

"Civilization," the Decline of Middle-Class Manliness, and Ida B. Wells's Antilynching Campaign (1892–94)

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For, if civilization means anything, it means self-restraint; casting away self-restraint the white man becomes as savage as the negro.—Ray Stannard Baker, "What is a Lynching?"¹

It is the white man's civilization and the white man's government which are on trial.—Ida B. Wells, *A Red Record*²

All England's congenital meddlers and busybodies are forming societies for civilizing us, and express themselves about our social state in language which Samoan natives would resent.—*New York Times*, 19 August 1894³

In March 1894, Ida B. Wells sailed to England in order to agitate against the rise of racial violence in the United States. She left a country where lynching was rarely mentioned in the white Northern press; where she herself was unknown to most whites. In June 1894, she returned a celebrity, villified as a "slanderous and nasty-minded mulatress"⁴ by some papers and lauded by others. Above all, she returned to an America where lynching was widely discussed as a stain on American civilization.

Wells's success in bringing lynching to the attention of the Northern middle class was due, in large part, to her ingenious manipulations of the Northern middle class's widespread fears about declining male power. By playing on Americans' anxiety about gender dominance, she was able to raise the stakes among middle-class Northern whites, who had previously tolerated lynching as a colorful, if somewhat old-fashioned, Southern regional custom (e.g., the *New York Times* humorously editorialized in 1891, "the friends of order [in Alabama] have been in pursuit of a negro.... If they catch him they will lynch him, but this incident will not be likely to add to the prevailing excitement" of the more "serious" moonshining problem⁵). Historians have long rec-

ognized Wells's successful debunking of the myth of the black rapist, but this was only part of her larger strategy of playing on the 1890s' gender tensions.⁶ As the epigraphs suggest, Wells brilliantly and subversively manipulated dominant middle-class ideas about race, manhood, and civilization in order to force white Americans to address lynching. Wells, in short, convinced nervous whites that lynching imperiled American manhood.

To understand how Wells played upon white Northerners' fears about dwindling manhood, we need to understand the centrality of Victorian manliness to 1890s middle-class identity. From the time the middle class had begun to form itself as a class, gender had been a crucial constitutive element of middle-class self-definition.⁷ Between 1820 and 1860, as increasing numbers of men had begun to earn comfortable livings as entrepreneurs, professionals, and managers, the middle class had become increasingly conscious of itself as a class, with interests, tastes, and life-styles different from both the very rich and from those who performed manual labor. In large cities as well as smaller towns, they and their families began to differentiate themselves from other social elements by stressing their gentility, respectability, and adherence to evangelical Christian values.⁸

Gender was central to this self-definition.⁹ Indeed, according to Mary Ryan, "the American middle class molded its distinctive identity around domestic values and family practices," especially as elaborated and instituted by evangelical Protestant women.¹⁰ The middle class celebrated true women as pious, maternal guardians of virtue and domesticity, and contrasted pure, domestic middle-class women with working-class women, whose evident willingness to neglect domestic duties made them appear un-Christian and morally deficient.¹¹

Manhood was equally crucial to middle-class identity. Middle-class constructions of both manliness and womanliness centered around willful control of sin.¹² Yet the middle class believed that men, unlike "naturally good" women, were beset by powerful gusts of sinful desires.¹³ This passionate masculine nature was considered simultaneously the source of men's greatest danger and of men's greatest power. Succumbing to overwhelming emotion or sexual passion would sap a man's force, rendering him weak and degenerate.¹⁴ Therefore, middle-class parents taught their sons to build a strong, manly "character" as they would build a muscle, through repetitive exercises of control over impulse.¹⁵ The middle class saw this ability to control powerful masculine passions through strong character and a powerful will as a primary source of men's strength and authority. By gaining the manly strength to control *himself*, a man gained the strength, as well as the duty, to protect and direct those weaker than himself: his wife, his children, or his employees. The mingled honor, high-mindedness, and strength stemming from this powerful self-mastery was encapsulated in the term *manliness*.¹⁶

Middle-class men invoked ideals of manliness in business and

domestic practices throughout the nineteenth century. In the context of the market economy's unpredictability, a strong character built on high-minded self-restraint was seen as the rock on which middle-class men could build their fortunes. Middle-class men were awarded—or denied—credit based on others' assessment of the manly strength of their characters, and credit raters like *Dun and Bradstreet* reported on businessmen's honesty, probity, and family life.¹⁷ Manly control over impulse also helped the middle class develop its distinctive family practices. Celebrations of manly self-restraint encouraged young men to work hard and live abstemiously, so that they could amass the capital to go into business for themselves, and to postpone marriage until they could support a family in proper middle-class style.¹⁸ In short, by the end of the century, a discourse of manliness stressing self-mastery and restraint expressed and shaped middle-class identity.

By the 1890s, however, both manliness and middle-class identity seemed to falter. Middle-class manliness had been created in the context of a small-scale, competitive capitalism, which had all but disappeared by the 1890s. In the context of a bureaucratic, interdependent society, the manly codes of self-restraint began to seem less relevant. For example, with the growth of large-scale corporate enterprises, the proportion of middle-class men who could aspire to independent entrepreneurship dwindled. At the same time, the rapid expansion of low-level clerical work in stores and offices meant that young men beginning their careers as clerks were unlikely to gain promotion to responsible, well-paid management positions, as had clerks in their fathers' generation.¹⁹ Under these conditions, manly self-denial grew increasingly unprofitable. Concurrent with middle-class men's narrowing career opportunities came new opportunities for commercial leisure. The growth of a consumer culture encouraged many middle-class men, faced with lowered career expectations, to find identity in leisure instead of in work.²⁰ Yet codes of manliness dictated they must work hard and become economically independent. The consumer culture's ethos of pleasure and frivolity clashed with ideals of manly self-restraint, further undermining the potency of middle-class manliness.²¹

Although cultural and economic changes had taken their toll, middle-class men continued to uphold manliness, for abandoning it would mean abandoning male power itself. Discourses of manliness were embedded in their very identities. They formed their sons into men by teaching them manliness. Especially in the context of challenges from the Gilded Age woman's movement, abandoning familiar constructs of manliness was an unimaginable option.

Instead, middle-class men, uncomfortably confused about the nature and sources of male power, began to cast about for new ways to fortify their shaky constructions of manliness. They adopted a variety of strategies, from growing crazes for body building and college football, to warnings of neurasthenic breakdowns among overworked

middle-class men.²² A new rhetoric about maleness appeared. Contemporaries coined the new epithets "sissy," "pussyfoot," and "stuffed shirt"²³ and began to speak approvingly about something they called "masculinity." The noun "masculinity," although rarely used until the late 1890s, would soon come into frequent parlance—precisely because it could convey new connotations about maleness different from the more usual "manliness." These reformulations frequently were fragmented and contradictory. For example, increasing numbers of middle-class men frequented urban red-light districts, yet many remained confused and ambivalent about the meaning of their illicit sexual activity. Was it an inevitable outcropping of naturally explosive masculine passions? Or was it a sordid loss of manly self-control and a sign of moral weakness?²⁴ In short, by the time Ida B. Wells sailed for England in 1893, middle-class manliness had taken on the character of a beloved but fragile friend, whose weakness must at all costs remain unacknowledged.

