, conceding to pressures exerted from “outside” the university, and its call for “civility.” Much of the criticism of Chancellor Wise, in other words, did not have to do with her responsibility to protect academic freedom at UIUC but rather with her transgression of that responsibility. How is this responsibility to be understood? In its defense of Steven Salaita, the American Academy of University Professors (AAUP) argued that Wise could not treat Salaita’s tweets as evidence to determine his “professional competence.” A report issued by an AAUP subcommittee pointed out that Wise was wrong to approach the tweets as a form of scholarly speech subject to adjudication within the university. The report acknowledges that while the tweets might indicate Salaita’s “unfitness” to teach at UIUC, they fall outside of the jurisdiction of the university and constitute a protected form of public speech. It argues that Salaita’s tweets were a form of “extramural speech” protected by the AAUP since its 1915 founding.²¹ Citing a 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* issued by the AAUP and Association of American Colleges, the report classifies Salaita’s tweets as citizens’ speech: “College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations.” According to the report,

²¹ John Dewey was one of the original founders of the AAUP.

posting tweets is not a form of scholarly publication but a form of extramural utterance legally exempt from university oversight. At the same time, the report takes seriously Wise's charge made to a UIUC Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure in response to the firing that such extramural speech might still indicate that his teaching might violate the "safe space" of the classroom by betraying a tendency toward "inflammatory" speech. It acknowledges that the tweets raise concerns about Salaita's "classroom conduct," noting that the AAUP's Statement on Professional Ethics "stipulates that '[p]rofessors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors,' adding that professors 'avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students.'"²² The report maintains, however, that the tweets could not be used as *evidence* in determining Salaita's "fitness" in regard to teaching or scholarship. Wise, in other words, may have been acting properly according to her responsibility to the university to raise concerns about Salaita's fitness for the classroom, but she was wrong to cite his tweets as evidence because they constitute extramural utterances.

In "Mochlos," Derrida observes that in order to delimit the philosophy faculty's responsibility to "truth" from a public responsibility to "action," Kant "must submit language to a particular treatment." This "treatment" is carried out through limitations placed on publication. Kant ascribes to philosophy a "quasi-private" language used to express "truth" that cloaks it from public scrutiny and keeps it properly within the autonomous realm of the philosophy faculty, which both produces and judges it.²³ Derrida points out that in Kant's formulation this semi-autonomous form of academic speech is not the same as publication, for it is the "*publication of knowledge, rather than knowledge itself, that is submitted to authority.*" According to Derrida,

²² Reichman, Scott, and Tiede, "Academic Freedom and Tenure: The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign."

²³ Derrida, "Mochlos," 97-98.

however, language always contains an “element of publicity.” It is never “natural” or “universal” but always subject to the “force of parasiting” from within (99). The AAUP’s argument that Salaita’s tweets are protected as extramural utterances attempts to preserve the legal boundary delimiting the semi-autonomous sphere of the university by situating the tweets beyond its domain as a type of public speech protected for U.S. citizens under the First Amendment. This boundary between private and public, however, doubles back on itself in Wise’s and the AAUP’s interpretation of Salaita’s tweets in relationship to his character. Whether approached as a semi-private form of speech subject to adjudication by the university or as a protected form of public speech, Salaita’s tweets are in both cases read as indicating an angry over-emotionalism that threatens academic freedom, especially in university classrooms.

Interpretations of Salaita’s tweets as indications of his academic “fitness” or “competence” appeal to a liberal law of addressability also invoked by Mill’s conceptualization of poetry. In Wise’s statement and the AAUP report, Salaita’s tweets are read as a type of “soliloquy performed in public” that betray a mis-match between the individual emotions they represent and the emotions they are to illicit in the audience that “overhears” them. Instead of “bodying... forth in symbols” universalized representations of emotion from the standpoint of a rational subjectivity, conceived by the first-person lyrical “I,” Salaita’s tweets are interpreted as potential embodiments of an “uncivil” nature, an essentialized incompetence. Both documents appeal to a liberal law of addressability distinguishing between “civil” (a.k.a. *civilized*) modes of address to call Salaita’s tenure, and by extension his citizenship as a tenured member of academia, into question. As queer theorist Jasbir K. Puar points out in her introduction to an interview with Salaita published in the scholarly journal *Qui Parle*, the discourse of civility at universities across the U.S. has given rise to training programs and rules of conduct in which

“certain bodies are constructed to simply be, a priori, uncivil.”²⁴ Puar explains that bodies coded as “uncivil” are “*always already* suspect—always seen as primed toward uncivil behavior. They demonstrate for us what incivility is by virtue of the *sheer presence* of their non-normativity. Thus the distinction here becomes less one of speech as uncivil than one of how the ideological evaluation of speech is used to reinforce the production of certain bodies as threatening, dangerous, and uncivil” (64-65). Salaita’s tweets, whether judged to be a semi-private form of scholarly speech or as protected public speech, are often evaluated according to racialized laws of addressability that govern lyrical speech acts.

