Critical Exchange

Duncan Bell, *Dreamworlds of Race: Empire and the Utopian Destiny of Anglo-America.* Princeton University Press, 2020

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During the late nineteenth century and the opening decades of the twentieth, there was a burst of interest in unifying the scattered members of the 'Anglo-Saxon race' or 'English-speaking peoples'. Though emanating principally from Britain, promotion of the Angloworld was at once transatlantic and transcolonial, drawing contributors from all the territories its proponents sought to unite. It assumed two principal forms. One focused on the consolidation of Britain and its remaining settler colonies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and (more ambivalently) southern Africa. This was the discourse of 'imperial federation'. The other main

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axis focused on relations between Britain and the United States. Members of the transatlantic intellectual elite – scholars, journalists, novelists, preachers, and politicians – encouraged closer co-operation, even political integration, between the two powers. This was the discourse of Anglo-America.

Dreamworlds of Race analyses some of the most ambitious ideas about Anglo-America formulated between 1870 and the First World War, though on occasion it reaches further back in time and moves closer to the present. The book is intended as a contribution both to the wide-ranging scholarly debates over the intersections between Euro-American political thought and empire and to utopian studies. It can be read as the third volume in a loose trilogy that analyses what I call the metropolitan settler imaginary. In *The Idea of Greater Britain* (2007), I examined imperial federation. In *Reordering the World* (2016), I revisited aspects of the debate over settler colonialism, concentrating in particular on the relationship between liberalism and colonization. *Dreamworlds* shifts the geographical focus to the transatlantic axis of the Angloworld. In this Introduction I summarize some of my key arguments and outline the contributions that follow.

In the opening chapter, I make three conceptual moves that frame the arguments in the book. First, I discuss the idea of racial utopia. I distinguish two modes of utopianism, the 'anthropic' and 'programmatic'. The former, which dominates current scholarship, views utopianism as a ubiquitous feature of the human condition. It is the dream of a better world. Understood in this broad sense, the utopian impulse can be harnessed to numerous political goals, including deeply reactionary ones. Most advocacy of empire, and of Angloworld union, was an expression of anthropic utopian desire, insofar as it claimed that racial unity would change the world for the better.

I suggest, though, that this conception of utopianism is too all-encompassing, and I contrast it with a more restrictive programmatic variant. On this account, a political project can be considered utopian if, and only if, it invokes or prescribes the radical transformation, transcendence, or elimination, of one or more pervasive practices, structures or ordering principles, that shape human collective life. This includes poverty, socio-economic inequality, organized violence, political authority, the biochemical composition of the environment, or the ontological constitution of human beings, including death itself.

Utopianism of this kind is predicated on a fundamental change in the order of things. And once again, it can be harnessed to a wide range of political goals, including deeply reactionary ones. One of the key arguments of the book is that Anglo-America was often (though certainly not always) characterised in programmatic utopian terms, chiefly through the assertion that Anglo-American union would establish perpetual peace. This was the Anglotopian dream.

Second, I discuss how race was understood in Angloworld discourse. Invoked by almost all advocates of Anglo-America as well as their critics, it was a fluid, contested, and often deeply confused category. Race, I contend, was typically

figured as a biocultural assemblage, a hybrid compound of 'cultural' and 'biological' claims about human evolutionary history, individual and collective character, comportment, mental capacity, and physiognomy. The racial identity of Anglo-America was most commonly described as 'Anglo-Saxon', though the term 'English-speaking people', equally racialized, was also popular. Both were employed to designate a human collectivity defined by a vague admixture of mythology, historical experience, shared values, institutions, language, religious commitments, and cultural symbolism, all circumscribed (but not fully specified) by whiteness. Individual thinkers diverged mainly over how they ranked and arranged the assorted elements.

Central to all accounts of global racial identity was a belief in the transformative power of technoscience, and especially new communication technologies, such as the electrical telegraph. Technoscientific capacity was thought to demonstrate the inherent superiority of European (and particularly Anglo) powers even as it provided them with the practical means to sustain it. Moreover, the ability to dominate nature was believed to endow the 'Anglo-Saxons' with a moral mission to govern those lacking such resources. It allowed, even required, the creation of new ocean-spanning forms of political association.

Shattering existing conceptions of time and space, communications and transport technologies precipitated the cognitive transformation necessary to imagine Anglo-America as a distributed but unified racial-political community. I refer to this model of political order as a 'cyborg imperium'. This figure was produced by fusing the long-standing notion of political community as an organic being – a body politic – with the idea of the telegraph network as a nervous system animated by electricity (see also Bell, 2021). The telegraph produced the resonant image of an Anglo sensorium, a world girdled by wires and waves, ships and railways, electrical current melding the race into a single vast polity, a human-machine assemblage endowed with a form of agency.

The chapters in the first half of *Dreamworlds* delve into the political thinking of four key race unionists – the Scottish-American industrialist Andrew Carnegie, the notorious imperialist Cecil Rhodes, W.T. Stead, at the time the best-known journalist in the British empire, and the popular writer and futurist H.G. Wells. At first glance, this might seem like an eccentric grouping, but they were all committed to strong versions of Angloworld union, and they formed a loose advocacy network. These chapters trace the development of their political visions and locate them in relation to arguments about a range of other issues, including political theology, international law, imperialism and settler colonialism, and the rise of democratic politics.

The chapters in the second half are painted on a broader canvas, each addressing a general theme rather than contextualizing an individual thinker. Chapter 5 explores *fin de siècle* speculative fiction, arguing that it was in popular narratives of future conflict that we find some of the most ambitious expressions of racial

utopianism. Chapter 6 engages with more traditional political theory topics: sovereignty, statehood, citizenship, and patriotism. I argue that the meaning of political membership was reengineered in debates over Anglo-union.

Challenging the isomorphic relationship between the territorial state, sovereignty and political obligation, race unionists promoted the idea of common ('isopolitan') citizenship, an innovative form of political membership that encompassed the totality of the 'English-speaking people'. This was often fused with a commitment to 'race patriotism', an account of loyalty that identified race as a privileged site of political devotion. Chapter 7 turns to the core of the Anglotopian dream: perpetual peace. The most ambitious advocates of union claimed that it could abolish war – usually understood in racialized terms as war between the so-called 'civilized' peoples of the world – once and forever. I term this the 'racial peace thesis' and read it against other nineteenth century arguments about democracy, empire, race, and war.

In the Conclusion, I discuss two alternative discourses that disrupted the temporal and spatial assumptions underpinning claims about Anglo-racial destiny. They posit contrasting conceptions of past, present, and future. I turn first to 'steampunk', a late twentieth century 'neo-Victorian' genre of speculative fiction. Some of the leading steampunk texts – such as William Gibson and Bruce Sterling's *The Difference Engine* (1990) – redefined, revised or subverted the foundational myths and historiographical claims that pervaded Anglotopian projects, chiefly by excising the supposedly predestined emergence of the United States as the dominant global power. The second half of the chapter engages 'Afro-modern' writing. I focus on W.E.B. Du Bois and the Jamaican pan-Africanist T.E.S Scholes, examining how, in presenting counter-histories that emphasized the important contributions of African and Asian peoples to world history, they excoriated defenders of racial hierarchy and destabilized the teleological validation of white supremacy.

This Critical Exchange takes the book as a starting point for exploring this complex history. David Armitage opens the conversation by asking about the role of the ocean, of treaty-making, of monarchy, and of dreams, in the work of my protagonists. Jennifer Blatt and Fabian Hilfrich probe the American dimension of Anglo-Saxonism, focusing on differences between debates in Britain and the United States. Blatt discusses political scientists such as John Burgess, while also reflecting on the role of white supremacism in the wake of the American Civil War. Hilfrich emphasizes the importance of party affiliation in the United States and questions my reading of Andrew Carnegie. Desmond Jagmohan discusses methodological issues in the history of political thought and asks whether all diasporic nationalist visions are morally problematic. Menaka Philips reflects on the significance of the political imagination, both in *Dreamworlds* and in recent superhero films.

In responding to my critics, I seek to answer their probing questions, clarify some of my arguments, and discuss ways of extending the analysis of the Angloworld ideology.

Duncan Bell

Imperial spectres: The hydro-body, hierarchy and heredity in *Dreamworlds of Race*

Dreamworlds of Race is the culmination – for now, at least – of what Duncan Bell calls his 'loose trilogy' of works on the intellectual history of Anglo-American relations around the turn of the twentieth century. It follows hard on the heels of Bell's *Idea of Greater Britain* (Bell, 2007), and his *Reordering the World* (Bell, 2016), and provides a novel, often surprising, survey of the imperial imaginaries of the Anglosphere at the zenith of its global extent, roughly from Victoria's becoming empress of India in 1876 to the First World War. The work covers the global moment, between the invention of the steam press and the widespread international imposition of copyright, when print exploded across the English-speaking world, leaving a vast and intimidating archive for historians to wrestle into shape.

It is a tribute to Bell's analytical subtlety, his writerly flair and his sheer *Sitzfleisch* that he can sustain a gripping argument, not just across three books, but, in this case, over four hundred pages, about the sometimes bloated, rambling, self-congratulatory and even repellent products of the era. *Dreamworlds of Race* sparkles with illuminating coinages and unexpected connections, and thereby renders even some of the least appealing, indeed most appalling, characters of the late nineteenth-century Anglo-world, such as Cecil Rhodes and Andrew Carnegie, both compelling and comprehensible.

What makes the achievement of the book still more remarkable is that Bell can bring these unsavoury and often brutal paladins of empire into fruitful conversation with a host of other authors and discourses, from Victorian speculative fiction to recent Afrofuturism. Whether these promising threads indicate unfinished business for Bell remains to be seen.

Dreamworlds of Race maps the variegated landscapes of argument concerning Anglo-American unity from about 1880 to 1914 and exposes the mechanisms contemporaries proposed to reinforce that unity in the present and, still more compellingly, to project it into a peaceful future. For some of the most prominent, notably Rhodes, Carnegie and the journalist W.T. Stead, the primary technology of unification was race, a biological-cum-cultural 'cyborg assemblage' that could shrink physical distance and promote white supremacy across the world from Auckland to Aberdeen and from Sydney to San Francisco.