To recoup their losses and explain what made them powerful as men, many middle-class men began to focus on race, and the qualities which made them powerful as "the *white man*." The 1890s were a period of virulent racism and racially conceived nativism.²⁵ The primarily native-born middle class gazed with distaste upon increasing crowds of Eastern and Southern European immigrants, and saw masses of unassimilable "races," whose unfamiliar customs and tendency to vote for "machine" Democrats challenged middle-class control of American cities. Anglo-Saxonism provided one powerful explanation of middle-class men's supremacy by rooting white manhood in racial traits purportedly developed long ago in the forests of Germany.²⁶ White Americans believed the Anglo-Saxon race, as Francis Parkman put it, was "peculiarly masculine." Anglo-Saxons were described as independent, adventurous, strong of will, tenacious of purpose—as manly.²⁷

The trope "the white man" also linked powerful manhood to race. When 1890s whites spoke of "the white man," they usually paired him with "the negro" or "the Indian." Referring to "the black man" or "the red man," the logical parallel construction, would mean conceding that black and red men were equally manly—thus undercutting the ideological work of the phrase "the white man." For example, in 1905 Ray Stannard Baker argued that lynching was unworthy of "the white man," because it rendered him as unmanly as "the negro": "For if civilization means anything, it means self-restraint; casting away self-restraint the white man becomes as savage as the negro."²⁸ But perhaps the most important thing about "the white man"—as the Baker quote also suggests—was the way it worked as a synecdoche. By referring to "the white man," contemporaries simultaneously invoked the manly white males who were "civilized" and "civilization" itself.

Affirming the manly power of the white man's "civilization" was one of the most powerful ways middle-class men found to assert their

interwoven racial, class, and gender dominance. "Civilization" kept the weakness of manliness hidden by repeatedly interweaving manhood and race, and affirming that white racial superiority proved white men the most manly in the world. Since Wells built her entire English antilynching tour around resistance to this discourse of "civilization," we need to spend some time examining it.

In the Darwinist 1890s, "civilization" had become a racial concept. Rather than simply meaning "the west" or "industrially advanced societies," "civilization" denoted a precise stage in human evolution—the one following the more primitive stages of "savagery" and "barbarism." Human races progressed in historical steps from simple and less valuable "savagery," through "barbarism," to advanced and more valuable "civilization." But only whites had, as yet, advanced to the civilized stage. In fact, people believed "civilization" was itself a *racial* trait, *inherited* by all Anglo-Saxons and other "advanced" white races.²⁹

Gender was an essential component of civilization, for extreme sexual difference was seen as a hallmark of civilization's advancement. Savage (that is, nonwhite) men and women were almost identical, but civilized races had evolved the pronounced sexual differences celebrated in the middle class's doctrine of "separate spheres." Civilized women were "womanly"—spiritual, motherly, dedicated to the home. And civilized white men were the most manly ever evolved—firm of character, self-controlled, protectors of women and children.³⁰

But the power of "civilization" stemmed from the way it *interwove* middle-class beliefs about racial and gender hierarchy. "Civilization" *naturalized* white male power by linking male dominance and white supremacy to human evolutionary development. Harnessing manliness to white supremacy, and celebrating both as essential to human progress, "civilization" temporarily revitalized middle-class Victorian manliness.

To understand how the discourse of civilization reinforced the power of manliness, let's consider a familiar example: Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition. In authorizing the exposition, Congress had called for "an exhibition of the progress of civilization in the New World."³¹ In order to exhibit "the progress of civilization," the organizers divided the world's fair into two areas.³² The civilized section, known as "The White City," celebrated advanced, masculine technology. Its focal point was the majestic "Court of Honor," a formal basin almost a half-mile long, surrounded by massive white *beaux arts* buildings. "Honorable," according to an 1890 dictionary, was a synonym for "manly," and contemporaries would not have missed the Court of Honor's association with manhood.³³ The seven huge buildings framing the Court of Honor represented seven aspects of the highest civilized advancement (Manufactures, Mines, Agriculture, Art, Administrations, Machinery, and Electricity), all presented as the domain of civilized white *men*. These buildings housed thousands of

enormous engines, warships, trains, machines, and armaments. The White City also glorified middle-class men's familiar world of commerce, exhibiting the most advanced products and manufacturing processes—"dynamos and rock drills, looms and wallpaper"—and housing these exhibits in magnificent white temples.³⁴ In short, by celebrating "civilization," the White City celebrated the power and perfection of Victorian manhood, and poets hailed it as "A Vision of Strong Manhood and Perfection of Society."³⁵

Woman's place in the "advancement of civilization" was represented in the White City by the smaller, much less formidable Woman's Building. Despite the feminist intentions of its board of Lady Managers, visitors were impressed mostly by the Woman's Building's softness, compared to the masculine dynamos and technological marvels of the rest of the White City. Said the *New York Times*, "the achievements of man [are] in iron, steel, wood, and the baser and cruder products...[while] in the Woman's Building one can note ... more refined avenues of effort which culminate in the home, the hospital, the church, and in personal adornment."³⁶ Its location underlined women's marginality: Not only was the Woman's Building located at the very edge of the manly White City, it was also situated immediately opposite the White City's only exit to the uncivilized Midway. On the border between civilized and savage (as befit women, who according to modern science, were more primitive than men) the Woman's Building underlined the manliness of the white man's civilization.³⁷

In contrast, the Midway, the exposition's uncivilized section, provided spectacles of barbarism—"authentic" villages of Samoans, Egyptians, Dahomans, Turks, and other exotic races.³⁸ Guidebooks advised visitors to visit the Midway only after visiting the White City, in order to fully appreciate the contrast between the civilized White City and the uncivilized native villages.³⁹ Where the White City spread out in all directions from the Court of Honor, emphasizing the complexity of manly civilization, the Midway's attractions were organized linearly down a broad avenue, providing a lesson in racial hierarchy. Visitors entering the Midway from the White City would first pass the German and Irish villages, proceed past the barbarous Turkish, Arabic, and Chinese villages, and finish by viewing the savage American Indians and Dahomans. "What an opportunity was here afforded to the scientific mind to descend the spiral of evolution," enthused the *Chicago Tribune*, "tracing humanity in its highest phases down almost to its animalistic origins."⁴⁰

Where the White City stressed the manliness of the white man's civilization, the Midway's villages depicted the absence of manliness among uncivilized, nonwhite races. In the Persian, Algerian, Turkish, and Egyptian villages, for example, unmanly dark-skinned men cajoled customers to shed manly restraint and savor their countrywomen's sensuous dancing.⁴¹ Male audiences ogling scantily clad belly

dancers could have it both ways, simultaneously relishing the dances' suggestiveness and basking in their own sense of civilized superiority to the swarthy men hawking tickets outside, unashamedly vending their countrywomen's charms.⁴² Those who had just visited the White City would be especially conscious of their own racially superior manliness.

Least manly of all the Midway's denizens, according to many commentators, were the savage Dahomans, who seemed to lack gender difference entirely. The *New York Times* described "The Dahomey gentleman (or perhaps it is a Dahomey lady, for the distinction is not obvious), who may be seen at almost any hour ... clad mainly in a brief grass skirt and capering nimbly to the lascivious pleatings of an unseen tom-tom pounded within.... There are several dozen of them of assorted sexes, as one gradually makes out" The columnist then ridiculed African-American spectators for imagining themselves more civilized than the Dahomans.⁴³ In short, the Columbian Exposition demonstrated, in a variety of ways, that "nonwhite" and "uncivilized" denoted "unmanly"; and conversely, that whiteness and civilization denoted powerful manhood.

The bifurcation of the Columbian Exposition between civilized White City and uncivilized Midway worked only if the darkest races were always represented as insurmountably savage. Therefore, organizers rebuffed the many African Americans who worked tirelessly to gain representation on the White City's organizing bodies. The exposition's logic of constructing manly white civilization in opposition to savage swarthy barbarism made it impossible for the white organizers to recognize the existence of fully civilized African Americans. Black men and women objected vociferously to their exclusion and agitated to be included in the exhibits and planning committees, but to no avail.⁴⁴

Ida B. Wells, like most educated African Americans, was outraged by this racist exclusiveness. Always attuned to the cultural dynamics behind whites' racism, in her counterattack she pinpointed the key discourse: the exposition's celebrations of manly white American "civilization." Along with Frederick Douglass, she called for black Americans to fund a pamphlet, printed in English, French, German, and Spanish, in which civilized African Americans could explain to the rest of the civilized world why the less-than-civilized exposition organizers had excluded them. Warning that "[t]he absence of colored citizens from participating therein will be construed to their disadvantage by the representatives of the civilized world there assembled," Wells promised her pamphlet would set forth "the past and present condition of our people and their relation to American civilization."⁴⁵

And it did. Entitled *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition*, the pamphlet inverted the white organizers' depiction of manly civilization as the opposite of Negro savagery. Instead, Wells argued, the best illustration of America's "moral

grandeur" and civilization would have been to exhibit the phenomenal progress African Americans had made after only twenty-five years of freedom. For centuries, American blacks had "contributed a large share to American prosperity and civilization."⁴⁶ Why, then, was the colored American not in the Columbian Exposition?