It might not at first seem like a stretch to approach tweets as lyrical utterances. Taken in isolation, the 140-character limitation of tweets could make them appear to be poems. Indeed, the interview with Salaita in *Qui Parle* defends him against accusations of incivility by concluding with one of his more “moving tweets” (86):

Convo w/my son
 ‘You talked at college, papa?’
 ‘Yes, I did. About Palestine.’
 ‘Why you talk Pal’stine?’
 ‘To keep it alive my love.’

Such a citation could be taken as evidence that Salaita’s tweets do not betray a lack of “professional competence.” The tweet could instead be read to reveal Salaita’s truly civil character, a character obscured when only Salaita’s “angry” tweets are read. This reading would be in keeping with the civilizational law of addressability invoked by the lyric. Salaita’s private conversation with his son reproduced on the public medium of Twitter would appeal to the ostensibly universal and ahistorical, but culturally liberal, emotions of parenthood—a father trying to instill in his son a sense of belonging, even citizenship, by appealing to Palestine as a shared source of identity, experience, and history. This reading, however, would also confirm

²⁴ Espiritu, Puar, and Salaita, 64.

Wise's interpretations of the tweets as betraying an inherently uncivil character. The anger expressed in other tweets could be taken as expressions of tendencies to over-emotionalism, a type of anger that can't be controlled. Two of these tweets widely cited include: "You may be too refined to say it, but I'm not: I wish all the fucking West Bank settlers would go missing," and "At this point if Netanyahu appeared on TV with a necklace made from the teeth of Palestinian children, would anybody be surprised?"²⁵ Whether approving or disapproving, both conceive Salaita's tweets as utterances made by a first-person self "embodied in symbols."

Although the AAUP report condemned Chancellor Wise's decision to fire Salaita, it failed to apprehend the way in which, in Puar's words, the "convergence" of "academic freedom, the erosion of faculty governance, and political work on Palestine, especially as it relates to and links with the United States as a settler colonial state [...] is not coincidental, but rather constitutive and intrinsic."²⁶ In separating out Wise's call to "civility" from the questions of Salaita's "professional competence" raised by his tweets, the report refuses to investigate how normative discourses of civility at the university frame the question of professional competence. According to Puar, Salaita's firing was not ultimately about the inflammatory tone or style of his tweets but about both preventing Salaita from acting as a potentially "radicalizing force" on campus in his trenchant critique of Israeli colonialism, a critique in which the U.S. as a supporter of Israel is also bound up, and to "set up precedence—legal and in terms of faculty governance" that could be replicated at other universities" (68). Appeals made to the incivility of Salaita's tweets thus work both as a smokescreen diverting attention away from how the university has been complicit with U.S. and Israeli colonialism and as a means to contain Salaita's critique by racializing him as "uncivil." As Salaita has pointed out, the effects of representing his character

²⁵ Quoted in Salaita, "Why I Was Fired."

²⁶ Espiritu, Puar, and Salaita, 67.

as, at its core, uncivil has been used by critics as an occasion to not only contain the threat that he poses to the university but also the threat of decolonial epistemologies developed in departments like American Indian Studies. In listing the charges made against him, Salaita explains:

First I was anti-Semitic. Then I was uncivil. Then I was a bad teacher. Then I was too charismatic. Then I was too angry. Then I was too profane. [...] Then I was a poor scholar. Then my colleagues were incompetent. Then my colleagues were deceitful. Then my colleagues were ignorant. Then the American Indian-studies program required special guidance. Then the decision to hire me was solely based on politics. Then indigenous studies was illegitimate. Then the entire damn field needed to be shut down.²⁷

According to Puar and Salaita, accusations made against Salaita on the basis of his tweets need to be understood within the contexts of the history of academic freedom as a concept within liberal modernity.