Imperial Britain and its tentacular extension through its settler colonies formed one side of this imagined body; the United States, as it added an insular empire to its continental polity of conquest, was the other. Imagined as a global whole, and occasionally folding in other White peoples, this 'racial utopia' might at last be the vector of perpetual peace visionaries had dreamt of since the late seventeenth century. Yet only one side of the colour line would reap the fruits of that peace, of course: indigenous 'dying' races were assumed to be rapidly vanishing and white supremacy would rule over the remaining 'darker' peoples of the Earth. If this were to be peace, it was a peace founded on dispossession, hierarchy, heredity and pseudo-science, as well as on scientific fictions.

Bell's magisterial account of this imaginary assemblage stimulates a host of reflections and reactions. For the purposes of this forum, I want to focus briefly on three that relate to my own interests as an historian – oceans, treaties and monarchy – and then conclude with a couple of less substantial points about the insubstantial: that is, regarding the peculiar prominence of dreams and ghosts in this utopian moment.

I begin with the sea. The intellectual and political action of *Dreamworlds of Race* takes place during a time of greatly heightened oceanic consciousness, not just in the anglophone world of the Atlantic but also in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. As Bell notes, contemporaries perceived how novel technologies, especially the steamship and the telegraph, had 'annihilated' time and space, particularly oceanic space. Coal-fired ships and gutta-percha-wrapped cables sped bodies and communications over previously unimaginable distances and rendered conceivable what had before been unthinkable: political communities that extended over water rather than land, and that could encompass a planetary diaspora formerly divided by the seas not linked by them (Bell, 2005). The United States and Canada were the only major segments of the Angloworld to be contiguous, while the Australian federation after 1901 provided a model of greater integration for the wider settler world.

But what if the novel distance-destroying technologies could in effect evaporate the world's waters to make racial utopianism a reality? The Angloworld would then necessarily be de-territorialised – or, at least, differently territorialised. It would sit between the classic terracentrism of Westphalian mythology, firmly founded on bounded land, and the incipient aerial world that lay just over the imaginative horizon of most of Bell's subjects, but which was just beginning to populate their dreams and nightmares, most notably in the work of H.G. Wells. Yet how did Carnegie, Rhodes, Stead, and their ilk conceive of specifically oceanic space? Did they, like their equally vocal and prolific contemporary, Alfred Thayer Mahan, theorise or historicise it? Did they understand it as an alternative or competitor to territorial space? Did they integrate oceanic and terrestrial visions into their dreamworlds? And did they view sea power as a technology of white supremacy? In short, and to run a variation on Thongchai Winichakul's illuminating concept,

did they ever conceive of the 'geo-body' of the Angloworld as what might be called a 'hydro-body' (1994)?

The utopian racialist visions that Bell anatomises were not just ontological: they were also teleological. And, following in the footsteps of a hundred theorists from the long eighteenth century, the telos they sought was peace. Bell has uncovered a sunken archipelago of 'imperial peace' theorists who believed, *contra* the so-called 'democratic peace' theorists, that the victory of imperial rule would bring with it the triumph of peace itself. Among the pacific technologies they believed empires might wield were treaties among (rather than within) empires.

Treaties appear throughout *Dreamworlds of Race* as intermittent instruments for articulating the Angloworld: that is, both for joining and linking it and for expressing its governing ideals. As Bell notes, the Angloworld's dreamers returned repeatedly to the idea of an arbitration treaty as the mechanism for preventing war and calming conflict. Treaties could also be the formal agreements that could ground federalism and federation itself – as the etymology of those very terms, from the Latin *foedera* or pacts, would have signaled to those with classical educations and to Americans. This sprinkling of treaty plans over the course of Bell's narrative inevitably raises the question of just how frequent such proposals were.

The International Relations scholar Edward Keene has identified what he terms a 'treaty-making revolution' in the last third of the nineteenth century, on the eve of Bell's explosion of racial utopianism (Keene, 2012). How were these two epochal developments related, if at all? How did the visions of peace-making through treaties reflect other symptoms of the treaty 'revolution', such as the late-century surge of multilateralism, the various Hague Conventions, or other species of pacification in the period that did not rely on the horizontal recognition of sovereign equality but on the forcible imposition of imperial hierarchy? And how seriously were they taken in the decades before the Kellogg-Briand Pact, for example?

The capacity for making such agreements had long been an index of sovereign equality and a condition for its recognition: with this in mind, one might ask whether the conditions of eligibility for this constrained club changed in the context of what Bell calls the 'bio-cultural assemblage' of late nineteenth-century racialism.

Bell shows that the 'bio-' part of that assemblage descended both somatically and culturally. It was inscribed on bodies and passed by inheritance, creating distinctions between peoples that racialists could then arrange in a hierarchy with the white 'race' at its summit. Racialism thereby shared two defining characteristics – hierarchy and heritability – with another exclusionary ideology of the era: that is, with monarchism. For some of the characters in *Dreamworlds of Race*, monarchy was a major stumbling-block to the integration of the Anglo-world. Running athwart that imagined community was a division between American-style

republicanism, of the anti-monarchical variety, and British monarchism as the ligament of unification through shared subjecthood – rather than via common citizenship.

Since the mid-eighteenth century, British utopian writers had tended to project the institution of monarchy into the distant future even as they wished away many of the other retrograde features of their own societies; for tolerably obvious reasons, American speculative writers had long since expunged monarchy from the repertoire of their possible futures. Elsewhere, Bell has traced the malleability of late nineteenth-century monarchism in his study of Victorian 'patriot queenship' (Bell, 2006).

With this in mind, one might ask, how the two leading strains of heritable connection, racialism and monarchism, collided, coalesced or subducted in the period covered by *Dreamworlds of Race*? Was a racialist federalism the means to evade an unpalatable choice between republicanism and monarchy? How did an originally German monarchy in the British Empire relate to the 'Saxon' element within Anglo-Saxonism, and how did this in turn inform Rhodes's plan for educational elite formation to include German as well as anglophone scholars? Moreover, and going somewhat beyond Bell's chronology, could the British Commonwealth be seen as one of the lasting legacies of the utopianism he traces, albeit one mostly cleansed of racialism by the elevation of the monarchy as its binding institution (Murphy, 2013)?

A world of dreams is often a world of ghosts: that is, of spectral presences from the past with the power to materialise in the present and even to point towards the future. Any reader of *Dreamworlds of Race* will be struck by the proliferation of dreams (and their dreamers) in the forty years or so on either side of the turn of the twentieth century. Although Bell does not discuss this oneiric surfeit directly, it would be valuable to know more about why dreams became such potent vectors for, among other matters, racialism and federalism in this moment.

Can the salience of dreams perhaps be connected to Freud's discovery in 1895 of dreams as the 'royal road to the unconscious'? Or were these merely two manifestations of a larger 'dreamworld' at the time? The increasing prominence of spiritualism might provide one part of the answer (and Bell reminds us that Stead was interested in spiritualism as well as utopianism, for instance). Like electricity and the telegraph, spiritualism was a de-territorialising technology that dissolved time and space and helped to make transregional, and even global, unity within the Anglosphere conceivable. It also raised spectres from the past, especially the eighteenth-century past.

The era of the American Revolution saw the imagining of parliaments that travelled across the Atlantic, of novel forms of imperial citizenship and of federal solutions to prevent the fission of an oceanic imperial monarchy. In their wake came an explosion of constitutionalism, American and otherwise, that would later inspire similar transnational charters in the aftermath of the First World War.

All this is of course not to say that the schemes Bell has so brilliantly reconstructed in *Dreamworlds of Race* were derivative or unoriginal: rather, that they formed links in dream sequences that stretched back at least a century and projected forward for decades more, some even into our own time. Readers of his latest masterpiece can only hope that he will deploy his archaeological skills to excavate other dreamworlds, past, present, and future, and to extend his current trilogy into a tetralogy or even a pentalogy.

David Armitage

American dreamworlds: White racial reunion in U. S. political thought

As Duncan Bell reminds us in his learned and fascinating exploration of some of the racial 'dreamworlds' that informed British and American political thought at the time, the years around the turn of the twentieth century saw elites on both sides of the Atlantic expressing at once great utopian hopes and intense new anxieties about the scope and pace of change. Advances in technology, industry, communication, and transport, along with the new social and political forms that accompanied them, led many to believe that their generation might be the first with the tools to finally bring human destiny under rational control. As the British scholar-politician James Bryce put it, science was 'making the world small'; for many British and American political and social thinkers that meant bold, decisive action might allow them to grasp it in their hands (Bryce, 1886, p. 442). Failing that, those same forces threatened chaos.

A particular locus of elite anxiety in this seemingly shrinking world was what many called 'race contact'. In his famous 1900 'color line' speech, W.E.B. Du Bois affirmed that, 'sheer numbers and physical contact' meant that 'in this age when the ends of the world are being brought so near together the millions of black men in Africa, America and the Islands of the Sea, not to speak of the brown and yellow myriads elsewhere, are bound to have a great influence upon the world in the future' (in Waters, 1917, p. 258). While lamentably few shared Du Bois's commitment to racial equality, even fewer among the British and American intelligentsia would disagree with his claim that interactions among racial groups would be central to world politics in the twentieth century. Indeed, if Du Bois denounced the prospect of 'denying to over half the world…the opportunities and privileges of modern civilization' for being on wrong side of the color line (in Waters, 1917, p. 258), Bell's book describes a transnational network of white writers and political figures who pushed for a global order more consonant with that line. Specifically, figures like the robber baron Andrew Carnegie, the journalist W.T. Stead, the arch-imperialist Cecil John Rhodes, and the writer H. G. Wells were among the most vocal advocates of various legal and institutional arrangements meant to produce an 'Angloworld'. This would reunite scattered

and divided Anglo-Saxons, thus beginning at least to reconcile mismatched racial, territorial, and legal boundaries and ultimately making it possible to impose a vast, imperial peace on those unruly 'myriads'.

