"The Black Man's Burden": African Americans, Imperialism, and Notions of Racial Manhood 1890–1910*

MICHELE MITCHELL

Take up the White Man's Burden –
Send forth the best ye breed –
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need [...]
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years,
Cold-edged with dear-brought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!
Rudyard Kipling, 1899[1]

Take up the Black Man's burden –
"Send forth the best ye breed",
To judge with righteous judgment
The Black Man's work and need [...]
Let the glory of your people
Be the making of great men,
The lifting of the lowly
To noble thought and aim [...]
J. Dallas Bowser, 1899[2]

In 1899, about fifteen years after the Conference of Berlin accelerated Europe's partitioning of Africa, African-American preacher Henry Blanton Parks fervently believed the fate of Africa would be determined during the twentieth century. Parks struggled long and hard as a young man to secure an education in Georgia and rise in the ranks of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church; he earned a reputation for having an expansive outlook in the process. By the time he became Secretary of Home and Foreign Missions, Reverend Parks not only located Christian redemption of Africa within the promise of a new century, he authored a book to convince other African Americans that it was their duty to conquer the continent for God, for Africans, for themselves. In *Africa: The Problem of the New Century*, Parks contended that if the AME Church failed to secure a righteous "destiny [...] [for] the junior races of the world [...] [and] historic

Africa", the scramble for Africa would blight the continent with liquor, vice, and genocide. Africa's destiny was a signal issue for Parks, but so was the question of imperialism.[3]

Parks was hardly alone when he worried about the "native simplicity" of Africans being corrupted by Europeans – other African-American women and men pondered the ramifications of imperialism in Africa as well.[4] Some shared racist assumptions about "darkest Africa" commonly found in popular travelogues; others felt European forays into Africa would enlighten the continent.[5] Prominent newspaper editor T. Thomas Fortune railed against British, French, German and Belgian encroachment during the 1880s. By the 1895 Congress of Africa, however, Fortune projected European imperialism would, in time, have a beneficial outcome. Fortune conceded that while "laying the foundation of empires" occurred at the expense of "savage tribes", the "intermingling of so many race elements [would] work for national and spiritual and material strength in Africa".[6] In 1892, Ida Wells expressed tempered optimism as she uneasily acknowledged a European foothold in Africa. Wells nevertheless held fast to a belief that black Americans could prosper there since the continent had not been completely overrun by "rapacious" whites. S.H. Johnson was more pessimistic than either Wells or Fortune; Johnson maintained European ascendancy in Africa ominously signaled that whites would soon subjugate blacks across the continent. Whether these journalists believed Europeans would eventually succeed in wrenching all rights and land from Africans, Reverend Parks had a job to do. He needed to convince African Americans that Africa was theirs to save.[7]

3. H[enry] B[lanton] Parks, *Africa: The Problem of the New Century; The Part the African Methodist Episcopal Church is to Have in its Solution* (New York, 1899), pp. 5, 8–9, 20. For biographical information, see Horace Talbert, *The Sons of Allen* (Xenia, OH, 1906), pp. 212–214.

4. Overviews of Afro-American viewpoints on European campaigns in Africa include Sylvia Jacobs, *The African Nexus: Black American Perspectives on the European Partitioning of Africa, 1880–1920* (Westport, CT, 1981) and Elliott P. Skinner, *African-Americans and US Policy Toward Africa, 1850–1924: In Defense of Black Nationality* (Washington DC, 1992). For analysis of the AME Church and its complex relationship to Africa, see James T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (New York, 1995).

5. See Walter L. Williams, "Black Journalism's Opinions About Africa During the Late Nineteenth Century", *Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture* , 34 (1973), pp. 224–235; *idem, Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa, 1877–1900* (Madison, WI, 1982); Kevin Gaines, "Black Americans' Racial Uplift Ideology as 'Civilizing Mission': Pauline E. Hopkins on Race and Imperialism", in Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (eds), *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham, NC, 1993), pp. 433–455.

6. T. Thomas Fortune, "The Nationalization of Africa", in J.W.E. Bowen (ed.), *Africa and the American Negro: Addresses and Proceedings on the Congress of Africa* [...] (Atlanta, GA, 1896), pp. 199–204, esp. pp. 201, 203–204. Consult Jean M. Allman and David R. Roediger, "The Early Editorial Career of Timothy Thomas Fortune: Class, Nationalism and Consciousness of Africa", *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 6 (1982), pp. 39–52 for analysis of Fortune's editorial writing.

7. Ida B. Wells, "Afro-Americans and Africa", *AME Church Review*, 9 (1892), pp. 40–44, esp. p. 41; S.H. Johnson, "Negro Emigration: A Correspondent Portrays the Situation and the Benefit

Henry Parks was able to do so by skillfully manipulating the language of empire. He proudly informed his black American readers that:

> [...] the AME Church [is] confronted with responsibilities as [...] broad as the new American policy of empire [...]. [It] stands on the threshold of a policy of expansion [...]. Africa – the second largest continent in the world – is the new colonial possession of the Missionary Department of the AME Church[.]

Enlightening Africans with Christianity and progress was not "the white man's burden", Parks continued. Rather, race pride alone should convince African Americans that if spreading civilization involved bearing burdens, people of color should make sure imperialism was benevolent.[8]

Christian zeal clearly blinded Parks to the possibility that religious imperialism might be anything but benevolent in the eyes of prospective converts, but why was he so eager for black Americans to build their own empire in Africa? Why were the pages of *Africa: The Problem of the New Century* peppered with militaristic images of "warlike conquerors" and a "marching army" of civilization? And why, when soliciting donations, did Parks liken the financial needs of his "missionary campaign" to funding a war? Parks did so because he was a man of his era: he accepted contemporary notions that empire building required militaristic demonstrations of prowess. Thus, when Parks wrote the "conquest of the Cross" was far more potent than "conquest by war", he could actively suggest that the real men in Africa were not European soldiers or colonists, but black missionaries who would save the day for Africans and the race as a whole.[9]

Like many African-American texts written between 1890 and 1910, *Africa: The Problem of the New Century* made both subtle and blatant claims about imperialism, race, and manhood. Placed in its historical context, Parks's plea for Africa assumes significance for other reasons as well. First of all, it was produced during an era when racial oppression was at once extreme and common. Negotiating their lives around the realities of disfranchisement, lynching, and low status, few black American men fully exercised the prerogatives of manhood at the turn of the century. Parks could therefore appeal to black men by arguing that going to Africa was a decisive opportunity for them to create and belong to "a better manhood".[10] Such an appeal was most likely to resonate with men like Parks – ambitious strugglers within a cohort of aspiring class African Americans whose status was anything but secure.

Second, Parks' book appeared when Social Darwinism was tremendously

to Be Derived by Emigration", Indianapolis *Freeman*, 26 March 1892, p. 3; Parks, *Africa: The Problem of the New Century*, pp. 20–22.
8. Parks, *Africa: The Problem of the New Century*, pp. 29–30, 41.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8–9, 20, 48.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

popular in the United States.[11] Social Darwinism complimented gendered notions of conquest implicit in imperialism as it provided a rationale for subjugating people of color. By ranking racial "types" on a hierarchical scale according to fitness, character, and culture, Social Darwinism promoted notions that each race had its own domain and linked racial fitness to both virility and whiteness. "Colored" races were less fit for civilization because they were less manly; they were less manly because they were not white.[12] *Africa: The Problem of a New Century* shared more than a few civilizationist, social Darwinist assumptions: Parks categorized Africans and Afro-Americans as two *distinct* races; blacks in the US were supposedly more evolved due to constant contact with Anglo-Americans and acquisition of modern tools of progress. In the process of outlining how the trappings of civilization enabled Afro-Americans to inch further up the evolutionary ladder, the author subverted a critical tenet of Social Darwinism by presenting Africans as inherently manly. Parks did not go as far as AME bishop Henry McNeal Turner, a fiery orator and leading advocate of emigration to Liberia, who claimed West Africans were *manlier* than blacks across the Atlantic. Still, Parks insinuated that black Americans could bolster their own racial manhood by working in tandem with Africans to "civilize" the continent.[13] Henry Parks was influenced by Social Darwinism but he warped it just enough to suit his own concepts of race, civilization, and manliness.

