The Emerging Social Sciences and Editorial Practice in *Poetry* and *The Crisis* in the Early Twentieth Century

by

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Contents

Abstract ii

Acknowledgements iii

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Science and Scientific Authority in American Culture and Identity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century 24

Chapter 2: Anthropology and *Poetry*: Native American Verse as the Raw Materials for a New American Poetic Tradition 73

Chapter 3: Sociology and *The Crisis*: American Identity and Black Culture 162

Conclusion...242

Works Consulted 248

Abstract

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This thesis seeks to demonstrate the ways in which the emerging social sciences influenced literary constructions of racial and national identity in American poetry at the turn of the twentieth century. Using methodologies derived from the fields of literature and science and periodical studies, along with an underlying theoretical framework adapted from Pierre Bourdieu's work on fields of production, I argue that the dominant approaches to ideas of race and culture in the fields of anthropology and sociology directly shaped the ways in which poetry was curated for the public by the editors of two influential magazines: *Poetry* under the editorship of Harriet Monroe, and *The Crisis* under the editorship of W.E.B. Du Bois.

Chapter One examines the cultural contexts which fostered the availability and popularity of science as a source of authority deployable in other fields in the early twentieth century. To differing extents, both Monroe and Du Bois specifically sought to sway their respective audiences by strategically substituting a form of borrowed scientific capital for the cultural capital they initially lacked.

Chapter Two traces the development of institutionalized anthropology in the United States and Harriet Monroe's deployment of anthropological materials and authority to build a specifically American poetic tradition within and beyond the pages of *Poetry* that would minimize its indebtedness to European verse. This chapter is supported by original archival research which reveals Monroe's preoccupation with Native American cultures as a revitalizing resource for American poetry, and includes examinations of poetry by Carl Sandburg, Mary Austin, Alice Corbin Henderson, and Vachel Lindsay.

Finally, Chapter Three explores the poetry and editorial material printed in *The Crisis* and the ways in which they reflect Du Bois's attempts to combine strategies from contemporary sociology and anthropology in order to establish the validity and authenticity of African American identity and culture. This chapter draws on analyses of writings by Jessie Fauset, Countee Cullen, James Weldon Johnson, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Fenton Johnson, and Langston Hughes to demonstrate the ways in which the poetry of black writers was deployed in and actively participated in scientific debates surrounding race in turn-of-the-twentieth-century America.

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Introduction

At the turn of the twentieth century, as the prestige and influence of science and the idea of the scientific increased in the arena of public policy in the United States, the desire to be recognized as scientific spread beyond the practitioners of the natural and physical sciences to fields that were just coming to be consolidated into professional or academic disciplines, such as ethnology, anthropology, sociology, and economics. The world of literature, in general, and poetry in particular, was also undergoing a period of revolution, as the forms and themes embraced by previous generations began to fall short of adequately representing the experiences of writers and readers in a world of new technologies, growing urban centers, and shifting social and racial hierarchies. While some poets, critics, and editors fought against the rise of scientificity, others saw it as an opportunity to accumulate cultural authority to support their new approaches to poetry. Two such figures were editors Harriet Monroe, founder of the influential little magazine *Poetry*, and W.E.B. Du Bois, the first editor the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP's) official publication, *The Crisis*. This thesis will trace the relationships between the emerging social sciences of anthropology and sociology and the literary and political projects of these two prominent editors of literary magazines in the period between the magazines' inceptions in the 1910s to the early 1930s when their editorships changed. I will also look back as far as the 1890s for the purposes of articulating scientific contexts. The basis of this thesis was formed by survey readings of *Poetry* (from 1912 to 1940), *The Crisis* (from 1910 to 1934), *The Little Review* (the complete run from 1914 to 1929), *Scientific American* (1890 to 1930), *Science* (1890 to 1930), and *The American Journal of Sociology* (1895 to 1930).

Scholarship on American poetry of the early twentieth century has largely focused on the body of work that has retrospectively become established as modernism. The recognized canon associated with modernist poetry has shifted and broadened significantly over time, but the core concepts central to modernism have consistently included an emphasis on formal experimentation, modernity, and a conscious turn away from the mass market.[1] Despite the project of the New Modernist Studies, which has sought to expand the canon of modernism through the inclusion of previously marginalized groups of writers (including women, writers of color, and the modernist movements which took place outside of the United States and Western Europe), a preoccupation with the old modernism has of necessity persisted.[2] Although the proponents of the New Modernist Studies offer reassurances to the contrary, "modernism" as a term can be seen to function as an artificially homogenizing force because, to be included under the modernist umbrella, it is still necessary for a work to be placed in conversation with the old modernism: the twentieth-century, Western-European experimental or avant-garde traditions.[3]

While poets who have come to be known as modernist (whether old or new) certainly saw themselves as participating in a revitalization of poetry, they did not explicitly label themselves as modernist in the sense in which critics and anthologists use that category today. In the United States, one contemporary category used to refer to the sea change in poetry that occurred around the turn of the twentieth century was the "New Poetry." This term was applied even more broadly than modernism is today, but it

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[1] See for example Malcolm Bradbury and James Walter McFarlane, "The Name and Nature of Modernism," in *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930* (London: Penguin Books, 1991): 19-56; Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986); John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London: Faber, 1992).
[2] Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz, "The New Modernist Studies," *PMLA* 123, no. 3 (May 2008): 737.
[3] Ibid., 741.

encapsulated the spirit of the turn away from traditional nineteenth-century verse which was seen to be outworn and an inadequate vehicle for writing about the modern world; a turning away without simultaneously limiting the variety of acceptable strategies for doing something else with poetry. By shifting focus away from modernism as a literary category and onto the New Poetry, I will demonstrate the extent to which developments in the social sciences had a previously under-recognized influence on American poetry. By foregrounding the roles of the editors of the magazines in which the New Poetry was published, I will also uncover structural parallels between the rise of the New Poetry and the rise of social sciences which shaped it.

The rise of literature and science as a field of study over the past several decades has opened up an extensive array of new ways of looking at the role of writing in society. Methodologies pioneered in the 1980s by critics such as Gillian Beer, George Levine, Lisa Steinman, and others comparing the interrelated uses of metaphor in literature and scientific writing, examining the influence literature has had on the thinking of scientists, and analyzing the influence of scientific and technological advances on literature have now become well established.[4] One need only look to works such as Charlotte Sleigh's *Literature and Science* (2011) or Martin Willis's *Literature and Science: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (2015) for an overview of the breadth of possibilities opened up by these methodologies.[5] However, the overviews and anthologies of literature and science also reveal that these methodologies have been applied almost exclusively to the

[4] Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983); George Lewis Levine, ed., *One Culture: Essays in Science and Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); Lisa M. Steinman, *Made in America: Science, Technology, and American Modernist Poets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

[5] Charlotte Sleigh, *Literature and Science* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Martin Willis, *Literature and Science: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (London: Palgrave, 2015).

relationship of literature to the natural and medical sciences; examinations of the social sciences have been comparatively rare.[6]

The relative absence of the social sciences from the field of literature and science criticism may have more to do with the history of sociology and anthropology in America and Western Europe than with a lack of interesting material for study. The scientific status of the social sciences has often been contested both internally and externally. Beginning in the late 1960s, the notion of a "mainstream" sociology grounded in empirical research and value neutrality was being replaced by a demand for more qualitative methods focused on the identity of the individual in relation to the group.[7] The scientific status of sociology, which its leading practitioners had sought to consolidate and solidify up to that point, has since become more ambiguous. Ernest Gellner, for example, concludes his opening article of the 1984 special issue of the *International Social Science Journal* titled "Epistemology of Social Science" by claiming that the social sciences cannot be unreservedly described as scientific.[8] The scientific status of Anthropology has also come to be seen as a matter of debate, rather than a matter of course, as demonstrated by the controversy over the removal of the word "science" from the American Anthropology Association (AAA) mission statement in 2010.[9] The changes in the agreed functions and methodologies of the social sciences, along with the ever growing public prestige of theoretical physics and of the biological sciences that contribute to the progress of medicine have combined to occlude the points in literary and scientific history where the social sciences have interacted with literature

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[6] For instance, there are no entries for anthropology, sociology, or social science in the subject index of Walter Schatzberg et al., *The Relations of Literature and Science: An Annotated Bibliography of Scholarship, 1880-1980* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1987), 419-458.
[7] Immanuel Wallerstein, "Culture of Sociology in Disarray: The Impact of 1968 on U.S. Sociologists," in *Sociology in America: A History*, by Craig Calhoun (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 435.
[8] Ernest Gellner, "The Scientific Status of the Social Sciences," *International Social Science Journal* 36, no. 4 (1984): 584.
[9] Dan Barrett, "Anthropology Without Science," *Inside Higher Education*, November 30, 2010, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2010/11/30/anthroscience, accessed February 20, 2017.

in ways that can be fruitfully analyzed through the various methods employed in the field of literature and science criticism.

This is not to say that no work has been done on literature and the social sciences. In the 1990s, critics such as Ronald Bush and Michael North examined primitivism in the work of key expatriate American modernist writers T.S. Eliot and Gertrude Stein, attributing associated themes to the influence of James G. Frazer, Emile Durkheim, and European imperialist projects in Africa and the Pacific, with little reference to American anthropology.[10] James Nolan explored the influence of indigenous peoples in North America on Walt Whitman and the American poetic tradition he inspired, but rather than focusing on the anthropological frameworks and materials that would facilitate such an influence, Nolan's work is based on the assumption, borrowed from twentieth century writers such as Mary Austin and Vachel Lindsay, that Native American artistic influence is a natural consequence of living in North America, that it represents the "maternal" line of American literary heredity.[11] This is an assumption that is specifically interrogated and critiqued in this thesis in relation to Harriet Monroe and her contemporaries. Alison Griffiths convincingly elaborated the connections between the kinds of displays of indigenous peoples constructed by anthropologists for world's fairs, films of Native Americans recorded by anthropologists and employed as anthropological research tools, and "quasi-ethnographic" films, created in the 1910s by non-anthropologists, which simultaneously sought to be both scientifically legitimate and entertaining spectacle.[12]

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[10] Ronald Bush, "The Presence of the Past: Ethnographic Thinking/Literary Politics," in *Prehistories of the Future: The Primitivist Project and the Culture of Modernism*, ed. Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 23-41; Michael North, "Modernism's African Mask: The Stein-Picasso Collaboration," in *Prehistories of the Future: The Primitivist Project and the Culture of Modernism*, ed. Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 270-89.

[11] James Nolan, *Poet-Chief: The Native American Poetics of Walt Whitman and Pablo Neruda* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 40-41.

[12] Alison Griffiths, "Science and Spectacle: Native American Representation in Early Cinema," in *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, ed. S. Elizabeth Bird (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 79-95.

Griffiths's analysis, however, is restricted to the medium of film, and does not consider how these impulses influenced American poetry.

More recent work on the relationship between literature and the social sciences includes Peter Middleton's *Physics Envy*, which offers an analysis of the period of upheaval in the 1960s when the self-definition of sociology began to shift away from its empirical roots. The book is an examination of the struggle of mid-twentieth-century poets to defend their rights to claim an epistemological role for poetry in a world where physics had apparently won the battle for sole rights to intellectual inquiry.[13] Middleton presents poets as critics of the "mainstream" empirical sociologists and, indirectly, as competing with sociologists for recognition as the primary sources of alternative epistemologies beyond those offered by physics (as the model science).[14] The battle that I identify early twentieth century poets as fighting is even more fundamental: that of the right to make claims to accurately representing experience. Where the relationship between poets and social scientists in 1968 was competitive, at the turn of the twentieth century, the social sciences offered a useful point of contact between science and human experience.

John Holmes's work on the Victorian poet Swinburne's interactions with anthropology also offers an example of the application of the methodologies of literature and science to the social sciences.[15] Holmes identifies a passing reference to anthropology in Swinburne's letters, and explores the degree to which such a reference should be taken seriously. Holmes identifies several of the key historical debates which shaped the future of anthropology, yet his literary focus remains personal. He asks

[13] Peter Middleton, *Physics Envy: American Poetry and Science in the Cold War and after* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 18.
[14] See Chapter 8: "Defying Social Science" ibid., 221-254.
[15] John Holmes, "Algernon Swinburne, Anthropologist," *Journal of Literature and Science* 9, no. 1 (2016): 16-39.

questions about how sensitivity to anthropological references and ways of thinking might shape our reading of Swinburne's work, but does not make any claims regarding the broader field of cultural production. Like Holmes's account of Victorian anthropology in Britain, my account of early twentieth-century American anthropology highlights internal struggles within that field surrounding empiricism, evolution, and race, but I am seeking to answer broader questions about how periodical editors participated in and redeployed those debates with the intention of changing the ways their readers thought about literature, culture, and identity on a larger scale.

Critics John Bruni and Robin Schulze have made valuable recent contributions to our understanding of the relationships between early twentieth-century literature and science in America. Although Bruni's *Scientific Americans: The Making of Popular Science and Evolution in Early-Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture* (2014) and Schulze's *The Degenerate Muse: American Nature, Modernist Poetry, and the Problem of Cultural Hygiene* (2013) both incorporate the emergence of the social sciences of anthropology and sociology as increasingly scientific fields in their arguments, as their titles suggest, each book is explicitly framed as a study of the impact of evolutionary theories on American culture.[16] Both anthropology and sociology at the turn of the twentieth century were primarily based on various interpretations of evolutionary theories, but by focusing on their status as emergent social sciences, this study will shed light on the parallels between the positions of the most prominent practitioners of these sciences in the field of scientific production and the positions of literary magazine editors in the field of cultural production. Where previous scholars have concentrated on the transfer of ideas between fields, I will add an analysis of the

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[16] John Bruni, *Scientific Americans: The Making of Popular Science and Evolution in Early-Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014); Robin G. Schulze, *The Degenerate Muse: American Nature, Modernist Poetry, and the Problem of Cultural Hygiene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

strategies by which scientists and editors attempted to bring about transfers of power and influence.

With the exception of Holmes, all of the critics just mentioned drew heavily from magazines of popular science for source materials on which to base their arguments, demonstrating the central role magazines have played in the reception of science by literary writers and the reading public at large. At the very least, the ubiquitous invocations of magazines like *Scientific American* speak to the assumptions scholars make about the transmission of scientific ideas to a non-scientific public. Without seeking to in any way diminish or undermine the usefulness of studying magazines of popular science, this thesis will take professional journals and official governmental publications containing reports of social science research as the primary source of the texts constituting the output of scientific fields. This decision was made based on unpublished archival materials particular to Monroe and Du Bois. As later chapters will show, although there is evidence in her editorial writing that Monroe was at least a casual reader of *Scientific American*, she had also been a reader of the annual official reports of the *Bureau of American Ethnology* long before she began her career as an editor.[17] Du Bois wrote letters to James McKeen Cattell, who at the time was the editor of the important professional journal *Science*, for editorial advice concerning the existing protections afforded to academic freedom, and to critique Cattell's dismissive attitude in the pages of *Science* toward the work of scientists of mixed race.[18] These literary editors were not receiving scientific ideas indirectly as filtered through the efforts of popularizers. They were actively seeking out such ideas at their source in professional

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[17] Harriet Monroe, Diary Entry, (November 26, 1898), [Box 4, Folder 4], Harriet Monroe Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[18] W.E.B. Du Bois, Letter, "W.E.B. Du Bois to James McKeen Cattell," (March 3, 1910), [Box 109], James McKeen Cattell Papers, Library of Congress; W.E.B. Du Bois, Letter, "W.E.B. Du Bois to James McKeen Cattell," (October 23, 1914), [Box 109], James McKeen Cattell Papers, Library of Congress.

scientific publications, and, I will argue, adopting the strategies for constructing editorial authority they found in such publications along with scientific information itself.

The New Poetry was primarily disseminated through magazines and anthologies. As such, the editors of these magazines and anthologies are of as great an interest as the poets themselves in that they not only shaped the reception of this poetry, but directly contributed to the creation of the perception that something new was happening to poetry on a grand scale. *Poetry* and *The Crisis* are two of the most thoroughly studied little magazines of the early twentieth century, in part because they were both established early in the period associated with American literary modernism, and in part because of the stature of the modernist poets published in their pages including Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Zora Neale Hurston in *The Crisis*, and H.D., William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot in *Poetry*, among many others. Both Du Bois, as editor of *The Crisis*, and Monroe, as editor of *Poetry*, had central roles in shaping the reception of poetry that later came to be defined as the core canon of American literary modernism, but neither can be unequivocally described as modernists themselves. The attitudes they expressed in their editorials, their own poetry, and the body of poetry they promoted over the course of their editorial careers are reflective of their contemporary conceptions of modernity, but are not congruent with most current definitions of modernism.

My interest in these figures and the poetry they curated and promoted does not stem from an underlying project of expanding definitions of modernism to accommodate them, but from a desire to elucidate literature of this period beyond the confines of modernism. My goal is to draw attention to what the editors of these literary magazines set out to achieve and why, as opposed to retrospectively cherry-picking the best of the poems they published according to a particular set of retrospectively imposed aesthetic

criteria. This historicist approach is ultimately beneficial in two ways: it situates some of the modernist poetry familiar to twenty first-century critics in a richer context, but it also points to alternative lenses on the literature of the early twentieth century beyond the literary modernism that has dominated scholarship for the past several decades. By studying the influence on poetry of the cultural authority of science, generally, and the growing preoccupation with the social sciences in particular, I will reintegrate allegedly disparate strands of early twentieth century culture that have been cut out of the majority of literary scholarship of the period in favor of the elements that have played a central role in the narrative of literary modernism.

The focus of this study will be the interactions between race and the rising cultural importance of science in the self-conscious formation of American national identity by magazine editors who saw their roles as not only curatorial but also formative. Like John Timberman Newcomb, I am interested in elucidating alternatives to the "narratives of repudiation– of the urban populace, of politics, of technology, of modernity itself" that for many years dominated critical accounts of twentieth-century American poetry, and I also follow him in his interest in recuperating early twentieth-century poets' interest in innovative content, as opposed to restricting critical focus to innovative form.[19] However, where Newcomb takes as his focal point the rise of writing about urban life and experience, I will argue that the pervasive rise in science as a mode of approaching the modern world was as much a part of the development of the New Poetry as the city was.

Newcomb devotes much of his chapter on Monroe in *How Did Poetry Survive?* to defending *Poetry's* avant-garde bona fides and Monroe's vision as a modernist editor, albeit not in the Poundian vein.[20] He notes Monroe's dual commitments to a Midwestern

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[19] John Timberman Newcomb, *How Did Poetry Survive? The Making of Modern American Verse* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 4; 3.
[20] Ibid., 29.

regionalism as well as an international cosmopolitanism in the pages of the magazine.[21] In this study, though I will not be repudiating the importance of the latter, it is the former that will be of primary interest: the ways in which Monroe sought to forge a specifically American poetic identity, and the extent to which that identity was rooted in Chicago and in the American West. *Poetry's* abiding interest in Native American verse, described by Newcomb as a "genuine" but "compromised" interest and one of the magazine's "inevitable misses," will be explored in more depth as in fact revealing much about Monroe's vision for a distinctly American poetry grounded in scientific methods and discoveries.

One of the enduring preoccupations of early twentieth-century poets and critics was the function of rhythm in verse and its relationship to psychology, physiology, and race. Monroe, for instance, published at least five editorials explicitly discussing rhythm in poetry and its connections with science between 1913 and 1925.[22] More recently, Michael Golston has made a convincing case for the important influence of contemporary scientific thought concerning rhythm on canonical modernism.[23] He makes use of professional scientific and popular publications to establish broad trends in the ways rhythm was used in anthropological, psychological, and racial discourse, and demonstrates the ideological implications of the metrical innovations of poets like Pound and Yeats. I have adopted a similar methodology in terms of turning to scientific periodical publications to identify currents of anthropological and sociological thought which, read alongside literary magazines, shed light on Monroe's and DuBois's editorial

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[21] Ibid., 51.
[22] Harriet Monroe, "Rhythms of English Verse: I," *Poetry* 3, no. 2 (November 1913): 61-68; "Rhythms of English Verse: II," *Poetry* 3, no. 3 (December 1913): 100-111; "Dr. Patterson on Rhythm," *Poetry* 12, no. 1 (April 1918): 30-36; "Prosody," *Poetry* 20, no. 3 (June 1922): 148-52; "A Word about Prosody," *Poetry* 27, no. 3 (December 1925): 149-53.
[23] Michael Golston, *Rhythm and Race in Modernist Poetry and Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

decisions and writings. As mentioned above, up to this point, the vast majority of the work done by scholars of literature and science has either taken a fairly narrow view of science by studying the interactions between literature and physics, human biology, or psychology, or has explored the liminal spaces of science by studying fields like Spiritism and examining the border between science and the occult, which was considered far more permeable in the early twentieth century than it is today.[24] However, the processes of establishing scientific and cultural credibility which were central to the emergent social sciences around the turn of the twentieth century held many similarities both to the processes of re-establishing the cultural capital of poetry as a genre and to the attempts to obtain political, social, and cultural authority for people of color after the travesties of the eras of slavery and Reconstruction.

The similarities and overlaps between these struggles for cultural capital can be further analyzed using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of "fields" and multiple forms of capital. Bourdieu's work presents a useful framework and vocabulary for discussing the struggles for influence and recognition across multiple areas of the public sphere, and as such, I will be drawing heavily on his work. However, there are several gaps and weaknesses in his analyses of fields, especially in terms of questions of gender, race, and class as barriers to entry into particular fields, and the varying scale of such barriers at different points in history. This is not to say that Bourdieu does not address questions of class, in particular, in other areas of his work, but he does not adequately address the ways in which these categories contribute to what he refers to as the "price of entry" of a field.[25]

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[24] See, for instance, Michael H. Whitworth, *Einstein's Wake: Relativity, Metaphor and Modernist Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Daniel Albright, *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, and the Science of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Tim Armstrong, *Modernism, Technology, and the Body: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Lara Elizabeth Vetter, *Modernist Writings and Religio-Scientific Discourse: H.D., Loy, and Toomer* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[25] An example of a discussion of the price of entry to a field that completely overlooks questions of race, class, and gender can be found in *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 65.

Bourdieu's work is invoked here as a starting point for the kinds of questions that will be posed in this thesis; a means to an end, but not an end in itself.

In his influential essay, "The Field of Cultural Production," Bourdieu describes the difficulty of bringing about any significant change in a given field:

> when the newcomers are not disposed to enter the cycle of simple reproduction, based on recognition of the 'old' by the 'young' [...] and recognition of the 'young' by the 'old' [...] but bring with them dispositions and position-takings which clash with the prevailing norms of production and the expectations of the field, they cannot succeed without the help of external changes. These may be political breaks, such as revolutionary crises, which change the power relations within the field [...], or deep-seated changes in the audience of consumers who, because of their affinity with the new producers, ensure the success of their products.[26]

In other words, when a group of artists, writers, or thinkers challenges the authority of the previous generation to confer legitimacy and this new generation asserts a new set of values by which merit and legitimacy should be judged, they are unlikely to succeed unless they bring with them an audience that is predisposed to favor the kinds of art or writing this new generation produces. The New Poetry as a movement explicitly brought with it new position-takings that expanded the boundaries of acceptable poetic form and content. The NAACP, as a source of black cultural production, took the new position that African Americans should not be content to remain within the role prescribed for them by white society as 'old' cultural leaders such as Booker T. Washington advocated. As editors, Monroe and Du Bois wished to find or even create audiences that would enable the success of the respective challenges to the established cycles of production. The specific barriers to entry faced by each editor will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

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[26] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 57-58.

The scientists instrumental in the founding of Sociology and Anthropology, while not completely denying the need for recognition of the young by the old within the field of scientific production, also took up new positions that had not been previously available within the scientific field by applying the frameworks of scientific thought and the accepted forms of scientific production to areas that had previously not been considered as valid subjects of scientific study. Bourdieu differentiates between the artistic and scientific fields on the grounds that in the scientific field, newcomers must "apply at every moment all the available cognitive instruments and all the means of verification that have been accumulated in the course of the whole history of science."[27] Whereas in the field of cultural production, newcomers may seek to displace those who have come before, scientists, if they wish to remain within the boundaries of the field of scientific production, must generate originality by creating new combinations of known elements and applying "instruments of discovery" (such as mathematics or the scientific method) in novel ways.[28]

Bourdieu's characterization of the scientific field as generating objectivity through intersubjectivity is also useful for understanding the importance of the role of the discipline-specific journals or official governmental publications organized by the early social scientists in America. The objectivity that qualitatively separates the scientific field from such fields as economics or art, according to Bourdieu's characterization, is not a function of the lone scientist altruistically setting aside personal interest and somehow transcending the limitations of her individual point of view. Rather, it results from both the social and cumulative nature of the scientific field. For a scientific result, idea, or theory to become accepted as scientific fact, it must first be

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[27] Bourdieu, *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, 76.
[28] Ibid., 66.

capable of demonstration using methods and instruments which represent embodiments of the cumulative history of science. It must also be subjected to the critique of peers who are simultaneously both competitive and cooperative.[29] This necessary element of the field is facilitated though journals, which constitute means of publicly presenting ideas for critique as well as communicating (either consciously or unconsciously) the assumptions and boundaries of whichever discipline each journal encompasses. The importance of journals or other forms of periodical publication to emerging scientific disciplines had the additional effect of making anthropological and sociological material available to canny editors outside the scientific field such as Monroe and Du Bois, as will be explored in depth in Chapters 2 and 3. In addition, Chapter 3 will demonstrate the ways in which Du Bois sought to mirror the role played by a journal within the field of a given scientific discipline with *The Crisis*.

To differing extents, both Monroe and Du Bois specifically sought to sway their respective audiences by strategically substituting a sort of borrowed scientific capital for the cultural capital they lacked. The first step of this substitution was to foster in their audiences the capacity to perceive scientific capital. As Bourdieu argues, "symbolic power of the scientific type can be exerted only on agents who possess the categories of perception necessary to know it and recognize it. It is a paradoxical (and, in a sense, heteronomous) power which presupposes the 'complicity' of the agent who undergoes it."[30] Bourdieu is here referring to the function and distribution of symbolic capital among the members of the field of practicing scientists. However, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 1 of this thesis, the reading public of the early twentieth century was predisposed to value scientific capital, and so by supplying either implicit frameworks

[29] Ibid., 82-83.
[30] Ibid., 55.

for judging scientific value, in the case of Monroe, or explicit frameworks in the case of Du Bois, it was not unreasonable for these two editors to expect to garner at least some degree of success with such a strategy.

Because of their unique role in bridging the fields of art and the economy, periodical editors have the opportunity to assess, shape, and exploit (in Bourdieu's words) the "deep seated changes in the audience of consumers" required to ensure the success of the newcomers for whom they are the ambassadors. Monroe devoted extensive editorial space in early issues of *Poetry* to the questions of who the audience for the New Poetry was and what the relationship between poets and readers should be. Like Bourdieu, she recognized that an iconoclastic movement could not survive unless there was also a sea change in the attitude of readers of poetry. She saw it as one of the most important functions of a magazine of the New Poetry to educate readers so that they would be capable of accepting, appreciating, and supporting the unfamiliar turn in the genre. Du Bois's editorial policies also focused on educating his readership to the point of being willing to not only consider but demand new possibilities for African Americans, both as writers and as citizens. Both Monroe and Du Bois drew on the successes of anthropology and sociology, respectively, in enlisting the substantial cultural capital of science to legitimate new positions within their respective fields.

In order to analyze the roles played by Monroe, Du Bois, and other editors of journals and magazines, I will be drawing in part on the editorial typologies established by Matthew Philpotts, as well as Philpotts and Stephen Parker's work on forms of capital accrued and utilized by magazines, and Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman's assessment of the author function in magazines. Parker and Philpotts take Bourdieu's concept of the multiple forms of capital which circulate within various fields in addition

to financial capital as a starting point from which to begin to explain some of the functions of periodicals. According to their analysis,

> journals become vital institutions in the field, sites in which intellectuals adopt positions in that field and through which they exercise agency in their transactions of capital. That capital may be "economic," "political," or "cultural" depending on the field in which it originates and is recognised. For writers, literary capital becomes the vital currency, defined and dispensed according to principles internal to the literary field itself, but literary producers also participate in the struggles of the economic and political fields, in which economic and political capital is bestowed.[31]

According to Parker and Philpotts's application of Bourdieu's work, "the accumulation of […] successive position-takings [in each new issue of a magazine] and of the capital held by individual agents associated with the enterprise is invested in the name of the journal, which functions as an agent in its own right, able to participate in transactions of capital and occupying its own readily recognizable position in the field."[32] The journal, then, becomes greater than the sum of its editors and contributors.

In order for a journal to accumulate capital to its name, however, it is necessary for editors to direct efforts surrounding that journal in particular ways. To describe the range of possible approaches to periodical editing, Philpotts borrows the term "habitus" from Bourdieu, defining it as "a deeply ingrained but readily transferable set of attitudes which generates the perception and practices of individual agents."[33] Habitus is a "second nature" rather than "conscious and calculated" behavior. Philpotts identifies three categories of editorial habitus: "charismatic," "bureaucratic," and "mediating."[34] The charismatic habitus is characterized by intense personal involvement on the part of the editor, to the point that the magazine is directly identified with the editor. The charismatic

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[31] Stephen Parker and Matthew Philpotts, *Sinn Und Form: The Anatomy of a Literary Journal* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 5.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Matthew Philpotts, "The Role of the Periodical Editor: Literary Journals and Editorial Habitus," *Modern Language Review* 107, no. 1 (2012): 42.
[34] Ibid., 43.

editor has a clear mission or point of view to be promoted through the magazine and keeps direct personal control over all editorial decisions in order to carry this out. Another distinguishing feature of the charismatic editor is the ability to accumulate cultural capital for the journal in the form of well-known and high quality contributors. This capital, however, "is not easily transferred to a new post-holder."[35] The weakness of a charismatic editor is a disregard for the more commercial aspects of the post, which are neglected in favor of the artistic vision of the editor. Magazines edited in this way tend to have an elite and exclusive readership and are rarely financially self-sustaining.

At the other end of the spectrum, the bureaucratic habitus is characterized by pragmatism, conservatism, and usually involves delegation of various aspects of the editorial role amongst a team of co-editors. While magazines edited in this way tend to be more sustainable than their charismatically edited counterparts, they also tend to take fewer risks. For this reason they are often viewed as part of the established culture rather than the avant-garde, which in turn can lead to a shift in contributors and readership if a charismatic founding editor is succeeded by an editorial team demonstrating the bureaucratic habitus.[36] Another distinctive feature of bureaucratically edited magazines is that this habitus comes to inhere in the magazine itself, and the vision and habitus of each individual editor is subordinated to that of the magazine. For this reason, the transfer of editorial roles to new post-holders is usually much easier and more successful.

Rather than being a middle way, the mediating habitus is defined as combining "dispositions which are intrinsically opposed to one another" within a single individual.[37] The editor acting within the mediating habitus has all of the passion and the ability to accumulate cultural capital of the charismatic editor, but is able to instinctively temper

[35] Ibid., 49.
[36] Ibid., 54.
[37] Ibid.

these impulses in a pragmatic way. This modulation between two extremes helps to ensure the financial stability of the magazine without abandoning the artistic vision that attracts high-quality contributors and the intended readers. Philpotts identifies this dual habitus as the most likely to create a successful and long-lived periodical.

Like any typological system, Philpotts's descriptions of editorial habitus are drastic simplifications of reality. They do, however, serve their purpose in identifying particular characteristics and binaries that can aid in understanding the function of an editor. Both Monroe and Du Bois exemplify traits associated with the charismatic habitus. Monroe's personal vision permeates *Poetry*, and although she was to some extent open to input from others, particularly Pound in the magazine's early years, her refusal to compromise that vision was what drove Pound to look elsewhere for a convenient platform for his own views. Du Bois was more willing to delegate tasks and allowed a range of perspectives to be represented in *The Crisis*, yet the editorial voice of the magazine was unmistakably his own. It was Monroe's and Du Bois's awareness of multiple forms of capital, however, and their pragmatic deployments of that capital, traits more typical of the bureaucratic editorial habitus, which resulted in their magazines' success and longevity. In both cases, cultural capital came to inhere in the magazines themselves, as evidenced by the fact that both magazines have remained continuously in print even after their founding editors left them in the 1930s.

The idea of a journal functioning as an agent in its own right leads us to the problem of the author function within magazines. Philpotts has more recently expanded on this idea, using Foucault's definition of the author function as a label or category that allows works to be grouped together and contrasted against other works. This definition strengthens his argument that the author function in periodicals is filled by the name of the magazine, with each new issue representing a new work to be added to the group of

works by the same "author."[38] Scholes and Wulfman, on the other hand, assert that "what the author is to a book, the editor(s) and staff are to a periodical – the major influence on the contents of the object."[39] They go on to problematize this assertion, comparing magazines with films in their status of having multiple creators, but return to the summary that, "editorship, especially for the smaller periodicals, is a crucial unifying element."[40]

Bearing this contradiction in mind, throughout this study I have interpreted *Poetry* and *The Crisis* as expressions of their founding editors' overarching visions and artistic and political goals. My interpretations of individual pieces of writing published in these magazines are primarily oriented toward the context of their placement within a magazine, and although the authorship of each piece informs my analysis, it is the piece's selection for publication by the editor in question which gives it its primary significance. The process of selecting and framing pieces of writing for publication within their respective magazines was each editor's most visible means of accruing cultural, social, and political capital, and therefore forms the basis of this study.

The final element of Bourdieu's field theory that will be useful in thinking about the ways in which Monroe and Du Bois sought to accrue cultural capital as editors of their respective magazines is the concept of "field homologies." In simplest terms, field homologies can be described as parallel positions of power (or of oppression) held by two groups or individuals within separate fields. Such homologies can represent opportunities for building mutually beneficial relationships between the members of apparently separate fields. However, Bourdieu points to the potentially disingenuous

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[38] Matthew Philpotts, "Defining the Thick Journal: Periodical Codes and Common Habitus" (Modern Language Association 2013, Boston, MA: ESPRit, 2013), http://www.ru.nl/esprit/resources/what-journal-towards/.
[39] Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman, *Modernism in the Magazines: An Introduction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 53.
[40] Ibid.

nature of such parallels where discrepancies exist in other aspects of two groups' positions:

> The cultural producers, who occupy the economically dominated and symbolically dominant position within the field of cultural production, tend to feel solidarity with the occupants of the economically and culturally dominated positions within the field of class relations. Such alliances, based on homologies of position combined with profound differences in condition, are not exempt from misunderstandings and even bad faith.[41]

Despite the similarities in relative positions within their respective fields between the proponents of the New Poetry, social scientists, black writers, and Native American communities, such field homologies were no guarantees of alliances. As I will demonstrate in the chapters that follow, the relationships between social scientists and African Americans, and editors of the New Poetry and Native American communities were as likely to be exploitative to varying degrees as they were supportive.

Science has become one of the key sources of authority when making truth-claims about new position takings. This was especially true in early twentieth-century America. Harriet Monroe invoked scientific authority and the public enthusiasm for scientific and technological progress in making her case for the need for a new approach to poetry. She also sought material for this new poetry in scientific texts and achievements, and encouraged others to do likewise. Du Bois was trained in the social sciences himself, and marshalled arguments from the science of heredity, evolutionary studies, and the social sciences to make his case for the extension of equal rights to African Americans not only credible, but incontrovertible. Early practitioners of the emerging social sciences also used similar borrowing strategies from other, more established, scientific areas of study to demonstrate that their methods, arguments, and conclusions were equally valid sources of truth. Many of the claims made by the emerging social sciences represented attempts to apply scientific authority to various political agendas, particularly those surrounding

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[41] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, 44.

race in America. In Chapter 1, I examine more closely the cultural contexts which fostered the availability and popularity of science as a source of authority deployable in other fields. I argue that the accrual of authority and capital, whether scientific, cultural, or political, was not the natural, automatic process it appears to be retrospect, but the result of calculated, concerted effort on the part of individual members of the fields in question.

Chapter 2 traces the development of institutionalized anthropology in the United States and Harriet Monroe's deployment of anthropological materials and authority to argue for a specifically American poetic tradition that would minimize its indebtedness to European verse. This use of anthropological material, frameworks, and scientific status is complicated, however, by the political commitments of governmentally sponsored anthropological projects and publications, which gained status (and funding) by framing scientific findings in racialized terms that would provide justifications for official policies concerning the treatment of indigenous peoples within the borders of the continental United States.

The eclectic, collage-like nature of *The Crisis* has frequently been highlighted by scholars of periodical studies and African American writing.[42] Chapter 3 will explore the many distinct and sometimes contradictory strategies employed by Du Bois in his fight to establish the legitimacy and equality of African American cultural, economic, political, and scientific production. I will argue that Du Bois's background as a sociologist made him sensitive to the internal struggles for influence in other fields, and that his passion for social justice for all people of color drove him to attempt to deploy as many of the tools used in those struggles as he could possibly turn to his own use.

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[42] Anne Elizabeth Carroll, "Protest and Affirmation: Composite Texts in the *Crisis*," *American Literature* 76, no. 1 (2004): 89-116; Ann Ardis, "Making Middlebrow Culture, Making Middlebrow Literary Texts Matter: The *Crisis*, Easter 1912," *Modernist Cultures* 6, no. 1 (April 15, 2011): 18-40.

Outlining the struggle for scientific authority that accompanied the emergence of sociology as an academic discipline both contextualizes Du Bois's own career as a social scientist, which he partially set aside to become the editor of *The Crisis*, and allows for some direct parallels to be made between the decisions of the editors of early professional journals of sociology and decisions made by Du Bois in his editorial career.

Chapter 1: Science and Scientific Authority in American Culture and Identity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

The Cultural Authority of Science

In 1906, social theorist Thorstein Veblen declared that science was the defining characteristic of modern western society. In an article written for the *American Journal of Sociology* (*AJS*) titled "The Place of Science in Modern Civilization," he defines science as engaging with the "matter-of-fact" aspects of life, and describes "the modern civilized peoples" as "in a peculiar degree capable of an impersonal, dispassionate insight into the material facts with which mankind has to deal."[1] For Veblen, this is the only aspect of human culture in which modernity can be said to be superior to earlier stages of cultural evolution. Employing terms borrowed from late nineteenth-century anthropology, he describes the overarching paradigm of knowledge in savage societies as anthropomorphised "dramatic" consistency and in barbaric societies as anthropomorphised authoritarian hierarchy, but that in modern, so-called civilized societies the paradigm becomes chains of cause and effect that are both mechanistic and impersonal.[2] That is to say that so-called savage societies ascribe personal agency and desires to natural phenomena in order to explain their observations of the world, but do not strongly systematize these explanatory narratives, developing a form of animism in which knowledge is simply directed by "idle curiosity"; so-called barbaric societies maintain a narrative form of explaining phenomena, but impose hierarchical structures within natural phenomena that reflect those developing in society, such as the hierarchies of medieval feudalism; the defining and superior characteristic of modern society, for

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[1] Thorstein Veblen, "The Place of Science in Modern Civilization," *American Journal of Sociology* 11, no. 5 (1906): 585.
[2] Ibid., 590, 593, 596.

Veblen, is the turn away from narrative explanations of phenomena toward objective causality, or in other words, the emergence of science.

The relationship between industry, technology, and modern scientific inquiry is, for Veblen, absolutely inextricable. Scientific knowledge can readily be employed in technological fields because it is pursued in a world governed by technological thinking:

> The reason why scientific theories can be turned to account for these practical ends is not that these ends are included in the scope of scientific inquiry. These useful purposes lie outside the scientist's interest. It is not that he aims, or can aim, at technological improvements. His inquiry is as "idle" as that of the Pueblo myth-maker. But the canons of validity under whose guidance he works are those imposed by the modern technology, through habituation to its requirements; and therefore his results are available for the technological purpose.[3]

Aspects of modern society that are not directly related to or inspired by mechanistic, cause-and-effect, matter-of-fact ways of thinking, including "creative art," are "intrusive feature[s] in the modern scheme, borrowed or standing over from the barbarian past," though Veblen speaks of these alternative areas of achievement with a degree of regret and wistfulness, leaving open to question the wisdom of the fact that "on any large question which is to be disposed of for good and all the final appeal is by common consent taken to the scientist."[4] In the early twentieth century, on the evidence of Veblen's writings, scientific thinking was a key source of cultural authority, influencing on a fundamental level any intellectual project that sought to be defined as modern.

More recently, Charles E. Rosenberg has echoed Veblen in describing the relationship between society and science in the nineteenth century and into the Progressive era as a means by which the accepted cultural ideologies and social norms could be authorized and communicated, arguing that science had become one of the

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[3] Ibid., 598.
[4] Ibid., 586-587.

"sources of authority clothed with the greatest emotional relevance."[5] Carroll Pursell argues that two of the key motivating impulses of early twentieth-century Progressivism in America were "searching for social justice and humane institutions" and the "effort to rationalize and manage society in the interests of stability and order." For many Progressive Americans "social justice and humane institutions could only grow out of stability and order." Science offered an apparent "impartiality" as well as "efficiency" which served both of these ends.[6] Science, and the idea of the scientific, was in many senses a cornerstone of American culture and American identity at the turn of the twentieth century.

The social sciences emerged as fields of growing importance and increasing professionalization in response to the Progressive projects of social rationalization and social justice. Although the history of sociology and anthropology, the two social sciences most relevant to this study, can be traced back to the seventeenth century and beyond in various forms, these fields first began to coalesce in their recognizable modern forms in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, and reached the point of professionalization in America in the 1890s and 1900s amidst wider changes in the structure of American universities.[7] As in Britain, the university curriculum began to shift away from its roots in classical languages and literatures and theology to encompass the natural, physical, and applied sciences. Anthropology and sociology, as they began to accumulate scientific authority, promised solutions to pressing social and political problems, but the accumulation of such authority was, as social science historian Dorothy Ross explains, "not a product of the automatic progress of science," but a deliberate process in which

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[5] Charles E. Rosenberg, *No Other Gods: On Science and American Social Thought*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 2.
[6] Carroll Pursell, *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 204.
[7] Dorothy Ross, "Changing Contours of the Social Science Disciplines," in *The Cambridge History of Science, Vol 7: The Modern Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 205.

practitioners of these emerging fields had to deploy a range of strategies to construct academically and institutionally credible identities.[8]

Poetry and *The Crisis* are two of the most thoroughly studied little magazines of the early twentieth century, in part because they were both established early in the period associated with American literary modernism, and in part because of the stature of the modernist poets published in their pages including Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Zora Neale Hurston in *The Crisis*, and H.D., William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot in *Poetry*, among many others. Both W.E.B. Du Bois, as editor of *The Crisis*, and Harriet Monroe, as editor of *Poetry*, had central roles in shaping the reception of poetry that later came to be defined as the core canon of American literary modernism, but neither can be unequivocally described as modernists themselves. The attitudes they expressed in their editorials, their own poetry, and the bodies of poetry they promoted over the course of their editorial careers are reflective of their contemporary conceptions of modernity, but are not congruent with most current definitions of modernism. Part of the modernity central to both editors' visions for their respective magazines derived from their attempts to draw, in various ways, on the pervasive cultural authority of science. In this chapter I will pose the questions of what "science" signified both to modernist writers and to turn-of-the-century practitioners of the social sciences, and how the unique relationships to science established in a range of the periodicals in which these disciplines and schools coalesced can enrich our understanding of American poetry in the early twentieth century beyond the terms of debates surrounding modernism.

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[8] Ibid., 206.

Science in Modern Literary Magazines

In the introduction to *Made in America* Lisa Steinman claims that in the early twentieth century,

> many disciplines, including poetry, tried to borrow the prestige of science and technology in order to declare a place for their own work in an American context. Some also argued that the arts, to be relevant, had to address the issues of the practical and technological world in which people lived. At the same time, most people saw themselves as defenders of art and human values against a scientific age.[9]

This assertion seems to take for granted a division between science and the arts that has in recent years been increasingly called into question. As I will demonstrate, the editorial writings and decisions of W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Crisis* and Harriet Monroe in *Poetry* do reflect the editors' need to address the cultural influence of science in order to assert their own cultural authority, but the strategies they employ are rarely as simple as "borrowing the prestige of science," and they certainly do not betray any desire to "defend" humanity against the threat of the "scientific age." The specific uses of, or responses to, science in each magazine have important political and artistic motivations, and reveal the extent to which specific scientific advances, as well as the concept of science and its associated values more generally, inspired these editors and influenced the ways they chose to shape their readers' perceptions of both poetry and the wider world.

In *The Crisis* most of the direct treatments of science and scientific authority are found in the early issues of the magazine and decrease in frequency as the magazine became established within its niche readership. References to science and scientific authority in *Poetry*, however, remain fairly consistent throughout the years of Monroe's editorship, even increasing in the late 1920s and early 1930s near the end of her life. This difference reflects the different aims of the respective publications. *The Crisis* was

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[9] Lisa M. Steinman, *Made in America : Science, Technology, and American Modernist Poets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 2.

attempting to assert cultural authority from outside the American mainstream, sometimes in direct opposition to the most widely publicized claims of science. To use the terms of Bourdieu's theory of social fields, Du Bois needed to take up a position that had not been previously occupied within the field of cultural production, a position from which, despite his dominated position in terms of race, he could critique some manifestations of scientific authority while using others as tools in the ongoing struggle for dominance and capital within the field.[10] *Poetry*, on the other hand, was established with the goal of creating a space for innovative and modern (though not necessarily modernist) poetry within the cultural mainstream, which included the celebration of scientific achievement and the integration of scientific authority. This position also represented an effort to create a change in the existing power relations within the field due to Monroe's resistance to the dominant position that prestige belonged to artists or poets who rejected any interest in financial compensation or the wider literary market. Monroe's appeals to science and her insistence that science should be a natural subject for and influence on poetry represent strategies by which she attempted to transfer the symbolic capital of the field of science onto her magazine to aid in the struggle to redefine the power relations within the field of cultural production. Whether they embraced or rejected the values associated with science, both Du Bois and Monroe recognized the resource science represented for defining the voices of their respective magazines.

Grouping *Poetry* and *The Crisis* together may at first seem like an arbitrary choice. *Poetry* has historically been associated with the rise of literary modernism in America, while *The Crisis* has only comparatively recently come to be seen as an important text in the new modernist studies, thanks to the work of scholars such as Ann

[10] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, 30-31; 37-39.

Ardis, Anne Carroll, Russ Castronovo, and Rachel Farebrother.[11] In addition to publishing canonical modernist writers, a criterion which can be fulfilled by virtually all of the little magazines of the early twentieth century, *Poetry* and *The Crisis* share several key features. Both were founded in the first half of the 1910s and had extensive runs of about two decades under their founding editors. Both have significant editorial content, in contrast to magazines like *Others* which featured virtually no direct editorial input. Most importantly, both are edited in such a way as to obscure the collaborative nature of magazine production and create the illusion of the editor as the author of each issue.

The obvious differences between these magazines also contribute to their usefulness as a pair. They represent two important strains in the modern literature of North America that are rarely studied in conjunction: the New Poetry movement and the New Negro movement. Such a conjunction creates a more thoroughly historicized view of early twentieth century poetic innovation, allowing readers and critics to move beyond the limits of the traditional modernist canon to include a more representative spectrum of American poetic voices. Modernism is a retrospective and an infamously contested category, and much of the poetry I am concerned with does not fall within its boundaries. When the lens of modernism, which has so thoroughly dominated our understanding of the poetry of the early twentieth century, is set aside, lost tensions, groupings, and nuances can emerge. Both Monroe and Du Bois sought to showcase writing they deemed to be pressingly relevant to modern America, and in so doing they provided a vehicle for many of the poets closely associated with modernism today, such as T.S. Eliot, Carl Sandburg, and Langston Hughes. Yet taken as a whole, the poetry printed in *Poetry* and *The Crisis* reveals many additional narratives within the field of twentieth-century

[11] See Ardis, "Making Middlebrow Culture, Making Middlebrow Literary Texts Matter"; Carroll, "Protest and Affirmation"; Russ Castronovo, "Beauty along the Color Line: Lynching, Aesthetics, and the *Crisis*," *PMLA* 121, no. 5 (2006): 1443-59; Rachel Farebrother, *The Collage Aesthetic in the Harlem Renaissance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

American literature beyond the rise of modernism. My exploration of the relationship of poetry to science, and specifically to the social sciences, brings into focus the processes by which human relationships and interactions were being renegotiated in the early twentieth century, and the struggles to forge or maintain a sense of identity on racial, national, and personal scales in light of these renegotiations.

