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Anything to Fit in:

A Comparative Study of American and South African Women's Suffrage Movements

Senior Honors Thesis

Risa Katzen

Mentors: Carl Harris and Stephan Miescher

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A Brief Note Regarding Terminology:

Terminology in South African history is always slippery, but it becomes increasingly problematic in a comparative framework. The terms "African American" and "black" will be used to describe Americans of African decent while "nonwhite" will be used to describe South Africans of African heritage. Although a significant Indian population lived in the British South African colony of Natal, this study will focus on indigenous Africans and those of mixed heritage. When analysis specifically deals with indigenous South Africans, it will be noted through the term "black African." The term "Coloured" will be used any time discussion turns to racially heterogeneous South Africans of black African, European, and Khoisan decent.

Introduction: Embarking on Two Journeys

Sometimes the winds of political change fail to move nations consistently forward or backward. Often the winds appear to move a citizenry in one direction, but then they dramatically deviate from their original course. Sometimes these winds languish and nations stagnate entirely.

More than one hundred years ago in North America and on the southern-tip of continental Africa, women's rights movements found that endorsing principles of equality gained them little traction in their quest for the vote. Instead, white male politicians in both regions dismissed women's attempts to secure full citizenship and focused on the status of nonwhite men. Following suit with the increasingly racist character of national politics, American and South African suffragettes turned away from their more tolerant pasts and epitomized just how fully "campaigns for civic rights and equality can in fact depend on invocations of [their] supposed antimonies—prejudice and exclusion."[1] The twentieth-century political systems of "Jim Crow" and Apartheid segregation, both infamous for drastically curtailing the political, economic, and social mobility of nonwhites, developed alongside rather than in spite of suffragette activity.

American and South African women respectively garnered the vote in 1920 and 1930, but suffrage movements signified more than an acquisition of political rights. As activists paraded in victory, stowed away their ticker tape, and slowly disassembled the vast political networks they created to secure the vote, they closed the door on campaigns that reinforced rather than discredited racial hierarchies.

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[1] Pamela Scully, "White Maternity and Black Infancy: The Rhetoric of Race in the South African Women's Suffrage Movement, 1895-1930" in *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation, and Race,* ed. Ian Christopher Fletcher, Laura E. Nym Mayhall, and Philippa Levine (New York: Routledge, 2000), 70.

Historians in both regions, however, tended to concentrate on male perpetrators of racism. When cultural historians addressed how and why white Americans united behind the prejudiced "strange career" of Jim Crow, they often disregarded women's suffrage promoters' activities.[2] In *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, David Blight admitted that he failed to fully develop the "the gendered character" of white unification and the rise of racial segregation.[3] South African historian Vivian Bickford-Smith described the British settlers' contribution to the rise of racial segregation in early twentieth-century South Africa, but failed to explore the role of suffragettes in promoting the system. According to Bickford-Smith, male politicians promoted Afrikaner "teleological" racism, the view that maintaining a racial hierarchy served as the primary purpose of government.[4]

Although impressive comparative studies on race relations in the United States and South Africa emerged, they too limited discussion to males. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, C. Vann Woodward's groundbreaking study of the American South, was the first work to address the similarities in American and South African race relations. Woodward made steps toward cross-national comparison when he emphasized the significance in the American context of eloquent statements made by anti-Apartheid activist Alan Paton. As South African racial segregation grew in strength and rigidity throughout the mid twentieth-century, the Civil Rights movement created opportunities for political, economic, and social integration. Paton poetically summarized the effect of Apartheid on mid-twentieth century white South Africans when he claimed that the South African "man [was] caught on the face of a cliff," a cliff from which "he [could] not go

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[2] C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957).
[3] David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 2.
[4] Vivian Bickford-Smith, "South African Urban History, Racial Segregation and the Unique Case of Cape Town?" *Journal of South African Studies* 21 (1995), 73.

down" nor continue to live above. Entitling his own chapter "The Man on the Cliff," Woodward believed that the 1950s United States "no longer indentified herself with South Africa," but as Americans began turning away from their own system of racial segregation, they "watch[ed] [South Africans] with pity."[5]

Historian George Fredrickson examined the contours of the rocky "cliffs" of both countries, but he left the role of women out of his narrative. Contributing significantly to the discipline of comparative history, Fredrickson aptly described how an American and South African "cross-national comparative history…made the experiences of [the] individual nations more meaningful."[6] Yet like cultural historians in both regions, he focused almost entirely on the role of men in promoting and expanding racial inequality. From his book one might assume that "herrenvolk societ[ies]," civilizations that limited voting rights to the dominant white group, developed due to the actions of American and South African males alone.[7]

American historian Aileen S. Kraditor eventually broke this silence and explored the relationship between women's suffrage and race. Kraditor argued that the American suffrage movement began by advocating universal rights, but then it adopted a flexible and racist strategy based on expedience. Kraditor claimed that northern suffragettes, facing a "South Question" over the status of recently emancipated slaves, employed racist rhetoric in order to curry favor with politicians below the Mason-Dixon Line. Suffragettes, unable to achieve success on their own,

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[5] Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*,121-122.
[6] George Fredrickson, *The Comparative Imagination: On the History of Racism, Nationalism, and Social Movements* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997), 5.
[7] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, xii.

promoted an exclusive, white woman's franchise as a practical attempt to persuade racist and xenophobic males to support women's suffrage.[8]

Revisionists added another analytical layer to the study of women's suffrage, contending that suffragettes' public shift from egalitarian to racist propaganda reflected an increasingly powerful "imperialistic mentality" in the United States and South Africa. Beginning in the 1990s, Louise Michele Newman, Allison L. Sneider and Pamela Scully argued that from the very beginning an omnipresent belief in the "natural hierarchies between men and women or between races" colored suffragettes' sentiments.[9] Both Newman and Sneider correlated the intensification of American suffragettes' racist language with the United States' annexation of Puerto Rico, Samoa, and the Philippines between the 1870s and 1890s. These historians argued that suffragettes' increasingly racist rhetoric followed suit with the U.S. government's attempt to subjugate nonwhites abroad. Like Newman and Sneider, South African historian Pamela Scully claimed that suffrage campaigns "must be understood in relation to the nation's civilizing missions and imperializing projects."[10] Scully asserted that following union in 1910, South Africa became a federated, home-ruled colony of Great Britain with imperialistic aims of its own. As South African whites further entrenched themselves in indigenous land and grappled with Zulu rebellions in Natal, suffragettes used "racially-coded ideologies of upliftment and degradation" to place a "colonial condition" on nonwhites.[11]

In the hopes of contributing to the work of Kraditor and the revisionists, this paper will

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[8] Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 163-164.
[9] Louise Michele Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17, Allison L. Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question, 1870-1929.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008),13, Scully, "White Maternity and Black Infancy," 69.
[10] Scully, "White Maternity and Black Infancy," 70.
[11] Scully, "White Maternity and Black Infancy," 69.

explore the role of suffrage in reinforcing and reflecting American and South African reconciliation and nation-building. Kraditor recognized a crucial shift in suffrage rhetoric, but she inaccurately portrayed suffragettes as true believers in natural rights speech who only shifted their language in order to gain the favor of male politicians. Revisionists focused on suffrage through an imperial perspective and did not emphasize a marked dialectic between postwar national reconciliation efforts and suffrage activism.

Aside from brief summaries of both movements in transnational women's history pieces, a comparative study of American and South African women's suffrage has yet to be attempted.[12] The United States' suffrage movement spanned from 1848 to 1920 while the South African campaign extended from 1895 to 1930. Though disparate in chronology, thematic parallels in the evolution of American politics from 1848-1920 and South African government from 1895-1930 are quite striking. American and South African suffrage movements both developed amidst dramatic and eventually violent civil conflicts. Both causes surfaced before the nationwide Civil and South African Wars and shifted their rhetoric following the conflicts' conclusions. Each movement grappled with the most extreme and racist segments of society and each shaped their organizations in order to incorporate these segments. In two nations so inextricably marked by government-condoned racism, how suffrage campaigns managed to navigate this difficult terrain and how heavily prejudice effected their actions warrants scholarly attention.

In my analysis of the role of race in American and South African women's rights movements, I will illustrate both clear differences and overarching areas of similarity in the regional histories. First, how did the distinct American and South African founding political

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[12] Ellen DuBois, "Women's Suffrage Around the World: Three Phases of Suffragists Internationalism," in *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Perspectives* ed. Caroline Daley and Melanie Nolan (New York: New York, University Press, 1994), 331-348.

rhetoric shape the nature and journey of the suffrage movements? Did specific events or political trends alter ideology? Lastly, to what extent did suffrage movements' postwar language reflect larger efforts toward national reconciliation following the Civil and South African Wars?

In order to forthrightly address the relationship between women's rights movements, racist rhetoric, and public opinion, this paper will rely almost entirely on published propaganda for primary sources. Although Kraditor and subsequent historians used public propaganda to decipher the individual sentiments of suffragettes and the role of imperialism in encouraging racist language, these documents should be directly examined in the context of the Civil and South African Wars. Through periodicals, speeches, and government hearings, the historian can gauge suffragettes' evolving use of racist tactics in the context of regional and sectional conflicts.

This paper will argue that the different political foundations of the United States and South Africa consistently shaped the parameters and the longevity of the egalitarian and the racist public rhetoric of suffragettes. In the United States, despite a history marked by black slavery and racial oppression, political foundations rested on "natural rights" rhetoric that supposedly required liberty and equality for all. In South Africa, on the other hand, the unabashedly prejudiced language of the political foundations led suffragettes' towards a more outwardly racist discourse.

As national governments moved beyond the Civil and South African Wars and united American and South African white male citizens, suffragettes found that achieving the vote required them to embrace rather than deviate from their nations' rhetorical heritage. In the years leading up to 1920, American activists attempted to reconcile northern and southern members by conforming to the dual American tenets of egalitarian and racist rhetoric. In contrast, South

African suffragettes unified ethnic factions by completely subordinating tolerant language to racism. Although both finally achieved the women's right to vote, neither American nor South African activists were able to create independent movements based on gender equality. Instead, they illustrated the challenges inherent in counteracting fortified, national traditions of intolerance.

Part One: Mapping the Parameters
American and South African Founding Rhetoric

Just as history helps today's academics and politicians put contemporary struggles into proper context, scaling back from American and South African women's suffrage movements and examining the political foundations of both nations ensures a more thoughtful comparison of the movements themselves. From their very inceptions, the political foundations of the United States and the former South African colonies shaped the character of suffragists' rhetoric. Although comparing the American nation to South African colonies and republics may appear disjointed, these were the political foundations that predated and shaped women's suffrage in 1848 and 1895. Despite their broad similarities as European settler colonies before the active years of women's suffrage, the natural rights rhetoric in the United States' founding documents differed markedly from the outwardly racist speech expounded in South African constitutions.

Inextricably tied to the legacy of the Declaration of Independence, United States' political rhetoric outwardly promoted "equality" and "liberty" from the colonial era onward. Thomas Jefferson helped institute the precepts of American democracy by championing the concept of universal natural rights in the Declaration. Writing on behalf of all "rebels" during the American Revolutionary War, Jefferson claimed that "all men [were] created equal" and that "they [were] endowed with certain unalienable rights."[13]

Far from serving as temporary wartime propaganda, Jefferson's creed was cemented into American law in the Bill of Rights. Not only did the first ten amendments enumerate specific individual rights, but Amendment IX warned that their articulation should "not be construed to

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[13] Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence," *Archiving Early America,* http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/freedom/doi/text.html (accessed January 1, 2009).

deny or disparage" other freedoms "retained by the people."[14] Yet even as founding politicians advocated universal equality, their policies often conflicted with this ideal. In an American Constitution touted for its codification of freedom and equality, the founding fathers included provisions that institutionalized slavery.