The pamphlet's answer, left implicit to avoid excessive confrontation, was that the *white* American was not the manly civilized being he pretended to be. Wells's coauthor Frederick Douglass made this argument, lamenting the unfortunate necessity of speaking plainly of wrongs and outrages endured "in flagrant contradiction to boasted American Republican liberty and civilization."⁴⁷ Indeed, far from embodying high civilization, white Americans still embraced "barbarism and race hate."⁴⁸ Yet the Negro was "manfully resisting" this oppression, and "is now by industry, economy and education wisely raising himself to conditions of civilization and comparative well being."⁴⁹ Douglass concluded his chapter by insisting upon black manliness: "We are men and our aim is perfect manhood, to be men among men. Our situation demands faith in ourselves, faith in the power of truth, faith in work and faith in the influence of manly character."⁵⁰

The balance of the pamphlet, compiled and partly written by Ida B. Wells, documented Douglass's assertion of black manhood. Since emancipation, African Americans had demonstrated manly character, making phenomenal strides in education, the professions, the accumulation of wealth, and literature. Nonetheless, white Americans had perversely attacked this youthful black manliness—through oppressive legislation, disfranchisement, the convict lease system, and the "barbarism" of lynch law. Finally, the pamphlet documented the exposition organizers' deliberate exclusion of blacks—except, Douglass sniffed, "as if to shame the Negro, the Dahomians [*sic*] are also here to exhibit the Negro as a repulsive savage."⁵¹ In short, the pamphlet demonstrated that excluding the colored American from the Columbian Exposition, far from glorifying American civilization, demonstrated American barbarism.

Wells and Douglass, headquartered in the White City's small Haitian Building, distributed 10,000 copies of *The Reason Why* during the three months before the fair closed. (Debarred from representing his own nation, Douglass had been named Haiti's representative to the exposition.) Wells received responses from England, Germany, France, Russia, and India.⁵² Yet Wells's greatest success in turning the claims of "manly civilization" against white racism lay not in her world's fair agitation, but in her 1892–94 campaigns against lynching.

In 1892, one year before Wells and Douglass published their pamphlet, Wells had been forced into Northern exile by her agitation against lynching. At thirty, she was already an experienced journalist and agitator. Since March 1892, she had spearheaded black Memphis's protest against the heinous lynchings of three respected local busi-

nessmen, one of whom had been a close personal friend. Finally, in May, she wrote her famous editorial: "Nobody in this section of the country believes the old thread bare lie that Negro men rape white women. If Southern white men are not careful, they will over-reach themselves and public sentiment will have a reaction; a conclusion will then be reached which will be very damaging to the moral reputation of their women."⁵³ White Memphis's violent response shocked Wells: editorialists threatened her with mutilation and hanging; her presses were seized and sold; and white men watched her home, vowing to kill her on sight.

Exiled to the North, she framed new tactics for her new circumstances. While she continued to urge black Americans to boycott, vote, and agitate against white oppressors,⁵⁴ she knew these methods alone could not stop lynching. Instead, as she later recalled, she focused her efforts on "the white press, since it was the medium through which I hoped to reach the white people of the country, who alone could mold public sentiment."⁵⁵ Yet the white Northern press excluded most African-American writers. To gain a hearing in the white press, Wells was forced to create effective new arguments and tactics. To this end, she began to work to counter the middle class's interweavings of manly authority and white racial dominance.⁵⁶

One month after arriving in the North, the *New York Age*, a major black newspaper, published Wells's attack on Southern lynching, later reprinted as *Southern Horrors*.⁵⁷ This pamphlet, addressed to the American people, black and white, described dozens of gruesome, horrific Southern lynchings, each appalling enough to convince any open-minded reader that lynching must be stopped. Yet Wells had long lost faith that white Americans would be open-minded where racial justice was concerned.⁵⁸ Aware that whites would shrug off tales of tortured black men, Wells chose to invoke an issue that she knew would affect white men more viscerally: their fears of declining manliness.

Wells recognized that inherent in the "lynching for rape" scenario was a symbolic celebration of the power of Victorian manliness. Like the White City—which demanded that black men be represented as unmanly savages so that white men could embody powerful, manly civilization—the lynching for rape scenario represented black men as unmanly rapists, so that white men could embody powerful, manly self-restraint. As Jacquelyn Dowd Hall argued, by constructing black men as "natural" rapists and by resolutely and bravely avenging the (alleged) rape of pure white womanhood, Southern white men constructed themselves as ideal men: "patriarchs, avengers, righteous protectors."⁵⁹

This lynching for rape scenario stirred *Northern* white men too, because it dramatized the potency of traditional manliness. In this dramatization, upright character and powerful manliness (embodied in the white lynch mobs) restrained uncontrolled, unmanly, sexual passion (embodied in the Negro rapist). These noxious images per-

meated Northern press reports of Southern lynchings. The *Providence Journal*, reporting a Louisiana lynching in 1893, celebrated the mob's manly restraint. "Three Negroes were lynched in a quiet, determined manner by a mob of white men on Friday night.... The lynching was one of the coolest that has taken place in this section."⁶⁰ And the *New York Times*, describing the Memphis lynching of Wells's friends, stressed what it called the "quick and quiet" demeanor of the white men in the mob, contrasting their stern and firm behavior with that of the "shivering negroes" whom they murdered.⁶¹ In these depictions, the black victims represented weak, unmanly passion—whether fear or lechery—while the lynch mob represented the strength of manly self-control.

In *Southern Horrors*, Wells refuted the lynching scenario by inversion. Where whites' scenario depicted black men as unmanly passion incarnate, Wells depicted black men as manliness personified. In Wells's framework, black men lynched for "rape," far from embodying uncontrolled lust, were innocent victims, seduced into having consensual sex with carnal white women. As Wells put it, they were "poor blind Afro-American Sampsons who suffer themselves to be betrayed by white Delilahs."⁶² Like the Biblical Samson, these black men had been manly towers of strength until they were ensnared and destroyed by the wiles of a wicked woman. The white Delilahs who falsely cried "rape" were the real embodiments of lust, not the innocent lynch victims. To prove white women, and not black men, instigated these liaisons, Wells listed thirteen white women who willingly had sexual relationships with black men. Only upon discovery were these liaisons called "rapes." Several of these white women were prostitutes, and Wells joked bitterly, "'The leading citizens' of Memphis are defending the 'honor' of all white women, *demi-monde* included."⁶³

Where whites' lynching scenario depicted lynch mobs as disciplined, manly, and restrained, Wells depicted them as vile, unmanly cowards, hiding their own rampant lusts with sanctimonious calls for chastity and excusing their brutal murders by invoking the honor of harlots. Wells argued that white Southern men, including those who formed the lynch mobs, were enthusiastic *supporters* of rape and sexual abuse—as long as the victims were *black*. Far from suppressing lust, "the white man" gloried in it. His miscegenation laws, Wells wrote, "only operate against the legitimate union of the races; they leave the white man free to seduce all the colored girls he can," knowing he need neither marry nor support the victims of his lust.⁶⁴ Furthermore, Wells charged, Southern white men were "not so desirous of punishing rapists as they pretend." If they truly reviled *rape*, they would not so readily forgive the many *white* men who raped *black* women. Again, Wells named names and gave dates, overwhelming the reader with cases of black women and little girls brutally raped by white men, with no objections from their white neighbors. Yet these solid white citizens of the South—rapists and accessories to rape—murdered black men

who slept with willing white women, and proclaimed themselves defenders of chastity!⁶⁵ Hypocrisy, licentiousness, and unrestrained passion—sexual lust and blood lust—characterized Southern white men, as Wells depicted them. Thus, in her account, the Southern lynch mob did not embody white manliness *restraining* black lust—it embodied white men's lust running amok, *destroying* true black manliness.