The use of the generalized term "science" today may seem too inexact to be useful in an academic discussion in an interdisciplinary context. As Daniel Cordle points out, "one of the points of contention that sometimes arises in the two cultures debate is that science is described in the humanities as a single, unified thing, with examples from, say, biology wrongly taken as paradigmatic for the whole of science."[12] My interest, however, is in the way the term was used in early twentieth-century texts, and I will myself use the term when referring to the abstract intellectual institution that continues to rely on appeals to objectivity and empiricism to assert cultural and political authority. "Science," as opposed to "biology" or "anthropology," was widely used in literary and generalist publications and even in the texts and titles of more specialist journals such as *Scientific American* and *Science*. Use of the word "science," as demonstrated above in Veblen's use of the term, immediately invoked a particular set of values and assumptions for early twentieth-century readers.

According to historian Ronald Tobey, the two key influences on the perception of science in Progressive Era America were a reinterpretation of Darwinism and the idea of the expert. While Spencerian social Darwinism provided the justification for unregulated capitalism, Progressive reformers "reasoned that an accurate understanding

[12] Daniel Cordle, *Postmodern Postures: Literature, Science and the Two Cultures Debate* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 13.

of Darwinian theory did not justify the status quo."[13] They argued instead that the evolution and progress of the human species could be shaped through the implementation of social reforms. Thus science became a utilitarian resource for improving society, a resource best accessed through experts.[14] The scientific expert did not have access to special knowledge unattainable by the layperson. In Tobey's words, "The progressives did not doubt the ability of every man to understand science and reality. Every man, however, did not have the time to understand them. The expert was accepted in terms of social efficiency."[15] This focus on the utility of science, to the exclusion of scientific discovery for its own sake, shifted the values associated with science away from exploration, creativity, and inspiration toward technology, precision, and the mundane, what Veblen called the "matter-of-fact."

A useful point of comparison for discussing the elements that distinguished the attitudes to science found in both *Poetry* and *The Crisis* can be found in Margaret Anderson's magazine *The Little Review*. In an avant-garde, experimentally-focused literary magazine such as *The Little Review*, the association of science with the pejoratively mundane and practical was often taken as a matter of course. This attitude has historically been ascribed to modernists generally, especially before the rise of Einstein's popularity and the debates surrounding theories of relativity and non-Euclidian geometry.[16] Science, per se, is rarely the direct subject of editorial comment in *The Little Review*, but is surprisingly ubiquitous as a counter example or negative standard. Because of its alignment with traditional assumptions about the relationship between science and

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[13] Ronald C. Tobey, *The American Ideology of National Science, 1919-1930* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), 14.
[14] Ibid., 18.
[15] Ibid., 107.
[16] Armstrong, *Modernism, Technology, and the Body*, 4.

modernist literature, I will briefly explore the editorial treatment of science in *The Little Review* before embarking on a more detailed analysis of *Poetry* and *The Crisis*.

In her November 1914 article in praise of Emma Goldman, Anderson dismisses the criticism that Goldman is "unscientific" as irrelevant by explaining that such detractors fail to comprehend that "the chief business of the prophet is to usher in those new times which often appear in direct opposition to scientific prediction."[17] Science is limited by its reliance on reason and measurement, and is fundamentally ill-equipped for originality, which for Anderson is fuelled by passion. The opposition between poetic "prophet" and the scientific "pedant" is employed again in Anderson's March 1916 retrospective editorial essay, "Our First Year." In acknowledging some of the criticisms which have been levelled against *The Little Review*, particularly the accusation that the magazine lacks focus and a clear "policy," Anderson says, "I should much rather have the limitations of the visionary or the poet or the prophet than those of the pedant or the priest or the 'practical' person."[18] While science is not explicitly mentioned here, it becomes clear as the text progresses that, for Anderson, there is no material difference between the old authority of priests and the new authority of scientists. To assert the need for a magazine like *The Little Review*, Anderson presents an extensive quotation from Walter Lippman's *Drift and Mastery* (1914) to the effect that the challenge of his generation was not to overthrow the conservative authority that oppressed the generation that came before, but rather to bring a new order out of the reigning chaos. In the quoted excerpt, Lippman argues that "[s]cientific invention and blind social currents have made the old authority impossible in fact, the artillery fire of the iconoclasts has shattered its prestige."[19] At least in this segment, science for Lippman is a revolutionizing force,

[17] Margaret Anderson, "The Immutable," *The Little Review* 1, no. 8 (November 1914): 20.
[18] Margaret Anderson, "Our First Year," *The Little Review* 1, no. 11 (February 1915): 2.
[19] Ibid., 4.

freeing society from "the intellectual leadership of the priest" and "Victorian sentiment." Anderson rejects Lippman's argument, claiming that science has merely replaced religion as the tool of oppressive cultural authority: "The horrible joke of modern life is that *we have been presented with a new rock of ages!*"[20] The rule of science, reason and practicality is just as stifling to the truly revolutionary artistic imagination, in Anderson's eyes, as religious dogma, thus casting scientific innovation as anti-modern.

Nevertheless, Anderson frequently employs the vocabulary of fields such as eugenics and psychology, and writes positively about science in certain political contexts; that is, when science is employed to solve cultural problems that are important to her. The most prominent example of this tendency is in Anderson's discussions surrounding sexuality. Although she protests that "the science of eugenics" is "fundamentally a sentimentalization […] because there is no such thing as the scientific restriction of love and passion," she believes that "the restriction of the birth-rate" should be one of science's "big battles."[21] Eugenics, as a legislative policy governing who should and should not reproduce, or even as a voluntary system of individuals selecting mates on the basis of the ability to produce optimal offspring, would place intolerable restrictions on individual freedom. Anderson sees the development of safe techniques for voluntarily avoiding pregnancy, however, as an outcome that would strongly favour individual freedom and the expression of love as an end in itself, not as merely a means of genetically improving the human race.[22] Science in Anderson's editorial writing is not so much a concept or an institution unto itself as it is a political instrument. It is the enemy of creativity when it is in the service of governments that wish to constrain citizens into building a better nation. It is useful, however, in the hands of iconoclasts fighting to

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[20] Ibid.
[21] Margaret Anderson, "Mr. Comstock and the Resourceful Police," *The Little Review* 2, no. 2 (April 1915): 3-4.
[22] Tobey, *The American Ideology of National Science, 1919-1930*, 18.

create a better nation by eradicating ignorance and expanding individual rights. As a magazine seeking to subvert or even dismantle existing cultural authority, *The Little Review* had no need to appeal to or accommodate the cultural authority of science, and thus Anderson and other *Little Review* writers were free to either incorporate or dismiss the values surrounding science as it suited them.

Science in *The Crisis*

The attitude to science and its associated cultural capital in *The Crisis* was markedly different because Du Bois was seeking to reshape dominant attitudes to African Americans, not to completely dismantle existing cultural structures. Appeals to science played a fundamental role in the early stages of Du Bois's efforts to promote the acknowledgement of intellectual parity between people of color generally and the dominant white population. This use of science marks a resistance to the dominant nineteenth- and twentieth-century narrative in which, according to Lois Cuddy and Claire Roche, "in the Western countries, science had empowered upper-class, educated, white men to enjoy the only thing they could believe in with absolute certainty: their own pre-eminence in a world of constant change. And for the most part, women and blacks, hearing this message repeated in multiple ways at every moment of their lives, consciously or unconsciously appropriated that construct and made it part of their own psyche."[23] In *The Crisis*, the message of white supremacy endorsed by science was actively opposed. Cuddy and Roche argue that Du Bois's use of Darwinian theory in his fiction merely reverses the standard racial hierarchies, and that science as a cultural institution, particularly Darwinism, necessarily leads to hierarchies of race and therefore

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[23] Lois A. Cuddy and Claire M. Roche, "Introduction," in *Evolution and Eugenics in American Literature and Culture, 1880-1940 : Essays on Ideological Conflict and Complicity* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2003), 47.

of political power.[24] I will argue, however, that in Du Bois's role as editor of *The Crisis*, he and his editorial team redeploy the scientific communication tools used by the white ruling class, not to invert racial hierarchy, but to demonstrate that contemporary scientific research inspired by the Darwinian revolution in the life sciences was in fact dissolving the notion of racial hierarchy completely; a dissolution with important consequences for the social sciences. Because of the pervasiveness of the hierarchical, supremacist message, Du Bois was faced with a dual task: to construct for the readership of *The Crisis* the perception of the authority of the scientists who supported his cause, and also to undermine the authority of those who stood against equal rights.

Du Bois had been actively seeking the support of like-minded scientists, primarily biologists and anthropologists, since before the founding of *The Crisis* in 1910. In 1906, he persuaded Franz Boas, a key figure in turn-of-the-twentieth-century anthropology, to visit Atlanta University to give the commencement day address.[25] In the second issue of *The Crisis*, Du Bois published as the leading article the transcript of a speech given by Boas at the Second National Negro Conference in May of 1910. In the editorial note introducing "The Real Race Problem," Boas's authority in the eyes of *Crisis* readers is constructed by appealing to sources external to the magazine. The editorial note assures the reader that "the editor of *Science* reports that the leading scientists of America regard [the anthropology] department of Columbia as the strongest in the country. This gives a peculiar weight to Dr Boas's words."[26]

Thus contextualized, Boas becomes for the readers of *The Crisis* the accepted spokesperson for an imagined scientific community with, it is implied, no motivation but

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[24] Ibid., 34–35; 32.

[25] For a full account of this visit see Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt and William Shedrick Willis, *Franz Boas and W.E.B. Du Bois at Atlanta University, 1906* (Philadelphia, Pa: American Philosophical Society, 2008).

[26] Franz Boas, "The Real Race Problem," *The Crisis* 1, no. 2 (December 1910): 22.

a quest for the truth. The essence of Boas's speech is that, "on the whole, the morphological characteristics of the two races show rather a specialized development in different directions than a higher development in the one race as compared to the other."[27] This anti-hierarchical message is obviously one that would be endorsed by the primary audience of *The Crisis*, that is, members of the NAACP, and so superficially may seem not to require a framework to lend it additional authority. However, the use of external sources of authority reaffirms the confidence of those who agree with Boas's message, allows them to adopt this authority for themselves when arguing with those who would disagree, and fortifies Boas's opinions against sceptical or hostile readers. Many of the advertisements and letters to the editor published in *The Crisis* mention both sympathetic and antagonistic elements of a white readership of the magazine. One such advertisement from the 1920s entitled "Our Enemies – Why Not You?" includes the subscription renewal slip from the Birmingham, Alabama branch of the Ku Klux Klan.[28] While additional scientific authority attributed to Franz Boas's views of race equality probably did not succeed in changing the minds of Klan members, it anticipated objections to those views on the grounds of Boas's unreliability as a scientist and met the white establishment on its own terms.

The occasional use of technical biological vocabulary such as "morphological" throughout Boas's talk without the inclusion of any definitions or explanations from either Boas or the editorial team of *The Crisis* serves two functions. First, it contributes, along with the editorial framework already mentioned, to Boas's authenticity and authority as a scientist. Second, the inclusion of such terms implies certain important assumptions concerning the audience. It implies that, when addressing the National

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[27] Ibid.
[28] "Our Enemies - Why Not You?," *The Crisis* 33, no. 3 (January 1927): 162.

Negro Conference, Boas considered himself to be addressing intellectual equals who were likely either to understand or at least be able to intelligently deduce the meaning of such language. The lack of editorial comment or explanation of such vocabulary in the reprinting extends this assumption of intellectual parity to include all readers of *The Crisis*, and in fact showcases that assumption. It was common practice in *The Crisis*, as in other contemporary periodicals, to quote extensively from a speech or from an article printed in another publication, but to frame the quotations in editorial text, giving the editors the opportunity to guide readers' reactions to and understandings of the original text. In *The Crisis* this was frequently done with blatantly racist articles from Southern newspapers, but also occasionally with other conference speeches. The choice to simply print Boas's speech as a verbatim block of specialized text in the second issue constitutes a demand for both the magazine and the black component of its readership to be taken seriously by white readers, whether sympathetic or hostile to the cause of racial equality.

In addition to the content of Boas's speech and direct editorial appeals to external sources, Boas's authority as a scientist in the eyes of *Crisis* readers was also constructed over time using strategies internal to the magazine. Three issues later, "The Real Race Problem" was first advertised for sale as a pamphlet printed by the NAACP. In that same issue, Boas was cited as an authority in an article on "African Civilization" by M. D. MacLean, herself a member of the *Crisis* editorial team. This article reports on developments in the understanding of African history, including the theory that metal-working first developed in Africa and was then disseminated to Asia and Europe. MacLean assures the reader that "the theory is supported by our greatest anthropologist, Professor Boas of Columbia."[29] Considering MacLean's position, it is reasonable to refer

[29] M. D. MacLean, "African Civilization," *The Crisis* 1, no. 5 (March 1911): 24.

to her article as intentionally contributing to the agreed aims of the magazine, including the ongoing efforts to solidify the perception of Boas's authority.

The appearances of Boas's name in *The Crisis* were not limited to feature articles and editorial matter. In the June 1911 issue, an advertising campaign for *Half a Man* by Mary White Ovington, also part of the *Crisis* editorial team, began. This half-page ad, which ran for several years and often occupied a prominent back-cover slot, featured as a main selling point the fact that Boas wrote the foreword to the book. Boas's own book *The Mind of Primitive Man* featured in several versions of the recurring advertisement detailing the list of books sold through the *Crisis* office, beginning in November 1911 and ending in August 1915. Boas continued to be referenced periodically in editorial features throughout the next two decades. The frequent use of Boas's name in both advertisements and in-house articles, much like product placement, kept him in the reader's mind, making his version of anthropology, specifically, and science more generally, a familiar and reliable household brand.

While Boas was probably the most frequently mentioned scientist in the first decade of *The Crisis*, he was not the only scientist in the magazine's spotlight. Jacques Loeb, famous in the pages of national newspapers for his experiments in parthenogenesis and his belief that all the phenomena of life could be explained in physiochemical terms, was a prominent figure in *The Crisis* from May to December of 1914.[30] The aforementioned aspects of Loeb's work were not those highlighted in *The Crisis*, many of whose readers were devoutly religious and would have dismissed Loeb's starkly

[30] For a detailed account of Loeb's life and work, see Charles Rasmussen, *Jacques Loeb: His Science and Social Activism and Their Philosophical Foundations* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1998).

mechanistic world view. Instead, Loeb is quoted denouncing German belief in racial superiority as the underlying cause of the outbreak of the First World War.[31]

As in the case of Boas, Loeb's authority is constructed partly through repeated internal reference over the course of a few months and partly through appeals to external sources. In the introductory note to a condensed version of the talk Loeb was scheduled to give at the NAACP Conference for 1914, his affiliation with the Rockefeller Institute is established and he is described as "a world authority on modern biology." In place of the assurances of a particular figure, such as the editor of *Science*, however, this introduction appeals to the readers' own perceptions of Loeb's ideas coupled with the values associated with the scientific method to vouch for Loeb's status and reliability: "readers of *The Crisis* will notice his caution in making generalizations from insufficient data, a caution that marks the great scientist."[32] By giving the reader an active role in identifying Loeb as a great scientist, the editor goes some way toward counteracting any negative associations readers might have with Loeb's materialist publications, as well as giving readers with less scientific literacy a point of entry into judging scientific texts for themselves. In this condensed address, Loeb argues that the heredity of such separate traits as skin color and intelligence are not biologically linked, that contemporary research had not yet revealed whether significant numbers of individuals of different races, if brought up under the same conditions, would differ from each other in their morals and intellect, and that intermarriage between races could not be proved to be detrimental, and that, on the contrary, interracial breeding had been shown to be occasionally beneficial in plants.

[31] "Opinion: The World War," *The Crisis* 9, no. 2 (December 1914): 69.
[32] "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Sixth National Conference: Heredity and Racial Inferiority," *The Crisis* 8, no. 2 (June 1914): 84-5.

Loeb's most substantial contribution to *The Crisis* was an article in the December 1914 issue titled "Science and Race." Though Loeb certainly cites biological research, such as Mendel's laws of heredity, to justify his opinions, much of this article is devoted to a fairly impassioned denunciation of racial oppression. Referring to the Catholic persecution of the Jews in late fifteenth-century Spain, Loeb writes, "the group that was capable of doing that thing was an inferior group, a group of oppressors. They are usually a mentally and morally deficient group. Spain has suffered from the domination not of its best elements, but of those elements which were at the time the most ignorant, the most cruel."[33] Loeb directly proceeds to draw a parallel between this deficient group and the white-supremacist American South: "I do not know whether there is a connection, but if you compare the North and the South and the statistics of contributions to scientific development you will notice that the universities in the South have contributed considerably less than the northern universities." He then draws the conclusion that "the Negro question […] is the problem of the ascendancy of the morally and intellectually strong element in the South."[34] This conclusion interacts somewhat uneasily with the assertion from the June 1914 issue that Loeb, as a great scientist, refrains from forming generalizations from insufficient data. However, if the reader has been previously convinced of Loeb's careful objectivity, these strong indictments of the intellect and morals of powerful Southerners become all the more compelling.

Perhaps because Loeb makes statements in this article that would be highly controversial, if not insulting, in some circles, the editorial introduction invokes as many external institutions as possible to solidify Loeb's authoritative position. In Bourdieusian terms, Du Bois invokes the symbolic capital accorded to scientists to confer authority on

[33] Jacques Loeb, "Science and Race," *The Crisis* 9, no. 2 (December 1914): 93.
[34] Ibid.

and legitimize Loeb's utterance. The degrees and institutional positions held by a scientist represent the symbols of power that, along with Loeb's own successful use of scientific language and style, contribute to the success of Loeb's communicative act in the marketplace of readers.[35] Whereas in the June 1914 issue, Loeb is simply described as being "of the Rockefeller institute," in the December 1914 issue his entire scientific career, including his education, is documented.[36] The editor, possibly Du Bois himself, explains that:

> Dr Jacques Loeb, head of the department of Experimental Biology in the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York City, is one of the best known scientists in the world. He was born in Germany in 1859, educated at Berlin, Munich and Strasburg, and has held chairs at Strasburg, Wurzburg, Geneva, Bryn Mawr, Chicago, and Columbia Universities. He is the author of numerous books and articles and speaks, therefore, with unusual authority.[37]

Although many of these institutions are German, and there was already growing anti-German feeling among the American public at this early stage of the war, the quotations included in the "Opinion" section of Loeb denouncing the war and the German government, which physically preceded this article by several pages, go some way to forestalling any criticisms or objections to Loeb and his views on those grounds.

By constructing as unassailable a position for Loeb as possible, the editors of *The Crisis* achieve several related goals. Loeb's views become safely quotable materials for readers to use to defend equality themselves. The antagonistic element of the readership are left with as little ground as possible from which to deny the credibility of Loeb's views. Most significantly, the entire realm of science and its associated cultural weight can be claimed for the cause of racial equality, thus creating for readers the sense that equality itself is scientific; that is, objective, modern, and incontrovertible.

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[35] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 75-76.
[36] "Heredity and Racial Inferiority," 84.
[37] Loeb, "Science and Race," 92.

Though the editors of *The Crisis* carefully constructed their readers' perceptions of the authority of scientists whose research and consciences led them to speak out in favour of racial equality, there were of course still many scientists, journalists, and politicians who invoked science to support racist policies such as segregation and anti-miscegenation laws. Du Bois and the editorial team were as concerned with discrediting these uses of science as they were with spreading the scientific views they endorsed. These efforts to undermine white-supremacist science rarely generated free-standing articles, but were usually incorporated in one of the several recurring editorial departments that provided a digest of race-related current events with either embedded or silently implied commentary.

In Jessie Fauset's column "The Looking Glass" for May 1916, for example, Viscount Bryce's Huxley Memorial Lecture (as reprinted in abridged form in the *New York Times*) was quoted at length. Bryce explains that science is often misappropriated: "People used to go to the Bible for texts that would sanctify their conduct. Now they generally turn to natural science." He warns, "we must not be surprised if today a nation which is nothing if not scientific, seeks and finds in what is called the Darwinian doctrine of natural selection proofs of the view that the elimination of the weak by the strong is the method by which progress is attained in the social and political, no less than the biological sphere."[38] Bryce's analogy of science with the Bible, and the reprinting of this analogy by *The Crisis* serves to give the audience a sense of ownership over the correct interpretation of science. At this period it is likely that a majority of the readers of *The Crisis* would have strong opinions about the meaning and inviolability of the Bible. While some may have felt that the rise in the cultural prevalence of science threatened religious belief, a threat that is certainly present in Bryce's use of the phrase "used to go

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[38] "The Looking Glass: 'Survival of the Fittest,'" *The Crisis* 12, no. 1 (May 1916): 27.

to the Bible," the underlying implication of the analogy Bryce makes is that there is a correct interpretation of both of these sources of authority which is accessible via common sense by non-specialists. Just as many of the readers of *The Crisis* had been brought up with a familiarity with the Bible and a set of tools for interpreting it, even if they were not academically trained theologians, Fauset's quotation of Bryce's speech implies the availability of a similar level of familiarity with and set of tools for understanding scientific principles even for those who were not academically trained scientists.

Although this clearest expression of the belief in the accessibility of science by common sense was not published in *The Crisis* until 1916, it is obvious that the editorial team took it for granted in their approach to racist scientific publications. In the "Opinion" section of the November 1912 issue, the term "pseudo-science" is applied to white supremacist science, not on the basis of the flawed procedures that produced the results that supported the theory of racial supremacy, but on the basis that such a theory was obviously and inherently egregious:

> And then the Bourbon Charleston *News and Courier* steps in with its ancient pseudo-science: '[…] Dr Smith of Tulane University, in his splendid study, "The Color Line," shows conclusively that physiologically the Negro is precluded from intellectual progress comparable to that achieved by the white man. […] The reason seems to be that the sutures of the black's skull become absolutely fixed at about the age of sixteen, while the growth of the white's skull continues until the man is twenty-five years old or more'.[39]

By accusing Smith of practicing pseudoscience, Du Bois goes beyond critiquing his methodologies, which would constitute merely bad science. As Michael Gordin argues, scientists label ideas as pseudoscience "only when they perceived themselves to be threatened – not necessarily by the ideas themselves, but by what those ideas represent about the authority of science, science's access to resources, or some broader social

[39] "Opinion: The Ultimate Problem," *The Crisis* 5, no. 1 (November 1912): 24.

trend."[40] For white scientists around the turn of the twentieth century, the term was most often applied to psychical research or other attempts to extend the boundaries of science to encompass the mystical or spiritual.[41] For Du Bois, however, racial science which did not acknowledge the inherent bias of white male observers threatened to turn the full force of scientific authority against himself and his race. Cynthia Schrager argues that Du Bois "link[s] the discourses of race and spiritualism" to build the "alternative subject position" offered by double-consciousness in *Souls of Black Folk*.[42] This position of double-ness, of being both spiritual and material, observed and observer, gives Du Bois a perspective from which to critique "the posture of the detached observer" blind to his own racial and gendered biases.[43] By invoking the phrase "pseudo-science" in relation to racial science, Du Bois both turns the strategies of mainstream science against the white scientific hegemony, and simultaneously insists on his own authority to define the proper limits of scientific enquiry.

One instance of the exposure of the fundamentally unsound methods of scientists attempting to prove that white children were mentally superior to children of color is provided in the February 1927 issue in an edition of the "Opinion" department that is directly attributed to Du Bois. His scathing criticism of psychologist Dr Nathaniel D. M. Hirsch's 1926 "Study of Natio-Racial Mental Differences" relies primarily on sarcasm and the readers' assumed understanding of the basic requirements of experimental design according to the scientific method. Du Bois introduces Hirsch as a "former Fellow of the National Research Council" without mentioning his affiliation with Harvard or whether

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[40] Michael D. Gordin, *The Pseudoscience Wars: Immanuel Velikovsky and the Birth of the Modern Fringe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 2.
[41] Cynthia D. Schrager, "Both Sides of the Veil: Race, Science, and Mysticism in W.E.B. Du Bois," *American Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (1996): 552-553.
[42] Ibid., 554; 576.
[43] Ibid., 576.

there was a legitimate reason why Hirsch's fellowship ended, thus undermining Hirsch's authority from the outset. He goes on to describe Hirsch's "astounding discovery":

> By testing 5,500 New England school children he finds that Negroes and Portuguese have the least intelligence. And then he adds blithely, 'the children tested were all attending public schools in four factory towns of Massachusetts, with the exception of 449 Negro children from Tennessee'! [Du Bois's italics].[44]

According to Du Bois, "the state [Tennessee] spends less than five dollars a head each year in training colored children. Massachusetts spends seven times this amount on her children, but the poor Portuguese who are recent immigrants have had scant chance to take advantage of it."[45] Taken in the context of the careful work and cautious conclusions of the scientists, such as Loeb, who had been praised in *The Crisis* in the past, the inconsistency and unreliability of Hirsch's research method might seem ludicrous to *Crisis* readers, were it not for the fact that so many Americans were willing to take his conclusions at face value. Over the course of the first two decades, and primarily through the emphasis placed on the role of science in establishing racial equality in the first decade of *The Crisis*, non-specialist readers were provided with the rudimentary tools needed to engage with the relevant debates concerning the science of race.

Science in *Poetry*

Of the three literary magazines considered in this chapter, *The Crisis* certainly engaged most directly with practicing scientists. Harriet Monroe's engagement with science in *Poetry*, however, had the most pervasive influence over the entire contents of the magazine she founded and edited. *Poetry* was founded with the express intention of building prestige and an audience for poetry in America, and Monroe's editorials go beyond simply reviewing the work of individual poets to grapple with the question of

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[44] W.E.B. Du Bois, "Opinion: 'Science,'" *The Crisis* 33, no. 4 (February 1927): 179.
[45] Ibid.

what poetry's role in modern society ought to be. She writes both for readers of poetry and for poets themselves, who constituted a significant portion of the magazine's readership judging by the letters poets frequently addressed to the *Poetry* office.[46] Monroe used her position as editor of *Poetry* as a platform from which to attempt to reform and shape American poetry, and she firmly believed that poetry in general, and American poetry in particular, should be engaged closely with science. Monroe's understanding of science, technology, and nature did not place nature and technology in opposition to each other. Rather, she saw a scientific approach to the world as one which could reveal wonders, whether natural, technological, or, as in the case of anthropology, cultural. Encounters with the primal forces of the world, whether those of physics as harnessed by engineers, those of human life described by anthropologists as being untouched by civilization, or those of nature as revealed through encounters with the American landscape, were crucial, for Monroe, for revitalizing an over-civilized poetic tradition.

As I will discuss in depth in the following chapter, it was the emerging social science of anthropology which provided, for Monroe, one of the richest sources of material for American poets attempting to break free from the restraints of the European poetic tradition. Anthropologists uncovered and explained beautiful and mysterious songs, dances, and other forms of art which Monroe interpreted as linking the human experience to the natural world in a much more direct and visceral way than the art produced by the European tradition. But this was only one strand of her interest in contemporary science, and her wide-reaching fascination with the potential relationship of several branches of the sciences to poetry supports an interpretation of her interest in

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[46] These letters are preserved in the Poetry: A Magazine of Verse Records archive in the Special Collections Library of the University of Chicago.

the indigenous cultures made accessible by the work of anthropologists as grounded in science, not merely in a passing curiosity.

As part of her campaign to renew American poetry, Monroe frequently exhorted the poet to actively seek encounters with the American landscape. As Robin Schulze argues, Monroe's statement that "nature is the ultimate modernist" completely undermines the traditional assumption on the part of critics of modernism that nature was linked to anti-modernity. She demonstrates that the Progressive urge to return to nature was founded on the principles of eugenics and the anxiety of cultural and physical degeneration.[47] Although in *The Degenerate Muse* Schulze provides an excellent account of Monroe's scientifically grounded relationship to nature in her travel writing as well as in her editorials for *Poetry*, there is still more to be said about Monroe's relationship to science and technology generally. In fact, I argue that Monroe's entire theory of poetry relies on her view of the relationship between science and art.

Schulze introduces her book by recounting a printed exchange between Monroe and Edwin Slosson. Slosson held a doctorate in Chemistry, and at the time of the interaction described by Schulze (1920) he was also an editor and contributor for the *Independent*, a weekly magazine based in New York. Slosson would soon go on to become the head of the newly formed Science Service, which provided scientific journalism to newspapers across the country. Monroe's editorial "Back to Nature" in the September 1919 issue of *Poetry* prompted Slosson to complain in an article in the *Independent* for January 3, 1920 entitled "Back to Nature? Never! Forward to the Machine," that the cry of "Back to Nature!" derives from "a reactionary spirit, antagonistic to progress and destructive to civilization."[48] If this article represents

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[47] Robin G. Schulze, *The Degenerate Muse : American Nature, Modernist Poetry, and the Problem of Cultural Hygiene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4–8.
[48] quoted in ibid., 2.

Slosson's understanding of Monroe, rather than simply an opportunity to rail against mainstream culture, then he has clearly failed to read and understand Monroe's earlier editorials. Monroe's enthusiasm for science, engineering and technological progress are apparent from beginning to end of her editing career. In her October 1913 editorial "Our Modern Epic," Monroe proclaims that the making of the Panama Canal has "the proportions of a great myth," that "Prometheus the fire-bringer, Ulysses the wanderer, Siegfried the dragon-slayer, are not more typical of humanity in heroic action and heroic hope than this modern piercing of the Isthmus."[49] Monroe's belief in the benefits of a return to nature, as described by Schulze, is grounded in the idea that struggle against the wilderness is eugenically invigorating and has the potential to prevent America from degenerating, like western Europe, into aesthetic dissipation.[50] I would extend that argument to include Monroe's belief in the ability of science, through its technological applications, to provide the kinds of eugenically beneficial encounters with the material world that would strengthen Americans and give them the competitive advantage over Europeans who might claim cultural superiority. Slosson and Monroe were in fact closer in their beliefs than Slosson understood.

Monroe's parallel responses to nature, science, and technology are consistent with what David E. Nye terms the American technological sublime. Nye argues that in America the concept of the sublime diverged from that described by European philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke to become an experience accessible to a mass audience and which could be inspired alike by overwhelming natural vistas such as the Grand Canyon or by manmade technological objects such as railroads, bridges, or the giant machinery Monroe describes in her 1910 poem "The Turbine."[51]

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[49] Harriet Monroe, "Our Modern Epic," *Poetry* 3, no. 1 (October 1913): 23.
[50] Schulze, *The Degenerate Muse*, 97.
[51] David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 8-10.

Originally published in the June 1910 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and again in an abridged form in the September 1911 issue of *Electric City*, “The Turbine” describes the wonder, fear, and exultation felt by an engineer contemplating the machinery in an electrical power plant. The speaker addresses the turbine as a woman whose “right hand/ Is power, her left is terror, and her anger/ Is havoc.”[52] In the speaker’s depictions of the scale of the power of the turbine itself, and the achievement it represents on the part of mankind as a whole, we can see the elements of the technological sublime as described by Nye in his discussion of responses to early locomotives: the poem’s speaker is dwarfed by such a grand scale and pleasurably terrified by the turbine’s potential to harm him, but he is also elevated through his consciousness that the machine is under human control.[53] The turbine stands as the culmination of human history, “Mounted on all the ages, at the peak/ Of time,” and through the turbine’s interaction with the “ether” the speaker comes into contact with the greater universe and “the infinite energies our little earth just gnaws at.”[54] Yet the speaker, in his role as engineer, is able at times to “hold in leash/ Destructive furies,” reinstating mankind in general, and American engineers in particular, as masters of the epic grandeur of nature.[55]

According to Nye, the experience of the sublime in the American landscape was an important element in American “self-definition,” taking the place of traditional European symbols of nationalism and unity: “lacking the usual rallying points (a royal family, a national church, a long history memorialized at the sites of important events) Americans turned to the landscape as the source of national character.”[56] As America gained technological prowess on the world stage, immense monuments of these

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[52] Harriet Monroe, “The Turbine,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 105, no. 6 (June 1910): 778.
[53] Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, 55.
[54] Monroe, “The Turbine,” 779, 780.
[55] Ibid., 779.
[56] Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, 24.

achievements began to take on nationalist significance: "the American public celebrated the fact that a spectacle or sight was the biggest waterfall, the longest railway bridge, or the grandest canyon, and they did so with a touch of pride that Europe boasted no such wonders."[57] The enthusiasm for the American wilderness that Schulze identifies in Monroe's writing is undoubtedly linked to eugenic thought as Schulze suggests; however, it is also part of Monroe's broader nationalist preoccupations. When looked at from the perspective of the role of the sublime, both natural and technological, there is no contradiction between Monroe's writing about nature and her writing about science and technology.

Even natural sites of the sublime, such as Niagara Falls, were intentionally altered to incorporate elements of the technological sublime through the use of electric lighting, a form popularized at world's fairs, themselves national celebrations of progress.[58] Thus the American experience of the natural sublime included an inherent element of the technological sublime in that it inspired the American imagination to visions of acquisition and control: "the [natural] sublime was inseparable from a peculiar double action of the imagination by which the landscape was appropriated as a natural symbol of the nation while, at the same time, it was being transformed into a man-made landscape. One appeal of the technological sublime in America was that it conflated preservation and the transformation of the natural world."[59]

Monroe's account of the Panama-Pacific world's fair, held in San Francisco in 1915, shows her implicit awareness of the elements of the technological sublime. She praises the grandeur of this and preceding world's fairs and describes in detail the beauty of both the natural and the built environment of the fair, but comments that the night-

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[57] Ibid., 32.
[58] Ibid., 171.
[59] Ibid., 37.

time lighting was too glaring and garish. She does not claim that electric lighting should be absent, but that night at the fair should be "emphasized by soft lights discreetly used, so that its mystery enfolds and enhances great buildings."[60] This is consistent with Nye's characterization of the sublime, drawing on Burke's emphasis on the intensifying effect of obscurity, as well as his assertion that electricity was seen as a tool for evoking or enhancing the experience of sublimity.[61] Monroe directly invokes the idea of "sublimity" in reporting her response to the reproductions of Mayan sculpture on display at the Panama-Pacific exposition, and even attributes this feeling to acquisitive impulses: "I was feeling like stout Cortez, with a new world swimming in my ken—what a marvellous age is ours, to bring all strange things near!"[62] In comparing herself to Cortez, she alludes also to Keats's comparison in "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer."[63] The parallel Monroe clearly wishes to foreground is that of the experience of the sublime through a sudden opening up of a metaphorical vista. Monroe's description synthesizes elements of both Keats's vista of the intellect and imagination and Cortez's literal, visual spectacle. By drawing on an allusion to a revelation facilitated by an act of translation from an ancient culture to a contemporary one, Monroe frames her sense of revelation on first viewing the Mayan sculpture exhibit as indebted to a similar act of translation. On the one hand this parallel masks an element of cultural theft involved in the Mayan display. On the other hand, the association of Cortez with imperialism and the overthrow of the indigenous empire of the Aztec by the Spanish creates for the modern reader a level of dark irony which would probably not be read by her contemporary audience. For Monroe, her experience of the sublime is facilitated both by anthropological advances in terms of making such artifacts available and reproducible and by technological advances in

[60] Harriet Monroe, "At the Fair," *Poetry* 7, no. 1 (October 1915): 38.
[61] Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, 10, 171.
[62] Monroe, "At the Fair," 38–39.
[63] John Keats, *Poems of John Keats*, ed. Claire Tomalin (London: Penguin, 2009), 10.

transportation which made the Yucatan peninsula physically accessible to creators of the exhibit. The backdrop of this accessibility is of course the completion of the Panama Canal, the event at the heart of Panama-Pacific World's Fair, and an event associated in Monroe's mind, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter, with feats of engineering sublime in their own right. The World's Fair provides many opportunities for experiencing the sublime, and the elements of nature, technology, and exertion of control over natural and man-made landscapes are inextricable in the production of these experiences.

Like many of her Progressive Era contemporaries, Monroe viewed science and technology as virtually synonymous; a particularly American conflation.[64] Unlike in earlier periods in which technological innovation was seen as the province of the lone genius inventor, and invention as too mercenary an ambition for the disinterested scientist, by the turn of the twentieth century in America, and increasingly after World War I, science and technology were becoming interdependent.[65] Industrial scientists and laboratories gradually replaced the "heroic inventor" in the public imagination.[66] Elmer Sperry, inventor of the gyroscopic compass and several other inventions employed by the U.S. Navy during the war, was asked to wear a lab coat and pretend to use a microscope in publicity photographs taken after the war in order to appeal to the expectations of the public, despite the fact that he never used either in the usual course of his work.[67] Even Thomas Alva Edison, the quintessential nineteenth-century heroic lone inventor, quickly saw both the advantages and the growing public appeal of the scientific invention laboratory, and by the 1870s had created a lab staffed by university-trained scientists.[68]

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[64] Steinman, *Made in America*, 2-3.
[65] Pursell, *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology*, 220.
[66] Thomas P. Hughes, *American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870 - 1970*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 138.
[67] Ibid., 139.
[68] Pursell, *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology*, 221.

Both science and technology, according to Monroe's theory of poetry, are not only worthy subjects for poetry, but when directed toward a grand purpose, constitute a type of poetry in themselves. Depicting her sense of wonder at the power of science and technology, Monroe writes of the engineers and machine operators engaged in building the Panama Canal: "these men, our strong compatriots, are poets, in imagination and idealistic motive if not in words. Will the articulate poets prove worthy of them?"[69] Although Monroe is an avid advocate for the art of poetry and its status in the modern world, she questions the capacity of existing poets to live up to the modern world's demands.

The proper function of poetry, for Monroe, was to simultaneously record and construct its own era. In her April 1913 editorial "The New Beauty," she asserts that poetry should be modern, but that this modernity "is not a question of subject, nor yet of form […]. The poet is not a follower, but a leader; he is not a poet because he can measure words or express patly current ideas, but because the new beauty is a vision in his eyes and a passion in his heart […]. He cannot resign his ancient prophetic office."[70] The poet is charged by Monroe with a huge undertaking: to become, in effect, not the voice of the age, but the spirit of the age. By this definition it is easy to see how great scientists or engineers can be "poets in imagination," and Monroe spends much of her editorial career exhorting the "articulate poets" to rise to the standards of the scientist.

This was especially true during and just after the First World War. During a time of national crisis and rapid change, Monroe believed that poets, like scientists, engineers and men of business, must give up their individual interests for the good of a common cause. In the war effort, Monroe argues, "we find men of science and business, men

[69] Monroe, "Our Modern Epic," 26.
[70] Harriet Monroe, "The New Beauty," *Poetry* 2, no. 1 (April 1913): 22-3.

representing the keenest commercialism of a so-called ‘materialistic’ age and country, all forgetting their battles and jealousies, forgetting profits, omitting from their plans both the ego and the dollar.”[71] The fruits of their collective efforts are comparable to the great art of earlier generations: “In the case of the truck and the motor we find, if not religion, a fundamental sense of brotherhood, of democratic tribal unity, expressing itself, if not in beauty, in something scarcely less noble—the fittest possible instrument of service.”[72] It is the responsibility of poets to do for beauty what the engineer has done for efficiency, but Monroe is less confident in the willingness of poets to acknowledge their duty: “will they give us the miracle that they alone can give—the beauty of the new era that must come when war has burned away the old?”[73] Two years later, and only two months before writing the editorial on nature that Slosson reacted so strongly against, Monroe is still insistent on the interconnectivity between genius and culture, and the equivalent status of poetry with the achievements of industry and technology, arguing in her July 1919 editorial, “A Year After” that, “a masterpiece of art, or poetry, or science, or business—the Reims cathedral, *Hamlet*, the Loening monoplane, Marshall Field’s store—is never an isolated magic miracle, but the response of genius to the cumulative will of the immediate world.”[74] Whereas Anderson and Du Bois are interested in science as a means of either socio-political control or liberation, for Monroe science and technology are, like art, also valuable as ends unto themselves. They make up the fabric of the world which gives rise to poetry through the agency of the poet’s genius.

Monroe’s comparisons between poetry and technology are surprising in the context of the traditional view of modernism that sought to create distance between art and the marketplace and to position modernism as reacting against modernity. Recent

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[71] Harriet Monroe, “Christmas and War,” *Poetry* 11, no. 3 (December 1917): 145-6.
[72] Ibid., 146.
[73] Ibid., 147.
[74] Harriet Monroe, “A Year After,” *Poetry* 14, no. 4 (July 1919): 211.

currents of modernist studies have now made abundantly apparent that this mid twentieth-century version of modernism was motivated by an intellectual elitism that, consciously or unconsciously, excluded many important sociological influences from the definition of both modernism and literature in general.[75] It is not necessary, however, to stretch the boundaries of current understandings of modernism to include Monroe's vision for American poetry or the poetry she praised as modern. Her efforts to encourage and promote a body of poetry which constituted in her own eyes a meaningful response to modernity and even participated in the creation of modernity are revealing on their own terms. It is therefore possible to see Monroe as both genuinely inspired by the achievements of science and technology (as evidenced by her own verse), and pragmatically employing the Progressive values of social usefulness and nationalism to elevate the status of poetry. Monroe was as committed to broadening the audience for poetry as she was to providing a space in which to publish the New Poetry, and her expressed enthusiasm for science played a part in her strategy to reach an audience beyond the limited coteries of artists.

While it would clearly be unreasonable to expect that every piece of verse or prose printed in *Poetry* would further the rapprochement between the artist and the scientist, examples providing evidence of this goal can be found in every aspect of the magazine. In the issue for January of 1914, for example, there is an advertisement entitled "Electrical Verse" placed by the *Edison Monthly* seeking "both serious and humorous verse on electrical subjects." It would be an exaggeration to argue that the printing of this

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[75] For example, Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, *Geographies of Modernism: Literatures, Cultures, Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2005); Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Bad Modernisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Alissa G. Karl, *Modernism and the Marketplace: Literary Culture and Consumer Capitalism in Rhys, Woolf, Stein, and Nella Larsen* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Peter Brooker, *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Mark A. Wollaeger and Matt Eatough, *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

advertisement is representative of Monroe's editorial policies because the magazine would certainly have needed the financial gain associated such an advertisement. In her autobiography, Monroe refers to the fact that during the first two years of publication, *Poetry* did not generate enough profits for her to pay herself any salary as editor.[76] It would be difficult, however, to imagine the same advertisement appearing, for instance, in *The Little Review*. It can at least be argued that the publicity department for the *Edison Monthly* saw *Poetry* as having a readership which would be sympathetic to the idea of publishing "serious" poems outside strictly literary boundaries, not to mention writing poetry which takes technology as its theme.

More than a decade after printing the *Edison Monthly* advertisement, Monroe echoes some of its sentiments herself. The advertisement asserts that "the science [of electricity], in its many aspects, offers a field for genuine poetic expression as yet but little realized." In March 1926, Monroe used her monthly editorial to report her experience of attending the Middle-West Power Conference. The title of the editorial is "The Impossible," and Monroe praises the "conviction" and "creative imagination" which drove the inventors of the innovative machines she saw on display.[77] Monroe also takes this occasion to criticize the majority of poets who are "hardly even interested" in "the scientific adventurers who war with elements and earth forces, and stake out new claims for knowledge in the vast unknown beyond us." She concludes the editorial with a lament for the failure of the modern poetic imagination to successfully engage with science:

> There are comedies and tragedies, lyrics and epics in the sweep of modern science, and in its making-over of the industrial world, for the poet who can feel order and direction through all the seeming chaos, and can hear the song through the noise. As a stimulant to an imagination so inspired, a friend of POETRY

[76] Harriet Monroe, *A Poet's Life; Seventy Years in a Changing World* (New York: The Macmillan company, 1938), 363.
[77] Harriet Monroe, "The Impossible," *Poetry* 29, no. 6 (March 1927): 325.

> recently offered a prize for a poem interpreting modern science or industry, but as yet the entries have been few and inadequate.[78]

Celebrated modernist poems like *The Waste Land* for Monroe are mere "cries [of] warning" against a world that is moving too quickly for the comfort of poets who cannot "hear the song."[79] The lack of poetry "interpreting modern science" represents a continuing failure of American poets to fulfil their function as the bringers of the "beauty of the new era." As John Timberman Newcomb points out, Monroe's career has often been misunderstood or underappreciated: "Pound himself established [the] pattern for later historians by describing Monroe as an unimaginative bluestocking who was merely in the right place at the right time."[80] Her apparent failure to fit within the traditional narratives of modernism, combined with her crucial role in the emergence of modernist poetry, however, have prompted recent critics such as Newcomb to call for new narratives of American modernism that can account for Monroe's theory of poetry. One step toward developing such a narrative is allowing Monroe's privileging of science and technology as poetic themes to influence our readings of poems she selected for publication in *Poetry*, as well as those she excluded or resisted.

Schulze argues convincingly that Monroe's infamous objection to Eliot's "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" was not based on her dislike of "the strangeness of the poem's form, the difficulty of its allusions, or the complexity of its ideas," but rather on the grounds of its portrayal of encounters with nature as a degenerative as opposed to reinvigorating.[81] As evidence for her argument she cites a letter from Pound to Monroe in which the former quotes the latter as commenting that the poem "goes off at the end." One of the ways Pound refutes Monroe's assertion is by pointing out that "a portrait satire

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[78] Ibid., 327.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Newcomb, *How Did Poetry Survive? The Making of Modern American Verse*, 28.
[81] Schulze, *The Degenerate Muse*, 103.

on futility can't end by turning that quintessence of futility, Mr. P. into a reformed character breathing out fire and ozone."[82] This comment, alluding to the common belief in the healthful properties of ozone, which was claimed to be found in much higher quantities in seaside air as opposed in urban areas, points clearly to Monroe's belief in the eugenic power of nature to restore health to urbanized societies.[83] According to Schulze, Monroe dislikes the end of "Prufrock" because "rather than renew[ing] Prufrock's mental and physical strength, […] the sea merely leads Prufrock to reflect on the depths of his decay."[84] The poem was published, despite Monroe's reservations, in the issue for June 1915.

Although Monroe's letters to Pound have been lost, direct evidence of her opinion of "Prufrock" is available. In fact the form of this evidence is of much greater interest because it constitutes part of the public process of the formation of American literary modernism and may have influenced the public reception of Eliot's work in ways that a private letter obviously would not. In her July 1918 editorial responding to Edgar Jepson's criticisms of *Poetry* in the *English Review*, Monroe discusses publicly some of the opinions she had presumably expressed to Pound privately in 1915. According to Monroe, the only poet published in *Poetry* whom Jepson praises is Eliot. Jepson is quoted as wondering, "could anything be more United States, more the soul of that modern land, than *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*?"[85] Of course, for Monroe, nothing could be farther from representing the soul of America. By his "choice of exile," she argues, Eliot "has cut himself off from all possibility of expressing that soul." By "making a wandering

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[82] Quoted in ibid., 104. Pound's full letter from 31 January 1915 can be found in Joseph Parisi and Stephen Young, *Dear Editor: A History of Poetry in Letters: The First Fifty Years, 1912-1962* (New York: Norton, 2002), 180-181.
[83] H. Henriet, "The Atmosphere of Cities: An Investigation with a Practical Bearing on Public Health," *Scientific American Supplement* 64, no. 1644 (July 6, 1907): 11.
[84] Schulze, *The Degenerate Muse*, 104.
[85] Harriet Monroe, "Mr. Jepson's Slam," *Poetry* 12, no. 4 (July 1918): 211.

cosmopolite of himself" he has "like Henry James" limited himself "to the presentation of that rather forlorn human type."[86] Monroe's choice of the phrase "wandering cosmopolite" carries with it an undercurrent of anti-Semitism due to its echo of the "wandering Jew." The term "cosmopolitan" also was frequently euphemistically used in the Great War era to refer to Jews.[87] While Monroe, and presumably her readers, knew that Eliot was not Jewish, her use of this term ascribes to Eliot the derogatory sense of not being a real American. The literal meanings of the words "wandering" and "cosmopolite," in the sense of being cut off from one's roots, landscape, and people, also carry equal importance in Monroe's intended meaning, since for her American poetry is rooted in the American landscape. Monroe acknowledges Eliot's skill as a poet, but she utterly denies his status as a representative of the new American poetry. In this response to Jepson, deeply sarcastic in tone, Monroe broadly defines the true American spirit in terms of the "new" in contrast with the European "old." She suggests that Jepson should look beyond Eliot to find the true "American soul":

> a cross-section of it, so to speak-has now crossed the sea, and may be discovered by anyone who cares to get acquainted with our boys in the trenches. They are of all kinds– from farm and university, factory, office and forest range. They are not afraid of life– or death. We commend them to Mr. Jepson.[88]

This turn to a definition of the American spirit based on the bravery of American troops is, superficially, uncharacteristic of Monroe's anti-war stance. In her autobiography, however, she emphasizes the tragedy of war's waste of young lives, allowing for a reading of her 1918 comment as being motivated by a fierce protective impulse on behalf of a group of young men whom she sees as undervalued by both their government and

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[86] Ibid.

[87] For a fuller discussion of this use of the term "cosmopolitan," see Jahan Ramazani, "'Cosmopolitan Sympathies': Poetry of the First Global War," *Modernism/modernity* 23, no. 4 (2016): 855-74.