Finally, when *Africa: The Problem of the New Century* appeared in 1899, there was an ongoing, heated debate among African Americans over the implications of the Spanish–American and Philippine–American Wars. Whereas some African Americans were staunch anti-imperialists who believed any form of imperialism had dire consequences for people of color, many others welcomed US wars for empire. They did so, in part, because gambits for empire involved attributes closely associated with masculinity: if black men bravely participated in American war efforts they might succeed in refuting long-standing charges that manliness was forever beyond their grasp. While Parks was trying to enlist soldiers for God with the promise

11. Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought: 1860–1915* (New York, 1959); August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880–1915* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1966); J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman (eds), *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York, 1985).

12. For commentary on gendered subtexts of imperialism, race, Social Darwinism and civilization in *fin de siècle* thought, consult Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago, IL, 1995) and Jan Breman (ed.), *Imperial Monkey Business: Racial Supremacy in Social Darwinist Theory and Colonial Practice* (Amsterdam, 1990).

13. Parks, *Africa: The Problem of the New Century*, pp. 8–9, 22, 40–51, 43. For observations by Turner, see Edwin S. Redkey (ed.), *Respect Black: The Writings and Speeches of Henry McNeal Turner* (New York, 1971), pp. 124, 159. Analysis of civilizationist suppositions within Afro-American appropriations of Social Darwinism may be found in Gaines, "Black Americans' Racial Uplift Ideology as 'Civilizing Mission'", pp. 433–455, esp. p. 438, and Williams, "Black Journalism's Opinions About Africa During the Late Nineteenth Century", p. 230.

that the AME's work in Africa was akin to "the new American policy of empire", US expansionism presented its own opportunities.

This article explores gendered notions among black people in *fin de siècle* United States by highlighting concepts of race and manhood within Afro-American discourse. The connection between US imperialism and imperialism in Africa within this discourse is particularly important. US imperialism initially seemed to afford black men a rare chance to prove themselves better men than their white contemporaries. After these hopes proved illusory, Africa appeared to be one of few fields where black Americans could flex muscle, build nations, and demonstrate virility by fending off white-skinned intruders. Whereas US imperialism potentially bolstered masculinity within the race, the prospect of a black American reclamation of Africa proved just as, if not more, promising.

Significantly, the majority of extant Afro-American commentary on race and empire was produced by ambitious men within the aspiring and elite classes.[14] These men were most likely to view imperialism as an opportunity to improve their station and fortify black manhood: like Henry Parks, many aspiring and elite black men overcame formidable obstacles to achieve and acquire. Given steady disfranchisement, escalating racial violence, and the unstable economy at the century's end, aspiring and elite men were likely to feel that their hard-won gains were slipping away; ironically, such men usually offered little explicit commentary about class when commenting on imperialism. Even aspiring and elite men hostile to expansionism relied upon a trope of manhood constructed around race, as did men who believed class mobility could be best achieved outside US borders. Class informed rather than defined Afro-American discourse on imperialism in that anxieties over class were articulated through racialized language about manhood. If there was relative silence concerning class, there were other important silences as well. Since the push for empire was primarily gendered as a struggle over manhood, it is not surprising that aspiring and elite black women, while not altogether silent on imperialism, focused their energies on domestic reform and the sexual politics of respectability during this

14. Although this essay deals with the industrial age, applying standard class labels – "working class", "bourgeois", "owning class" – to African Americans who lived between 1890 and 1910 would obscure the specific circumstances of a people barely a generation removed from slavery. Since over seventy per cent of African Americans still resided in the rural south by 1900 and approximately ninety per cent were workers, I use slightly different terminology. "Working poor" refers to people who struggled to survive – sharecroppers, domestics, underemployed seasonal laborers. "Aspiring class" refers to workers – from seamstresses to skilled tradesmen to teachers to small proprietors – able to save a little money. These women and men were concerned with appearing "respectable"; many had normal school education or were self-educated and some worked multiple jobs in order to attain class mobility. "Elite" refers to college-educated professionals, many of whom were prominent in national organizations, owned well-appointed homes, and had successful businesses.

period.[15] As for working poor women and men, many wrote impassioned letters about emigrating to Africa, but relatively few recorded their views on empire.

At no time between 1890 and 1910 were all US blacks of one mind about imperialism, but by 1910 greater numbers of African Americans were against both US imperialism and European imperialism in Africa. However, at times, anti-imperialist blacks all but suggested that some form of civilizing conquest was necessary if Africa ever hoped to keep apace with Europe, North America, and Asia in the march of progress. Existing literature has certainly accounted for the complex relationship between African Americans and imperialism; indeed, it has even commented on the ambivalence of black soldiers who participated in wars for empire.[16] Still, interpreting how African Americans responded to imperialism and understanding what came to be known as the "black man's burden" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries requires analysis of racialized ideas concerning manhood and sexuality.

MASTER CONTINENTS, MILITANTS, AND MANLINESS: RACE AND GENDER IN AFRO-AMERICAN DISCOURSE ON EMPIRE

In the rapidly industrializing and newly reconstructed United States, gender informed how black Americans organized households, established institutions, and negotiated work arrangements. After reconstruction, gender assumed special significance for African Americans due to persistent arguments that blacks were "feminine" compared to "masculine" Anglo-Saxons; black women were frequently derided in popular discourse as aggressive, immoral, and slovenly while black men were either demonized as oversexed brutes or satirized as servile – and impotent – "uncles".[17] Most black

15. For analysis of black women's political activism during these years, see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996), Stephanie J. Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and To Do* (Chicago, IL, 1996), and Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894–1994* (New York, 1999).
16. See, for example, Willard B. Gatewood, Jr, "Negro Troops in Florida, 1898", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 49 (1970), pp. 1–15; *idem*, "Black Americans and the Quest for Empire, 1898–1903", *Journal of Southern History*, 38 (1972), pp. 545–66; *idem, Black Americans and the White Man's Burden, 1898–1903* (Urbana, IL, 1975); Richard E. Welch, Jr, *Response to Imperialism: The United States and the Philippine–American War, 1899–1902* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1979), pp. 101–116; Kevin Gaines and Penny von Eschen, "Ambivalent Warriors: African Americans, US Expansion, and the Legacies of 1898", *Culture Front*, 8 (1998), pp. 63–64, 73–75.
17. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York, 1971), pp. 97–129, *passim*; James Oliver Horton, "Freedom's Yoke: Gender Conventions Among Antebellum Free Blacks", *Feminist Studies*, 12 (1986), pp. 51–76, esp. p. 53.

Americans resisted such racist characterizations: they responded to attacks on their collective character by emphasizing respectable femininity in women and uncompromised manliness in men and the race as a whole.

As much as African Americans were concerned about the impact stereotypes and racial oppression had on black women, the possibility that the race was losing its "manhood stamina" within the United States was a specific anxiety.[18] Exclusionary practices left many black men chronically underemployed during the 1890s while civil rights were tenuous and under attack. Moreover, attempts by black men to seize prerogatives of manhood – particularly the franchise – often resulted in retributive mob violence at the hands of white men; conflagrations in Wilmington, North Carolina (1898) and Atlanta, Georgia (1906) were both sparked by conflicts between black and white men over political rights. White vigilantism exacted certain and brutal tolls on black women and children, and black women were indeed lynched, but mob violence was perceived as having the greatest impact on masculinity and black male bodies.[19] As an angry Henry Turner put it, such oppression was "so repugnant to the instincts of respected manhood" that black Americans were at risk of either "transmit[ting] [...] servility to their posterity" or, even worse, "*unracing* themselves".[20]

To further compound matters, black men's sexuality was relatively circumscribed in comparison to white men who routinely enjoyed consensual and coerced sexual intercourse with women of color. As much as it is an anemic historiographical truism that black men bitterly resented not being able to protect "their women", black men were certainly incensed by the racialized, sexual double standard that prevailed throughout most regions of the United States.[21] For Afro-American men in the late nineteenth century, then, asserting a claim to "manliness" was a potent means of countering restrictions in their daily lives.