The case made against Salaita cannot be understood apart from New World histories of colonization and slavery. As Salaita argues, academic freedom at the university has historically been “hostile to deviant bodies and bodies of deviant ideas.”²⁸ It remains bound up with an imperial grammar of civilization that has worked historically to make state imperial projects appear consistent with values of freedom and egalitarianism. The normative discourse of civility, in Salaita’s words, was forged as part of “colonial worldviews” that are still operative both inside and outside the university: “[Civility] forces us to identify with the logic of colonization. Any communication that challenges colonialism or plutocracy, then, automatically assumes the burden of intemperance or disrespect. The normativity of the hegemon can constantly reproduce itself” (70). As Puar points out, the “vitriolic speech” of Salaita’s critics has not been subject to the same censure (65). In her investigation of a liberal discourse of tolerance at the university, political scientist Wendy Brown argues that such “civilizational discourse” is not “reducible to liberalism” but is, in fact, “strongly shaped by the legacy of the colonial and settler-native

²⁷ Salaita, “Why I Was Fired.”

²⁸ Espiritu, Puar, and Salaita, 71.

encounter as well as the postcolonial encounter between white and indigenous, colonized, or expropriated peoples.” She argues that the “lexicon and ethos” of civilizational discourse is “mediated” by this legacy and has “constitut[ed] an element in the constitutive outside to liberalism.”²⁹ Borrowing from Derrida’s conceptualization of the *supplement*, Brown demonstrates how the civilizational discourse of tolerance functions as the supplement to U.S. imperialism by producing a normative framework that “privatizes” the realm of culture while “casting liberal principles as universal” (23). Within an imperial grammar of civilization, university programs designed to promote “diversity” and “inclusivity” often approach systemic forms of racism as private, moral problems to be redressed through civility training.³⁰ Sequestering racism to a private realm allows the systemic devaluation of life through racist imperial policies, practices, *and* culture to continue un-criticized. This grammatical operation is what allowed Chancellor Wise’s firing of Salaita to appear compatible with an appeal to her responsibility to protect “inclusivity” and “diversity” at UIUC.

Salaita’s tweets posed a threat to the university because their angry tone and style bespoke a responsibility not to the liberal fiction of the university as a semi-autonomous space governed by reason and truth but instead a responsibility to decolonial frameworks, epistemologies, and methodologies capable of critiquing the violent imperial and colonial actions carried out by liberal states. This responsibility, according to Salaita, is deeply bound up with the politics of language. In his words, “Many genocides have been glorified (or planned) around dinner tables adorned with forks and knives made from actual silver, without a single inappropriate speech act having occurred. [...] You tell me which is worse: cussing in

²⁹ Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 8.

³⁰ For examples of some these programs, see Espiritu, Puar, and Salaita, 64; and Joan W. Scott, “The New Thought Police,” *The Nation*, April 15, 2015. <http://www.thenation.com/article/new-thought-police/>

condemnation of the murder of children or using impeccable manners to justify their murder.”³¹

Salaita’s uncivil speech comprises a rejection of civilizational discourses of respectability that function as part of “epistemologies of colonial wisdom” that have justified murder and genocide with appeals to civility. Discussing the relationship between form and politics, Salaita argues that the “selection and performance of form bespeak a rhetorical engagement that arises from some sort of political engagement, even if it is implicit.”³² Intervening in reading practices that would examine his tweets for evidence of moral character by judging them according civilizational norms, Salaita calls instead for a reading practice that would see his rhetorical choices as an emotional condemnation of colonial actions. His tweets ask an audience to consider how the epistemological frameworks they bring to Israeli colonization might need to change in order to see anger and other “uncivil” emotions as a morally appropriate response to colonial warfare and murder, which are physically and epistemologically violent acts that seek to *negate* peoples and knowledges by situating them beyond the pale of liberal civilization. Salaita’s firing demonstrates how the university is never in fact “outside” the state. It shows how the imperial grammars of civilization that produce the devaluation of Palestinian life can be harnessed at the university to devalue scholar and student activists critical of U.S. imperialism by, in the case of Salaita, denying academic citizenship. As Salaita and Puar point out, the very presence of minoritized and racialized scholars in the university constitutes an act of survival against liberal practices and epistemologies that seek their erasure as well as the negation of the epistemologies they employ. In this way, Salaita’s tweet to his son bespeaks the political significance of survival. Asked what he means when he says that he discusses Palestine at the university to “keep it alive,” Salaita responds: “Alive in our consciousness. Alive in our family history. Alive

³¹ Salaita, “Why I Was Fired.”

³² Espiritu, Puar, and Salaita, 77.

as a geography. Alive as an idea. Alive as an ideal. Alive as a living space. In short, alive in all the ways a beloved place can survive the erasures of colonization.”³³

Appeal

“It is with these sentiments that our organization, the Black Liberation Collective, was born. Black students we are here for you. We want you to succeed, and we will help you build capacity whenever and wherever necessary. We love you, we need you. We want you to grow, we want you to develop as leaders, and we want you to transform your institutions to fit your needs and the needs of the community. No longer will we sit back and be ignored. No longer will we allow ourselves to be consumed in the daily grinds of being student-activists. No longer will we allow these institutions of higher education to exploit us, and in return we get debt, trauma, and good memories that fade when our energy is sucked into the machine that is oppression. Love—a radical, intersectional love for all black lives—is necessary to do this work.”