[88] Monroe, "Mr. Jepson's Slam," 212.

the European allies they are fighting to defend, in a war destined to be merely one among many:

> When the United States was drawn into the conflict, and many friends went to the Front as soldiers, nurses, journalists, I could not share the prevailing feeling that this was a war to end war, a war which would lift the wounded world out of its material preoccupations to a higher level of spirituality.[89]

What is characteristic in Monroe's advice to Jepson is the emphasis she places on the range of American experience: farm, university, factory, office, and forest range. The American spirit cannot be narrowed, for Monroe, to the "wandering cosmopolite," and American poetry cannot be represented by an expatriate like Eliot. To be a truly American poet, as Monroe implies in many of her other editorials and reviews, it is necessary to seek the invigorating encounters with wilderness or with ground-breaking developments in science and technology, such as, to return to an earlier discussion of Monroe's enthusiasm for the Panama Canal project, the feats of engineering which went into the construction of the canal, described in epic terms by Monroe in 1913: "these men on the Isthmus, performing seven thousand labors of Hercules with their giant tools, removing mountains and uniting oceans in a mood of lyric rapture," or the "demoniacal-no, god-like-turbines" of the General Electric Company that "deal out light and power all over the world."[90] These experiences and their associated mental characteristics form, for Monroe, the chief distinction between America and the overly-sophisticated and aestheticized cultures of Europe.

While the "wandering cosmopolite" is for Monroe the antithesis of the American soul, this does not preclude all city-dwellers from communion with that celebrated spirit. Carl Sandburg's "Chicago," printed in the March 1914 issue of *Poetry*, participates in the same vocabulary of healthy eugenic struggle with which Monroe describes American

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[89] Monroe, *A Poet's Life; Seventy Years in a Changing World*, 354.

[90] Monroe, "Our Modern Epic," 26; Harriet Monroe, "A Scientist's Challenge," *Poetry* 15, no. 3 (December 1919): 150.

wildernesses and "scientific adventurers." Chicago in Sandburg's poem is "husky" with "big shoulders." It is like "a savage pitted against the wilderness."[91] In her May 1916 review of Sandburg's *Chicago Poems*, Monroe discusses his role in American poetry in the eugenic terms of hybrid vigour. She contextualizes Sandburg as the son of Swedish immigrants, and proclaims that "no prophet can measure the ultimate enrichment of our art through this enrichment of our racial strain."[92] As the title of the review, "Chicago Granite," suggests, she also interprets Sandburg's artistic voice as a "force of nature," and as such, as "unassailable." "One would no more question his sincerity", she writes, "than that of the wind and rain."[93] Monroe sees in Sandburg a melding of urban technology and wilderness that distinguishes American art from that of the European cultures immigrant poets have left behind. Monroe's attitude toward science and technology in *Poetry* aligns with Veblen's: she sees scientific thinking as the underlying paradigm of modernity, and she incorporates it into her theory of American poetry not merely as a strategic move to make poetry seem relevant, but because she genuinely believes poetry ought to participate in this modern paradigm to fulfil its aesthetic and social purposes.

In the context of her enthusiasm for the technological and natural sublime, Monroe's interest in the anthropology of the indigenous peoples of North America can be understood as both authorized by the scientific paradigms of anthropology and as providing a model for creating poetry that derives its vitality from a merging of human passions with the inhuman forces of nature. The following chapter will detail the ways in which contemporary anthropological theories allowed for a conflation of Native American peoples with the landscapes they inhabited. Such a conflation, similar in many

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[91] Carl Sandburg, "Chicago," *Poetry* 3, no. 6 (March 1914): 191-2.
[92] Harriet Monroe, "Chicago Granite," *Poetry* 8, no. 2 (May 1916): 90.
[93] Ibid., 91.

ways to the conflated grandeur of the landscapes of Panama or Niagara Falls with the grandeur of the technologies that altered them, was precisely what Monroe wished American poets to achieve in order to initiate an independently and unmistakably American poetic tradition.

Scientific Authority in the Emerging Social Sciences

Literary magazines were not the only publications that felt the need to consciously position themselves in relation to scientific authority. The turn of the twentieth century saw the emergence and professionalization of several fields of study that sought to apply scientific principles of systematic observation and cause-and-effect mechanistic thinking to human relationships and customs. Early practitioners of the social sciences, particularly anthropology and sociology, took pains to establish clear lineages from established fields such as biology, physics, and mathematics to their own areas of study in order to authenticate their methods and gain acceptance for their conclusions.

The publication of the first issue of the *American Journal of Sociology* (*AJS*) in July 1895 was a landmark in the emergence of sociology as a credible professional and academic field in the United States. This magazine was the first American scholarly journal to be devoted exclusively to the discipline by more than two decades, and was both founded and edited by Albion Small.[94] Small was also responsible for establishing the influential Sociology department at the University of Chicago. The department later came to be considered the center of its own school of sociology in contrast with the theories of sociology employed by other groups around the country, but at the time the

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[94] Martin Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology: Institutionalization, Diversity, and the Rise of Sociological Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 34.

AJS was founded, Small was far more interested in defining Sociology as a field than with drawing more subtle distinctions between groups of practitioners.[95]

The articles included in the first issue make clear a few of the primary concerns facing the newly formed academic discipline. The opening article is written by Small himself, and is entitled "The Era of Sociology." In addition to outlining the aims of the new journal, Small's piece constitutes an apology for the relevance of the discipline of sociology on the grounds that the modern era involves a greater awareness of the interrelations of people than was found in any previous age. This assertion is couched primarily in economic and industrial terms:

> Wherever the proportion of laborers in the extractive industries is diminishing and the proportion of people occupied with intermediate processes of production and consumption is correspondingly increasing, it would be surprising if the change were not accompanied by some modifications of men's views about the relative importance of the physical and the social elements in the condition of human experience.[96]

The study of sociology is growing in importance, according to Small, because commerce is increasingly dependent on people interacting with each other, as opposed to interacting primarily with the physical environment. It is worth noting that Small's argument rests on an underlying assumption that the interactions between "people occupied with the intermediate processes of production" are more complex, carry more importance, and are more interesting subjects for study than the interactions between "laborers." This assumption may represent a genuine belief on Small's part, or it may simply be a strategy for elevating the status of the field by elevating its subject matter and catering to one of the types of reader the editors expected the *AJS* to attract.

Despite this initial alignment of sociology with industry and commerce, Small invokes the authority of scientists such as Charles Darwin and T. H. Huxley along with

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[95] Craig Calhoun, "Sociology in America: An Introduction," in *Sociology in America: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 21-22.
[96] Albion W. Small, "The Era of Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 1, no. 1 (July 1895): 1.

social theorists such as Herbert Spencer and Karl Marx when outlining the role of sociology within society. He insists on the need for a scientific approach to sociological research and the need for such research to underpin the broad generalizations expected of the field by quoting from Huxley's *Hume*: "In truth, the laboratory is the fore-court of the temple of philosophy."[97] Sociology as outlined by Small is distinct from the "physical sciences," but is inextricably bound up with the ideas of evolutionary theorists and is subject to the methodological rigor usually associated with physics, chemistry, or biology.

This view of the nature of sociology as a discipline is supported by the second article in the first issue of the *AJS*. Written by Lester F. Ward, another of the journal's editors, this article is titled "The Place of Sociology Among the Sciences." Ward argues that Sociology should not be seen as an offshoot of either economics or psychology, but as a category that encompasses economics and stands on the same hierarchical level as the physical sciences. This hierarchical structure is borrowed from Auguste Comte, who according to Ward, "found that there were five great groups of phenomena of equal classificatory value but of successively decreasing positivity. To these he gave the names astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and sociology."[98]

Placing sociology in the same set of categories with the physical sciences was an important step in demarcating the boundary between the academic sociology practiced by well-educated, middle-class men like Small and Franklin Giddings (who founded the department of sociology at Columbia University), and the so-called applied sociology of women like Jane Addams (who founded Hull House). This was a deeply gendered move, motivated by the distaste for the implications of femininity attached to social reform

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[97] Ibid., 12.
[98] Lester F. Ward, "The Place of Sociology Among the Sciences," *American Journal of Sociology* 1, no. 1 (July 1895): 19.

work.[99] Insisting on the scientific basis of sociology would provide the grounds for both credibility and professionalization, which had more masculine associations. However, Daniel Breslau argues that the connections drawn by early sociologists between their field and the physical sciences cannot be seen as merely attempting to borrow the authority of these better-established fields. This argument, he says, "suggests that the discipline-building project was prior to the adoption of a natural science orientation."[100] On the contrary, he argues, American sociology grew out of the desire to apply scientific principles to observing, explaining, and potentially ameliorating the way society functioned. This desire was in turn based on a Baconian empiricism which assumed "that the accumulation of facts will lead to the establishment of valid scientific generalizations" pertaining to social problems.[101]

Today the dominant narratives of early twentieth-century American anthropology and the professionalization of the field focus almost exclusively on Franz Boas and the anti-evolutionary theory of culture that developed out of the anthropology department he founded at Columbia University. Such narratives, however, underestimate the continued importance and influence of the evolutionary theories that formed the basis of the field and its mission around the turn of the century until the interwar period.[102] The professionalization of anthropology in America began, not in the universities, but in government-funded institutions, particularly the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE). The BAE was founded as a subsection of the Smithsonian Institute by John Wesley Powell, who used a combination of theories grounded in Darwinian evolution and detailed in situ fieldwork to produce a body of knowledge about indigenous American

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[99] Daniel Breslau, "The American Spencerians: Theorizing a New Science," in *Sociology in America: A History*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 60.
[100] Ibid., 42.
[101] Ibid., 45.
[102] Regna Darnell, *And along Came Boas: Continuity and Revolution in Americanist Anthropology* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1998), 6-7.

communities that could be used as the basis for apparently scientific approaches to addressing the so-called Indian question. Because of the prominence of ethnologists and theorists in related fields such as Lewis Henry Morgan, E.B. Tylor, and Herbert Spencer, turn of the century anthropologists did not face exactly the same challenges in asserting their scientific authority as their contemporaries in sociology. Early issues of *American Anthropologist*, for example, did not demonstrate the same preoccupation with articles explaining and justifying the aims and scope of anthropology as whole.

Nevertheless, the language used in the articles that appeared in the journal, along with the foregrounding of detailed direct observations are obvious strategies employed to distinguish the work of scientific anthropologists from the ethnologists who preceded them, and who based their more philosophical theorizing on information collected by missionaries and other travelers.[103] *American Anthropologist* was the first professional journal of anthropology to be published on a national scale in the United States. It began as the journal of the Anthropological Society of Washington in 1888, but in 1899 it became a national journal under the editorship of Frederick W. Hodge of the BAE and the direction of an editorial board that included both Powell and Boas among other leading figures in the field from the Smithsonian, large museums such as Chicago's Field Museum, and universities including the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard. When the American Anthropological Association (AAA) was formed in 1902 by many of the same figures who already constituted the editorial board of *American Anthropologist*, the journal became the official publication of the AAA.

The first issue of the New Series of *American Anthropologist*, which began in 1899 when Hodge took over the editorship, does not include any editorial note

[103] Kuper, Adam, "Anthropology," in *The Cambridge History of Science, Vol 7: Modern Social Sciences*, ed. Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 362.

concerning the change in editorship or describing the purpose and mission of the journal. *American Anthropologist* in fact included very little overt editorial framing. A brief survey of the table of contents, however, demonstrates the concern of the contributors and editors for the scientific identity of the publication. Most of the titles of the articles indicate Latinized niche areas of study such as esthetology or zootechny, and topics implying specialist knowledge such as auriferous gravel or "The Adopted Algonquian Term 'Poquosin'." Otis Mason's article entitled "Aboriginal American Zootechny" includes several tables and detailed figures of aboriginal hunting equipment with extensive explanations.[104] These features emphasize the observation and analysis that formed the basis for Mason's conclusions, implicitly placing the work of anthropologists on the same level as the work of natural and physical scientists.

Another means of securing the place of the social sciences alongside the physical sciences was through publication in leading professional journals of general science. In the United States, *Science*, the publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), was, and still remains, one of the most prestigious. In 1899, Ward the sociologist engaged in an illuminating exchange with Powell the anthropologist in the pages of *Science* regarding Powell's book *Truth and Error* (1898). *Truth and Error* is an attempt to, in Powell's words, "propound a Philosophy of Science."[105] An extract of the book was printed in the February 21, 1896 issue of *Science*, and Ward, to whom the book was dedicated, and zoologist W.K. Brooks wrote scathing reviews which together constituted the leading article for the January 27, 1899 issue of *Science*.

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[104] Otis Tufton Mason, "Aboriginal American Zootechny," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 1, no. 1 (January 1899): 45-81.
[105] John Wesley Powell, "Reply to Critics," *Science* 9, no. 216 (February 17, 1899): 263.

The issues central to Powell's book, and thus to the ensuing discussion of the book in *Science*, are the relationship between science and philosophy and the consequences of that relationship to our perception of reality. These were key questions for social scientists because it was necessary to establish a philosophy of science that was capable of encompassing human interactions as well as material interactions on a scientific basis. Powell's solution was based on his own idiosyncratic interpretation of the nature and cause of the thermodynamic property described as "affinity" between atoms.[106] Powell asserts that the observed phenomenon of atomic affinity demonstrates that atoms possess the capacity for "consciousness and choice." He extrapolates that "all of the mechanical bodies have consciousness and choice, but only in their particles; but animal bodies have organized consciousness, which is mind."[107] Powell uses this apparently universal quality which he terms "judgment" to show that the difference between the organization of atoms in molecules and the organization of humans in societies is one of degree, not kind, implying that many of the same scientific principles apply across physics, chemistry, and the social sciences.

It is important to note that the controversial argument that atoms are capable of independent judgment is not included in the extract of Powell's book that was published in *Science*. It does, however, feature in the reviews by Brooks and Ward. Brooks sarcastically remarks that "the question the chemist is likely to ask is whether Major Powell can so play on the emotions of an atom of hydrogen as to persuade it to do anything which we have not every reason to expect in course of nature."[108] Ward echoes this criticism, albeit in less facetious terms:

> The whole idea of choice or affinity is anthropomorphic. [...] To say that the action of a magnet or an attracting body, or the behavior of chemical substances

[106] For a contemporary account of atomic affinity see James Walker, "Chemical Affinity," *Science Progress* 3, no. 18 (1895): 419-28.
[107] Powell, "Reply to Critics," 262.
[108] W.K. Brooks and Lester F. Ward, "Truth and Error," *Science* 9, no. 213 (January 27, 1899): 125.

> toward one another, is judgement, or conscious choice, except metaphorically, is to ignore the vast series of steps in evolution which separate the chemical atom from protoplasm and span the chasm between the inorganic and the organic worlds.[109]

Powell's emphasis on the property he terms "judgement," though it exposed him to harsh criticism from his peers, served to create more direct links between the physical sciences and the social sciences. The intense negative response from other high-profile professional practitioners of the social sciences such as Ward, however, also served to strengthen the perceived ties between the social sciences and the physical sciences by asserting the critic's superior knowledge of the physical sciences, overtly positioning Ward the sociologist as a qualified scientist. The presence of debates over the philosophy of science carried out by social scientists in a high-profile journal aimed at broad range of scientific specialists represents an astute effort on the part of the various social scientists involved to increase the perception of the social sciences as scientific in their content as well as in their methods.

Particularly in the earliest decades of the twentieth century, the scientific theory that influenced both sociology and anthropology the most heavily was evolution. Anthropology in the nineteenth century drew on evolutionary principles to justify the processes of colonialism while assuaging the collective white conscience through the professed mandate of conserving/preserving for the future the cultures colonialism was destroying.[110] A few turn of the twentieth century anthropologists such as James Mooney, whose work on the Ghost Dance will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, opposed the evolutionary model in reports on their field work, and the rise of Boas's influence in the early twentieth century began to shift the character of the field away from the evaluation of cultures on a continuum of savagery to civilization, but this process was

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[109] Ibid., 135.

[110] For a detailed exploration of this line of argument, see Lee D. Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

gradual, especially due to the complicated interrelationship between evolutionary anthropology and the pervasive frontier mythology that was so integral to American identity. Sociology's use of evolutionary concepts, on the other hand, sought to unify society by altering environments to promote convergent evolution. In other words, by changing policies concerning education, labor, crime, and other social issues, groups within the nation whose interests conflicted with the status quo such as immigrants, the poor, and the working class could be brought into alignment with the interests of the nation as a whole because they would adapt in useful ways to the new environmental conditions created.

Conclusion

The editors of literary magazines and practitioners of social sciences alike were not only deploying the authority of science tactically to gain cultural capital, but were immersed in a society structured around scientific thinking and values. Their engagement with science was not merely superficial, but at the heart of their various projects. Studying the emerging social sciences alongside contemporary poetry, particularly poetry as it was selected, arranged, and interpreted in literary magazines, reveals the ways in which the ideas and observations generated and disseminated by social scientists provided poets and editors with new materials and ways of viewing the world. While it remains true that biology, psychology, and physics had important influences on both the form and content of canonical modernist poetry, the social sciences inspired poetry that grappled with questions about racial and national identity and what it meant to be an individual living within an increasingly interconnected complex of machinery, institutions, and individuals who did not necessarily share a common identity. They also provided a framework within which to think about human nature and the arts which

remained safely within the dominant cultural demands for scientific thinking, providing an alternative to rejecting these demands out of hand as Anderson did.

The canon of modernist poetry we have received has centered primarily around the work of poets who were overtly experimental, and to a greater or lesser extent, rebellious toward mainstream cultural values. My interest in the chapters that follow is in the work of poets and editors whose work was intensely modern in the sense that they fully embraced the scientific spirit of their age but sought to participate fully in that spirit on its own terms, to simultaneously record and construct the world they inhabited, rather than to stand apart from it or resist it. The work of social scientists to justify their objects of study—humans and their interactions—as scientific simultaneously provided the possibility for poetry, which also dealt with the experience of being human, to access a similar cultural authority. The following chapters will explore the influence of the work of anthropologists and sociologists on the ways poets and editors themselves interpreted those experiences and defined their own identities as artists, as individuals, and as members of larger communities.

Chapter 2: Anthropology and *Poetry*: Native American Verse as the Raw Materials for a New American Poetic Tradition

Anthropology in *Poetry* Magazine

Harriet Monroe's interest in science as both a subject and a resource for poetry was not limited to the technological sublime discussed in the previous chapter. She was also interested in the materials being collected by anthropologists from indigenous peoples across the United States. Her fascination with such materials was not simply a passing curiosity, but contributed to her broader vision for American poetry. Nor was the influence of anthropology limited to her exposure to cultural artifacts such as ceremonial dances, recorded songs, and translated poetry. Along with the examples of Native American art she took from professional anthropological publications, she also absorbed many of the theoretical frameworks employed by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthropologists, and these frameworks influenced the ways in which she envisioned Naive American poetry's relationship to American poetry more generally.

Although Edward Sapir is known today as an important linguist and anthropologist, he was also known to contemporary readers of *Poetry* as a poet. Between August 1919 and November 1931, *Poetry* published seven groups of poems by Sapir, as well as several reviews either by or about him. The majority of his poetry is not directly linked to his anthropological studies in terms of content, but one interesting exception is the poem "Zuni," published in January 1926. This poem is addressed "To R.F.B." It is likely these initials indicate fellow anthropologist Ruth Fulton Benedict who, like Sapir, was a former student of Franz Boas and who, unlike Sapir, had been working among the Zuni people in the mid nineteen twenties. In this poem Sapir blends allusion to both Zuni and classical traditions:

> The priests are singing softly on the sand,
> And the four colored points and zenith stand;
> The desert crawls and leaps, the eagle flies.
> Put wax into your ears and close your eyes.[1]

The four points or directional quarters, along with the zenith, the nadir and the center were known to be ceremonially significant to the Zuni, to the extent that these points governed not only religious rituals but also the architectural design of their houses and cities. The advice to "put wax in your ears and close your eyes" invokes the sirens episode of the Odyssey, and may be a gesture toward the classical allusions that permeate H.D.'s poetry.[2] The comparison of life in the desert to Homer's sirens implies both beauty and menace, urging the reader to resist the impulse to give herself up to this seductive environment. Nevertheless, this merging of Native American and imagist sources serves as a model of the kind of poetry Harriet Monroe and Alice Corbin Henderson predicted would become central to a specifically American artistic aesthetic. Although these predictions were not fulfilled on a large scale, anthropological research, both professional and amateur, played an important role in *Poetry*'s ethos for more than a decade.

From its earliest years, *Poetry* participated in the active construction of American identity. Although it goes without saying that the magazine was primarily interested in the aesthetic aspect of that identity, America's aesthetic identity was embedded in a broad network of cultural influences. The two major influences I will be concerned with in this chapter are the rise of anthropology as a scientific discipline and the increasing availability of access to the cultures of North American Native peoples. I will argue that the evolutionary model of anthropology allowed Americans to identify themselves either against or with the indigenous inhabitants of North America with a great deal of fluidity

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[1] Edward Sapir, "Zuni," *Poetry* 27, no. 4 (January 1926): 178.
[2] Around this time Sapir also published a review of H.D.'s Collected Poems: Edward Sapir, "An American Poet," *The Nation*, August 19, 1925, 211-12.

in terms of the concepts of the self and the other. Politically speaking, the Native Americans were treated strictly as being other. The United States government wanted to either assimilate or eliminate the peoples who inconveniently occupied the North American landscape.[3] Aesthetically, however, Native Americans were often treated as the source of the true, authentic American self, in contrast to the European other.

This chapter will trace the patterns in the way Native American cultures and poetry were used as a resource within *Poetry*, first to build an American identity distinct from the traditions of Europe during the First World War, and later to consolidate the magazine's authority over American poetry. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Monroe's broad vision for the New Poetry differed in important ways from the category known today as modernism. If we define literary modernism in terms of experimentation with form and conscious response to urban modernity (whether embracing or rejecting), then Monroe's enthusiastic interest in both urban and wilderness spaces and her eclectic praise of a range of both traditional and experimental forms precludes her from being described as a truly modernist editor. Monroe's *New Poetry* anthologies and the range of poems she selected or allowed to be included in *Poetry* magazine show her to be constructing a poetic ideal that was both more democratic, in the sense of being more accessible and not inherently restricted to a classically-educated elite, and more catholic than modernism, but which nevertheless fulfilled its promise of being "new" through introducing relatively unknown poets whose work seemed to Monroe to represent a fresh perspective, regardless of the chosen form or subject matter. Monroe wanted to show that poetry could speak meaningfully to anyone who wanted to listen, and she directly opposed what she saw as the elitism of the approaches to poetry

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[3] For an account of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, see for example Cathleen D. Cahill, *Federal Fathers & Mothers : A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

by Pound, Eliot, Margaret Anderson and others who, as the slogan of *The Little Review* put it, "[made] no compromise with the public taste." Poetry inspired by Native American art and culture formed one of the mainstays of Monroe's vision for an authentically American poetry, free from obligation to an over-wrought European tradition.

In addition to outlining the role played by borrowings from Native American cultures in Monroe's attempts to construct a new American poetry, I will also clarify the relationships between the magazine's use of Native American sources and the developments within the field of anthropology, suggesting that it was the late nineteenth century model of evolutionary anthropology, and not the twentieth century school of cultural relativity initiated by Franz Boas, that dominated the attitudes toward Native Americans in *Poetry*, despite frequent criticisms of governmental agencies which were also organized around evolutionary anthropological principles.

The tensions that emerge in *Poetry* between the authority of institutional scientific research and the authority of first-hand experience can be usefully analyzed as competition between two sources of capital, in Bourdieu's terms. As will be discussed in detail later in this chapter, the value placed by Monroe on poetry based on reinterpretation of material collected by anthropologists and accessed through official scientific publications versus poetry based on a poet's first-hand experiences among indigenous tribes shifts over time. This shift corresponds with her needs to borrow the scientific capital of government-sponsored science to lend weight to her views on the future of American poetry in the early stages of her editorial career versus her desire, once her position in the field of cultural production was better-established, to accumulate cultural capital specific to the field of poetry by demonstrating the ability of poets to access indigenous cultures directly and in more meaningful ways than scientists could. As defined by Bourdieu, scientific capital derives from both the practice of science and the

recognition of that practice that results in consensus-building amongst competing practitioners and institutions.[4] The degree of recognition received by a scientist's ideas determines whether those ideas will be incorporated into the formalized body of knowledge that comes to be known as "science."[5] Those who control a high proportion of scientific capital "are able, often effortlessly, to impose the representation of science most favorable to their interests, that is to say, the 'correct', legitimate way to play the game."[6] By aligning her critical and editorial practice with anthropological research funded by the U.S. government, Monroe stood to gain a degree of legitimacy by association. Scientific capital, for Bourdieu, "functions as a form of credit, presupposing the trust or belief of those who undergo it."[7] In the early years of *Poetry*, Monroe attempted to some extent to trade on that credit by referencing government anthropology in an era before academic institutions gained control over the scientific capital in that field. Cultural capital of the kind more often valued in the field of literature differs from scientific capital in that it rests on the literary practitioner's independence from the kinds of economic and intellectual systems that underpin scientific capital:

> At least in the most perfectly autonomous sector of the field of cultural production, where the only audience aimed at is other producers [...], the economy of practices is based, as in a generalized game of 'loser wins', on a systematic inversion of the fundamental principles of all ordinary economies: that of business [...], that of power [...], and even that of institutionalized cultural authority (the absence of any academic training or consecration may be considered a virtue).[8]

Poetry around the turn of the twentieth century is described by Bourdieu as one of the most autonomous fields in literary history, and although he was specifically speaking about the field of French poetry, Monroe's editorial in the first issue of *Poetry* suggests

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[4] Bourdieu, *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, 55.
[5] Ibid., 34-35.
[6] Ibid., 35.
[7] Ibid., 34.
[8] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, 39.

that American poetry also had little audience beyond other practitioners.[9] In order to maintain and accrue cultural capital within the field of literary production, Monroe had to be seen to challenge the same institutionalized authority of government anthropology that she had previously embraced. Although there are chronological shifts in this balance over the course of *Poetry's* first decades, both impulses were constantly present in Monroe's selection and editorial framing of poems inspired by indigenous cultures.

The unpublished letters and other materials in the Harriet Monroe Papers and *Poetry* Papers archives held at the Special Collections Research Center at the University of Chicago enable new insights into Monroe's personal reading on the subjects of anthropology and Native Americans, as well as into how the poets writing poetry using Native American sources viewed their own aesthetic projects. Moreover, they shed light on Monroe's editorial decisions, particularly decisions concerning how much background information to include in the "Notes" sections of the magazine to guide readers' interpretations and experiences of so-called aboriginal verse.

The question of how to refer, collectively, to the multitude of culturally distinct nations, peoples, and individual communities that had been established in North America before Western European colonization remains politically charged.[10] Where possible, I have attempted to use the self-chosen names of specific indigenous tribes. Due to the nature of the material I am examining, however, it is frequently necessary to use a collective descriptor such as "Native American" or "indigenous." The term "Native American" is problematic in that, like the term "Indian," it is an externally imposed label that originated within the power structures of the dominant white culture. While there is

[9] Ibid., 54; Harriet Monroe, "The Motive of the Magazine," *Poetry* 1, no. 1 (October 1912): 27.

[10] See, for example, the series of interviews and personal statements on the subject collected by Amanda Blackhorse, "Blackhorse: Do You Prefer 'Native American' or 'American Indian'? 6 Prominent Voices Respond," *Indian Country Media Network*, May 22, 2015, https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/culture/social-issues/blackhorse-do-you-prefer-native-american-or-american-indian-6-prominent-voices-respond/.

constant flux in the preferred terminology, I have chosen to employ the term "Native American" over "American Indian" in order to differentiate my terminology from the contemporary discourse of early twentieth-century scientists, governmental agencies, and writers who were, broadly speaking, using the terms "Indian," "American Indian," or "Amerindian" uncritically and in actively oppressive ways. The fact that it is so difficult to find vocabulary to refer with sensitivity to the various and self-determined cultures that the United States government actively displaced through colonization only underscores the extent to which exploitative power structures and the tendency to think of indigenous communities in the Americas in the past-tense remain firmly in place today.

The Emergence of Anthropology as a Scientific Field of Study

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the rise of anthropology as a professional discipline, and in the United States, the conveniently located and politically problematic Native American tribes became the obvious focus for field research. The early researchers working with Native American tribes were not trained anthropologists, as anthropology did not become a formalized academic endeavor until the turn of the twentieth century when Franz Boas became the first professor of Anthropology and created the country's first academic Department of Anthropology at Columbia University in 1896. Instead they were either government geologists, agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or amateurs with an interest in a specific aspect of Native American culture such as music or religion. In 1879 the first officially organized governmental department relating specifically to anthropology was founded by Major John Wesley Powell. The Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) was a sub-division of the Smithsonian Institute created ostensibly to document Native American languages,

crafts, ceremonies and songs before they were destroyed by the advancing tide of "civilization." However, Powell, who had previously been a United States Geological Survey geologist, also attempted to demonstrate the practical importance in the eyes of congress of establishing a separate governmental bureau for ethnology by asserting that a clear, scientific understanding of what were thought of as the primitive practices of Native American cultures was the first step in solving the so-called Indian problem. "Savagery is not inchoate civilization," Powell insists, "it is a distinct status of society, with its own institutions, customs, philosophy, and religion; and all these must necessarily be overthrown before new institutions, customs, philosophy, and religion can be introduced."[11]

The school of anthropological thought that Powell subscribed to, and which consequently drove much of the research that came out of the BAE in the final decades of the nineteenth century, was based on drawing parallels between physiological evolution and the development of cultures. The influential ethnologists E.B. Tylor (1832-1917) in Britain and Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) in the United States developed a comparative framework for classifying non-white cultures based on a broadly three tiered system of unilinear evolution. Cultures were considered to be either "savage", "barbarous," or "civilized" according to how closely they resembled the white cultures of Europe. The precise criteria used by various ethnologists to determine which category a particular culture belonged in differed, but the general consensus was that, through one mechanism or another, cultures inevitably evolved from a state of savagery through barbarism to ultimately become civilized. Otherwise, a culture would, like a species that failed to adapt, simply become extinct. This evolutionary and comparative approach to

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[11] John Wesley Powell, *Report on the Methods of Surveying the Public Domain to the Secretary of the Interior at the Request of the National Academy of the Sciences* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), 15.

the study of cultures tends to homogenize perceptions of non-white cultures because it presupposes that there is only one viable developmental path, that all cultures evolve through the same stages in the same order, and that any culture in a given stage of development will closely resemble any other culture when it was passing through the same stage of development.

Powell espoused a similar set of assumptions which he articulated in "From Savagery to Barbarism," his presidential address to the American Anthropological Association in February 1885. Powell refers directly to Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1877), and employs the same stages used by Morgan, arguing merely that the transition from savagery to barbarism occurs later along the continuum of cultural development than Morgan suggests. Powell also adds further criteria to the determination of cultural stages, including achievements encompassing "all the fundamental activities of man."[12] For Powell, the homogeneity of cultures at similar developmental stages, particularly among cultures approaching a state of civilization, is not merely a perception resulting from the theory of cultural evolution, but a natural law integral to the process of progress. The forces that drive cultural evolution, according to Powell, are the inventive pursuit of happiness (as opposed to the struggle for survival), and the tendency toward homogeneity through cultural transfer (as opposed to differentiation of new varieties).[13] If a more advanced civilization comes in contact with a less advanced one, the natural and universal laws of cultural evolution dictate that, over time, the technological and social developments of the more civilized culture will inevitably spread to the less civilized culture to fulfil the dual tendencies toward progress and homogeneity.

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[12] J. W. Powell, "From Savagery to Barbarism. Annual Address of the President, J. W. Powell, Delivered February 3, 1885," *Transactions of the Anthropological Society of Washington* 3 (1885): 174.
[13] Ibid., 195.

BAE Anthropology as a Source of Inspiration for the Arts

The BAE produced an annual report to congress including an outline of the work undertaken that year, but also long, detailed reports on field work written by the individual scientists who undertook that work. These accounts of Native American communities often contained illustrations, musical notation, and transcribed and translated poems or stories. The annual reports were available to the public upon request, and according to BAE historian Neil Merton Judd, in the first decade of the Bureau's history there were often more requests for copies of the annual report than could be supplied.[14] It was not only amateur ethnologists who were interested in acquiring copies, but also artists. For instance, by the late 1920s and 1930s, members of the surrealist movement were finding inspiration in the illustrations accompanying reports on Native American visual arts and crafts.[15] Furthermore, interest in the annual reports was not restricted to the year in which it was published. Unlike many periodicals, the BAE publications, while published on a periodic basis, possessed a permanent, book-like status, rather than an ephemeral, disposable one. As I will demonstrate throughout this chapter, reports from the 1890s were still being used and recommended by writers in the 1910s. In this way, the governmental documents produced by the BAE spread beyond their initial intended audience, subtly propagating and perpetuating the evolutionary model of anthropology in ways unforeseen by the anthropologists themselves.

Harriet Monroe's interest in Native American cultures dates back to at least 1898. In a diary entry for November 26 of that year she writes, "H. Garland […] recommends

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[14] Neil Merton Judd, *The Bureau of American Ethnology; a Partial History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 78.

[15] Janet Catherine Berlo, "Introduction: The Formative Years of Native American Art History," in *The Early Years of Native American Art History: The Politics of Scholarship and Collecting* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 15.

the U.S ethnological reports and Lummis's works for my [reading] about the Indians."[16] Unfortunately, Monroe's archive contains no record of her responses to reading either the BAE reports or any of Charles Fletcher Lummis's writing. As I will show later, based on editorials she wrote for *Poetry*, it is certain that she at least read the BAE report for 1891-1892, which includes Frank Hamilton Cushing's "Outlines of Zuni Creation Myths," and passing references in her writing indicate that it is almost certain that she read others as well.

In his director's report for the *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, Powell places emphasis on drawing connections and parallels between Native American tribes and languages, and on capturing the primitive condition of tribes. He explains, in summarizing James Mooney's work collecting tribal objects for display at the upcoming 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, that the Kiowa tribe "was selected as continuing in its primitive condition more perfectly than any other which could be examined with profit."[17] His choice of phrasing when discussing the differences between European and Native American languages also insists on the categories of primitive versus civilized, with a strong bias in favor of the civilized languages being superior for successful communication.[18] His goal is to justify the expenditure of time and resources in researching and recording the history of human development through the observation of still-extant communities, which makes sense only within the framework of evolutionary anthropology.

In this context, the opening paragraph of Cushing's introduction to his paper on Zuni creation myths is an obvious gesture toward conforming to Powell's interests.

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[16] Harriet Monroe, Diary Entry, (November 26, 1898), [Box 4, Folder 4], Harriet Monroe Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[17] John Wesley Powell, "Report of the Director," in *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute, 1891-92* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), xxxii.

[18] Ibid., xxiii.

Cushing states that the Zuni are "the most archaic of the Pueblo or Aridian peoples," as well as "the most highly developed, yet characteristic and representative of all these people."[19] He also goes to great lengths to explain that, although the Zuni had extensive contact with the Spanish, the influence of that conflict on the core of the Zuni culture was minimal, and does not undermine his claim that they are representative of the pristine Pueblo culture before contact with Europeans. Having established the status of the contemporary Zuni tribe as typical, or even archetypical, of ancient peoples of the American Southwest, Cushing then draws the analogy, widely in use at the time, of primitive man to present day childhood: "The primitive man, no less than the child, is the most comprehensive of observers, because his looking at and into things is not self-conscious, but instinctive and undirected, therefore comprehensive and searching."[20] Finally, he makes an explicit connection between the primitive Zuni and the pre-rational stage of thought in all cultures: "Unacquainted as he is with rational explanations of the things he sees, he is given, as has been the race throughout all time, to symbolic interpretation and mystic expression thereof, as even today are those who deal with the domain of the purely speculative."[21] Zuni creation myths, then, tell the white, Euro-American reader almost as much about his own history and culture as they do about the history and culture of the indigenous peoples of the American Southwest. Their underlying principles are universal because all cultures go through the same developmental or evolutionary stages.

Charles Fletcher Lummis, the other source recommended to Monroe by Garland, was also a proponent of the ideas of Henry Lewis Morgan on evolutionary anthropology,

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[19] Frank Hamilton Cushing, "Outline of Zuñi Creation Myths," in *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute, 1891-92*, by John Wesley Powell (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), 325.
[20] Ibid., 376.
[21] Ibid.

at least as the best available authority in comparison to ethnologists who preceded him. However, in his writings, Lummis seems far more interested in the autonomy and specificities of the Native American tribes he describes than in the universality of the course of their development. In “The Indian Who Is Not Poor,” an article by Lummis in the September 1892 issue of *Scribner’s Magazine*, he describes the group of tribes known as the Pueblos as having well-established, advanced, and complex traditions. He also draws attention to the ignorance and injustice underlying the treatment they receive from European Americans:

> Furthermore, the Pueblos are citizens of the United States, a political fact which seems to have escaped the notice of the Interior Department as completely as has the fact that they are members of a Christian church. Their autonomy and their full rights of citizenship have been established in the highest tribunals of the land; and yet we continue to "educate" them by force, and to send missionaries to them![22]

Unlike the contributors to the BAE annual reports, Lummis is free to express his political opinions overtly in his article. It is uncertain to what extent Cushing would be interested in the political applications of his research, but certainly Powell would not have supported Lummis’s argument for the recognition of Native American rights.

Despite this endorsement of the Pueblos as possessing a viable culture and political equality, Lummis credits the Spanish with endowing the Pueblo tribes with many of the attributes he praises. These include their conversion to the Christian religion and their happy “home-life.”[23] The most advantageous traits of the Pueblos, at least from the perspective of a white American, are therefore not endemic to the Pueblos but learned from Europeans. The underlying message of the article, which superficially purports to provide an example of an exceptional and advanced group of Indians which challenges

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[22] Charles Fletcher Lummis, “The Indian Who Is Not Poor,” *Scribner’s Magazine* 12, no. 3 (September 1892): 366.
[23] Ibid.

the stereotypical phrase "the poor Indian,"[24] is rather that the Saxon treatment of Native Americans is more damaging than the supposed "Spanish atrocities."[25]

Lummis is arguing for a break from the traditional attitude of the English colonists. He repeatedly condemns the "Saxons" and the U.S. government, and is at once giving an example of a case in which such attitudes are inadequate responses (the Pueblo tribes are already civilized citizens with no need of further intervention), and offering alternative models. These alternative models are not limited to Spain, however. When describing the treatment of criminals among the Pueblo tribes, he characterizes the tribes as more humane (and therefore more civilized) than the Europeans and their descendants.[26] While the immediate subject of his article is the Pueblo tribes, the motivating impulse of Lummis's writing is the call for a reconsideration and redefinition of the American self.

Based on Monroe's own contradictory stance on the place of Native American nations within the United States, it seems likely that she really did take the writings of both Cushing and Lummis as her sources. While most of her editorial writing, particularly in the 1910s, treats Native American culture as a resource to which European-American writers and artists had an unrestricted right, she also demonstrates an interest in Native American rights. In an undated and unpublished poem entitled "The War Dance," Monroe describes the experience of attending a pageant at an Indian school in Arizona. As a piece of art, this poem is negligible, written in rhyming couplets of seven iambic feet per line which quickly become monotonous. However, the content of the poem poses a challenge to the dominant ideology of the turn of the twentieth century concerning Native Americans; namely the idea that the best way to resolve the Indian

[24] Ibid., 361.
[25] Ibid., 364-365.
[26] Ibid., 367.

problem was to force Native American children to be westernized. This choice of subject matter specifically strengthens the case for Monroe looking to Lummis as an authority on Native Americans, as he wrote a controversial series of articles for *The Land of Sunshine* (of which he was also the editor) in 1899 entitled "My Brother's Keeper" specifically devoted to denouncing the Indian Schools administered by the Indian Service. Monroe contrasts the westernized part of the program— "Our clothes ill worn, our songs ill sung, our English tongue ill spoken"— with a traditional Apache war dance, ostensibly included to demonstrate the extent of the students' progress by contrast: "'Tis not that we are proud of it, but that you may behold/ How much we have improved—' At this my lordly blood ran cold."[27] "Lordly," here, along with similar terms elsewhere in the poem like "superior" and "conquering," is used ironically to undercut the hierarchy constructed by the U.S. government.

As the students begin their performance of the Apache war dance, the speaker of the poem becomes increasingly absorbed in the ritual, which conjures images of an army "Like a dark storm that levels all from mountains to the sea."[28] Threatening and magnificent, the image of the warriors contrasts painfully with the apparent subservience of the Native American children when not engaged in the performance of art from their own culture. Though it never explicitly calls for an end to the practice of compelling Native American families to send their children to the Indian schools by any means necessary, the poem implicitly condemns a policy that would transform a powerful and richly cultured people into broken-spirited poor imitators of imposed and foreign customs. These sentiments, and the clear critique of European-American society, echo

[27] Harriet Monroe, Manuscript, "The War Dance," (undated), [Box 16, Folder 8] Harriet Monroe Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.
[28] Ibid.

Lummis's attitudes without rejecting the savage/civilized dichotomy that BAE anthropology worked to reinforce.

Monroe and the Importance of Perceived Authenticity

Monroe travelled to the Southwest for the first time in January of 1899. The chief reason for her visit was to improve her health, but the choice of the Southwest as the site of her convalescence seems deliberate in light of her stated interest in reading about the Native Americans. On arrival, the wildness of the land quickly captured her imagination. After she published an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* in November 1899 praising the Southwest, the Santa Fe Railroad gave Monroe free rail passes in appreciation of publicity they felt would be good for tourism.[29] She returned to Arizona with her sister for three weeks in August and September of 1901.[30] It was on this trip that Monroe first witnessed the ceremonial Hopi Snake Dance. Monroe clearly considered herself as having a superior appreciation and more authentic experience of this spectacle compared to those who did not see it as early in the century as she did:

> Today many tourists motor to Hopi Land for the Snake Dance, and it may have become corrupted by popularity. But in 1901 the rite was still unscathed, the audience chiefly Navajo rather than white; and there, six hundred feet above the plain, it seemed as if all the arts had united in a symphony of the desert as authentic, as humanly expressive in its dramatic beauty, as any great national festival of any clime or time.[31]

This concern with authenticity was one of the dominant motivations of Monroe's ongoing interest in Native American culture and the landscape of the Southwest, and as this chapter will later demonstrate, it played an important role in her vision for the development of a national poetry.

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[29] Harriet Monroe, "The Grand Cañon of the Colorado," *The Atlantic Monthly* 84, no. 506 (December 1899): 816-21.
[30] Monroe, *A Poet's Life; Seventy Years in a Changing World*, 170-174.
[31] Ibid., 173.

Monroe and *Poetry* did not, of course, function in a cultural vacuum. The history of the representation of Native Americans in American literature and anthropology has been insightfully chronicled by Helen Carr, who identifies Monroe as one of several key figures in the re-emergence of a romantic primitivism in relation to Native Americans in the 1910s and 1920s. Other writers associated with this primitivist movement included Mary Austin, whose work will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, and Mabel Dodge Luhan, both of whom were associated with the colony of artists and writers that developed in Taos, New Mexico.[32] Carr describes the recognition of intentional aesthetic content in Native American cultures by authors and anthropologists in the early twentieth century as a reformulation of a Jeffersonian primitivism that prized Native American oratory as evidence of their republican spirit and allowed the Indian to be used as a powerful symbol of the new freedom-seeking American nation.[33] Where Jefferson sought to use Native American culture to critique European monarchy, modernist writers sought to critique American modernity: "Instead of the sequence European, Indian, American, it has become bourgeois, Indian, artist."[34] Both the eighteenth- and twentieth-century primitivisms assert that Native American cultures, because they are closer to nature, maintain an authenticity, lost to overly-civilized societies, that in turn naturalizes and makes universal particular qualities read onto Native American culture by Euro-American writers. According to Carr's analysis, Jeffersonian primitivism works to naturalize individualist freedoms; early twentieth-century primitivism seeks to naturalize an aesthetic unity that has become fragmented and lost in modern industrial civilization.[35] Monroe's deployment of Native American poetry retains some of the earlier primitivist

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[32] Helen Carr, *Inventing the American Primitive: Politics, Gender and the Representation of Native American Literary Traditions, 1789-1936* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 203.
[33] Carr, 207; 202; 59.
[34] Carr, 202.
[35] Carr, 31; 202–203.

concern with creating distance and distinctions between European and American culture. Her selection and curation of Indian verse in *Poetry* strategically construct the perception of authenticity in terms that give American poetry claims to both universality and modernity in ways that are not available to European poets.

The earliest group of poems based on the culture of a Native American tribe to be published in *Poetry* was Constance Lindsay Skinner's "Songs of the Coast-Dwellers" in October 1914.[36] According to the biographical information provided in the "Notes" section of the October 1914 issue, Skinner grew up in British Columbia, first encountering "Indians" through her father, who was a government agent, presumably for the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs. Her poems are presented as English interpretations of the work of "primitive bards."[37] The name of the tribe which provided most of Skinner's source material, known at the time as the Kwakiutl (now more accurately known as the Kwakwaka'wakw), is notably absent both from the poems and from the notes that accompany them in the magazine, though Skinner had mentioned it in a letter to Monroe a few months earlier.[38] This lack of recognition of the cultural distinctions between one Native American tribe and another is symptomatic of the evolutionary model of anthropology with its assumption that, broadly speaking, one primitive or barbarous culture is representative of any other culture at the same developmental stage. The omission and its implications are not merely accidental, but part of the artistic project driving Monroe's publication of Skinner's writing.

[36] The only earlier poem to make extensive use of Native American imagery or allusion is Vachel Lindsay's "The Black Hawk War of the Artists," *Poetry* 4, no. 4 (July 1914): 138-40. The use of Native American material in this poem, however, is overtly metaphorical, and is not intended as a representation or reinterpretation of Native American verse.
[37] "Notes," *Poetry* 5, no. 1 (October 1914): 47.
[38] Constance Lindsay Skinner, Letter, "Constance Lindsay Skinner to Harriet Monroe," December 29, 1913, Poetry: A Magazine of Verse. Records, [Box 23, Folder 16], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

In another letter to Monroe, Skinner discusses the similarities in form and rhythm of her poem "The Chief's Prayer after the Salmon Catch" to a "Bilqula death-song": "I was interested in finding in my own poem (written hastily and not considered till afterwards) confirmation of my own theory about the universality of the primitive forms, and that the Bards composed simultaneously in their spontaneous double utterance of words and music."[39] The supposed universality of elements of her poetry across space, time and culture allowed Skinner to view her own work as both exotic and familiar, both ancient and modern. Tellingly, the Bilqula speak a language from an entirely different language family from Kwak'wala, undermining Skinner's claim to authority and authenticity, but this was apparently unknown to Monroe. The poem Skinner compares to "Bilqula Death Song," "The Chief's Prayer after the Salmon Catch," is the opening poem of the October 1914 issue. Although the first line of the poem refers to "Kia-Kunae," a Kwakwaka'wakw deity, to establish its authenticity as a representation of a different and exotic world, the diction of the rest of the poem is heavily liturgical:

> O Father, we have waited with shut mouths;
> With hearts silent, and hands quiet,
> Waited the time of prayer,
> Lest with fears we should have beset thee,
> And pray the unholy prayer of asking.
> We waited silently; and thou gavest life.[40]

These lines sound as though they could have come straight from the *Book of Common Prayer*, but their content serves as a gentle reproof against the tendency in the Christian religion to ask favours of God in prayer ("Give us this day our daily bread…"). The culture ostensibly being represented in the poem is Kwakwaka'wakw, but the true intention of the poem has much more to do with critiquing the legacy of Europe familiar

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[39] Constance Lindsay Skinner, Letter, "Constance Lindsay Skinner to Harriet Monroe," (February 6, 1914), [Box 23, Folder 16], Poetry: A Magazine of Verse Records, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[40] Constance Lindsay Skinner, "The Chief's Prayer after the Salmon Catch," *Poetry* 5, no. 1 (October 1914): 1.

to the readers of *Poetry* than with presenting Kwakwaka'wakw art and lore in their own right.