A range of post-Reconstruction African-American discourse was therefore gendered and sexualized; it overwhelmingly emphasized the "manhood" of the race. Of course, "manliness" and "manhood" were frequently used by black and white Americans as generic terms including women.[22] But again,

18. [Quotation from Ida B. Wells], *Voice of Missions* , June 1894, p. 2.
19. Elsa Barkley Brown offers powerful commentary on past and present tendencies to view lynching as a "masculine experience". See Brown, "Imaging Lynching: African American Women, Communities of Struggle, and Collective Memory" in Geneva Smitherman (ed.), *African-American Women Speak Out on Anita Hill–Clarence Thomas* (Detroit, MI, 1995), pp. 100–124, esp. 101–102.
20. Henry McNeal Turner, "Essay: The American Negro and the Fatherland", in Bowen, *Africa and the American*, pp. 195–198, esp. p. 197. (Italics in original.)
21. See Reverend Emanuel K. Love, "Oration Delivered on Emancipation Day" (2 January, 1888), Daniel A.P. Murray Pamphlet Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC; Wesley J. Gaines, *The Negro and the White Man* (Philadelphia, PA, 1897); Jack Thorne [David Bryant Fulton], *A Plea for Social Justice for the Negro Woman* (New York, 1912).
22. Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 1.

due to the particularly low status of black American men, Afro-American emphasis on manhood and masculinity was often a strategy to confer dignity and power upon men who were, in reality, accorded little respect or dominion.[23] Black commentary on racial oppression in the US south reflects this strategy: in 1890, for example, an article by obscure author Lucy Norman insisted mob violence could never diminish black manhood. In contrast, the much better known Bishop Turner was so outraged over conditions in the south, he observed with no small amount of disgust that *"there is no manhood future in the United States for the Negro* [...] he can never be a *man* – full, symmetrical and undwarfed". Black men could not be masculine men, Turner contended, until they went to a country where their manhood was universally recognized and respected.[24]

For many black men and women that country was Liberia. Whereas emancipated slaves and free blacks emigrated to Liberia throughout the nineteenth century, it was not until the 1890s that scores of working-poor and aspiring-class black Americans viewed removal to Liberia as a means of gaining access to opportunities and alleviating immiseration.[25] Black women and men across the United States formed their own "exodus associations" and "independent orders", while many others turned to the American Colonization Society, an agency with strong – if problematic – ties to Liberia. Letters claiming "thousands" wanted to emigrate poured into the society: in one such letter, grassroots organizer Mary Jackson declared that Liberia seemed nothing less than "the place for the best advantage of the Negro".[26]

Liberia was especially attractive to aspiring-class men. Lewis Lee looked forward to building a "Negro nation" where he, as a thirty-four-year-old farmer, could freely "exercise [...] privlege" [sic]. John Lewis – a molder forced to wait at tables due to discriminatory practices in the skilled trades – felt that since whites would "not let the Negroe [sic] advance beyond a prescribed limit", he had nothing to loose by emigrating. Twenty-six-year-old R.A. Wright was also unable to follow his chosen profession. A lawyer by training, Wright taught in a school and longed to live where both his

23. See David Leverenz's discussion of Frederick Douglass in *Manhood and the American Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY, 1989), pp. 108–134.
24. Lucy V. Norman, "Can a Colored Man Be a Man in the South?", *Christian Recorder*, 3 July 1890, p. 2; Turner, "Essay: The American Negro and the Fatherland", pp. 195–198, esp. p. 195; (italics in original.)
25. Edwin S. Redkey, *Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890–1910* (New Haven, CT, 1969), pp. 1–23, *passim*. For representative primary evidence, see I.W. Penn to William Coppinger, 10 April 1891, American Colonization Society Papers, Library of Congress, Washington DC [hereafter, *ACSP*], container 280, vol. 283.
26. See, for example, *African Repository*, 43 (1887), pp. 49–51 and *African Repository*, 46 (1890), pp. 49–51; Mary E. Jackson to Coppinger, 20 May 1891, *ACSP*, container 280, vol. 283. For evidence of independent black emigration societies, see Mary E. Jackson to Coppinger, 16 June 1891, *ACSP*, container 280, vol. 283.

ambition and manhood would go unrestrained. "There are several reasons why I desire to go", Wright confessed, "chiefly among them [is] I desire to go where a man of color can, if he will, be a man in the true sense of the word." Lee, Lewis, and Wright were frustrated in their separate quests for mobility yet none discussed their frustration in terms of class. Black men did, however, express anxieties over the sexual proclivities of white men. A group of prospective emigrants in Arkansas wrote that two factors shaped their desire to leave the US: their inability to vote and the frequent murders of black men whose wives were then seized, terrorized, and assaulted by white mobs. Along similar lines, Tennessee resident James Dubose ruefully observed that white male access to black women made it impossible for a black man "to be a man in any Southern state".[27]

Emigration was rather controversial nonetheless. In contrast to aspiring and working poor folk who found emigration appealing, elite or otherwise privileged black Americans were more likely to warn against viewing Africa – especially Liberia – as a refuge or proving ground. Charles Taylor, a vocal black Democrat who served as US Consul-General to Liberia during the Cleveland administration, acidly referred to Liberia as "an independent farce" where Americo-Liberians "convert[ed] nobody [...] and g[o]t rich off of the natives". Taylor even went so far as to imply that in Liberia masculine power was routinely outstripped by feminine force. Without outwardly claiming men became eunuchs in Liberia, Taylor more than insinuated women were the manly ones among the Americo-Liberian populace.[28]

Like Charles Taylor, Amanda Berry Devine Smith also spent time in Liberia; the laundress-turned-evangelist did mission work there from 1882 to 1890. Smith included trenchant opinions on the merits of Liberia as a colonial enterprise in her 1893 autobiography and she described Afro-American emigration to the coastal republic in detail.[29] Much of what Smith wrote was less than flattering, including her description of a major gathering during late 1886 or early 1887 when a group of Americo-Liberians welcomed a contingent of approximately one hundred South Carolinians to their settlement. Sister Smith took umbrage when women were barred from attending and she resisted in dramatic fashion. Literally carrying her own chair into the proceedings, Smith ignored reproachful glances and seated herself in a conspicuous spot. The self-described "privileged character" then witnessed a parade of men spouting lofty rhetoric: when "[a]ll the prominent men of the place" reassured newcomers Liberia was a "free

27. Lewis Lee to J. Ormond Wilson, 23 October 1894, *ACSP*, container 286, vol. 291; John Lewis to Wilson, 31 January 1893, *ACSP*, container 288, vol. 294; R.A. Wright to Wilson, 26 February 1894, *ACSP*, container 286, vol. 291; F.M. Gilmore to Coppinger, 15 April 1891, *ACSP*, container 280, vol. 283; James Dubose to Coppinger, 12 February 1891, *ACSP*, container 279, vol. 282.
28. C.H.J. Taylor, *Whites and Blacks, or The Question Settled* (Atlanta, GA, 1889), pp. 33–34, 37, 39.
29. Amanda Smith, *An Autobiography: The Story of the Lord's Dealings with Mrs. Amanda Smith, the Colored Evangelist* (Chicago, IL, 1893).

country where they [...] could be *men*", Smith was troubled by her sense that manliness was being predicated upon anti-white sentiment.[30]

Despite her impatience with the exclusionary practices and hubris of some Americo-Liberian and Afro-American men, Smith supported emigration – but only conditionally. In her eyes, only the poorest of the southern poor crossed the ocean and she despaired too many were illiterate, ill-prepared, and ignorant of what it meant to start anew in another country. Because Smith witnessed extreme privation in Liberia her assessment of emigration only grew harsher with time. By 1895, she dismissed emigration as "an enterprise [...] detrimental in every possible way to our people".[31]

Levi Coppin, prominent editor of the *AME Church Review* who later served as a bishop in South Africa, attacked emigration on a different level:

> [...] those who favor the scheme of emigration [...] ask significantly if we would rather stay here and be menials than go back to Africa and be men[...]. [T]he argument is misleading [...]. [W]hen the American Negro [...] goes to Africa in search of an asylum, it will be well for him to remember that the man from whom he flees has gone on before [...] and planted himself.