Although politicians recognized the conflict between the premise of natural rights and the institution of slavery, the majority of northerners and southerners accepted their coexistence. In the Continental Congress of 1784, an ordinance ensuring that "after the year 1800 of the Christian era, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude" failed to gain traction.[15] Instead of implementing Jefferson's lofty rhetoric and immediately abolishing slavery or blocking its spread, the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 enshrined concepts of inequality within the Constitution itself. The "3/5ths rule" counted the nonwhite slave as a fraction of a person in census data. James Wilson, the greatest promoter of the 3/5ths rule, assured readers of *The Federalist Papers* that the American Constitution carried out the spirit of the nation's exceptionalism and represented the "*best form of government which has ever been offered to the world*" (original emphasis).[16] Echoing Wilson's faith in the righteousness of American political foundations, President George Washington claimed that this "free constitution" epitomized "wisdom and virtue."[17]

Although political and social racism manifested themselves in both the North and the South, it is crucial to note the isolation of southern states in the implementation of slavery.

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[14] "The Constitution of the United States," *The Charters of Freedom: A New World is at Hand*, http://www. archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html (accessed January 1, 2009).
[15] Mr. King, Mr. Howell, and Mr. Ellery, *Journal of the Continental Congress* (New York: S.N, 1785),1.
[16] James Wilson, "James Wilson Speech," in *Friends of the Constitution: Writings of the "Other" Federalists 1787-1788,* ed. Colleen A. Sheehan (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998),112.
[17] George Washington, "George Washington's Farewell Address: To the People of the United States," *Archiving Early America*,http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/farewell/ (accessed January 1, 2009).

Between 1780 and 1804 states north of the Mason-Dixon Line passed laws ensuring gradual emancipation, making racially delineated slavery a regional rather than national institution. Significantly, even citizens of southern states identified with and promoted the United States' egalitarian underpinnings. Like northerners, southerners saw the Union as "the instrument by which liberty was to be extended to all mankind."[18] A small, elite camp of antebellum southerners critiqued the Declaration of Independence's egalitarian overtones, but most southern politicians and laymen felt deeply connected to the document and to its promotion of universal equality. In an attempt to maintain egalitarian mores and the institution of slavery, white southerners claimed that slaves were property rather than human beings. Although a markedly racist line of reasoning, this argument indicated a sense of discomfort amongst southerners regarding slavery's relationship with founding doctrine. The fact that southern proponents of slavery endorsed the "full, free, and adequate expression" of equality reflected the ideological strength of American natural rights rhetoric.[19]

The United States' dual founding principles of egalitarianism and racism acted in tandem, the first in the realm of rhetoric, the second in the practical implementation of laws and social mores. Just as these principles and historical legacies shaped the strategies and tactics behind American women's suffrage, a very different style of political speech dictated the contours of South African women's rights campaigns.

Across the Atlantic Ocean on the shores of South Africa, race played an equally fundamental role in early regional history. When the Dutch first settled on the Cape, they too implemented nonwhite slavery and a distinct racial hierarchy. Where Americans divided along

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[18] Charles Grier Sellers Jr., *The Southerner as American* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960) 41.

[19] Fletcher Green, *Constitutional Development in the South Atlantic States 1776-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 79.

"white" and "black" lines, a racially heterogeneous group commonly termed the "Coloureds" made up a significant and distinct demographic in South African society. When the British arrived on the shores of Table Bay in 1795 and took hold of Cape Colony in 1805, they responded to Dutch settlers' mistreatment of nonwhites in a complex and ambiguous manner. Although many English settlers held pseudo-scientific racist views themselves, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution altered their adherence to rigid social and class distinctions. Like American northerners, the British did not present themselves as benevolent countercurrents to the torrent of racist Dutch speech. Instead, in their governance of the Cape they employed concepts of both equality and racism.[20]

As the early nineteenth-century progressed, the Dutch began identifying themselves as "Afrikaners," championing their unique ethnic identity, and outwardly critiquing British hegemony in the Cape. Ethnic tensions only increased with the British abolition of slavery in 1834. Although frictions between the two groups went beyond disagreements over nonwhites' status, Afrikaners deemed abolition an inexcusable expression of *gelykstelling*, or racial equality. Escaping what they perceived to be unfair interference, Afrikaners began to "trek" from the cool, temperate climate of the Cape to the savannahs of the Transvaal in 1836. Forming the Transvaal (also known as the South African Republic) and the Orange Free State, "Great Trek" Afrikaners constructed devoutly Christian and racist republics.[21]

In the British colonies of the Cape and Natal and in the Afrikaners' Transvaal and Orange Free State, demographics led to a far more explicit articulation of racism than in the United States. Where Americans tended to disregard the oppression of a black minority, a massive indigenous majority led both British and Afrikaner politicians to address the status of nonwhites

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[20] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 163.
[21] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 167.

more directly. The clearest and earliest dichotomy in nonwhites' status developed in the Cape Colony and Boer republics.

Even though some streams of egalitarian rhetoric emerged in Cape Colony, the intensity of white supremacist language dwarfed the impact of such rhetoric. In the Cape's constitution, the British imperial government assured that "no difference whatever, either in Church or State" could be implemented "on account of colour." Within the colony's confines, "natives [could] walk where they like[ed]" and "could obtain a grant for every properly conducted school."[22] Despite this rhetoric of racial equality, however, municipal court documents in the prewar period indicated consistent mistreatment of Cape Coloureds and black Africans.[23] Furthermore, Cape egalitarianism did not reflect as widespread an ideological trend as it did in the United States.

The Afrikaner-governed republics typified South Africa's emphatically racist nineteenth-century political heritage. If the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution represented a complex, contradictory relationship between egalitarian principles and racist practices, the foundations of the Boer Republics centered entirely and unabashedly on racist ideology. In the late 1830s, when the Great Trekkers formed the Transvaal and The Orange Free State, they included "racism and forms of segregation" within the "constitutions and social practices" of their governments.[24] The Transvaal's *Groundwet,* or constitution, declared "absolutely no equality, either in Church or State, between white and coloured." In contrast to the Cape, nonwhites could "not walk on the side paths or occupy any vehicle other than the trucks or carriages…specially built for them." In its final affront, the constitution promised the

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[22] J.S. Moffat, "The Black Man and the War," *The Vigilance Papers*, no. 8 (The South African Vigilance Committee, Cape Town, 1900), 3.
[23] Bickford-Smith, "South African Urban History," 68-69.
[24] Bickford-Smith, "South African Urban History,"67.

"maximum" for Afrikaner education and allocated no educational funds for "the native child."[25] The racist language expounded in the Boer republics overwhelmed the speech of Cape politicians. Far from quelled by the more tolerant rhetoric manifest in their own colony, a number of Cape British and Afrikaners advocated the "republican mode" of government.[26] The ascendance of racist rhetoric in the South African colonies and republics set a substantially different precedent than the United States' contradictory and often regionalized racist tradition.

Although the political and social conflict surrounding the role of race differed in the United States and South Africa, American and South African suffragettes worked under virtually identical "Victorian" gender constructs. In the United States and throughout the British Commonwealth, women's suffrage conflicted with gender roles that limited women to the domestic sphere and required them to remain "pure" and "untouched" by political debate. Throughout both movements, American and South African women had to address how "public" political participation would be reconciled with the belief that women belonged in the "private" arena of the home.[27] In evaluating suffragettes' respective employment of racist rhetoric, it is crucial to recognize the degree of pressure that gender constructs created and the widespread disapproval heaped upon activists for women's suffrage in both countries.

By comparing regional histories and addressing the similarities and the differences in rhetorical heritage, women's historians of both the United States and South Africa can gain a new, deeper understanding of how and why national suffrage movements employed racialized language as they did. As suffragettes struggled to counteract Victorian gender roles and achieve women's suffrage, they acted within the parameters their national histories allowed. In both the

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[25] Moffat, "The Black Man and the War," 4.
[26] Bickford-Smith, "South African Urban History," 67.
[27] Scully, "White Maternity and Black Infancy," 68.

United States and South Africa, the prejudiced boundaries of the past could be shifted, expanded, or even weakened, but suffragettes soon realized the limits of such efforts. Balancing on a rhetorical tight rope controlled as much by their political histories as by free will, American and South African suffragettes helped solidify the racism beneath their feet.

Part Two: Stepping Out
Suffrage Before the Civil and South African Wars

American and South African women's suffrage movements emerged on the eve of violent conflicts that called the historical foundations of their regions into question. Suffrage efforts emerged in the American North and amongst British South Africans, two groups for whom the concepts of abolitionism and equality under the law rang the clearest and strongest. Before the onset of the Civil and South African Wars, both American northern and British South African suffragettes began their efforts without outwardly urging that the "woman" be defined as "white."[28] Not only did American suffragettes employ natural rights rhetoric, but they allied their efforts with the radical abolitionist cause. In South Africa, women's rights activists turned away from the republics' racist language and purposefully left race out of campaign literature and rhetoric.

As revisionist historians Newman, Sneider, and Scully illustrated, one must be chary before portraying American northerners and the British imperial government as stalwart promoters of racial tolerance.[29] Instead, pre-existing racist sentiments, xenophobia, and imperialistic aims often combined to make New York and the Cape feel as inhospitable to nonwhites as Alabama and the Boer Republics. Keeping this scholarship in mind, portraying northern and British suffragettes as unqualified promoters of racial equality would be a gross overstatement. Despite the racist underpinnings of northern and British factions, however, historian Aileen Kraditor accurately asserted that in the early stages of women's suffrage activism both groups employed egalitarian language.

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[28] Ann D. Gordan, "Woman Suffrage (Not Universal Suffrage) by Federal Amendment," in *Votes for Women! The Woman Suffrage Movement in Tennessee, the South, and the Nation,* ed. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995) 3.
[29] Sneider, *Suffragettes in an Imperial Age, 6.*

In the United States, the woman's suffrage campaign surfaced amidst escalating sectional conflict. Throughout the Mexican-American War from 1846-1848, disagreement over the place of slavery in newly acquired territory generally divided along North-South lines. Although most northern members of Congress expressed few moral qualms about slavery, they did claim that the institution curtailed efforts to establish a more modern, innovative national economy and that it threatened free white labor.[30] Touching off a congressional debate that spanned the 1840s and 1850s, Representative David Wilmot proposed that all land acquired from Mexico be declared "free" territory. When the suffragettes emerged on the national stage in 1848, American politicians remained deadlocked in debate surrounding the "Wilmot Proviso."[31] Despite a temporary compromise in 1850, political conflict over slavery grew stronger and more frequent.

When Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott stepped onto the stage at the Seneca Falls, New York women's rights convention in 1848, they made a concerted decision to link their movement with abolitionists who shared their dedication to natural rights. Disillusioned by the contradiction between American ideals of equality and the political exclusion of women, Mott and Stanton modeled the Seneca Fall's "Declaration of Sentiments" after the Declaration of Independence. Although little progress resulted from the Declaration, the ideals behind it framed the women's movement's future goals.[32] The pioneers of Seneca Falls "demand[ed] the equal station to which they [were] entitled" and, in articulating this insistence, they signaled the beginning of American women's concerted efforts toward political equality.[33] Pronouncing that "all men and women [were] created equal" and were "endowed by their Creator with certain

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[30] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 139.
[31] James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire* (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 1982), 58.
[32]Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Seneca Falls Declaration," *Virginia Commonwealth University Richmond, Seneca Falls Declaration* ,http://usinfor.state.gov/usa/infousafacts/democratic/17.htm (November 23, 2006), 1.
[33]McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 2, 44.

inalienable rights," Stanton and Mott echoed not only the words of American founding fathers, but also the natural rights rhetoric commonly expounded by Republican abolitionists. Accompanied by fellow women's rights advocate Susan B. Anthony, Stanton and Mott spent the next decade campaigning alongside abolitionist compatriots for racial and gender equality.