Letters between Monroe and Skinner also reveal that the parallel between Native American poetry and Imagist poetry which would become common place in the magazine, was already being drawn by Alice Corbin Henderson in relation to one of the poems in this earliest sequence of Native American interpretations to be published in *Poetry*. “Song of the Young Mother” was not originally among the group of poems Monroe selected for publication as “Songs of the Coast Dwellers.” It was initially returned to Skinner, but the space to be allocated to Skinner’s work in the October 1914 issue, as well as the price per line to be paid to Skinner were renegotiated, and during that process Monroe requested that “Song of the Young Mother” be resubmitted. The reason, according to Monroe, is that Alice Corbin Henderson particularly liked two of the lines in the poem, which struck her as “outdo[ing] the Imagistes.”[41] The lines in question form part of a recurring metaphor comparing the speaker’s body to a house:

> The breasts of love were as the eaves of a house,
> Jutting through the red mists and the dusk of ending day.[42]

Henderson’s characterization of the lines as imagist suggests that she has read them as presenting instantaneously and concisely a physical sensation, a multi-layered visual representation, and an intense set of emotions. However, as Carr suggests, the aesthetic similarities between translations of Native American poetry and the Imagist works of Pound, H.D., and others likely originate in the process of translation rather than in the source materials themselves.[43] Henderson’s and Monroe’s predisposition to take these translations at face value and to locate the similarities they perceived within the sources

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[41] Harriet Monroe, Letter, “Harriet Monroe to Constance Skinner,” (May 14, 1914), [Box 23, Folder 16], Poetry: A Magazine of Verse Records, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.
[42] Skinner, “Song of the Young Mother,” 14.
[43] Carr, *Inventing the American Primitive*, 191.

themselves is indicative of the investment they felt in demonstrating that poetry of this kind could come from what they saw as authentically North American sources.

The same issue that opens with "Songs of the Coast Dwellers" also features several editorial pieces questioning the state and nature of modern American poetry in relation to the poetry of European nations. These include Ezra Pound's well-known editorial objecting to the magazine's motto from Walt Whitman stating that "To have great poets there must be great audiences too," and Harriet Monroe's rebuttal. Pound dismisses Whitman's version of the relationship between the poet and the public, which Pound compares to "the waste and the manure and the soil." Instead he directs the reader to Dante who famously claimed that the wisest man is "He whom the fools hate worst," and Synge who was rejected by "people more stupid and sodden than [are] to be found even in America."[44] His clear implication is that America and the American public are no fit resources for the American poet, who should look instead to the European tradition. Monroe, unsurprisingly, insists on a more democratic vision for modern poetry, and the language she employs in defense of Whitman's statement reflects the values of American nationalism. She views the ideal modern poet as a "prophet" for the "new democracy."[45] It is no longer sufficient for the poet to appeal to a small coterie as in "the stay-at-home aristocratic ages."[46] The European monarchies and oligarchies which produced the tradition of poets Pound prefers are dated now that American democracy has arrived, and the poet must now both educate and respond to "the many."

This exchange is directly followed by an editorial by Amy Lowell titled "Nationalism in Art." In this piece Lowell argues that the critics' preoccupation with "Americanism" in American art is one of the biggest obstacles in the way of American

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[44] Ezra Pound, "The Audience I," *Poetry* 5, no. 1 (October 1914): 29.
[45] Harriet Monroe, "The Audience II," *Poetry* 5, no. 1 (October 1915): 32.
[46] Ibid., 31.

artists, and that the chief characteristic of true American art is individualism. In fact, Lowell seems to be directly refuting Monroe's emphasis on a democratic view of the arts with statements like, "Universal suffrage works as badly in the domain of the arts as it does in Wall Street."[47] Lowell blames critics for trying to categorize artists into schools and movements, and for claiming that if a Kentucky artist's subject isn't "the laborers on the adjacent farms" then he isn't producing authentically American art.[48]

The common thread among these editorials is a concern with the state and definition of American art. Their presence in the same issue with the first group of Native American interpretations (albeit by a Canadian) is not coincidental. First, Constance Skinner's work constitutes, at least superficially, a departure from the European tradition. As much as her treatment of Kwakwaka'wakw life conforms to European diction and themes, the attempt to portray the Kwakwaka'wakw community and to adopt elements of their rhythm shows a conscious desire to do something new. According to her letters, Monroe greatly admired Skinner's work, so featuring a large group of Skinner's Native American interpretations at the beginning of the issue which also featured Pound's exhortations to look to the European tradition reads very much like a conscious strategy to undermine Pound's anti-American point of view.

The timing of this issue, at the outset of the First World War, is also no coincidence. It was always one of Monroe's major goals to promote specifically and geographically American poetry, not just the poetry of Pound's expatriate community. After the outbreak of war in Europe, but before America became actively involved, there was a conscious effort in *Poetry* to create more distance between the American and European traditions as a means of also distancing America from the horrors of the

[47] Amy Lowell, "Nationalism in Art," *Poetry* 5, no. 1 (October 1914): 34.
[48] Ibid., 37.

European war.[49] For example, in the September 1914 issue, Monroe contributed an editorial entitled “The Poetry of War” denouncing the glamour, honor, and heroism with which poets of the past have endowed the idea of war. In contrast, she praises Carl Sandburg’s “Ready to Kill,” reprinted in full within the editorial. In this poem, Sandburg rejects the celebration of past war heroes who, rather than striving to feed and clothe their fellow men or otherwise contribute to society, are “ready to run the red blood and slush the bowels of men all over the sweet young grass of the prairie.”[50] Within the context of Monroe’s editorial, the “sweet young grass of the prairie” becomes a synecdoche for America as a nation, which has come under threat of being defiled by the war inspired, at least in part, by the European artistic tradition. Sandburg’s break with this tradition of valorizing war emerges as the beginning of a new, American tradition which Monroe claims could eventually develop the power to end war entirely. The intense interest in Native American culture in *Poetry* constitutes another key element in Monroe’s efforts to actively broaden the divide between American and European art.

Native American Verse as an Exploitable Natural Resource

By identifying the trends that developed in the publication history of Native-American-inspired material in *Poetry* between this first appearance and the end of Monroe’s editorship in the 1930s, we can see that the indigenous cultures of North America provided a means to artistic independence for many American poets, though we now can also see the exploitative nature of the relationship between American poets and the Native American nations they claimed to represent.

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[49] Monroe continued to write editorials condemning the war as a failure on the part of the European cultural and artistic tradition, even after the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917. See for example “Emerson in a Loggia,” *Poetry* 10, no. 6 (September 1917): 311-15.

[50] quoted in Harriet Monroe, “The Poetry of War,” *Poetry* 4, no. 6 (September 1914): 239.

The March 1916 issue of *Poetry* contained a group of poems by John Gould Fletcher inspired by the American Southwest. As readers were reminded in his biographical note at the back of the magazine, Fletcher was one of the poets included in the Imagist anthologies published by Amy Lowell. He was originally from Little Rock, Arkansas, but emigrated to England in 1913.

The first of the pieces in "Arizona Poems" is entitled "Well in the Desert." The speaker describes drowsing by a well and dreaming of "[…] riding/ To a low brown cluster of squat adobe houses/ Under the brow of a red barren mesa." In the dreams, the speaker encounters an "Indian with a red sash, flannel shirt, and blue trousers,/ And a red bandana about his coarse hair." The final lines of the poem give a double significance to the poem's title:

> Eyes black as an antelope
> Looked up at me:
> Sheep were feeding about him.
> And I said to him, "Where do you come from?"
> And he replied,
> "From Nazareth, beyond the desert,
> In Galilee."[51]

Encountering Christ at a well in such unexpected circumstances echoes the biblical story of the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well found in the gospel of John 4:5-42. In the story, a Samaritan woman meets a stranger at a well in the desert who asks her for a drink of water. She is surprised that the man addresses her because he is a Jew, and the Samaritans and Jews were enemies at this point in history. In the course of their conversation, the man tells her things about herself that convince her that he is a prophet and possibly the Messiah foretold in the Jewish religious tradition. The stranger is of course Christ, and the woman brings the rest of her village to meet him and come to recognize him as the

[51] John Gould Fletcher, "The Well in the Desert," *Poetry* 7, no. 6 (March 1916): 272.

Messiah. It is significant that in both the biblical story and in Fletcher's poem, the two central figures come from deeply divided cultural groups.

Placing this Christian story in a Native American context raises complex issues. On the one hand, it reads the Native American cultural landscape in terms of white culture. The antelope, sheep, desert, and even the adobe houses of Arizona, which at this time was still home to significant populations of several Native American tribes maintaining non-integrated ways of life, are forced into the familiar mold of scenes of the holy land prevalent in European cultures around Christmas and Easter. On the other hand, the poem serves as an indictment of the treatment of Native Americans at the hands of white individuals and the American government collectively. Rather than treating these 'strangers' with the respect, kindness and compassion a Christian would wish to show Christ, Native Americans were lied to, stolen from and persecuted in a myriad of ways by Americans.

The political content of this poem is submerged somewhat by its context within the March issue of the magazine. This was the Easter number for 1916, and also contains Edgar Lee Masters's "All Life in a Life." This poem is a gently modernized retelling of the life of Christ in which his most dramatic exploits are mentioned in "one of the sensational newspapers" and the authorities who presided over his execution were not Jewish religious leaders and Roman soldiers but "certain members of the Bar Association,/ And of the Civic Federation,/ And of the League of Public Efficiency,/ And a legion/ Of men devoted to religion."[52] The speaker concludes that throughout history, religious leaders have profited by unnecessarily complicating Christ's simple teaching:

> And parasitic things who make a food
> Of the mysteries of God for earthly power,
> Must wonder how before this young man's hour
> They lived without his blood

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[52] Edgar Lee Masters, "All Life in a Life," *Poetry* 7, no. 6 (March 1916): 295, 299.

> Shed on that day, and which
> In red cells is so rich.[53]

Masters's critique of his contemporaries' failure to recognize and live up to what in his eyes constitute the most fundamental Christian teachings is far more blatant than Fletcher's. The thematic similarities between the two poems suggest that the editors of *Poetry* intended them to be read in dialogue with each other, particularly given the timing of the issue in which they were both printed. Retrospectively, the reader's focus is shifted to the role and practice of Christianity in the modern world generally, and away from Fletcher's more specific point concerning the lack of kindness shown to Native Americans by the United States government.

Fletcher's "Arizona Poems" group also includes "Cliff Dwelling," which contrasts the seeming impossibility of life in the desolate desert with the "bold" ruins of cliff-side towers which prove that life at least at one time flourished there. For the speaker of the poem, these ruins with their "shards of pots and shreds of straw" serve as a reminder of the transience of human life, and the poem ends with a metaphor describing the stream that runs through the abandoned landscape as: "A clock that ticks the centuries off in silence."[54] Cliff-dwelling Native American communities held a fascination for the American public, particularly in the 1910s, due to the perceived aesthetic similarities between pueblos and the skyscrapers spreading across America's cities. For example, the September 1912 issue of *The Edison Monthly*, a New York-based magazine devoted to promoting the role of electricity in daily consumer life, published a pair of uncredited photographs of the New York City skyline, one in daylight and one in the dark entitled "The Cliff Dwellers of Manhattan, By Day and Night."[55] Similarly, in the Carnegie

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[53] Ibid., 300.
[54] John Gould Fletcher, "Cliff Dwelling," *Poetry* 7, no. 6 (March 1916): 275.
[55] "The Cliff-Dwellers of Manhattan, by Day and Night," *The Edison Monthly* 5, no. 4 (September 1912): 112.

Institute of Art annual exhibition in 1914, George Bellows exhibited his famous painting of New York tenements in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, a different but equally modern aspect of the city, with the title "Cliff Dwellers."[56] It is possible Fletcher may have seen this painting either in print in the *Fine Arts Journal* (or another publication) or as part of travelling exhibition that followed its initial showing in Pittsburg.[57] Bellows's painting includes the added parallel of portraying a culture that would be unfamiliar to a middle-class white viewer. As one contemporary critic noted, Bellows "frequently causes the smug to feel conscious of the brutal facts of life."[58] Bellows's choice of title for the subject matter of this painting may have been influenced by Henry Fuller's 1893 novel of the same title. Fuller's *Cliff Dwellers* is set in Chicago, not New York, and is described by Monroe as an "arraignment" of that city, and an attempt to "punish its materialistic ideals."[59] Nevertheless, the association of cliff dwelling pueblo peoples and urban modernity in one form or another was firmly fixed in the minds of the segment of the middle-class American public who were readers of novels and of magazines devoted to the arts. Furthermore, the pueblo communities had only recently become geographically accessible to the general American public as a result of the construction of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad lines beginning in the 1860s and continuing into the 1910s, making modern technology a prerequisite for experiencing the apparently primitive wilderness or ancient civilizations of the American West. In this context, Fletcher's poem is as much a comment on modern urban life as a comment on the desert environment he describes, suggesting parallels between the barren desert and the urban landscape, as well as pointing out the hubris of a modern world which believes it has conquered nature.

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[56] *Catalogue of the Eighteenth Annual Exhibition at the Carnegie Institute* (Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie Institute, 1914), Plate 17.
[57] "Cliff Dwellers | LACMA Collections," accessed June 11, 2017, http://collections.lacma.org/node/228840.
[58] "Annual Exhibition Carnegie Institute," *Fine Arts Journal* 30, no. 6 (June 1914): 291.
[59] Harriet Monroe, "Henry B. Fuller," *Poetry* 35, no. 1 (October 1929): 37.

The poem that directly follows "Cliff Dwelling" in the "Arizona Poems" group explores the theme of human transience from a slightly different perspective and introduces one of the dominant tropes common to many poems and other forms of art relating to Native American cultures; that of the vanishing race. Like "Cliff Dwelling," "Rain in the Desert" describes desert ruins, but the central conceit of the poem is that of the desert as a temple. The remains of human priests are superseded by nature:

> And now the showers
> Surround the mesa like a troop of silver dancers:
> Shaking their rattles, stamping, chanting, roaring,
> Whirling, extinguishing the last red wisp of light.[60]

In place of the more westernized image of the clock in "Cliff Dwelling," the "last red wisp of light" is a much more pointed reference to the native peoples, who were collectively and often pejoratively referred to as "red" in the same way that people of African descent were referred to as "black" or "negro." The Native Americans, Fletcher implies, are in the process of fading back into the natural environment they were so closely associated with by Americans of European ancestry.

The vanishing race was a well-established and politically useful concept in American thinking about Native Americans, not only in literature, but in the field of anthropology as well, as it justified interest in Native American cultures while asserting the ultimate futility of changing policies concerning the treatment of Native American peoples. The argument employed by Powell to lend urgency to the BAE's appeals for increased government funding relied almost entirely on the vanishing race myth. It was imperative, Powell argued, to document Native American languages, crafts, ceremonies and songs before they were destroyed by the advancing tide of civilization. Even in the 1880s this was hardly a new argument. The vanishing savage or vanishing race trope had

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[60] John Gould Fletcher, "Rain in the Desert," *Poetry* 7, no. 6 (March 1916): 276.

been a common element in European American thought concerning Native Americans since the eighteenth century, perhaps epitomized in James Fenimore Cooper's 1826 novel *The Last of the Mohicans*. To avoid a national sense of moral culpability, the dwindling Native American population was ascribed in the American public sphere to "the universal law of civilized progress," and lamented as an unavoidable tragedy, possibly even predestined by God.[61] As anthropology emerged as a nationally important field of science in the mid-nineteenth century, American anthropologists, politicians, and members of the general public were drawn to the theory of cultural evolution which reinforced the idea that nothing could be done to stop Native American cultures from disappearing.

The identification of Native American civilizations with the natural environment in which they existed was a crucial element of the vanishing race myth. It not only diffused any consciousness of responsibility from the encroaching white settlers and the U.S. government, but it also allowed Americans of European descent to treat Native American cultures as simply another natural resource (simultaneously freeing the actual natural resources from any prior claims). The fact that some of the earliest research into Native American cultures occurred under the aegis of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) can only have contributed to this way of thinking. The main project of this institution was to accurately map the nation, including not only geological resources, but all of the natural resources available in the vast spaces as yet unpopulated by white Americans. In carrying out this work, USGS scientists encountered Native American tribes and mapped their territories. In this sense, the tribes became features of the natural landscape, and their cultures became, by extension, a type of natural resource.

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[61] Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American : White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 12.

Whether it was based on observations of territories where Native American communities lived or on interpretations of existing Native American songs and customs, poetry centered around Native American themes was beginning to contribute to an American poetic aesthetic which defined itself as contrasting with the received European tradition. Within the pages of *Poetry*, the emerging ideals of this new American poetry were simplicity of diction and striking use of the image, as promoted by the Imagist movement in the first years of the magazine, but also a focus on American modernity and the active life. Celebrating newly developing cities, like Carl Sandburg's "Chicago" poems, represented one facet of American modernity, but another important and uniquely American facet of modernity was the exploration of the wildernesses of the Southwest. Native American themes formed a part of what I will refer to as "wilderness modernity," particularly due to their inextricable link with the developing field of anthropology and their continued political relevance.

Wilderness modernity was by no means limited to the pages of *Poetry*, but Harriet Monroe was one of its leading proponents. As Robin Schulze explains in *The Degenerate Muse*,

> for Monroe, it was the wilderness of the American West, not the rich cultural milieu of Europe, that inspired her passion and, ultimately, her program for the renaissance of American poetry. For Monroe, modernist verse was, somewhat unexpectedly, rooted in the imaginative confrontation with the American land.[62]

Although it is debatable, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, whether Monroe's overall New Poetry project can be considered synonymous with "modernist verse," her vision of American modernity rested on the tension between European civilization and the untamed North American landscape.

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[62] Schulze, *The Degenerate Muse*, 71.

Schulze goes on to describe the conflicting attraction and repulsion inspired in Monroe by Native American culture. On the one hand, Schulze explains, Monroe saw Native American art and ritual as "accomplish[ing] an imaginative merger with the land that she herself desired."[63] On the other hand, however, she argues that Monroe's perception of the Native American tribes as being "at the low end of the phyletic ladder" held her back from "forg[ing] a romantic connection with the land" because it would be "racially degrading."[64] She concludes that, despite Monroe's instinctive desire to prostrate herself in a worshipful relationship to the romantic sublimity of the desert wilderness, she instead embraces an attitude of pioneering conquest in the belief that combative confrontation with the wilderness will act as a eugenic force for the strengthening of the white American race.[65] I would disagree with Schulze's analysis that Monroe viewed the assimilation of Native American culture into the European American aesthetic as potentially racially degrading. Although Monroe continued to view Native American tribes as "primitive," it was this very characteristic which made their cultures a source of contact with the unadulterated creative forces inherent within humanity. The art of the ancient Greeks (which Monroe, based on the framework of cultural evolution, saw as near equivalents with Native American cultures) had degenerated into a European tradition which consisted merely of "derivations of pseudo-classic derivations, long separated from their primitive Greek source,"[66] and it was American artists' access to both pristine wilderness and pristine ancient culture that would propel them to a position of dominance in the twentieth century.[67]

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[63] Ibid., 93.
[64] Ibid., 94-95.
[65] Ibid., 95-96.
[66] Harriet Monroe, "Back to Nature," *Poetry* 14, no. 6 (September 1919): 329.
[67] See for example Harriet Monroe, "In Texas and New Mexico," *Poetry* 16, no. 6 (September 1920): 327.

The "Aboriginal" Special Issue of *Poetry*

In February of 1917, Monroe published a special issue of *Poetry* devoted to "Aboriginal Poetry." The decision to devote an entire issue almost exclusively to poetry inspired by Native American cultures suggests not only that such poetry was of great interest to Monroe, but also that she believed there was a growing audience for it. This belief was supported by the publication in September 1918 of an anthology of "Indian Poems" which included many of the same poems found in the *Poetry* special issue, and which cited *Poetry* as its "inspiration."[68] The fact that *The Path on the Rainbow* went into a second printing within three months of its initial publication provides further evidence that there was an audience for such material. *Poetry* can be credited, at least in part, with creating that audience. Carr argues that *Poetry's* promotion of *vers libre* helped to make translations of Indian poetry, which tended to be in free verse form, appear to have greater artistic merit.[69] The special "Indian Verse" issue marked the beginning of a new surge in interest in Native American culture in new terms: the primitive status of the Indian no longer marked him as "evolutionarily tardy," but rather as more authentically artistic than the modern American bourgeoisie.[70]

The *Poetry* special issue included "interpretations" that were essentially loose translations of existing songs and verse used in the rituals of various tribes, as well as works closer in character to Fletcher's "Arizona Poems," which represented the observations and emotions of white tourists in Native American territories. The issue also included an extended editorial entitled "Aboriginal Poetry" which was divided into segments contributed by Monroe, Henderson, and Sandburg. The purpose of the editorial

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[68] George William Cronyn, ed., *The Path on the Rainbow: An Anthology of Songs and Chants from the Indians of North America* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918), ix.
[69] Carr, *Inventing the American Primitive*, 222.
[70] Carr, 207–208.

was to demonstrate the relevance of "Indian" or "primitive" verse to American artists and readers. Throughout her segment of the "Aboriginal Poetry" editorial, Monroe praises the work of white collectors, recorders and translators of Native American art and culture, but silently assumes that all of the art in question was created in the remote past, and by omission writes the creative capacity of individual Native American artists out of her account entirely.

Monroe describes the examples of Native American art which have been recorded or collected by anthropologists saying that, "vivid as such work is in its suggestion of racial feeling and rhythm, it gives merely a hint of the deeper resources– it is a mere outcropping of the mine."[71] In this metaphor, Native American art has the potential to enrich white American art, rather than leading to any sort of degeneration. Native American art is not an organically developing, potentially uncontrollable living force, but a collection of pre-existent, crystalized, static objects, made the more valuable by their anticipated scarcity. In the same paragraph Monroe goes on to warn that, "in the process of so-called civilization, [the tribes] will lose all trace of [their cultural heritage]; […] their beautiful primitive poetry will perish among the ruins of obliterated states." Here Monroe is appealing not only to the myth of the vanishing race, but also to the myths of the noble savage and the degenerating tendency of civilization. The myth of the noble savage, particularly as it related to Native Americans, relies on the idea that, as a result of a close symbiotic relationship with nature, "savages" are innocent of the vices that arise from civilization. As soon as the "noble savage" comes in contact with civilization, however, his innocence begins to erode, or is destroyed outright.[72] Rather than seeing Native Americans as posing a eugenic (or political) threat, Monroe has

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[71] Harriet Monroe, Alice Corbin Henderson, and Carl Sandburg, "Aboriginal Poetry," *Poetry* 9, no. 5 (February 1, 1917): 251.
[72] Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 19; 25.

dissolved any distinction between them and the wildernesses they inhabit. They are increasingly threatened extensions of the wild landscape which Monroe so clearly identifies as a restorative force for civilized America.

In the three-part editorial, key tensions between the art, science and politics surrounding Native American nations emerge more clearly than in any previous issue of *Poetry*. Monroe celebrates Natalie Curtis (Burlin), Alice Fletcher, and Frances Densmore's use of technological advancements like the phonograph in their research, but blames governmental bureaucracy for suppressing the artistic creations of ethnologists such as Frank Hamilton Cushing.[73] Monroe claims that Cushing had the "most sympathetic and creative mind" of all the ethnologists working with Native American nations, and that "it is a reproach to our civilization that no publisher has yet dug it out" from "one of those massive tomes which entomb the annual reports of the U.S. Bureau of Ethnology."[74]

Despite Monroe's glowing analysis of Cushing as an artist, he was a controversial figure when viewed as a scientist. Cushing has been described by Don Fowler as the first anthropologist to become a "participant observer."[75] While his time as an accepted member of the Zuni tribe gave him access to more information and a deeper understanding of Zuni culture than was available to anthropologists who were observers only, this partially internal status raised ethical questions for Cushing. When he came to publish articles on the Zunis, he was criticised by fellow anthropologists for withholding some of the information the Zunis considered to be sacred, and for simply not publishing extensively enough in general.[76] Cushing's romanticised position as a member of the

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[73] Monroe, Henderson, and Sandburg, "Aboriginal Poetry," 253.
[74] Ibid., 253-4.
[75] Don D. Fowler, *A Laboratory for Anthropology : Science and Romanticism in the American Southwest, 1846-1930* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 118.
[76] Ibid., 126.

Zuni tribe provided an aura of authenticity admired by Monroe, but his uncertain loyalties, divided as it were between scientific objectivity and his personal connection to the Zunis, along with his dearth of publications undermined his reputation amongst his anthropological contemporaries.

One of Cushing's major influences was British ethnologist E.B. Tylor, particularly the analogy Tylor drew between fossils as indices to geological periods and 'index forms' or particular behavioural patterns such as legends, games, and songs as indicators of stratified stages of development within a society. His participant observer methodology, which today is associated with an approach to anthropology based on the idea of cultural relativism, was in fact employed in the services of this geological analogy. Analysis of surviving 'index forms' in Zuni folklore was used by Cushing to serve as evidence of the impact of environment on the development of the ancient societies from which the Zuni had descended.[77] Inherent in Cushing's *Creation Myth of the Zunis*, which Monroe described as one of "the great epics of the world," is an underlying assumption that the culture Cushing immersed himself in was a metaphorical fossil bed, the ossified remains of an ancient and dead society, as opposed to a vital and viable one.[78] The ethical qualms he developed when it came to exposing information which he had received in confidence as an accepted member of a functioning community do not seem to have influenced his theoretical framework (and may in fact have been a calculated strategy to lend mystique to his public image).

To a certain extent, Monroe seems to have inherited many of the same conflicting impulses represented by Cushing's work. On the one hand, Monroe views Native American cultures as complex and unique, meriting the kind of commitment and

[77] Ibid., 155-156.
[78] Monroe, Henderson, and Sandburg, "Aboriginal Poetry," 253.

openness Cushing demonstrated by "enter[ing] fully into the spirit of [Zuni] religion and poetry."[79] On the other hand, the language Monroe employs throughout her section of the editorial is redolent of the archaeological or geological mode of thinking about Native Americans. She praises Cushing's work as "uncover[ing] whatever beauty he finds with reverence and without violence."[80] Here, Cushing seems to be proceeding like a careful archaeologist to extract buried artifacts without damaging them. She opens the editorial by describing Native American art as a "rich mine of folk-lore still unrevealed, or but half revealed, among our aboriginal tribes."[81] Although the use of 'mine' could be read as a dead metaphor, knowledge of Monroe's familiarity with the writings of Powell (the geologist-turned-anthropologist), the juxtaposition of the metaphor with Monroe's image of Cushing-as-archaeologist, and the fact that she employs the 'mine' metaphor more than once in the same editorial all work to renew the power of the metaphor to influence the reader's understanding of the status of Native American art. A great deal of the value of Native American song and verse for Monroe, as for Skinner, is the link it represents to the ancient and somehow universal impulse toward poetry, along with its availability as a resource to any Euro-American who cares to explore the "mine."

The continuities between ancient and modern poetry are also emphasized by Sandburg in his segment of the "Aboriginal Poetry" editorial. He begins his segment by repeating the criticism of the BAE for their failure to publicize the work of their researchers and goes on to highlight the song-collecting work of Frances Densmore among Chippewa communities. He ends his segment by including four "specimens" of Chippewa songs, introducing them with the facetious remark that "suspicion arises

[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid., 252.
[81] Ibid., 251.

definitely that the Red Man and his children committed direct plagiarisms on the modern imagists and vorticists."[82]

First, it is important to note the significance of the term "specimens" in the context of Native American verse originally collected for the BAE.[83] Although in some cases it could conceivably be used as a simple synonym for "examples," in light of Monroe's geological diction, "specimens" reinforces the idea of Native American art as a set of artifacts mined from the past. It also draws attention to the dual status of these poems as subjects of both artistic and scientific interest.

Sandburg's mention of the Imagist and Vorticist movements echoes Henderson's opinion that some of the lines in Skinner's interpretations of Native American verse bore a marked resemblance to the work of the Imagists. The basis of this resemblance, particularly as it relates to Densmore's work, has clear ties to her own methodology of translating Native American poetry. As Carr describes it, Denmore's practice was to cut all repetition from the songs she collected, then record each individual word of the song in its original language on a single line with literal translations to the right. The resulting translations resembled imagist poems in their minimalism and simplicity, but the form of these translated poems bore very little relation to the form or structure of the originals. In fact, Densmore further reduced the variety and complexity of her source materials by paying for a melody only once, refusing additional verses or versions, and instructing singers to give her only the most interesting passages of words or music.[84] Other translators and interpreters drew on the aesthetics created by Densmore's practices and on Pound's translation strategies in which "poetry which lacked stanzaic form [...] was

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[82] Ibid., 255.
[83] It should be noted that Sandburg's use of "specimens" to describe poems predates Pound's famous use of the word at the beginning of his *ABC of Reading* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1934).
[84] Carr, *Inventing the American Primitive*, 191–192.

identified (however mistakenly) as *vers libre*."[85] The misrecognition of the products of translation as an underlying similarity between disparate so-called primitive poetries (Chinese, Greek, Native American), works to make an intentional process of appropriation appear to be the common-sense result of natural laws of cultural evolution, and allowed the contemporary readers and creators of Native American interpretations to distance themselves from the process of colonization that gave them access to Native American source materials.

Henderson's and Sandburg's insistence upon the resemblance between Native American poetry and Imagism could be read in several different ways. Such a resemblance could serve to legitimate the work of poets writing translations and interpretations of Native American verse because it is as artistically interesting as the most modern work coming from the expatriate writing communities in England. It could also be intended to demonstrate that the modern poetry movements represent a return to the authentic essence of poetry supposedly common to all cultures in all time periods. However, it could equally be read as a veiled insult to the Imagist and Vorticist movements if what they are representing as a new advancement in poetry is in fact merely a return to a more primitive form. The complexity of these contradictory readings relates to the transitional phase *Poetry* was in at the time this issue was published. The magazine and its editors still had a stake in the status of the Imagist movement since their reputation was closely bound up with the emergence of Imagism in 1913. By 1917, however, Imagism was no longer new, and the comparisons between Imagist poetry and Indian poetry served to remind readers of *Poetry's* role in discovering Imagism while at the same time offering the reader a newer and even more authentic genre. The unspoken implication of these comparisons was that if Vorticists and Imagists could begin to access

[85] Carr, 224.

the primal roots of poetry independently, the writers of poetry influenced directly by so-called primitive cultures would be able to access even deeper levels of human nature and the natural world. Authenticity and a return to the primitive were considered by Monroe to be antidotes to degeneration through over-civilization, and poetry inspired by Native American verse had the advantage of a more direct link to an authentic source than was available to expatriates such as Pound.

In the brief final segment of the "Aboriginal Poetry" editorial, Alice Corbin Henderson provides an explanatory note concerning her own poems included in this issue. Unsurprisingly, considering her earlier positive comments about Skinner's "Song of the Young Mother," she describes her own treatment of Native American themes in Imagistic terms: "I have taken the Indian key-note – which is often not more than a phrase, a single image, with variations of musical inflection and repetition – and expanded it very slightly." Native American verse, according to Henderson, "is content to give the image and not to talk about it."[86] Using Imagist terminology and principles to discuss Native American poetry here continues the process of both naturalizing Imagism and making a case for a specifically American version of modern or "New" poetry.

Henderson's segment differs from Monroe's and Sandburg's in the critiques it offers relating to Native American poetry. Rather than criticizing the BAE for burying its researchers' results in dense and obscure government reports, she blames ethnologists for failing to recognize "the literary significance of the Indian songs."[87] She criticizes the non-scientific world for either ignoring or "Europeanizing" Native American verse in terms of "both sentiment and form."[88] "A translation of an Indian song that reads like an

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[86] Monroe, Henderson, and Sandburg, "Aboriginal Poetry," 256.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

Elizabethan lyric," she reminds the reader, "gives little idea of the original."[89] What is at stake for Henderson is both authenticity and a distinctly American aesthetic, as directly opposed to a traditional European aesthetic.

The poets whose work Monroe selected for the "Aboriginal number" included Frank S. Gordon, Henderson, Mary Austin, and Skinner. These writers represented a mix of backgrounds in terms of their experiences and familiarity with Native American communities in either the Southwest or British Columbia. Gordon was a physician from the East Coast who "lived much in our Southwest and in Mexico" before returning to New Jersey to practice medicine.[90] Little biographical information is available concerning him, but according to one of his letters to Monroe, his ambition was to find work as an Indian Reservation Superintendent in order to "get among the Indians."[91] His letters also show, however, that he was ultimately unsuccessful.[92] After his debut in the "Aboriginal number," he was subsequently published in *Poetry* on several occasions. In 1917 Henderson had recently relocated to Santa Fe to receive treatment for tuberculosis at the Sunmount sanitarium. Though she still maintained the title of Associate Editor of *Poetry*, she had been much less active in that post since her departure from Chicago in March 1916.[93] In fact, Henderson ultimately chose to remain permanently in Santa Fe, becoming a central figure in that city's artistic community and turning to Native American folklore as inspiration for her work.[94] Mary Austin was an author and political activist who lived for many years in southern California. She would later move (via

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[89] Ibid.
[90] "Notes," *Poetry* 9, no. 5 (February 1917): 275.
[91] Frank S. Gordon, Letter, "Frank S. Gordon to Harriet Monroe," (undated, c.a. April 1916), [Box 10, Folder 6], Poetry: Magazine of Verse Records, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.
[92] Frank S. Gordon, Letter, "Frank S. Gordon to Harriet Monroe," (April 2, 1917), [Box 10, Folder 6], Poetry: Magazine of Verse Records, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.
[93] Parisi and Young, *Dear Editor*, 188.
[94] Lynn Cline, *Literary Pilgrims: The Santa Fe and Taos Writers' Colonies, 1917-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 21-24.

Europe and New York) to Santa Fe and take up a position in the artistic community there that included Henderson, Witter Bynner, Ivor Winters and others.[95] Skinner was, as previously described, born in Canada where her father worked with the local indigenous peoples, though she later moved to California and then New York.[96]

At the root of the "aboriginal verse" genre was the concept described by Elizabeth Outka as the "commodified authentic," a paradoxical impulse whereby, around the turn of the twentieth century, Anglo-American culture reached simultaneously toward the commercial, technological modern and the traditional, supposedly non-commercial past.[97] In the case of consuming Native American cultures, whether by writing and reading poetry in English based on tribal rituals, or by buying pottery, cloth, or jewelry produced by indigenous artisans, the remove from the commercial present appeared even greater by virtue of the novel unfamiliarity of the cultures producing these materials. Consuming such artifacts constituted an act of extreme modernity because it was meant to serve as an antidote to problems brought on by extreme modernity, just as Schulze describes the "return to nature" impulse as an antidote to the perceived over-civilization of early twentieth-century American life.[98] In the case of poetry, the more closely linked a poet could claim to be to her "aboriginal" source material, in terms of first-hand experience, the more effective her poetry would be as an antidote. The "aboriginal verse" printed in *Poetry* was necessarily in the form of translations, interpretations and borrowings, but the poems in the February 1917 issue were nevertheless written with the aim of providing white readers access to experiences of indigenous communities.

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[95] Susan Goodman and Carl Dawson, *Mary Austin and the American West* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), xiii-xviii.
[96] Jean Barman, "Skinner, Constance Lindsay," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto/ Universite Laval, 2017), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/skinner_constance_lindsay_16E.html.
[97] Elizabeth Outka, *Consuming Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.
[98] Schulze, *The Degenerate Muse*, 23.

Gordon represented for Monroe an ideal example of an American who came into contact with the cultures of North and Central America's indigenous peoples, recognized the value of their arts in contributing to a "truly American" literature, and sought ways to increase his contact with these sources of inspiration by pursuing a career which would allow him to live on a reservation. His attitudes toward Native communities, however, was more aligned with the rhetoric of the BAE than with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as demonstrated by his avowed desire "to do [his] little bit […] for a noble and vanishing race."[99] His sequence of poems entitled "Along the South Star Trail," comprised of "The Tom-Tom," "Sa-a Narai," "On the War Path," and "Night," intentionally emphasises the pathos of the plight of the Native American tribes. His letter to the editor for the March 1917 issue of *Poetry*, which superficially shows an almost obsessive concern with authenticity and the importance of his source material, if read together with his poems from the February 1917 issue, reveals the extent of his Europeanizing impulse. In this letter, Gordon provides the literal translation of the source for his poem "Night." This poem was based on a "corn-grinding song of the pueblos" in which an ear of corn anticipates the coming of rain:

> Lovely, see the cloud, the cloud, appear;
> Lovely, see the rain, the rain, draw near.
> *Who spoke?*
> 'Twas the little corn ear
> High on the tip of the stalk,
> Saying, while it looked at me,
> Talking aloft there,
> "Ah, perchance the floods,
> Hither moving,
> Ah, may the floods come this way –
> Wonder-water !"[100]

[99] "Notes," February 1917, 275.
[100] Frank S. Gordon, "A Word from Dr. Gordon," *Poetry* 9, no. 6 (March 1917): 330.

Gordon's poem echoes the structure of the corn-grinding song, but opens with the word "woeful," rather than the word "lovely," and continues on to make the first stanza a song of mourning, rather than hope:

> Woeful, hear the shadows creep;
> Woeful, hear the tread of sleep.
>   *Who spoke?*
>   It was a lone whip-poor-will
> By the fallen tree, chanting mournfully
> For the dead, or stretching a memory thread
> Between the Now and Other Years;
>   Striking his harp
>   Of tears.[101]

Although we are not given the source material for the other poems in "Along the South Star Trail," Gordon's March 1917 letter to the editor makes his perception of the Native American question clear, and retrospectively directs the reader's interpretation of his other poems. Gordon believes fervently and unselfconsciously in the myth of the noble savage: "I believe in both the rise and fall of man. Primitive races, not having fallen so low as is possible under civilization, may be nearer to art, closer to the universal creative spirit, than we."[102] He goes on to draw a parallel between the discoveries to be made from the study of Native American art and the study of biological specimens: "The greatest discoveries in biology have been made from a study of the lowly forms of life." The "instinctive" genius of the "red man" is, according to Gordon, destined to become "infused" into American art.[103]

By insisting on the declining status of the Native American tribes and on their pathos, including specific references to the massacre at Wounded Knee in "The Tom-Tom" as well as more general recurring references to death, famine and extinction, Gordon constructs a sympathetic account of Native American tribes that are already

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[101] Frank S. Gordon, "Night," *Poetry* 9, no. 5 (February 1917): 229-230.
[102] Gordon, "A Word from Dr. Gordon," 329.
[103] Ibid.

beyond the hope of rescue. The best that can be done for them, according to Gordon's interpretation, is to lament their passing, and to keep their art alive by assimilating it into non-Native American art. This infusion of genius, as he describes it, will restore authentic rhythms to an over-civilized poetic tradition. Both Gordon and Skinner claim to be primarily concerned with recreating the musical rhythms of their source material. As Michael Golston argues in *Rhythm and Race in Modernist Poetry and Science*, the concept of racial rhythms was deeply imbedded in much of the formally experimental poetry of high modernist writers such as Pound and Eliot. According to some schools of anthropology, physiology and psychology, each race, as defined primarily by national borders, possessed a distinct physiological rhythm, based on heart rate, breath, metabolism, and other cyclical biological processes, and the artistic productions of a race, primarily their music, reflected these rhythms. This school of thought also held that listeners of different races would be affected by the same piece of music in different ways, depending on how it corresponded with their own race's rhythms.

The music of Native American tribes was of particular interest to psychologists carrying out studies to demonstrate this theory, including Thaddeus Bolton and Ida M. Hyde. Bolton's 1894 article in the *American Journal of Psychology* entitled "Rhythm" includes a section on "The Effects of Rhythm on Savages and Children" which indirectly explores, among other things, the possibilities for the use of rhythm in social control, and argues that less civilized or developed people (such as children, Native Americans, and the working classes) are more susceptible to the influence of rhythm.[104] Hyde's 1927 study entitled "Effects of Music upon Electro-Cardiograms and Blood Pressure" measured the effects of Native American music upon Euro-American listeners (and vice

[104] Golston, *Rhythm and Race in Modernist Poetry and Science*, 2008, 18.

versa).[105] It seems that what drove Gordon, Skinner, and others to attempt to recreate the rhythms of Native American song and dance in their poems was the belief that rhythms are linked to race and have powerful effects on individuals. Unlike Hyde, who claimed to demonstrate that Native American rhythms in music would over-stimulate white listeners, and particularly white women, the writers of verse based on Native American songs believed that incorporating the rhythms of a more primitive race would allow them to access a universal and fundamentally more real, revitalized form poetry.

In Gordon's poems, the rhythms are established primarily through repetition and refrains, which create cohesion in the absence of either rhyme or recurring images. For example, in "The Tom-Tom," the refrain "Drum-beat, beat of drums,/ Pebble-rattle in the gourd" is repeated at the beginning of each stanza. This repetition re-establishes the sense of rhythm that is frequently difficult to follow through the central sections of each stanza, which contrast long and short lines: "A sacred herd graze on tips of fair fresh flowers/ In garden – Star of Evening's./ A bison drinks mixed all-water, pure/ From Spring; 'tis hers…." [106] Likewise, the end of each stanza consistently returns to a set of four lines following a pattern the includes the word "lullaby" in the first of the set of three lines, a more specific attribution of the lullaby in the second line, and then a pair of apostrophes beginning with "O" and ending with either "mine" or "thine," as in stanza four, "Lul-la-by/ Tirawa's long lullaby…/O blood of mine!/ O child of mine!," or in stanza eight, "Lul-la-by/ The Nation's lullaby…/ O race of mine!/ O brothers mine!"[107] This strategy of repetition and minor variation differs sharply from the strategies employed by Henderson in her poetic interpretations. She favors a stark brevity which is reminiscent of the imagist characteristics she claims to see in tribal songs, and it would

[105] Ibid., 27.
[106] Frank S. Gordon, "The Tom-Tom," *Poetry* 9, no. 5 (February 1917): 224.
[107] Ibid., 223; 224.

seem that Henderson later grew to doubt Gordon's contribution to American poetry, if she ever believed in it to begin with, as she dissuaded Monroe from including him in their 1922 revised and expanded edition of *The New Poetry*, the anthology that Monroe and Henderson coedited.[108] An unsent draft of a letter from Monroe to Gordon shows evidence that she was initially planning to include both "Sa-a Narai" and "On the War Path."[109] Monroe's inclusion of both styles in the aboriginal verse special issue demonstrates the breadth of possibilities for American poets afforded by what Gordon calls "the red man['s]" "genius."[110]

Henderson's own group of poems in the February 1917 issue of *Poetry* represents two different approaches to Native American material. The first poem in her group, "In the Desert," like Fletcher's "Arizona Poems," is written in the first-person voice of an apparently white speaker encountering the desert. In fact, strictly speaking, as she herself retrospectively points out in a letter to Monroe, this poem is not explicitly concerned with Native American material except insofar as it was inspired by the surroundings in which she observed Native American culture directly for the first time.[111] Its inclusion in a special issue devoted to "Aboriginal verse" reinforces Monroe's elision of Native American culture with the American landscape. The remaining poems in her group, however, are direct reworkings of literal translations of authentic Native American songs. These poems strongly resemble the style of short Imagist poetry epitomized by Pound's "In a Station of the Metro," which was itself first published in *Poetry* in April 1913. The

[108] Alice Corbin Henderson, Letter, "Alice Corbin Henderson to Harriet Monroe," (August 28, 1922), [Box 18, Folder 9], Harriet Monroe Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.
[109] Harriet Monroe, Letter, "Harriet Monroe to Alice Corbin Henderson," (April 3, 1922), [Box 18, Folder 11], Harriet Monroe Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.
[110] Gordon, "A Word from Dr. Gordon," 329.
[111] Alice Corbin Henderson, Letter, "Alice Corbin Henderson to Harriet Monroe," (February 6, 1917), [Box 34, Folder 23], Poetry: A Magazine of Verse Records, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

group of "Indian Songs" by Henderson owe their brevity and apparent similarity to imagist poetry primarily to the translations that constitute their source material. As she explains in her section of the "Aboriginal Poetry" editorial, Henderson used Frances Densmore's literal translations of Chippewa (Anishinaabe) songs as the basis for her interpretations.[112] The songs collected by Densmore, along with her musical analysis of them, were published as BAE special bulletins numbers 45 and 53.[113] Generally speaking, Henderson uses the short literal translation of a song provided by Densmore as a starting point, and briefly elaborates on it. For example, Henderson's poem "Fear" opens with the lines: "The odor of death/ In the front of my body."[114] These lines are a direct quote from Densmore's description of a song called "Death Song of Name′binĕs′:" I discern the odor of death/ In the front of my body."[115] The additional material added by Henderson in the second stanza of this short, eight-line poem does not have a direct source in Densmore's translation of "Death Song," however. The speaker of Henderson's poem asks, "Is there any one/ Who would weep for me?/ My wife/ Would weep for me."[116] Densmore describes "Death Song" as originating from the aftermath of a battle between Chippewa and Sioux tribes, composed by a fatally wounded but heroic Chippewa warrior.[117] Henderson's additional material questioning who would mourn the speaker's loss adds an element of the pathos also found in Gordon's poems that would not necessarily be read into the source poem. This additional dimension can be read as an indictment of the indifference of white Americans to the vanishing of indigenous

[112] Monroe, Henderson, and Sandburg, "Aboriginal Poetry," 256.
[113] Frances Densmore, *Smithsonian Institution Bureau of Ethnology Bulletin 45: Chippewa Music* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910); Frances Densmore, *Smithsonian Institution Bureau of Ethnology Bulletin 53: Chippewa Music II* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913).
[114] Alice Corbin Henderson, "Fear," *Poetry* 9, no. 5 (February 1917): 237.
[115] Densmore, *Smithsonian Institution Bureau of Ethnology Bulletin 53: Chippewa Music II*, 114.
[116] Henderson, "Fear," 237.
[117] Densmore, *Smithsonian Institution Bureau of Ethnology Bulletin 53: Chippewa Music II*, 113.

peoples and the loss of their cultural contributions to the American aesthetic, a reading potentially supported by some of Henderson's other choices in her group of poems.

Henderson's poem "Buffalo Dance" also includes a direct quote from one of Densmore's literal translations. The complete translation of "Dancing Song of the Bi′jīkiwûk′" reads: "strike ye/ our land/ with curved horns."[118] Henderson's expansion of this phrase turns it into a refrain which opens and closes her poem (quoted here in full):

> Strike ye our land
> With curved horns!
> Now with cries
> Bending our bodies,
> Breathe fire upon us;
> Now with feet
> Trampling the earth,
> Let your hoofs
> Thunder over us!
> Strike ye our land
> With curved horns![119]

The context of "Dancing Song of the Bi′jīkiwûk′" given by Densmore explains that the song was used in the preparation of "cattle herb medicine" or "bi′jīkiwûk′" which was intended "to 'make men strong', and to be a powerful healing medicine."[120] Densmore again focuses on conflicts between the Chippewa and Sioux when describing the purpose of bi′jīkiwûk′ songs, thus reinforcing the image of the barbaric or savage tribes destructively warring against each other, rather than allowing the strength of the warriors to become a direct threat to white civilization. Henderson uses the word "buffalo" in the title of her poem, but in fact that word is not found in Desmore's description of the series of bi′jīkiwûk′ songs. Elsewhere in *Chippewa Music II*, however, she claims in a footnote that "bi′jīki," obviously the root of "bi′jīkiwûk′," originally meant buffalo, "but later applied to 'cattle'."[121] This apparent avoidance of the term buffalo, and the substitution

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[118] Ibid., 102.
[119] Alice Corbin Henderson, "The Buffalo Dance," *Poetry* 9, no. 5 (February 1917): 235–36.
[120] Densmore, *Smithsonian Institution Bureau of Ethnology Bulletin 53: Chippewa Music II*, 99.
[121] Ibid., 145.

of the more benign and agrarian "cattle" may have had a political motivation, rather than a purely linguistic one, though it is difficult to say whether it originated with Densmore or her interviewees. Equally, Henderson's choice to revert to the old meaning of "buffalo" is significant, assuming she had any awareness of its context within the Ghost Dance religion.

The Ghost Dance religion was a phenomenon of the 1880s and '90s, and was adopted by many tribes across the Midwest and Southwest.[122] It was structured around a central messiah figure, and promised an end to white expansion and the suffering that accompanied it, as well as reunion with the spirits of the dead. Given the public controversy surrounding what was seen by many as the unwarranted massacre that occurred at Wounded Knee, any invocation of its symbolism in poetry would have inherent political implications. James Mooney published an extensive report on the history, beliefs, and practices of the Ghost Dance across several tribes in the *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*. Mooney explains in an appendix to his report detailing some of the songs associated with the Ghost Dance that "the buffalo was to the nomad hunters of the plains what corn was to the more sedentary tribes of the east and south – the living, visible symbol of their support and existence; the greatest gift of a higher being to his children."[123] This note accompanies a short song on the subject of a buffalo bull which will be used to "make medicine." Buffalo hair, meat, and bone played important roles in many sacred ceremonies of the Ghost Dance religion, and Mooney explicitly sates that, "on the battlefield of Wounded Knee I have seen buffalo skulls and plates of dried meat placed at the head of the graves."[124]

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[122] James Mooney, "The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890," in *The Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution: 1892-93, Part II*, by John Wesley Powell (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), 641-1136.
[123] Ibid., 980.
[124] Ibid.