—Black Liberation Collective, “On urgency, frustration, and love: A love letter to black students”³⁴

In the video clip, a group of students stand in a circle around Nicholas Christakis, professor and master of Silliman College at Yale University. Visible beyond the circle are gray, Georgian buildings that match the overcast sky. The blaze of orange leaves on the autumn trees is matched only by Christakis’s bright blue shirt as he stands, wringing his hands, among the students. Many of the students gathered around Christakis appear to watch intently, arms crossed, at the confrontation unfolding before them while others appear to have stopped by to watch the spectacle. The camera frames Christakis head on, while a student in gray green shirt and backpack confronts him about an email that his wife, Associate Master of Silliman Erika Christakis, had sent to Silliman residents about Halloween costumes. In the email, Erika Christakis responded to a mass email sent by Yale’s Intercultural Affairs Committee asking students to “consider” the Halloween costumes they chose and “avoid circumstances that threaten our sense of community or disrespects, alienates or ridicules segments of our population based on race, nationality, religious belief or gender expression.”³⁵ Addressing Silliman’s

³³ Espiritu, Puar, and Salaita, 86.

³⁴ The Black Liberation Collective, “On urgency, frustration, and love: A love letter to black students,” *Black Liberation Collective*, December 10, 2015. <http://www.blackliberationcollective.org/news/>

³⁵ Quoted in Ryan Wilson, “Open Letter to Associate Master Christakis,” *Down Mag*, October 31, 2015. <http://downat Yale.com/post.php?id=430>

students as “Sillimanders,” Christakis said that while she didn’t wish to “trivialize” the concerns expressed in the IAC email she questioned whether such requests issued from university administrators attempted to exercise too much “control” over students. Christakis marshals her expertise as a child development specialist and former preschool teacher to “wonder” if there is “no room anymore for a child or young person to be a little bit obnoxious... a little bit inappropriate or provocative, or yes, offensive?” She continues with a lament: “American universities were once a safe space not only for maturation but also for a certain regressive, or even transgressive, experience; increasingly, it seems, they have become places of censure and prohibition. And the censure and prohibition come from above, not from yourselves!” Representing Halloween costumes as a protected form of speech, Christakis divulges to students her own perhaps “fetishistic” love for Bangladeshi saris and appeals to them to consider whether or not there is anything “‘appropriative’ about a blond-haired child’s wanting to be Mulan for a day.”³⁶

The confrontation captured on video begins with Nicholas Christakis, who is white, speaking in measured tones, explaining to the young black woman, “The exception is that other people have rights, too, not just you.” Shortly after, the student erupts in rage. “Be quiet!” she shouts. “As your position as master, it is your job to create a place of comfort and home for the students that live in Silliman.” Responding to the charge that he and his wife had violated the terms of their positions, Christakis says quietly that he disagrees. The woman continues yelling, “Then why the fuck did you accept the position? Who the fuck hired you?” As Christakis tries to explain that he has a “different vision” than the student, she demands for him to “step down”

³⁶ Erika Christakis, “Email from Erika Christakis: ‘Dressing Yourself,’ email to Silliman College (Yale) Students on Halloween Costumes,” *FIRE: Foundation for Individual Rights in Education*, October 30, 2015. <https://www.thefire.org/email-from-erika-christakis-dressing-yourself-email-to-silliman-college-yale-students-on-halloween-costumes/>

from his position and declares, “It is not about creating an intellectual space! It is not! Do you understand that? It’s about creating a home here!” At the end of the confrontation, the woman picks up her backpack, which had fallen to the ground, and turns away telling Christakis, “You should not sleep at night,” and calling him “disgusting.” The clip ends with the woman’s face as she makes her way out of the circle, out of the frame, and, via the video, into various analyses that, echoing Erika Christakis, lament the crisis of “free speech” at the university.³⁷ The woman in the video wasn’t the only student who was angered by Christakis’s email. An open letter signed by Concerned Yale Students, Alumni, Family, and Staff took issue with the way in which Christakis’s email “infantilizes” students and ignores not only demands that students had made to Yale asking the university to address racist Halloween costumes but also how these demands participated in antiracist activism taking place at college campuses across the U.S.³⁸ The video of the angry Yale student went viral, however, as an example of the over-emotionalism of student activists whose demands appear to pose a threat to free speech at the university.³⁹ Responding to the student who confronted her husband in the video, Erika Christakis, who decided not to teach during the 2016 spring semester, said that they “wish her the best. [...] No one should be held accountable for a moment in time when they’re 20 years old.”⁴⁰