Historians have noted that many northern suffragettes believed in natural racial hierarchies, but most of the activists' rhetoric carried no figurative "3/5ths rule" to taint their "constitutional" framework.[34] Catherine Beecher claimed that white women embodied the republican principles of "self-restraint, disinterestedness, and rationality" better than black men, but nonetheless even she publicly allied the women's cause with the abolitionist movement. Women's historians continue to debate whether suffragettes actually believed in natural rights rhetoric throughout the antebellum years. Certainly their status as a progressive movement made them more likely proponents of abolition than the majority of antebellum northerners. Although abolitionists appeared radical and achieved only limited popular support in northern states, suffragettes saw their morally driven rhetoric as a means to gain political equality and democratization.[35]

Although black women served more as symbolic members rather than as active participants, Stanton and Anthony invited prominent black female abolitionists to participate in their efforts. Historian Ellen DuBois described how their roles were limited and "not particularly powerful," but she nevertheless indicated that black women like Frances Watkins Harper and Sojourner Truth consistently participated in antebellum feminist conventions.[36] When American suffragettes linked their movement with black female activists, they did more than highlight how

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[34] Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age,* 13.
[35] McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire,* 45, Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America* (Ithaca:Cornell University Press, 1978), 32.
[36] Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 68,69,70.

black and female Americans shared "badge[s] of degradation."[37] By associating their movement with black freedom and civic rights, suffragettes exposed the inherent conflict between American racism and the country's egalitarian ideals.

Thousands of miles and fifty years removed from those brisk winter days in the American Northeast, South African women began grappling with the role of nonwhites in their own campaigns for suffrage. In South Africa, emancipation occurred in 1834, decades before the emergence of suffrage efforts. Even during the most active years of the slave trade, slavery affected fewer South Africans than Americans. Although some Afrikaners responded to abolition with the Great Trek away from the British Cape Colony in 1836, emancipation still created less controversy and tumult than in the United States. The first British suffragettes in South Africa, therefore, developed their own language and opinions surrounding gender, race, and their rhetorical heritage.

As in the American context, the emergence of British suffrage organizations in 1895 correlated with a surge in white ethnic tensions. Since Afrikaners had discovered diamonds in the Orange Free State in 1869 and gold in the Transvaal in the 1880s, republican governments had steadfastly denied citizenship and voting rights to British "Outlanders."[38] In the Jameson Raid of 1895, the British tried and failed to induce an insurrection amongst Outlanders and annex the Boer Republics. Although it would be inaccurate to argue that race was the primary cause for Anglo-Boer tensions, Afrikaner politicians did hope to maintain "flagrant forms of racial hegemony" by continuing their government over the republics. Despite the mounting frictions

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[37] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Elizabeth Cady Stanton-Susan B. Anthony Reader Correspondence, Writings, Speeches,* ed. by Ellen Carol DuBois, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992),7.
[38] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 194.

surrounding control over the mining industry and the political citizenship of Outlanders, different opinions regarding nonwhites' status "g[a]ve a sharper edge to the Anglo-Boer hostility."[39]

In their own period of political discord, suffragettes followed the general strain of British race policy and, in so doing, dramatically deviated from the overarching foundations of South African politics. By limiting their public discussion of nonwhites, suffragettes disengaged themselves from the racist policies in the Boer Republics and even to an extent within the Cape.[40] Rather than allowing prejudiced rhetoric to take center stage, "the native question" remained "strikingly absent in much of the published suffrage literature."[41] In a political theatre where Paul Kruger, the Afrikaner president of the Transvaal, "restrict[ed] Africans' freedom of movement, limit[ed] educational opportunities, and seiz[ed] their land," the silence of the suffragettes reflected a departure from the norm.[42]

Instead of centering their argument on race, early British suffragettes focused on directly counteracting gender inequality.[43] Historian Philipa Levine indicated the boldness of the South African women's suffrage campaign, pointing out how South African suffragettes did not rely on women's suffrage activists working in England. Although the British metropole had yet to establish voting rights for its own female citizens, South African women campaigning for the vote felt inspired but not dependent on British suffragettes.[44] Beginning in 1895, activists used newspaper editorials to raise public awareness of their mistreatment. Julia Stanfield, an active

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[39] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 192.
[40] Cheryll Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*. (Cape Town, The University of Cape Town, 1979), 7.
[41] Union of South Africa, House of Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings with Annexures (Selected) of the South African National Convention held at Durban, Cape Town, and Bloemfontein, 12 October 1908 to 11 May 1909,* Cape Town, Cape Times Ltd, Government Printers, 1911, 22, 25 quoted in Scully, "White Maternity and Black Infancy," 74.
[42] Scully, "White Maternity and Black Infancy," 68,72.
[43] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 21.
[44] Philippa Levine,"Introduction,"in *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire,* xvi.

temperance leader, participated in the Loyal Women's Guild in order to counteract the "appalling destitution" of Cape Town's families. Yet when asked "what women [were] doing in South Africa," Stanfield claimed that rather than finding work, "matrimony [was] their sole object in coming out."[45] Edith Chamberlain, a Capetonian nurse, complained that female nurses faced "arbitrariness and discourtesy" from their male peers and that any mention of their unequal status "was the signal for [their] exclusion from [the] sphere of usefulness."[46] In the years leading up to the war, British South Africans identified themselves as committed, locally concentrated activists ready and willing to "attack the very cornerstones of Victorian society."[47]

It is crucial to note, however, that black women never actively participated in the South African suffrage campaign. Rather than uniting in a biracial coalition, suffragettes did not recruit black women nor did nonwhites seek membership in women's suffrage organizations. Throughout the suffrage campaign, nonwhite women engaged in race-based progressive activities rather than women's rights efforts. Even so, a number of white suffragettes supported the political inclusion of nonwhite women. Temporarily dismissing the region's racist history, some suffragettes publically advocated "the qualified nonwhite woman's vote."[48]

In South Africa, shear demographics made suffragettes' silence on the race issue an even greater political risk than American activists' alignment with abolitionists. Both American and South African suffrage camps worked within often stifling gender constructs and found themselves generally unpopular throughout prewar periods. But in South Africa, demographics caused politicians to view the white woman's vote as entirely irrelevant. Not only did the British

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[45] Julia Sanfield, "What Women Are Doing in South Africa." *Womanhood: The Magazine of Woman's Progress and Interests, Political, Legal, Social, and Intellectual, and of Healthy and Beauty Culture* (1900), 103.
[46] Edith Chamberlain, "Women's Work in South Africa." *Womanhood,* (1900), 51.
[47] Walker, *The Woman's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 29.
[48] Walker, *The Woman's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 31.

tend to focus most on expanding the vote to the white male Outlander, but the imperial government and the Afrikaner Republics remained preoccupied by the battle over nonwhite voting rights. In 1900, black Africans accounted for 81 percent of South Africa's population but only 9.1 percent of the electorate. When the women's suffrage movement emerged, only the Cape Colony allowed nonwhites any right to vote. During this same period, South African white women constituted roughly 5 percent of the country's population.[49] In an environment where nonwhite men vastly outnumbered white women, politicians in both colonies and republics were far more interested in debating the racially delineated franchise than the women's vote. That suffragettes did not immediately connect their goals with the national controversy surrounding nonwhite male voting rights indicated their divergence from both tradition and the practical course of action at the time.

The actual sentiments of South African suffragettes never came close to embracing egalitarian rhetoric, but activists did engage in a public, gender-based campaign without overt discussion of race. Public records pointed to minimal strains of racist thinking in letters to public figures, magazines, and speeches.[50] By maintaining outward neutrality on an issue that preoccupied late nineteenth-century politicians, suffragettes stepped out of the confines set long before by the intolerant words of the Transvaal's President Kruger and other stalwartly racist politicians. American suffragettes' public allegiance with the abolitionist party clearly challenged historical racism, but the utter absence of racist rhetoric in the early years of South African suffrage illustrated just as profound a deviation. The forthcoming interregional wars initially provided hope for both American and South African suffragettes' in their campaigns for

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[49] Robert, Ross. *A Concise History of South Africa (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 82.
[50] Scully, "White Maternity and Black Infancy," 69.

the women's vote, but in both nations the enduring power of sexism and racism eventually left activists frustrated and disillusioned.

Part Three: Giving in to Fit in
Postwar Politics and Women's Suffrage Movements

Affecting the evolution of women's suffrage campaigns as much as the general narratives of American and South African history, the Civil War and the South African War initially created opportunities to extend the political language of natural rights. Though the nuances of the two conflicts are beyond the scope of this study, the more tolerant treatment of black Americans and nonwhite South Africans in the aftermath of the wars affected women's suffrage campaigns. In the United States, the Union victory inspired a resurgence in founding natural rights rhetoric and stimulated efforts to grant and defend voting rights for black Americans. In South Africa, the British imperial government provided citizenship to a previously disfranchised group of immigrants and publically addressed nonwhite voting rights. Although the Civil War reinforced natural rights arguments more than the South African War, both conflicts provided a unique opportunity to counteract the racist components of American and South African rhetorical traditions.

When the Civil and South African Wars respectively ended in 1865 and 1902, the suffragettes hoped that political environments where public servants actively discussed citizenship and civil rights would ease the achievement of their goals. At first, the two wars seemed to strengthen both nonwhite and women's efforts to achieve the vote. Despite the novelty of nation-building and reunification, however, American and South African racism reemerged. Both groups of suffragettes managed to develop more tolerant public stances than the racist elements of their national traditions seemed to warrant, but in the American town halls of Kansas in 1867 and the parliamentary halls of Cape Town in 1908 and 1909 this tide of relative racial tolerance began to change.

The American Civil War and Suffragettes in Kansas

Initially the Civil War helped nationalize the egalitarian language that abolitionists and suffragettes had employed during the antebellum period. Between 1860 and 1861, eleven southern states seceded from the Union and formed a "Confederacy" built on the "cornerstone" of black slavery. After four years of battle, the Union government defeated the Confederacy, abolished slavery, and began the process of reuniting under the Constitution.[51] As the war progressed, the Union government embraced natural rights rhetoric and even indicated a commitment to greater racial equity. In the "Gettysburg Address," President Abraham Lincoln reframed the war and made nonwhite slaves the "face" of a conflict centered on universal rights. Insisting that the United States remained "dedicated to the proposition that all men [were] created equal," Lincoln reignited the rhetorical heritage of the past and argued for its enduring significance in the 1860s. As he "broaden[ed] the aims of the war from Union to Equality and Union," Lincoln promised Americans a "new birth of freedom" leading into the postwar period.[52] Quickly following the war's conclusion, this rhetorical shift found its way permanently into the Constitution. As abolitionist-influenced suffragettes looked on, the states ratified the Thirteenth Amendment and permanently abolished slavery.[53]

Immediately following the war, it appeared that the national government fully supported the democratizing aims of antebellum suffragettes. Throughout the late 1860s invocations of aggrandized natural rights rhetoric coupled with constant political debate surrounding nonwhite

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[51] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 287, 288.
[52] Abraham Lincoln, "The Gettysburg Address." *Abraham Lincoln Online: Speeches and Writings* http://showcase.Netins.net /web/creative/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm (accessed February 15, 2009) and David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1995), 466.
[53] "The United States Constitution," *Arching Early America*, 1.

political rights gave credence to the very inclusive, egalitarian arguments championed by antebellum women's rights activists.