These Angloworld dreams were expressed in various proposals to more closely integrate Britain with its settler colonies and/or the United States through forms of political union or closer affiliation and/or schemes for a special, common citizenship status for whites that would transcend national borders. Fears about Britain's waning influence relative to the United States seem to have motivated many calls for an Anglo-American union, particularly among the British intelligentsia. For the most fervent of these racial utopian dreamers, an Angloworld was not just a solution to the problem of threats to British power; it promised a way out of history and its interminable conflicts. The united, imperial Anglo-Saxon (or 'English-speaking') power might effectively 'occupy an Archimedean point, monitoring, regulating, and shaping the behavior of other peoples and polities' (Bell, 2020, p. 332). As Bell shows, the utopian character and broader cultural appeal of these visions came out even more vividly in popular speculative fiction, with turn of the century 'future war' stories by both British and American writers ending in world domination by the united, technologically and politically advanced, and ultimately benevolent (if often initially genocidal) Anglo-Saxons.

Bell is clear that the stronger proposals of the sort Rhodes, Stead, Carnegie, and Wells were articulating for a reunion of what the American Revolution had torn asunder were in some ways idiosyncratic. While a range of ideas for increased cooperation between Britain and America were widely entertained, calls for union never gained serious political momentum in either country, and were particularly marginal in the United States. At the same time, as Desmond Jagmohan points out in his contribution to this Critical Exchange, theirs was one of many such dreams of political order reorganized on racial lines that were emerging at the time, including anti-colonial versions expressed by Pan-Africanists, Pan-Arabists, and others. Racial dreaming was in the air.

More ideologically consonant with Angloworld discourse than Pan-Africanism and its corollaries were several other visions of better living through more unified whiteness. The fledgling academic discipline of political science in the United States offers instructive examples, both in terms of how the Angloworld discourse resonated with ideas about domestic and world order produced in that setting, and how those visions diverged. John W. Burgess, who in 1880 established the United States' first doctoral program in political science, was an enthusiastic Anglo-Saxonist. His version of 'Teutonic germ' theory held that American political institutions were the product of an Anglo-Saxon 'genius for liberty' transplanted to the new world and destined to perfect itself and ultimately 'civilize' the world for the 'welfare of mankind' (Burgess, 1902, p. ix). But even for him, the American Revolution was a pivotal moment, having freed American civilization from old institutional constraints so that it might eventually realize the 'ideal of the

American commonwealth' (Burgess, 1895). More generally, as Dorothy Ross (1992) has shown, American political scientists around the turn of the twentieth century, like their counterparts in the other social sciences, largely shared Burgess's commitment to an American exceptionalism that left little room for an impulse to return to anything recalling pre-Revolutionary political arrangements.

Still, there are key resonances between the calls for an Angloworld and the visions of racialized political and social order that were widely shared and taught in this milieu. Burgess and many like him thought the United States was not yet ready to take on imperial responsibilities. As Burgess put it in 1899, so long as the U.S. remained a 'mixed population of Americans, Europeans, and Africans', and had 'an Indian problem and a Mormon problem and a negro problem', among others, Americans would have been better served by 'remain[ing] at home and attend[ing] to our own domestic affairs' (Burgess, 1899, pp. 1-2). Even as such misgivings lingered, in the wake of the Spanish-American War, most American political scientists had, whether from principle or pragmatism, dropped the question of whether the U.S. should be an empire in favor of what kind it should be. There was little dissent from the idea that what international relations scholar Raymond Buell called the 'restless energy of the caucasian peoples' meant that imperial expansion would have happened one way or another, and was likely to continue (Buell, 1923, p. 59).

These scholars tended to envision an American-style 'empire of reform', rather than a specifically Anglo-Saxon one, but it was to be no less white, and like the envisioned Angloworld peace, would require the long-term, if not permanent, subordination of 'backward' peoples. As Paul Reinsch warned, any illusions that American-style imperialism implied meaningful self-government in the colonies ought to be quelled by 'that part of our national experience...supplied by the negro question and Chinese immigration' (Reinsch, 1904, p. 119). This was, as he later commented, to 'subject' the 'great types of humanity which are essentially different...to the same methods of government, was a mistake of the nineteenth century [not to be] carried over into the twentieth' (Reinsch, 1905, p. 117).

Reinsch also envisioned the possibility of imperial peace, though again of a somewhat different cast than those envisioned by the cohort Bell describes. They envisioned versions of a benevolent empire of united Anglo-Saxons, held together by racial affinity and new technologies like the telegraph, which could connect geographically dispersed communities in an instant. For Reinsch, racial affinity was insufficient to join the white powers together or discourage them from inter-imperial conflict, but racial characteristics might step into the breach, binding those powers' fates together in a way that recalled the technological imagination of some Angloworld thinkers. For Reinsch, the same 'caucasian restlessness' driving conquest and competition would also drive trade and scientific advances, which in turn would require ever-increasing degrees of international cooperation on both the state and sub-state levels. If the telegraph was to be the nervous system of the

Angloworld, for Reinsch, international unions for banal, everyday things like standards for measurement and cooperation in policing, sanitation, and agriculture would be the 'true constructive force', a vast, interlocking web that, even if it failed to unite them, would in practice constitute a 'foundation' for global community among the imperial powers that depended upon them (Reinsch, 1911, p. 2). If this vision did not quite have the utopian finality of many Angloworld dreams, that seems to me a difference of degree rather than kind.

Moreover, if Anglo-American reunion was not a central preoccupation for American political scientists in this period, other questions of white racial reunion loomed large. It was an item of near consensus that the Civil War had proved the inadequacy of 18th-century political philosophy. Burgess was one of the most forthright to make this case, and to propose remedies. For him, the fateful collision of a northern commitment to misguided ideals with a southern failure to see that slavery had outlived its usefulness had brought the nation to catastrophe. To correct the nation's course, Americans needed to understand that rights and political membership didn't originate from individuals but rather derived from an organic, evolving Teutonic 'state'. That is, the true American political community, to which American rights and liberties applied, was the white one; claims for African-American citizenship were just as wrongheaded as southern claims of independent sovereignty. Such an understanding was a necessary precondition for sectional rapprochement based on a 'united national opinion'; forging it was the era's (and U.S. political scientists') 'most serious and delicate task' (Burgess, 1897, pp. vii-viii).

For Burgess, the Civil War was a tragic episode that nonetheless contributed to the development of the American state. Reconstruction, on the other hand, appeared as a crime against that state. If whites were the true subjects of self-government, obliging them to participate alongside or even to be governed by African-Americans made a mockery of it. To make this point, and by doing so – they hoped – to help Northern whites repent of the injustice they had wrought on their Southern race-fellows, Burgess and his student-turned-colleague William Archibald Dunning sponsored something of a cottage industry of lurid, dystopian accounts of Reconstruction as the 'tragic era' of negro rape and misrule. These appeared in historical monographs and also, frequently, in accounts of southern politics in the *American Political Science Review* and *Political Science Quarterly.*

In those journals, Reconstruction often appeared as a cautionary tale and Jim Crow laws as sensible administrative solutions for whites being asked to live on terms of legal equality with what, in a fairly typical passage, one writer referred to as 'a wholly distinct race' whose unsuitability for equal coexistence with whites was 'not factitious but anthropological' (Langdon, 1891, p. 31). Lynching, in turn, was generally discussed as the sad but predictable result of the limits of such workarounds. Commenting on one such analysis by Albert Bushnell Hart for the *American Political Science Review* in 1910, a reviewer praised the relatively

racially liberal Hart for displaying, finally, a healthy 'acceptance of the inevitable' need for southern whites to be given rein to govern their African-American populations as they saw fit (Stone, 1910, p. 613). And, as with Angloworld proponents, American political scientists yearning for the north and the south to come back together via a mutual embrace of white supremacy were hardly alone. If, as Bell shows, some of the wildest dreams of an Angloworld found expression in speculative fiction, romance was often the characteristic mode for imagining north-south white reunion in American popular fiction.

What Nina Silber (1993) calls 'romances of reunion' were popular even before the Civil War, but that genre exploded in the war's aftermath. In the immediate postwar years, most of these stories featured a virile Union soldier taming a passionate, headstrong southern belle. But this began to shift with the abandonment of Reconstruction. As Jane Turner Censer (1999) observes, by the 1890s north-south romances began to be more critical of the north, and, often, to require a northern conversion to precisely that healthy 'acceptance' of white supremacy suggested by writers in the Burgess/Dunning school. Southern women novelists like Katherine Sherwood Bonnier and Julia Macgruder had by that point already begun to write more critically of their northern male characters, who, failing to understand the wisdom of southern whites' way of life, sometimes didn't end up with the girl.

These themes were picked up even more explicitly in the 'red-blooded', 'realist' fiction that Richard Slotkin (1995) identifies as a reaction to the sentimental novels aimed at the vast female readership of this period. Perhaps the most culturally resonant of these was the bestselling *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan,* written by Thomas A. Dixon (a former student of Teutonist historian Herbert Baxter Adams and classmate of Woodrow Wilson's at Johns Hopkins University) and famously adapted in the 1915 blockbuster film, *Birth of a Nation.* In the novel, a Thaddeus Stevens stand-in named Austin Stoneman brings his children to reunite with their southern friends the Camerons in Reconstruction Piedmont. The boys, once on opposite sides of the Civil War battlefield, are brought back together by sharing in an orgy of lynching (led by a Cameron brother who is a Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan) and, finally, by marrying each other's sisters. The book ends on Stoneman's agonized recantation (he laments being led astray by his mulatto housekeeper – the 'yellow vampire who keeps my house'), followed by a brief scene in which the Grand Dragon explains to his chastened northern bride that the black vote has been successfully suppressed, and thus, 'Civilization...saved, and the South redeemed from shame' (Dixon, 1905, pp. 371, 374). The film version ends on an even more millennial picture, in which that same couple is holding hands on a hillside as the camera pans to the valley below and a scene of bucolic peace watched over by a looming Christ figure.