Yale is one of the many U.S. colleges and universities where, beginning with the University of Missouri in the fall of 2015, student activists have made specific demands for the hiring of more black faculty, the admission of more black students, decreases in tuition, and a

³⁷ TheFIREorg, “Yale University Students Protest Halloween Costume Email (Video 3),” YouTube video, posted November 6, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLvIqJIL2kOMefn77xg6-6yrvek5kbNf3Z&v=9IEFD_JVYd0

³⁸ Wilson, “Open Letter to Associate Master Christakis.”

³⁹ For an overview of student protests at the University of Missouri and Yale, see Scott Jaschik, “Racial Tensions Escalate,” *Inside Higher Ed*, November 9, 2015. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/11/09/racial-tensions-escalate-u-missouri-and-yale>

⁴⁰ Anemona Hartocollis, “Yale Educator Recounts ‘Painful Experience’ of Halloween Email Furor,” *The New York Times*, February 6, 2016. <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/07/education/educator-recounts-painful-experience-of-halloween-email-furor-at-yale.html>

widespread reckoning with the way that colleges and universities have participated in ongoing histories of racialized oppression and violence, including but not limited to settler colonialism in the U.S. and elsewhere, slavery and its afterlife, and the prison industrial complex.⁴¹ At the University of Missouri, student activists confronted the apathy of university administrators toward racist speech and other acts directed against black students by successfully demanding the resignation of President Tim Wolfe. A black graduate student, Jonathan Butler, went on a hunger strike and the school's black football players refused to play until the president resigned. Among other things, students protested Wolfe's behavior toward students by demanding that he take responsibility for his driver running into students during a protest and do something about the appearance of a swastika, formed out of human feces, that appeared on the wall of a dormitory. At the University of Missouri and Yale, students also demanded that buildings and statues commemorating racist historical figures be removed or renamed. The letter written by Concerned Yale is part of a litany of demands made by students who have framed antiracist activism on university and college campuses as a key part of the Black Lives Matter movement that began with protests in Ferguson, Missouri, over the police murder of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager. In a November 2015 press release, the Black Liberation Collective, a group of student activists from campuses across the U.S., appealed in fact to a much larger context in which to understand the "campus revolution," which they say, "does not exist in isolation from the broader Movement for Black Lives, and the much longer Black Freedom Struggle."⁴²

⁴¹ See, for example, the Black Liberation Collective Demands: "1) WE DEMAND at the minimum, Black students and Black faculty to be reflected by the national percentage of Black folk in the state and the country 2) WE DEMAND free tuition for Black and indigenous students 3) WE DEMAND a divestment from prisons and an investment in communities." The Black Liberation Collective also lists demands from several specific colleges and universities. See Black Liberation Collective, "Our Demands," *Black Liberation Collective*, n.d. <http://www.blackliberationcollective.org/our-demands/>

⁴² Black Liberation Collective, "On urgency, frustration, and love."

Even while appearing to welcome antiracist activism, scholars and journalists have spilled much ink reprimanding the tactics and demands of student activists. Often championing the civil rights movement as a golden era of activism for racial justice and equality, such critiques represent the threat that contemporary student activists pose to the right of free speech as well as to liberal values of tolerance, diversity, and inclusivity. Student activists have been represented as asking too much or making demands *in excess* of liberal values that frame the university's political and ethical responsibilities toward students. Their manner of address, in particular, is summoned as evidence of an immaturity that betrays a misunderstanding of, or even a lack of gratitude for, free speech. In an article for the *New York Review of Books*, Georgetown University law professor David Cole outlines the way in which student protests at Yale threaten free speech at the university by abandoning implicit rules of civil discourse. He concedes that while student activism across U.S. campuses "is a welcome change from the much-bemoaned apathy of previous generations," he is concerned by students who have "sought to suppress or compel the expressions of others, a fundamentally illiberal tactic that is almost certain to backfire, and that risks substituting symbol for substance in the struggle for justice." Commenting on the video of the angry woman confronting Nicholas Christakis, he states, "Her words are highly inappropriate, to say the least," before comparing her anger to the "rage that many teenagers occasionally vent at their parents." He contends that student activists like the woman in the video do not even understand the struggle in which they are engaged. It is "paradoxical," he explains, that college campuses have been sites for student activism since they tend to be "committed to diversity" and comprise "some of the most integrated sites in an otherwise still largely segregated nation." According to Cole, colleges like Yale have in fact enabled student activism: "Most of what has taken place at Yale and other colleges reflects the

best traditions of free speech: students of color and others have been organizing politically, holding rallies, and speaking out.” Citing a number of statistics on the racial inequality of student admissions and faculty hiring practices at elite institutions like Yale, Cole argues that student activists’ focus on racist speech diverts energy away from the “core” of “what they are fighting for,” which he defines for them as “an inclusive community that treats them as equals.”⁴³