Finally, Wells attacked the idea that lynching showed the continuing power of manliness. Instead, she argued, Northern men could only regain their manliness by stopping the lynching. These ideas echoed old antislavery arguments: just as antislavery activists had warned that the slave power would spread North and contaminate free labor, so Wells warned that Southern men's unrestrained lust had spread north and corrupted Northern men's manliness. Northern white men had abrogated their manly duty to restrain vice. They had allowed white Southerners to rape, butcher, and burn black Americans alive, and this tolerance of vice had rotted their manliness. Throughout America, Wells wrote, "Men who stand high in the esteem of the public for Christian character, for moral and physical courage, for devotion to the principles of equal and exact justice to all, and for great sagacity, stand as cowards who fear to open their mouths before this great outrage."⁶⁶

More was at stake in these tactics than mere rhetoric. In refuting this discourse of civilization, Wells was trying to stop lynching by producing an alternative discourse of race and manhood. "Civilization" positioned black men as unmanly savages, unable to control their passions through manly will. Northern whites, accepting the linkage of white civilization and manhood, believed black men were savage rapists; therefore, they tolerated the brutal actions of Southern lynch mobs. As Hazel Carby insightfully argued, black women, including Wells, reconstructed the sexual ideologies of the nineteenth century to produce an alternative discourse of womanhood.⁶⁷ Similarly, Wells's antilynching propaganda constructed an alternative discourse of manhood, remaking and redefining the "truths" that whites deployed to define and limit black men's place in the world, and to construct white men as powerful and manly.

In 1892, however, most whites ignored Wells's pamphlet. A few scattered antilynching articles in white periodicals borrowed Wells's arguments. For example, in 1892 Albion Tourg e, the period's most forthright antiracist white, wrote in the *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, "[W]ithin a year half a score of colored men have been lynched for the crime of having white mistresses, while it does not seem to be thought necessary to hang or burn the white woman, nor is the white man who keeps a colored mistress in any danger of violence at the hands of his fellow citizens ..."⁶⁸ George C. Rowe, the sole black contributor to an 1894 symposium on lynching in the *Independent*, made a similar case.⁶⁹ But such articles were exceptional. Wells, like most blacks, could only get her articles published in the black press, which few whites read.

Despite the eloquence of *Southern Horrors*, Wells's objective of reaching white Northerners remained frustrated.

By 1893, after a year of writing and speaking in the North, Wells still had no access to the white American press. When offered the opportunity to tour England, she jumped at it, recognizing that although the white American press ignored *her*, they might not ignore the British.⁷⁰ Although her first tour—in 1893—got very little American press coverage, it laid the foundation for her 1894 tour, which got all the publicity she desired. When Wells returned, she had become notorious; and white Americans had discovered that, due to their tolerance and practice of lynching, the rest of the world's Anglo-Saxons doubted whether white Americans were either manly or civilized.

Wells shaped both tours in terms of "civilization."⁷¹ Her speeches, her writings, and even her demeanor framed her mission as an appeal from one civilized race to another for protection from violent white barbarians. As she told one British journalist, if Britain told America "the roasting of men alive on unproved charges and by a furious mob was a disgrace to the civilisation of the United States, then every criminal in America, white or black, would soon be assured of a trial under the proper form of law."⁷² Wells spoke to British audiences, but her goal was to convince Americans that their tolerance of lynching rendered them unmanly savages in the eyes of the civilized world.

Wells knew that many Americans felt a pleasurable sense of racial kinship with the English—as fellow Anglo-Saxons, the most manly and civilized of all races. By forming an alliance with British reformers, Wells attacked this smug racial empathy. As she told an audience in Birmingham (England), "America cannot and will not ignore the voice of a nation that is her superior in civilisation ... I believe that the silent indifference with which [Great Britain] has received the intelligence that human beings are burned alive in a Christian (?) country, and by civilised (?) Anglo-Saxon communities is born of ignorance of the true situation; and that if she really knew she would make the protest long and loud."⁷³ American Anglo-Saxons were unmanly and uncivilized and needed direction from their civilized British superiors.

Similarly, Wells's newspaper columns from abroad, published in the white *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, described the massive support she received from the most prominent, civilized British dignitaries.⁷⁴ Wells detailed dinners given in her honor by prominent members of Parliament and intimate gatherings organized by titled aristocrats. In all her columns, these celebrities expressed shock at lynching's barbarity. Often she included stories of loutish white Americans whose incivility further convinced the British of American barbarism. For example, a "swell reception" was given for her at Princess Christian's Writer's Club, Wells wrote, and "[t]he ubiquitous and (so far as I am concerned) almost invariably rude American was on evidence there. In a strident voice she pronounced my statements false. I found she had never been in the South and was a victim to her own imagination. I

heard an Englishwoman remark after the encounter was over that she had seen a side of Mrs.——'s character which she never knew before."⁷⁵ In contrast, Wells always carried herself with restraint, dignity, and refinement, and Britons clearly appreciated her as a true lady.⁷⁶ By presenting herself and her mission as embodying civilized values, Wells highlighted the barbarism of white Americans.

Throughout, Wells hammered away at the myth of the black rapist. In the context of "civilization," though, her old arguments from *Southern Horrors* took on new weight. Since civilization, by definition, entailed pure womanliness and upright manliness, Wells could now show that white Americans' lasciviousness proved them uncivilized. Barbarous white American men burned innocent black men alive for the "crime" of sleeping with willing white women, while they themselves brutally and boldly raped black women. Wells also added statistics, culled from the white *Chicago Tribune*, to prove that fewer than one-third of all lynch victims had even been *accused* of rape. The unchaste white women who took black lovers, then watched them burn, were also uncivilized; but, Wells claimed, unchastity was endemic to the white South: "Why should it be impossible to believe white women guilty of the same crime for which southern white men are notorious?"⁷⁷ Why should it be hard to imagine that depraved white men, whose crimes had peopled the South with mulattoes, had depraved white daughters?

Most unmanly of all, however, were the bloodthirsty lynch mobs. Wells argued passionately that by refusing to try accused African Americans in a court of law, and by engaging in the most horrific of tortures, lynch mobs and the Americans who tolerated them exposed themselves as barbarians.

Make your laws as terrible as you like against that class of crime [rape]; devise what tortures you choose; go back to the most barbarous methods of the most barbarous ages; and then my case is just as strong. Prove your man guilty, first; hang him, shoot him, pour coal oil over him and roast him, if you have concluded that civilization demands this; but be sure the man has committed the crime first.⁷⁸

No one but a brute, of course, could conclude that "civilization demands" an accused criminal be burned alive, without benefit of trial.

Similarly, in describing an Alabama lynching, Wells ironically interwove references to race and gender, invoking "civilization" in order to condemn Americans as manifestly uncivilized. Bitterly she wrote, "the civilization which defends itself against the barbarisms of Lynch Law by stating that it lynches human beings only when they are guilty of awful attacks upon women and children" might have been expected to give these alleged *arsonists* a fair trial, especially since "one of the prisoners charged was a woman, and if the Nineteenth Century has shown any advancement upon any lines of human action, it is pre-eminently shown in its reverence, respect and protection of its woman-

hood." But, Wells argued, these uncivilized white men were entirely unmanly—anxious not to protect womanhood, but to butcher it. The victims, Wells wrote, "were caged in their cells, helpless and defenseless; they were at the mercy of civilized white Americans, who, armed with shotguns, were there to maintain the majesty of American law." And these "brave and honorable white southerners ... lined themselves up in the most effective manner and poured volley after volley into the bodies of their helpless, pleading victims, who in their bolted prison cells could do nothing but suffer and die."⁷⁹ Manliness and civilization, which stood for the rule of law, the defense of the weak, and the protection of womanhood, did not exist in the American South.