Extra-territorial imperialism does not figure in *The Clansman,* but it was a theme in *The Leopard's Spots*, the previous novel in Dixon's self-described 'series of

historical novels on the Race Conflict' (Dixon, 1905, p. 1). Slotkin points out that in that book, as in many other fictions of north-south reunion, the comradeship of northern and southern soldiers in the Spanish American war cast white reconciliation as a key feature of American expansion (1992, pp. 186-187). The north's recognition of their guilt for Reconstruction helps unite white Americans behind their imperial mission in the Philippines and elsewhere; that imperial mission in turn reinforces white America's sense of being, as the hero of *The Leopard's Spots* puts it, 'united at last and invincible, waked to the consciousness of her resistless power' (1908 [1902], p. 412). Here we see again echoes of Angloworld thinking, a dream future or imagined recent past in which, by reconciling their differences, whites can come together to impose a proper, lasting order, at home as much as globally.

My point in offering these comments is not to minimize the distinctiveness of Angloworld discourse. Rather it is to highlight the heuristic potential of Bell's nuanced mapping of these imaginative geographies of race and power. These white supremacist dreams were, as he notes, highly flexible and often self-contradictory assemblages, but the logics they expressed – and even their racial utopian impulses, if sometimes in more muted forms – were and remain deeply embedded in conceptions of national belonging and world order far beyond the networks he describes.

Jessica Blatt

The eccentric utopian: Andrew Carnegie, American views of the Anglosphere, and American exceptionalism

Dreamworlds of Race is a *tour de force* through Victorian/Gilded Age British and American utopias about the impending triumph of the 'Anglosphere', a variably imagined space dominated by Anglo-Saxons. The dreamworld always incorporated Great Britain and the United States and sometimes extended to the British settler colonies as well. While its institutional makeup and timetable remained in flux, its propagandists predicted global Anglo-Saxon dominance for the benefit of all mankind and an era of permanent peace. In the first three substantive chapters, Bell discusses several British and American propagandists of the Anglosphere. Three more chapters focus on themes, such as contemporary science fiction literature, as well as some of the utopia's core principles, for example isopolitan citizenship and the dream of eternal peace. In a concluding chapter that does much more than summarize the book's main themes, Bell contrasts these Victorian dreams with similar narratives in recent Steampunk literature and with Afro-modernist visions that dramatized how one (Anglo-Saxon) person's dreamworld could be another (non-Anglo Saxon) person's nightmare. It is also in the conclusion where Bell points to the continued political relevance of his topic because the campaign for

Brexit has once again engendered a 'celebration of the world-historical role of the Angloworld' (Bell, 2020, p. 359).

As Bell outlines, this millennialist dream could be religious or atheist, driven as much by God's choice as by the 'natural selection' of social Darwinism. Common to all of them, however, was the underlying conviction that the Anglo-Saxon 'race' had been singled out for fulfilling the world's destiny. Race, as Bell adds, was a very fluid category that could signify anything from nationality and language, from politics and history to biology. To capture this complexity, Bell crafts the fitting phrase 'biocultural assemblage', which underlines the extent to which these outwardly universal utopias for the world's benefit were driven by the exclusive – and elusive – category of race.

In his introduction, Bell emphasizes that he is neither interested in exhaustively sketching the Anglosphere debates, nor in assessing their impact on politics, since it is the boldest visions that will help him outline the potency of this 'racial utopianism'. While I have no objections to that remit, I want to contextualise these utopian visions in order illustrate their reach and importance, but also the limits of their appeal (maybe that is just the historian in me!). For that purpose, I want to concentrate on the American versions of the Anglosphere, which Bell discusses in the second chapter, by focusing on Andrew Carnegie's dreamworlds. Adding personal context for Carnegie will help explain the hyperbole of his visions, whereas a juxtaposition with more specifically American utopias suggests that the attraction of the Anglosphere may well have been greater in Britain than in the United States. Even so, these utopias were no less racially determined than the Anglosphere.

Carnegie's Anglospheric dreams were undoubtedly grandiose. The legendary steel magnate and second richest man in the world was an outlier and a maverick, full of contradictions, as Bell emphasizes. He was one of the few 'captains of industry' who recognized the right of workers to organise, yet he brutally crushed one of the largest unions in the Homestead Strike of 1892. He opposed colonial domination of the Philippines on principled grounds, but he compromised these principles when he deemed the indigenous population sufficiently small, as in Hawaii, or the targeted territory sufficiently close to the United States and of national interest, as in the Caribbean. His exceptions were so numerous that one historian has referred to him as a 'tinsel anti-imperialist' (Beisner, 1985, p. 184). And on utopianism, Carnegie fancied himself 'a dreamer' who could emerge as an agent of global change, but he rejected out of hand as naïve some fellow peace activists who approached him about donations (Nasaw, 2006, pp. 693, 716-717).

Bell embeds Carnegie's visions in a wider tableau of similar thinking in the United States at the time. Interestingly, though, while Carnegie shared the dream of an Anglo-Saxon world with these protagonists, he disagreed with most of them on crucial details and contemporary political questions. With an evangelical like Josiah Strong, Carnegie disputed the role of God in legitimizing and bringing about

the millennium. With imperialists like Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge or Lyman Abbott, Carnegie disagreed about the conquest of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War and about what imperialists considered to be the model function of the British Empire. As for advocates of increasing military preparedness, such as Alfred Thayer Mahan or, again, Roosevelt, Carnegie chided them for their views on the use of force versus the need for arbitration and schemes for global peace (although Bell emphasizes that Carnegie was never a pacifist). The only attribute he shared with them, apart from the utopias, was the affiliation with the Republican Party.

This makes Carnegie an anomalous spokesperson for American Anglotopias and the only other shared attribute, party loyalty, is more significant than Bell acknowledges. It delimits the reach of Anglo-American fantasies in the Gilded Age United States – to white Anglo-Saxon Protestant elites (the proverbial WASPs) who made their home primarily in the Republican Party. The Democrats, on the other hand, were the party of more recent immigrants from southern and eastern Europe and from diverse religious backgrounds who felt excluded from these Anglo-Saxon dreams – even though, as Bell rightly emphasizes (Bell, 2020, p. 33), American propagandists always left the definition of the Anglo-Saxon race vague enough to include most *white* immigrant groups. Nevertheless, as far as I can see, neither prominent Democrats nor many other recent immigrants from non-English parts of Europe took up the baton of the Anglosphere.

More importantly, in the United States, the Anglosphere always had to contend with millennialist visions inspired by American exceptionalism, the notion that the country was unique because of its democratic founding. These ideas informed propagandists like Josiah Strong at least as much as the Anglosphere. This narrative was strongly predicated on the juxtaposition of the unburdened New World with the corrupt, monarchical, and socially hierarchical Old World. Contemporary observers may have viewed Great Britain as the most kindred and 'advanced' part of the Old World, but nevertheless a part of it. To such a nationalist millennialist vision all Americans could subscribe, even though it was still strongly racially determined and did not usually extend to the non-white inhabitants of the United States.

I would argue that a stronger contextualisation of this particular utopia would have been helpful in hypothesising that the Anglosphere (not unlike the 'special relationship') was more of a British than an American obsession in the Victorian era. Carnegie himself is an instructive example in this context because he seemed torn between American, Anglosphere and global visions of the perfect future. This ambivalence emerges best in the juxtaposition between two of his most important publications: *Triumphant Democracy*, published in 1886, and 'A Look Ahead', six years later. As Bell acknowledges, the book's first edition glorified the United States and castigated the United Kingdom (Bell, 2020, pp. 47–48; also Nasaw, 2006, pp. 273–277). Carnegie emphasized flat social structures and the absence of

feudalism as distinguishing advantages of the United States, features emphasized by advocates of American exceptionalism. Although Carnegie already championed a union between both countries at the time, he left no doubt that Great Britain would have to follow the American lead and discard its monarchical shackles for 'race imperialism' to triumph. The book was both a paean to American exceptionalism and an invitation to the mother country to follow its offspring into a union after divesting itself of its 'Old Europe' moorings. It is the latter aspect that Bell emphasizes.

Nevertheless, the book's reception history underlines the first reading. Contrary to Carnegie's expectations, his heavy-handed criticism of Great Britain guaranteed a frosty response to the volume. British critics did not dwell on the invitation to a united Anglosphere, but on the criticism of their traditions and institutions. Even Carnegie's idol Herbert Spencer denied that republican institutions accounted for American successes. This is the context in which we must read 'A Look Ahead', not least because it was also intended as a postscript to a new edition of *Triumphant Democracy*. Bell considers this the centrepiece of Carnegie's Anglospheric dreamworld. The article seems targeted at a British, rather than an American audience, and it relativised much of the book's criticism. The significance of the American Revolution was belittled as an 'involuntary' accident and the reasons and conditions of future reunion outlined. Carnegie emphasized that the scheme would materially benefit Great Britain, while harming American manufacturers, and he even found an – albeit transitory – role for the monarchy. Before fading away, the Queen could effect reunion. Carnegie still envisaged American leadership of that union, but this time, he derived its legitimacy simply from the superiority in numbers, rather than from superior institutions. 'A Look Ahead' toned down both the criticism of Great Britain and the exceptionalism of the United States. How much of that was due to a realistic assumption that praise might be more conducive than criticism to bring about the utopia – and how much of it was due to the fact that a vain author was hoping for a more sympathetic reception of the new edition of *Triumphant Democracy* in the United Kingdom?

If the critical reception of the book's first edition in Great Britain provides some context for understanding the gushing Anglo-American utopia in 'A Look Ahead', contemporary developments help explain why – I would argue – Carnegie's enthusiasm for this particular utopia cooled from the late 1890s onwards. As Bell emphasizes, the Venezuelan boundary crisis of 1895/96 evoked outwardly contradictory reactions in Carnegie. On the one hand, he thought that the United States would be justified to go to war against the mother country to safeguard the principle of arbitration. On the other hand, though, the optimist in him thought that going to the brink of war could serve as an incentive for closer union between both countries, especially after the British government relented (76-78; Nasaw, 2006, p. 500). Carnegie's subsidiary hopes for increased efforts at international arbitration were at the forefront of his thinking then, and again during the Taft

Administration, when an even more ambitious arbitration treaty was rejected by the US Senate (Nasaw, 2006, pp. 752-755, 769-770). Incidentally, this underlines that an exceptionalist and isolationist American tradition continued to have more purchase in the United States than the Anglosphere.