According to Coppin, leaving the US was futile given the probability that Europeans in Africa would assume onerous, oppressive roles. If black men really wanted to showcase their manly resolve and virile constitutions, they should remain in the United States to "secure [...] the manhood and independence that we seek".[32] Negative press was effective in deterring emigration and news about Europeans in Africa weakened the resolve of a few hopeful emigrants.[33] Prospective emigrants might have been disinclined to compete with Europeans yet Americo-Liberians contended that anyone could succeed in Liberia as long as they possessed "self-dependence and [...] manhood". In 1894, one recent transplant, *Christian Recorder* correspondent A.L. Ridgel, proudly reported that the "*master* continent" of Africa held wonderful "prospect[s], especially for the Afro-American".[34]

Ironically, European activity on the continent led Afro-Americans to underscore ways in which imperialism allowed men of African descent to demonstrate masculine prowess. AME bishop and former Ohio legislator Benjamin Arnett, for one, believed African Americans and Africans should join forces in redeeming Africa by defending the continent in a manly fashion.[35] John H. Smyth, a Howard-trained lawyer who completed a long,

30. Smith, *Autobiography*, pp. 331–465, esp. pp. 414–417; (italics in original).
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 451–463; "Amanda Smith's Letter", *Voice of Missions*, July 1895, p. 2.
32. Levi J. Coppin, "Editorial: What Shall We Do?", *AME Church Review*, 10 (1894), pp. 549–557, esp. pp. 551–552.
33. See, for example, J.H. Harris to Coppinger, 5 August 1891, *ACSP*, container 281, vol. 284.
34. "Made a Fortune in Liberia", *Liberia Bulletin*, 9 (1896), pp. 84–86; A.L. Ridgel to Wilson, *ACSP*, 1 June 1894, container 286, vol. 291, reel 143; (emphasis in original).
35. Benjamin W. Arnett, "Africa and the Descendants of Africa: A Response in Behalf of Africa", *AME Church Review*, 11 (1894), pp. 231–238. esp. p. 233.

tumultuous stint in Liberia as Consul-General during the 1870s and 1880s, contended black manhood would always prove more formidable than European power.[36] Following the defeat of Italian forces in Ethiopia in 1896,[37] Sarah Dudley Pettey – who served as General Secretary of the AME Zion's Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society – declared the Ethiopians' victory as nothing less than the "the uprising of an oppressed race daring to assert manhood."[38] Although Pettey's tone was clearly celebratory when she rhapsodized that virility would restore the race's "ancient glory", neither Pettey, Arnett, nor Smyth suggested African or African-American men were superior to white men. Rather, during the mid-1890s, the majority of African-American observations about race, manhood, and imperialism in Africa were basic affirmations that Africans and African Americans possessed manliness.

That would change by the end of the decade as US imperialism spread to Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Wake Island, Guam, and Samoa. In particular, the 1898 entry of the US in the War for Cuban Independence – commonly referred to as the Spanish–American War – forged salient connections between race, manhood, and empire for African Americans. Just as the feats of black Union soldiers made the Civil War a "watershed for black manhood", black men's exploits in Cuba transformed 1898 into a similarly definitive moment.[39] As one race paper put it, if black men heartily joined the American show of force against Spain, they would, at last, be "treated as men among men". The Washington *Colored American* even declared the Spanish–American War an arena where "the Negro's manhood [would be] placed directly in evidence" alongside white soldiers. Black participation was controversial among African Americans, nonetheless, and black journalists were no exception: one editor argued that any black man who served a racist nation in a segregated army sorely needed "a few grains of self-respect".[40]

With the realities of segregation and terrorism on the home front, US imperialism was an uneasy vehicle for black manhood. A speech delivered by Nannie Helen Burroughs in mid-1898 cogently expressed the predicament facing black men – whether to fight for a country that routinely denied their humanity. Although black manliness was systematically

36. J.H. Smyth, "The African in Africa and the African in America", in Bowen, *Africa and the American Negro*, pp. 69–83, esp. pp. 74, 77.
37. Interestingly, V.G. Kiernan points out that "a large part of the army defeated at Adowa in 1896 was composed of men from [...] Afric[a]". See Kiernan, "Colonial Africa and its Armies", in Harvey J. Kaye (ed.), *Imperialism and Its Contradictions* (New York, 1995), pp. 77–96, esp. p. 83.
38. Sarah Dudley [Mrs C.C.] Pettey, *A.M.E.Z. Church Quarterly*, 7 (1897), p. 30.
39. Jim Cullen, "'I's a Man Now': Gender and African-American Men", in Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (eds), *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (New York, 1992), pp. 76–91, esp. p. 77; Gaines and von Eschen, "Ambivalent Warriors", p. 64.
40. Parsons *Weekly Blade*, 9 July 1898; Washington *Colored American*, 30 April 1898; Coffeyville *American*, 7 May 1898, all quoted in George P. Marks (ed.), *The Black Press Views American Imperialism, 1898–1900* (New York, 1971), pp. 70, 53.

trampled upon by lynching and disfranchisement in the United States, Burroughs argued that no African-American man could afford to shrink from duty only to "sulk in his tent" at home. To "sulk", she implied, was to make the race vulnerable to further assault.[41] African Americans were acutely aware of their liminal status in the US, then, but the war with Spain still became a tremendous source of race pride. Black soldiers even found their experiences in Cuba so exhilarating they wrote home that Spanish combatants found them more ferocious than white enlistees. In late July 1898, for example, Sergeant M.W. Saddler of the Twenty-Fifth Infantry sent a dramatic dispatch from Santiago:

> Our men began to fall, many of them never to rise again, but [...] so effective was our fire that the Spaniards became unnerved and began over-shooting us. When they saw we were "colored soldiers" they knew their doom was sealed [...]. [The] coolness and bravery that characterized our fathers in the 60s have been handed down to their sons of the 90s. If any one doubts the fitness of a colored soldier [...] [the] Spaniards call us "Negretter Sol[d]ados" and say there is no use shooting at us, for steel and powder will not stop us.[42]

The manly derring-do of "Negretter Sol[d]ados" stirred up commentary earlier that month when black cavalrymen reportedly rescued Teddy Roosevelt's heralded Rough Riders at San Juan Hill. The Rough Riders were not damsels in distress, but in the eyes of many Afro-Americans, they would have perished had it not been for gallant black rescuers.