Wells's powerful tactics mobilized the British press and reformers, who turned lynching into that season's *cause célèbre*. A *Westminster Gazette* writer said he could no longer "regard our American cousins as a civilised nation."⁸⁰ The *Christian World* thought American lynch law "would disgrace a nation of cannibals."⁸¹ The *Birmingham Daily Gazette* editorialized, "The American citizen in the South is at heart more a barbarian than the negro whom he regards as a savage.... Lynch law is fiendishly resorted to as a sort of sport on every possible opportunity, and the negroes are butchered to make a Yankee holiday.... Either they mistrust their legal institutions or they murder in wantonness and for mere lust of blood."⁸² Murdering in "wantonness," "lusting" for blood—Americans had degenerated past any claim to manliness or civilization.

Having convinced a large segment of the British public of American barbarism, Wells called upon the moral forces of Britain to stop it. She convinced the gatherings she addressed to pass resolutions condemning lynching as uncivilized, and warning the United States that its tolerance of lynch law was lowering it in the estimation of civilized countries. She got the national conventions of major religious denominations—Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Unitarians—to send resolutions to their counterparts in America condemning lynching as uncivilized, and ask what they were doing to stop it. Individual churches and reform organizations followed suit, sending resolutions to American organizations, politicians, and publications, warning that the civilized world held all Americans—Northern or Southern—responsible for these "barbarisms."⁸³ For example, Liverpool's Unitarian church wrote to the *Christian Register*, America's leading Unitarian periodical, expressing its "grief and horror" upon learning of "the barbarities of Lynch Law as carried out by white men on some of the coloured citizens of the United States." They demanded to know why American Unitarians did not stop such horrific torture and brutality, which instilled into white American children the "lust of cruelty and callousness of murder." The American Unitarians were forced to agree that lynching made "the dark deeds of the dark ages seem light in comparison," and the magazine sent letters of protest to three Southern mayors and Governor W.T. Northen of Georgia.⁸⁴

Wells ultimately convinced British reformers that they bore the responsibility of civilizing the United States. As Sir Edward Russell wrote in the *Liverpool Daily Post* (and as Wells quoted to her American readers), Americans were "horrifying the whole of the civilized world," and needed British uplift, for "when one reflects that [such things] still happen while we in this country are sending missions to the South Sea Islands and other places, they strike to our hearts much more forcibly, and we turn over in our minds whether it were not better to leave the heathen alone for a time and to send the gospel of common humanity across the Atlantic ..."⁸⁵ Moreover, the British were preparing to send such "missionaries." By the end of her tour, prominent British reformers were organizing antilynching societies and planning to send representatives to the United States to investigate these atrocities first hand.⁸⁶ Such societies had been formed previously to protest Turkish and other exotic atrocities, but never to investigate fellow Anglo-Saxons.

All this British fervor finally got Wells her hearing in the white American press. Wells could be ignored; but the British were considered fellow Anglo-Saxons, racial equals qualified to pronounce upon civilized manliness. Thus, American men felt obligated to reply to their accusations.

The *Memphis Daily Commercial* attempted to discredit Wells by slandering her character. Playing on longstanding racist discourses depicting black women as especially licentious—thus unwomanly and uncivilized—it flooded England with newspapers accusing Wells of being a "negro adventuress" with an unsavory past. Yet Wells skillfully turned these slanders to her advantage by using them to prove American barbarity. Her rebuttal, circulated to newspapers throughout Great Britain, noted "so hardened is the Southern public mind (white) that it does not object to the coarsest language and most obscene vulgarity in its leading journals so long as it is directed against a negro," and pointed out that since the *Daily Commercial* could not deny the barbarity of the South's frequent lynchings, they were reduced to smearing her character. British papers were as shocked as Wells intended. The *Liverpool Daily Post* described the articles as "very coarse in tone, and some of the language is such as could not possibly be reproduced in an English journal." Since it was neither manly nor civilized to slander a lady's character, the episode served to reinforce British opinions of American barbarism.⁸⁷

Southern newspapers typically insisted that rape justified lynching; and that "the negro" was uncivilized. The *Atlanta Constitution* argued that British agitation was futile, since "the negroes themselves are the only people who can suppress the evil, and the way for them to get rid of it is to cease committing" rape.⁸⁸ The New Orleans *Times-Democrat* opined that once Wells left Britain, she would no longer be believed, for Americans "know well that the Negro is not a model of virtue and the white man a cruel, bloodthirsty tyrant, as the Wells

woman pretends..."⁸⁹ A Southern educator complained that "stigmatizing [Southern men] as savages and barbarians" did no good—the real problem lay with the Negro, who was "still a semi-savage, far below the white man in the science and practice of civilization."⁹⁰

Other critics accused the British of hypocrisy, arguing that British colonists abused blacks more brutally than white Southerners did. The Democratic *Philadelphia Daily Record*, for example, countered the British and Foreign Unitarian Association's condemnations by alleging, "John Bull looks at America with one eye and at Africa with the other. His hands are bloody with recent African butcheries ..."⁹¹ While plausible, these criticisms stemmed not from concern for Africans, but from resentment of meddling British "civilizers."

Many Northern Democrats and Southerners complained that American lynch law was none of Britain's business.⁹² In this they echoed British conservatives, like the *London Times*, which accused the antilynchers of having a "fanatical anxiety to impose our own canons of civilization upon people differently circumstanced." The *New York Times* cited the column as the sentiment of "a big majority of sensible Englishmen, who resent the meddling antics of a little and noisy minority," and approvingly reprinted it.⁹³ Governor Northen of Georgia accused Wells of being funded by a syndicate of British and American capitalists who wanted to stop British immigration to the South.⁹⁴

The last straw for those upset about British "meddling" came in early September 1894, when the London Anti-Lynching Committee sent a small fact-finding delegation to tour the South.⁹⁵ Governor O'Ferrall of Virginia complained, "Things have come to a pretty pass in this country when we are to have a lot of English moralists sticking their noses into our national affairs," and fourteen other governors, Northern and Southern, concurred. Governor Northen accused the British of unmanly hypocrisy, suggesting the antilynching committee return to England and "prevent by law the inhuman sale of virtuous girls to lustful men in high places. Hang all such demons as 'Jack, the Ripper'; punish as it deserves the barbarous, wholesale slaughter of negroes in Africa by Englishmen who go there to steal their gold ..." Governor Turney of Tennessee agreed: "I think they had better purify their own morals before coming among a better people."⁹⁶

Governor Turney was embarrassed, however, when several days later six black men accused of arson were lynched near Memphis; he condemned the murders and offered a reward of \$5,000 for the lynchers' capture. Jeered the Northern editors of the *Independent*, "It is very unfortunate ... that just after Miss Wells's charges had been loudly pronounced false other such atrocious cases should have occurred, as if to justify all that she had said ..."⁹⁷ But in Memphis, Wells's campaign had borne fruit. Although two years before, Memphis's civic leaders had destroyed Wells's presses and driven her north for protesting the three businessmen's murders, now they piously proclaimed

their horror of lynch law. The *Memphis Scimitar*—the same paper that two years earlier had demanded that Wells herself be lynched—editorialized, "Every one of us is touched with blood-guiltiness in this matter, unless we prove ourselves ready to do our duty as civilized men and citizens who love their country and are jealous of its good name."⁹⁸ White Memphis merchants even demonstrated their civilized manliness by holding an indignation meeting, and raising \$1,000 for the murdered men's widows and orphans!⁹⁹ Thirteen white men were indicted, although never convicted, for the lynchings. According to historian David Tucker, the Memphis press never again condoned lynch law; and no new lynchings occurred until 1917.¹⁰⁰

Wells's campaign also inspired many white Northerners to object more vocally to lynching. In Chicago, Brooklyn, and Santa Cruz, whites were reported to have formed antilynching societies, although these organizations seem to have been ephemeral.¹⁰¹ While some Northern papers still defended lynching as necessary to deter rape, many others agreed with the *Cleveland Leader* that "[a]cts of barbarism have been committed in this country within the last twenty years by people claiming to be civilized which would scarcely have been credited to the cruelest and most bloodthirsty savages in Africa."¹⁰²

In sum, Wells's British agitation had hit a nerve. White Americans, the cheers for the Columbian Exposition still ringing in their ears, were chagrined to discover prominent British reformers calling them unmanly barbarians. The United States—the glory of the civilized world, the epitome of evolutionary progress—was the object of "missionaries"! Finally, Wells had the attention of the white American public. Her campaign, by enlisting the aid of British reformers, had forced indifferent American whites to address lynching. The *Indianapolis Freeman*, like most of the African-American press, proclaimed that Wells's campaign had put an end to white complacency. "For the first time since the commencement of its long debauch of crime, the South has been jerked up to a sudden standstill; it is on the defensive.... The North has at last realized that the so-called race problem is a matter that concerns not only the South, but the nation ..."¹⁰³ Wells could not force white Americans to *oppose* lynching, but in 1894, they could no longer *ignore* lynching.