The status of the buffalo as a symbol of the sacred and of the drastic changes to traditional ways of life, along with the association with the battle of Wounded Knee, place "The Buffalo Dance" in the context of decisions and policies of the U.S. government that resulted in violence and the destruction of the natural landscape. While Henderson's poem is too late to be considered a direct protest against the Wounded Knee massacre, the timing of its publication, shortly before U.S. entry into World War I, gives it a different political significance. As argued previously in this chapter, Monroe was openly opposed to the violence of the war in Europe. In early 1917, before the contents of the Zimmerman telegram were made known by the British, American public opinion was still strongly divided as to whether the U.S. should become involved in the war. I would argue that the context of "The Buffalo Dance" in an issue of *Poetry* devoted to uniquely American creative resources and promoting the use of these resources to create a uniquely American poetry in contrast to the European tradition transform a poem about loss and the spread of civilization into a warning against governmentally sanctioned violence and an indictment of a government that would waste American lives in an essentially European conflict. The use of the verbs "trampling," "thunder," and "strike" act as a call for the effacement of European influence on American soil in favor of a return to American wilderness symbolized by the buffalo.

Although the buffalo could serve as a powerful symbol of resistance for Henderson, for the Anishinaabe who supplied Densmore with information about their songs, it would be impolitic to dwell too strongly on an animal associated with the religion that sparked one of the most brutal assaults perpetrated by government officials against a tribal group. After the Wounded Knee massacre, practice of the Ghost Dance religion persisted, but never openly. The Chippewa are not mentioned in Mooney's report, but due to their contact with the Sioux it is difficult to say whether the Chippewa

tribe in which the songs collected by Densmore originated embraced the Ghost Dance. Even if Densmore's sources did directly link some of their songs with buffalo medicine, it would not necessarily have served her career with the BAE well to emphasize that element either. Mooney's report on the Ghost Dance religion had been strongly criticized by Powell because it departed from the accepted evolutionary model of anthropology embraced by Powell and the BAE as an institution.

Rather than framing the religion in terms of savagery versus civilization, Mooney draws parallels between the Ghost Dance and Christianity, including the southern revival movements of the early nineteenth century: "About the year 1800 an epidemic of religious frenzy, known as the Kentucky Revival, broke out in Kentucky and Tennessee, chiefly among the Methodists and Baptists, with accompaniments that far surpassed the wildest excesses of the Ghost dance."[125] In Powell's introduction to the fourteenth annual BAE report, he specifically warns readers against taking this aspect of Mooney's work seriously.[126] As opposed to Mooney's radicalism, Densmore's BAE work focused primarily on the accepted official aims of that institution: collection and preservation. Her analysis is almost entirely restricted to patterns in the musical features of the songs, which she recorded using phonographic technologies. The work of collection and preservation was valued by writers like Henderson, Monroe, and Sandburg, who expressed no strong opinions about anthropological methodologies. As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, evolutionary models of anthropology enabled the kinds of thinking demonstrated by poets who used Native American culture as a mine of source material. Henderson's invocation of Ghost Dance symbolism served her own political ends rather than making a statement about contemporary anthropology.

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[125] Ibid., 942.
[126] Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture*, 2010, 89.

In contrast to the poems that precede them in the February 1917 special issue, the two poems by Mary Austin immediately stand out as the only ones in which the individual tribe from which the source material was obtained is prominently identified. Gordon's poetry is identified as coming from tribes in the Southwest, and Skinner includes some geographical and linguistic footnotes with her poems, but only Austin provides the names of the relevant tribes. Of all of the poets represented in this issue, Austin was also the most insistent on her own authority to describe and analyze Native American verse, and this level of specificity in attribution plays a role in establishing this authority. Although these visible attributions mark a greater attention to cultural specificities between groups of indigenous Americans than that displayed by Skinner, Gordon, and Henderson, Austin's decision to include them has arguably more to do with bolstering her own claims to specialist understanding than with promoting a framework for understanding Native American cultures that breaks from the dominant evolutionary anthropological model that clearly underpins the wilderness modernity aesthetic.

Austin moved to California from Illinois in 1880 at the age of twenty, where she eventually began forging relationships with local tribe members.[127] This was a habit she continued in each of the communities she became a part of throughout her years in the West. According to her recent biographers, Susan Goodman and Carl Dawson, Austin rejected the kind of knowledge collected by government agencies: "within a year or two, few beside Mary—and almost never, in her mind, the Bureau of Indian Affairs—knew the customs and characteristics of California's Indians: how they had lived and how they needed to live."[128] While in California, she developed a personal friendship with Charles Fletcher Lummis, with whom she frequently discussed her writing, and who acted as a

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[127] Susan Goodman and Carl Dawson, *Mary Austin and the American West* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 11–12.
[128] Ibid., 11.

mentor (though their relationship also included a degree of rivalry).[129] By the 1910s she had published several books about the West and its people, including her best-known, *The Land of Little Rain* (1903), and was gaining a reputation as both an expert on the West and something of a political radical through her lectures on Native American culture, regional writing, and women's rights.[130] Her rejection of BAE anthropology and the BIA policies which were to some extent enabled by it was largely superficial, however, as demonstrated by an examination of the collection of "re-expressions" of "Amerindian songs" she went on to publish in 1923, followed by an expanded edition in 1930.[131]

In the introduction to *The American Rhythm*, Austin describes a vision for American poetry that very much parallels Monroe's. Writing in 1923, she retrospectively identifies and characterizes the emergence of a distinctively American poetic aesthetic:

> Almost anybody might have predicted the rise of a new verse form in America. This was implicit in the necessity of restating the national consciousness in terms of the burgeoning American outlook; and without any knowledge of the rhythms in which the land had already expressed itself, two or three things might have been confidently prophesised about it. It would be a form as lacking in tradition as the American experiment itself. It would be democratic [...]. Anybody could use it, as anybody always has been able to use native verse form freely. Finally, it would be a statement of life as for the first two or three hundred years, life presented itself on the western continent, in terms of things lived through rather than observed or studied.[132]

Her description of Native American verse as "the rhythms in which the land had already expressed itself" demonstrates that, like Monroe, Austin saw the poetic traditions of the various indigenous peoples of North America as a type of natural resource linked to the land first and foremost. Also like Monroe, Austin felt it self-evident that authentically American poetry would represent a clear break from the European poetic tradition.

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[129] Ibid., 45.
[130] Ibid., 122.
[131] Mary Hunter Austin, *The American Rhythm: Studies and Reexpressions of Amerindian Songs*, 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1930).
[132] Ibid., 9-10.

Throughout her introduction to *The American Rhythm*, Austin frequently privileges experience over observation and imitation, describing the English poetic tradition as "derived" from Greek, Roman, and Hebrew influences that were not "indigenous" to English poets, and "genetic only as the result of long selection." The selection process warped poetry into "the instrument of a selected class, the rhythms of privilege."[133] The highest forms of poetry must emerge from "inherited" or "instinctive" rhythms, as opposed to mere "imitation:" "Imitation plays its part, but what better evidence could there be of the failure of the imitated gesture to evoke a high type of poetic realization than the kind of verse that has been evoked in America by those temples of Imitation, the Universities? […] True evocation comes from the autonomic centers of *experience* [original italics]."[134] The lack of a pre-existing American tradition was an opportunity to develop a poetic form based on direct and new experiences of a landscape as yet unshaped by civilization. Native American poetry, for Austin, both suggested the outlines of what this poetry might become and served as a stimulus or a form of direct experience of the American landscape for white poets.

Austin's relationship to the science of anthropology was complex. Her analytical and critical writings show a high degree of preoccupation with the scientific status of her literary work. When discussing rhythm, she defines the poetic impulse on a physical basis as "the orchestration of organic rhythms under the influence of associated motor and emotional impulses, recapitulated from generation to generation."[135] In explaining the inherited or instinctual nature of rhythm, she turns to specialist terms from the psychology of rhythm such as "sequential stimuli," "motor habits," and "ego urge," along with references to the mechanist/vitalist debate: "even the mechanists admit the passing

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[133] Ibid., 10-11.
[134] Ibid., 6-7.
[135] Ibid., 8.

with the germ plasm of potentialities for all the organic rhythms on which anything that we can reasonably call a rhythmic sense is founded."[136] She later builds on this apparent knowledge of psychology to begin to undermine the authority of scientists as compared to her own. In her discussion of what she calls "the evolution of tribal poetics", she regrets that she will not be able to "put succinctly" all that she as "been able to observe" until "the psychologists have provided me with a better concept of group mindedness and popularized a terminology under which its various states can be handled."[137] Next to the word "psychologists" in that sentence is a footnote indicator, placed there by Austin, not her editor. The footnote reads:

> I shall probably not wait much longer. […] Somebody, I say, must make a clean guess at these things before we can prove whether they are true, and since the function of Science is to undertake vicariously for Society the supreme abnegation of all guessing, it might as well be I as anybody who makes the first throw."[138]

Austin criticizes the conservative tendencies of science that hold back discovery, and places herself as equally or better qualified to blaze a new trail based on direct experience where the analytical scientists hesitate to go.

Her attitude toward anthropologists is similar. She calls their reliability into question and positions herself as better qualified, due to her instinctive and first-hand experience, to draw conclusions about Native American poetry. In the text of her introduction to *The American Rhythm*, she frequently refers to her own experiences in ways that indirectly lead the reader to assume that these are the source of her knowledge of Native American cultures. In addition to passing mentions meant to give the impression of the breadth and depth of her experiences such as "one winter at Tesuque" where she saw a performance of the "Eagle dancers" that was even more intricate than

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[136] Ibid., 6-7.
[137] Ibid., 19.
[138] Ibid., 166-168.

usual, or "after twenty years' observation, it remained for Ovington Colbert, a Chickasaw, to point out to me […]," or "sitting on the sunny side of the wikiup, considering with the elders of Saharewite how it came to be called the Place-where-they-gave-him-mush-that-was-afraid, I thought of […]," she also provides something of a litany of the tribes she has come in contact with: "I began by knowing a remnant of the vanished Mission San Gabriel group, then Yokuts, Paiutes, Washoes, Utes, Shoshones, and later enlarged my borders to include some acquaintance with Mojaves, Pimas, Papagoes, Mescalero Apaches, Tewas, Taos, and an occasional individual Plainsman."[139] Her narrative style and choice of personal detail create the impression that she has discovered and understood for herself first-hand all of the details of Native American culture she draws on to build up her arguments about rhythm and the nature of poetry. Yet close attention to the footnotes included as the Appendix to *the American Rhythm* reveals her indebtedness to the same sources mentioned by Monroe, Henderson, and Sandburg: Densmore, Cushing, Mooney, and other BAE anthropologists.[140]

Although she may have mistrusted them, particularly after having to publicly retract a statement she made based on a mistake in the work of professor of ethnology Daniel Brinton, Austin relied on the translation work of professional anthropologists almost as heavily as did Henderson. Despite the impression she creates of her vast and intimate knowledge of a range of tribes, she was unable to translate the languages herself. Carr argues convincingly that Austin's interpretation of Native American poetry, regardless of specific tribal origin, stems from her understanding of Paiute religion:

> All the later points she makes about Indian poetry are bound up in this conception of their inner consciousness; the centrality of rhythm whereby the action of the body shapes consciousness, the imitation of natural forms, the abandonment of intellectualised creativity, creation from what she calls the 'deep self'.[141]

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[139] Ibid., 29; 30; 39; 38.
[140] Ibid., 170; 171; 173; 174.
[141] Carr, *Inventing the American Primitive*, 218.

Carr also highlights the connections Austin drew between her status as a woman artist and her openness to the shapes and rhythms of the land, in contrast to, for example, Whitman's "clumsy masculine assault on the spirit of the American continent."[142] Austin's belief in her carefully cultivated feminine attunement to the Native American spirit allowed her to see her inability to translate tribal languages as an opportunity to prove the authenticity of her understanding, rather than as a detriment to interpreting Native American poetry:

> It was when I discovered that I could listen to aboriginal verses on the phonograph in unidentified Amerindian languages, and securely refer them by their dominant rhythms to the plains, the deserts and woodlands that had produced them, that I awoke to the relationships that must necessarily exist between aboriginal and later American forms.[143]

Although the evolutionary model of anthropology grouped tribes based on their relative stages of development while Austin groups them by geographical landscape, the tendency to blur the lines of cultural specificity and to view indigenous Americans as subject primarily to environmental, rather than social or economic forces, shows the degree to which late nineteenth-century institutional anthropological paradigms shaped Austin's thinking. Her self-proclaimed sensitivity to the interiority of Native Americans and their poetry is undercut by her willingness to draw generalized conclusions from aggregated observations of distinct tribes just as the pre-Boasian anthropologists did.

Austin's "Prayer to the Mountain Spirit" stands apart from others in the February 1917 special issue of *Poetry* in that, in addition to its clear attribution to the Navajo tribe, it expresses pride as opposed to pathos. Whereas nearly all of Gordon's poems, for example, aim to provoke sympathy for the tragic but inevitable destruction of the primitive tribes, "Prayer to the Mountain Spirit" is a call for health and strength,

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[142] Carr, 220.
[143] Ibid., 19.

implicitly presenting its speaker as a source of eugenic revitalization. In Gordon's "The Tom-Tom," the speaker laments:

> Drum-beat, beat of drums—
> By Wounded Knee ye buried them, buried them—
> Red men's flesh, their bones …
> By Wounded Knee we buried them, buried them.
> The songs we sung, the dreams …[144]

Given a different theoretical framework, the subject matter of the poem could potentially have inspired a call to political action in favor of Native American land rights or freedoms, but instead this poem is merely sentimental; expressing sadness at the plight of the tribes, yet passively accepting that plight as hopeless.

In "Prayer to the Mountain Spirit," the young male speaker entreats his deity, a manifestation of the magnificent natural landscape, to bestow upon him all of the qualities early twentieth-century eugenicists would find desirable: "cleanness," "straightness," "braveness," and "staunchness."[145] He does not inspire pathos, but hope and optimism. In Austin's interpretation of this prayer from the Navajo tribe, the implication is not that the young man lacks the qualities he seeks, but that he is constantly renewing them through his communion with the spirits of nature. The second stanza of the poem, in particular, is an appeal for renewal:

> Hear a prayer for cleanness.
> Keeper of the strong rain
> Drumming on the mountain,
> Lord of the small rain
> That restores the earth in newness,
> Keeper of the clean rain,
> Hear a prayer for wholeness.[146]

[144] Gordon, "The Tom-Tom," 222.
[145] Mary Hunter Austin, "Prayer to the Mountain Spirit," *Poetry* 9, no. 5 (February 1917): 240-41.
[146] Ibid., 240.

Through her focus on "restor[ation]," "wholeness," and "newness," Austin's poem demonstrates a concern, not with the sad plight of the tribes, but with their perceived vital and active connection to the natural world.

The translation of the Navajo song that appears to have been Austin's source material also focuses on health and renewal, but Austin makes several significant changes that foreground her own preoccupations with American poetry and identity. "Prayer to Dsilyʹ Neyáni," collected and translated by BAE ethnologist Washington Matthews, was published in the BAE annual report for 1883-1884. The two poems share their first several opening lines, though in a slightly different order and with slightly different lineation. They are also both connected with the Navajo ritual known as the Mountain ceremony. The "free translation" of "Prayer to Dsilyʹ Neyáni" provided by Matthews begins:

> Reared Within the Mountains!
> Lord of the Mountains!
> Young Man!
> Chieftain!
> I have made your sacrifice.[147]

The additional literal translation (distinct from the free translation) that accompanies the phonetic notation of the song in its original language notes that "Reared within the Mountains" is the name of the prophet to whom the prayer is addressed.[148] The contextual information Matthews provides also indicates that the prayer as he heard it was performed by a woman who was the intended "patient" of what Matthews describes as a medicine ceremony.[149] Conversely, in Austin's interpretation, the singer is presumably a "young man:"

> Lord of the Mountain,

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[147] Washington Matthews, "The Mountain Chant: A Navajo Ceremony," in *The Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution: 1883-84*, by John Wesley Powell (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887), 420.
[148] Ibid., 465.
[149] Ibid., 418-420.

> Reared within the Mountain,
> Young Man, Chieftain,
> Hear a young man's prayer![150]

The shifts in both speaker and addressee that occur between the source material and Austin's poem reveal Austin's underlying beliefs about the value of the wilderness and of indigenous art. In "Prayer to Dsily′ Neyáni," we can see similarities between Navajo religious practices and European monotheistic religions: it is simply a prayer to a prophet or saint to cure a sickness or grant a request. In Austin's poem, we see an enactment of the idealized and eugenic communion with nature that Austin and Monroe placed at the center of their visions for American poetic identity. The change of "sacrifice" into "prayer" in the first stanza (quoted above) contributes to her goal of showing the potential for contact with the American wilderness to strengthen the nation naturally and spontaneously, rather than requiring Americans to give up something valuable in exchange for such strength as implied by the word "sacrifice." In the source material, the singer asks the prophet in a repetitive litany to "restore" and "make beautiful" her mind, her body, her words, and the world around her. Throughout Austin's poem, she invokes various aspects of the natural environment to provide several different desirable attributes of physical health and prowess. Although repetition is present in Austin's poem, it is greatly reduced compared to the source, and the requests are more specific: "braveness," "staunchness," "fleetness," "wholeness," and "straightness." Austin's imagined speaker demands a physically and morally robust form of health that conforms to European ideals, whereas in the source poem the request for beauty and restoration is less rigid and allows for a broad range of interpretation of what is "beautiful."

In spite of her stated desire to break from the European poetic tradition, some of the alterations she chooses to make as compared to her source material are reminiscent

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[150] Austin, "Prayer to the Mountain Spirit," 240.

of traditional English verse. The phrase "small rain" quoted above has no source in the song collected by Matthews, but calls to mind "O Western Wind," or "The Lover in Winter Plaineth for the Spring," as it is titled in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*:

> O Western wind, when wilt thou blow
> That the small rain down can rain?
> Christ, that my love were in my arms
> And I in my bed again![151]

Both poems are expressions of longing for renewal, insofar as the speaker of "O Western Wind" awaits the return of spring, and both call on personifications of the natural world. Furthermore, both poems rely on a metrical structure of four strong beats per line with variable numbers of un-stressed syllables. The reference may be coincidental, showing Austin's unconscious connection to the tradition she is attempting to leave behind. More likely, however, Austin may include this distinctive phrase as an attempt to demonstrate the inherent similarities between an anonymous English poem whose origins are lost to time and a song of the Navajo with a similarly mysterious origin, suggesting a universal element present in poetry that has not suffered the effects of over-civilization. Regardless of Austin's precise intentions in "Prayer to the Mountain Spirit," it is clear that her re-interpretation of her Navajo material is filtered through both BAE anthropology and her own preoccupations with defining white American identity.

The February 1917 special issue of *Poetry* is integral to understanding Monroe's project of shaping the development of American poetry. While each of the poets represented brought their own preoccupations and preferences, there are several recurring threads that emerge, each of which plays a role in Monroe's overarching vision. Firstly, there were official scientific documents available to authorize the material presented. Second, each poet could claim at least some first-hand contact with the wild American

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[151] Arthur Quiller-Couch, ed., *The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 53.

landscape. Third, Native American verse was a valuable means of accessing a link with nature that had the power to revitalize American poetry and the American people, and to allow America to stand apart from a violent and decaying Europe, crumbling under the weight of over-civilization. Finally, Native American material was a threatened resource as civilization inevitably encroached on the wilderness.

The Role of Native American Verse in the Formation American Identity

As the war in Europe became increasingly bloody, and particularly after the United States entered the conflict directly, the desire to create an American artistic identity which owed nothing to Europe became increasingly apparent in the pages of *Poetry*. The adoption of Native American culture as Euro-American heritage is perhaps at its most crass and blatant in the opening poem of Vachel Lindsay's group "For America at War" in the July 1917 issue of *Poetry*. This poem, which also opens the issue, is entitled "Our Mother, Pocahontas." Lindsay is not translating or interpreting Native American poetry, but rather takes an extremely romanticized image of the historical figure as his subject. The first of the poem's three parts is written in rhyming couplets of predominantly either seven-syllable lines consisting of a dactyl an iamb and a pyrrhic, or eight-syllable lines with the pattern: iamb, pyrrhic, iamb, pyrrhic. These patterns develop into the effect of the extremely clichéd drum beat used by Longfellow in *The Song of Hiawatha*, consisting of one accented beat followed by three unaccented ones: "She dreamed of sons like Powhatan/ And through her blood the lightning ran."[152] The refrain which recurs in all three sections of the poem repeats the title's assertion of a familial bond: "In the springtime,/ In Virginia,/ Our mother, Pocahontas."

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[152] Vachel Lindsay, "Our Mother Pocahontas," *Poetry* 10, no. 4 (July 1917): 170.

Although these structural features tend to give the poem a probably unintentional childish, sing-song effect, in addition to the now-objectionable racial stereotyping of the meter of part one, it is the content of the poem that does most to reveal the poet's lack of awareness of real Native American communities and the contemporary injustices inflicted on them by the European-Americans he claims to speak for. The first segment of the poem describes the untamed, animalistic beauty of Pocahontas, with a strong emphasis on her innate connection to the land. It then introduces the figure of John Rolfe, who came to the American colonies in order to grow and export a lucrative variety of tobacco, and eventually married Pocahontas. Lindsay uses this marriage as a crossroads or point of contact between the European and Native American traditions, providing an opportunity for (European) Americans to choose which past, and thus which identity and which future, belongs to them:

> John Rolfe is not our ancestor—
> We rise from out the soul of her
> Held in native wonderland
> While the sun's rays kissed her hand.[153]

In these lines, it is the land that holds Pocahontas, and the sun which kisses her, implying that her offspring are the children of the land far more so than they are the children of a European father. The third and final segment of the poem renews this assertion:

> We here renounce our Saxon blood.
> Tomorrow's hopes, an April flood,
> Come roaring in. The newest race
> Is born of her resilient grace.
> […]
> She sings of lilacs, maples, wheat;
> Her own soil sings beneath her feet.[154]

It is connection to, and by extension, ownership of the land that serves as the defining feature of Americans. According to the logic of the poem, Pocahontas was American

[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., 172.

because she was connected to the land, and the white Americans' ownership of the land has transferred the native quality of Americanness to them in a more potent and authentic sense than mere biological heredity. Thus white Americans are a new and distinct race, superseding both the European races and, it goes without saying, the vanishing race of Native Americans.

The nationalism of "Our Mother Pocahontas" and of the other poems in "For America at War" is interestingly undercut by the poem by Henderson that directly follows them in the July 1917 issue. The title, "The Airbirds Go Swiftly By," creates the expectation that the poem will be a celebration of the technological prowess of America's military. However, the reader is encouraged to read swiftness in terms of both speed and ephemerality. The closing lines, "One man's soul is as great as the whole,/ And no times greater than Time," deflate the sense of historical importance usually accorded to wartime, and remind the reader of the myriad individual tragedies masked by the scale of a world war. The juxtaposition of Lindsay's American exceptionalism and Henderson's bleak depiction of war functions to once again create a sense of distance between America and the European nations which initiated the war, in spite of the government's decision to intervene on the side of the Britain, France, and Russia.

Although "Our Mother Pocahontas" has no direct links to contemporary anthropological thought (despite its superficially Native American subject) this issue of *Poetry* also contains an editorial by Vaughan MacCaughey entitled "Nature Themes in Ancient Hawaiian Poetry" which aids the reader in drawing conclusions about America's identity as independent from Europe. This review directly follows Monroe's monthly editorial, which in this case discusses the impossibility of producing masterpieces in the form of "war poems" on demand.[155] MacCaughey's editorial uses translations of

[155] Harriet Monroe, "Will Art Happen?," *Poetry* 10, no. 4 (July 1917): 203-5.

Hawaiian poetry by Nathaniel Emerson to comment on the intimate connection of this poetry to the Hawaiian landscape. Emerson was a physician by trade, but his book, *The Unwritten Literature of Hawaii*, from which MacCaughey took his translations, was published by the BAE in 1909.

MacCaughey's focus on natural imagery is consistent with Cushing's theory, broadly influenced by E.B. Tylor and by the concept of *Kultur* in German ethnology, concerning the centrality of a people's "original environment" in forming the defining elements of their culture and "model of sociocultural space."[156] It also serves as a link to "Our Mother Pocahontas," which insists on the compelling influence of the American land on its inhabitants, both native and European. The decision to include "Nature Themes in Ancient Hawaiian Poetry" in this issue points to the persistent link, at least in Monroe's mind, between the war in Europe and the urge to study non-European cultures. Once again Monroe demonstrates her desire to discover a viable and authentic alternative to the mechanized violence of Europe.

The pattern of juxtaposing war-related content with Native American (as well as Midwestern) content continued with similar effect throughout the remainder of the war. Although the November 1918 issue would obviously have been composed and printed before the armistice, it serendipitously includes a Monroe editorial on the subject of the magazine's role and identity that serves as a useful milestone or turning point in the treatment of Native American material in the magazine. In "A Century in Illinois," Monroe characteristically enumerates the many artistic, cultural, and industrial achievements associated with Chicago in order to support her assertion that the city represents "the inmost heart of the nation."[157] She rejects the artistic "colonialism that

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[156] Fowler, *A Laboratory for Anthropology*, 156.
[157] Harriet Monroe, "A Century in Illinois," *Poetry* 13, no. 2 (November 1918): 92.

leans on London, Paris, New York, thus bidding our artists to imitate, not create," arguing that her magazine strives to nurture a spirit of independence in American poets:

> When *Poetry* began, for example, two courses were open to it: it could have become what *The Little Review* is now, the organ of a choice little London group of superintellectualized ultimates and expatriates; or, as I hope it has become, the organ of a higher, more conscious, concentrated and independent imaginative life in this country. […] If *Poetry* can help to develop and make articulate the imaginative life of the nation – as when, for example, it wrings out of a poet's over-modest reluctance the beautiful Chippewa monologues in the present number– then its editors will be more proud than of having introduced the imagists, important as that episode was in our earliest history and the literary history of our period.[158]

Here Monroe explicitly positions the circle of poets around Ezra Pound (including the earliest phase of Imagism) as un-American expatriates in contrast to the genuinely American poets who rely on regional and national inspiration (including Native American poetry). This dichotomy was likely partially motivated by Pound's perceived defection from *Poetry* to *The Little Review* in mid-1917, but it is consistent with the publishing patterns of the magazine over the entire course of the First World War.[159] Monroe's statement also reintroduces the frequent comparisons of Native American poetry to Imagism; in this case privileging Lew Sarett's translations as more important to American poetry than H.D.'s *Sea Garden* poems.

The introduction of Sarett's poetry into the magazine marks a turning point in the attitude toward Native American verse in *Poetry* because of the increased insistence on the specificity of the particular Native American community from which Sarett took his source material. In order to grasp the significance of this shift, it is helpful at this point to apply a Bourdieusian analysis of Monroe's goals and strategies. Bourdieu describes poetry from the mid-nineteenth century into the twentieth century as having a high degree of autonomy from the field of both power and economy, and therefore having a highly

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[158] Ibid., 92-94.

[159] Parisi and Young, *Dear Editor*, 202–203.

polarized internal economy in which value external to the field is likely to detract from value within the field.[160] As referenced earlier in this chapter, Monroe and Pound differed in their opinions concerning the importance of an audience for poetry.[161] Pound's view, that poetry should be written without any regard for the existence of an appreciative audience, corresponds with the "pole of pure production" within the literary field and is associated with high cultural capital.[162] Monroe is attempting to take a position that is not represented in Bourdieu's account of the field of literary production: she strives to generate both an avant-garde poetry, in the sense of constituting a radical break from the poetry of previous generations, and at the same time a broad audience for that poetry, beyond the restricted audience of fellow poet-competitors normally available to the avant-garde in Bourdieu's analysis. By admitting her intention of broadening her audience, she leaves her magazine open to being criticized as merely "bourgeois." She must therefore maximize the magazine's symbolic capital in other ways. According to Bourdieu's framework, poetry based on a poet's direct experience would be considered to generate more symbolic capital within the field of cultural production than poetry that was clearly indebted to other fields for its value. If, as Bourdieu argues, cultural capital in a literary field is accrued in an inverse proportion from an artist's relationship to the fields of power, business, and institutionalized cultural authority, then a poem that owes nothing to the mediation of scholars, scientists, and translators would appear to have greater value in the economy of the literary field than poems which foregrounded their dependence on government science, or even heavily classical poems such as H.D.'s which could only be written by a poet who was deeply enmeshed in the products of

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[160] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 61; 114-115.
[161] Ezra Pound, "The Audience I," *Poetry* 5, no. 1 (October 1914): 29-30; Monroe, "The Audience II."
[162] Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 142.

institutionalized cultural authority.[163] The "Century in Illinois" editorial shows Monroe fighting for authority over the future course of American poetry, a fight which requires the cultural capital specific to the field of poetic production. It is natural that the balanced tensions between the value of scientific capital and the value of cultural capital would alter to favor cultural capital at this point in the history of the magazine.

One aspect of Monroe's efforts to alter the balance within *Poetry* between scientific authority and cultural or poetic authority included a change in emphasis from accessing Native American materials through anthropological publications to accessing these materials in direct, personal ways. One strategy for achieving this goal was placing a greater emphasis on the particularity of source materials. In her editorial Monroe uses the name of the Chippewa tribe where in past issues she was more likely to use terms such as "aboriginal" or "Indian."[164] In the letter from Sarett included in the "Correspondence" section of the magazine, he is deeply concerned with impressing on Monroe his attempts at maintaining the authenticity of his work and, indirectly, the general reader: "In its basic fidelity to Chippewa concepts and images, to Chippewa language and diction, to Chippewa moods and emotional reactions, to Chippewa singing and the monotonous dancing rhythms—in these respects the poem is as perfect as I can make it."[165] Earlier issues had also included letters from the authors of Native American-inspired poems containing explanatory notes about the customs the poems relate to, but Sarett's intense repetition of "Chippewa" and references to personal experiences with the tribe make the particularity of the Chippewa community an unavoidable feature of the poems (assuming, of course, that the reader bothers to read the correspondence section). By comparison, in the notes accompanying the June 1918 issue, which includes another

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[163] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, 39.
[164] Monroe, "A Century in Illinois," 93-94.
[165] Lew Sarett, "A Word from Mr. Sarett," *Poetry* 13, no. 2 (November 1918): 107.

group of Native American-inspired poems by Gordon, the name of a tribe (Navajo) is used only once, with more general words like "tribal," "aboriginal," and "Indian" in place of acknowledgements of debts to individual tribes.[166]

The shift toward a greater awareness of the distinctions between the cultures of regional or tribal groups is echoed in the previously-mentioned anthology of Native American poetry edited by George W. Cronyn and published in 1918. Poems from the February 1917 special issue and other issues of *Poetry* appear alongside poems first published in popular magazines such as *McClure's*, *Everybody's*, and *Scribner's*, as well as specialist publications such as the *Journal of American Folklore*, the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, and the annual reports of the BAE. Well-known names from the field of anthropology such as Franz Boas, and from the field of literature such as Carl Sandburg appear with the names of figures such as Austin who are less easily categorized due to their status as untrained amateurs. The arrangement of the poems is significant, however, because they are grouped first according to their status as either "translations" or "interpretations," and the translations are then arranged by geographical region, rather than by author. Cronyn chose this structure specifically in order to highlight the contrasts between these "cultural divisions."[167] Once again it is possible to distinguish a shift toward particularity and away from the kinds of aggregate ways of thinking about indigenous communities encouraged by cultural evolutionary models.

Such shifts, however, were selectively applied, and were motivated primarily by concerns about the cultural authority of the poets, critics, and editors of the Indian Poetry genre rather than by an awareness of the politics of inequality manifested in cultural appropriation, that is, actively benefitting from borrowing certain cultural artifacts taken

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[166] "Notes," *Poetry* 12, no. 3 (June 1918): 173.

[167] Cronyn, *The Path on the Rainbow, an Anthology of Songs and Chants from the Indians of North America*, ix.

from an oppressed culture without allowing the source culture to benefit in any way from that borrowing. By increasing the attention given to the particularity of source material, editors like Monroe and Cronyn were indirectly asserting their own knowledge and mastery of Indian cultures, cutting out the middle-man of anthropological sources and scientific authority. Regardless of this strategic editorial move, Monroe, Henderson, and the poets of the Indian poetry genre as represented in the pages of *Poetry* remained indebted to the anthropological frameworks at the core of their understandings of indigenous cultures: that those cultures were more primitive than European cultures and thus had more direct instinctual connections with the natural world, that they were ultimately doomed to be overtaken by civilization, and that as part of the natural landscape, their cultural artifacts could be collected, curated, and appropriated in ways similar to the collection and use of other natural resources.

An example taken from Henderson's critical writing about the Indian poetry genre illustrates the importance of personalizing and particularizing Native American sources in elevating the cultural status of the genre by effacing its debt to the authority of scientific sources. In her review of the anthology for the April 1919 issue of *Poetry*, she emphasizes the importance of appreciating Native American poetry in its own right as poetry. She approves of the decision to group the poems regionally, and goes on to characterize the broad stylistic differences between the poetry of the various regions. She also explicitly rejects the vague and stereotyped language used in public discussions of Native Americans and their art: "One thing is sure: whatever else may be accomplished by this book, we must discard our nursery-period Fenimore-Cooper-Hiawatha, cigar-store-Indian impression of the Indian. He is not a bit like our naïve conception of him."[168] She objects to the term "aboriginal" as "colorless and far-distant-sounding," and

[168] Alice Corbin Henderson, "Poetry of the North-American Indian," *Poetry* 14, no. 1 (April 1919): 46.

similarly criticizes the idea of the vanishing-race as masking the reality that "the American Indian is a contemporary of ours," and that "his poetry is very much of our time."[169] These statements foreground the superior understanding that poets have of Indian cultures, implying that the poetry collection will do more than anthropology has done in educating the public on the true nature of Indian cultures.

These observations on the part of Henderson provide a new perspective on the frequent comparisons made between Native American poetry and Imagism. The early instances of this comparison imply that Imagism has its roots in the essence of the ancient and primitive poetic instinct, granting it an authenticity perceived to be lacking in nineteenth-century poetry. When recontextualized, such a comparison implies, at least for Henderson, that Native American poetry and the new forms of American poetry (which she tellingly does not specifically label as Imagist here) are both responses to the American landscape, and, crucially, both traditions should be read as poetic equals. This moment of cultural sensitivity and respect is somewhat marred, however, by the final lines of the penultimate paragraph of Henderson's review. After praising the work of both the ethnologists and the poets represented in *The Path on the Rainbow*, she acknowledges that the greatest praise belongs to "the unnamed Indian poets whose work speaks for them in these pages."[170] Admittedly, it is unusual for the Native American poets to be acknowledged at all, but the fact that they remain unnamed as a matter of course without any discussion or interrogation into why this might be the case demonstrates that the Euro-American impulse to claim ownership of Native American cultural heritages persisted.

[169] Ibid., 42.
[170] Ibid., 47.

Poetry's relationship to indigenous peoples' place in the modern world in the late 1910s and early 1920s was complex and contradictory. Although Henderson acknowledges the contemporary status of "the American Indian," there are few moments in the magazine when any writers fully commit to this recognition. The land rights of Native American tribes had been addressed in the magazine a few months earlier in the form of a group of poems by Lew Sarett. "Council Talks," consisting of "Chief Bear's-Heart Makes Talk" and "Little Caribou Makes Big Talk," printed in the November 1919 issue, highlights the duplicity of the United States government, and the agents of the Bureau of Indians Affairs in particular, in regards to the treaties made with sovereign Native American nations. Based on their subject matter, these poems would seem to be politically engaged with the idea of the present and continuing needs of the indigenous nations of North America. However, the stylistic elements employed completely undercut any attempt to read the poems as anything other than exercises in pathos and novelty. Both poems are written in a broken English dialect similar in many respects to the dialects used by white authors to represent the speech of African Americans. Phrases such as "All over Eenshun allotment land—/ He got-um forty acre more, all under lake!/ […]For Eenshun be good farmer/ Eenshun should be fish!" distract from the genuine injustices brought about by the Dawes Act, also known as the General Allotment Act of 1887, referenced in these lines.[171] Although the law was established in the late nineteenth century, the process of implementing it was still underway in the 1910s and 1920s.

This piece of legislation intentionally discouraged existing ways of life for Native American tribes by dividing tribally held lands into homestead allotments allocated to individuals and nuclear families for agricultural cultivation. Those who opted to participate in the allotment program were granted U.S. citizenship, but there was no

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[171] Lew Sarett, "Little Caribou Makes Big Talk," *Poetry* 15, no. 2 (November 1919): 89.

viable mechanism for opting out. Any tribally held land in excess of the requirements for allotments for the Native American population in a given region could then be sold to white families.[172] In practice, as indicated in Sarett's poem, even in cases where the members of a tribe resigned themselves to cooperation with the U.S. government and to the abandonment of their habitual ways of life, the lands assigned to Native Americans were often unsuitable for their intended use as homesteads, and the most desirable land was either reserved for white settlers or sold to them after the fact.

Rather than acting as a viable call for much needed reform and political action, Sarett's dialect poems merely fall back on the familiar sense of pathos and inevitability. A significant proportion of "Chief Bear's-Heart Makes Talk" is spent enumerating the sufferings of the Chippewa tribe that resulted from treaty violations and interactions with European Americans:

> No got-um lots annuity;
> No got-um w'ite man's grub.
> Squaw, she got-um bad osh-kee'-shee-gwa'-pee-nay'—
> She sick on eye lak devil-hell.
> Squaw-sich, little gal, she got-um measles-sick,
> De spotted-sickness on de face.
> Little boy, he got um heap sick—
> Bad coughing-sickness. Ugh! He spit all-tam'!
> Got sick on lung, an' hot on cheek;
> Got eye she blaze lak wild-cat !
> W'y should be dose t'ing?
> Ugh ! Go w'ite man's town :
> He got-um plenty grub;
> Hees belly laugh wit' grub![173]

The reader is encouraged to feel pity for the speaker, whose tribe has clearly been wronged, but the speaker is also presented as helpless, trusting and naïve. This is especially the case at the end of the poem, when the speaker denounces the Indian agents and the U.S. government for their duplicity:

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[172] Cahill, *Federal Fathers & Mothers*, 41.
[173] Lew Sarett, "Chief Bear's-Heart Makes Talk," *Poetry* 15, no. 2 (November 1919): 84-85.

Mebbe hees tongue she talk-um little bit crooked ! Ho ?

Mebbe so! . . . . Mebbe so! . . . .

Mebbe he got-um forks in tongue
Wit' little poison-gland! Ugh!

Eenshun t'ink—
He lie! . . . .[174]

The speaker's exaggerated shock and innocence in the face of dishonesty has two distinct functions. First, it creates a sense of either guilt or outrage in a white reader that his or her own government would act this way. However, the guilt and outrage are intensified by the contrast drawn between the savvy but cold-hearted 'civilized' government agents and the stereotype of the morally childlike 'noble savage'. The 'noble savage' stereotype damages the likelihood of Native American tribes being taken seriously in a political context because it reinforces the idea that as naïve children in the ways of civilization, they would be most suitably treated as wards of the state, rather than sovereign states in their own right, or even as American citizens with equal rights and voices in government. As "noble savages," it is inevitable that the Chippewa communities in Sarett's poem will continue to be exploited rather than obtaining the justice they seek from the U.S. government because, while admirable and a source of pathos, their innocence and honesty makes them unfit for the modern world.

There is some evidence of an interest in or at least an awareness of issues surrounding Native American rights in the network of poets connected to *Poetry*, but predictably in most cases this interest can be traced back to the fear of losing the resource represented by Native American cultures, rather than an interest in the well-being of Native American individuals. Mary Austin and Mabel Dodge Luhan were both active in campaigning against the Bursum Bill of 1922, and the debate surrounding the bill is

[174] Ibid., 86.

referred to in correspondence in the *Poetry* archives. This proposed law would have authorized the seizure/reallocation of lands occupied by the Pueblo peoples by the government and private European American citizens. In a letter to Monroe dated from Sunmount Sanatorium in Santa Fe, New Mexico on January 11, 1923, Janet Lewis describes a group of Indian delegates protesting the Bursum Bill as "a wonderful lot," but does not go into any further detail about the protests.[175] Monroe was a signatory to the "Protest of Artists and Writers Against the Bursum Bill," along with Henderson, Sandburg, Austin, Lindsay, and others who had connections to *Poetry*.[176] There was one brief discussion of the Bursum Bill in the "News Notes" section of the January 1923 issue of *Poetry* urging readers to write to their congressmen in protest against the passage of the Bursum Bill. This brief impulse toward activism within *Poetry* on behalf of Native American rights, however, should not be interpreted as motivated by cultural sensitivity and respect for the autonomy of Native American communities. The reasons given in "News Notes" for opposing the bill were that:

> the community life of the village Indians in the pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona is our most precious inheritance from the aboriginal past of this country; and their dance-ceremonies, pottery, blankets, jewellery, drawings, music and poetry are important beyond any possible estimate both for their intrinsic beauty and interest as specimens of primitive art, now too rare in an over-civilized world, and for their inspirational value to the present and future generations.[177]

Native American cultural practices should be preserved, not as the inalienable right of Native Americans, but because of their usefulness to European American society. While the success of John Collier's 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, which reversed the policy of assimilation and to some extent aided in the preservation of tribal cultures, can be

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[175] Janet Lewis, Letter, "Janet Lewis to Harriet Monroe," (January 11, 1923), [Box 35, Folder 30], Poetry: A Magazine of Verse Records, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[176] Tisa Wenger, "Land, Culture, and Sovereignty in the Pueblo Dance Controversy," *Journal of the Southwest* 46, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 384.

[177] "News Notes," *Poetry* 21, no. 4 (January 1923): 230.

traced in part to the heightened awareness of the value of those cultures that grew out of Monroe's and others' pleas for Native American arts to be taken seriously as art, the magazine's interests were always primarily in the role Native American culture could play in the development of Euro-American art and identity.[178]

It may be tempting to read any increase in awareness of cultural specificity in *Poetry* after the Great War as a response to the growing influence of Franz Boas on American anthropology. Boas is best known today for his theoretical framework of cultural relativity, as opposed to using comparative methods to categorize cultures on an evolutionary spectrum from savagery to civilization. However, the persistent presence of the stereotypes of the noble savage and the vanishing race (despite challenges from Henderson), as well as the names cited as anthropological authorities invalidate such an assumption. Boas's work on cultural relativity did not begin to gain a strong foothold in non-specialist circles until the 1930s, so only those who closely followed developments in the field would have been aware of Boas's new work at this stage. In spite of Monroe's special interest in anthropology, in November 1925, for example, she is still referring to the work of Frank Cushing, whose major contributions to the field were made in the 1890s. It is impossible to say whether Monroe's neglect of Boas was intentional or coincidental. W.E.B. Du Bois, as discussed in the following chapter, was already very much aware of Boas's work by the early 1910s, showing that it was certainly possible for someone outside of the professional field of anthropology to come into contact with his ideas. But whether Monroe was aware of the growing changes in anthropological theory and chose to ignore them, or whether she was simply ignorant of the gradual shift within the discipline, there is in fact little evidence of Boasian influence in *Poetry*, even in the poems of Sapir.

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[178] Carr, *Inventing the American Primitive*, 209.

Because Monroe's aesthetic of wilderness modernity relies heavily on the adoption of Native American cultural heritage by European American artists as their manifest birthright, her post-war editorials continue in a similar vein to her war-time writing, treating Native American culture as a homogeneous whole, similar in kind to other natural resources that are features of the American geographical landscape. The impulse to view Native American art as a natural resource is still clearly present in Monroe's September 1919 editorial "Back to Nature," which could be considered a manifesto for wilderness modernity. Monroe claims that the revitalization of both European American art and the health of the European American race in a holistic, eugenic sense, will come from the adoption and assimilation of the resources of the American landscape:

> […] will not that spiritual renewal of the race, out of which great art must spring, come rather through a more direct appeal to more original sources—through the immediate contact of our people with nature in her sacred and intimate reserves? And will not the new art take its hint from aboriginal art—perhaps the art of the Aztecs and the pueblos—rather than from derivations of pseudo-classic derivations long separated from their primitive Greek source?[179]

Although she mentions the (broadly described) Aztec culture by name, she metonymically elides the names of the Native American tribes inhabiting the American Southwest through the use of the term "pueblos," which describes the most superficially visible element of the cultures of the Zuni, Hopi, Cochiti, Tiwa, Jemez and other linguistically and culturally distinct communities. Although the term "Puebloan" or "Pueblo," specifically with a capital 'p', is used today to collectively refer to this group of communities, Monroe's lack of capitalization implies that she is referring to the distinctive architectural structures and the geographical region in which they are found. She thereby suppresses the reader's awareness of the people who create aboriginal art, along with completely overlooking their status as contemporary, active cultures.

[179] Monroe, "Back to Nature," 329.

In her editorial for September 1920, Monroe groups the ceremonies of the Hopi and the Cochiti tribes together under the heading of "primitive art" that demonstrates a universal and "original human impulse toward the creation of beauty."[180] Her argument is that these extant examples of primitive art provide access in the modern world to art of the same spirit and importance as that of ancient Greece or Egypt. The comparison between Native American and ancient Greek art is a pervasive element of both Monroe's and Henderson's discussions of Native American art. Although both apparently intended such comparisons to serve as a justification of the validity and importance of Native American art, they also reinforce the impression of Native American cultures as relics of previous cultural evolutionary stage whose continued existence is a curiosity which provides a rich resource for scientific and artistic study, but whose viability in the modern world is inherently limited.

The apparent increase in interest in cultural specificity in *Poetry* is primarily a continued and intensified interest in authenticity, combined with a proprietary impulse to maintain a gatekeeping position for the magazine in an area of American poetry which its editors felt they were responsible for discovering and propagating, particularly as more poets began to experiment with the use of Native American materials. A letter from Amy Lowell to Monroe from 1921 reveals a controversy surrounding Lowell's poem "Many Swans: Sun Myth of the North American Indians," first published in the *North American Review* for August 1920. In a convoluted chain of literary gossip, Lowell had apparently heard that "one of the travelers of Houghton Mifflin reported to them that Lou Sarrett [sic] had said that my Indian poems were copied from him and that you also believed this."[181] Lowell defends herself from this charge from every conceivable angle,

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[180] Monroe, "In Texas and New Mexico," 327.
[181] Amy Lowell, Letter, "Amy Lowell to Harriet Monroe," (May 14, 1921), [Box 37, Folder 11], Poetry: A Magazine of Verse Records, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

arguing that she had sufficiently cited the sources she did use (and Sarett was not one of them), that her use of idiom derived from her "researches into exact translations," and that because this idiom is, according to her, "indigenous to all the tribes," she feels that she has just as much right to use it as she would if she were to use "Irish brogue or Yankee dialect." In terms of imagery she claims that "all Indians pray for rain, and one could write practically no poem about Indians in which the subject did not occur." The impulse to generalize across all tribes contrasts with the detailed specificity of Sarett's work.

In justifying her use of Native American material, Lowell rests on the authority of her extensive reading, explaining that "the publications of the Smithsonian Institute and the National Museum leave no need for anyone to copy any modern poet on the subject."[182] In an earlier letter from 1920 she establishes her claim to academic authority more explicitly: "I have been studying Indian lore now for nearly two months, and I have read practically all the translations that have been made (I think it is more than that, I think it is all), and almost all the publications on the subject by the Smithsonian Institute. In all I have read sixty-three volumes of Indian matter."[183] Monroe, on the other hand, recognized that to maintain its position in the field of literary production, *Poetry* needed to be able to demonstrate a different sort of symbolic capital, based not on study, but on authentic experience. If, as discussed in the previous chapter, Monroe wished to create a democratic American poetry that was not restricted to poets who had the means to be indifferent to economic success, it became increasingly apparent that she needed to work to establish a form of symbolic capital that was available to any American poet, not just poets like Lowell who could rely on their families' positions within the fields of power and the economy. Although in the February 1917 special issue of *Poetry* Monroe

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[182] Ibid.
[183] Amy Lowell, Letter, "Amy Lowell to Harriet Monroe," (May 28, 1920), [Box 37, Folder 11], Poetry: A Magazine of Verse Records, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

recommends the same anthropological publications cited by Lowell, by the end of the war the method of approaching Native American cultures through institutional anthropological publications on the subject seems to be significantly less valued by Monroe than first-hand experience. In the notes included in *Poetry* about the authors of the Native American-themed poems published in its pages, Monroe is careful to emphasize any direct contact poets had with individual tribes. We are told, for instance, that Lew Sarett's "knowledge of the Chippewa language and customs is due to his having spent nine seasons with the tribe while earning money as a guide in their country in order to get an education," and that Ina Sizer Cassidy's poems in the December 1933 special Southwestern number "may be regarded as translations from the Navajo, and they were done with the assistance of Henry Tracy, a full-blooded member of the tribe."[184]

Monroe is also interested in maintaining privileged status for the poets included in the original special issue that inspired *The Path on the Rainbow* as against established poets like Lowell and Witter Bynner who began to explore Native American sources only after *Poetry* established such sources as valid and desirable in the new poetry (as opposed to popular verse). Monroe does not claim that Bynner's poetry is plagiarized, but simply that it fails to provide the access to the primal impulse of artistic creation which she values so highly:

> I do not feel the aboriginal influences of the *Pueblo Dances*, or echoes of primitive rhythms in the *Chapala Poems* of old Mexico; both are purely descriptive, done from the outside by a white-skinned observer. No doubt that is all one should expect, but one gets more than that from Dr. Gordon's *Sa-a-Narai*, and from the interpretations or translations of Mrs. Burlin, Mrs. Austin, Miss Skinner and others in the *Rainbow Anthology*.[185]

The implied claim that Gordon and others achieve at least the poetic effect of insider status, in contrast with Bynner who remains a white outsider, relates at least superficially

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[184] "Notes," *Poetry* 13, no. 2 (November 1918): 115; "News Notes," *Poetry* 43, no. 3 (December 1933): 175-176.
[185] Harriet Monroe, "Mr. Bynner in the South-West," *Poetry* 36, no. 5 (August 1930): 276-277.

back to Monroe's admiration of Cushing's work as an early participant observer. However, as it was never made explicit whether Gordon actually had any direct contact with local Native American tribes, it is likely that Monroe's true underlying concern is to validate the poets she discovered as having greater intrinsic authenticity than those who came to writing "Aboriginal verse" without her help.