After he initially praised efforts of black cavalrymen, Theodore Roosevelt vehemently refuted notions that the Tenth Cavalry "saved the Rough Riders from annihilation". Some white soldiers, however, willingly conceded that during the charge up San Juan Hill – an iconic event that literary historian Amy Kaplan rightfully refers to as "a battle showcasing American masculinity" – black men proved themselves superior fighters.[43] Kenneth Robinson, a wounded Rough Rider, not only claimed black men saved his unit, he quipped "without any disregard to my own regiment [...] the whitest men in this fight have been the black ones".[44] If a white soldier could

41. Washington *Bee*, 21 May 1898, p. 5. This notice about Burroughs' speech, "Should the Negro Take Part in the Spanish-American Trouble?", is a summary and thus the text quoted above might not be her actual wording.
42. Willard B. Gatewood, Jr (ed.), *"Smoked Yankees" and the Struggle for Empire: Letters from Negro Soldiers, 1898–1902* (Urbana, IL, 1971), pp. 55–57.
43. Booker T. Washington *et al.*, *A New Negro for a New Century* (Chicago, IL, 1900), pp. 40–41; Amy Kaplan, "Black and Blue on San Juan Hill", in Kaplan and Pease, *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, pp. 219–236, esp. p. 226.
44. W.H. Crogman, "The Negro Soldier in the Cuban Insurrection and Spanish-American War", in J.L. Nichols and William H. Crogman (eds), *Progress of a Race or the Remarkable Advancement of the American Negro* [...], revised and enlarged (Naperville, IL, 1925), pp. 131–145, esp. pp. 137–138. For additional commentary that black troops "saved" the Rough Riders, see Herschel V. Cashin *et al.*, *Under Fire with the Tenth US Cavalry* (New York, 1899).

go on public record lauding black heroism, then the widely reported bravery of black soldiers in Cuba did not pass unnoticed among African Americans on the home front. Women in Brooklyn distributed materials regaling black troops; Stella Brazley's "The Colored Boys in Blue" praised "scions of a warlike race" whose feats "[r]enew[ed] the prestige" of African-American people. Katherine Davis Chapman Tillman rewrote the last stanza of one of her previously published poems to memorialize those who "charged with such good will [a]nd saved the Rough Riders at San Juan Hill".[45] Other black Americans argued that man for man, black soldiers were literally superior specimens of physical manhood who were immune to both tropical diseases and bullets.[46] During the Spanish–American War, the mixture of race, manhood, and imperialism became powerfully suggestive as a number of commentators other than Kenneth Robinson dubbed black soldiers "the whitest men" in the war.

The Philippine–American War was a slightly different matter. Black Americans, for the most part, felt a racial affinity with both Cuban rebels and Philippine insurrectionists. The major difference, of course, was that black Americans and Cubans were allied in the struggle against Spain whereas in the Philippines, Afro-American soldiers would be fighting against Filipinos. The *Colored American* concluded that whereas Afro-Americans were bound to side with Filipinos due to "racial sympathies", they could not afford to forsake the United States. The Kansas City *American Citizen* unequivocally disagreed: black American soldiers should not fight other "negroes", the paper flatly stated, only to "fall [...] prey to southern hell hounds and civilized American cannibals" upon their return stateside. Other African-American newspapers summarily condemned imperialism as a coercive means to "blight the manhood of the darker races".[47] Even Sergeant Saddler, who once brimmed with enthusiasm over his exploits in Cuba, conceded it was difficult to relish a fight against "men of our own hue and

45. Theophilus G. Steward, *The Colored Regulars in the United States Army* (Philadelphia, PA, 1904), illustration between pp. 230–231; Katherine Davis Chapman Tillman, "A Tribute to Negro Regiments", and "The Black Boys in Blue", in Claudia Tate (ed.), *The Works of Katherine Davis Chapman Tillman* (New York, 1991), pp. 146, 188–189; Stella A.E. Brazley, "The Colored Boys in Blue", in W. Hilary Coston, *The Spanish-American War Volunteer* (Middletown, PA, 1899), p. 81. See also Lena Mason, "A Negro In It", in D.W. Culp (ed.), *Twentieth Century Negro Literature or, A Cyclopedia of Thought on the Vital Topics Relating to the American Negro* (Naperville, IL, 1902), p. 447. For a decidedly anti-war poem, see Frances E.W. Harper, "Do Not Cheer, Men Are Dying", Richmond *Planet*, 3 December 1898.
46. Crogman, "The Negro Soldier in the Cuban Insurrection and Spanish-American War", *Progress of a Race*, pp. 135–144; "W.A.B.", "The Rough Rider 'Remarks'", *World*, 22 August 1898, in *Under Fire with the Tenth US Cavalry*, pp. 277–279; Miles V. Lynk, *The Black Troopers, or The Daring Heroism of The Negro Soldiers in the Spanish-American War* (Jackson, TN, 1899), pp. 18, 69–70. See also Gatewood, "*Smoked Yankees*", p. 11.
47. Washington, *Colored American*, ca. 1899, quoted in Gatewood, "*Smoked Yankees*", p. 237; Kansas City *American Citizen*, 28 April 1899 and Helena *Reporter*, 1 February 1900, both quoted in Marks, *The Black Press Views American Imperialism*, pp. 124–125, 167.

color" in the Philippines.[48] In other words, when it came to the Philippine–
American War, the question of allegiance – and imperialism – was rather
tricky.

Both torn loyalties and domestic factors fueled black anti-imperialism by
1899. Whereas participation in the Spanish–American War filled African
Americans with the hope that their display of patriotism at home and cour-
age abroad would reduce racial oppression within US borders, the war "in
fact accelerated the decline, the loss of civility, the increase in bloodshed,
the white arrogance [as it] [...] enlist[ed] the North as an even more active
partner in the subjugation of black Americans".[49] Not only did the Spanish–
American war mend fissures caused by the American Civil War, black vet-
erans returning from Cuban battlefields often faced intense resentment and
violence. When black cavalrymen who served in Cuba were stationed in
Huntsville, Alabama, during late 1898, they proudly possessed "enough man-
hood to resent any insult cast upon them" by local whites. As a result, two
black soldiers were gunned down in the street – reportedly by another
African American – after a local white resident "put out a reward for every
black tenth Cavalrym[a]n" assassinated.[50] Thus, by the time black soldiers
were deployed for the Philippine–American War in 1899, an appreciable
number of black veterans chose to re-enlist rather than stay in the south.[51]
An undeniable tide of racial violence – such as the infamous Wilmington
massacre which claimed eleven black lives and effected countless more –
certainly influenced many black men to enlist or re-enlist; that same racial
violence piqued black anti-imperialism during the brief interwar period.

But if black anti-imperialism was both perceptible and on the rise,
some African Americans still believed the race would benefit by going
to the Philippines as colonists. Black settlement of the Philippines was
a popular enough notion that by 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt
dispatched T. Thomas Fortune on an expedition to explore the feasibility
of mass black emigration to Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and, in particular, the
Philippines. Approximately four hundred black Americans settled on the
islands during and after the Philippine–American War; most were, at
least by Fortune's judgment, fairly prosperous. Fortune was so impressed
he fully endorsed black emigration to the Philippines. He also concluded
that only Afro-American labor could tame the islands' terrain into a
profitable colony:

> [I]t is written on the wall that ultimately, if the American flag remains in the
> Philippines, the Afro-Americans will have to be drafted to hold it up [...] for the

48. Gatewood, "*Smoked Yankees*", pp. 247–249.
49. Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York, 1992),
p. 333.
50. Gatewood, "*Smoked Yankees*", pp. 88–89, 85.
51. Kaplan, "Black and Blue on San Juan Hill", p. 235.

white American does not find either the climate or the people and their ways to his liking [...] this is no sufficient anchorage [...] in the successful colonization of [a] country [.]