How effective was Wells's agitation in the long run? Wells did not stop lynching. Although lynching did decline after 1892, most historians credit factors other than Wells's efforts.¹⁰⁴ The British antilynching committees, faced with white Americans' vehement complaints about the London committee's visit, cancelled further fact-finding tours and restricted their activities to outraged letter-writing campaigns.¹⁰⁵ Southern lynchings continued, and Wells continued to agitate against them.

But even if Wells could not put an end to the violence, her success in putting American whites on the defensive did force some long-lasting, if subtle, shifts in whites' approaches to lynch law. White Amer-

icans had no stomach for being called unmanly and uncivilized by the British. After 1894, most Northern periodicals stopped treating lynching as a colorful Southern folkway. They dropped their jokey tones and piously condemned lynching as "barbarous"—although they still implied one could do little to stop it. It became a truism that lynching hurt America in the eyes of the "civilized world."¹⁰⁶ At the same time, Wells's statistics forced the Northern press to acknowledge that most lynch victims had *not* been accused of rape—although the lynching for rape scenario retained its appeal as a dramatization of white male power, and the myth of the Negro rapist remained almost as strong as ever. Southern states began to pass antilynching laws—which, unfortunately, were almost never enforced.¹⁰⁷ While it is impossible to know whether these small changes actually deterred any prospective lynchers, in the context of the nation's overwhelming climate of racist violence, they must be seen as modest but definite victories.

To appreciate how skillfully Ida B. Wells conducted her antilynching campaign, one needs to understand, as Wells did, the subtle ways race, gender, and class were interwoven in the 1890s. With social and cultural change threatening middle-class dominance, middle-class men had become fearful that their manhood was at risk. In order to strengthen faltering constructs of traditional manly power, they turned to race. By envisioning themselves as "the white man," whose superior manliness set them apart from more primitive dark-skinned races, middle-class men reassured themselves that their manliness remained as strong as ever. "Civilization" naturalized this combined manly/racial dominance by tying it to human evolutionary progress. By celebrating "civilization," as they did at the 1893 Columbian Exposition, middle-class white men reassured themselves that they were the most powerful beings ever evolved.

Wells inverted these linkages between manhood and white supremacy. Where white Northerners imagined lynching proved white men's superior manliness, Wells argued the reverse: lynching proved black men were far more manly than whites who tolerated lynching. Where white Americans constructed elaborate pageants like the Columbian Exposition to dramatize that white men were more manly and civilized than savage dark-skinned races, Wells mobilized "civilization" to demonstrate the opposite: white Americans were despicably unmanly and uncivilized.

Wells's manipulation of manliness and civilization can be seen as one example of a tactic oppressed groups have frequently adopted: mobilizing dominant discourses in subversive ways. Women's and labor historians have written about many such cases—from Cleveland unionists who turned their employers' calls for "law and order" into a potent rationale for a citywide strike,¹⁰⁸ to working girls in turn-of-the-century New York who parodied upper-class fashions in order to publicly assert their own working-class identities,¹⁰⁹ to labor activists and

woman's activists who found in Protestantism a potent rationale for their own liberatory projects.¹¹⁰ Similarly, Ida B. Wells inverted discourses of manly civilization, which made lynching tolerable to many whites, in order to show that manliness could only be saved, and civilization advanced, by stamping out lynch law.

Unlike Cleveland's law-and-order unionists or New York's stylish working girls, who were synthesizing beliefs and identities for themselves, however, Wells was consciously working to propagandize her *oppressor*. Her effectiveness stemmed from the skill with which she manipulated cherished middle-class ideologies. Her strategy of playing on middle-class men's fears about the fragility of traditional manliness succeeded brilliantly. Working with constructs so crucial to her audience's own shaky self-image made Wells's propaganda especially effective; her accusations, especially devastating.

By inverting "civilization" and challenging the links between white supremacy and manliness, Wells produced an antiracist construction of manhood. Wells recognized that behind middle-class gender lay a fundamental assumption that pure women and manly men were *white*. To attack that one point, as Wells and many of her contemporaries did, was to attack the entire edifice of middle-class identity and middle-class gender. Victorian ideologies of womanhood marginalized black women by depicting them as unwomanly harlots and contrasting them with white women, who were depicted as "real" women, high-minded and sexually pure. By resisting these ideas and insisting on black women's pure womanliness, black women in effect produced an alternative discourse of womanhood, as shown by Hazel Carby.¹¹¹ In the same way, middle-class formulations of manliness marginalized black men by depicting them as unmanly rapists, whose uncontrolled sexuality contrasted with the restrained self-mastery and manliness of "the white man." By arguing that it was "the white man," and not the black man, who was lustful and uncivilized, Wells produced a less damaging formulation of gender.

Middle-class gender's racial underpinnings may seem merely ideological, but as Wells recognized, they had dire material repercussions. They legitimized both the sexual victimization of black women and the brutal murders of black men. Wells's insistence upon the womanliness of black women and the manliness of black men was meant to dismantle the ideological structure that facilitated whites' oppressive practices. By subverting whites' raced discourses of gender, Wells hoped to force an end to racial violence.

For Wells, critiquing middle-class gender was a *tactic*, not an objective. More than a theorist, Wells was a skilled journalist, a gifted publicist, a consummate activist. As such, she understood—and was gifted at—practical propaganda. Above all else, she passionately desired to end the terror black Americans faced at the hands of "Judge Lynch." She analyzed the complexities of middle-class Americans' race/class/gender system in order to forge an effective weapon for

social change. Cognizant of the subtle dynamics of these discourses, she was able to manipulate them to her political ends. She shook middle-class whites out of their complacency and forced them to pay attention to racial violence. By adeptly reading and manipulating interwoven discourses of class, race, and gender Wells made her antilynching campaign a success. Her example suggests that the ability to deconstruct the discourses of race, gender, and class, more than merely an academic exercise, is an inherently *practical* political skill for those interested in effectively motivating social movements.

Notes

For helpful criticisms of earlier drafts, many thanks to Mari Jo Buhle, Ruth Feldstein, Elizabeth Francis, Kevin Gaines, Suzanne Kolm, Louise Newman, Mary Lou Roberts, Joan Scott, the audience at my Berkshire Conference panel, and Barbara Melosh and the *RHR* readers.

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2. Ida B. Wells, *A Red Record*, reprinted in *On Lynchings* [1895] Salem NH, 1987), 98.

3. "China Cares Not to Borrow.... If They Believe All That They Read, It Is Not Surprising English Busybodies Talk of Forming Societies to Civilize Us," *New York Times*, 19 August 1894, 1.

4. "British Anti-Lynchers," *New York Times*, 2 August 1894, 4.

5. "An Idyll of Alabama," *New York Times*, 30 December 1891, 4. See also "The Cartwright Avengers," *New York Times*, 19 July 1893, 4.