Two reviews published in *Poetry* in the early 1930s exemplify the shift in Monroe's emphasis in terms of Aboriginal Verse from scientific authority to the authenticity of personal experience and the different forms and uses of symbolic and cultural capital that are most important to her. In the same issue as Monroe's critique of Bynner, Gwendolen Haste's review of Constance Skinner's collected *Songs of the Coast Dwellers* denies the accuracy and direct representation of Native American sources in Skinner's work. Haste argues that the poems are not "scholarly transcriptions of the legends of British Columbia Indians – in fact, Miss Skinner says in her introduction that at the time most of these poems were written she had made no study of Indian poetry."[186] Monroe would not necessarily have seen Haste's review as a negative reflection on the authenticity of Skinner's work as Monroe would define the term. Haste says that rather than representing Native American myths and culture, the poems "are the songs of that coast dweller who was Constance Lindsay Skinner, writing her emotions in terms of her memories. […] Constance Skinner has listened to the earth and returned with these songs."[187] The primary value of Native American sources for Monroe is the deep connection she perceives between the art of the indigenous American communities and their surrounding environment. If Skinner has accessed this type of connection in her

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[186] Gwendolen Haste, "North-West Coast Dwellers," *Poetry* 36, no. 5 (August 1930): 278.
[187] Ibid., 278-280.

own right, the accuracy of her representation of Native American legends would be of secondary concern to Monroe.

James Rorty's "Domingo Day," published in October 1931, occasioned the most extreme example of a (well-deserved) critique of the accuracy of representation of a tribal society in *Poetry*. "Domingo Day" ostensibly depicts the holiday of the same name celebrated by the people of the Santo Domingo Pueblo in New Mexico. As the area was formerly under Spanish control, the people of the San Domingo pueblo blended Spanish Catholicism with indigenous religious practices. This blending made them a subject of interest to poets seeking to explore ways of drawing connections between Native American verse, dance, and ritual and modern American life. However, Rorty's poetic treatment of this community demonstrates a complete lack of attention to the distinctions between such diverse native cultural groups as the peoples of the Southwestern pueblos and those of the Pacific Northwest. At one point, for instance, the pueblo speaker exclaims, "let us shake the long totem pole."[188] Either the theme of the uniquely American assimilation between indigenous practice and European religion has taken precedence for Monroe over accuracy of detail, or she and her editorial team overlooked such incongruities.

In the December issue for the same year, however, Monroe includes a review by Derrick Lehmer who derides Rorty's failure to attend to basic details: "Has Mr. Rorty ever seen a totem pole? Let him go to the nearest museum and pick out a good long one, twenty inches in diameter, say, and twenty feet high, and try to dance around with it 'shaking' it! Does he imagine that the totem-pole is ever seen on the desert?"[189] Lehmer's critique goes beyond this superficial level of fault-finding to question Rorty's

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[188] James Rorty, "Dance Invocation," *Poetry* 39, no. 1 (October 1931): 10.
[189] Derrick N. Lehmer, "Mr. Rorty's Indians," *Poetry* 39, no. 3 (December 1931): 165.

understanding of the nature of the tribe he is depicting, and ultimately to question the trajectory of the genre of "Indian poetry" as a whole:

> It is a small matter, you say– why make a mountain out of such a mole-hill? Because I have seen the standardization of western stories. It is impossible for the writer of "westerns" to get publication unless he adheres faithfully to a formula; a pattern, cut out for him by eastern editors and publishers that have never ventured farther west than the Hudson River. I have seen Indian music standardized so that unless your song is one of deadly thrumming on the bass and a continual slide of a third downward in the treble it will not be recognized as Indian stuff at all. I am looking forward with misery to a similar standardization of Indian poetry.[190]

Lehmer's comments raise two key questions: Why did Monroe choose to print Rorty's original group of poems when they contained such glaring factual errors; and what, exactly, was at stake for Euro-Americans in the threatened standardization of "Indian poetry?"

While it is impossible to say with certainty why Monroe chose to publish Rorty's group, I would argue that she was drawn to Rorty's overt blending of the traditions of rain dance and Christian prayer. In some senses these poems relate closely to Fletcher's "Well in the Desert" from the March 1916 issue. Monroe seems to have found poems linking Christianity and Native American stories and rituals especially compelling, perhaps because of their power to defamiliarize one of the most deeply ingrained aspects of Euro-American culture. The answer to the question of what is at stake in the possible standardization of "Indian poetry," however, is central to the entire project of the "Indian poetry" movement. Standardization, as used by Lehmer, is closely linked with commercialization. The westerns to which "Indian poetry" is compared were a best-selling pulp genre, and as Lehmer points out, a large proportion of the stories were formulaic potboilers, and almost unanimously depicted the triumph of civilization and order over wilderness and chaos. The aim of "Indian poetry" was to provide new and

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[190] Ibid., 166.

original material and approaches for American poets, to achieve modernity through creating and consuming the commodified authentic. If the commodified authentic is to represent a paradoxical and seamless elision between the authentic past and the commercial present, as Outka suggests, it cannot function when crassly and overtly commercial itself.[191] The threat of standardization would negate the original appeal of "Indian poetry" by pushing it over the fine line between consumable authenticity and mass-produced commercial products. For Lehmer, one way to avoid this standardization was to adhere to the scientifically accurate information about particular tribes made widely available by the practice of institutionalized anthropology and the resulting public museum exhibits. Another way of looking at the threat of standardization would be to frame it as civilization overtaking the primitive source material of "Indian poetry," thereby negating its potential eugenic benefits. From either of these perspectives, which are by no means mutually exclusive, standardization is viewed as the process of imposing Euro-American traits and standards on Native American materials. In Bourdieusian terms, standardization represents the threat that the genre of "Indian poetry" is shifting away from the pole of the field of poetic production which is high in symbolic capital and low in economic capital toward the opposite pole which is high in economic capital and popular success, but low in symbolic capital. One way to combat this threat is to impose a higher price of entry to the sub-field of "Indian poetry" through an increased attention to accuracy, though as previously argued, reliance on scientific authority does not accrue symbolic capital as effectively as reliance on direct experience.

A more successful example than Rorty's of the blending of tribal themes with Euro-American modernity, at least in terms of Monroe's goals, can be found in Mary Austin's "Caller of Buffalo," published in June 1928. In this poem, elements of the

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[191] Outka, *Consuming Traditions*, 6.

cultures of the plains tribes exist alongside features of modern urban, civilized life such as railcars, curtains, and psychological symptoms consistent with the modern American condition of neurasthenia. Austin acknowledges, albeit indirectly, the negative impact of white expansion on the way of life of the plains tribes by creating an image of the Western landscape as a buffalo:

> When the round-backed hills go shouldering down
> To drink of the western rivers,
> And dust, like ceremonial smoke,
> Goes up from the long-dried wallows,
> Then I remember the Caller of Buffalo.[192]

The buffalo itself can be read as a symbol of irrevocable loss, as described earlier in connection with the Ghost Dance religion. The phrase "long-dried wallows," although technically speaking of lack of water, also suggests disuse and the absence of buffalo themselves.

The final stanza of the poem proposes an imagined reciprocal relationship between Euro-American and Native American:

> O Caller of Buffalo!
> Hunt no more on the ancient traces
> Pale and emptied of going as a cast snake-skin.
> Come into my mind and hunt the herding thoughts,
> The White Buffalo
> Of the much desired places.
> Come with your medicine-making,
> O Caller of Buffalo!"[193]

Although this invitation appears to be offered as mutually beneficial, providing a field of action for the caller of buffalo who has no more buffalo to call, in fact it describes the uni-directional relationship of Native American source material to modern poetry. Both the caller of buffalo and Native American source materials are intended to give health to the overly modernized mind or poem, respectively. The "herding thoughts" that must be

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[192] Mary Austin, "Caller of Buffalo," *Poetry* 32, no. 3 (June 1928): 124.
[193] Ibid.

hunted evoke the symptoms of neurasthenia as described by George M. Beard in his 1881 treatise on *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences*. The primary cause of "nervousness," according to Beard, is "modern civilization," defined by the prevalence of "steampower, the periodical press, the telegraph, the sciences, and the mental activity of women."[194] Through his "medicine-making," the caller of buffalo will tame the speaker's thoughts and restore mental health and wellbeing in an exact parallel with the supposed health benefits of spending time in the wilderness as so frequently recommended by Monroe. Austin's by this point long-standing association with "aboriginal life and poetry" for the readers of *Poetry* functions as assurance that, unlike Rorty's, the incorporation of details from tribal cultures in her verse is accurate and authentic.[195] The fact, emphasized in the accompanying "News Notes" section of the magazine, that she "lives mostly in Santa Fe" serves to highlight the lived experience that Austin draws on, as distinct from merely second-hand scientific authority. Monroe's goal of seeing modern American poetry merge seamlessly with the American natural resource of indigenous poetry, made conceptually available for use by government-sponsored anthropological research, is realized in Austin's work. While anthropological frameworks were a necessary starting point for Monroe's project of incorporating Native American materials into American poetry, accessing those materials solely through anthropological publications was not an adequate end point. Once Native American materials had been made both literally and conceptually available to poets through anthropological publications, Monroe's requirements for authenticity began to shift, and it became necessary for poets to enact the same merging of European and Indigenous American cultures in their lives that she looked for in their poetry.

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[194] George Miller Beard, *American Nervousness : Its Causes and Consequences* (New York : Putnam, 1881), vi.
[195] "News Notes," *Poetry* 32, no. 3 (June 1928): 177.

Conclusion

Returning finally to Sapir, one of the earliest formally trained students of Boas, the question arises of why he published so little "aboriginal verse" in *Poetry*, or indeed anywhere else. I would argue that the cultural relativism that Boas and his students took as the theoretical basis of their research did not lend itself to cultural appropriation in the same way that the cultural evolutionary model did for Monroe, Henderson, and others. Interested as he was in the historical particularities and distinct developmental courses of individual cultures and their relations to one another, he would not have viewed the art of these cultures as his own rightful inheritance. Sapir had the first-hand experience valued by Monroe, and was clearly interested in poetry as an art form, but did not share the anthropological framework that made the "Indian poetry" genre possible.

For Monroe, the availability of Native American cultures as a natural resource to be both exploited and conserved for future use was made possible by her adoption, whether conscious or sub-conscious, of the methodological frameworks of official, government anthropology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The framework of cultural evolution allowed her to position American poets as the natural inheritors of what was perceived as a trove of cultural artifacts and practices that were universal, primal, and fundamentally invigorating for American art. The re-integration of these primitive forces into American poetry would allow the American tradition to separate itself from and surpass the European tradition that had depleted the energy and resources it had inherited at many removes from ancient Greece.

Once the methodologies and underlying assumptions of government anthropology had become naturalized to Monroe and other American poets, the use of anthropological documents as source materials became less important. Having imparted a degree of legitimacy to the "Indian poetry" genre, such means of access to indigenous

cultures could be discarded once other authentication strategies became more expedient. In order to compete with the symbolic capital accruing to avant-garde movements, particularly those associated with Pound, a defector from the *Poetry* project, Monroe changed the emphasis on poetry inspired by Native American cultures to the specificities of direct personal experience which apparently owed nothing to the hierarchical structures of external fields of production such as those of science or power. In addition to altering the type of symbolic capital associated with the Indian poetry genre, the increased importance Monroe placed on personal experiences with Native American communities allowed her to maintain closer control over the genre. Amy Lowell, for example, might have had adequate status and influence to challenge Monroe's curatorial position, were it not for that fact that Monroe was able to label her work as inauthentic on the grounds that Lowell's contact with her source material was merely through secondary sources.

The autonomous state of the field of poetic production described by Bourdieu supposedly favors an inverted economy which presupposes indifference among producers to rewards to be gained in terms of money or of recognition by anyone beyond their group of recognized competitors or peers. As we will see in the next chapter, such so-called autonomy is in fact heavily contingent on the collective positions held by literary producers within the field of power. It was only possible to participate in the "Indian poetry" genre if the poet in question belonged to the dominant group within the overarching field of political power. White poets were not autonomous from, but beneficiaries of their place in that apparently external field. It was race and, to some extent as discussed in the previous chapter, class, and not any quality inhering in poetry as a product, that produced the illusion of autonomy which determined the characteristics of the field of poetic production as experienced by the white poets discussed in this

chapter. Given a different position in the field of power, such as the range of positions most black poets were forced to sustain, the characteristics likely to accumulate any available symbolic capital would differ dramatically.

Chapter 3: Sociology and *The Crisis*: American Identity and Black Culture

Du Bois's Use of the Social Sciences to Define a Distinctively Black American Culture

The cover of the August 1918 issue of *The Crisis* serves as an example of the deployment of the strategies of anthropological display common to world's fairs. It consists of a photograph of a young, dark-skinned woman in apparently tribal African costume. Close examination of the woman's costume reveals what look like manually cut edges, indicating that the background that originally surrounded the figure has been deliberately removed. In the table of contents, however, there is a note informing the reader that this is a photograph from a school pageant in New Jersey of an African American woman named Bessie Moore portraying "Ethiopia." Pageants written to be enacted by schoolchildren, such as the one from which this photograph was taken, were, according to Rachel Farebrother, opportunities for "historical recovery of forgotten ancestry," and were "equated with an ideology of racial uplift."[1] However, the similarities between pageants celebrating the ancient African heritage of black Americans and the practice of white anthropologists recreating so-called authentic pre-modern cultures in live displays or model villages at worlds' fairs complicate this equation and require further analysis.

The scientific status of live displays at exhibitions was always ambiguous. Anthropologists would pay Native American individuals to wear antiquated clothing or engage in staged ritual practices which significantly differed from those common to their daily lives in order to create both spectacle and ostensibly scientific knowledge in world's

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[1] Rachel Farebrother, "'Thinking in Hieroglyphics': Representations of Egypt in the New Negro Renaissance," in *Afromodernisms: Paris, Harlem and the Avant-Garde*, ed. Fionnghuala Sweeney and Kate Marsh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 213.

fair exhibitions.[2] The visual spectacle created by these displays was an extremely popular, and consequently profitable, component of world's fairs, starting with the Paris World's Fair in 1889. Sadiah Qureshi cites the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exhibition as a key moment in the growing interrelationship of mass entertainment and anthropology. Live displays of a range of Native American, African, and Asian peoples sat alongside amusement rides and performers in the Midway, outside the more formal and aesthetically unified White City. Qureshi highlights this distinction between the "official educative space and an unofficial amusement zone," along with the organization of the displays of live peoples to visually replicate the assumed progression of human civilization from savagery to civilization, as two innovations that were adopted by many of the world's fairs that followed.[3] For Qureshi, the involvement of anthropologists in creating these displays and the evolutionary theory underpinning their arrangement was overshadowed by the elements of mass entertainment in these displays, and she argues that the Columbian Exhibition "created a convention that […] helped disassociate displayed peoples from contemporary scientific practice."[4] The overlap between scientific knowledge and mass entertainment, however, made these displays a versatile resource for re-appropriation in the context of pageants. The narrative element of the pageant allowed for greater control over the interpretation of the visual components of live display, but also foregrounded the performative nature of such a display, thus removing any illusion of authenticity.

The removal of the background of the photograph of Moore can be read simultaneously in multiple ways. Erasing the context of the school pageant preserves the

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[2] Rosalyn R. LaPier, *City Indian: Native American Activism in Chicago, 1893-1934* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 21-22.
[3] Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 249.
[4] Qureshi, 249.

Cover of The *Crisis*, August 1918. Image courtesy of the Modern Journals Project, http://modjourn.org/render.php?id=1292948896639875&view=mjp_object

illusion that Moore could have stepped directly out of an idealized Ethiopian village or city. The positioning of Moore's left arm suggests an invitation to join her in such an imagined setting. The blank background also encourages readers to focus all of their attention on the figure herself, with no distractions. This speaks to the cover's function as a provocative statement about black identity and subjectivity. Moore is looking directly at the camera, and her expression is both powerful and piercing. She and her Ethiopian costume are the object of the reader's gaze, but she also appears to be unapologetically returning that gaze. This returned gaze problematizes the aesthetic of the spectacle of scientific entertainment familiar from world's fair exhibitions. It highlights the pressure on African Americans to perform stereotypical roles such as the primitive other, the long-suffering and loyal house slave, the violent and dangerous rebellious field slave, or the shiftless tenant farmer. The scientific approach to black identity offered by early twentieth century anthropology allows for a history beyond slavery, but is limited in its scope to an African other with no role in modern American society. Moore's direct gaze combined with the delayed revelation that she is a New Jersey school girl in costume function as a deliberate unmasking of performative racial identities. Such a strategy forces readers to see beyond such stereotypes to the reality of African Americans whose identities are rooted in rich and varied African pasts but are also undeniably modern and American. This chapter will argue that Du Bois attempted to deploy strategies from several of the social sciences against each other in order to draw out the potentialities of each for contributing to the authentication of a distinctive African American culture while negating the ways in which each of these social sciences reinforced restrictive stereotypes of black Americans.

Outside of *The Crisis*, attempts to employ anthropological strategies to authenticate African American culture did not meet with much mainstream success. Lee

Baker explains that "World's Fair organizers routinely turned down requests by African Americans to erect Negro exhibits, and philanthropists simply rejected requests to erect a museum to showcase African and African American achievements."[5] One of the functions of *The Crisis* under Du Bois's editorship was to act as this museum by curating information, images, and literary artifacts to, in Baker's words, "authenticate the distinctive culture of the Negro."[6]

There are, of course, important differences between the photograph used on the cover of *The Crisis* and the practice of staging living anthropological displays. Bessie Moore was not, presumably, subjected to the same inhumane conditions as, for example, the Inuit entertainers who walked out on their contract to be part of the official "Esquimau Village" at the 1893 World's Columbia Exposition in Chicago after being locked up in their huts for refusing to wear authentic sealskin clothing all day in Chicago summer heat.[7] The intended audience of the school pageant was also somewhat different from the general audience of world's fairs, but the blend of education and entertainment through spectacle motivating the pageant, the anthropological world's fair exhibits, and the choice of cover image for this issue of *The Crisis* is shared. Furthermore, the world's fair exhibits, pageants like the one Bessie Moore participated in, and the August 1918 cover photograph were all attempts to authenticate the cultures of the represented groups through inherently inauthentic performances, albeit a consciously transparent attempt in the case of *The Crisis* which in fact foregrounded its own inauthenticity. By both creating and deflating the inauthentic image of a New Jersey high schooler as an Ethiopian princess, *The Crisis* encompasses but also reaches beyond anthropological models of

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[5] Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture*, 2010, 16; see also *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 60-61.
[6] Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture*, 2010, 26.
[7] Paige Sylvia Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 39-40.

racial identity to demand recognition of African American culture as both ancient and modern, both African and American.

The Crisis depicted and laid active claim to African culture and history for African Americans. In an uncredited editorial which, based on its prose style, was almost certainly written by Du Bois, the long record of African history is deployed to demonstrate the grandeur and glory of African American soldiers fighting in the First World War. In the same August 1918 issue which featured Bessie Moore in Ethiopian costume on the cover Du Bois pronounces that:

> We are the Ancient of Days, the First of Races and the Oldest of Men. Before Time was, we are. We have seen Egypt and Ethiopia, Babylon and Persia, Rome and America, and for that flaming Thing, Crucified Right, which survived all this staggering and struggling of men—for that we fight today in and for America—not for a price, not for ourselves alone, but for the World.[8]

In these impassioned words Du Bois unifies the two sides of the "double consciousness" he attributes to black Americans by insisting on their status both as inheritors of ancient civilizations and selfless American patriots. This perfectly illustrates the ultimate goal motivating his incorporation of strategies drawn from both sociology and anthropology: to establish African Americans as full participants in American society while simultaneously providing evidence of a proud cultural heritage in which whites have no role and which did not require racial essentialism as a logical consequence.

***The Crisis* and Du Bois's Efforts toward Changing Racialized Cultural Assumptions**

Although the systemic racism against both Native Americans and African Americans presented apparently insurmountable obstacles to social equality, cultural freedom, and, far too frequently, even survival, this racism was surrounded by different rhetoric and different governmental policies in each case. While the government treated

[8] "Editorial," *The Crisis* 16, no. 4 (August 1918): 164.

Native Americans as external enemies to be either exterminated or sequestered, African Americans, especially former slaves and their descendants, were seen more as child-like wards who must be both maintained and disciplined, but who should also know their inferior place within American society and not attempt to rise above it. Throughout Du Bois's early career as a sociologist, he attempted to document the social, political, and economic factors that worked together to prevent African Americans in the South from achieving full economic independence and social autonomy. *The Crisis* represented an attempt on Du Bois's part to instigate changes to the social attitudes found both in white and in black communities that he felt stood in the way of the progress of racial equality.

As a Harvard-trained social scientist, Du Bois was highly aware of the prominent scientific journals of the day. The pages of *The Crisis* during his tenure as editor are full of reprints, excerpts and synopses of scientific studies relevant to perceived racial difference. I would also argue that the structure of the magazine itself reflects strategies for verifying truth-claims that are borrowed directly from the field of scientific production. The collage aesthetic prevalent in *The Crisis* has previously been noted by scholars including Anne Elizabeth Carroll, who cites theory drawn from the visual arts and from film to help explain some of the effects of the juxtaposition of a multitude of topics and of visual and textual elements.[9] Without denying these aesthetic effects, recognizing the parallels between the *Crisis* and scientific journals such as *Science* is key to fully understanding Du Bois's aims. Like *Science*, *The Crisis* presents information from a broad range of fields and sources but, through juxtaposition, uses these varied sources to corroborate a much more limited set of underlying conclusions. Du Bois's interest in the editorial practices of *Science* editor James McKeen Cattell, as evidenced by archival correspondence, suggests that structural similarities between the two

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[9] Carroll, "Protest and Affirmation," 89.

publications are more than merely coincidental. Before exploring the question of what *The Crisis* may owe to *Science* and other professional scientific journals, however, it is necessary to understand the broader context within which Du Bois was attempting to deploy science to build the case for racial justice and equality.

Black America as a Challenge to American Identity

Monroe, Austin, Sandburg, and others saw the art of indigenous American tribes as a source of health-giving authentic strength for white American poetry, and accessed this art, at least in part, through the research and methodology of institutionalized anthropology. Many of the people who favored the influence of Native American art, however, wrote disparagingly of African American art and culture, warning against its damaging influence.

In a letter written to *Poetry* in 1923, Vachel Lindsay endorses the healthiness of Native American culture in contrast to the "diseased" quality of jazz music, the cultural form most closely associated with African Americans in the 1920s. The purpose of his letter is to clarify why he resents being called a "jazz poet" by critics, claiming that he would rather be called a "college yell poet":

> The college yell represents an utterly different mood, and a far healthier state of the nervous system, than jazz. The college yell expresses nineteen-year-old boys and girls generally at a co-educational state university at the height of their youth and glory. You have seen the Indian dancers, and you know the Dionysiac beginnings of the Greek drama. The college yell seems to me an expression of the same spirit. On the other hand, jazz is hectic, has the leer of the badlands in it, and first, last and always is hysteric. It is full of the dust of the dirty dance. The saxophone, its chief instrument, is the most diseased instrument in all modern music; it absolutely smells of the hospital.[10]

Lindsay's overt use of the language of degeneration and sickness in relation to jazz, as opposed to the language of eugenic health in relation to Native American dance

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[10] Vachel Lindsay, "Mr. Lindsay Protests against Jazz," *Poetry* 21, no. 5 (February 1923): 286.

highlights an important distinction frequently drawn by white writers between African American and Native American cultures. As I have argued in my previous chapter, the Native American tribes were considered as anachronous remnants of ancient civilizations, like the ancient Greeks also invoked by Lindsay in the above quotation, with no lasting place in the modern world. African Americans, on the other hand, were a very real political presence. Native American cultures were viewed by many as means of access to a lost pure and authentic primitive state. African American culture, when it was considered by white writers to have roots of any kind, was most often seen as atavistic, uncontrolled, and even bestial. Native American culture existed primarily in the past, making it the proper subject matter of anthropologists interested in preserving the remains of man's primitive state. African American culture was a present and growing force, threatening the white social order, making it the proper subject matter of sociologists interested in identifying, explaining, and, if possible, solving the problems afflicting society as a whole.

Mary Austin also expressed ambivalence verging on distaste for jazz rhythms, echoing Lindsay in characterizing them as chaotic and unhealthy. In the long essay that accompanies her 1923 collection of Native American-inspired poems entitled *The American Rhythm*, Mary Austin maintains the common contemporary belief that rhythm in poetry arises from the rhythms of the body. She argues that, this being the case, the environment experienced by the body will have a direct and perceptible influence on the poetry written by people living in that environment. Therefore, according to Austin, modern American poetry must necessarily share some traits with Native American poetry.

Although she describes both "Amerindian" and "Afro-American" rhythms as arising from unleashing the subconscious memory of the body from "its civilized

inhibitions," the influence of black rhythms is unhealthy and degenerative as opposed to the positive affects she identifies as resulting from the influence of Native American rhythms on white American poetry.[11] Michael Golston cites this segment of Austin's book as demonstrating her adherence to the contemporary theory that poetic rhythms arise from the physical body, and vary from race to race. The theory obviously relies on the idea that so-called races, which are defined along roughly nationalist lines as well as according to skin color, are sufficiently physically distinct that rhythms such as breath, heartrate, and locomotion differ perceptibly between (and insignificantly within) groups.[12] Although he explains that Austin views the influence of Native American rhythms as more "organic" than the influence of black rhythms, he does not sufficiently interrogate why Austin and many others developed this view.

Austin's description of jazz rhythms as "bond-loosening, soul-disintegrating," and having a tendency "toward spiritual disintegration," betrays unquestionably racist attitudes, but the passage warrants further analysis.[13] The eugenic fear of racial contamination is not on its own an adequate explanation for Austin's attitudes since *The American Rhythm* dwells at length on the positive influence of Native American verse and rhythms. As summarized above, Austin's logic for celebrating the influence of some non-white cultures but rejecting others is based on a poetics of place: the experiences informing Native American poetry, she argues, are fundamentally the same as those informing modern white American poetry. The hereditary rhythms found in African American poetry, music, and dance derive from a different place, and so would not make

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[11] Mary Hunter Austin, *The American Rhythm: Studies and Reexpressions of Amerindian Songs*, 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), 31.
[12] Michael Golston, *Rhythm and Race in Modernist Poetry and Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 11-12.
[13] Ibid., 53; Austin, *The American Rhythm*, 1923, 32-33.

their way organically into the work of a Euro-American poet. But this explanation does not seem adequate to produce such vehement phrases as “soul-disintegrating.”

Austin’s poetics of place was obviously strongly connected to the American West and Southwest, but I would argue that the place it was most strongly connected to was the imagined and mythologized space of the frontier. Richard Slotkin characterizes the myth of the frontier as one of the most pervasive and influential ideological tools in American politics and popular culture. The myth of the Frontier explains and naturalizes American expansion and exceptionalism by depicting American history as a cycle of “regeneration though violence:” separation from the metropolis, temporary regression to a more primitive state, and victorious conflict with savagery.[14] The most relevant element of this myth for the purposes of understanding the attitudes toward racial others of Austin, Monroe, Henderson, and many of their associates is the figure Slotkin describes as the “the man who knows Indians.”[15] This hero is a representative of civilization who understands and may even have some sympathies with the “savages,” but who ultimately learns and teaches others “how to defeat savagery on its own native grounds – the natural wilderness, and the wilderness of the human soul.”[16] His struggle for survival is represented in his battle both against Indians and against the wilderness itself. The literary archetype of “the man who knows Indians,” also referred to by Slotkin as the “hunter-hero,” is James Fenimore Cooper’s Hawkeye from *The Last of the Mohicans*: a man who was raised in the Mohican tribe and is celebrated for his skill in hunting as a means of survival.

[14] Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 11-12.
[15] Ibid., 14.
[16] Ibid.

In one of the traditional readings of this figure, the hero's choice to separate himself (or to maintain such a separation if it is initially thrust upon him) from the metropolis to live a more primitive way of life serves as a critique of the present.[17] The wilderness purifies the hero of the weaknesses and contaminations of civilization. I would argue that Austin's poetics seeks to establish the poet as the frontier hero who will enact the cycle of "regeneration through violence" within American poetry to reinvigorate the art and purge corrupting influences from its over-civilized tradition. The cycle is initiated by encountering and appropriating Native American rhythms, the rhythms of the wilderness. African American rhythms, belonging to a people group who historically are not foes but subjugated slaves, are associated with either the urban metropolis or the agrarian pastoral, and are therefore one of the elements to be purged in the savage purification of poetry.

Thus, while the repudiation of jazz rhythms by Austin, like her appropriation of Native American rhythms, was deeply objectionable in the attitude it reveals toward racial difference, it would be an oversimplification to say that her theory of poetry was merely racist. It would be more accurate to say that her poetics participate in a frontier-oriented project of Americanizing modern poetry that relied unreflectively on deeply ingrained American mythology.

The passage of *The American Rhythm* quoted by Golston and discussed above pertains specifically to the "jazz-born movements of Mr. Sandburg's *Man Hunt*."[18] If we examine "Man, the Man-Hunter" directly, we can see that more is at stake in this poem than rhythm: the poem describes a lynch mob and its aftermath. By describing the members of the mob as hunters, Sandburg is actually striking at the root of one of the

[17] Ibid., 23.
[18] Austin, *The American Rhythm*, 1923, 32. Austin misquotes the title of Sandburg's "Man, The Man-Hunter".

central features of the frontier myth. The first two lines of the poem justify such a reading by setting up the expectation of a primitive setting, fitting for a frontier hunter-hero: "I saw Man, the Man-hunter,/ Hunting with a torch in one hand."[19] It is not until the third line that the "torch," the key element that evokes a primitive setting, is recontextualized into modernity through the completion of the sentence with "and a can of kerosene in the other." A similarly bathetic effect is achieved in the second stanza:

> I listened
> And the high cry rang,
> The high cry of Man, the man-hunter:
> We'll get you yet, you sbxyxch!

The phrase "the high cry rang" and the repetition of "high cry" in the next line appeal to the elevated mythic status of the noble hunter. This image is then abruptly deflated by the use of profanity represented by "sbxyzch," which is clearly meant to indicate "son of a bitch."

Within the parameters of the myth of the frontier, American history and identity relies not only on confrontation with and extermination of Native Americans, but also on the subjugation of African slaves to enable the country's rapid economic development.[20] By calling attention to the morally indefensible aspects of that subjugation, and ascribing them to the hunter-hero himself, Sandburg is in effect threatening to disintegrate the fantasies surrounding the version of American identity that Austin most values. She could not in good conscience criticize Sandburg for denouncing lynching, so she displaces her critique, whether consciously or unconsciously, onto the poem's rhythm. Other poems in Sandburg's 1920 collection *Smoke and Steel* are also critical of the American status quo, but as these mainly focus on the plight of the working class and other urban issues, they do not threaten the core of Austin's American identity. She praises the authenticity of

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[19] Carl Sandburg, *Smoke and Steel* (New York: Harcout, Brace and Company, 1920), 48.
[20] Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 11.

these poems by claiming that they create the rhythms one would find in the (hypothetical) "rhythmic dance drama" of "the tribe of modern industrial workers."[21] We can conclude from comparing her assessments of the poems in *Smoke and Steel* that the problem with black rhythms (and by extension perhaps also black people) is that their very presence in America after the abolition of slavery threatens to undermine the country's heroic vision of itself.

In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), W.E.B. Du Bois articulates this same problem, albeit from a very different perspective. In the first chapter of *Souls*, Du Bois invokes the image of the emancipated African American as Banquo's ghost at the banquet of American culture: "and yet the swarthy spectre sits in its accustomed place at the Nation's feast. In vain to we cry to this our vastest social problem: 'Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves shall never tremble!' The Nation has not yet found peace from its sins."[22] Like Austin, Du Bois sees the nation's guilt over the subjugation of African slaves and the other atrocities associated with the aftermath of slavery as a threat to American identity. Unlike Austin, however, he works to expose and confront the spectre, rather than deny and conceal it, as the only way to forge a new and whole identity for both the country in general and for African Americans individually.

The Emergence and Scientific Status of Sociology

Where Austin turned to the principles and methods of anthropology as the basis of her own approach to building an American identity for poetry, Du Bois sought many of his tools for building an integrated and accepted African American identity in the field of sociology. Although he was not widely recognized as a practicing sociologist during

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[21] Austin, *The American Rhythm*, 1923, 32.
[22] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Boston, Mass: Bedford Books, [1903] 1997), 40.

his lifetime, today Du Bois is considered to be a key figure in the history of the field due to both his empirical research and his philosophical analyses.[23] Like anthropology, the field of sociology grew out of the application of nineteenth-century theories of evolution beyond the physical body. Although present-day sociology has dissociated itself from its early foundations, the links to Darwin, Lamarck, and above all, Spencer were pronounced in the early decades of the development of American sociology, and within academic institutions, there was an obvious effort to maintain close ties with the natural sciences.[24]

The articles published in the early volumes of the *AJS* provide ample evidence of such efforts. Before the public scandal concerning his virulent racism which forced him to leave Stanford University in 1900, Edward Alsworth Ross published a series of articles on the study of the mechanisms of social control in the *AJS* beginning in March 1896. Ross distinguishes in his article between social control, which shapes individuals to suit the needs of a society, thus maintaining equilibrium, and artificial selection or "self-purging" whereby a society employs "segregation of the insubordinate and elimination of the criminal" in order to progress to "a higher level" and a "more perfect equilibrium."[25] In both cases, Ross, referring frequently to Spencer, relies on the analogy between a society and an organic organism, arguing that social control, or "discipline," is necessary for maintaining the continuing life of the society, whereas artificial selection leads to the evolution of the society.[26] Ross also outlines the role of competition between means of social control in ensuring that, over time, "the most efficient [methods] survive"

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[23] Calhoun, "Sociology in America: An Introduction," 2007, 32.
[24] For discussions of the influence of evolutionary theories and the biological sciences on the development of sociology, see for example Breslau, "The American Spencerians: Theorizing a New Science"; Craig Calhoun, "Sociology in America: An Introduction," in *Sociology in America: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1-38; Snait B. Gissis, "Lamarckism and the Constitution of Sociology," in *Transformations of Lamarckism: From Subtle Fluids to Molecular Biology*, ed. Snait B. Gissis and Anna Zeligowski (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 89-100.
[25] Edward Alsworth Ross, "Social Control," *American Journal of Sociology* 1, no. 5 (March 1896): 521.
[26] Ibid.

and become far more influential in creating a cohesive society than the inherited degree of altruism found in the individual members of that society.[27]

In addition to linking sociology to biology through evolutionary analogies, Ross works to bolster the scientific status of sociology by actively distancing it from overlapping fields such as the philosophical study of ethics. He argues that the province of sociology is to study the ways in which "associated life" alters the individual to act in the interests of the group, rather than to solely further one's own interests. He then explains that ethics, which purports to define the best way to live from the perspective of the individual, must promote pure egoism, thus acting against the interests of society. "From the social point of view," Ross insists, "such a body of doctrine would constitute an *immoral* rather than a *moral* science, and could not fail to bring on the head of the expounder a storm of denunciation [original italics]."[28] The only alternative for the ethicist is to preach the disingenuous doctrine that altruism is in fact in the best interest of the individual. Such arguments, however, cannot be considered scientific: "Such a moralist […] is a most useful, nay, even precious functionary of society," Ross admits, but "we cannot call such a one a scientist."[29] Thus, Ross proposes that ethics can be dismissed as entirely distinct from, and inferior to, the science of sociology, and he argues for sociology as the unchallenged source of reliable knowledge about the mechanisms of society.

One of the unspoken assumptions of early sociologists in America, including Ross, was that white (and primarily Anglo-Saxon) society represented the most advanced form of "associated life." Another assumption, which was absorbed by writers and critics like Austin and Lindsay, was that, like biological organisms, society was vulnerable to

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., 531-2.
[29] Ibid., 532.

disease and degradation. Ross refers to “social influence,” that is the pressure to imitate the behaviors and reactions of others, as a “contagion of emotions”– language that closely resembles Lindsay’s description of jazz as “diseased.”[30] The political scandal that caused him to leave Stanford University in 1900 was initiated by a speech he gave at an anti-Japanese immigration rally in which he warned against the dangers to American society presented by the influx of Asian immigrants. Although his forced resignation resulted more from his criticism of the railroad industry and its use of cheap labor from Japan and China than the repugnancy of his views on the immigrants themselves, the language he employs in an article written more than a decade later for the *Century* shows his continued belief in the possibility of American society catching the diseases of other cultures: “The Slavic thirst, multiplying saloons up to one for every twenty-six families, is communicated to Americans, and results in an increase of liquor crimes among all classes.”[31] For sociologists like Ross, one of the key challenges facing the field was to identify the means by which white American society could be protected from the contagions introduced by immigrants through a combination of restrictions on immigration and successful assimilation of immigrants, who he describes as “sixteenth century people,” who were mainly “farm bred” into the modern “twentieth-century community” of white American cities.[32]

As will be shown below, African Americans, like the immigrant groups described by Ross, were frequently classified by white sociologists as backward, essentially rural people who were not suited to sophisticated social life or urban environments. Black cultural leaders who sought equality for African Americans were faced with the problem of negotiating a black American identity which could transcend this view of black men

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[30] Ibid., 519; Lindsay, “Mr. Lindsay Protests against Jazz,” 286.
[31] Edward Alsworth Ross, “American and Immigrant Blood: A Study of the Social Effects of Imigration,” *The Century* 87, no. 2 (December 1913): 225; 229.
[32] Ibid., 225.

and women as unsophisticated, necessarily rural, too weak to resist moral vice, and thus a source of social disease threatening white American society. Sociology did, however, offer possibilities and mechanisms for the improvement of the social standing of African Americans which were not offered by the paradigms of other disciplines.

For black sociologists, emphasis within the field on the scientific status of sociology was also key to creating a position from which they could critique the social structures that continued to reproduce oppression of black individuals and communities. Whereas, as will be discussed in the following section of this chapter, black sociologists at the turn of the century felt strong pressure to make concessions to white opinion in their work, as the century progressed and sociology as a field accrued scientific capital, it became possible to rely on data and appeals to the scientific method to adequately demonstrate the legitimacy of an idea or conclusion. This is not to say that sociology did not continue to function within a framework of institutionalized and paradigmatic racism throughout the early twentieth century. Although Bourdieu describes the price of entry to the field of a given scientific discipline as "mastery" of "a collected capital of methods and concepts," the scientific field has never been so autonomous as to be free of the racial and class biases governing the field of power.[33] Scientific symbolic capital derived not only from knowledge, but also from recognition.[34] The objectivity purported by members of the scientific field to be highly valued is still socially constructed.[35] Nevertheless, as the field of sociology came to rely more heavily on quantitative data and to value detached objectivity, at least superficially, black sociologists such as Charles Spurgeon Johnson, who founded *Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life* in 1923 and published several book-length sociological studies of the condition of African Americans in the

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[33] Bourdieu, *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, 65.
[34] Ibid., 34.
[35] Ibid., 82-83.

early twentieth century, or E. Franklin Frazier, who became the first black president of the American Sociological Society (later renamed the American Sociological Association) in 1948, could feel increasingly empowered to take up positions within the field which challenged the positions held by the white sociologists who dominated the field at the time.

Sociological Models of Black American Identity

While Du Bois ultimately drew on both sociological and anthropological ways of thinking about African Americans, neither science taken on its own terms provided an adequate account of black culture and identity from his perspective. Generally speaking, anthropologists in the U.S. tended to focus on the study of Native American culture, as opposed to African American culture. According to Brad Evans, at the end of the nineteenth century, for every ten anthropological papers on Native Americans in scientific journals, there was only one anthropological paper on African Americans.[36] In the introduction to his *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, Boas goes so far as to say that African Americans do not have a distinct culture for anthropologists to study: "While it is true that certain survivals of African culture and language are found among our American negroes, their culture is essentially that of the uneducated classes of the people among whom they live, and their language is on the whole identical with that of their neighbors."[37] The definitions of culture developed by early twentieth-century anthropologists were not able to conceptually accommodate the circumstances of African American communities, and it was therefore difficult to effectively employ

[36] Brad Evans, *Before Cultures: The Ethnographic Imagination in American Literature, 1865-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 75.
[37] Franz Boas, "Introduction," in *Handbook of the American Indian Languages: Part I*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 40 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 8.

anthropological methodologies and strategies to authenticate black identity. The field of sociology, while allowing for stronger arguments in favor of racial equality on a biological level, also failed to provide an adequate range of approaches to a specifically black identity.

For Boas, culture can be defined as the social and material practices developed by a group of people living together in a defined geographic area, and is the result of a combination of external environmental influences, internal psychological characteristics of the group in question, and the influence of diffusion from nearby groups through trade or other forms of contact. Because the historical circumstances of every cultural group are different, the degree to which environment, psychology, or diffusion influences a given practice will differ on a case by case basis.[38] Although the psychology of a group may be to some extent determined by heredity, the overall bases of culture are not predetermined by heredity alone, nor do all cultural groups progress uniformly through the same stages of culture. For this reason, according to Boas's account of culture, it would be entirely possible for individuals who were removed from one culture group and inserted into another to adapt to the practices of the new culture group. Thus while Boas's separation of race from culture was an important factor in the process of refuting nineteenth century ethnological accounts of racial hierarchy, it also opened the possibility for denying the cultural particularity of non-Anglo-Saxon groups like African Americans and immigrants from both Europe and Asia.

Sociologists made use of this separation of culture from race to justify assimilation as the best solution to the race problem. Assimilation, in this context, refers to the complete adoption of one group's cultural values and practices by another, rather than the possible alternative meaning of one genetic group being absorbed by another

[38] Franz Boas, *Race, Language and Culture* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1940), 270-274.

through interbreeding. Miscegenation was not often encouraged by either white or black commentators on the race problem, though black rights activists objected to anti-miscegenation laws on the grounds that they would preclude black women who were raped by white men from insisting on marriage (a dubious privilege at best). Assimilation in the cultural sense was, in Lee Baker's words, "the ultimate vanishing policy [...]. Racial uplift and assimilation were not much more than euphemisms for evolution and civilization, minus the biological component."[39] Although by the 1920s the nineteenth-century anthropological concept of cultural evolution was losing favor, necessitating the need for euphemisms suggested by Baker, the connections to biological components at the roots of sociological concepts had been, as I have shown above, crucial both to the establishment of scientific authority in the early decades of the field's development and conceptually central to the discipline's overarching purpose. Yet, the denial of African American culture was a consequence of the premise of the independence of culture from biological race which made sociology one of the few areas of white culture to take seriously the idea of biological racial equality. For this reason, the field attracted many African American intellectuals who were willing to varying extents to accept or overlook the erasure of African American culture.

By 1903, the year in which W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* was published, the *AJS* was still publishing articles primarily concerned with defining and refining sociology as a field, but it was also publishing studies and book reviews on issues such as labor and unions, how to deal with juvenile delinquents, the comparative treatment of women across cultures, and the position of African Americans in American society. Surprisingly, given the extent of institutionalized racism in the United States at

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[39] Lee D. Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 22.

the time, many of the articles and reviews in the *AJS* dealing with the topic of race were written by African Americans. However, the proportionately high number of reviews and articles on race by black scholars in the first decades of the *AJS* was also attributable to the minimal interest of white sociologists in the topic before the large-scale northern migration of the African American population beginning in the 1910s. In his study of the history of black sociology, John H. Stanfield accounts for the lack of writing on the "Negro problem" by white sociologists by explaining that, "it was widely assumed the Blacks were the South's problem [...] and professional sociology was still very much a mid-Western and Eastern discipline."[40]

One of the earliest articles in the *AJS* focusing on race relations was by an African American student at the University of Chicago. Monroe N. Work's "Crime among the Negroes of Chicago" was published in September 1900 while Work was studying for a BA in Philosophy. Work would soon go on to become the first African American to be awarded an MA by the Sociology department at University of Chicago, and his article is an excellent example of sociology presented using the formal and stylistic conventions of the natural sciences.[41] Work systematically presents the data he has collected concerning the demographics and related details of arrests in Chicago, presenting each variable with minimal comment or analysis. His conclusion is presented in the language of evolution and degeneration. He acknowledges that one possible hypothesis to account for the gradual annual increase in crime among the black population of Chicago is "that the negro is retrograding." He also offers a counter-hypothesis: "may we not say that, since his emancipation, he has been in a transitional state – a transition from a state of slavery to one of freedom? During all these years he has been endeavoring to adjust

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[40] John H. Stanfield, *Historical Foundations of Black Reflective Sociology* (Walnut Creek, Calif: Left Coast Press, 2011), 146.
[41] Rayford W. Logan and Michael R. Winston, eds., *Dictionary of American Negro Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1982), 667.

himself to his new environment. […] In those places where his economic condition is the best his crime rate is the lowest."[42] In this way, Work subtly deploys facts and statistics to make the case for the benefits to society as a whole of improving the conditions of the black population without making overt emotional appeals to either morality or compassion.

Work was also the author of the first review of W.E.B. Du Bois to be printed in the *AJS*. Like Work's presentation of his own research, this review of *The Negro Artisan* offers little comment other than to describe Du Bois's conclusions as "very interesting and important."[43] Work quotes Du Bois extensively, and does not overtly mediate between the *AJS* readership and Du Bois's own words. His choice of passages for quotation seem somewhat weighted, however, focusing on points at which Du Bois makes concessions concerning the character of black workers such as, "the slavery-trained artisans were for the most part careless and inefficient," or, "there are signs of lethargy among these artisans, and work is slipping from them in some places."[44] Such concessions are clearly both made and emphasized in order to create the impression of objectivity and to gain credibility in the eyes of a predominantly white readership for other observations that indict the white status quo for actively oppressing African Americans. In Du Bois's original study, this type of concession is couched in the history of the opportunities to improve that have been denied to black workers by white slave owners and, later, landlords, business owners, and bankers, placing the responsibility for the realization of the full potential of black workers at least in part on white society. However, outside the context of Du Bois's study, they seem to place the responsibility

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[42] Monroe N. Work, "Crime among the Negroes of Chicago. A Social Study," *American Journal of Sociology* 6, no. 2 (September 1, 1900): 222.
[43] Monroe N. Work, "Review: The Negro Artisan. By W.E.B. DuBois," *American Journal of Sociology* 8, no. 6 (May 1903): 854.
[44] quoted in ibid., 855.

for improving the lot of the African American race on individual self-improvement and the conscious effort of each worker to adopt the traits necessary for success in white society.