Despite the hopes of suffragettes, in the postwar period the Republican "party of abolition" increasingly turned away from women's rights efforts. Although many former abolitionists supported women's suffrage before the war, male abolitionists' stronger position in postbellum American politics quelled their loyalty to the woman's cause. Since southern white men consistently voted for Democrats, Republicans saw black suffrage as "the only secure basis" for continuing Republican control of states below the Mason-Dixon Line. As suffragettes fought their own battle to discredit Victorian gender roles or to find a way to fit the woman's vote within them, Congressional Republicans began to perceive an alliance with suffragettes as potentially detrimental to the suffrage cause of the black man.

In 1865, when Republicans in Congress introduced an amendment advocating the extension of suffrage to former slaves, they purposefully included the word "male" in the bill.[54] In 1866, only Representative James Ashley of Ohio publically articulated a desire to amend the proposed black franchise amendment by "omit[ting] the word 'male'" as a qualification. Among 224 members of the House of Representatives, 173 of them Republicans, only Ashley claimed that he was "unwilling to prohibit any State from enfranchising its women if [it] desire[d] to do so."[55]

Though tension between suffragettes and Republican politicians stirred nationally, women's activists still approached the 1867 Kansas state elections ready to campaign for black and female suffrage. Stanton and Anthony saw the Kansas election as "the first popular test ever made of woman suffrage" and as a real opportunity to restore the suffragette and abolitionist

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[54] DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 57,62,73.
[55] James Ashley, *Congressional Globe*. 39th Cong., 1st sess, 29 May 1866.

alliance. Roughly two years after the conclusion of the Civil War and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, Kansas voters faced two democratizing referendums: one proposing the enfranchisement of African American men, the other geared toward granting the vote to American women. Stanton, always the capable and articulate speaker, gave a speech in Lawrence once again expressing the natural rights principles heavily promoted throughout antebellum suffrage campaigns. Before a crowded lecture hall, she voiced confidence in a "time coming when all men and women, black and white, shall stand equal." She urged the white, male citizens of Kansas "to vote thoughtfully and religiously on these two propositions" and to solidify the importance of equality and justice.[56] Yet even as Stanton continued to employ natural rights rhetoric and to advocate universal suffrage, her feminist contemporaries began seeing this as all but impossible.

Congressional Republicans saw the granting and implementation of black suffrage as crucial to their Reconstruction program and to the future of the Republican Party in the South, but they fretted that black suffrage typically lost in northern state referenda. National party leaders considered it crucial to gain momentum by achieving as large a positive vote as possible in the Kansas black suffrage referendum. Feminist Lucy Stone sensed a concern among Republican leaders that the Kansas campaign for gender equity was detracting from the crucial referendum on race. Stone accused Republican party members of canvassing "only for the word white" instead of holding steadfast to eliminating "males-only" qualifications. Even though she continued to promote the black male franchise, Stone insisted that she had "for the last time been on her knees" in an attempt to sway the opinions of Kansas Republicans.[57] After months of

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[56]Stanton, *The Elizabeth Cady Stanton-Susan B. Anthony Reader* 115, 116.
[57]Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony* (Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1898), 123,281, 278.

confusion and ambiguity, Kansas Republican Party leaders made public the platform shift that suffragettes like Stone had feared and anticipated. On September 5, 1867 Kansas Republicans claimed in a local newspaper that they now stood "unqualifiededly opposed to the dogma of 'Female Suffrage."' Kansas party members actually claimed that the "well-being and good name of [their] young commonwealth" depended on the failure of the women's franchise referendum.[58] Suffragettes watched in dismay as Republicans dismissed previously idealized natural rights language and, echoing emerging national political currents, turned away from women's suffrage efforts.[59]

In the throes of political turmoil, Kansas feminists answered the historical hypocrisy of the United States' political founders and the contradictory stance of contemporary Republicans by following their lead. Although in earlier parts of the campaign Democrats remained silent on the issue of female suffrage, desperation led suffragettes to enlist the party's help and the racist political tools that made members affective.[60]

Recognizing the limits of natural rights rhetoric in the postbellum period, suffragettes embraced the prejudiced elements of the American rhetorical tradition by employing racist Democratic politician George Francis Train.[61] Stanton and Anthony recruited Train, a longtime Democrat and nationally renowned public speaker to aide in the upcoming Kansas election. Presenting his case throughout the state and helping to finance the statewide woman's suffrage campaign, Train promoted the woman's vote as a "weapon to be used against the specter of

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[58]Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony* 283.
[59]Clarina I.H Nichols, *The Papers of Clarina I.H. Nichols,1854-1884,* ed. by Joseph G. Gambone (Kansas Historical Quarterly: 1973-74), 123.
[60] DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 76.
[61] Nichols, *The Papers of Clarina J.H. Nichols*, 558.

black supremacy."[62] Tacitly accepting the racist rhetoric employed by Train, Stanton and Anthony actually championed his role in the campaign. Stanton claimed that his work in Kansas "turned the tide" of the election and "secured a large Democratic vote" for the female franchise referendum. Although voters eventually defeated both the black and women's franchise referendums, Stanton insisted that Train's participation was not "a grave blunder" and that the results in Kansas "proved otherwise."[63]

By turning away from women's suffrage in an attempt to secure black male voting rights, Kansas Republicans caused suffragettes to conclude that their commitment to egalitarian speech could and should be sacrificed if practically necessary. When Wendell Phillips, a former abolitionist and treasurer of the Francis Jackson Woman's Rights Fund turned away from suffragette campaigns, he illustrated how easily pragmatism triumphed over principle.[64] These former abolitionists illustrated how natural rights rhetoric need not correlate with a deep or steadfast commitment to the civil rights of all Americans. If the situation called for an exclusion of some in the name of political pragmatism, both egalitarian language and its application could be sacrificed.

The following year, Susan B. Anthony made the political realignment in Kansas a national movement by taking women's suffrage arguments to the 1868 Democratic National Convention. If events in Kansas signaled the beginning of a strategy involving Democratic cooperation, Anthony's words firmly secured the alliance. Reminding Democrats that a black man, unlike a woman, held "the bullet and the ballot in his own right hand" and that politicians should therefore "consider his case settled," Anthony attempted to sway a political party in no

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[62] DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage, 80,* 94.
[63] Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, 247.
[64] Nichols, *The Papers of Clarina J.H. Nichols,* 123.

need of such urging. According to historian Morton Keller, postbellum Democrats "were fiercely anti-Radical, Negrophobic, [and] sympathetic to slavery and secession."[65] Democrats were no more supportive of the woman's vote in its own right than Republicans, but they relished the opportunity to exacerbate tensions amongst former abolitionists.[66] Motivated by racism and political expediency, Democrats wanted to "turn from the dead questions of the past to the vital issues of the hour," for they already considered the case for expanded black rights to be "settled."[67]

Although the racist beliefs of both northern and southern Americans helped spur Anthony's appeal to the racist Democratic Party, this development still represented an act of free will. After all, suffragettes had once embraced universal equality, so the fact that they now sanctioned racist rhetoric represented a concerted decision. Through her involvement in the convention, Anthony did not indicate the Democrats' willingness to prioritize white women's voting rights over those of black men. By standing before this publicly racist body and touting the women's right to vote, she signaled her own movement's willingness to do so.

Illustrating the increasingly weakened state of natural rights language on a national level, in 1869 suffragettes split in their response to the Fifteenth Amendment granting the vote to black men. Although Stone supported the amendment, Stanton, Anthony, and other feminists publically denounced its exclusion of women. Those who opposed the amendment formed the National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA) and, turning away from the language of Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiments," began actively differentiating between the rights of white

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[65] Morton Keller, *Affairs of State* (Cambridge:The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977), 49.
[66] DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 76.
[67] Anthony, *Official Proceedings of the National Convention, 29-30.*

women and black men.[68]

In subsequent years, northern feminists generally embraced the NWSA stance on race. In 1872, when Isabelle Beecher Hooker stood before a Senate Committee advocating a women's suffrage amendment, she pointed out that the "political benefit" of the Fifteenth Amendment giving black men the franchise was "not very precisely measured." When Hooker claimed that "history ma[de] its own precedents! The men of America made theirs in 1776--the women of America are making theirs today," she portrayed a deeper connection to early American politicians than she likely intended. By coupling universalist language with racist connotations and racist political partnerships, northern women asserted their own place in a tradition of American hypocrisy and ambiguity.[69]

Echoing the language of the Democrat George Francis Train in Kansas, suffragettes not only diverged from their previous stance on race but increasingly embraced the idealized image of the pure and maternal female. In the immediate years following the Kansas campaign, Stanton continued to critique the Victorian-delineated image of women, writing in *Revolution* that suffragettes must counteract the concept that "nature" limited them "all for the one mission of housekeepers."[70] Yet beginning in the 1880s, suffragettes began to "admit, then to stress, the differences between men and women." Although most northern and western suffragettes refrained from outwardly connecting their movement to "black corruption," they began emphasizing how the "more moral, more temperate, more law-abiding" woman could "purify" the electorate.[71] Far from a nonracialized development, this language indicated the undercurrents

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[68] DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 193.
[69] Senate Committee on the Judiciary Relative to Woman Suffrage, *Argument of Isabelle Beecher Hooker Before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary Relative to Woman Suffrage*. 1st sess., 1872, 34.
[70] *Revolution,* January 22, 1868, as quoted in DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 104.
[71] Kraditor, *Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement*, 110.

of northern and western racism and opened opportunities for more dominative, bluntly racist suffragettes in later years.

Evidenced by the women's movement's shift in Kansas, the prejudiced undercurrents of the American rhetorical tradition reemerged in the postbellum era after a brief prewar and wartime resurgence in natural rights language. Although revisionist historians Louise Newman and Alison Sneider emphasized the role of imperial projects in shifting suffragettes toward racist language, events in Kansas illustrated just how much postwar politics of *national* reconciliation and identity also shaped suffragettes' behavior.[72] Far from responding to a uniquely *southern* issue, suffragettes brought the racist Democratic orator George Train into their movement in the Midwestern state of Kansas as a response to northern Republican politicians. Just as the Kansas election altered the relationship between women's rights movements, racist rhetoric, and the national political arena, the South African War and the 1908-09 South African National Convention permanently changed the character of South African suffragette efforts.

The South African War and Suffragettes at the National Convention

Far from anomalous, the Civil War's effect on nonwhite rights and citizenship in general reappeared in a South African conflict. Although to a more limited degree, the Anglo-Boer conflict also created the possibility to expand citizenship in a newly-federated union. In 1899, the British Manchester Transvaal Committee indicated this potential by standing unequivocally "in favour of one man one vote in South Africa."[73] Entitling his 1900 article "Never Again," British

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[72] Newman, *White Women's Rights*, 8.
[73] Manchester Transvaal Committee, "Liberals and the Franchise," *The Transvaal Committee* no. 4 (Pretoria, 1899),1.

official Sir Alfred Milner championed the imperial commitment "once and for ever…[to] municipal and civil equality."[74] In the Treaty of Vereenging ending the war, the British government promised to reevaluate nonwhite voting rights before founding the South African Union.[75] British South African suffragettes never directly aligned themselves with nonwhite rights, but they too hoped that after they "had thrown themselves eagerly into patriotic and relief work of various kinds," the imperial government would recognize their loyalty and expand their franchise rights as well.[76] In the immediate postwar period, suffragettes who had already illustrated marked tolerance in the prewar period hoped that the imperial government's apparent commitment to expanding Outlander and nonwhite franchise rights would also bring women the vote.[77]

Although the British emerged victorious from the South African War, anxiety ran high amongst English South African politicians regarding the increasingly powerful Afrikaner voting bloc. In a postwar effort to reconcile with Afrikaners, the British acquiesced to Afrikaner politicians' calls for general black disfranchisement and allowed the Transvaal, Orange Free State, and Natal to shape franchise legislation along racial lines.[78] The vestiges of southern African racial tolerance, never terribly strong to begin with, now existed only in the postwar Cape province. Just as American northern suffragettes gave in to an evolving racialized national environment, so too would South African women's rights activists.