Fortune was so swept up in romantic ideas about empire that in the northern section of Luzon, he posed for formal portraits donning a field costume and hat which bore more than a passing resemblance to outfits worn by black cavalrymen who saved the day at San Juan Hill.[52]

Yet when African Americans looked to the Philippines – or Liberia for that matter – as a refuge from oppression, colonizationist impulses made them potential oppressors as well. Race man that he was, Fortune apparently saw little inherent contradiction in blacks being either colonists or imperialists. Since African Americans were denied "manhood and citizen rights" in the US, Fortune swiftly rationalized that the race deserved an opportunity to colonize territories recently acquired by the United States so they, too, could "enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".[53] Fortune's view of the Philippines was not unlike Henry Parks's vision of Africa; for both men, it was possible if not preferable for African Americans to tame new frontiers and attain the heights of manhood beyond American borders.

Tom Fortune and Henry Parks deemed the possibility of black Americans acquiring their own empires as a literal opportunity for racial redemption. Other black Americans approached empire in a literary sense, producing a small wave of historical romances between 1899 and 1910: Pauline Hopkins published the serialized, Pan-Africanist *Of One Blood* (1902/3); Charles Fowler offered a sweeping tale of slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Spanish–American War in *Historical Romance of the American Negro* (1902); John Wesley Grant's *Out of the Darkness* (1909) was an unwieldy epic of the "diabolism and destiny" facing a colonized colored race in the post-Reconstruction south. Baptist minister Sutton Griggs was especially prolific, expounding on race and empire in no less than three novels: *Imperium in Imperio* (1899), *Unfettered* (1902), and *The Hindered Hand* (1905).[54]

Both *Unfettered* and *Imperium in Imperio* contained their share of curious commentary. Part analysis of US incursion in the Philippines, *Unfettered* included a lengthy appendix entitled "Dorlan's Plan" that heartily endorsed

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52. T. Thomas Fortune, "The Filipino: A Social Study in Three Parts", *Voice of the Negro*, 1 (1904), pp. 93–99, esp. pp. 96–97.
53. Fortune, "The Filipino: Some Incidents of a Trip Through the Island of Luzon", *Voice of the Negro*, 1 (1904), pp. 240–246, esp. p. 246.
54. Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood: or, the Hidden Self*, in Hazel V. Carby (ed.), *The Magazine Novels of Pauline Hopkins* (New York, 1988), pp. 441–621; Charles H. Fowler, *Historical Romance of the American Negro* (Baltimore, MD, 1902); J[ohn] W[esley] Grant, *Out of the Darkness; or, Diabolism and Destiny* (Nashville, TN, 1909); Sutton E. Griggs, *Imperium in Imperio* (Cincinnati, OH, 1899); Griggs, *Unfettered: A Novel; with Dorlan's Plan* (Nashville, TN, 1902); Griggs, *The Hindered Hand* (Nashville, TN, 1905).

"Americanization of the globe" and encouraged African Americans to chan-
nel their energies into the Philippines, Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and
Africa.[55] *Imperium* explored the possibility of a black empire within the US;
the text praised racial purity, invoked Social Darwinist thought, and cursed
black disfranchisement. Above all, *Imperium* was suffused with muscular
rhetoric which boldly proclaimed "the cringing, fawning, sniffling, cowardly
Negro [...] [has] disappeared, and a new Negro, self-respecting, fearless, and
determined in the assertion of his rights [is] at hand".[56]

   In *Imperium*, both protagonists are "fine specimens of physical manhood"
who are forced, over the course of the novel, to compromise their manliness.
Belton Piedmont, the "black" hero, is forced to masquerade as a woman
while the threat of racial extinction prevents mulatto Bernard Belgrave from
consummating his love affair with a devoted race woman.[57] Bernard's
intended, Viola, commits suicide; her suicide letter invokes Social Darwinist
concepts about sexuality, racial competition, and processes of extermination:

> [J]ust two years prior to my meeting you, a book entitled "White Supremacy and
> Negro Sub-ordination"[...] came into my possession [...] That book proved to me
> that the intermingling of the races in sexual relationship was sapping the vitality
> of the Negro race and, in fact, was slowly but surely exterminating the race [...] I
> looked out upon our strong, tender hearted, manly race being swept from the face
> of the earth by immorality, and [...] [m]y first step was to solemnly pledge to God
> to never marry a mulatto man.

Viola then bids her lover adieu by begging him to do everything he can to
preserve the race, up to and including emigration.[58]

   After each ultramasculine protagonist suffers his share of travails, they are
reunited in a secret organization – or *imperium* – which plots to establish a
black empire. However, Belton and Bernard's plans for establishing a manly
black nation go awry: one is killed, the other loses his grip on reality.
Imperium forcefully asserted that denial of black manhood in the United
States inevitably led to death or insanity. As an historical romance, more-
over, *Imperium* used plot devices similar to those in historical romances
produced by white Americans; the genre, as a whole, "spli[t] the subjects of
imperial power into gendered positions". *Imperium in Imperio*'s deployment
of manhood placed it firmly within a mainstream literary genre.[59]

55. Griggs, *Unfettered*, pp. 256–257, 275.
56. Griggs, *Imperium*, p. 62.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 132–135, 173–174.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 173–175. The work referred to in the suicide letter is J.H. Van Evrie, MD, *White
Supremacy and Black Subordination, or, Negroes a Subordinate Race, And (So-Called) Slavery its
Normal Condition* (New York, 1868), esp. pp. 149–167.
59. Amy Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire: The Embodiment of American Masculinity in the
Popular Historical Novel of the 1890s", *American Literary History*, 2 (1990), pp. 659–690, esp.
p. 672. For commentary on historical romances written by African Americans, see James Robert
Payne, "Afro-American Literature of the Spanish-American War", *Melus*, 10 (1983), pp. 19–32, esp.
pp. 27–29.

Literary commentary on masculinity and empire provided a unique opportunity for African-American writers to advance highly politicized rebuttals to popular stereotypes about black manhood. In this regard, a short story by poet and magazine publisher James McGirt was singularly notable. McGirt's "In Love as in War" (1907) was set during the Philippine–American War and told the tale of a Filipina princess, Quinaldo, who chooses an African-American sergeant to be her lover over an aristocratic Anglo-American lieutenant from Louisiana. Throughout the story, Quinaldo – a name that intentionally evoked Emilio Aguinaldo, leader of Philippine insurgents – swoons whenever she is in close proximity to the virile "Sarge". Their courtship is heated, yet chaste, with Quinaldo and Sarge's mutual desire reaching climax through his tales of conquest:

> They talked over many matters in swift succession, as though they wanted to crowd a lifetime in a few hours [...]. He then entertained her with stories of his hair-breadth escapes and his daring encounters with the Indians, as well as in the Spanish-American war [...]. The princess found herself at times moving, as though she herself were facing the enemy[.]
>
> When he had described these things to her until she could stand it no longer, she clapped her hands and exclaimed, "Brave! wonderfully brave!"

In contrast to Sarge's calm bravery, the white officer is a red-faced blue-blood, both "defeated and enraged" by the black enlisted man's edge with Quinaldo.[60]

Vaughn is ineffectual – if not effete – whereas Sarge is so manly he arouses passion in every Filipina who espies his glorious physique.[61] Here, the Philippines, as represented in the feminine forms of Quinaldo and other women, are more than willing to be possessed by black male bodies. The Philippines could not only be conquered, McGirt suggested, the territory was also a suitable "wife" capable of sustaining the material and sexual needs of any worthy *black* American man. Put another way, McGirt scripted an alternative to contemporary dynamics of power between black and white men in the American south and he used sexuality in an imperial setting to do so.

The sad reality was that whether black soldiers were conquerors on the battlefield or in the boudoir, participation in US military efforts abroad did little to change racial dynamics at home. Again, after 1898, outbreaks of racial violence involving returning black veterans and highly-publicized racial incidents between black and white soldiers in the Philippines – not to mention reports that some black soldiers defected and joined Filipino insurgents – influenced growing numbers of African Americans to argue

60. James E. McGirt, "In Love as in War", in McGirt, *Triumphs of Ephraim* (Philadelphia, PA, 1907), pp. 63–76, esp. p. 71. Background on the Philippine–American War may be found in Welch, *Response to Imperialism*.
61. McGirt, "In Love as in War", p. 75.

black soldiers should not help white Americans defeat other people of color. To add insult to injury, black soldiers proved their mettle in Cuba and the Philippines only to have their manhood compromised upon their return to the States.