Cole’s essay draws limits not only around what students can demand of colleges and universities but also the manner in which they can make demands by appealing to a law of addressability governed by codes of liberal “civility.” Responding to letters to the editor critical of his emphasis on civility, Cole argues that in his experiences as a law professor, “where divisive issues of race, gender, class, and religion are the order of the day,” civility has enabled “intellectual engagement” among students by “assur[ing] students that all views are welcome *and* that it is necessary to express themselves in a civil manner that respects their fellow students.” In his argument, objective knowledge production in universities must proceed according to codes of civility: “Civility is not about coddling customers, but about facilitating a meaningful exchange of ideas.” In Cole’s essays on Yale, academia is represented as embodying the ideal concept of the university represented by Kant in *The Conflict of Faculties*. Indeed, even historian Joan W. Scott’s criticism of Cole’s article frames the ostensible threat posed by students who demand that higher education respond to racist speech as a type of “outside” encroachment upon the ideal space of the university. Although also largely sympathetic to student activism, Scott attributes student demands for “safe spaces” as due to the increasing number and power of administrators in higher education. Equating student demands for safe spaces with demands for “trigger warnings,” or advance notice from instructors when subject

⁴³ David Cole, “The Trouble at Yale,” *New York Review of Books*, January 14, 2016. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/01/14/the-trouble-at-yale/>

matter might “trigger” emotional trauma, Scott says that it is administrators who, in treating students as consumers, represent “safety and comfort” as a “more important value than free speech.”⁴⁴ In an article for *The Nation* called “The New Thought Police,” Scott criticizes the “invocation of civility” in the UIUC case against Steven Salaita and among academic administrators more generally as diverting attention away from the content of “uncivil” criticism against colleges and universities by focusing on the manner in which such criticism is delivered. In her argument, the “mask of civility” conceals the “hidden transcripts” of power at the university, which, as in the case of Salaita, certain types of criticism appear to threaten the university as a brand or profit-making venture. In condemning the discourse of “civility” on U.S. campuses, Scott, however, aligns with Cole in representing the demands of student activists as potential threats to “First Amendment and academic freedom rights.”⁴⁵

Yet, who are the citizens protected under the First Amendment right to free speech? Who are the citizens of the university protected by academic freedom? Who can claim the subject position of the citizen? The unofficial case made against the manner and demands of student activists are framed by liberal epistemologies of equality and freedom. As numerous scholars have pointed out, the corporatization of the university since the 1970s in which universities and colleges are increasingly run according to business models has resulted in the hiring of more administrators (who make more money), the adjunctification of the teaching labor force, and tuition increases for students. This restructuring has challenged the idea that higher education serves a “public good” promoting socio-economic mobility.⁴⁶ As Salaita points out, the

⁴⁴ Joan W. Scott, Steve Mayer, Andrew G. Celli, Jr., and David Cole, “Troubles at Yale: An Exchange,” *The New York Review of Books*, February 11, 2016. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/02/11/troubles-at-yale-an-exchange/>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See for, example, Christopher Newfield, Introduction, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2008); and Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 156-162.

increasing reliance on adjunct instructors at colleges and universities has also made any criticism of the university that might be carried out in the process of teaching “critical thinking” more risky since adjuncts do not have the protection of tenure.⁴⁷ Colleges and universities have thus been active participants in late twentieth and early twenty-first century neoliberal state policies, which black studies scholar Jodi Melamed argues have been animated by “neoliberal multiculturalism.” According to Melamed, neoliberal policies, including the privatization of public resources and forms of financial and market liberalization aimed at “global economic management,” have been accompanied by multiculturalist discourse that revises earlier discourses of racial liberalism by “cod[ing] the wealth, mobility, and political power of neoliberalism’s beneficiaries to be the just desserts of ‘multicultural world citizens,’ while representing those neoliberalism dispossesses to be handicapped by their own ‘monoculturalism’ or other historico-cultural deficiencies.”⁴⁸ She argues that neoliberal multiculturalism “revises racial liberalism’s model of race as culture” by “displac[ing] racial reference altogether” so that “culture” appears untethered from a “history of racial conflict and antiracist struggle” but “nonetheless remains associated with ideas of ‘diversity,’ ‘representation,’ and ‘fairness’” (19). Multiculturalism, divorced from the histories of racial struggle out of which it emerged, becomes a normative discourse that can be appropriated for repressive projects. Melamed argues, for instance, that the distribution of Korans to Guantánamo Bay prisoners makes the prison appear “not as a betrayal of U.S. multicultural ideals, but as the logical extension of them for the so-called war on terror” (16). At U.S. colleges and universities, discourses of tolerance, diversity, and inclusion often appear in relationship to programs and initiatives created to develop “global citizens.” In such programs, values of diversity and inclusion are taught as norms governing