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[74] Sir Alfred Milner, "Never Again: Sir Alfred Milner's Reply to Ministers' Address," *Vigilance Papers,* no. 5 (Cape Town: 1900), 1.
[75] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 195.
[76] Mrs. Macintosh, "British Dominions Overseas: South Africa." *International Women's News* 9, no. 7(London: International Alliance of Women, 1902), 275.
[77] "A South African Diary: The Boer Women's and Children's Camps, Prisoners of War." *South African Conciliation Committee,* no. 70 (1902), 2.
[78] Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa,* 82.

Despite talk of expanded citizenship before and throughout the war, both British and Afrikaner politicians made clear their intention to maintain gender restrictions on voting. When asked about the suffragette cause in 1902, Assemblyman Jon Merriman claimed that "women's counsel and brandy are two capital things, but you must use them very cautiously."[79] In 1905, with women's rights efforts continuously framed as unnecessary or futile, an anonymous suffragette complained in an Australian publication that their movement faced threats from "the non-thinkers…who are full of fears when the tocsin of progress is sounded."[80]

Just as American suffragettes' response to the African American franchise signaled a shift in the principals behind their movement, South African suffragists' response to the debate over the "non-racial franchise" at the National Convention altered the course of their own efforts. Although the imperial government promised to reevaluate black voting rights, politicians outside the Cape interpreted that reevaluation as an opportunity to entirely disfranchise nonwhite men. In 1908 and 1909, the most pressing topic at the convention became the fate of the Cape Colony's "non-racial" franchise policy," not the women's suffrage campaign. [81]

Although Bickford-Smith has warned against overemphasizing the Cape's "great tradition" of racial tolerance and integration, the basic principles of equal rights before the law naturally allied with the progressive goals of British suffragettes.[82] Despite its own *de facto* system of racial hierarchy and segregation, "Kaapstad," or "the mother city," still typified a special place in South Africa. "Cape liberals," a term used for whites of the Cape with generally higher "racial tolerance" than whites in other regions of South Africa, appeared the most obvious allies for suffragettes. Usually members of the leftist Labour party, Cape liberals viewed race

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[79] *Cape House of Assembly Debates,* 1902 (Pretoria: State Library, 1966), 254.
[80] "South Africa." *The Australian Woman's Sphere* 5, no. 55 (Melbourne: 1905), 22.
[81] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 258.
[82] Vivian, Bickford-Smith, "South African Urban History" 63.

along the same lines as British suffragettes' claiming that "qualified" black women should vote.[83] Throughout the Cape, "some elite favoured or did not oppose racial integration" [84] and, in marked opposition with other postwar cities, "fraternization between racial groups in Cape Town remained relatively free and unimpaired by laws." [85] A property-based vote persisted, but in the years leading up to the Convention Coloureds constituted 13.5 percent of the colony's voters and black Africans 2.2 percent.[86] Unlike the politicians of the former Boer republics, a significant number of Capetonians claimed that if a black man's economic status allowed him to fill the same property qualifications as whites, "assimilation," even in the ballot box, "was possible and desirable."[87]

On the floors of the National Convention, increasingly alienated and frustrated women's franchise advocates turned away from the liberal politicians of the Cape and embraced the racist policies of the political majority. Rather than exclusively promoting the white woman's vote, prewar suffragettes had made ideological room for Cape non-racialism by urging politicians to grant women the right to vote in the same form as men. Suffragette leaders initially aligned themselves with the Cape Colony's John Stanford, who supported women's franchise as long as the national bill allowed for a non-racial vote.[88] Yet as the conventions' politicians "sidestepped the question of votes for women" in their preoccupation with limiting the nonwhite vote to the Cape or even "end[ing] the Cape franchise entirely," pioneering suffragettes felt as disregarded by white, male politicians as their American counterparts had over thirty years earlier. [89] As a

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[83] Scully, "White Maternity and Black Infancy," 69.
[84] Bickford-Smith, "South African Urban History," 66.
[85] Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, 2.
[86] Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa,* 82.
[87] Bickford-Smith, "South African Urban History," 68.
[88] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 28.
[89] Scully, "White maternity and Black Infancy," 71, 74.

final affront, an editorial from the *Natal Mercury* covering the Convention flippantly commented that "we hope the suffragists have enjoyed their picnic in Durban…we cannot pretend that we have any regrets for their non-success."[90]

Like the American women's rights promoters before them, South African women recognized that any progress toward the women's franchise required a clear stance on the relative status of nonwhites in a united South Africa. Disregarding potential allegiances with the Coloureds' African Political Organisation and black Xhosa political organizations, in 1911 suffragettes formed the Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union of South Africa (WEAU) and began the early steps of distributing propaganda literature to inform largely racist "Afrikaans-speaking constituencies" of their movement.[91] South African suffrage efforts began "from the left," but when it became increasingly evident that "the dominant political relationship was between white and black," they developed methods to fit women's suffrage into this dichotomous structure.[92]

Similar to American suffragettes, post-Convention British activists began employing gendered arguments championing the maternal female voter. British suffragettes claimed that "women's experience of maternity and the domestic…authorized them to move into the political arena."[93] Unlike their American counterparts, however, British suffragettes directly claimed "white maternity" counteracted "black infancy." According to a Mrs. Brown, "the real and best interests of these coloured people who are so many of them mere children will be safer if women

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[90] "The Woman's Vote." *The Natal Mercury Editorial*, October 1909.
[91] Louise Vincent, "A Cake of Soap: The Volksmoeder Ideology and Afrikaner Women's Campaign for the Vote," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 32 (1999), 2.
[92] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 3.
[93] Scully, "White Maternity and Black Infancy," 77.

share the privilege of the vote."[94] Suffrage activists matched their American counterparts in the portrayal of morally upright female voters, but in the immediate post-Civil War years American suffragettes did not employ such patronizing images of nonwhite incompetence. Though they took the maternal argument one step further than American women of the 1880s, both movements followed a progression from relative tolerance to an increasingly narrow perception of suffrage for white women.

Like the shifting language of Americans Stanton and Anthony, this development must be judged in the dual arena of historical tradition and free will. South African suffragettes never came from a rhetorical heritage advocating equal, universal rights. Although the South African War offered the potential to expand this language, it proved superficial and short-lived. South African suffragettes could only fortify their public commitment to more tolerant rhetoric with British language *during* the war. No equivalent to the United States' Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments respectively abolishing slavery, granting nonwhites citizenship, and providing black men the right to vote ever materialized and altered the Union's constitution. The historical contingencies, with three colonies forthrightly against the non-racial franchise and only one in favor, placed even more pressure on movement leaders.

Although the different parameters of constitutional rhetoric led to a more intense racial discourse in South Africa, both American and South African suffrage movements directly altered their movements as a response to evolving national precepts of gender, race, and citizenship. The suffragettes' embrace of racist tactics in Kansas and at the National Convention reflected larger developments in American and South African race relations that would only intensify in postwar

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[94] M. Brown, "A Claim for the Enfranchisement of Women in Cape Colony," Women's Enfranchisement League, *Our Claim for Enfranchisement* (Cape Town, J.C. Juta and Co., 1912),10.

periods. If early actions of American northerners and South Africans of British descent indicated a willingness to separate gender and racial political equality, American southern and Afrikaner suffragettes only deepened the divide.

Part Four: Taking in to Fit in
American Southern and Afrikaner Suffragettes

In the 1890s and 1910s, American southern and Afrikaner women respectively began campaigning for the women's right to vote. As American and South African suffrage movements traveled toward the muggy cotton and tobacco fields of American southerners and the mineral-rich farm lands of South African Afrikaners, they faced fundamental ideological tests surrounding the role of race in their movements. Although American northern and British activists appealed to racist male politicians in Kansas and at the National Convention, at the turn-of-the century both movements had to respond to more outwardly prejudiced American southern and Afrikaner suffragettes.

Although black Americans no longer faced legalized enslavement, the development of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century suffragette movement correlated with the implementation of a new form of racial inequality in the American South. In the 1880s southern legislators began to scale back black rights and implement legal segregation. In 1890, Mississippi became the first southern state to use literacy tests and poll taxes to disfranchise black male citizens by legal means. Although the term "Jim Crow" originated in mid nineteenth century minstrel shows that stereotyped and mocked the "carefree" and "ignorant" male slave, it later became the popular name of the turn-of-the-century southern legal system of racial segregation.[95] From the 1890s onward, white southerners used "violence, economic oppression,

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[95] "Who Was Jim Crow?" *Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memoriabilia,* http://www.ferris.edu/news/jimcrow/who.htm (accessed March 9, 2009).

electoral fraud, and manipulation" to ensure that long-held conceptions of white supremacy would be practically implemented in the name of a belittled, demeaned, and black Jim Crow.[96]

Around the same period, a group of southern female suffragists forced national suffrage leaders to confront illicit, unapologetically racist language. American historian Fitzhugh Brundage claimed that southern suffragettes generally "contended that the vote was a natural right," but apparently this right only extended as far as American white women.[97] Stanton and Anthony, by dangerously allying themselves with the Democrats, sanctioned the storm of prejudiced thought that southern suffragists expounded. Although economically and socially based racism permeated the postwar North, the former "slave states" in the South remained the most rigid and institutionalized centers of racism. In the turn-of-the-century South, the American dissonance between egalitarian rhetoric and racist action gave way to a more outward form of white supremacy. Racist demagoguery took an especially strong hold amongst southern suffragettes who, despite being firm believers in women's suffrage, defended white supremacy in whatever way possible.[98]

Georgia native Rebecca Latimer Felton, an influential feminist advocate, took the lead in emphasizing the connection between women's suffrage and limiting black social status. Despite a reformist background, in the 1890s Felton championed the women's franchise as a tool for counteracting black corruption. After examining the overall social composition of Georgia and the South, she recognized that women's suffrage remained exceedingly unpopular among most southern voters. Presenting white female suffrage as a way to avoid racial equality appeared the

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[96] Jane Dailey, "Introduction," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow* ed. Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton: The Princeton University Press, 2000), 4.
[97] Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).
[98] Mary Spruill Wheeler, *New Women of the New South*: : *The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), xiiv.

only political tactic strong enough to counteract general distaste for feminist activity. Unlike northerners, however, Felton and fellow southern suffragettes actively asserted their racist values, eventually testing just how much intolerance the founding suffragettes would allow into their movement. Far from needing the Kansas campaign's George Francis Train to speak on her behalf, Felton presented herself as a loyal racist southerner to the core.[99]

Although southerners campaigned for the vote by touting an idealized and maternal image of the white female reminiscent of many northern and western activists' arguments, Felton and her compatriots more directly connected women's suffrage with the curtailment of black voting rights. In numerous speeches asserting the sexual predation of southern black males, Felton made no secret of her deeply seated racist beliefs.[100] If white women's sanctity ever faced denigration, she encouraged her fellow southerners to "lynch… a thousand times a week if necessary."[101] In order to better the quality of the electorate, Felton concluded, the United States' government should "limit suffrage to [the] virtue and intelligence" of white Americans.[102] To her, black voters would never develop into an idealized voter akin to the white woman, for "god made them negroes and [southerners] cannot make them white folks by education."[103]

Other southern suffrage leaders followed in Felton's footsteps, promoting the white woman's purity and critiquing the civic involvement of black men. Matching the racism of Felton, prominent suffragette Kate Gordon wrote that if southerners faced "a point of choice