Ultimately, it was the United States' flirtation with empire in the wake of the Spanish-American War that weakened Carnegie's infatuation with the Anglosphere to a more significant extent than Bell concedes. Robert Beisner categorically concluded that 'the war with Spain was the final blow to Carnegie's once grandiose conception of 'race imperialism' (Beisner, 1985, p. 175). This may be exaggerated, as Carnegie still invoked an 'alliance of hearts' and a 'patriotism of race' in this period, but he was clearly troubled by imperialists' suggestions that the British Empire served as a model for the US administration of overseas territories, especially the Philippines. No longer confident that the British Empire would just fade away, as he had argued in 'A Look Ahead', Carnegie emphasized that 'India means death to our race' (Carnegie, 1899a, p. 240). The only lesson the United States could learn was to avoid imperial possessions altogether. The Star-Spangled Scotsman passionately argued against an alliance with Great Britain that would surely be needed if the United States thrust itself into the world of competing empires. Such an alliance, Carnegie warned, would be 'humiliating' and only 'a slender thread' of protection, to be revoked at any moment British national interest prevailed (Carnegie, 1899b, pp. 3-4).

Carnegie clung to the dream of a future Anglo-American utopia, but he also feared that the direction could be different, i.e. the United States emulating the British Empire, rather than the other way around. That would lead to forfeiting the nation's exceptional geographical and economic advantages and, most importantly, its character as a democratic nation and a champion of freedom. Other anti-imperialists were even more unequivocal in their advocacy of a distinctly nationalist utopia that could only be preserved if the United States refrained from Old World imperial practices and alliances. Most anti-imperialists (and again, many of them Democrats) did not champion an Anglo-American utopia. Nevertheless, their nationalist utopia was still racially determined, as was the anti-imperialism of many of them, keen as they were to avoid engagement with 'inferior' races that could only debase the 'superior' one. These utopias were no less racist than the Anglosphere.

Despite his professed continued commitment to the Anglosphere, Carnegie published and talked less about it after 1900. Instead, he focused increasingly on disarmament, arbitration and various schemes devoted to international peace, including the idea of an international league. While it is true that he still spoke of Anglo-American arbitration, for example, as the nucleus of establishing arbitration as a global principle, he increasingly emphasized the roles of other actors as agents of world peace (ironically the German emperor Wilhelm II among them). His utopian focus had become more global, but again, no less racist because it was still

grounded in northern hemispheric leadership. Hence, even in Carnegie, but even more so in fellow anti-imperialists, we can see that the Anglosphere had always been more of a British than an American dream. There was always an inherent tension between this utopia and the exceptionalist American one, which is precisely why Carnegie could only imagine an outcome with Great Britain becoming more like and subservient to the United States. When the alignment between the two countries seemed to point in the other direction, towards the British Empire, Carnegie mentioned the Anglosphere less. Was the Anglosphere more attractive to British observers (like the special relationship nowadays), at least in part because they worried about the aftermath of the British Empire? Was it a means to preserve and prolong British global significance? After all, utopias are always driven by fear as much as by hope and exuberance; they are always shadowed by dystopias – of which there were also many in the Gilded Age.

Ultimately, it is, of course, ironic if opposition to empire decreased the attraction of the Anglosphere for some Americans because all the different dreamworlds – whether Anglo-American, American or 'global' – were predicated on the primacy and leadership of the white races across the globe. In that sense, all these versions were deeply racist and imperialist, even though they may not have envisioned direct rule over independent territories. And this is ultimately one of the most significant insights of Bell's impressive book.

Fabian Hilfrich

Racial utopias and moral nightmares

In a little over a decade, Duncan Bell has completed a stunning trilogy on empire and late Victorian political thought. Instead of dipping into the familiar pail of deplorables, his newest instalment, *Dreamworlds of Race* (2020), picks up where his previous volume, *Reordering the World* (2016), left off. There he had levelled reformist liberals like J. A. Hobson, L. T. Hobhouse, and Henry Sidgwick. But here he bludgeons the real movers and shakers of empire, those we seldom read but whose ideas had the far greater influence on the commerce and crime of their day. Empire was one of the most conspicuous features of modern life, and, if Bell is right, many of its willing executioners were liberal philosophers, politicians, and artists. From the late nineteenth century to the First World War, many of them imagined a future in which Anglo and global supremacy were inseparable. Bell, who writes with moderation and precision, weaves an impressive array of sources into a seamless story in which respected thinkers and imperial hustlers shared a common political imaginary – a racial utopia or Angloworld. This ideal, part desire to remake the world and part delusion of racial dominance, was forged in popular novels, vernacular histories, philosophical treatises, and scientific studies. Advocates included crude capitalists (Andrew Carnegie), popular novelists (H.G. Wells),

and learned scholars (A.V. Dicey). Their swagger and sway injured black and brown people in terrible and unpardonable ways. That cost, though less accounted for in Bell's trilogy, shadows the Demerara cane fields of my childhood, banana plantations of Santo Tomás de Castilla, and cotton farms of Alabama.

If we are going to take the history of ideas seriously then we ought to give those more pernicious ideas their intellectual due, and that is precisely what Bell has been doing. Reading him reminds one that ideas travel freely. They respect neither borders nor genres. And while it may be a sad fact, it is nonetheless a fact that Herbert Spencer may have penned the vision but it was Teddy Roosevelt who marshalled a powerful nation in its service. As a historian of ideas, I am fully aware that Horatio Alger had a far greater impact on American character than Edith Wharton, that the subtle and brilliant is no match for the violent and vulgar. Life does not imitate our syllabi, especially those on the history of modern political theory. The sermons of Lyman Abbot, far more than the lectures of Charles Sanders Peirce, influenced Americans' sense of place in the world and duties toward others. We must enter that intellectual pigsty if we are to grasp the paternalist and racist beliefs that shaped international relations and interracial interactions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. From there you see the unsettling connection between the American state's justification for intervening in Latin America and middleclass social uplift, namely, the call to reform the characters of African Americans and new immigrants. The prejudice immigrants experienced was nothing like the racism with which African Americans had to cope. But both groups fell outside the Angloworld and were therefore objects of pity and contempt. This is all to say that Duncan Bell should be applauded for resisting the common impulse of substituting moral platitudes for serious scholarship. To witness Bell practicing his craft is enriching. Still, I found the American side of the story less compelling.

What follows is less a criticism and more an invitation to consider, first, how the Angloworld related to the rise in ethnocultural nationalism, and especially diaspora nationalism, during the late nineteenth century; and, second, to ask what *exactly* is the wrong-making feature of the Angloworld. The Angloworld was a product of social dreaming, a burst of utopianism that included, among its constitutive features, a desire for global domination through racial union. Like most racial dreams it sprang from anxiety and hope. In this case, fear of decline and yearning for power. I, too, consider it an irredeemably evil vision. Yet I am unsure as to whether its moral wrongness inheres in the form of political imaginary that birthed it or in its racist and imperial content? Put differently: are all diasporic dreams moral nightmares?

Nationalism can be understood as having three essential and mutually reinforcing features: first, a nationalist is someone who considers her nationality a morally indispensable part of her personal identity; second, a nationalist believes she has special duties to fellow members of her nation, obligations not owed to

non-members; and, third, a nationalist believes her national community, or nation, has a right to self-determination (Miller, 2000). These same normative assumptions grounded the diaspora nationalisms of the late nineteenth century. Black nationalists, for example, considered their race a morally salient feature of their personal identity. They also held that each member of the race, whether she lived in Nashville or Nairobi, owed special and extensive duties to all black people. Those obligations stemmed from the fact that they belong to a single, though now dispersed, nation. To fulfil these associative or special duties, each member should struggle for the group's right to self-determination. That right, they further argued, should be realized through a sovereign state on the African continent or through a federation of smaller states. The most cursory reading of classical black nationalism reveals a quite similar political imaginary that Bell finds morally objectionable. But, as I later show, the context and the content of that vision were quite different.

The late nineteenth century witnessed a flourishing of ethnocultural nationalism, including many diaspora nationalist movements – Jewish, Arab, Irish, and Turkish, for example. Each argued that common history, language, and culture justified the right to self-determination. These movements assumed they also had to show that each comprised a single and distinct people that persisted despite the deracination and oppression suffered over the centuries and across many territories. Having a sense of being subjected to common persecution was a necessary but insufficient condition for political solidarity. That is why these movements produced vindicationist histories and cultural narratives. Each sought to shore up traditions and social practices that would nurture a thicker sense of collective identity, which was necessary for sustaining the taxing politics of supporting a global movement for the creation of a sovereign state that would, someday, be capable of protecting co-nationals within and outside of its borders from future oppression. For these movements, race, and other sources of collective identity nurtured an aspiration to escape oppression and alienation. Common oppression not only increased the moral salience of race but also freed some from endorsing an essentialist view of race as the basis of political solidarity. On this view, the Angloworld can be understood as an instance of diaspora nationalism. Its advocates also saw race, culture, and history as means for nurturing political solidarity across territories. They also sought to reunite a dispersed people by creating a single and powerful state or alliance. Fear and desire also motivated their call for an Angloworld – fear of decline and desire to remake the world. That this *particular* racial imaginary sought to dominate rather than emancipate should not detract from the fact that its form, though not its content, was quite similar to other racial utopias. So, what sets the Angloworld apart morally?

The answer lies not in the means which advocates of the Angloworld employed but in their ends. It is reasonable to contrast ethnocultural nationalism with civic or statist nationalism. Perhaps it is even sensible to assume the United States

exemplifies the latter: a state whose civic values – including those of democracy, equality, and the rule of law – unify its members into a single people, obtaining compliance to those values. Historically, though, many whites in America and England swore that those values were uniquely Anglo-Saxon, a birthright to rule others and to reshape the world in their image. From Woodrow Wilson to the present, this sort of racial imaginary remains a part of the American republic. Recently, a group of U.S. Congressmen and women tried to create an America First Caucus that would protect Anglo-Saxon political traditions from the threats immigrants supposedly pose. The content of the Angloworld is irredeemable, to be sure, but its ultimate wrongness inheres in its ends. Like other advocates of a utopian imaginary, promoters of the Angloworld linked race, state, and power. If we conclude that this relationship is itself morally wrong, then we must logically conclude that diaspora nationalism, too, is ethically bad since it also envisions a fairly similar relationship.