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

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13. John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 178–82.

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17. Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 207–8; Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 140–2.

18. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 165–85.

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23. Higham, "Reorientation," 78–79.

24. Freedman and D'Emilio, *Intimate Matters*, 178–82.

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28. Baker, *What is a Lynching*, 429.

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32. Robert W. Rydell, *All The World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 38–71. My discussion of the racial aspect of the fair draws heavily upon Rydell's excellent analysis.

On the cultural meaning of the Columbian Exposition, see also Kasson, 17–28; and Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 208–34.

33. *The Century Dictionary: An Encyclopedic Lexicon of the English Language* (New York: The Century Company, 1890), s.v. "manly."

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

35. *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, 26 April 1893, Supplement. Cited in Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 249, n. 19.

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37. Russett, *Sexual Science*, 54–77.

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

39. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 61–62.

40. *Ibid.*, 65.

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

42. For contemporary commentary on this dynamic, see "The World's Columbian Exposition—A View from the Ferris Wheel," *Scientific American* 69 (9 September 1893): 169; and Frederic Remington, "A Gallop Through the Midway," *Harper's Weekly* 37 (7 October 1893): 996.

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

44. Elliot M. Rudwick and August Meier, "Black Man in the 'White City': Negroes and the Columbian Exposition, 1893," *Phylon* 26 (Winter 1965): 354–55; Ann Massa, "Black Women in the 'White City,'" *Journal of American Studies* 8 (December 1974): 319–37.

45. Wells and Douglass's letter is reprinted in "No 'Nigger Day,' No 'Nigger Pamphlet!'" *Indianapolis Freeman*, 25 March 1893, 4. The *Freeman's* editor, who was involved in a long-standing feud with Wells, accused her of washing American dirty laundry (i.e., bringing up slavery) in public, for foreign guests. Unfortunately, Wells and Douglass were unable to raise funds to cover printing full translations into four languages. Only the introduction was translated, into French and German.

46. [Ida B. Wells], "Preface," in *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition* [ed. Ida B. Wells] (Chicago, 1892), no page number.

47. Frederick Douglass, "Introduction," *The Reason Why*, 2.

48. *Ibid.*, 3.

49. *Ibid.*, 10–11.

50. *Ibid.*, 12.

51. *Ibid.*, 9. Lest this sound like Douglass lacks respect for Dahomans, note that American cartoonists leapt to draw unflattering depictions of impossibly thick-lipped Dahoman men, clad (like women) only in brief grass skirts, necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. See Rydell *All the World's a Fair*, 53, 54, 70.

52. Alfreda M. Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 117.

53. Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*, reprinted in *On Lynchings* ([1892]; Salem, NH: Ayer Company, 1987), 4.

54. See, for example, Iola [Ida B. Wells], "Iola's Southern Field—Save the Pennies," *New York Age*, 19 November 1892, 2; *idem*, "The Reign of Mob Law: Iola's Opinion of

Doings in the Southern Field," *New York Age*, 18 February 1893 (typescript in Ida B. Wells Papers, University of Chicago); Wells, *Southern Horrors*, 22–23.

55. Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice*, 86, 219.

56. More complete biographical information on Wells's campaign and her beginnings as an antilynching activist may be found in: Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice*; Bettina Aptheker, "Woman Suffrage and the Crusade against Lynching, 1890–1920," in *Woman's Legacy: Essays on Race, Sex, and Class in American History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 53–76; Paula Giddings, "Ida Wells-Barnett 1862–1931," in *Portraits of American Women from Settlement to the Present*, eds. G.J. Barker-Benfield and Catherine Clinton (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 366–85; Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 19–31, 89–93; Thomas C. Holt, "The Lonely Warrior: Ida B. Wells-Barnett and the Struggle for Black Leadership," in *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, eds. John Hope Franklin and August Meier (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 39–50; Mary Magdalene Boone Hutton, "The Rhetoric of Ida B. Wells: The Genesis of the Anti-Lynch Movement" (Ph.D. diss., University of Indiana, 1975); Dorothy Sterling, *Black Foremothers: Three Lives* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1988), 61–117; Mildred Thompson, "Ida B. Wells-Barnett: An Exploratory Study of an American Black Woman, 1893–1930" (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1979), 20–125; David M. Tucker, "Miss Ida B. Wells and Memphis Lynching," *Phylon* 32 (Summer 1971): 112–22. Hazel V. Carby deftly analyzed Wells's antilynching pamphlets in the context of the 1890s black women's movement in *Reconstructing Womanhood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 95–120, and in "On the Threshold of Woman's Era': Lynching, Empire and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory," in *"Race," Writing, and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 301–16.

57. Wells, "Preface," *Southern Horrors*, no page number.

58. For Wells's lack of faith in appealing to whites for justice, see Iola [Ida B. Wells], "Freedom of Political Action—A Woman's Magnificent Definition of the Political Situation," *New York Freeman*, 7 November 1885, 2; Ida B. Wells Diary 1884–1887, entry for 11 April 1887 (Ida B. Wells Papers, University of Chicago), 183.

59. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Mind that Burns in Each Body': Women, Rape and Racial Violence," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, eds. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 328–49, esp. 335. On the myth of the black rapist, see Angela Davis, "Rape, Racism, and the Myth of the Black Rapist," *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 172–201. On Southern white men's projecting repressed sexuality onto black men, see also Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign Against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 148; and Trudier Harris, *Exorcising Blackness: Historical and Literary Lynching and Burning Rituals* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 1–28.

60. "Negro Lynching," *Providence Journal*, 2 February 1893, 5.

61. "Negroes Lynched by a Mob," *New York Times*, 10 March 1892, 1.

62. Wells, *Southern Horrors*, "Preface" (no page number), and 5.

63. *Ibid.*, 7–10, quotation on 8. Italics in original.

64. *Ibid.*, 6.

65. *Ibid.*, 11–12.

66. *Ibid.*, 14.

67. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood*, 6; idem, "On the Threshold," 303–4.

68. Albion Tourgée, "A Bystander's Notes," *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, 24 September 1892, 4.

69. George C. Rowe, "How to Prevent Lynching," *The Independent* 46 (1 February 1894): 131–2.

70. Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice*, 77–78, 82, 85–86. Also see Wells's comments in "Idol of her People," *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, 8 August 1894, 2.

71. *Note on sources*: Although Wells's speeches were covered extensively by the English press, they are mostly not obtainable in this country. Hutton's dissertation, "The

Rhetoric of Ida B. Wells," used British press reports extensively to document both tours. The excerpts Hutton cited are similar in tone to interviews Wells gave to American papers immediately after returning, and to Wells's book, *A Red Record*, published early in 1895. Thus, I am using these sources, in addition to a few available English sources, to reconstruct what Wells said.

72. "A Sermon on Ibsen—A Coloured Woman In the Pulpit," *Christian World* 38 (14 March 1894): 187; quoted in Hutton, "Rhetoric," 127.

73. Ida B. Wells, "Lynch Law in the United States" (letter), *Birmingham Daily Post* (England, photocopy, n.d. [16 May 1893]) in Ida B. Wells Papers, University of Chicago. The article is reprinted and dated in Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice*, 101, but is not accurately transcribed.

74. Significantly, Wells never explicitly discussed incidents of lynching in these columns, evidently believing that British censure would upset Northern whites far more than African-American suffering. Similarly, Wells rarely discussed the economic causes of lynching to white audiences during these years, although she regularly raised economic issues in her writings for African-American newspapers. She had a sophisticated analysis of the economic causes of lynching, catalyzed by her realization that the three Memphis grocers had been lynched in order to stop them from competing with white merchants. Yet she nearly always stressed issues of "civilization" and downplayed economic factors for white audiences during the years of her British tours. This was probably because she did not believe most white Americans would care that blacks were being murdered for economic reasons, while she knew it would rankle them to be called uncivilized.

75. Ida B. Wells, "Ida B. Wells Abroad," *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, 25 June 1894, 10. Also in Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice*, 179.