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[99] John Erwin Talmadge, *Rebecca Latimer Felton, Nine Stormy Decades* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960), 113, 104.
[100] Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black/White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1986), 124.
[101] Wheeler, *New Women of the New South*, 103.
[102] Rebecca Latimer Felton, *Country Life in Georgia in the Days of My Youth, Also Addresses Before Georgia Legislature Women's Clubs, Women's Organizations and Other Noted Occasions* (Atlanta: Index printing company, 1919), 4, 61, 255.
[103] Felton, *Country Life in Georgia,* 255.

between nigger or woman, [they would be] glad to take the woman…there was more truth than poetry in it." Expressing her opinion on the Fifteenth Amendment's provision for black suffrage, Bell Kearney contended that the South "struggled under its dead-weight for over thirty years bravely and magnanimously."[104] While white women held a long tradition of "refinement," black men had never received proper "train[ing] [in] the holy duties of citizenship." More than a decade after emancipation and the Fifteenth Amendment granted black men the right to vote, Kearney summarized the general argument of 1890s southern suffragettes: only "Anglo-Saxon blood, North or South, is the blood of [the] free."[105]

Despite their common mistreatment under white male patriarchs, Felton and other southern activists morphed suffrage campaigning into a denigration of black women. In the South, men saw only two castes of women: the "ladies" who were "always white and chaste" and the "whores," a term used for "any white woman who defied the established social constraints on her sexual behavior."[106] Writing in the *North American Review* in 1890, Burton Harrison claimed that southern men often felt compelled to teach white women "their proper place" in Victorian society.[107] As for black female slaves and their descendants, they stood not as enemies to the white suffragette cause, but rather as potential allies in the fight against this confining, stereotypical image of southern women. After all, the shear intensity of the agricultural labor of black women "demonstrat[ed] how slavery and racism made a mockery of the logic upon which sex discrimination [was] based."[108]

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[104] Belle Kearney, *A Slaveholder's Daughter,*(New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969),4.
[105] Kearney, *A Slaveholder's Daughter*, 2, 4, 8,19.
[106] Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 205.
[107] Burton Harrison, "Maidens and Matrons in American Society." *North American Review* 151 no. 6 December 1890, 713.
[108] Deborah G. White, *Ar'n't I a Women?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South.* (New York: Norton, 1999).

Instead of using the unique experience of black female slaves to counteract idealized female stereotypes, suffragettes embraced contrived gender roles and used them to denigrate black women. Far from denouncing the unfair imagery of the demure and desexualized white woman, Felton and her compatriots embraced the stereotype and used it to strengthen their campaign. Building off the argument begun in nineteenth-century Kansas, Felton contrasted the domesticated, cultivated white voter with the black "Jezebel." Felton accused black women of "infanticides and brazen prostitution," belittled their intelligence, and even advocated the curtailment of their reproductive capacity.[109]

For the founding members of the women's suffrage movement, race, gender, and natural rights ideology created a complex and contradictory argument for suffrage, but in 1867 that began to change in Kansas. Decades after the conclusion of the Civil War, suffragettes would have to decide how and if they would incorporate Felton and her compatriots into their movement. Twenty years later, the emergence of Afrikaner suffragettes forced leaders of the South African suffrage movement to make a similar decision. In the years following the National Convention, the movements' founding members encountered tactics similar to those of Felton and Kearney in South African Afrikaners.

Where American southern women racialized suffrage efforts throughout the 1890s, British activists first encountered the palpable racist language of Afrikaners in the 1910s. Although scholars often emphasized the role of Afrikaner women in the 1920s phase of the campaign, Louise Vincent argued that Afrikaner suffragettes began effecting the intensity and scope of racist sentiment following the National Convention in 1909.[110] With their status pinned

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[109] LeeAnn Whites, *Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Making of the New South* (New York Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 161.

almost entirely on conceptions of women's' "purity" and child-raising duties, Afrikaner women lived under a distinct, codified Victorian gender framework. Idealized in an almost dehumanizing way, the Afrikaner woman, "in her faith and purity, took on certain attributes of the Holy Virgin in Catholicism."[111] Yet despite this powerful image, leaders of the Dutch Reform Church in the 1910s insisted that "the man was head of the family" and that according to creation the woman "was given to the man as a helpmeet" only.[112]

Although cultural historian Judy H. Gardner claimed that "Afrikaner women played virtually no role in the suffragist movement," middle-class Afrikaners like Anna Malan, M.E. Rothmann, and Enid van der Lingen strengthened and shaped racist suffragette arguments.[113] Following the convention, British-dominated publications like *Woman's Outlook* consistently vocalized how "the suffrage movement in south Africa [could] make no real advance until the women of the veld are reached."[114]

Like American southern women, Afrikaners embarked on a women's suffrage campaign that embraced rather than rejected Victorian gender roles. The idealized Afrikaner female, the "tough and self reliant" *volksmoeder* who handled all domestic activities from "housekeeping to dressmaking," became an iconic figure for the suffragette cause. Entitling her article "A Cake of Soap," South African women's historian Louise Vincent claimed that Afrikaner women

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[110] Louise Vincent, "A Cake of Soap: The Volksmoeder Ideology and Afrikaner Women's Campaign for the Vote," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 32 (1999), 3.
[111] Dunbar T. Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (Berkeley: University of California, 1975), 10.
[112] J.D. Du Toit, "Women Suffrage as Viewed by the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa." *International Women's News* 15 no.12 (London: International Alliance of Women,1912), 190.
[113] Judy H. Gardner, *Impaired Vision: Portraits of Black Women in the Afrikaans Novel* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1991), 21.
[114] MKC Macintosh, "British Dominions Overseas: South Africa." *International Women's News* 9 no. 9 (London: International Alliance of Women, 1911), 7.

"campaigned vociferously" for their own franchise by "employing the language of home-making and motherhood."[115] On behalf of her nuclear family and "her volk," the maternal Afrikaner woman could and would serve as an ideal South African voter.[116]

Yet like American southerners before them, Afrikaner women assessed the woman's vote as only crucial if connected with larger racial questions of the period. Afrikaner women never came close to articulating "equality and universal human rights," and the majority of them intensified the gender and racial delineations presented by British activists. By the 1910s, Afrikaner suffragettes insisted that only the white woman could effectively "tidy up the nation's legislative closet and scrub its moral fabric." Using racially-coded language, Afrikaner suffragette M. Moldenhauer described how the vote would give *white* women the chance to "clean up the dirty places of the country, and lighten darkness wherever it [was] possible."[117] From the very beginning of their involvement in the suffrage movement, Afrikaners sympathized with "the racist, segregationist views of their male counterparts."[118] Martha Mabel Jansen, the founding president of the Natal Nationalist Women's Party, claimed that she would "rather forfeit the vote [her]self indefinitely" than see the Cape's non-racial franchise expand.[119] Just as southern women insisted on black women's inherent inferiority, Afrikaners insisted that blacks remained "outside civilized society" and that "the women" in the argument for franchise "were white women."[120] Generally agreeing with Afrikaner leader General Herzog that "the most

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[115] Vincent, "A Cake of Soap," 11, 2.
[116] Vincent, "A Cake of Soap," 12.
[117] M. Moldenhauer, "Our Suffrage Victory and After," in *The Flashlight* 36 (Uitenhage: Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union of South Africa), (1930), 36 quoted in Vincent, "A Cake of Soap," 2.
[118] Vincent, "A Cake of Soap," 3,5.
[119] Martha Mabel, "Minutes of Evidence," *1926 Select Committee on the Enfranchisement of Women,* 68 quoted in Vincent, "A Cake of Soap," 3.
[120] Scully, "White Domesticity and Black Maternity," 76, 77.

pressing issue was to achieve the political segregation of Africans in the Cape," Afrikaner women followed their men and, as historian Dunbar Moodie has written, "export[ed] the libidinal well of racial prejudice at every possible juncture."[121]

When American suffragette Carrie Chapman Catt visited South Africa in 1911, she expressed the need for South African women to follow suit with postwar reconciliation and unite white ethnic factions. To Catt, the "one hindrance" for women's suffrage could be found in "the suspicion and distrust of Briton for Boer, and Boer for Briton." She promised that those willing to "lift themselves and their cause" above this dispute could and would control the "fate of woman's suffrage [and] the future of South Africa."[122] Her words served as prescient remarks for both the American and South African suffrage movements. Only by following and reinforcing the pattern of national reconciliation set by male politicians did American and South African suffrage movements unite ethnic factions, achieve success, and illustrate their willingness to assert women's political rights by dividing and discriminating along racial lines.

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[121] *Cape House of Assembly Debates,* 1926 (State Library, Pretoria, 1966), 44, Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 247.

[122] Carrie Chapman Catt, "South Africa." *International Women's News* 6 no. 4 (London: International Alliance of Women, 1911), 36.

Part Five: Painting the Space White
National Reconciliation and the Suffrage Movements

Far from acting in a "vacuum," American and South African suffragettes chose to incorporate American southerners and Afrikaners into their movements in a way that reflected their countries' unique forms of national reconciliation. Race played a central role in both American and South African postwar national unification efforts, but on the national level the intensity and supremacy of racist legislation differed. In the 1900s American suffragettes incorporated racist southerners into their movement but, like the postwar Union government, they never advocated Jim Crow political segregation on a national level. In South Africa, the supremacy of Afrikaner racial delineations over the non-racial Cape franchise dictated suffragettes' response to Afrikaner women. Paralleling national political trends between British and Afrikaner politicians, suffragettes of the 1920s fully incorporated and adopted the Afrikaner's racist rhetoric.

In the United States, an understanding of the gradual and increasingly racist process of postwar reunion sheds light on how and why suffragettes acted as they did. In the late nineteenth-century, large-scale national unification had developed along lines similar to those of the revolutionary period: the national government retained its outward commitment to equal rights even as southern politics and nationwide prejudice conflicted with this ideal. When the federal government failed to maintain stable southern governments run by Republicans during Reconstruction, southern white Democrats began championing a "national reunion on Southern terms."[123] Beginning in the 1880s, "plantation school" literature that portrayed the antebellum South as an ideal, simple, and orderly place grew in popularity. In "Marse Chan: A Tale of Old Virginia," the storyline of Thomas Nelson Page had "faithful" former slaves decrying freedom and nostalgically recalling life under their benevolent "mastas." By pushing forth this narrative,

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[123] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 265.

Page hoped that southerners and northerners would turn away from the decades they had spent debating slavery and the years they had spent fighting a "civil war amongst whites" in its name. In their romanticized depiction of southern life before the war, Page and other southern writers relayed the message that the antebellum racial hierarchy bred happiness and peace. An undercurrent of this narrative, one that writers emphasized in nearly every short story, was that the white supremacy of the antebellum era should somehow be implemented in the 1880s and 1890s.[124]

Likely a response to both plantation school literature and the influx of immigrants to cities like New York, an "upsurge in racist thought and sentiment" began to characterize late nineteenth-century northern culture and politics. When white northerners eagerly read the short stories of Page and Joel Chandler Harris in *Scribners, Lippincott's*, and *Harper's Weekly* magazines, they condoned the South's Jim Crow system on a cultural level.[125] In 1890 Harvard geologist Nathaniel Shaler, a Union officer in the Civil War, urged northerners to solidify postwar national reconciliation. Professor Shaler insisted that since "the stage of [Civil War] suffering is over," northerners and southerners must recognize their common status as "American representatives." He claimed that only "physical and social environment" had caused southerners to rely on institutionalized racism before the war, and he urged Northerners to make efforts to "understand the general state of mind of these divergent people."[126]

In a series of court decisions that culminated in the 1897 *Plessy vs. Ferguson* case, northern Supreme Court justices solidified the cultural sanctioning of Jim Crow segregation by legalizing southern state systems of racial segregation. Even as white southerners curtailed the

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[124] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 224, 225.
[125] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 217.
[126] Nathaniel Shaler, "The Peculiarities of the South," *North American Review* 151 no. 4 (1890), 477,481.

political, economic, and social rights of African Americans in the name of racial segregation, *Plessy* asserted the constitutionality of "separate but equal" provisions for whites and blacks. The Civil War and the immediate postwar period had briefly prompted significant northern attention to natural rights arguments, but by the 1900s white northerners tended to agree with their southern counterparts that black "defiance of convention [and] propriety" must be prevented.[127]

Crucially, government-condoned segregation remained a "localized," southern exception "rather than a national norm." Northern state governments never formally disfranchised black men nor sanctioned postbellum legal segregation.[128] In the late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century North, prejudiced rhetoric and *de facto* segregation in residential areas and entertainment venues certainly persisted, but it never completely overrode natural rights rhetoric.