But are there morally objectionable and morally unobjectionable racial utopias? Of course there are. To separate the morally objectionable from the morally unobjectionable we must consider the ends of each racial utopia. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Jewish and black people responded to global oppression by imagining what many, at the time, considered utopia – an independent state in their respective historical homelands. The long histories of anti-Semitism and white supremacy denied both groups a shared culture and language. Yet both had to make the case that their members did, indeed, constitute a distinct people in order to attain the right to self-determination, which each movement saw as vital for surviving oppression and contesting future domination. For instance, one finds in the writings of Theodor Herzl and Marcus Garvey a rather similar political imaginary to the one Bell recovers. Both considered collective identity to be the moral basis of political community. We should not, however, fall into the trap of false equivalencies. Despite the convergence in form between black utopianism and the Angloworld, they were very dissimilar in content, and it is their respective content that sets them apart morally. For Bell, advocates of the Angloworld envisioned an isopolitan or common citizenship binding all of its members. That meant they assigned great importance to racial patriotism, best understood as a fractal mode of political belonging, one that encompassed the entire English race (2020, p. 6).

It was, however, the dystopian reality of global white supremacy that inspired the dream of an Afroworld or what one scholar has called *Afrotopia* (Moses, 1998). Architects of this imagined state – such as Alexander Crummell, Edward Blyden, Marcus Garvey, and William H. Ferris – insisted that all black people have special duties arising from race. Some of them held an essentialist notion of race but others, like Garvey, insisted on a constructivist conception of race, one born from common oppression and, more importantly, shared social practices (Jagmohan, 2020). Regardless, it was neither moral conceit nor cultural chauvinism that

motivated their emphasis on racial pride or their promotion of vindicationist histories of Egypt and Ethiopia. They did so to draw ethical attention to how white supremacy injured the souls of black folk – the ways it crushed the bones of black people and slurred and slandered, vilified and maligned, the race as a whole. In response to that horror, the Afroworld promised political redemption and moral repair. Like the Angloworld, it sought to reimagine and remake the world. And yet, it could not be more different from the Angloworld. The Afroworld held a promise of escape from oppression, whereas the Angloworld pursued the suffering of others. For black nationalists, racial utopia was a morally sensible, if not always politically feasible, response to white supremacy. But for many whites in America and England, the Angloworld held out an opportunity to overcome long festering and fratricidal wounds: moral repair through the colonial domination of others.

So far, I have made the case that not all racial utopias are ethical nightmares. There are morally unobjectionable racial utopias, those that link race, state, and power as a means of escaping oppression. We should therefore scrutinize the ends of racial utopias, not merely their means. Yet I can't shake the feeling that there is something troubling about utopian thinking itself.

To explain, let me end on a biographical note. I was born and raised in Guyana, which achieved its independence from British rule in 1966 and only became a republic in 1970. A few years after independence the historical shortsightedness of nearly a thousand moral visionaries led them to seek emancipation from American intolerance through building a utopia on 3800 acres of land in the Guyanese jungle. Four years later, nine hundred of these apostolic socialists perished from a mass murder-suicide. Lest we forget, Jonestown was an interracial utopia. I should add that it is also estranging to read of empire as something that happened in the distant past in a faraway place. My childhood in 1980s Guyana was less than two decades removed from empire – a white dream that left in its wake the destruction of countless black and brown lives. My grandmother Daisy Williams labored in the cane fields of Demerara, toiling in the terrifying presence of English overseers. But it is also impossible to grasp empire's horrific afterlife without knowing its intellectual origins, and there is no finer account of its philosophical roots than Duncan Bell's trilogy.

Desmond Jagmohan

From Wells to Wakanda: The creative agonism of political imaginaries

Looking at the unionist dreams of its central figures – Andrew Carnegie, W.T. Stead, Cecil Rhodes, and H.G. Wells – *Dreamworlds of Race* (2020) excavates 'a specific articulation of transnational white supremacism' (Bell, 2020, p. 361) at the heart of the Anglo-American imaginary. Even as Wells, for instance, rejected the mania of 'Race Prejudice' (Bell, 2020, p. 177), his socialist utopia was predicated

upon the supremacy of English-speaking peoples. But Bell also turns to writers like W.E.B. Du Bois, T.E.S. Scholes, Martin Delany and others to outline 'a counter-canon of history and social science' (Bell, 2020, p. 377) that emerged to challenge the Anglo-American racial Pax, and to shape alternative visions of the future.

In so doing, Bell's study attends to the oft-neglected practice of imagining in political scholarship. By reading the *fin de siècle* politics of world-making through the utopian visions of businessmen, journalists, scholars, and science fiction writers, Bell adds welcome color and complexity to contemporary studies of race and empire. *Dreamworlds* is a crisp reminder that political thinking operates beyond the traditional canon, or even the scholarly text, and thus so too should the study of politics.

The book's closing discussion of Afro-modern speculative fiction certainly invites further reflection on contemporary efforts to disrupt racist narratives in popular cultural texts. In that spirit, I explore the politics of imagination through the genre of superheroes, a genre which has variously replicated and challenged the raced and gendered conditions of social and political life. In three recent productions, HBO's *Watchmen,* Netflix's *Luke Cage*, and the blockbuster film *Black Panther*, we find new challenges to the Anglo-American racial Pax which also reveal some instructive limits of the political imagination, and of racial imaginaries, in particular.

Superhero narratives have long diagnosed and reimagined the politics of the present in the context of the fantastic. A multibillion-dollar transmedia industry, the superhero genre is incredibly popular and can also offer a window into the attitudes, fears and desires that shape the public and its problems. Much like the counternarratives to the Anglo-American unionist visions described in *Dreamworlds,* some of the more prominent stories of Black superheroes today draw on Afrofuturism—a genre in which the imagination functions as a vehicle for 'political critique, vindication, and desire' (Bell, 2020, p. 377). By refiguring the relationship between technology, power, and race, Afrofuturist narratives sometimes present alternative futures untethered from histories of white supremacy; they can also produce parallel realities which reimagine Black experiences alongside the politics of race and imperium.

The integration of critique and desire Bell observes in writers like Du Bois and Delaney operates in contemporary screen adaptions of superhero stories like *Watchmen*, *Luke Cage* or *Black Panther*. Each was widely acclaimed for their meditations on race and racism, which reworked the racial and gendered conventions of superhero narratives to 'critique the present and sketch other forms of life' (Bell, 2020, p. 377).

But I argue that each series also reproduces elements of the racial imaginaries they aim to contest in their constructions of the 'hero'. That reproduction suggests something about the limits and possibilities of political imaginaries: namely, that

our imaginations lead us inexorably back to the limits of our own realities – but this should not dissuade us from taking up the practice.

HBO's *Watchmen,* for instance, returns to the past to construct an alternate, though not altogether rosy, timeline. Beginning with the Tulsa massacre of 1921, Damon Lindelof's version imagines an America which reckoned with that event instead of burying it. Acts are passed, reparations are made, and museums are built to address American racism and its victims. By centering Angela Abar/Sister Night as the formidable detective/caped crusader, the show also contests the racist pathologies that have long shaped portrayals of Black women in American culture. *Watchmen* takes a dystopian turn when Abar comes upon a white terrorist organization, the Seventh Calvary, working to 'retake' America by appropriating the enormous powers of Dr. Manhattan, who in this iteration is a Black man. Thus, and echoing Bell's study of the 'racial peace' lurking within Anglo-American utopias (Bell, 2020, p. 304), the show layers this alternate reality with the notion that white supremacism is ever-present, a sickness of the American mind.

Despite its intended critique of America's racial politics, through its provocative reimagining of history, *Watchmen* also introduces some narrative tensions in its construction of the hero vis-à-vis the American security state. On one hand, the show's handling of real events like the Tulsa massacre, as well as the fictionalized Seventh Calvary, confronts the complex relation between policing and white supremacism in the United States. On the other hand, its hero is an officer of that state (first in Vietnam, and later as a detective in Tulsa). This reflects a well-worn relationship between media and policing institutions, in which both fictional and non-fictional shows (*Cops*, *Law and Order*) have centered and popularized everyday policing in America. Yet, 'if the ideas that popular culture embeds in the public consciousness about policing remain after the story is over' (Rosenberg, 2016), marking *Watchmen's* superhero not only as a cop, but as a Black female 'supercop', allows audiences to navigate the racial dynamics of American policing conservatively: though we feel horror at the racist events and individuals depicted, our response to that horror is processed through a heroic representative of the American security state.

Luke Cage presents similar tensions. Though situated in our present, the Netflix adaptation by Cheo Hodari Coker takes seriously the Afrofuturist investment in technological reimagining. The subject of illegal prison experiments that result in his superstrength and unbreakable skin, Cage's story taps into both the racist histories of medical and policing systems while upending those histories through a Black superhero that is literally bulletproof. Like *Watchmen, Cage* pulls a history of racial perils—redlining, disinvestment, mass incarceration (Coates, 2015)—into its story of a superpowered Black man, protecting the streets of Harlem. And like the *fin-de-siècle* works of Afro-modern thought (Bell, 2020, p. 375), the series highlights the real-life contributions of Black American scholars, artists, authors, and activists which have been otherwise muted in the telling of American history.

But as a hero, Cage still performs within the boundaries of a white racial imaginary even as his story contests some of its key structures. Cage's physical strength is showcased yet highly controlled – his violence and anger always disciplined even in situations that warrant them. Thus Cage not only takes on the responsibility of repairing the damage structural racism has done in Harlem, his status as a hero is also framed by the norms of respectability and control demanded by America's racial state (Philips, 2021). As with Angela Abar/Sister Night then, Luke Cage lives in a liminal space between critique and reinscription. Though they contest and reorient the boundaries of the white racial imaginary, they also, in some ways, reproduce its expectations.