One of the few white scholars to work extensively on race relations before 1910 was Alfred Holt Stone. Although he was not a trained sociologist, but rather a Southern planter and a lawyer at the time of its publication, his book *Studies in the American Race Problem* became widely influential among sociologists. His account of "race friction" was even incorporated into Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess's 1921 textbook *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, one of the foundational texts of the discipline. In an address to the American Sociological Society in 1907 (reprinted in the *AJS* in 1908), Stone argues that aversion to contact with "Negros" on the part of Anglo-Saxons is inborn, while slavery produced conditions which allowed for more friendly relations to develop between white masters and black slaves:

> The attitude of the northern man toward the matter of personal association is really the natural attitude of the white man. It is the unconscious expression or feeling of instinctive racial antipathy in its elementary form. The attitude of the southern man toward the same association is in reality the wholly artificial product of the relations made possible by slavery.[45]

"Race friction" is the unavoidable result of close contact between Anglo-Saxons and large numbers of members of the "dark" races, and is particularly exacerbated when dark individuals begin to demand social and political equality.[46] The only solution to the problem of race friction, according to Stone, is for one of the races to acquiesce to a subordinate social position, as the black slaves ostensibly did in the antebellum era.[47]

The discussion of Stone's address which followed at the meeting of the American Sociological Society was also reprinted in the following issue of the *AJS*. This discussion

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[45] Alfred Holt Stone, "Is Race Friction Between Blacks and Whites in the United States Growing and Inevitable?," *American Journal of Sociology* 13, no. 5 (March 1, 1908): 685.
[46] Ibid., 679; 680-681.
[47] Ibid., 681.

consisted of short papers by eight other sociologists, historians, statisticians, and economists, and according to Stanfield, provides a fairly representative cross-section of the various positions held within the social sciences about whether the "Negro problem" was a national, or purely Southern, problem.[48] It also furnishes an overview of the range of opinions of the African American population current within field of sociology in the early twentieth century. The discussants range from those who, like Stone, felt that strict social and legal control in areas with concentrated black populations, and acceptance of inferiority on the part of African Americans, were the only ways to avoid racial tension and violence, to W.E.B. Du Bois, who called for empirical investigations into the range of living conditions of African Americans as the first step toward finding genuine solutions.[49]

Many of the discussants express the view that it is Northern politicians and "friends of the negro" who are responsible for the tensions surrounding race relations. Ulysses G. Weatherly, founder of the American Sociological Society, argues that the real tension is between the white populations of the North and the South:

> Since emancipation, likewise, the northern friends of the negro have probably injured his interests by imprudent agitation in favor of his rights in the southern states. The southerner believes that he understands the negro and that the northerner does not. He therefore resents an interference which he regards as both unintelligent and insulting to himself.[50]

J.W. Garner also blamed the actions of white individuals for increasing tension surrounding race relations, but placing the bulk of the responsibility on Southerners, citing the "recent rise of a new school of politicians in the South who have discovered in the agitation of the negro question an open door to political success."[51] John Spencer

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[48] Stanfield, *Historical Foundations of Black Reflective Sociology*, 147.
[49] Walter Francis Willcox et al., "Discussion of the Paper by Alfred H. Stone, 'Is Race Friction Between Blacks and Whites in the United States Growing and Inevitable?,'" *American Journal of Sociology* 13, no. 6 (May 1, 1908): 835.
[50] Ibid., 823.
[51] Ibid., 830.

Bassett treats inciting racial antagonism as a cheap but easy political trick for Southern politicians, insisting that, "although many of them do not approve of making the negro question a chief political issue, there will probably always be ambitious men who by championing it make themselves influential."[52] Such discussions of race in sociological journals frame problems of black identity solely in terms of how the presence of black Americans affected white Americans, and entirely efface questions like those raised in *Souls* of how black Americans can successfully be at once black and American within American society.

Even sociologists who were apparently supportive of black cultural leaders and their concerns regarding the role of African Americans in society tended to redirect discussions of those concerns to their effect on white Americans. Bassett, for example, who famously came close to losing his job at Trinity College (now Duke University) for claiming that Booker T. Washington was the greatest man to be born in the South in a hundred years with the sole exception of Robert E. Lee, nevertheless also speaks out against African American enfranchisement in his contribution to the discussion of Stone's paper. The Fifteenth Amendment represents, in his eyes, an unnecessary imposition of the North on the South. He remarks that, "in forcing negro suffrage on the South and on the nation the radicals of the North so distorted the formerly accepted views and interpretation of the Constitution that the southern people felt they would be justified in overthrowing it by any means possible," again shifting the discussion of race relations away from actual contact between the black and white population to make it a question of the political relations between the white North and the white South.[53]

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[52] Ibid., 827.
[53] Ibid., 826.

Of course, many sociologists were not at all sympathetic to the goal of social equality, arguing instead that sociological methods should be used to prevent, rather than promote, the integration of African Americans into American society. A serious concern for several of the respondents to Stone's paper is the spread of the supposed "Negro problem" into the North through mass migration of African Americans from the rural south to urban environments. Because Northerners did not know how to properly manage "the Negro," several of these sociologists posed wistful questions about hypothetical situations in which migration was eliminated, or anxiously described African Americans as "pouring into the north."[54] Weatherly complains that increasing northern migration "will augment the southern negro's unrest under the social restraints that are now imposed upon him, and will, by opening an easy road of escape, render him less willing to submit to such restraints."[55] Garner argues that social restraints should be increased, with more severe penalties for the crimes most commonly committed by black men and an increased police force in cities with large African American populations.[56] He even goes so far as to propose that "it is worth considering whether something might not be done to check the movement of the negroes to the cities and keep them subject to rural environment where, as Booker Washington has observed, their ideal conditions are best attained."[57] This is perhaps an extreme example of the urge within the field of sociology to adjust the mechanisms of so-called social evolution, but it demonstrates the severe and arguably wilful lack of understanding of the conditions underlying racial tension and black urban crime.

Only Du Bois's own response to "Is Race Friction Between Blacks and Whites in the United States Growing and Inevitable?" shows any real engagement with either

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[54] Ibid., 832, 833.
[55] Ibid., 824.
[56] Ibid., 831.
[57] Ibid.

sociological methodologies or the goal of eliminating racial tensions by working toward true racial equality, and in the context of the responses from other sociologists, even the qualified faith he expresses in the power of truly scientific empirical sociological studies appears overly optimistic. Du Bois was, as the annotation at the head of his printed response to Stone's paper explains, unable to attend the 1907 meeting of the American Sociological Society, and his paper apparently did not arrive in time to be read out on the day with the other responses. It is, nevertheless, an impassioned and incisive addition to the printed version of the discussion. Du Bois impeaches the scientific validity of the sociological discussion of race relations, observing that "the data upon which the mass of men, and even intelligent men, are basing their conclusions today, the basis which they are putting back of their treatment of the Negro, is a most ludicrous and harmful conglomeration of myth, falsehood, and desire."[58] He also points out the absurdity of expecting African Americans to acquiesce to a position of social inferiority: "it is peculiarly dangerous for a people of today, who expect to keep up with modern civilization, to base their hope of peace and prosperity on the ignorance of their fellows or the lack of aspiration among working-men on the survival of such virtues for instance as we expect and cultivate in dogs but not in men."[59] The enforcement of Jim Crow laws and general social inferiority across racial lines is, according to Du Bois, both unscientific and anti-modern, and flies in the face of Small's rhetoric concerning the increasing dependence on the interrelations of different people for building national economic success. Although Du Bois saw potential in the application of the empirical methods of sociology in the cause of racial equality, he faced deeply entrenched resistance to the actual deployment of those methods. Even if the objective studies he called for were

[58] Ibid., 836.
[59] Ibid., 834.

carried out on a large scale, the framework of ideas within the field concerning national unity and assimilation were more likely to foster programs aimed at assimilation through the elimination of cultural differences, rather than true acceptance and equality for African Americans on their own terms.

For early twentieth-century sociologists who dismissed the implementation of the extreme social control advocated by Southerners like Stone, Gardner, and others as impracticable, the only remaining alternative for addressing the problem of integrating African Americans into society was assimilation. The sociological concept of assimilation as it was understood in the early twentieth century is most clearly seen in the work of Robert E. Park. As the northern migration of the black population increased, African American communities and their interactions with white communities gradually became of greater interest to white sociologists. Over the course of his career, Park developed a cyclical theory of race relations in which conflicting races developed from contact through conflict and accommodation to eventual assimilation. Park would become a controversial figure within the field of sociology by the late twentieth century. Stanford Lyman argues that Park's assimilation theories were far more progressive than those of contemporaries such as Ward or Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who proposed that the lower classes of African Americans be "enlisted" into an "army" and essentially made into a governmentally owned cheap labor force for the improvement of Southern property value.[60] Baker, on the other hand argues that the logical conclusion of Park's theories is that there was no distinctly African American culture worth preserving.[61] Nevertheless, for Park and most of his contemporaries, assimilation became the apparent goal, either explicitly or implicitly, in the sociological study of race relations. The possibility of

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[60] Stanford M. Lyman, *Militarism, Imperialism, and Racial Accommodation: An Analysis and Interpretation of the Early Writings of Robert E. Park*, Studies in American Sociology ; v. 3 (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1992), 8.
[61] Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture*, 2010, 24-26.

assimilation relies on Boas's assertion of the independence of culture from race and implies that there is no inherent biological inferiority or superiority between races (though during the accommodation phase, according to Park's cycle, one race will commonly take on the role of superiority).[62] The accepted mechanism of assimilation was self-improvement, particularly through thrift. Circumstances such as those described by Du Bois in his study of *The Negro Artisan* and highlighted by Steward which work to inhibit individual self-improvement would be viewed as significant problems by sociologists. The push toward assimilation created a dilemma for African Americans working for social equality in that it incorporated many attractive principles, including political and economic rights, but at the same time it denied the possibility of African American cultural particularity and glossed over the institutionalized racism that obviously stood in the way of the practical realization of political, economic, and social equality.

In 1913, ten years after the publication of *The Souls of Black Folk*, Park published a study in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* entitled "Negro Home Life and Standards of Living" that served almost as a rebuttal to Du Bois's chapters on the economic and social conditions of black farmers in the Black Belt. It is difficult to say whether this article was intended to refute Du Bois's conclusions or to demonstrate the degree of progress made over the course of ten years, but contrary to Du Bois's depictions of hopeless debt and financial exploitation of black farmers by white landowners and merchants, Park emphasizes the comfort and cleanliness of the farmers' homes and the all-important thrift behind their financial stability. While Du Bois exposed the near impossibility of avoiding debt, Park claims that, "A thrifty farmer […] can reduce the amount of his purchases at the store to almost nothing" by growing his own

[62] Ibid., 22.

vegetables, raising his own livestock for meat, and growing his own sugar cane.[63] This is in direct contrast to Du Bois's findings that, due to land rents being collected in the form of cotton and all credit being based on the mortgaging of a farmer's cotton crop, almost all of a farmer's land would be planted in cotton so that he could afford his rent and the supplies he would need at the outset of the growing season (e.g. a mule and cotton seed).[64] Unless a farmer already had significant capital to hand at the outset, it would be nearly impossible for even the thriftiest farmer to set aside enough land for growing edible crops to feed a family and any livestock for a year. Park's work shifts responsibility for any financial hardships experienced by black southern farmers onto their own character flaws, in contrast with Du Bois's conclusion that such hardships are not only inherent but intentional in the external economic frameworks of white capital.

To further support his underlying argument that black Americans should adopt white habits and values, Park emphasizes success stories, citing the largest fortunes left by black men, the farm manager from Georgia who sublet his land and had $5,000 in savings toward buying the plantation he currently rented, or "one of the most successful farmers in Kansas" and largely avoiding discussion of unsuccessful farmers.[65] When he moves on from depicting rural life to depicting urban life, he claims that "wherever Negroes have had to win their way by competition with the white man they are, as a rule, not only more efficient laborers, but they have invariably adopted the white man's standards of living."[66] Again Park provides a series of success stories of successful and thrifty artisans and businessmen (with the exception that laborers such as miners are described as "wasteful and improvident").[67] As positive and flattering as Park's

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[63] Robert E. Park, "Negro Home Life and Standards of Living," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 49 (September 1, 1913): 152.
[64] Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 124.
[65] Park, "Negro Home Life and Standards of Living," 148; 154.
[66] Ibid., 155.
[67] Ibid., 157.

assessment of the standards of living of some black individuals may sound, it is framed as being fundamentally predicated on the adoption of white customs and values, ignoring institutionalized mechanisms of oppression and insisting on assimilationism at the individual level as the key to improving quality of life for African Americans.

The models of black equality and black identity made available by sociology ultimately proved to be as inadequate for Du Bois as those provided by anthropology. In fact, in an article by Park about the conflicts between "racial temperaments" he echoes Boas's assessment of the descendant of slaves as being cut off from their cultural roots: "there is every reason to believe, it seems to me, that the Negro, when he landed in the United States, left behind him almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament."[68] This was a commonly held assumption in early twentieth-century sociology. Weatherly also expressed a similar view in the discussion of Stone's American Sociological Society paper on race friction, insisting that, "on the side of cultural and institutional development the negro's history was almost a blank until he was brought to America as a slave."[69] What remains, conveniently for Park, is a perfect case study for testing his hypothesis about the influence of what he defines as racial temperament. Park wishes to demonstrate the ways in which such a temperament selects and reinterprets the cultural forms of an external culture, and according to his interpretation, African Americans provide a population in which this can be observed without any of the distorting influence of pre-existing cultural heritage.

By suggesting that African Americans had been isolated from their African heritage, Park is, whether intentionally or not, undermining the public perception of the

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[68] Robert E. Park, "The Conflict and Fusion of Cultures with Special Reference to the Negro," *The Journal of Negro History* 4, no. 2 (April 1, 1919): 116.
[69] Willcox et al., "Discussion of the Paper by Alfred H. Stone, "Is Race Friction Between Blacks and Whites in the United States Growing and Inevitable?," 824.

authenticity of African American culture in an era which, as I have demonstrated in previous chapters, was intensely preoccupied with such authenticity. Baker argues that it was this failure to recognize the authenticity of African American culture that shaped the racial politics that developed from the contrast between Boasian anthropology, which emphasized cultural particularity, and Park's sociology, which emphasized assimilation.[70] The ancient and authentic had become the domain of anthropology and were subject to that discipline's program of conservation. Without such authenticity, African American culture fell squarely into the domain of sociology and its push toward the erasure of black cultural difference.

***The Crisis* and its Relationship to Sociology as a Science**

In his history of the Chicago school of American sociology, Martin Bulmer includes a brief account of Du Bois's career as a sociologist in which he claims that Du Bois's involvement in the NAACP and subsequent founding of *The Crisis* represent an "abandon[ment of] academic social science and [a] turn toward intellectual activism." Bulmer attributes this change to the difficulty Du Bois faced in securing adequate funding for his research.[71] While Bulmer's assessment of Du Bois's motives for altering the course of his career is fair, I would argue, based on the contents of *The Crisis*, that the shift in Du Bois's career was also due in part to his ambivalence toward the sociological program of assimilation. I would also argue that, although Du Bois was no longer focused on conducting structured field research and publishing in scientific journals, he constructed *The Crisis* in such a way as to both engage with the content of many of the

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[70] Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture*, 2010, 25.
[71] Martin Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology: Institutionalization, Diversity, and the Rise of Sociological Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 66.

key sociological debates concerning race and to replicate the mechanisms approved by sociologists for generating consensus about truth claims.

Du Bois's approach to navigating the conflicting terms of the public debate about race in *The Crisis* reflects his theory of double consciousness, though with a difference. In the chapter of *Souls* entitled "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," he describes double consciousness as an awareness of being at once American and black, and therefore an outcast from American society.[72] In *The Crisis*, while there is certainly an awareness of the outcast status of African Americans, there is a greater focus on the positive aspects of otherness. Du Bois's editorials and the selections of texts he approved as editor work to simultaneously justify African American culture as a discrete entity with ancient roots and inherent value, yet also to demonstrate that there is no appreciable difference in the values and capabilities between black and white Americans. He builds the argument that African American culture deserves to be celebrated, preserved, and perpetuated while at the same time attempting to maintain the support of those promoting racial uplift through assimilation.

The NAACP as a whole was often accused of having assimilationist tendencies in its early decades, due in part to the fact that its leadership was almost exclusively white.[73] The progressive, philanthropic mind set of early board members such as Moorfield Storey and Mary White Ovington would have been heavily influenced by sociological thought. Moorfield Storey, the first president of the NAACP, seems to have espoused some version of Park's race relations cycle and his concepts of primary and secondary assimilation. In a lecture on racial prejudice from a series of lectures published

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[72] Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 38.

[73] Jenny Woodley, *Art for Equality : The NAACP's Cultural Campaign for Civil Rights*, Civil Rights and the Struggle for Black Equality in the Twentieth Century (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 65.

as a book entitled *Problems of Today*, Storey insists that if either black or immigrant groups remain isolated from mainstream American culture, the result will be racial tension. Therefore, "we must persuade them to become members of our family."[74] By depicting the nation as a family, Storey implies that the primary assimilation of individuals into intimate groups such as families can be taken as a direct model for the secondary assimilation of racial groups into the nation as a whole, a process Park describes as much more complex and challenging. Storey also displays the focus on change on the individual level prevalent in contemporary sociological writing on race which created what Baker describes as "a powerful narrative of individual uplift and collective blame."[75] High crime rates, poor sanitation, and ignorance are attributed to African Americans as a demographic category, but black individuals can potentially overcome these obstacles through striving for an education, and both African American and immigrant individuals can improve their personal lot and the future of the nation by choosing to be 'Americanized'.

Mary White Ovington, one of the co-founders of the NAACP, had even closer ties to the field of sociology. Her sociological study of the living conditions of African Americans in New York City around 1910, *Half a Man*, was reviewed in the November 1911 issue of the *AJS*, and her review of Harry H. Johnston's *The Negro in the New World* was printed the previous month in the September 1911 *AJS*. The thesis of *Half a Man* is that equal access to the same socio-economic conditions enjoyed by white Americans is a necessary precondition for making fair judgements concerning the supposed inferiority of people of African descent. Although her explicitly stated vision of the solution to the race problem is a heterogeneous cosmopolitanism, there is an

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[74] Moorfield Storey, *Problems of To-Day* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), 145.
[75] Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture*, 2010, 27.

obvious undercurrent of assimilationism in her choice of supporting details intended to prove that black people are not inherently inferior.[76] For example, in the chapter concerning the conditions in which children are raised in the black tenements of New York City, Ovington describes the pleasant atmosphere of even the poorest home where "there is an opportunity for the mother to spend some time in the home" in terms reminiscent of the ideal Victorian household:

> Pictures decorate the walls, the sideboard contains many pretty dishes, and the table is set three times a day. Meals are not eaten out of the paper bag common on New York's East Side, but there is something of formality about the dinner, and good table manners are taught the children.[77]

Even in the face of poverty, black women have the potential to be 'the angel in the house': perfect examples of the cleanliness, decency, and respectability valued by middle-class white Americans. In this way they are even more readily culturally assimilated than the immigrant population of New York's East Side, an argument stressed throughout Ovington's study.

Ovington's book also provides some context for the importance of respectability for Du Bois and other equal rights activists of the turn of the twentieth century. Ovington begins her account of contemporary living conditions for African Americans in New York with a survey of the history of those conditions, beginning with the institution of slavery in the eighteenth century. In this overview, she mentions the 1854 legal case of Elizabeth Jennings, a nineteenth-century Rosa Parks, who refused to get out of a public horse-drawn streetcar when ordered to on the grounds of her race. She successfully sued the Third Avenue Railroad Company, and, in the words of the New York *Tribune* from the 23rd of February 1855, "railroads, steamboats, omnibuses, and ferryboats will be

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[76] Mary White Ovington, *Half a Man: The Status of the Negro in New York* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1911), 227.
[77] Ibid., 64.

admonished from this as to the rights of respectable colored people."[78] This quote from the *Tribune* suggests that the rights of African Americans were predicated on their respectability, a term which could be defined broadly, but tends to imply an adherence to middle-class American values of hard work, sobriety, cleanliness, and Christian standards of moral conduct.

Before the era of the Harlem Renaissance it was difficult to argue in favour of racial equality without resorting to some degree of assimilationism due to this link between rights and respectability, but also due to a lack of available alternative models. Even before founding the NAACP and subsequently *The Crisis*, Du Bois's famous assertion of intellectual equality in *The Souls of Black Folk* sets up white European culture as the measure of intellectual achievement:

> I sit here with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls. From out the caves of evening that swing between the strong-limbed earth and the tracery of the stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn nor condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the Veil.[79]

Likewise much of his writing on the economic plight of African Americans in the rural South implies that, under improved circumstances, their way of life would be modelled on white standards of respectability. In the chapter entitled "The Quest of the Golden Fleece" Du Bois describes in detail the negative influence of inadequate housing, the peonage system which guarantees perpetual debt and thus a perpetual lack of motivation, and the historical factors which led to what was then viewed as sexual immorality. "There is little or no prostitution among these Negroes," he explains, "and over three-fourths of the families […] deserve to be classed as decent people with considerable regard for

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[78] Quoted in ibid., 23.
[79] Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 102.

female chastity," but there is a high instance of family groups being broken up through desertion. "It is the plain heritage from slavery," he asserts:

> In those days, Sam, with his master's consent, 'took up' with Mary. No ceremony was necessary, and in the busy life of the great plantations of the Black Belt it was usually dispensed with. If now the master needed Sam's work in another plantation or in another part of the same plantation, or if he took a notion to sell the slave, Sam's married life with Mary was usually unceremoniously broken, and then it was clearly to the master's interest to have both of them take new mates. This widespread custom of two centuries has not been eradicated in thirty years. […] The Negro church has done much to stop this practice […]. Nevertheless, the evil is deep seated, and only a general raising of the standard of living will finally cure it.[80]

If there is a difference in the morals and standards of behavior between white Anglo-Saxon Protestants and rural black farmers, it is one that was created and perpetuated by circumstances imposed on the black farmers by white society. Under improved conditions, the differences in behavior will diminish over time, and, presumably, the equality of respectability between black and white Americans will lead to equal rights and treatment.

In *The Crisis* Du Bois continued to deploy the sociological paradigm of assimilation, and many of his efforts were focused on demonstrating the capacity of African American citizens for achievement on the economic, moral, and artistic terms defined by white American society. Du Bois adopted more than this basic paradigm, however. By publishing a range of literary writing by black authors along with reports of intellectual and economic success stories about black men and women, Du Bois amassed a body of essentially sociological data concerning the equal ability of African Americans to contribute to a range fields of cultural and economic production. Furthermore, through his use of print symposia and reviews of scientific literature, he attempted to create in *The Crisis* the same mechanisms and forms of intellectual exchange found in scientific journals and used for the legitimation of truth-claims in the scientific field.

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[80] Ibid., 121.

Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of the field of scientific production is a useful tool for thinking about what Du Bois attempted to achieve in *The Crisis* in terms of establishing the truth of the claim that African Americans should be considered the political and social equals of white Americans. In *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, Bourdieu argues that scientific fields can make claims to producing objective truths because such fields are

> universes in which a social consensus is set up regarding truth but which are subject to social constraints favouring rational exchange and obeying mechanisms of universalization such as cross-controls; in which the empirical laws of functioning that govern interactions imply the implementation of logical controls; in that, for once, there is an intrinsic force of the true idea, which can draw strength from the logic of competition; in which the ordinary antimonies between interest and reason, force and truth disappear.[81]

In other words, the social structures of exchange and competition inherent in scientific fields create an environment in which, through the use of designated rules and instruments, the truth of an idea can be tested in ways that lead to a consensus that is based on factors beyond pure self-interest and power. This is not to say, however, that symbolic capital is not an important factor in who decides on what the designated rules are, and Bourdieu also notes that "symbolic capital flows to symbolic capital" because "the scientific field gives credit to those who already have it."[82] In *The Crisis* Du Bois attempts to replicate the sense of subjecting claims about race to the scrutiny of a community of scientists, and evaluates the extent to which such claims were based on the agreed upon rules of scientific inquiry. His inclusion of the writings and ideas of well-established social scientists along with critical analysis of the work of scientists who are obviously biased against African Americans is an attempt to attract the symbolic capital that *The Crisis*, as a black publication, lacked while undermining the symbolic capital of his opponents.

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[81] Bourdieu, *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, 82.
[82] Ibid., 56.

Horace Mann Bond's critique of the intelligence tests used by white psychologists to demonstrate the supposed inferiority of black children is a clear example of exposing the "rules of the game" established by white scientists.[83] Published in the same year as Du Bois's own satirical evaluation of a study of the relative aptitudes of white, black, and immigrant children, Bond's article takes an ironic tone which both marks a departure from the genre of scientific papers and simultaneously highlights the lack of true scientific rigor in the work of the white psychologists in question. Bond comments on the confirmation bias inherent in the methodology of these psychologists:

> First, one must have a *white* examiner; a group of *Negro* children; a test standardized for *white* children tested by *white* examiners; and just a few preconceived notions about regarding the nature of "intelligence," the degree to which Negro children are endowed, if at all, with this faculty and the *fact* that the social status of Negro children need not be considered as an extra allowance for scores different from whites [original italics].[84]

As in Du Bois's piece on Nathaniel Hirsch, discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, the ironic tone helps guide the reader toward an understanding of the accepted scientific principles violated by the white scientists in question – in this case controlling socio-economic variables. As a result of studies conducted in this way, Bond explains, continuing in his heavily ironic vein, "though we had a sneaking suspicion that this [the inferior intelligence of black children] was the fact all along, we are now able to fortify our prejudices with a vast array of statistical tables."[85]

Bond then adroitly co-opts the scientific credit he has taken from the white psychologists he critiques to supplement the credit he lacks due to his status as a black scientist by demonstrating that his own studies, showing the equality of intelligence between black and white children of similar socio-economic status, adhere more faithfully to the rules of scientific investigation. "The writer of the present article […]

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[83] Horace Mann Bond, "Some Exceptional Negro Children," *The Crisis* 34, no. 8 (October 1927): 257.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

broke one of the rules at the beginning," he confesses, "for he believed that, as white investigators are able to gain fullest *rapport* with white children, the same thing might be true of Negro testers with Negro children. Also, instead of discounting environment to begin with, he kept it in mind as a possible factor [original italics]." By using irony throughout Bond invites *Crisis* readers to participate in the critique, tacitly providing the knowledge of the scientific field necessary for them to recognize and evaluate scientific capital themselves – a strategy frequently employed in the magazine.

Du Bois used *The Crisis* to fulfil, to some extent, the function of a scientific journal in order to create a visible public forum in which to establish the legitimacy or truth of ideas. In addition to publishing articles with overtly scientific content which reclaimed scientific authority from white scientists who abused it by failing to apply scientific principles in their work, Du Bois also employed structural elements that echoed scientific journals and conferences. Printed transcripts of scientific speeches represented a very common genre of article in scientific journals including both *Science* and the *AJS*, a genre frequently borrowed by Du Bois in reprinting talks by Loeb, Boas, and other well-known scientists. Du Bois went even further in reproducing the structures of scientific communication, however, with the series of articles entitled "The Negro in Art: How Shall He Be Portrayed?: A Symposium," which first appeared in the March 1926 issue. Its form echoes similar discussions which took place either in print or at scientific conferences, such as the one Du Bois himself contributed to on the question "Is Race Friction Between Blacks and Whites in the United States Growing and Inevitable?" published in the *AJS* on May 1, 1908, discussed earlier in this chapter. It consists of a series of responses to a survey constructed by Du Bois and sent out to a cross-section of both black and white artists and writers who demonstrated an interest in African American culture. The responses to this survey, printed serially in several issues of the

magazine, are in themselves qualitative sociological data which readers are given the opportunity to compare and evaluate for themselves. The series also generates a sense of ongoing conversation and debate within a community of experts similar to the communities created through scientific journals and conferences. Although the questions posed by Du Bois in the survey are not entirely scientific in their scope, the series blends the disparate elements of *The Crisis* to treat cultural and racial issues in a scientific manner.

By employing the structures used by scientists and the editors of scientific journals to create a public sphere in which ideas about race could be evaluated outside of the racially oppressive structures of mainstream science, Du Bois achieved multiple simultaneous goals. He was able to provide a space for refuting racial science, he was able to accumulate scientific authority for the views about race expressed in the magazine, he was able to amass and present his own sociological data on race, in the form of survey responses, cultural artifacts such as art, poems, and short stories, as well as photographs and news items, and most importantly, he was able to construct a primarily black readership equipped with the necessary skills for evaluating and understanding racial science and its social implications.

"Men of the Month" as Sociological Data in *The Crisis*

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois presents a set of case studies showing the damage inflicted on black communities, families, and individuals in the agrarian South by the peonage system, which serves as an indictment of the failure of the Reconstruction to provide an environment in which freed slaves could establish independent and successful lives and make positive contributions to American society. The recurring editorial department in *The Crisis* entitled "Men of the Month," which first appeared in

May 1913, also provides what amount to miniature case studies, collected from obituaries, correspondence, or fragments of news, of a much different subset of the African American population. The stories found in "Men of the Month," as the department's title suggests, were primarily stories of people of color who were able to overcome "the handicap of race, and the disadvantages felt by every colored man in this country," to become successful in business, professional fields, the military, the church, or in academia.[86] In foregrounding black success stories, Du Bois is co-opting a strategy used by Park to support his belief in assimilation by showing that black success depended on the adoption of white values and habits at an individual level and re-deploying that strategy to inspire both hope and resistance to oppression. A brief survey of only five editions of "Men of the Month" taken at annual intervals includes a nationally recognized dentist, a civil war veteran, three graduates of Yale, Harvard, and/or Columbia Universities, four college professors, two of whom were also college presidents, a missionary, two federal government officials, an extremely successful business man who ran multiple businesses as well as owning over one hundred real estate properties, and two philanthropically-minded women praised for their virtue and generosity.[87] Many of these individuals were ex-slaves or the descendants of slaves and grew up in extreme poverty. The brief accounts of each individual are frequently accompanied by photographic portraits, which function in part to ensure that there is no misunderstanding about the race of the individuals in question.

These portraits are visually very similar to the portraits of celebrities and public figures found in other illustrated generalist American magazines in the early 1910s. Like the photographs that accompanied profiles of prominent public figures in contemporary

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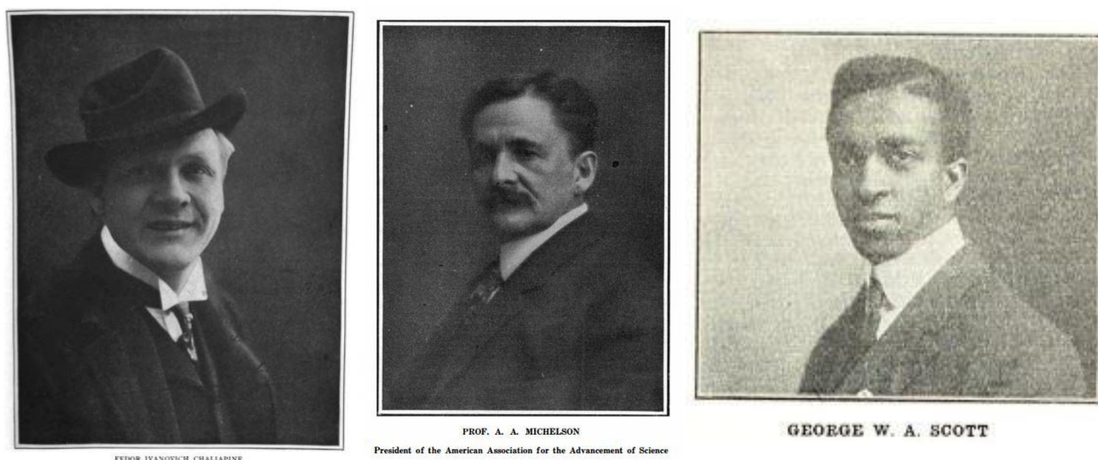
[86] "Men of the Month," *Crisis* 2, no. 1 (May 1911): 11.
[87] These examples are taken from the "Men of the Month" department in *Crisis* 2, no. 1 (May 1911); 4, no. 1 (May 1912); 6, no. 1 (May 1913); 8, no. 1 (May 1914); and 10, no. 1 (May 1915).

magazines marketed to white middle-class audiences, the photographs printed in "Men of the Month" were primarily formal portraits with the occasional addition of press photographs. The formal portraits, as can be seen below, focus the viewer's attention on the face of the subject through the use of a plain dark background, the subject is looking toward the camera, and the subject is usually dressed in professional attire. In both *Scientific American* and the *Century*, the figures shown with portraits generally have some claim to national or international fame.



Left: Opera singer Fedor Ivanovich Chaliapine, published in the *Century* December 1911. Image courtesy of the Hathi Trust, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112001586335;view=1up;seq=255.

Center: President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science Professor A.A. Michelson, published in *Scientific American* January 7, 1911. Image courtesy of the *Scientific American* archive at Nature.com, http://www.nature.com/doifinder/10.1038/scientificamerican01071911-8.

Right: Columbia graduate George W.A. Scott, published in the *Crisis* May 1911. Image courtesy of The Modernist Journals Project, http://library.brown.edu/cds/repository2/repoman.php?verb=render&id=1308146594546752&view=pageturner&pageno=11.

Chaliapine, shown above, is described in a lengthy profile piece as one of the best singers in Russia.[88] Michelson, likewise, is described as reaching one of the most prominent public positions available to American scientists as president of the American

[88] Henry Finck, "Chaliapine, The Russian 'Mephistopheles,'" *The Centruy* 81, no. 2 (December 1911): 230-37.

Society for the Advancement of Science.[89] Significantly, in the case of the portraits in "Men of the Month," the subjects are frequently not previously known to the *Crisis* readership. Scott, for example, is a recent college graduate in search of a job.[90] Through their similarity to portraits of public figures commonly found in other contemporary periodical publications, the portraits themselves help to elevate the status of the individuals described in "Men of the Month" to that of public figures. Thus, in addition to verifying the race of the men and women profiled in "Men of the Month" and to providing a personal identity that readers can feel a connection with, the portraits printed in this section of *The Crisis* create an unspoken implication that, for men and women of color, achievements such as graduating from college in a country that enforces institutionalized racist policies such as Jim Crow laws should be seen as being as significant as achieving nationwide fame in one's profession.

The stories found in "Men of the Month" demonstrate the talent, moral fiber, intelligence, and perseverance to be found among the African American population, and are, on one level, intended to serve as an inspiration to readers of *The Crisis*. They also attest to the ability of black men and women to achieve success on the same terms as white men and women, and pose by implication the question of how much more black Americans could achieve and contribute if they were not hindered by the obstacles of racial prejudice and poverty. In addition to inspiring black readers, they constitute a body of data which refutes the assertions of many white sociologists, politicians, psychologists, and others that black Americans have nothing to contribute to American

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[89] Marcus Benjamin, "Prof. Albert Abraham Michelson," *Scientific American* 104, no. 1 (January 7, 1911): 8.
[90] "Men of the Month," May 1911, 11.

society except degradation, crime, and moral dissolution unless they can be compelled to remain in their proper place on Southern farms.[91]

Du Bois also uses "Men of the Month" to reiterate a point often made in *The Crisis* about the inaccuracy of the widespread belief in the inherent physical and intellectual inferiority of black children as compared to white. In the edition of "Men of the Month" for May 1915, one of the individuals honored is Lizabeth Niell, who won the title of "perfect baby" in a Washington D.C. "Better Babies" contest.[92] Out of 379 white and black babies, only two scored as well as or better than Lizabeth, though the local paper skews the perception of her achievement by naming her "best colored baby," and failing to report that her score of 99% is based on comparison with white babies as well as black.[93] This story is worthy of inclusion in "Men of the Month" because it participates directly in the debates surrounding biological essentialism and eugenics. If black babies have the potential to be as healthy and well-developed as white babies, it demonstrates that it is the environmental conditions produced by institutionalized racism and the wide-spread poverty that results from such racism, and not essential eugenic inferiority, that lead to any broad statistical gaps between white and black children.

Lizabeth's story, as proof of the excellence of her parents, along with the stories of philanthropists, missionaries, preachers, hard-working businessmen who created fortunes for themselves from nothing, and virtuous mothers show the respectability and the potential for assimilation, so important to sociologists like Park, among the African American population. The sheer cumulative numbers of individuals recognized in "Men of the Month," which ran for over a decade, were equally as important as the details of

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[91] See Willcox et al., "Discussion of the Paper by Alfred H. Stone, 'Is Race Friction Between Blacks and Whites in the United States Growing and Inevitable?'"
[92] "Men of the Month," *Crisis* 10, no. 1 (May 1915): 14.
[93] Ibid., 15.

the individuals' stories, creating over time the perception of a sample size that could not be statistically ignored. In spite of the difference in intent, however, the strategy of collecting and foregrounding black success stories as sociological data does not fully escape its underlying connections to the sociological framework of success-through-assimilation in that the unchallenged standards for success are inherently white standards. Equality, in sociological terms, could not easily be separated from externally imposed models of white American identity.

Poetry and Black American Identity in *The Crisis*

The externally imposed value of respectability persisted as an important theme in *The Crisis*, both in terms of morals and in terms of literary style. Moral respectability was emphasised through the extensive coverage of church news, biographical profiles of black clergymen and middle-class professionals such as lawyers and doctors, and the charitable activities of black women's clubs and committees. From a literary perspective, the respectability of black writers was demonstrated through the extensive publication of extremely conventional verse. Although today the most celebrated literary aspect of *The Crisis* is the publication of innovative works by Langston Hughes and other Harlem Renaissance writers, the vast majority of the poetry printed by *The Crisis* in its early decades was formally conservative, and much of this conventional verse dealt with love, nature, and the goodness of God, themes with established histories within the European poetic tradition.

As acting editor from December 1918 to June 1919, and literary editor from 1919 until 1927, Jessie Fauset had a significant influence on the selection of poetry printed in

The Crisis.[94] Her position on the function of African American art in general and of the purpose of the poetry published in *The Crisis* differed from Du Bois's in ways that eventually led her to resign her editorial position. By 1926, these differences were clearly visible within the pages of the magazine. In the September 1926 issue, Fauset's "Looking Glass" column extensively quoted Langston Hughes on the importance of black writers articulating their lived experience and their identity, regardless of the impression they make on white readers: "We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly, too."[95] Fauset's selection of poems by Hughes, Cullen, and other Harlem Renaissance writers over the course of her career as literary editor demonstrates that she supported Hughes's views on the value of self-expression and the development of a distinctively and authentically black literary tradition.

In contrast to Hughes's, and by extension Fauset's, insistence on the right of the artist to acknowledge both beauty and ugliness, Du Bois was equally vocal about his view that black writers had a responsibility to create art that was beautiful: "the ultimate art coming from black folk is going to be just as beautiful, and beautiful largely in the same ways, as the art coming from white folk […], but […] until the art of the black folk compels recognition they will not be rated as human."[96] His belief that black poetry would be beautiful in the same ways as white poetry contradicted the goals of Hughes, Cullen, and other Harlem Renaissance poets to create poetry that could not be written by a poet who was not black. On an aesthetic level, Du Bois and Fauset had entirely different

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[94] Teresa Zackodnik, "Recirculation and Feminist Black Internationalism in Jessie Fauset's 'The Looking Glass' and Amy Jacques Garvey's 'Our Women and What They Think,'" *Modernism/modernity* 19, no. 3 (December 18, 2012): 439.
[95] Jessie Fauset, "The Looking Glass," *The Crisis* 32, no. 5 (September 1926): 246.
[96] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art," *The Crisis* 32, no. 6 (October 1926): 297.

visions for black poetry. On a practical level, however, Du Bois was willing to incorporate the poetry selected by Fauset into his larger project of demonstrating the achievements of African Americans. As much as Fauset rejected the idea that art should be propaganda, respectability remained a dominant guiding principle in her writing and editorial practice.[97] The selection of poems discussed in this chapter spans the periods both before and during Fauset's tenure as literary editor, and represent the broad trends within the magazine over the course of its first two decades.

Although Fauset's own poetry, which Du Bois frequently printed before Fauset became literary editor, has at times been criticised as being old-fashioned or conventional, it was not noticeably dated in comparison to much contemporary poetry by white writers selected for magazines by white editors.[98] Fauset's "Again it is September" from the September 1917 issue of *The Crisis* is very similar in style and content to Marjorie Allen Seiffert's "November" from the November 1917 issue of *Poetry*. Each of these sentimental love poems reads more like the verse found in the marginal spaces of newspapers or mass market magazines than the experimental verse associated with little magazines, and yet each is set apart on its own page, implying that it should be a focal point. Monroe's selection of "November" speaks to her desire to raise the status of poetry by making it accessible to a broad readership, many of whom valued the perceived beauty of lyric poetry structured around conventional rhyme schemes and rich in natural imagery as much as or more than the more challenging and esoteric work of poets like Pound and others now labelled as modernists.[99] The placement of "Again it

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[97] David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 122–123.
[98] For a discussion of the history of the undervaluing of many black female poets, see Maureen Honey, *Shadowed Dreams : Women's Poetry of the Harlem Renaissance* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 1-2.
[99] For example, Mike Chasar uses early twentieth-century poetry scrapbooks to argue that contemporary readers appreciated both modernist poetry and poetry that represented "the very tastes [modernist poetry] was seeking to correct" alongside each other. See *Everyday Reading: Poetry and Popular Culture in Modern America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 31.

is September" in *The Crisis*, framed by an illustration by Laura Wheeler of a woman sitting alone on a bench in a formal garden, emphasizes the poem's conscious participation in the European poetic tradition. If the two poems were somehow each transposed to the magazine in which the other was published, there would be no indication that they were out of place. This is the very point that Du Bois sought to strike home in publishing such poems.

On the subject of conventional poetry written by black authors in the early twentieth century, Michael Bibby claims, "use [by black poets] of the self-conscious artifice of romantic and Victorian poetic forms that had historically structured white cultural hegemony during the postbellum era might be viewed as an important mode of resistance in a period when literal and figurative access to such conventions was not only tangibly fraught but historically novel."[100] He makes this argument to support his claim that modernist studies overlooks formally conventional poetry by African American writers despite embracing the formally conventional poetry of white male writers such as Wallace Stevens or Robert Frost, and that New Negro poetry ought to be included in discussions of American literary modernism.[101] While I would make a similar case for some of the more politically aware poems I will discuss below, attempting to include poetry such as either Fauset's or Seiffert's under the heading of modernism, broadly defined as a movement based on experimentation at the level of form and language and on the search for adequate responses to modernity, does not account accurately for the motivations underlying its production, and would also threaten to dissolve 'modernist' as a meaningful literary category. Rather, Seiffert's poetry is representative of a discrete category of popular poetry which was not intended to act as a response to modernity

[100] Michael Bibby, "The Disinterested and Fine: New Negro Renaissance Poetry and the Racial Formation of Modernist Studies," *Modernism/modernity* 20, no. 3 (2013): 496-497.
[101] Ibid., 486.

except insofar as it resists modernity by instead participating in the established tradition of inward-gazing lyricism and established modes of rhyme and metre. For black women, in particular, the deployment of Romantic poetic strategies were the authentic result of a "search for roots and identity [which] led inward, moved backward to an imaginary Eden where sensitivity could survive and even flourish," and were suited to the expression of the related "notion that truth lies within, uncorrupted by one's external circumstances."[102] The fact that poetry in this vein by white writers was published in *Poetry* demonstrates that it was not as universally overlooked in its day as it has now become.

This poetry also was valued in *The Crisis* specifically because of the "tangibly fraught" nature of its use of European modes of writing. As Jennie Woodley explains, one major function of the poets selected for publication in *The Crisis* was to "create the forms of 'high' culture that the NAACP believed middle-class white Americans valued and admired."[103] Poetry written in conventional forms was more highly valued by the majority of middle-class white Americans and the segment of the white literary elite represented by established publications such as the *Atlantic Monthly* than the controversial, experimental verse forms that have since come to constitute the canon of literary modernism. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the publication of poems such as Seiffert's in *Poetry*, formally conventional poetry was also still respected to some extent by the segment of the white literary elite that was concerned with re-establishing the cultural relevance of poetry and revising expectations about what poetry could and should do. Art that was respectable and indistinguishable from that of white artists would make the politically charged statement that, on the level of the individual, black poets'

[102] Honey, *Shadowed Dreams*, 18.
[103] Woodley, *Art for Equality*, 37-38.

subjectivities and poetic capabilities could mirror those of white poets and thus constitute examples of successful assimilation.

For middle-class black women writers like Fauset and Georgia Douglas Johnson, whom I will discuss at greater length below, use of classical form and Romantic lyricism in poetry may also have felt more natural, given that their educations would have emphasized the Western literary canon, and they may have been themselves biased against the jazz rhythms of the black working class.[104] Before they received positive critical attention from Gloria Hull, Maureen Honey, and other critics in the 1980s, black female poets of the Harlem Renaissance were often dismissed on the grounds that their poems "imitate[ed] European traditions and contribut[ed] little that was useful to the creation of a Black aesthetic."[105] Honey argues that, though subtle, the poetry and prose of Fauset, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Nella Larson, and the other women writers of the Renaissance do convey the unique experience of being black and a woman. If their choice of form and diction is largely conventional, according to Honey, it is due in part to the widespread "racist parodying of Black folk culture," which made "classical forms" attractive as "tools that promised to transcend a bleak political situation."[106]

Fauset's poetry is an example of successful assimilation in the sense that she masters the techniques of traditional white European poetry. Fauset herself held conflicting attitudes toward the prospect of gaining racial acceptance through assimilation into white society. Her deep involvement in fostering the writers who brought about the Harlem Renaissance, discussed at length by Abby Arthur Johnson, reveals her commitment to the development of black writing that was distinctly different

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[104] Honey, *Shadowed Dreams*, 6.
[105] Ibid., 2.
[106] Ibid., 5-6.

from white writing and racially self-aware.[107] Fauset's prose writing is also markedly more explicitly engaged with political issues concerning race. Her best-known novel, *Plum Bun* (1929), explores the controversial subject of passing, that is, of a light-skinned person of colour leading the life of a white person by concealing their racial background. Her interest in this practice and its racial ethics, along with the conclusions she points to in the novel, suggest that she favors racial integration while maintaining distinctive black cultural practices and community networks.

As Kathleen Pfeiffer observes, Fauset maintains "that literature crosses boundaries of space and time and creates communities of like-minded artists."[108] Pfeiffer argues based on the evidence of a letter written by Fauset to Jean Toomer in 1922 that Fauset sees literature, and the arts in general, as at least potentially exempt from the normal racial boundaries, and the artist as a non-racial individual. She goes so far as to encourage Toomer to engage in a form of literary passing when she suggests that since he has "no prejudicing appearances," he should "try to break into the newspaper game in one of the big cities."[109] Pfeiffer goes on to demonstrate, however, that the view that the arts offer a non-racial sphere in which passing is simultaneously easy and unnecessary is ultimately questioned and undermined in *Plum Bun*.[110] That Fauset's poems are published primarily in *The Crisis*, rather than being more widely circulated in magazines intended for primarily white readers, shows the limits of this way of thinking and demonstrates the need for additional strategies for promoting racial equality both within and beyond the field of literature. Fauset herself participated in such additional strategies

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[107] Abby Arthur Johnson, "Literary Midwife: Jessie Redmon Fauset and the Harlem Renaissance," *Phylon* 39, no. 2 (June 1, 1978): 143-53.
[108] Kathleen Pfeiffer, "The Limits of Identity in Jessie Fauset's *Plum Bun*," *Legacy* 18, no. 1 (2001): 79.
[109] Quoted in ibid.
[110] Ibid., 85.

by using her role as literary editor of *The Crisis* to further the careers of more overtly political writers such as Claude McKay, and more experimental writers like Toomer.

Racial activism and poetry were closely linked, and the most common category of poetry printed in *The Crisis* was overtly political verse written in conventional forms. One example of such poetry is a poem by Georgia Douglas Johnson titled “A Sonnet: To the Mantled.” Johnson, who was one of the most prolific poets in *The Crisis*, was also a playwright, an anti-lynching activist, a teacher, and the hostess of an important Harlem Renaissance literary salon at her home in Washington DC. She was not only one of the most frequent contributors of poetry to *The Crisis*, but was also the most widely published black female poets of her day. Between 1918 and 1928 she published three volumes of poetry, whereas no other black female poet was able to publish even one.[111]

The theme of “To the Mantled” is the coming overthrow of racial prejudice when black people everywhere will finally “cast their mantles by” and “rise:”

> And they shall rise and cast their mantles by,
> Erect, and strong, and visioned, as the day
> That rings the knell of Curfew o'er the sway
> Of prejudice—who reels with mortal cry
> To lift no more her leprous, blinded eye.
> Reft of the fetters, far more cursed than they
> Which held dominion o'er the human clay,
> The spirit soars aloft, where rainbows lie.
> Like joyful exiles, swift returning home,
> The rhythmic chanson of their eager feet,
> While voices, strange to ecstasy, long dumb,
> Break forth in major cadences, full sweet.
> Into the very star-shine, lo! they come,
> Wearing the bays of victory complete![112]

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[111] Gloria T. Hull, *Color, Sex & Poetry : Three Women Writers of the Harlem Renaissance* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 178.
[112] Georgia Douglas Johnson, “A Sonnet: To the Mantled!,” *The Crisis* 14, no. 1 (May 1917): 17.