⁴⁷ Salaita, *Why I Was Fired*; and Espiritu, Puar, and Salaita, 71-72.

⁴⁸ Melamed, “The Spirit of Neoliberalism,” 1.

interactions within a global economy and globalized workforce. An emphasis on the tolerance of difference as neoliberal norm erases the way in which antiracist movements have historically included critiques of capitalism as a source of racialized oppression and, as Melamed argues, functions as a new epistemology of race in which “culture” is transformed into a knowable quantity, or “information bits,” to be learned about as a strategy to manage difference.⁴⁹

According to Wendy Brown, those who do not appear to conform to the behavioral and speech norms of liberal values are cast as “dark others” that “signal the presence of barbarism, liberalism’s putative opposite.”⁵⁰

In historically situating their demands as part of the Black Lives Matter movement and the “much longer Black Freedom Struggle,” the Black Liberation Collective uncovers the way in which official appeals to diversity, inclusivity, and tolerance within higher education have been part of policies and programs that have not served black students. By making demands for colleges and universities to divest from prisons, which disproportionately warehouse black and brown bodies, or involving themselves in Palestinian solidarity through movements like Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions, student activists challenge official university policies and programs created in the name of diversity and inclusion that do not result in justice for students whose lives have been made more precarious by neoliberal state policies greasing the wheels of global capitalism. They illuminate how global citizenship has never been for them and, in so doing, also expose the theatricality of representations of the university that make it appear as a semi-autonomous site governed by ideals of free speech and academic freedom. As Derrida observes in his deconstructive reading of Kant’s *The Conflict of the Faculties*, the apparent autonomy of the university as a realm sequestered from the state and governed by a responsibility to objective

⁴⁹ Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*, 163.

⁵⁰ Brown, 172.

truth and reason takes on a certain “performativity,” since the “political effects” of knowledge published at the university are always “controlled, measured, and overseen by a power outside the university.” Derrida explains, “Regarding this power, university autonomy is in a situation of heteronomy, an autonomy conferred and limited, a representation of autonomy—in the double sense of a representation by a delegation and theatrical representation.”⁵¹ Writing as a representative of academia, David Cole’s representation of “civility” in his classes along with his appeals to the university as an idealized site of “tolerance” and “integration” *perform* the semi-autonomy of the university. In the process, he demonstrates how appeals to civility, tolerance, inclusion, and diversity can be used to racialize students and their demands as threats both to the university as exemplary site of free speech and to students whose divergent “views” appear as a protected form of speech. The angry Yale student calling for a “home,” a call which echoes the wider appeal for safe spaces on college and university campuses, appears within this theatrical performance as a threat to the semi-autonomous space of the university.

Yet, how might the call for “safe space” that is part of student activist demands be read in excess of a law of addressability governed by a neoliberal grammar of civility? How might it reframe racial liberal understandings of safety, protection, and freedom? Cole argues that university initiatives for cultural centers and ethnic studies are “invaluable for many students,” and here is presumably referring to the “many” students who cannot escape fleshly embodiments of “culture” or “ethnicity,” as long as they don’t serve to “further divide university life along racial and ethnic lines, and thereby increase the sense of alienation that many minority students report.” Such spaces are thus permitted as long as they do not interfere with business as usual, or the everyday liberal management of classrooms “where divisive issues of race, gender, class, and

⁵¹ Derrida, “Mochlos,” 86.