Black Panther is unique in the contemporary superhero archive not only because it exploded box office expectations with its $1.3 billion success, but because its meditations on Blackness across the African diaspora are intended as a critical counter-history to transnational white supremacism. The story mirrors the critical interventions Bell finds in 19th and early 20th century Afro-futurist writings through its eponymous superhero and his fantastical homeland. Ryan Coogler's depiction of Wakanda – a fictional African nation blessed with meteoric deposits of an indestructible metal, domestic tranquility, and hidden from the violent reality of European colonialism – is a visual and narrative exercise of political imagination, embedded in the popular genre of superheroes. Wakanda inverts racial stereotypes through an anticolonial depiction of tradition, and an antiracist representation of technology as a tool of and for – not over – Black bodies. It effectively repurposes the 'technological infrastructure' (Bell, 2020, p. 374) of the traditional (white) superhero genre to challenge the global color line. Colonial tropes of the 'native' society in disarray and conflict are replaced by images of community and political cohesion; and conceits about the racial superiority of Anglo-Americans become fodder for the film's technologically advanced protagonists in their engagements with outsiders. Shielded from empire, Wakanda retains a spiritual and cultural origin story. In Tocqueville's terms, its people's chain of memories remains unbroken.

Like the racial counternarratives explored in *Dreamworlds*, the film performs speculative fiction as political critique and possibility. But so too does *Black Panther* carry traces of the racial dystopias it tries to transcend. Wakanda's splendor is edged by the borders of African nations which bear the brunt of colonial depredation and its aftermath. As the intended villain Killmonger argues, Wakanda's leaders use their technological innovations to disengage from the colonial world, rather than to confront it. One of the central plotlines that results from this involves the politics of *saving*, of intervening to 'to clean up the world' (Coogler, 2018) – an interesting move for an American-made film about race and geopolitical power. The story also centers monarchical rule, established through ritual combat, rather than the political engagement of its people. And despite its otherwise powerful portrayal of Wakandan women *as* powerful, it is ultimately

male blood – inherited or spilled – that determines Wakanda's political leadership. For critics, these elements point to a neocolonial vision of Africa, and raise questions about how Africa itself is imagined even in liberatory texts (Gathara, 2018).

The limits of Wakanda's utopian existence are perhaps most evident in the line drawn between its competing male protagonists, T'Challa and Killmonger. With parallels to *Watchmen* and *Luke Cage*, T'Challa's heroism trades on the politics of respectability, as well as a reimagined form of noblesse oblige. King T'Challa moves Wakanda beyond the cloak of invisibility to build outreach centers in Oakland and share its technological innovations before the UN. His heroism is benevolent and his solutions to racial injustice largely non-violent. In stark contrast, his American cousin, an inner-city orphan and former American solider steeped in violence, demands a more radical form of resistance which would bring Wakanda's technological superiority to bear upon the racist dystopia beyond it.

The juxtaposition of these characters might task the viewer with evaluating the legitimacy of their competing approaches to justice, through benevolent reform or radical disruption. But Killmonger's perspective is too quickly framed as villainy as his call to liberate 'oppressed people all over the world' merges with a vision of a Wakandan empire (Coogler, 2018; see also Lebron, 2018). In these ways, the films' protagonists perform to expectations about Black heroism and Black villainy that operate in our racialized present: T'Challa and Killmonger are as much a product of the Anglo-American racial imaginary as Wakanda might be a contestation of it. Though Coogler intends to raise questions about 'colonization, borders, and identity', and about the politics of Pan-African brotherhood (*From Page to Screen: A Roundtable Discussion* 2018), the film's engagement with those very questions reinscribes the fraught politics of race and racism it otherwise endeavors to challenge.

I draw out the tensions in these popular cultural texts to illustrate a point which *Dreamworlds* makes vividly in relation to the Anglo-American imaginary – that our imaginations are not unbounded. Whether intentionally or not, the construction of heroism across these texts – a supercop, a controlled hero, and a benevolent king – play to the 'dominant plotlines' (Bell, 2020, p. 375) of race and racism present in our society today. From H.G. Wells to Wakanda, efforts to articulate a utopian vision of the future remain tethered to the 'religion of whiteness' (Bell, 2020, p. 373) that maps our past and our present. Of course, for the unionists Bell observes, the racial boundary is a space of privilege; in the imaginative texts of *Black Panther*, *Luke Cage*, or *Watchmen*, that boundary is a condition of existential threat.

What does it mean, then, that even critical efforts to envision 'a counter canon' to the ideology of white supremacism remain, as yet, bound by that ideology's limiting conditions? We might view this as an indictment of the political utility of imagining, as a call instead to focus on the 'real' and to forego the art of

envisioning ourselves in a different past, for a better future. But it would be a mistake to view its necessary boundedness as a failure of imaginative thinking. In their fantastic narratives of alternative timelines, superpowered bodies or utopian elsewheres – the genre of superheroes reflects the mess and promise of being human. That each of the texts noted above attempts to rework – even wholly escape – the racial imaginary *and* returns us in one way or another to its constraints is enlightening. The kinds of fault lines we find in the Anglo-American racial Pax and in its critical counternarratives map out precisely where and how the politics of race and racism infiltrate current understandings of heroism, for instance, and the measure of legitimate resistance. Thus, though our imaginations cannot escape the politics of race and racism – they can tell us much about where we are, and about the work that must be done if we want to alter our course.

Bell concludes that a better future can 'only be achieved by reclaiming the past' (Bell, 2020, p. 394), and imaginative thinking is necessary for that process of reclaiming – not escaping – it. As the poets tell us: 'To think of creativity in terms of transcendence is itself specific and partial – a lovely dream perhaps, but an inhuman one' (Rankine and Loffreda, 2015). We ought rather to think of the political imagination as an exercise in creative agonism – of inventive confrontations with the past, with the present, and with futures yet to emerge. Because, whether it be in the racial conceits of Anglo-Americans utopians, or in the creative counternarratives of Afrofuturist kings, our imaginations contain and are contained by our experiences. And this is precisely their power.

Menaka Philips

A response

I am very grateful to David Armitage, Jessica Blatt, Fabian Hilfrich, Desmond Jagmohan, and Menaka Philips, for their careful, generous, and incisive commentaries on *Dreamworlds of Race*. It is a pleasure to have such perceptive interlocutors. In the following pages, I reply to each author in turn, addressing their key questions and reflecting briefly on what they have taken from the book.

Armitage asks a series of insightful questions about oceans, treaties, and monarchy. The oceans played a double role in the Angloworld discourse, though it was rarely theorized in detail (Mahan is the principal exception I discuss in the book). On the one hand, it was regarded as far less geopolitically significant than in the past, due to the material and perceptual effects produced by novel transport and communications technologies. Unionists contended that the physical impediments that had once constrained the planetary extension of political communities had been overcome. Technoscience had dissolved distance. On the other hand, command of the sea was regarded as essential for Angloworld unity. It would allow people, goods, and military power to traverse the globe unhindered. Running

through these arguments was an assumption about the character of racial supremacy. Technoscientific capacity was understood as both necessary for maintaining global racial domination and as one of the key normative justifications of it. In other words, Angloworld advocates did think of it as a 'hydro-body', and sea power as a 'technology of white supremacy'.

The Anglworld debates – or at least the institutional proposals discussed in them – can be read plausibly as part of the 'treaty-revolution'. (Though might the treaty-revolution itself be seen as part of a wider drive to 'legalize' international order?). There were at least four different types of treaty advocated or implied in the discourse, but discussion of legal detail was, to use Armitage's term, 'intermittent' (for an exception, see Dos Passos, 1903). The first type was federative. During the late nineteenth century, federation was often regarded as an institutional technology that could solve a plethora of political challenges. For Ernest Barker, it was the 'note of the hour' (1915, p. 181). A federal legal apparatus was entailed in most visions of full Anglo-American union, though (like the oceans) it was rarely explored systematically.

A less ambitious group of thinkers advocated Anglo-American defence treaties to bind the two countries together. This was seen as the basis for deeper inter-imperial coordination. A third category, which I explore through a reading of A.V. Dicey's work, was the institution of 'isopolitan citizenship'. Finally, many of the Angloworld thinkers I discuss advocated an Anglo-American arbitration treaty. Here I distinguish between what I term 'regulatory' and 'revisionary' arbitration models. A relatively narrow legal instrument, the former presupposed the existence of sovereign states and war as core elements of global order, thus reinforcing the institutional status quo. The latter regarded arbitration as an initial step on the road to fundamental geopolitical reordering. It was figured as a mechanism to catalyse or accelerate systemic change, principally through serving as the foundation for new supranational institutions or polities.

The revisionary argument was promoted by some of the most ambitious Anglo unionists, including Carnegie and Stead. But not all Angloworld advocates were committed to treaty-making as the basis for lasting union. This scepticism did not necessarily signal a lack of ambition about the destiny of the Angloworld; it was just as likely to reflect distrust of the political efficacy of (international) law. Examples I discuss include Mahan and the British scholar-politician James Bryce. For such sceptics, the bonds of racial identity were sufficient.

The most straightforward solution to the constitutional problem posed by monarchy was to support minimalist forms of union, such as a defensive alliance or informal inter-imperial cooperation, as they did not require major constitutional engineering. The issue arose only for those who sought formal union. For Wells, the monarchy would eventually disappear, washed away by the tide of technocratic progress. Carnegie and Stead envisaged it being transformed into an eccentric local institution in a larger republican United States of the English-Speaking World.

Works of speculative fiction did address the issue, with wildly divergent results, from the reincorporation of the United States into Britain in Julius Vogel's *Anno Domini 2000* (1889) to the republican overthrow of monarchy (as well as capitalism) in George Griffith's *The Angel of the Revolution* (1893). Given the popularity of the monarchy in late Victorian Britain, it is little surprise that maximalist unionist projects struck many otherwise sympathetic commentators as unfeasible.

Armitage also asks about the 'Saxon' in 'Anglo-Saxon'. Germany played an ambiguous role in Angloworld discourse, coded as potential enemy, ally, or precursor, depending on context. The most common response was to temporalise the category, positioning the 'Germanic' peoples as a key historical source of contemporary American and British greatness. Their foundational contribution was acknowledged even as it was relegated to the distant past. But the term Anglo-Saxon was subject to regular criticism, and many unionists preferred an alternative designation, 'the English-speaking peoples', which carried its own racial connotations (Bell, 2020, pp. 30-35).