In this increasingly prejudiced national environment, Elizabeth Cady Stanton served as a symbolic, nearly lone promoter of egalitarianism in the suffrage movement. Although American suffragettes allied themselves with the racist male Democratic Party in the 1870s, in 1892 Stanton harkened back to the suffrage movement's revolutionary and justice-driven rhetorical underpinnings. Even as Felton and Kearney canvassed throughout the South, insisting not only that an inherent racial hierarchy existed but also that it directly justified the woman's franchise, Stanton spoke before Congress arguing otherwise. "According to the fundamental principles of our Government," claimed Stanton, citizens should be granted "the same rights as all other members." [129]

Despite her role in the 1867 Kansas campaign, Stanton alone connected this universalist language with an engagement in the black Americans' cause. Following the Kansas campaign

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[127] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 183, 186 and Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 282.
[128] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 197.
[129] U.S. Congress, *House Committee on Judiciary, Hearing of the Woman Suffrage Association*, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess.,1892,1.

Stanton had advocated for "educated suffrage," or the right to vote on the condition of literacy. When she "enthusiastically advocated a literacy test" for the vote, Stanton epitomized the nativist and racist underpinnings of early twentieth-century American society.[130] In an interesting personal development, she disengaged from what historian Eric Foner termed the "elitist arguments for rejecting the enfranchisement of black males" and recent immigrants.[131] In a time where northern and southern politicians attempted to put the debate over black Americans' status behind them, Stanton insisted that "all races are capable of profiting from education" and should be offered the right to vote, too. For her, this reality rested on far more than "a critical analysis of the vital organs of the body and shades of the epidermis"— its justifications came from an American assurance of liberty and justice for all.[132]

In Stanton's final speech before retiring, the Civil War's disappointments, the betrayal of Congressional Republicans, and the disintegration of the Kansas campaign faded into the periphery. For an aging, increasingly philosophical Stanton, political expediency and the controversies of the day amounted to little when compared with "the solitude of self." Before a crowded hall, Stanton championed the vote as the practical manifestation of a lesson she had taken a lifetime to learn: regardless of skin color or gender, "every human soul" had the right to "independent action."[133]

Despite Stanton's lone voice of dissent, American suffragettes began structuring their movement to match the terms of political unification that northern and southern politicians of the

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[130] Sue Davis, *The Political Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton: Women's Rights and the American Political Traditions* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 210.
[131] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 448.
[132] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Solution of the Race Question." *The Woman's Tribune* 19 no. 17 (Portland: C.B. Colby etc., 1902), 4.
[133] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Solitude of Self." *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course On the Web,* http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5315(accessed March 11, 2009).

early twentieth-century continued to instill. Carrie Chapman Catt, epitomizing the American postwar decision to unify despite the enduring complexities surrounding the Civil War, insisted that activists must disregard different opinions surrounding race issues and focus entirely on achieving the women's franchise. Informing her fellow suffragettes in 1895 that their "watchword [was] 'organization,'" Catt foreshadowed the American suffrage movements' unification behind the achievement of tangible success.[134] Without outwardly mentioning the role of race or any other socio-economic factors in the movement, she wrote in 1896 that "the surest path to victory lies in the united, earnest and harmonious effort of a great and powerful organization, based upon the one claim "No sex in citizenship."[135] Rather than immediately denouncing southern racist women, northern feminists like Catt recognized the importance of "bringing in the South and recruiting Southern women to work with them."[136]

Mirroring a national story of reconciliation, Catt found a way for northern and southern language to coexist within the suffrage movement. Just as northerners at large condoned the policies of the South in the name of national unity, Catt and her compatriots did the same in the name of women's franchise rights. She claimed that the efforts of southern suffragettes in Mississippi, South Carolina, Arkansas, and even in Felton's Georgia represented a "splendid showing of work" that benefited the movement as a whole.[137] Following the national spirit of reconciliation to its logical conclusion, Catt praised northerners like Stanton and Anthony at one point and worked on suffragette propaganda with southerner Laura Clay at another.[138]

In congressional hearings from 1900 to 1920, suffragettes illustrated just how much they

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[134] Carrie Chapman Catt, "National Organization Campaign." *The Woman's Journal* 26 no. 17 (Boston, 1895), 32.
[135] Carrie Chapman Catt, "Our Sole Issue." *The Woman's Journal* 27 no.13 (Boston, 1896), 75.
[136] Wheeler, *New Women of the New South,* 100.
[137] Chapman-Catt, "National Organization Campaign,"32.
[138] Chapman-Catt, "Our Sole Issue," 70.

had learned from the practical application of postbellum reunion efforts. In 1918, movement leaders introduced Tennessee native Guilford Dudley to speak before Congress on behalf of southern women. Dudley subtly interjected racial issues into her speech, but did not employ the racist language of Felton and Kearney on a national level. As Catt and her compatriots watched on, Dudley insisted that the black vote existed only "as a phantom as applied to woman's suffrage." To her, "the negro problem" lived on as an "old, old ghost that stalk[ed] through the Halls of Congress" and needed to be disregarded.[139] By aligning their efforts with Dudley, suffragettes followed the path set by northern politicians who ignored the literacy tests, grandfather clauses, poll taxes, and blatant coercion that deprived most black southern men of voting rights.

Yet in the United States, reconciliation on a national level and in the suffrage movement never meant a full, unqualified embrace of the southerners' racially circumscribed political system. Southern suffragettes deviated from a nationalized American ideal by outwardly promoting racism to achieve the woman's vote. Although prejudice clearly pervaded northern society, it never took on the codified character of racism in the southern states. Including and cooperating with southern suffragettes, though crucial, did not mean following suit with their Jim Crow infused aims.

Just as the national Constitution maintained black male voting rights despite southern states' curtailment of the black franchise, suffragettes chose to maintain their commitment to the non-racial vote until 1920. Bostonian Maude Wood Park did not turn entirely to the American southern suffragettes' arguments of distinct white female purity. Instead she publically framed

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[139] U.S. Congress, House Committee On Woman Suffrage, *Extending the Right of Suffrage to Women*, 65th Cong., 2nd sess., 1918, 19.

suffrage as a natural right based upon the essentially American "principle of Democracy."[140] Dr. Anna Shaw, born in England but raised since childhood in Michigan, insisted that politicians could ask for "no women," black or white, "more noble than the women of these United States."[141] On August 18, 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment passed and assured that "the vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."[142] Following the course set by postbellum northern politicians, members of the National American Women's Suffrage Association never made unified, public attempts to counteract Jim Crow political segregation. Although politically active southern black women called out to former northern suffragists for help, their disfranchisement persisted in the South until the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1954. After decades of trials and tribulations, the women's suffrage movement found that achieving the vote meant accepting and reflecting the American dissonance between egalitarian language and prejudiced action.

Like American suffragettes, South African women's activists worked within the parameters of national reconciliation imagined along racialized lines. The nationwide reconciliation of British and Boer South Africans rested on defining political citizenship as "white" and solidifying the unequal political status of nonwhites. As in the postbellum United States, the Boers "had lost the war" but in policies surrounding nonwhites they had "won the peace."[143] Cultural historian Isabel Hofmeyer claimed that, like American southerners, Afrikaners began the process of reconciliation by memorializing life in the former Boer Republics. She described how Afrikaners began publishing books in "Afrikaans," an oral

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[140]U.S. Congress, House Committee on Woman Suffrage, *Extending the Right of Suffrage to Women*, 4.
[141]U.S. Congress, House Committee on Woman Suffrage, *Extending the Right of Suffrage to Women*, 7.
[142] U.S. Constitution, amend. XIX.
[143] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 138.

offshoot of Dutch, and encouraging their countrymen to "fill Afrikaner churches, attend Afrikaner schools and buy Afrikaans books."[144] Similar to authors in the postbellum American South, Afrikaners promoted a united white South Africa "distinctly coloured by an Afrikaner hue."[145]

Historian Bickford-Smith effectively explained how the British settlers, like American northerners, reconciled with their wartime enemies. Increasingly concerned about their racial and ethnic minority status, the British shifted their position from "assimilation to segregation" in their "ideology and practice." Reverend J. S. Moffat, an ardent supporter of the British throughout the war, went from championing the "British notion of the aboriginal man as a man with all human rights" to warning that "black men will some day overflow us as the flood overflowed the contemporaries of Noah."[146] Despite the protest of middling Coloured and black African political factions, most notably the African National Congress (ANC), systems of racial inequality became more deeply entrenched following South African unification in 1910. Although Apartheid officially commenced in 1948, historian Melissa Steyn claimed the "essentials of whites only rule had been enshrined in the years following the Act of Union."[147]

As in the post Civil War United States, the development of cultural reconciliation based on race found its place in government legislation. The 1913 Native Lands Act reserved "87

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[144] Isabel Hofmeyer, "Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature, and Ethnic Identity, 1902- 1924,"in *The Politics of Race, Class, and Nationalism in 20th century South Africa* ed. Sula Marks and Stanley Trapido (London: Longman Press, 1987), 102.
[145] Hofmeyer, "Building a Nation from Words," 101.
[146] Moffat, "The Black Man and the War," 3 and Reverend J.S. Moffat, "The Current Status of Union." *Vigilance Papers,*no. 19 (Cape Town: The South African Vigilance Committee, 1912),7.
[147] Melissa Steyn, *"Whiteness Just Isn't What it Used to Be:White Identity in A Changing South Africa* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 34.

percent of the country's land for the white minority" and the Afrikaner-dominated, resolutely racist Nationalist Party grew in political power and clout. The Natives Urban Areas Bill of 1918 forced blacks living in urban centers throughout the country onto "locations," or impoverished and poorly managed townships on the outskirts of cities.[148] Literally separating nonwhites in a country where they were the clear majority, South African racial segregation went further than segregation did in the Jim Crow South.

Unlike in the United States, the Cape's non-racial franchise served as an exception rather than standard practice in a unified South Africa. Although in the United States the amendments extending black male civic rights remained in the federal Constitution, in South Africa a sweeping ban that denied nonwhites membership in Parliament in all four provinces indicated that the Transvaal and Orange Free States' "tradition[s] w[ere] the ascendant one[s]." As South African suffragettes entered into the post-Union period, they did so with the knowledge that national reconciliation rested on Afrikaners' insistence that they "wanted no part in [the] "Cape liberal policy"" of equality before the law.[149]

In the meeting halls overlooking Cape Town, South African suffragettes found that successfully achieving the vote for women required them to embrace their national history and the terms of national reconciliation. Like Stanton in the American context, signs of the earlier, more tolerant prewar stance trickled into the post-Union theatre. Bravely speaking out against the racist turn of South African postwar policies, Georgiana M. Solomon claimed that even in 1914 "women of nobler mould deeply resent[ed] the clauses which jeopardize[d] the franchise rights

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[148] "South Africa Political Background" in *The Political Handbook of the World* ed.Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, and William R. Overstreet (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2007), 1215.
[149] Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 139, 197.

of natives and coloured people in [the] Cape."[150] Yet just as Stanton's appreciation for unqualified natural rights did not achieve popular support in the turn-of-the-century United States, Solomon's call for a non-racialized suffrage campaign failed to resonate with recently unified South Africans.