This message is couched in religious imagery, so that it is unclear in phrases such as "the spirit soars aloft" whether this victory will take place in this life or the next. However, the eventual downfall of racism is unambiguous, as evidenced by Jonson's invocation of a prophetic voice through her use of "shall" in the opening line.

The choice to write about the end of prejudice in a conventional form like the sonnet and in decidedly poetic diction complete with inversions and archaisms reflects the demands specific to African American literature as delineated by Kenneth W. Warren. Warren argues that African American literature is chronologically bounded by and inextricably linked with the conditions of Jim Crow segregation. As such, it was characterized by an awareness on the part of African American writers that their work would be viewed in both instrumental and indexical terms, an argument also raised by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.[113] In other words, texts by black authors would be judged not only on their artistic merit, but also on the degree to which they either furthered the cause of racial equality or "constitute[ed] an index of racial progress, integrity, or ability," or both.[114] Indexical pressure, the consciousness that a poem would be comparatively measured against a white standard, is one of the core factors behind Du Bois's assertion that "all Art is propaganda and ever must be."[115]

Georgia Douglas Johnson's racially-themed poetry was a direct response to such pressure. Her first volume of poetry, *The Heart of a Woman* (1918), was criticised for its lack of racial consciousness, which led her to make her next volume of poetry, *Bronze: A Book of Verse* (1922), deliberately more politically aware. Gloria Hull describes *Bronze* as "read[ing] like obligatory race poetry."[116] She quotes a 1941 letter from

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[113] Kenneth W. Warren, *What Was African American Literature?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 10; Henry Louis Gates, "Criticism in the Jungle," in *Black Literature and Literary Theory* (New York: Methuen, 1984), 5.
[114] Warren, *What Was African American Literature?*, 10.
[115] W.E.B. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art," *The Crisis* 32, no. 6 (October 1926): 296.
[116] Hull, *Color, Sex & Poetry*, 160.

Johnson to Arna Bontemps in which Johnson admits that she prefers to dwell on the happier aspects of her life rather than the suffering. Johnson explains, "perhaps that is why I seldom elect to write racially," but acknowledges that, "lest we forget, we must now and then come down to earth, accept the yoke and help draw the load."[117] Although much of Georgia Douglas Johnson's verse writing consists, like Jessie Fauset's, of intensely personal, lyrical love poetry, *The Crisis* chose to publish many of her more racially conscious poems. These poems are used as both quantitative and qualitative data upon which to base the magazine's twin central sociological conclusions that racial equality was both a biological fact, demonstrated by the quality of Johnson's poems, and a political imperative, demonstrated by the poems' content.

The well-known writer, diplomat, and political activist James Weldon Johnson also frequently contributed politically-themed poems in conventional forms to *The Crisis*. In a poem entitled "To America," he makes an even more pointed statement than Georgia Douglas Johnson's about the need to end racial prejudice. He asks America, personified as a woman in the illustration by Laura Wheeler that accompanies the poem, whether she would prefer the black population to be "Strong willing sinew in your wings/ Or tightening chains about your feet."[118] Couching the question of racial equality in essentially economic terms, albeit metaphorically, Johnson appeals to the interrelated socio-economic preoccupations of sociologists and echoes Du Bois's argument in *Souls* that if there are many ignorant, spendthrift, and criminally inclined black people creating a burden on white society, it is largely because enforced social inequality, and in the South the mismanagement of reconstruction, has put them in that position. There is clearly a tension in James Weldon Johnson's poetry, and in politically themed poetry in

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[117] Ibid., 179.
[118] James Weldon Johnson, "To America," *The Crisis* 15, no. 1 (November 1917): 13.

The Crisis in general, between the desire to rebel against the oppression of the white hegemony and a pragmatic acknowledgement of the advantages of appealing to the interest of white America to gain allies in the fight for racial equality.

This tension was manifested within the NAACP itself, especially in its early years. When James Weldon Johnson was first hired as field secretary to the organization in 1916, seven years after it was founded, he and Du Bois were the only two people holding administrative positions at the NAACP headquarters in New York who were not white. The white board of directors insisted that without predominantly white leadership, the organization would become alienated from the key sources of power in American society and so inevitably fail.[119] Johnson, however, successfully used his position as field secretary to build up black support within the organization, so that by 1920, 95 percent of the funds of the NAACP came from black contributors, and Johnson had enough personal supporters in the many branches he had helped to foster throughout the nation that he was able to secure the key leadership role of executive secretary.[120] As Sondra K. Wilson notes, Johnson's prominent roles both as a political organizer within the NAACP and as a writer and editor at the forefront of the Harlem Renaissance demonstrate how closely literature and politics were intertwined in the fight for racial equality.[121] It follows naturally, then, that the compromises between appeals to white power structures and black autonomy and empowerment would also be shared across both the political and the literary sphere.

The political overtones of the strategic selection and framing of poetry in *The Crisis* can be seen with greater clarity by way of contrast with the selection and framing

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[119] Sondra K. Wilson, *In Search of Democracy: The NAACP Writings of James Weldon Johnson, Walter White, and Roy Wilkins (1920-1977)* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 14.
[120] Ibid., 15-16.
[121] Ibid., 17.

of poems by black writers in *Poetry*. Based on the relative numbers of poems by and reviews of black writers and translations of and editorials about Native American poetry, it is clear that Monroe was far less interested in African American writing. The handful of reviews of volumes of poetry by black writers such as James Weldon Johnson and Countee Cullen are brief– usually no more than a page or two– compared with the extensive articles written by Monroe, Henderson and others on the significance of Native American translations and interpretations. One editorial from August 1920 by Helen Hoyt claims in italics beneath its title to review volumes by James Weldon Johnson, Charles Barton Johnson, Waverly Turner Carmichael, and Joseph S. Cotter. Of those four writers, only James Weldon Johnson and Charles Barton Johnson are mentioned by name in the text of the review, and only the latter of the two is quoted. Although the review begins by acknowledging that "the Negro race has given so much musically to America that we look eagerly for signs of what we may expect in poetical contribution," the brevity and the overall tone of the review suggest that Hoyt remains unimpressed by the achievements of black poets.[122] Hoyt's caveat that "a mere half-century after the Emancipation is too soon to make even a forecast" concerning the contribution of African Americans to American poetry feels both patronizing and, through the juxtaposition of "mere" and "century," somewhat disingenuous. The fact that she mentions dialect poetry twice over the course of what amounts to less than a page-worth of text implies that this is the type of verse that defines black poets.

Most of the poetry by black writers published in *Poetry* is not in fact written in dialect, though much of it does seem to be chosen for its tendency to confirm, when taken out of context of the rest the poet's oeuvre, the stereotype of the model emancipated slave. The pair of poems by Fenton Johnson published in December of 1921 under the

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[122] Helen Hoyt, "Negro Poets," *Poetry* 16, no. 5 (August 1920): 287.

heading “Two Negro Spirituals” are focused on the passionate Christianity and longing for righteousness of the speaker, who looks to heaven, not earth, for his reward after a life of toil: “I stooped and washed my soul in Jordan's stream/ Ere my Redeemer came to take me home.”[123] By grouping the poems under the phrase “Two Negro Spirituals,” the poems are also departicularized, appearing to represent the folk-art of a race, rather than the individual skill and expression of the poet himself. References to “morning in the cornfield” place the speaker in the agrarian and presumably Southern setting that was seen by many white Americans as the proper place for the African American population.[124] The chronologically closest poem by Fenton Johnson published in *The Crisis* on the other hand, shares the poetic diction of “A Dream” and “Wonderful Morning,” the poems comprising “Two Negro Spirituals,” but reveals a speaker revelling, not in religious salvation, but the beauty of his black mistress. “My Love” employs the conventions of the European poetic tradition to assert the superiority of black women over white women, creating a poem that is both superficially conventional and deeply political.[125] In *Poetry* Fenton Johnson’s work appears to confirm the white fantasy of the black poet as borrowing both language and religion to emulate white culture within acceptable limits. In *The Crisis*, his work demonstrates the capacity of black writers to assimilate what they choose from white culture while maintaining an independent cultural tradition of their own.

One of the more extensive reviews of an African American poet in *Poetry* was George H. Dillon’s April 1926 review of *Color*, Countee Cullen’s first book of collected verse. Like Hoyt, Dillon draws attention at the outset of his review to the association of African Americans with music by referring to *Color* as Cullen’s “first volume of musical

[123] Fenton Johnson, “Two Negro Spirituals,” *Poetry* 19, no. 3 (December 1921): 128.
[124] Ibid., 129.
[125] Fenton Johnson, “My Love,” *The Crisis* 5, no. 5 (March 1913): 240.

verses."[126] Although Dillon claims to be evaluating Cullen's work "simply as poetry," and not for its "racial significance," the review cannot escape the set of assumptions brought to Dillon's reading of the book based on Cullen's race.[127] In fact, Dillon's separation of Cullen's poetry from his race seems to be more of a strategy for avoiding difficult and controversial issues than a genuine assertion of Cullen's complete equality with white poets. Dillon praises Cullen's "serious purpose and careful work," and assures the reader that Cullen "will cultivate his fine talent with intelligence, and reap its full harvest."[128] The emphasis on work and the metaphor of agricultural labor, along with the earlier reference to music, read as veiled references to racial stereotypes and subtly inscribe limitations on Cullen as a poet. Dillon's primary critique of Cullen is what he calls Cullen's "rhetorical style" which "is surely neither instinctive in origin nor agreeable in effect."[129] The example he gives is of a line in which Cullen employs subject-verb inversion, a technique conventionally used in the European poetic tradition to elevate the diction of poetry and separate it from mundane, conversational language. Dillon's claim that such style is not instinctive to Cullen draws attention to the fact that Cullen is not a natural inheritor of this European tradition in Dillon's eyes. The aspects of Cullen's poetry that Dillon praises are its "mysterious simplicity, a note which Mr. Cullen has struck untutored," and its "poignant naïveté of expression."[130] Not only is it somewhat patronizing for Dillon, then only nineteen years old, to be commenting on the naïveté of Cullen's writing, but it is striking that Dillon's praise focuses on the racial stereotype of African Americans as uneducated and childlike, despite the fact that Cullen was at that time studying for a Master's degree in English at Harvard University.

[126] George H. Dillon, "Mr. Cullen's First Book," *Poetry* 28, no. 1 (April 1926): 50.
[127] Ibid., 53.
[128] Ibid., 50.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid., 52.

Although Dillon's review is essentially a positive one, it betrays the assumption that black writing ought to aspire to a naturalistic simplicity, rather than highly-educated sophistication.

While his work was not published as frequently as that of Langston Hughes or Georgia Douglass Johnson, several of Cullen's poems were printed in full or in part in *The Crisis* over the course of the 1920s. *The Crisis* also published a review of *Color* one month before Dillon's review was printed in *Poetry*. This review by Jessie Fauset, far from endorsing the kind of color-blind reading recommended by Dillon, praises Cullen as having "the feeling and the gift to express colored-ness in a world of whiteness," and she insists that "there is no universal treatment; it is all specialized."[131] Where Dillon dismisses any racial particularity, Fauset claims of Cullen's book that "it is in work such as this that the peculiar and valuable contribution of the American colored man is to be made to American literature."[132]

In an earlier issue before the publication of *Color*, Fauset had included excerpts of several of the poems that came to constitute the book in her unattributed editorial department called "The Browsing Reader." Here she also draws attention to the expression of his "racial consciousness" in poems like "Yet Do I Marvel" and "The Shroud of Color."[133] The excerpts she chooses from each of these poems evoke both the anguish and the resolve Cullen feels as the result of living with the aftermath of slavery in a world in which racial prejudice is pervasive. From "Yet Do I Marvel," she includes the final six lines:

> Inscrutable His ways are, and immune
> To catechism by a mind too strewn
> With petty cares to slightly understand
> What awful brain compels His awful hand.

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[131] Jessie Fauset, "Our Book Shelf," *Crisis* 31, no. 5 (March 1926): 238.
[132] Ibid.
[133] "The Browsing Reader," *Crisis* 29, no. 2 (December 1924): 80-81.

> Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:
> To make a poet black, and bid him sing!

This passage, which Fauset describes simply as "sombre," includes the exact phrase Dillon cites in his critique of Cullen's "rhetorical style."[134] The bleak and angry outlook Cullen portrays with such understated poignancy in language and style obviously learned from careful study of the European poetic tradition poses a subtle but real threat to white critics who would prefer to see African American poets keep to the realm of jazz and dialect poetry. Cullen's work as it is framed in *Poetry* is the work of a young and inexperienced poet struggling to find the voice best suited to him. As it is framed in *The Crisis*, it is the work of a highly intelligent, educated, and resilient young man who has found a way to express "colored-ness" in language that is undeniably equal in sophistication to that of any white poet. In the context of Du Bois's overarching sociological project in *The Crisis*, Cullen's work echoes his own articulation of the dilemma of "double consciousness." Cullen can be read in Fauset's review as the embodiment of the inner conflict between awareness of one's talents and awareness of one's internalized inferiority within a racially oppressive society. The skill and poignancy of Cullen's poetry is yet another piece of evidence set before readers of *The Crisis* demonstrating the fundamental equality of black Americans, and the injustice of racial hierarchies.

The Role of Egypt in both White and Black American Identity

While demonstrating the capacity of African Americans to participate to varying ends in conventional European-American culture was in itself a political statement, celebrating the differences between black and white American cultures was also an

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[134] Ibid., 81.

important if risky function of *The Crisis*. Because the push for assimilation from within the field of sociology relied on the erasure of African American cultural heritage, Du Bois as editor of *The Crisis*, along with other African American activists such as Alain Locke and James Weldon Johnson, turned to anthropological strategies related to cultural cataloguing and preservation to counteract the denial of African heritage taken for granted by Weatherly, Park, and even Boas. One of the main subjects of such efforts, in addition to Ethiopian cultural images such as the one of Bessie Moore discussed at the beginning of this chapter, was Egyptian culture. Although practitioners in the field of Egyptology may not have consciously considered themselves to be contributors to the construction of African American identity in the early twentieth century, this discipline, like the broader fields of anthropology and sociology, made key materials such as images of ancient Egyptian monuments, along with both images and actual collections of sculptures, paintings, hieroglyphic writings, jewellery, and even mummified remains available for viewing, analysis, and use both in intellectual debates about race and in the public imagination more generally. These images and objects were, of course, framed by the discourse of the Egyptologists who discovered, collected, and curated them, which inherently directed and limited their interpretation. Nevertheless, the degree to which visual materials can escape or exceed discursive framing left such materials open to re-interpretation and re-curation in settings like *The Crisis*.

Ancient Egyptian culture served, for Du Bois and other African American activists, as an iconic symbol of black American heritage, in part due to its pervasive presence in American popular culture and public imagination. One of the most striking visual features of *The Crisis* was its incorporation of the iconic imagery of ancient Egypt. From November 1911 to November 1912, the cover of each issue except for the Christmas and Easter numbers featured a sphinx head at the center of a pair of

outstretched wings just beneath the magazine's title. Illustrations by Aaron Douglas, such as the poster for the Krigwa Players Little Negro Theatre in the issue for May 1926, depicting a black figure sitting by a river with the a sphinx and a pyramid in the background, also contributed to keeping Egyptian culture fresh in the minds of readers. The front cover of the September 1926 issue featured a photograph of an Egyptian funerary mask similar to the now famous mask of King Tutankhamun, which had been rediscovered only a few years earlier in 1923. In addition to these visual elements, there were also articles on Egyptian culture and brief news segments and reviews of books relating to new discoveries in the fields of ancient Egyptian anthropology and archaeology. The purpose of the inclusion of Egyptian material is clear: to serve as evidence of the significant contributions of black cultures to world history.

Kantiba Nerouy's December 1924 article on African kings throughout history provides a clear example of the way in which Egyptology, despite its colonial basis, is repurposed to provide a cultural heritage that African Americans (and all people of African descent) can take pride in. Nerouy opens his article with a description of the lineage of Tutankhamun's wife, emphasizing the fact that she was black, and that it was his marriage to her that raised Tutankhamun to royal status, concluding his introduction by explaining that, "It is then this husband of a royal colored woman whose tomb, lately discovered, has aroused the civilized world to a new realization of the splendor of Egyptian civilization during these years."[135] Having established Egypt as an impressive kingdom through reference to the tomb of Tutankhamun, Nerouy goes on to describe the "black kingdom of Ethiopia" which not only overthrew Egyptian rule to establish its own kingdom in the southern region of Egypt, but which withstood the Persian forces which

[135] Kantiba Nerouy, "Tutankh-Amen and Ras Tafari," *The Crisis* 29, no. 2 (December 1924): 64.

overcame Egypt and "drove back the great Persian emperor, Cambyses, in 500 BC."[136] Thus Nerouy demonstrates that not only were some of the most famous rulers of Egypt either black themselves or owed their power to their ties to powerful black families, but that the entirely black kingdom of Ethiopia was even more powerful than much-celebrated Egypt.

The sphinx, because of its distinctive outline and the impressive size of the well-known monument at Giza, is one of the most frequently evoked symbols of ancient black culture in *The Crisis*. Du Bois deploys the simple statement "the great sphinx at Gizeh has the face of a Negro," as a self-evident argument in favor of the enormous potential of the African American culture to produce great art.[137] This statement seems to echo a passage quoted in *The Crisis* several years earlier from the *New York Evening Journal* in 1913 exhorting readers to think more carefully about the people they observe around them: "And the Negro, too, with a tired black face […].Possibly you despise his thick lips. But those lips are carved on every sphinx in Egypt's sands."[138] This unnamed author also felt that this statement needed no further commentary. If such a grand, iconic figure shared the features of African Americans, not only should those features not be denigrated, but the artists who originally created those impressive monuments may very likely also have been black, thus proving that African Americans possessed a formidable cultural heritage that demanded attention and respect.

American interest in ancient Egypt is as old as the American nation itself, but the late nineteenth century saw Egyptology emerge as a discipline which sought to define itself as having a scientific basis. In many ways the rise of Egyptology in America paralleled the development of anthropology. Like the field work carried out under the

[136] Ibid., 65.
[137] W.E.B. Du Bois, "Postscript: Criteria of Negro Art," *The Crisis* 34, no. 2 (April 1927): 70.
[138] "Opinion: The Negro in Egypt," *The Crisis* 7, no. 2 (December 1913): 77.

auspices of the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), institutionally supported expeditions to ancient Egyptian ruins became increasingly prevalent in the 1890s. Unlike the work of the BAE, however, the fieldwork sponsored by museums around the country was funded primarily by private philanthropists like the Rockefellers and the Hearsts, rather than directly by the United States government. The appeal of ancient Egypt captured the imaginations of many wealthy American collectors, but did not possess the same immediate political relevance as the anthropological study of Native American civilizations.

This is of course not to say that Egyptology existed outside of complex political concerns. It is impossible to understand the full significance of the field without discussing the context of British colonial occupation and rule in Egypt which, in its official capacity, lasted from 1914 to 1922, but in reality began in 1882 and lasted until the last British troops were withdrawn in 1956, four years after the successful 1952 Egyptian Revolution. The heyday of archaeological expeditions to explore ancient Egyptian ruins, therefore, coincided with British occupation, allowing European and American governments and institutions to appropriate and regulate distribution of ancient Egyptian artifacts. The primary regulatory body governing the work of archaeologists in Egypt was the Service of Antiquities.

Despite the dominant British influence in Egypt in the late nineteenth century, the leadership of the Service of Antiquities was exclusively French from the creation of the Service in 1858 until 1953. In his 1964 history of American Egyptology, John A. Wilson explains that, "the British control [of Egypt] was particularly effective in defense, policing, foreign affairs, finance, and public works. To the French they left the influence

on education and the arts, including archeology."[139] The director of the Service of Antiquities had the authority to grant or deny permits to conduct archaeological digs, to determine the fair distribution of artifacts found in the course of such digs, and to punish individuals perceived to be looters. Gaston Maspero, Director-general of the Service of Antiquities from 1881-1886 and again from 1899-1914, was described by Wilson as being rather open-handed with Egyptian antiquities: "when circumstances forced Maspero to give an excavator a poor division of his finds or no division at all, he saw to it that the man received other pieces from the Egyptian storerooms as a '*don gracieux*'."[140] Ancient Egyptian artifacts are here represented as relatively interchangeable to any but the most learned experts, based, presumably, on monetary and novelty value.

While Western archaeologists and even some known antiquities traders who were interested exclusively in profit were granted access to dig sites, retribution against local Egyptians who stumbled across ancient ruins on their own land and sold some of the artifacts they discovered was severe. The Service of Antiquities' collective desire to catalogue and control ancient objects was used to justify extreme and disproportionate cruelty on the part of European colonial powers toward colonized Egyptian individuals. Events such as those described by Wilson demonstrate the disregard of the colonial powers for the basic human rights of Egyptians, let alone their right to access and control their own cultural heritage. These and similar actions also demonstrate the high stakes Western cultures placed on the interpretation of the discovery of ancient artifacts. European control over both the excavation and the ownership (and thus, to some extent,

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[139] John A. Wilson, *Signs & Wonders upon Pharaoh : A History of American Egyptology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 68.
[140] Ibid., 69.

the curation) of Egyptian artifacts resulted in European control over the narrative and interpretation of Egyptian history.

One reason for the intense interest in the narrative of ancient Egyptian history was its implication in biblical and classical narratives. The Nile Valley was a key site in the conflict between biblical historiography and nineteenth-century positivist science. In the words of critic Scott Trafton, "the monuments of Egypt were placed in open conflict with the Bible in its role as secular record and made to function as a wedge between Egypt as a land of scriptural metaphor and Egypt as a land of scientific truth."[141] Furthermore, although specialists came to dispute the historical accuracy of biblical accounts of Egypt,[142] much of the popular perception of ancient Egypt in America, especially in the early nineteenth century, derived from the book of Exodus, in which the Egyptian Pharaoh is portrayed as a cruel tyrant who enslaves the Israelites, bringing down seven plagues from the Israelites' God on the Egyptian people, or from the book of Genesis in which the wife of an Egyptian slave owner unsuccessfully attempts to seduce Joseph, an Israelite slave. Thus Egypt was associated with abusive power and exoticized female sexuality. For the more highly educated in nineteenth-century America, these biblical narratives of Egypt were supplemented by narratives from classical authors such as the story of Cleopatra VII, another hyper-sexualized female figure.[143] Even as Egyptology became established as an academic discipline, beginning with the program founded by James Henry Breasted on his arrival at the University of Chicago in 1895, it remained difficult to separate it from biblical studies in the minds of the public. As Trigger explains, this problem was exacerbated by the prevalence of the

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[141] Scott Trafton, *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 19.
[142] Wilson, *Signs & Wonders upon Pharaoh*, 112.
[143] Bruce G. Trigger, "Egyptology, Ancient Egypt, and the American Imagination," in *The American Discovery of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Nancy Thomas (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1995), 23.

study of ancient Egyptian tombs and temples, creating the impression that ancient Egyptian culture was preoccupied with religion and death.[144] Whether the work of Egyptologists and the discoveries of archaeologists connected to the Service of Antiquities supported or refuted biblical and classical accounts of Egyptian history, the implications of such research for arguments about the accuracy of sources so close to the heart of Western cultural identity increased the stakes for maintaining Western (European) control over Egyptian cultural artifacts.

Ancient Egyptian history also held important consequences for constructions of twentieth-century European and American identity because of its role in competing theories about the rise and spread of civilization and technology in the ancient world. Breasted, the leading figure in twentieth-century American Egyptology, proposed Egypt as the birthplace and epicentre of modern Western civilization, even going as far as explicitly replacing Hebrew literature as the source of Western morality in *The Dawn of Conscience* (1933):

> It is now quite evident that the ripe social and moral development of mankind in the Nile Valley, which is three thousand years older than that of the Hebrews, contributed essentially to the formation of the Hebrew literature which we call the Old Testament. Our moral heritage therefore derives from a wider *human* past enormously older than the Hebrews, and it has come to us rather *through* the Hebrews than *from* them. The rise of man to social idealism took place long before the traditional theologians' 'age of revelation' began. It was a result of the social experience of *man himself* and was not projected into the world from outside.[145]

Breasted argued that, based on the interpretation of Egyptian history he developed, many of the fundamental assertions of Christianity—the religion still at the core of twentieth-century American identity— concerning the fall of man and morality as divine revelation, would need to be replaced by a humanist conception of an evolutionary model of morality.

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[144] Ibid., 30.
[145] James Henry Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), xv.

Breasted's diffusionist theory of civilization, which was broadly shared by other scholars such as the Australian anthropologist and anatomist Grafton Elliot Smith, constituted a break with late nineteenth-century theories of cultural development and was thus controversial intellectually as well as on religious grounds. As recounted in the previous chapter, late nineteenth century ethnology was based on a paradigm of cultural evolution from savagery to civilization in which individual cultures each evolved separately through a predictable series of stages. The diffusionist view, on the other hand, proposed that similarities between disparate cultures could be accounted for using concrete evidence which showed points of contact at which a more advanced culture passed its technologies, religious beliefs, social structures, and/or arts on to a less advanced culture through trade or migration. Breasted consistently argued for Egypt as the epicentre of a series of waves of diffusion radiating outward to the Mediterranean and parts of Asia. Smith's theory extended beyond this, arguing that Egyptian culture was the ultimate source of culture in Polynesia and the 'pre-Columbian' Americas as well.

In 1916, Smith issued a direct challenge in *Science* to American anthropologists to re-evaluate the materials they were collecting from indigenous peoples in light of his theory:

> In asking you to publish this crude sketch of views which I have set forth in more detail elsewhere I wish especially to appeal to that band of American ethnologists, whose devoted labors in rescuing the information concerning the ethnography of their country have called forth the admiration of all anthropologists, seriously to reconsider the significance of the data they are amassing.[146]

The evidence of material culture as well as accounts of ritual practices, mythology, and social structures, according to Smith, demonstrated that:

> the curiously distinctive culture-complex which was gradually built up in Egypt between the years BC 4000 and BC 900 began to be widely diffused, at some

[146] G. Elliot Smith, "The Origin of the Pre-Columbian Civilization of America," *Science* 44, no. 1128 (August 11, 1916): 195.

> time after the latter date, west, south and east, and that the latter (the easterly migration), with many additions and modifications which it received on the way (in the Soudan, East Africa, and Arabia; in the Mediterranean, Phoenicia, Armenia and Babylonia; in India, Ceylon, Burma and the Malay Peninsula; in Indonesia and China; and finally in Polynesia) ultimately reached the Pacific coast of the Americas and leavened the aboriginal population of the vast continent with the ferment of the ancient civilizations of the Old World.[147]

Smith's theory, at least as he presented it in *Science*, was critiqued by both Alexander Goldenwiser and Philip Ainsworth Means in letters to the editor in the issue for October 13 of the same year. Means, an American anthropologist who specialized in ancient Peruvian cultures, questioned the feasibility of the timeframe Smith allows for diffusion from Egypt all the way to the Americas, as well as the reasoning behind which cultural traits survived the diffusion process and which, like wheeled vehicles and advanced designs for ships, did not.[148] Goldenwiser, a student of Franz Boas, did some fieldwork among the Iroquois in Ontario, but was chiefly interested in the theoretical side of anthropology, rather than the practical side. He criticised Smith's assertions that American anthropologists had not adequately considered the role of diffusion in their accounts of indigenous American cultures, and questions the validity of Smith's methodological approach to defining exactly what constitutes proof of diffusion on a large scale.[149] Both Means and Goldenwiser defend the possibility of "independent origin" existing alongside diffusion, and see no compelling reason to attribute the more advanced features of indigenous American cultures to being "leavened […] with the ferment of […] the Old World" rather than similar solutions developed independently to similar problems.

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[147] Ibid., 191-192.

[148] Philip Ainsworth Means, "Some Objections to Mr. Elliot Smith's Theory," *Science* 44, no. 1137 (October 13, 1916): 534.

[149] A. A. Goldenweiser, "Diffusion vs. Independent Origin: A Rejoinder to Professor G. Elliot Smith," *Science* 44, no. 1137 (October 13, 1916): 531, 533.

It was not only the content of Smith's theory which promoted controversy, however, but also his mode of expression. In the same 1916 *Science* article he accused his intended audience of American anthropologists of adhering to "the rigid dogma" of the "similarity of the working of the human mind," which accounted too easily for similarities between geographically separated cultures.[150] When any such similarities are encountered, Smith explains, rather than seeking out evidence of contact between those cultures, "all that is necessary is to murmur the incantation and bow the knee to a fetish certainly no less puerile and unsatisfying than that of an African negro."[151]

Smith's casual racism here reveals not only a deep irony, coming from a man who spent the bulk of his career arguing that all of human culture diffused from a highly developed African civilization, but also the wilful racial blind spot common to the majority of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Egyptologists. In his biographical account of Smith's work in Egyptology and anthropology, David Crook defends Smith from the charge of racism claiming that he did not "succumb to the biological determinism that flourished at the time and that underlay much racist ideology in the west" and that because he believed that all humans belonged to the same *Homo sapiens* species, his diffusion theory should not be "dismissed as racist."[152] Crook may be correct that Smith's biology did not conform to the most extreme forms of racial science, but he drastically over-simplifies the question of race as it relates both to Smith and to Egyptology more broadly. Smith's verbal racism can in fact be seen as a necessary means of signalling his conformity to dominant assumptions about racial hierarchy in order to mask the radical implications of his biological theories.

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[150] Smith, "The Origin of the Pre-Columbian Civilization of America," 190.
[151] Ibid., 191.
[152] David Paul Crook, *Grafton Elliot Smith, Egyptology & the Diffusion of Culture: A Biographical Perspective* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), 22-23.

Egypt has always occupied an overtly ambiguous role in the formation of American national and racial identity.[153] Since its founding, America has been associated with ancient Egypt. One important historical parallel between America and Egypt was that in the nineteenth century, both were "ancient and newly discovered" since the Louisiana Purchase, which opened up new territory for American exploration, was transacted just five years after Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, which opened the Nile Valley to European exploration. The analogies drawn between the Nile and the Mississippi were useful to the construction of the identity of a nation that was "all too self-consciously young."[154] However, these associations were double-edged: Egypt was a great and glorious empire, but simultaneously notorious for its dependence on the enslavement of the Israelites.[155]

In terms of racial identity, the associations between Egypt and America were even more complex. Even excluding the question of Egypt's African-ness, the implications of a white Egypt were problematic from a nineteenth- or early twentieth-century white American perspective: "Egypt was white but blasphemously pagan, Egypt was white but decadent and doomed to destruction, Egypt was white but held the Hebrews in bondage, Egypt was white but succumbed to amalgamation. Even at its whitest, Egypt cast a dark shadow."[156] Mid nineteenth-century ethnologists and Egyptologists actively struggled to rid Egypt of its associations with the broader African continent and the troublesome possibility that Egypt had been a black civilization. One of the most blatant examples of these efforts was the chapter on Egypt in *Types of Mankind*, in which Josiah Nott and George Gliddon use cranial measurement data and biblical historical accounts to argue that the ancient Egyptians constituted a distinct human type entirely separate from their

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[153] Trafton, *Egypt Land*.
[154] Ibid., 16.
[155] Ibid., 4.
[156] Ibid., 9.

African neighbors. Their outrage and disgust is palpable when they explain to the reader that, "For many centuries prior to the present, as readers of Rollin and of Volney may remember, the Egyptians were reputed to be *Negroes*, and Egyptian civilization was believed to have descended the Nile from *Ethiopia*!" [original italics].[157] Rather than admit that the ancient civilization could owe anything to so-called Negroes, Nott and Gliddon resort to a convoluted theory about intermediate yet completely distinct types:

> That the skins of Egyptians, in Grecian times, were much darker than those of Greeks and other white races around the Archipelago, there can be no question; nor that this complexion was accompanied sometimes with curly or frizzled hair, tumid lips, slender limbs, small heads, with receding foreheads and chins, which, by contrast, excited the wonder or derision of the fair-skinned Hellenes. But, while it must be conceded that Negroes, at no time within the reach of even monumental history, have inhabited any part of Egypt, save as captives; it may on the other hand, be equally true, that the ancient Egyptians did present a type intermediate between other African and Asiatic races [...].[158]

Latent within this account of the racial traits of the ancient Egyptians is also the assumption that no hereditary mixing could have occurred between the Egyptians and their black "captives," and the simultaneous fear that, as in America, this was not really the case. Theories such as Breasted's and Smith's which posited Egypt as the point of origin of world culture only intensified the ambiguity of America's relationship to Egypt. As the new Egypt, such theories implied that America would be the center of the modern cultural world, but at the same time left white Americans vulnerable to the fear of being the inheritors of African-ness. The "anxieties about human origin" that Trafton has seen as foundational to American Egyptology created conflicts and contradictions within the field that could be fruitfully exploited in the struggle to establish the legitimacy and even prestige of a distinct African American culture.[159]

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[157] Josiah Clark Nott and George R. Gliddon, *Types of Mankind: Or, Ethnological Researches Based Upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculpture, and Crania of Races and upon their Natural, Geographical, Philological, and Biblical History*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Lipincott, Grambo & Company, 1854) 212.
[158] Ibid., 217.
[159] Trafton, *Egypt Land*, 50.

It is this very debate about human origin that Langston Hughes engages with in "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," published in *The Crisis* in June 1921.[160] In this famous assertion of the ancient roots of African American culture, Hughes invokes four key rivers, each with a specific significance for building his argument: the Euphrates, the Congo, the Nile, and the Mississippi. The Euphrates was not only the site of one of the oldest known civilizations, but was also one of the rivers proposed by historians adhering to literal interpretations of the Bible as the site of the Garden of Eden.[161] Its inclusion in the poem, along with the Congo and the Nile, highlights the vast age of "colored" civilization, but also hints at the biblical notion of a single human progenitor in Adam. The Congo represents the heart of the "dark" African continent, tying the peripheral rivers of the Euphrates, Nile and Mississippi to the core of the contemporary idea of blackness. The Nile, of course, invokes the debate over the origin and spread of civilization, and Hughes's direct assertion that the poem's speaker "looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it" unambiguously claims ancient Egyptian culture as part of the heritage of African Americans. Juxtaposing the Mississippi and the Nile in successive lines within the poem foregrounds the parallel frequently drawn between the two rivers, framing America as a new Egypt as discussed earlier in this chapter.

As noted by both Fauset in a 1926 review of *Weary Blues*, and more recently by David Chinitz, Hughes's relationship to race was equivocal. Fauset notes that she does not "think of him as a protagonist of color,– he is too much the citizen of the world for that."[162] Chinitz argues that this cosmopolitan aspect of Hughes's identity meant that "he could not portray himself truthfully as the authentically black character he wanted to

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[160] Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," *The Crisis* 22, no. 2 (June 1920): 71.

[161] See also this exchange of letters on the subject: D. G. Brinton, "Current Notes on Anthropology (VII.)," *Science* 1, no. 18 (1895): 488-89; and J. William Dawson, "The Rivers of Eden," *Science* 1, no. 21 (1895): 575-76.

[162] Jessie Fauset, "Our Bookshelf: The Weary Blues," *The Crisis* 31, no. 5 (March 1926): 239.

be."[163] Chinitz attributes Hughes's limited use of the "lyric 'I'" in his poetry to this uneasiness about his ability to speak authoritatively for black Americans.[164] The "I" of "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" is obviously not identical with Hughes himself, but, as Chinitz asserts, "embodies a collective voice and articulates a historical consciousness that binds the past to the present."[165] Although both Chinitz and, less directly, Fauset ascribe Hughes's urge to speak for African Americans only through a disembodied and historicized collective voice to motivations specific to his personal circumstances, this tendency in Hughes's work speaks to a need to "bind the past to the present" that was also recognized by Du Bois as inherent in the African American condition. While other poems by Hughes that were printed in *The Crisis*, such as "The Negro" (January 1922) and "Being Old" (October 1927) function similarly in terms of a collective first-person speaker blending past, present, and future in their representations of African American identity, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" goes farther in terms of linking its claims to particular, contemporary anthropological debates over human origins.

James Smethurst asserts that the diction in "Rivers" is heavily influenced by Hughes's admiration for Carl Sandburg's poetry. According to Smethurst, "[Hughes's] diction shares with Sandburg's a plain, almost colloquial, but not conversational character" which constitutes "a generic 'American' language."[166] He sees Hughes's body of poetry as explicitly responding to the dilemma of dualism as posed by African American writers before him including Du Bois and Paul Lawrence Dunbar. As discussed earlier in this chapter, dualism in this context refers to the paradoxical experience of being simultaneously black and American, given that American culture

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[163] David Chinitz, *Which Sin to Bear?: Authenticity and Compromise in Langston Hughes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 42.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid., 43.
[166] James Smethurst, "Lyric Stars: Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Harlem Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 119.

rejected the idea of African Americans participating fully in American identity. "Rivers" is in fact inextricably bound up in this paradox: its language is American, yet it speaks to a specifically African heritage which runs deeper than American identity. At the same time it suggests that all civilizations and races, including white America, emerged from the same source, as emphasized through the repetition in the line "older than the flow of *human* blood through *human* veins" [my italics]. "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," then, fits perfectly within the overall project of Du Bois's *Crisis* in that it draws on both biblical and scientific arguments in order to promote racial equality by simultaneously arguing for a unique African American cultural heritage and for the cultural debt owed to Africa by all Americans, both black and white.

As Farebrother argues, depictions of Egypt in *The Crisis* do not constitute a "retreat into the past," but rather a component of an active strategy for developing a basis for resistance and solidarity.[167] The identification of Egypt with contemporary African Americans in *The Crisis* is further cemented by the news item directly following "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" in the June 1921 issue. The first man celebrated in the "Men of the Month" department for June was Saad Zaghlul Pasha, an Egyptian activist who had just returned to his country after being interned by the British government for publicly demanding Egyptian independence at a global peace conference. This article, appearing in the context of Hughes's references to the Nile and the pyramids, not only raised readers' awareness of the colonial oppression of the Egyptian people by the British, but constructed a sense of solidarity between African American readers and the people inhabiting the land seen as contributing to their own cultural heritage. An unspoken but clear parallel is drawn between British oppression of the present-day Egyptians and the

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[167] Farebrother, "'Thinking in Hieroglyphics': Representations of Egypt in the New Negro Renaissance," 220.

oppression enacted by white America. Juxtapositions of ancient and modern Egypt in *The Crisis* contribute to a broader critique of colonialism, not only in Egypt, but also in India and Ireland.[168] This anti-colonial discourse not only condemns the political and military actions of Britain and other colonial powers, but also by extensions calls into question the legitimacy of the white scientists whose racial theories and denials of a black ancient Egypt were based on research enabled by European colonial regimes.

Conclusion

Just as the white scientists who were invested in providing a supposedly scientific basis for the belief in the inherent inferiority of people of color drew on a range of fields from evolutionary biology to psychology to anthropometry, so Du Bois employed arguments, data, and paradigms from biology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and history to refute that belief. Lacking many of the institutionalized structures employed by white scientists, most notably a public forum for consensus-forming similar to the many scientific journals employed by white scientists to secure scientific capital for their emerging fields or defend the scientific capital of established fields, Du Bois used *The Crisis* to present both the theories and the data relevant to establishing a consensus about racial equality.

The terms of the scientific debates relevant to racial equality were established in *The Crisis* both through articles or transcribed addresses by prominent scientists, and through satirical accounts and critiques of the work of scientists who were obviously biased against people of color. The data Du Bois accumulated to support the theory of equality were presented in the form of "Men of the Month" and through collaborative symposia designed to foster a sense of consensus-building around his claims. The poetry

[168] Farebrother, 221.

printed in *The Crisis* functioned simultaneously as argument and as data, and both the conventional poetry and the more modernist verse like Hughes's were equally modern in that they were both grounded in contemporary scientific and political debate. African American culture was not directly the subject of institutional anthropology in the United States because it was politically more expedient to deny its authenticity and value, rather than recording and preserving it. However, questions concerning both white American and African American identity were deeply implicated in the anthropological, archaeological, and historical research carried out by Egyptologists. In *The Crisis*, as part of his response to the dualism he claimed all African Americans experienced, Du Bois deployed the strategies of sociology intended to solve the so-called Negro problem as well as the strategies of anthropology to foster pride in African American cultural heritage.

Du Bois's borrowing of structural and theoretical elements from the social sciences functioned very differently from Monroe's borrowing of the data and underlying assumptions of turn-of-the-century American anthropological data. Monroe's project was to incorporate scientific capital to demonstrate the renewed relevance and modernity of poetry in America, and to use the resources gathered by anthropologists to enrich a specifically American poetic tradition. Du Bois, on the other hand, was not borrowing from a scientific field but actively participating in the field of scientific production in the way he felt would be most effective and practical in accumulating consensus and cultural capital to his position that African Americans could contribute to American society on an equal footing to white Americans, and yet maintain a unique and proud culture of their own.

Conclusion

In his exploration of the formation of national identity in twentieth-century American literature, Walter Benn Michaels argues that for modernist writers, culture became the defining component of identity. The authenticity of one's culture, and particularly one's claim to American identity, was of central importance to writers engaged in what Michaels describes as nativist pluralism.[1] On the surface, pluralism appears to be a rejection of racial essentialism, but by substituting culture for race as the basis of identity, it in fact merely serves to solidify race as the prerequisite for culture.[2] Culture, for Michaels, becomes separated from blood, but authenticity of culture is defined by race. He gives examples of fictional Indian characters who are raised by European Americans but whose learned white behaviors are not enough to make them white.[3] He also cites examples of black characters who, through their behaviors, can fail to be black by passing successfully and yet cannot ever successfully become authentically white.[4] Culture is neither identical with heredity nor reducible to behavior, but consists in enacting the behaviors associated with one's heredity.

Both Monroe and Du Bois used their roles as editors of magazines to intentionally engage in the formation of American identity. Both editors were closely associated with the generation of modernist writers Michaels describes, but maintained models of identity that were associated with the previous generation. Nevertheless, the work they did paved the way for later developments in the way modernist writers thought about identity. For Monroe, redefining American poetic identity meant fusing the scientific

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[1] Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 14.
[2] Michaels, 14–15; 129.
[3] Michaels, 126–127.
[4] Michaels, 117–118.

authority of turn-of-the-century anthropological theory with her belief in the need for a distinctively American poetic tradition to articulate the spirit of both the nation and the age. Unlike the writers characterized by Michaels as engaged in nativist pluralism, Monroe's approach to national identity was rooted in an earlier universalism, justified by the anthropological writings she turned to as source material on Indian art and customs. Monroe participated in what Shari Huhndorf describes as "going native" and Philip Deloria terms "playing Indian," turning to an inversion of the relative values assigned to the traits of the European American self and the Native American other in order to both critique and reaffirm European American culture.[5]

Deloria uses the example of the history of the development of the Boy Scouts in America as a case study of the use of playing Indian in the early twentieth century. Ernest Thompson Seton, founder of the Woodcraft Indians summer camp program and later co-founder of the Boy Scouts of America, turned to what he saw as the primitive state of Indian civilization as a remedy to the "effeminate, postfrontier urbanism" that was degrading young Americans and American culture more generally.[6] Like Monroe, Seton's central concern was authenticity. As Deloria observes, "because those seeking authenticity have already defined their own state as inauthentic, they easily locate authenticity in the figure of an Other."[7] Seton and Monroe both believed that by embodying a more authentic Other, American children and American poets (respectively) could recapture the health and vitality that modernity and the urban threatened to erode. Like Seton's boy Indians, Monroe's poet Indians did not ultimately emerge as the dominant force in defining American identity in their respective fields.

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[5] Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 5; Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 101.
[6] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 96.
[7] Deloria, 101.

Huhndorf's analysis of the racial politics of going native, however, suggests that the impulse toward Indian poetry may have accomplished the required work regardless of its lack of critical success or historical longevity.

Huhndorf's central thesis is that "going native," rather than simply providing an escape from modernity or other moments of American social crisis, also reaffirms racial hierarchies and contemporary definitions of American identity.[8] European American colonization of the indigenous peoples of North America is at the core of American history and identity, and "going native" by embodying, adopting, and absorbing elements of Native American cultures allows European Americans to distance themselves from, evade responsibility for, and obscure the violence of their national past.[9] As I argued in chapter 2, the timing of the increasing frequency of publication of Indian verse in *Poetry* around the outbreak of World War I was not coincidental. Not only did it allow Monroe to place distance between American poetry and the violence of Europe, but by Huhndorf's logic, it also placed distance between American poets and America's own violent history. By dissociating poetry from the both past and present violence, Monroe could then position poetry as a means for cleansing national identity and moving forward into a future that could fulfill the promises of peace and prosperity through technological progress.

The primitivism found both in the Indian verse that Monroe promoted and in the art and prose writing of the circle surrounding Mabel Dodge Luhan in Taos, New Mexico, demonstrated an idealization of Native American cultures which required that Indians be conceptually separated from modernity.[10] Tisa Wenger argues that for many

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[8] Huhndorf, *Going Native*, 3,5,14.
[9] Huhndorf, 76.
[10] Tisa Wenger, "Modernists, Pueblo Indians, and the Politics of Primitivism," in *Race, Religion, Region: Lanscapes of Encounter in the American West*, ed. Fay Botham and Sara Patterson (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 2006), 107.

of the members of the Taos circle, primitivism led to direct contact with Pueblo communities, which in turn challenged and altered modernist points of view and allowed these European American writers and artists to begin to understand indigenous peoples as contemporaries, rather than as valuable artifacts frozen in time.[11] Monroe's primitivism, however, maintained its basis in nineteenth-century ethnology. Although she was sympathetic to many of the causes and political battles on behalf of Native American land rights described by Wenger as central to the development of Luhan, John Collier, Mary Austin, and others, Monroe did not foreground these issues in *Poetry*, nor did she spend as much time in direct contact with Native American communities. Like the late nineteenth-century ethnographers who remained at the core of her understanding of Indian identity, Monroe found what she defined as authentic culture in detailed recollections of traditional Native American rituals and practices, convinced that authentic Indians did not and could not exist within the world of the modern.[12]

For Du Bois, the drive to construct an identity that could be both black and American led him to fuse the scientific authority of sociological paradigms with a range of expressions of black achievement to structure *The Crisis*. When drawing on early African cultures, Du Bois worked to highlight how advanced black cultures were relative to their white contemporaries, rather than focusing on their primitivist potential to bring authenticity to modern art. Unlike primitivist modernists who located indigenous Others in a perpetual past, Du Bois intentionally forced readers to acknowledge Africa as the site of contemporary, modern cultures, as well as historical ones. While the ancient heritage of African Americans was held up as a shared source of pride for his black readers, the past needed to stay in the past in order for modern African Americans to

[11] Wenger, 102.
[12] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 91.

achieve social, political, and economic equality with European Americans. Race pride based in a shared past, and solidarity with other oppressed modern day communities were more important for Du Bois than the concept of authenticity.

Black cultural identity was highly contested in the early twentieth century, however, and Du Bois's approach of using historical difference from European Americans to create unity within black culture while demonstrating modern equivalence to white culture was, according to Michaels, strongly tied to Du Bois's own bourgeois class identity. As Michaels points out, whereas Zora Neale Hurston believes that the "average Negro" and the "highly educated Negro" embrace their shared unique culture and only the middle class "scorns to do or be anything Negro," Du Bois "[suspects] that upper-class blacks [have] more in common with upper-class whites than with lower-class blacks."[13] I would argue, however, that Du Bois's insistence on the similarities between the races along class lines was a necessary point of departure for Hurston, Locke, and others to be able to construct the New Negro who rejects white culture in favor of his or her own. In order to be in a position to choose to embrace one's own authentic culture without dissolving one's class status, achieving what Michaels calls "racial authenticity," it was necessary to first establish, as Du Bois devoted his efforts to doing in *The Crisis*, scientific and authoritative evidence of the equality of the races on a class by class basis.[14]

Both Monroe and Du Bois aspired to influence American culture in sweeping and ambitious ways by helping to redefine national identity, but both were also aware of the lack of cultural or symbolic capital pertaining to their respective positions within the fields of cultural production and power. Bourdieusian analysis of their editorial practice reveals that both turned to scientific authority as a source of cultural capital that could

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[13] Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression," in *Negro Anthology*, ed. Nancy Cunard (London: Wishart & Company, 1934), 43; Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism*, 88.
[14] Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism*, 90.

act as a substitute in order to aid them in improving their positions within those fields. Close examination of this aspect of their editorial practice provides an alternative perspective on the goals and achievements associated with little magazines. Taking the editors' own respective visions for their magazines as the measure of their success, by creating financially viable, long-lasting, and comparatively widely read publications, Monroe and Du Bois achieved precisely what they set out to do. Although the success of little magazines is frequently measured in avant-garde terms that see acceptance into the mainstream as a failure to maintain a radical spirit, in the case of *Poetry* and *The Crisis*, appeals to a broad readership allowed the magazines to carry out the work of participating in the struggle to define American identity in the ways their editors intended.

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