Finally, to dreams, and to Freud. I would love to say that I had found a connection between Freud's work and the widespread use of 'dreaming' as a category in Angloworld debates, but I couldn't locate any evidence of it. The most important context for the proliferation of the language of dreams was the efflorescence of explicitly utopian writing in both the United States and Britain. But there is more work to be done on explaining the 'oneiric surfeit' of the age.

Blatt and Hilfrich stress some important differences between the British and American elements of the discourse and emphasise the power of American exceptionalism. I agree with them that there was significant variation in how the Angloworld was conceptualised in Britain and the United States, and also that the unionist vision – especially in its more heavily institutionalized forms – was more popular in the former than the latter. Blatt and Hilfrich are right to suggest that one of the main reasons for the greater popularity of Anglo-unionism in Britain was that it was seen as a way to preserve a role for Britain in the twentieth century. But I am skeptical that American 'exceptionalism' was necessarily antithetical to the racial dreamworlds I discuss. While there were plenty of American thinkers hostile or indifferent to Britain, the bulk of those stressing America's unique claims on world leadership saw some role for Britain in the future world order, usually in a subordinate or supporting role: the Anglo-Saxons, led by the United States, were destined to govern the globe. This is why Carnegie and Josiah Strong – cited by Hilfrich in this context – didn't have to choose between Anglosphere and exceptionalist arguments. They were part of the same framework.

Blatt insightfully explores several variations on the theme of white supremacy. Like her, I see many of them as continuous with, rather than alternatives to, the visions I discuss in *Dreamworlds*, even as they diverge on some points. It was a 'difference of degree rather than kind', as she puts it. I agree that few of the

American Anglo-Saxonists – including Burgess – envisaged 'a return to anything recalling pre-Revolutionary political arrangements', though I would suggest that many of them viewed Britain as the key racial-imperial ally of the United States. This was a form of racial inter-imperialism. Whereas British thinkers tended to stress the *Anglo* in Anglo-America, American thinkers tended to reverse the valence. They looked forward to an Anglo-*American* century. Blatt's account also points to an interesting disciplinary difference. Political Science, then in its infancy, was not a hotbed of Angloworld enthusiasts. Instead, it tended to be historians, both scholarly and popular – including Herbert Baxter Adams, George Burton Adams, John Fiske, James Hosmer, and H.H. Powers – who professed the ideas of American racial leadership and Angloworld unity.

Blatt also draws attention to an important issue that I did not discuss in *Dreamworlds* – the role of racial ideology in both exacerbating, and potentially suturing, the divisions within white supremacism precipitated by the Civil War and reinforced by the political dynamics of Reconstruction. Here I can only commend her account of the discourse of 'sectional rapprochement' and her argument that for thinkers like Burgess, arguably the founding figure of American political science, one way to reconcile, or at least paper over, the festering divisions between southern and northern whites was to sublate their differences within a broader vision of white supremacy that could then be projected externally as the ideological basis for imperialism. I was also intrigued by Blatt's discussion of shifts in the fictional representation of this dynamic. While I focus on science fictional narrations of racial union, war, and global domination, she suggests that romantic fiction was especially significant for exploring post-Civil War white racial reconciliation. This poses a fascinating question about the political inflections of genre form and choice that is worth further reflection.

Hilfrich makes an excellent point about party affiliation in the United States – he is right to suggest that Anglo-Saxonism (of whatever kind) was largely confined to members of the Republican Party, the home of WASP elites. Nearly all of the American thinkers I pay significant attention to identified with the Republicans. I should have said more about this topic. In Britain, by contrast, support for Angloworld union could be found across the political spectrum, though (as with imperial federation) most of the institutionally ambitious unionists were liberals of one stripe or another.

I don't think we disagree much about Carnegie. I concur that in the last decade or so of his life, Carnegie's passion for the subject was more muted than it had been in the 1880s and 1890s, and that the impact of both the Spanish-American War and the South African War played an important role in this shift. And it is true that Carnegie rejected a military 'alliance' with the United States (Bell, 2020, pp. 84–85), on the grounds that it would encourage the brutal imperialism that he thought inimical to racial union. But it is worth emphasizing that he never dropped his support for a maximalist vision of the 'English-speaking people'. Beisner

(1985) was mistaken to claim that the Spanish-American War ended Carnegie's advocacy of 'race imperialism'. Indeed Carnegie's proposals became more radical after 1900 – in the years after the South African War, for example, he proselytized full British incorporation into an expanded United States (Bell, 2020, pp. 96–97; Carnegie, 1904). An indication of his Anglotopian ambition can be gleaned from an unpublished letter he wrote to *The Times* in 1906. He started by repeating his call for Canadian incorporation into the United States as the first step to racial integration under American leadership. 'I do believe that someday the mother will find an alliance or union with her children across the Atlantic her refuge and her strength', he declared. 'During the life of many living, three hundred millions of English-speaking people, members of one race, are to dwell there. Britain, … will turn to and probably merge with them and they with each other'. Once this fusion occurred, he concluded, 'our race will fulfil its destiny, which is decisively to influence world affairs for the good of the world'.[1] As late as 1911 he was still telling Stead that he believed in the 'prophecy' of racial reunion that he had adumbrated throughout the previous decades (Bell, 2020, p. 99). Even if he devoted less time and energy to the cause, Carnegie remained committed to a strong variant of unionism until his death. And his other interests – especially the transatlantic peace movement and arbitration initiatives – were inflected with claims about the centrality of the Angloworld in global affairs.

Jagmohan raises important questions about the normative implications of my analysis of unionist discourse. In particular, he asks whether or not all movements advocating 'diasporic nationalism' are to be condemned. After all, as he is right to note, the *fin de siècle* saw numerous movements making the case for forms of belonging beyond state and empire. Ideas about pan-African, pan-Asian, pan-Latin, and pan-Slavic communities, among others, circulated widely (Aydin, 2007; Younis, 2017). As Blatt puts it, 'racial dreaming was in the air'. Moreover, as Jagmohan observes, arguments of this kind were also propounded by African-American thinkers seeking to challenge white supremacy in the United States and across the world. I do not think that all diasporic nationalist visions warrant condemnation of the kind that I level at the Angloworld, and I agree that it is the content not the form that should furnish the basis for ethico-political analysis. The reason that I criticise Angloworld arguments – though I should note that I don't do so in any systematic fashion – is not that they aimed to create forms of supranational political belonging, but rather that they were expressions of white supremacism, and as such that they made abhorrent claims about racial hierarchies that were predicated on violence, domination, and exclusion. In other words, they are arguments that support a form of gross injustice. But I can certainly imagine other variations of diasporic identity that avoid such problems. Or, to put it in Jagmohan's terms, not all diasporic dreams are moral nightmares.

[1] Carnegie, letter to *The Times*, 13 July 1906, Folder 131, Carnegie papers, Library of Congress.

I also appreciate Jagmohan's point about method in intellectual history. Across the loose trilogy of books, I have largely avoided 'canonical' thinkers, though I have analysed the work of T.H. Green, J.A. Hobson, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, among others. To make sense of some of the most consequential political thinking, it is necessary to engage with a wide range of writers, genres, and sources, much of it ephemeral and theoretically unsophisticated (Freeden, 2013). As Jagmohan puts it in a passage I agree with wholeheartedly, '[t]he sermons of Lyman Abbot, far more than the lectures of Charles Sanders Peirce, influenced Americans' sense of place in the world and duties towards others'. His conclusion is apt: 'Life does not imitate our syllabi, especially those on the history of modern political theory'. None of this is to suggest that canonical figures are unworthy of study – that we should focus on Abbott instead of Peirce – only that historians of political thought should be willing to centre such work in their analysis when required. This raises a host of thorny issues about disciplinary training, norms, and expectations.

In the final contribution to this Critical Exchange, Menaka Philips explores insightfully the politics of imagination. As she notes this is a key theme in *Dreamworlds of Race*. It takes at least two different (though related) forms in the book. First, I attend to a range of fictional representations of the Angloworld, chiefly in science fiction writing from the turn of the nineteenth century, and then again from the 1980s and 1990s. Secondly, I suggest that more conventional sources – political speeches, articles, manifestos, etc. – can be read as contributions to a utopian discourse fixated on ideas about the value of social dreaming. The line between political analysis and fictional extrapolation was permeable. Much of the material I work with was used to defend white supremacy. But I also discuss how, in the apt words of Philips, Afro-modern writers invited 'reflection on contemporary efforts to disrupt racist narratives in popular cultural texts'.

Philips discusses the politics of imagination in a variety of recent superhero stories, each of which challenges or subverts, albeit in different ways, visions of Anglo-white supremacism in the United States. I find this analysis compelling, and I second her contention that scholars of politics, including political theorists, should play closer attention to this kind of material. Likewise, I agree with her argument that Afrofuturism is an especially productive genre for thinking about politics, past and present. As she puts it, by 'refiguring the relationship between technology, power, and race, Afrofuturist narratives sometimes present alternative futures untethered from histories of white supremacy; they can also produce parallel realities which reimagine Black experiences alongside the politics of race and imperium'. Indeed Afro-futurism has produced some of the most powerful and insightful challenges to white supremacy and its dreams of racial purity and domination. But Philips is also alive to the limits of the imagination, its boundedness by time, place, and genre – the way that however hard we might try, we can never fully escape the ideological frameworks that entangle us. But that

is no reason to stop trying. Nor does it mean that change, resistance, or subversion, are impossible. Philips captures this neatly in her suggestion that we should view the political imagination as a site of 'creative agonism'. I can only echo her conclusion: 'though our imaginations cannot escape the politics of race and racism – they can tell us much about where we are, and about the work that must be done if we want to alter our course'.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my thanks to David, Jessica, Fabian, Desmond, and Menaka, for prompting me to revisit and expand on some of the arguments I made in *Dreamworlds of Race*, to think afresh about the implications that can be drawn from them, and for opening up avenues for future inquiry.

Duncan Bell

Note

1 At the time many still used the terms 'race' and 'nation' interchangeably to denote a collective identity based in a shared history, language, and culture.

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