religion are the order of the day.”⁵² In an editorial for *The New York Times* written during the fall of 2015, literary scholar and fiction writer Roxane Gay points out that while the freedom of speech guaranteed by the First Amendment is “sacred,” it does not protect against the vulnerability to violence. She explains that “[r]ather than examine why activists need safe space,” critics often proceed as if the demand for “sanctuary in plain sight, in a public space” was an affront to free speech by “fram[ing] [student activists] as coddled infants, as if perhaps we should educate college students in a more spartan manner—placing classrooms in lions’ dens.” Pointing out that most who “mock” demands for safe space are those privileged enough to “take safety for granted,” she explains that she understands the call for safe space: “When you are marginalized and always unsafe, your skin thins, leaving your blood and bone exposed. You live at the breaking point.” While Gay remains cautious toward what she calls “safe space extremism,” she points out that a physical and epistemological *vulnerability* of the body remains in excess to laws of free speech.⁵³

In “Mochlos,” his speech given to commemorate the founding of Columbia’s Graduate School, Derrida compares himself to a guest invited as an “afterthought,” “some parasite with a weak command of table manners,” in bringing to his audience’s attention the founding fiction of the university—a fiction that Derrida suggests is performed at university events like commemorations.⁵⁴ Noting that the “discourse of responsibility” functions “tautologically” by “appealing” to “a pure ethico-juridical agency, a pure practical reason, to a pure idea of the law” while at the same framing the response “in decidable terms, from and before the law,” Derrida wonders instead if responsibility at the university might be approached from a different

⁵² Cole, “The Trouble at Yale.”

⁵³ Roxane Gay, “The Seduction of Safety, on Campus and Beyond,” *The New York Times*, November 13, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/15/opinion/sunday/the-seduction-of-safety-on-campus-and-beyond.html>

⁵⁴ Derrida, “Mochlos,” 84.

“ground.” He asks, “Would it not be more ‘responsible’ to try pondering the ground, in the history of the West, on which the juridico-egological values of responsibility were determined, attained, imposed?” (91). The angry Yale student’s *uncivil* confrontation with Nicholas Christakis might be read as an appeal issued from a “ground” other than the semi-autonomous realm represented by the liberal university and eliciting a responsibility, or a response, that would move the university in another direction. In what way might the student’s anger comprise what *Citizen* calls a “type of knowledge”? How might her contention that the issue is not “intellectual space” but about “creating a home here” intervene in the founding fiction that the university is an autonomous site “free” from a political, economic, and social “outside”? How would the university’s epistemological framework need to change in order to apprehend her call *not* as an immature and over-emotional threat to the intellectual reason ostensibly embodied by the university but as an appeal summoning a mode of sociality governed by different rules of addressability? What would it take, in other words, to apprehend her call as directing the university toward another “ground,” another shore?

Derrida points out that the “question of the right to the law, of the foundation of the law, is not a juridical question”; it is a question of *founding* (109). He asks what it might mean if the impurity that always parasites the law—is always engendered by the law—became a ground from which to create a different founding. On considering a new “responsibility” for the university, he offers the concept metaphor of *mochlos*, a lever, a different articulation and movement. He explains:

Traditional law should therefore provide, on its own foundational soil, a support for leaping to another place for founding, or, if you prefer another metaphor to that of the jumper planting a foot before leaping—of ‘taking the call on one foot’ (*prenant appel sur un pied*) as is said in French—then we might say that the difficulty will consist, as always, in determining the best lever, what the Greeks would call *mochlos*. A *mochlos* can be a wooden beam, a lever for displacing a boat, a wedge for opening or closing a

door, something, in short, to lean on for forcing and displacing. When one asks how to be oriented in history, morality or politics, the most serious discords and decisions have less to do with ends, it seem to me, than with levers. (110-111)

At one point *Citizen: An American Lyric* reflects on language and addressability through a citation of philosopher Judith Butler. Butler is asked “what makes language hurtful”: “Our very being exposes us to the address of another, she answers. We suffer from the condition of being addressable. Our emotional openness, she adds, is carried by our addressability. Language navigates this.” The text muses, “Language that feels hurtful is intended to exploit all the ways that you are present.”⁵⁵ The letter written by the Black Liberation Collective opening this section explains that it was with certain “sentiments” toward “sustaining” black students and “their work in the movement” that the collective was “born.” Written in the collective voice of a “we,” it does not offer protection from vulnerability but a promise to meet mutual needs: “We love you, we need you. We want you to grow, we want you to develop as leaders, we want you to transform your institutions to fit your needs and the needs of the community.”⁵⁶ Not the “safe space” of the rational subject, symbolized by the lyrical “I,” the sociality imagined here is one of collectivity borne of mutual sustenance, care, and a type of “radical love”: “Love—a radical, intersectional love for all black lives—is necessary to do this work.” What would it mean to imagine the responsibility of the university from this ground?

⁵⁵ Rankine, 49.

⁵⁶ Black Liberation Collective, “On urgency, frustration, and love.”

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