This sense of futility led members of the National Afro-American Council to inject a noticeably anti-imperialist tone into the Council's 1899 meeting. Two black anti-imperialist leagues were formed that year – the league in Chicago even called itself the "Black Man's Burden Society".[62] Black anti-imperialism was anything but universal after 1899, however. Classics professor W.S. Scarborough probably spoke for some aspiring and elite men when, in 1901, he maintained Afro-American colonization of "our new possessions" remained the one viable opportunity for "black manhood [to] stand erect and unhindered, and [...] enlarge respect for itself".[63]

Still, how do we account for Henry Parks's call for what was tantamount to Afro-American imperialism in Africa? Some black Americans – due to conviction that "progress" in Africa benefited Africans and African Americans alike – believed imperialism contained a civilizing component and thus provided race men and women with unparalleled international opportunities. *Alexander's Magazine*, for example, actively promoted Afro-American "development" of Liberia through columns written by Walter F. Walker, vice-president of the Liberian Development Association. *Alexander's* editorial stance remained constant until August 1908: the magazine's enthusiasm toward emigration cooled due to a disastrous trip Walker made to Liberia, not because of a mounting sense that Afro-American colonizers might become little more than dark-skinned imperialists.[64]

If emigrationism did not automatically imbue those looking toward Africa with anti-imperialist ideas, Pan-Africanism enabled blacks in the US and the Caribbean to oppose American and European imperialism as they sought active roles in determining Africa's destiny. In 1900, Trinidad's Henry Sylvester Williams organized the first major Pan-African conference in London to mobilize people of African descent against imperialism and colonialism. African-American writer and educator Anna Julia Cooper attended the conference, as did W.E.B. Du Bois; both chafed at the notion that imperialism enabled either civilization or progress.[65]

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62. Kelly Miller, "Immortal Doctrines of Liberty Ably Set Out by a Colored Man; The Effect of Imperialism Upon the Negro Race", Springfield *Republican*, 7 September 1900, reprinted in Philip S. Foner and Richard C. Winchester (eds), *The Anti-Imperialist Reader: A Documentary History of Anti-Imperialism in the United States. Volume 1: From the Mexican War to the Election of 1900* (New York, 1984), pp. 176–180, esp. p. 180. See also Gatewood, "Black Americans and the Quest for Empire, 1898–1903", p. 559.
63. W.S. Scarborough, "The Negro and Our New Possessions", *Forum*, 31 (1901), pp. 341–349, esp. p. 347.
64. Walter F. Walker, "News about Liberia and Africa Generally", *Alexander's Magazine*, 5 (January 1908), p. 67; Walker, *Alexander's Magazine*, 6 (August 1908), pp. 162–166.
65. Carby, "Introduction", *The Magazine Novels of Pauline Hopkins*, p. xlv; Gaines, "Black Americans' Racial Uplift Ideology as 'Civilizing Mission'", p. 436. Insight on Du Bois' anti-imperialism

Given the rather blunt, conquest-hungry language in *Africa: The Problem of the New Century*, it might be difficult if not specious to situate Parks within such a Pan-Africanist camp. Parks dedicated his book to all people of African descent working "hand in hand for mutual good" and he clearly believed racial affinity should compel black Americans to act as counter-agents of European imperialism.[66] His evocation of imperial conquest in the name of racial salvation was consistent with viewpoints of black Americans – such as Pauline Hopkins – who simultaneously expressed Pan-African and civilizationist ideas. Still, it is less useful to label Parks a "Pan-Africanist" than it is to assume he could point to Europeans in Africa as justification to fortify black American presence on the continent. As historian Kevin Gaines points out, it was not necessarily a contradiction for women and men like Hopkins and Parks to embrace imperialism as a providential opportunity for their own uplift work.[67]

Understanding Parks's motives, then, requires situating him within the larger context of the complex, conflicting ways African Americans analyzed imperialism and its impact on people of color. For all the reasons why blacks in the US opposed certain forms of imperialism, anti-imperialist African Americans could and did advocate imperial roles for themselves. Again, Afro-American commentary about Africa became decidedly more anti-imperialist after 1900 but that anti-imperialism was largely directed at white colonists. In 1909, for example, the *Colored American Magazine* condemned European "lust" for Africa only to call for African Americans to assume a greater role in Liberia. As *Colored American* contributor I. De H. Crooke put it, "Africa for the Africans" was a hollow cry unless black Americans "colonize[d] and appropriate[d]" resources and territories in Africa. As late as 1913, a familiar argument resurfaced as one race paper chastised black men for not being as aggressive as white men in taking full advantage of the continent: if black men were ever going to thrive as men, if US imperialism was a poor means of fostering Afro-American manhood, then black men needed an *African* outlet for their masculinity.[68]

Such a seeming contradiction might have resulted from any number of political realities, motives, or ideas. One explanation rests in Liberia's peculiar situation: the country had long been a virtual ward of the United States; given the succession of black consul-generals appointed to Liberia by the

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is offered in Helene Christol, "Du Bois and Expansionism: A Black Man's View of Empire", in Serge Ricard and Helene Christol (eds), *Anglo-Saxonism in US Foreign Policy: The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1899–1919* (Aix-en-Provence, 1991), pp. 49–63.

66. Curiously, the full quotation from the title page reads "[t]wo races hand in hand for mutual good"; Parks, *Africa: The Problem of the New Century*, title page.

67. Gaines, "Black Americans' Racial Uplift Ideology as 'Civilizing Mission'", pp. 437 and 440.

68. I. De H. Crooke, "Africa for Africans", *Colored American*, 15 (1909), pp. 101–102; "The Grab for Liberia and Her Needs", *Colored American*, 17 (1909), pp. 118–122; New York *Age*, 13 March 1913 and 13 November 1913, Tuskegee Institute News Clipping File, series 1, main file, reel 2, frames 13 and 333.

US government, some African Americans likely expected that an "American" role in Africa would, in reality, be carried out by blacks.[69] Moreover, the predominance of racialized theories such as Social Darwinism enabled aspiring class and elite black Americans to abhor "white" imperialist domination in Africa while embracing a claim for themselves. With popular African-American attitudes that the race was duty-bound to save Africans from European oppression, given a desire to confer "progress" on the continent by "civilizing" and Christianizing Africans, then perhaps Parks's manifesto was something other than rank justification of imperialism. Although it might be tempting to dismiss Parks as a confused crank or self-hating Samaritan, such dismissal would tell us little about Parks or the moment in which he lived. Parks's argument exemplifies tensions felt by many black American men who abhorred racial oppression, harbored an allegiance to Africa, and yet desperately wanted to exercise the prerogatives of manhood denied them in the United States. Parks's quest for conquest was, in all likelihood, buttressed by the aura of triumphant black veterans – men who suggested certain aspects of imperial endeavor could actually bolster feelings of virility in men in color. Even as growing numbers of African Americans came to view imperialism as threatening the integrity of people of color around the globe, visions of a potential role in Africa enabled aspiring class and elite black Americans to create new, racialized notions of manhood. In other words, Henry Parks embodied the contradictions and tensions inherent in what many of his contemporaries tellingly labeled the "black man's burden".