Unlike in the United States, both prewar rhetoric and national unification characterized the supremacy of Afrikaner racist language and tradition. All major South African political parties, even those with heavy British membership, began promoting a "civilized," or race-based standard as their "sole basis for enfranchisement."[151] If founding movement members wished to achieve success, they increasingly recognized the need to align themselves with this national trend.

Paralleling the rhetoric of the former colonies and the postwar reconciliation efforts, South African suffragettes began emphasizing a race-based reconciliation with Afrikaner women's activists. In 1915 Laura Ruxton, the secretary of the Women's Enfranchisement Association, claimed that the movement needed to permanently scale back its bill asking for suffrage "on the same conditions as it is granted to men." If they allowed for a racial qualifier in legislation, Ruxton reasoned, Parliament leaders would show a new "spirit of enlightenment."[152] Detailing their movements' progress in an *International Women's News* article, fellow British suffragette Anna Malan claimed that the "the beacon-fires of [their] movement [were] being set alight all through the land." Reflecting the significant stipulations set by national reconciliation,

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[150] Georgiana M. Solomon, "South Africa," *International Women's News* 3 no. 4 (1914), 24.
[151] Vincent, "A Cake of Soap," 4.
[152] Laura Ruxton, "The Union of South Africa," *Jus Suffragii* 10 no. 3 (London: 1915), 41.

Malan claimed that South African women's suffrage would bring about "equal freedom and equal opportunities for both halves of the *white* race." [153]

For suffragettes of British decent, the effectiveness of Afrikaner women's campaigners proved difficult to ignore. In 1917, Afrikaans-speaking suffragettes campaigned to include a series of questions relating to women's suffrage in the election paperwork for Provincial Council members in the anti-suffrage-dominated Transvaal.[154] By 1918, a writer for the *Woman's Outlook* excitedly claimed that although "the question of woman suffrage ended in the withdrawal of a resolution" related to its legality in the largely Afrikaans Orange Free State, "the debate indicated an almost equally divided opinion."[155]

In the 1926 Assembly Debates, British suffragettes allied their movement with Afrikaners much in the way northern suffragettes had done with southerners before 1920. After the committee called witnesses from British and Afrikaner suffragettes from all four provinces, British activists officially solidified how "the principle of women's suffrage was more important [to them] than non-racialism."[156] Where the British suffragettes failed to achieve their goals in earlier years, their movement "finally began picking up momentum with the conversion of Afrikaans women."[157]

Where American northern and southern suffragettes hypocritically stood side by side, adopting egalitarian language while also making racist appeals, British suffragettes outwardly embraced the racist voting policies of the former Boer Republics. As Lady Rose-Inness stated,

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[153] Anna Malan, "South Africa," *International Women's News* 11 no. 5 (London: International Alliance of Women, 1915), 80.
[154] "South Africa: Transvaal Woman Suffrage." *International Women's News* 11 no. 12 (London: International Alliance of Women, 1917), 182.
[155] "South Africa: The Orange Free State Council and Woman Suffrage." *International Women's News* 12 no. 11 (London: International Alliance of Women, 1918), 173.
[156] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa,* 48.
[157] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa,* 104.

British suffragettes remained "anxious for the half-loaf…the other may come" at a later date. Where southerner Guilford Dudley represented the Jim Crow South but purposefully left the ardently racist rhetoric out of her speech before Congress, Afrikaner Elsie Groves publically stated the argument once reserved to Afrikaner suffragettes: the white woman's vote was about "race preservation."[158]

Reflecting a far more racist past and future than in the American context, the British not only condoned Afrikaner racist tactics but stalwartly employed them themselves. Portraying the foundation and postwar policies of her country of origin, English suffragette Aletta Nell claimed that "as a South African born person, [she] fe[lt] that it would be wiser if [they] gave the vote to the European woman only."[159] Women's activist Francis Bancroft wrote in 1927 that in the postwar environment, "the Englishwoman stood in conjunction with her Afrikaner sister." According to Bancroft, "the Enfranchisement of the women of South Africa served as a determining factor in the ultimate elimination of evil."[160]

In 1930, in a literal validation of the supreme role of racism in foundational and postwar rhetoric, women's suffragettes and the South African Parliament combined to bring the white woman the vote. Where American postwar reconciliation and women's suffrage efforts reflected a basic attempt to accept southern racial policies but never even considered fully implementing them, the achievement of South African women's suffrage illustrated an opposite net charge of priorities. Members of the South African, Union, Labour, and Nationalist parties recognized that granting white women the vote reduced "the electoral power of the Cape Africans…to the point

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[158] South African Parliament, 1926 Select Committee on the Enfranchisement of Women, *Women's Auxilary of the South African Labour Party* (1926), 33.
[159] South African Parliament, 1926 Select Committee on the Enfranchisement of Women, 51.
[160] Francis Bancroft, "The Women's Franchise," *The Englishwoman* (1927), 262.

of insignificance."[161] Although Nationalist leader J.M. Hertzog exclaimed in 1930 that "the long and energetic fight of feminists in this country will have its reward this year," this "fight" ran alongside the racist policies advocated by nineteenth-and twentieth-century men.[162]

In the 1930 Enfranchisement Act, the Parliament stipulated that "woman," as far as franchise rights were concerned, meant a female "who is wholly of European parentage, extraction, or descent."[163] Not only did the disfranchisement of the vast majority of South African women continue, but following the advent of the white woman's vote in 1930, nonwhites were reduced to a 4.5 percent voting bloc.[164] In a national effort to achieve the woman's vote, South African suffragettes ended their efforts by embracing the racist language they initially disengaged from. From the founding rhetoric of the former colonies and republics, through the war and into the postwar era, suffragettes found themselves in a situation similar to that of their American counterparts: hopelessly intertwined with the racial policies of the past.

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[161] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 51.
[162] James Hertzog, "The Suffrage in South Africa," *International Women's News* 24 no. 9 (London: International Alliance of Women, 1930), 100.
[163] Women's Enfranchisement Act, No. 18 of 1930 in Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 110.
[164] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 109.

Conclusion: Evaluating the Terrain

Far from a uniform, predictable discipline, historical study brings unique challenges depending on one's choice of topic. In my study of American and South African women's suffrage campaigns, I have placed less emphasis on the deeper nuances of each region in order to put forth what I see as an important, previously unexamined comparative framework. Like comparative historians before me, I can only hope that in doing so I provided a different and unique angle from which to view suffrage campaigns and American and South African history in general. With these complex women's rights campaigns in mind, American and South African historians should carefully reevaluate the significance of national rhetorical heritage and the character and impact of postwar national reconciliation.

Despite American suffragettes' antebellum deviation from the prejudiced elements of their national history, with the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 suffrage activists solidified the prejudicial legacy of the United States' past. In a union where idealized language never really matched political and social realities, the pioneers of the American suffrage movement followed suit with the United States' founding fathers, condoning prejudice and widening the wounds of American racial inequality and oppression. In South Africa, suffragettes followed the course of a consistently more prejudiced national arena by embracing racially delineated women's suffrage legislation.

This cross-national comparison makes apparent the misdirected and futile effort of judging these movements by a contemporary or region-specific morality. From the eras of great internal civil wars to the postwar periods, the paths taken by these two suffrage campaigns prove striking in their commonalities. If the foundational political tradition of the United States, like that of South Africa, had called for American suffragettes to champion a "whites-only" clause in

franchise legislation, they might well have done so. South African suffragette Sarah Grant explained to the South African Parliamentary Select Committee that "in this country it is no use talking of justice. If we talk of justice we are told we shall go under."[165] Both American and South African suffragettes added fuel to an ever-escalating fire of government-condoned racism. Yet in South Africa, suffragettes felt that the "fire" would have entirely consumed their movement if they had not quickly and steadfastly separated their cause from its flames.

A comparison of the United States and South African women's suffrage movements makes clear the slow pace of American post-Civil War reconciliation. American historians must be chary about neatly partitioning historical periods and limiting Civil War reconciliation to the nineteenth century. Free of colonial rule since the close of the eighteenth century, the United States nonetheless grappled with political inclusion along racial and gender lines in ways similar to patterns in South Africa. The post-Civil War United States remained in a long, complex, and often contradictory period of transition. When scholars of women's suffrage refer to racial arguments through the lens of the "Southern Question" or "imperialism," they often fail to recognize how crucial and enduring race remained in efforts to reconcile American northern and southern factions. Even though the Civil War ended nearly sixty years before the Nineteenth Amendment, the suffrage movement indicates that in 1920 citizens remained embroiled in an *American Question* centered on race and national identity.

Just as the cross-national comparison illustrates the slow recovery of the United States following the Civil War, it indicates just how quickly and resolutely South Africans united behind racial segregation and eventually behind the system of Apartheid. Though both countries grappled with issues of national reunion following the Civil and South African Wars, the process

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[165] South African Parliament, 1926 Select Committee on the Enfranchisement of Women, 42.

of American reunification appeared much lengthier and multifaceted than South African nation-building. From Australia to India to the shores of South Africa, imperialistic language increasingly delineated whites and nonwhites through the terms "civilized" and "uncivilized." South African suffragettes, however, moved beyond the language of empire and into the realm of nationhood. Despite an animosity between Anglo and Boer that equaled or exceeded that between American northerner and southerner, South African suffragettes united in a campaign that "was neither dependent upon nor subsequent to the British struggle" for women's suffrage.[166] In their steadfast attempts to unite British and Afrikaner activists, suffragettes helped heal the wounds of intra-racial conflict and aided in the region's development from a loosely-connected (though racially-coded) colonial settlement into a white supremacist nation. As American suffragettes and the country at large slowly but surely solidified white supremacy in the first decades of the twentieth century, British and Afrikaner suffragettes reflected a quick and resolute reconciliation behind a white South Africa.

In their most enduring legacies, American and South African suffrage movements' sacrificed the independent status of their movements by relying on racist arguments to achieve the women's vote. Tired of having the status of females symbolize "the essence of dependence," antebellum American suffragettes dreamed of self-reliant women who could stand upright without the support of men.[167] Alas, the role of racism in American and South African suffrage movements not only violated both organizations' "historical traditions and political principles," but also maintained the status of female dependence.[168] Even as American and South African women achieved franchise rights and became arguably less dependent on men, they did so by

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[166] Levine, "Introduction" in *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire,* xvi.
[167] DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 45.
[168] DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 94.

forming *another* dependent relationship with racist ideology. American women's activism continued into the 1920s and 1930s, but until the late 1960s and 1970s the call for gender equality in every facet of American life ceased to be a mainstream rallying point. In 1930s South Africa, suffragettes were "called upon to completely dissolve their political organizations and fuse" with the increasingly powerful Nationalist party.[169] Both American and South African suffrage activists garnered the women's vote by morphing their rhetoric to include racist arguments for the franchise, but neither developed movements based entirely on the woman's right to political independence.

With their ballots in hand, suffragettes looked on as the American "Jim Crow" system remained intact and as racial segregation in South Africa deepened and strengthened under the Apartheid regime. Yet even within the prejudiced climates of the twentieth-century United States and South Africa, the winds of change lingered. Lapping against the northern and southern Atlantic, they waited for the next generation of American and South African activists to emerge and forthrightly push their nations toward civic equality.

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[169] Vincent, "A Cake of Soap," 14.

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