76. "Ida B. Wells Abroad—The Bishop of Manchester on American Lynching," *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, 23 April 1894, 10; "Against Lynching—Ida B. Wells and Her Recent Mission in England," *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, 4 August 1894, 9.

77. Quoted in "An Anti-Lynching Crusade in America Begun," *Literary Digest* 9 (11 August 1894): 421.

78. Ida B. Wells, *London Daily Chronicle*, 28 April 1894, 3; quoted in Hutton, "Rhetoric," 135.

79. Wells, *A Red Record*, 74–5.

80. "The Bitter Cry of Black America—A New 'Uncle Toms [sic] Cabin'," *Westminster Gazette* 3 (10 May 1894): 2; quoted in Hutton, 146.

81. "Lynch Law in America," *Christian World* 38 (April 19, 1894): 287; quoted in Hutton, "Rhetoric," 156.

82. From a photocopy in the Ida B. Wells Papers, marked "The *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, May 18th [1893]."

83. Ida B. Wells, "Ida B. Wells Abroad" *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, 25 June 1894, 10; Hutton, "Rhetoric," 156–59, 170–71; Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice*, 176, 190–97; "English Feeling upon America's Lynchings," *Literary Digest* 9 (14 July 1894): 308; "That Irish Begging Letter" *New York Times*, 9 September 1894, 12; "The Sneer of a Good Natured Democrat" *Indianapolis Freeman*, 16 June 1894, 4.

84. Hutton, "Rhetoric," 157–58. Quotations from Richard Acland Armstrong, "Lynching in the United States" (letter), *Liverpool Mercury*, 3 April 1894, 3; and "Lynch Law in the South," *Christian Register* 83 (12 April 1894): 225–26; both as cited in Hutton, "Rhetoric."

85. Quoted in Ida B. Wells, "Ida B. Wells Abroad," *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, 19 May 1894, 16. A version is also in Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice*, 157–58, but it is not transcribed precisely.

86. Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice*, 215–17; Hutton, "Rhetoric," 68–69.

87. Ida B. Wells, "Ida B. Wells Abroad," *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, 7 July 1894, 18; also in Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice*, 183–86. For other evidence of attempts to smear Wells, see "Editor Flemming's Denial," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 28 July 1894, 4; and "Is it

Necessary?" *Indianapolis Freeman*, 4 August 1894, 4.

88. Quoted in "How Miss Wells' Crusade is Regarded in America," *Literary Digest* 9 (28 July 1894): 366.

89. Quoted in "The Anti-Lynching Crusade," *Literary Digest* 9 (8 September 1894): 544.

90. Edward C. Gordon, "Mob Violence: 'The National Crime'," *Independent* 46 (1 November 1894): 1400.

91. Quoted in "The Sneer of a Good Natured Democrat," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 16 June 1894, 4. See also "British Treatment of Negroes," *New York Times*, 20 August 1894, 8; and "How Miss Wells' Crusade is Regarded in America," *Literary Digest* 9 (28 July 1894): 367.

92. Since the South was solidly Democratic, Northern Democratic newspapers were more likely to defend Southern practices and politicians, while Republican newspapers were more likely to attack them. See, for instance, "An Anti-Lynching Crusade in America Begun," *Literary Digest* 9 (11 August 1894): 421–22; Editorial, *New York Times*, 16 March 1894, 4.

93. Reprinted as "Lessons for Busybodies," *New York Times*, 15 October 1894, 9; "London Week of Excitement," *New York Times*, 7 October 1894, 1. See also "English Criticism of the English Anti-Lynching Committee," *Literary Digest* 9 (27 October 1894): 757; and "British Anti-Lynchers," *New York Times*, 2 August 1894, 4. In the *London Spectator*, a debate on lynching raged in the Letters to the Editor column, while the editors simultaneously condemned lynching and called on Britons to stop interfering in American internal affairs. See Editorial, *Spectator* 72 (16 June 1894): 810; W. McKay, "Lynching in Georgia: A Correction" (letter), *Spectator* 73 (28 July 1894): 111; S. Alfred Steintal, "Lynching in America" (letter), *Spectator* 73 (4 August 1894): 142; Chas. S. Butler, "The Lynching of Negroes in America" (letter), *Spectator* 73 (25 August 1894): 240; BabapoΣ, "Lynch Law in the United States" (letter), *Spectator* 73 (8 September 1894): 303; and "Lynching in America and English Interference," *Spectator* 73 (11 August 1894): 1669–70.

94. "An Anti-Lynching Crusade in America Begun," *Literary Digest* 9 (11 August 1894): 421.

95. Although some historians have suggested that no delegations of British antilynching committees ever came to the United States, contemporary press reports suggest that Sir John Gorst—and perhaps a small committee—came as a representative of the London committee. See "Sir John Gorst's Report," *New York Times*, 10 September 1894, 8; "Governor Northen is Aroused," *New York Times*, 11 September 1894, 2; "Southern Governors on English Critics," *Literary Digest* 9 (22 September 1894): 601–2; and Peter Stanford, "Serious Complications—The Anti-Lynch Sentiment in England Being Cooled," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 1 December 1894, 1.

96. "Governor Northen is Aroused," *New York Times*, 11 September 1894, 2; "Southern Governors on English Critics," *Literary Digest* 9 (22 September 1894): 601–2.

97. "A Bad Week for the Lynchers," *Independent* 46 (18 September 1894): 1187.

98. Quoted in "The Latest Lynching Case," *Literary Digest* 9 (15 September 1894): 577; Wells, *Southern Horrors*, 5.

99. "Killing of the Six Tennessee Negroes," *New York Times*, 9 September 1894, 12.

100. Tucker, "Miss Ida B. Wells," 121–22.

101. "How Miss Wells' Crusade Is Regarded in America," *Literary Digest* 9 (28 July 1894): 366; "Helping Miss Wells's Crusade," *New York Times*, 11 December 1894, 6.

102. Quotation in "The Anti-Lynching Crusade," *Literary Digest*, 9 (8 September 1894): 545. For a selection of Northern newspaper editorials in favor of and against the antilynch agitation, see in addition, *ibid.*, (11 August 1894): 421–22; and "Remedies for Lynch Law: A Case in Point," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 4 August 1894, 4.

103. "His 'Opinion' No Good," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 29 September 1894, 4. See also "Remedies for Lynch Law—A Case in Point," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 4 August 1894; and Thompson, "An Exploratory Study," 116–22.

104. Edward L. Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 237–55; Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black–White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 117–18. Tucker credits Wells's campaign with curtailing lynchings in Memphis, however; see Tucker, "Miss Ida B. Wells," 121–22.

105. James Elbert Cutler, *Lynch-Law* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1905), 229–30; Peter Stanford, "Serious Complications—The Anti-Lynch Sentiment in England Being Cooled," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 1 December 1894, 1.

106. See, for example, "Lynching," *New York Times*, 27 May 1895, 5; "Lynching in the South," *New York Times*, 14 January 1896, 4; compare these to "The Cartwright Avengers," *New York Times*, 19 July 1893, 4.

107. "Public Sentiment Against Lynching," *New York Times*, 8 December 1895, 32; Cutler, *Lynch Law*, 233–45.

108. Steven J. Ross, *Workers on the Edge: Work, Leisure, and Politics in Industrializing Cincinnati* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 270–93.

109. Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 62–67. Christine Stansell made a similar argument in *City of Women*, 164–65.

110. Herbert G. Gutman, "Protestantism and the American Labor Movement," in *Work, Culture & Society in Industrializing America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 79–117; Elizabeth and Kenneth Fones-Wolf, "Trade-Union Evangelism: Religion and the AFL in the Labor Forward Movement, 1912–16," in *Working Class America*, eds. Michael H. Frisch and Daniel J. Walkowitz (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 153–84; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, ed., *The Woman's Bible* (New York: European Publishing Company, 1895); and Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973).

111. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood*, 6, 20–61; Giddings, *When and Where*, 82–89.