BURDENS OF GENDER, BURDENS OF RACE: PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS ON AFRICAN AMERICANS AND "HYPERMASCULINITY" IN TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY US CULTURE

The very notion of a "black man's burden" facilitates analysis of gender and race between 1890 and 1910 at the same time it illuminates why black Americans held myriad opinions about the impact of imperialism on the race's manhood. Rudyard Kipling might have been commemorating war in the Philippines when he wrote "The White Man's Burden", but his phrase was widely appropriated. White Americans typically used the notion of a racialized, gendered burden to describe white responsibility toward "the Negro Problem".[70] Black Americans often placed the burden squarely on the shoulders of men of color: as H.T. Johnson wryly retorted, "Pile on the

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69. Skinner, *African-Americans and US Policy Toward Africa*, pp. 13–16.
70. See, for example, B.F. Riley, *The White Man's Burden* (Birmingham, AL, 1910), title page. Anne McClintock points out that the concept of a "white man's burden" could be crassly commercial: Pears' Soap used the phrase as advertising copy. See McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York, 1995), pp. 32–33.

Black Man's Burden; His wail with laughter drown; You've sealed the Red Man's problem; and now take up the Brown". Black journalist John E. Bruce – an eventual associate of Marcus Garvey whose Universal Negro Improvement Association promoted its own vision of a black empire in Africa – likewise considered white imperial paternalism as simultaneously ludicrous and tragic: "It is to laugh – to read of the white man's burden [...]. The white man's burden, self-imposed, will break his back if he is not soon relieved of it. He is the biggest joke in the world today, posing as a *superman.*" Howard University professor Kelly Miller shared Bruce's contempt for "the white man's burden", but Miller caustically wondered whether black Americans would "stultify" and "humiliate" the race by supporting imperialism. For Miller, the racial hatred and fear that legitimated segregation and justified lynching were the same as the rationale behind imperial aggression.[71]

Just as Miller condemned the racism implicit in imperialist ideologies and Bruce belittled white men for attempting to be global conquerors, some black Americans subverted the very notion that the burden was heaviest for any group of men, black or white. "The Black Woman's Burden", for example, appeared in the pages of *Voice of the Negro* and bemoaned sexual victimization of African-American women by white – and black – lechers. Similarly, in his take on the ever-appropriated concept, Du Bois addressed the sexual subjugation of colonized women by asserting women's bodies bore the brunt of "drunken orgies of war". In 1906, a year before his elegy "The Burden of Black Women" was published, Du Bois was less poetic about sex on the imperial front: in an Atlanta University publication, he maintained "a curious commentary on imperialism" was unfolding due to white soldiers in "foreign service" who spread syphilis and gonorrhea wherever they went.[73] Frances Ellen Harper's "The Burdens of All" went further still – it declared imperialism created havoc for all humanity.[73]

US and European imperialism affected a vast range of people and African Americans clearly understood this. However, given the ways in which racialized and gendered concepts informed notions of war and colonial conquest in the US between 1890 and 1910, most black American commentators stressed imperialism's impact on black men. It is no coincidence that the

71. H.T. Johnson, "The Black Man's Burden", Salt Lake City *Broad Ax*, 15 April 1899, p. 4; John E. Bruce, "The White Man's Burden", reprinted in Peter Gilbert (ed.), *The Selected Writings of John Edward Bruce: Militant Black Journalist* (New York, 1971), pp. 97–98, esp. p. 97; Miller, "Immortal Doctrines of Liberty Ably Set Out by a Colored Man", pp. 176–180.

72. Daniel Webster Davis, "The Black Woman's Burden", *Voice of the Negro*, 1 (1904), p. 308; W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Burden of Black Women", reprinted in David Levering Lewis (ed.), *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Reader* (New York, 1995), pp. 291–293; W.E.B. Du Bois (ed.), *The Health and Physique of the Negro American* (Atlanta, GA, 1906), p. 69.

73. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, "The Burdens of All" (ca. 1900), in Frances Smith Foster (ed.), *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Reader* (New York, 1990), p. 390.

overwhelming majority of these commentators were aspiring-class and elite men: their class status was precarious and they viewed empire as playing a decisive role in stabilizing – or destabilizing – their position vis-à-vis other Americans. However, instead of discussing their situation using class language, these men invoked racialized notions about manhood to express their anxieties.

While many black Americans between 1890 and 1910 believed campaigns for empire compromised people of color as a whole, imperialism was also construed as a site for a highly racialized and masculinized struggle of the fittest.[74] Imperial efforts in Africa, Cuba, and the Philippines were thus seen as having the potential to serve as figurative and literal fronts where black men could prove their manhood or openly compete with white men. For Kelly Miller and other African Americans, imperialism was little more than a rigged contest where black men would inevitably lose. Henry Parks and J. Dallas Bowser saw things in a different light: they viewed the "black man's burden" as a necessary step in racial redemption, as an inevitable by-product of globalized racial combat, *and* as a morally superior version of imperialism.[75]

The push for empire combined gender and race in provocative ways for Americans who were only decades away from being subjugated and enslaved themselves. Just as race was used at the turn of the century to "remake manhood",[76] imperialism remade and reinforced a gendered racial identity for black American men. Participation in US imperial wars was undoubtedly fraught with contradictions for black American men, but as Dennis Morgan has argued, "of all the sites where masculinities are constructed, reproduced, and deployed, those associated with war and the military are some of the most direct".[77] By participating in imperial endeavors as militants and missionaries, African-American men could forge masculine identities, which were, for the most part, beyond their reach in quotidian life. In a sense, staking a claim to manhood was an attempt to realize social mobility for working poor, aspiring, and elite black men alike.

Finally, in order to understand why many Afro-Americans embraced imperial roles for themselves in Africa as they became increasingly hostile

74. Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, p. 171.
75. For further commentary on Afro-American reworkings of Kipling, see Gatewood, *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden*, pp. 183–186.
76. Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, p. 5.
77. Dennis H.J. Morgan, "Theatre of War: Combat, the Military, and Masculinities", in Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (eds), *Theorizing Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks, CA, c. 1994), p. 165. Relevant texts include: Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (eds), *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinities in Victorian America* (Chicago, IL, 1990); Jeff Hearn and David Morgan (eds), *Men, Masculinities, and Social Theory* (London, 1990); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York, 1996); Harry Stecopoulos and Michael Uebel (eds), *Race and the Subject of Masculinities* (Durham, NC, 1997); Darlene Clark and Earnestine Jenkins (eds), *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in US Black Men's History and Masculinity* (Bloomington, IN, 1999).

to US and European imperialism, it is useful to return to the US context. Both Clyde Griffen and Gail Bederman consider the period between 1890 and 1910 an era of "hypermasculinity" in the United States; Kristin Hoganson further contends that what Richard Hofstader has referred to as a "'psychic crisis'" in the US during the 1890s was, in fact, a "crisis of manhood".[78] If this was the case, imagine the predicament of African-American men. Not only were they emasculated beings according to mainstream discourse, but political disfranchisement, racial violence, and proscribed economic status often prevented them from asserting public claims to manhood; if economic downturns caused "fears of [...] dependency" among white men, those fears were all the more palpable for African-American men.[79] Without question, black men possessed integrity, agency, and virility, yet it must have been all but impossible for them to act in the same "hypermasculine" ways as their white contemporaries. In fact, the 1890s "hypermasculinity" might explain why aspiring and elite African-American men discussed imperialism in the ways that they did: class was hardly an inconsequential matter, but it seems that imperialism's obsession with race – combined with the era's hypermasculinity – led many aspiring and elite men to eschew class politics for a racialized politics of manhood. For all of its contradictions and compromises, imperialism was certainly a problematic arena, but it was nevertheless an arena in which some black men believed they could develop a manhood of their own making.

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78. Clyde Griffen, "Reconstructing Masculinity from the Evangelical Revival to the Waning of Progressivism: A Speculative Synthesis", in Carnes and Griffen, *Meanings for Manhood* , pp. 183–204, esp. p. 199; Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, pp. 170–215; Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT, 1998), pp. 11–12.
79. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, p. 12.