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# Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology

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The civilizing mission has been traditionally seen as an ideology by which late nineteenth century Europeans rationalized their colonial domination of the rest of humankind. Formulations of this ideology varied widely from those of thinkers or colonial administrators who stressed the internal pacification and political order that European colonization extended to “barbaric” and “savage” peoples suffering from incessant warfare and despotic rule, to those of missionaries and reformers who saw religious conversion and education as the keys to European efforts to “uplift” ignorant and backward peoples. But by the late 1800s, most of the fully elaborated variations on the civilizing mission theme were grounded in presuppositions that suggest that it had become a good deal more than a way of salving the consciences of those engaged in the imperialist enterprise. Those who advocated colonial expansion as a way of promoting good government, economic improvement, or Christian proselytization agreed that a vast and ever-widening gap had opened between the level of development achieved by western European societies (and their North American offshoots) and that attained by any of the other peoples of the globe. Variations on the civilizing mission theme became the premier means by which European politicians and colonial officials, as well as popularizers and propagandists, identified the areas of human endeavor in which European superiority had been incontestably established and calibrated the varying degrees to which different non-European societies lagged behind those of west-

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ern Europe. Those who contributed to the civilizing mission discourse, whether through official policy statements or in novels and other fictional works, also sought to identify the reasons for Europe's superior advance relative to African backwardness or Asian stagnation and the implications of these findings for international relations and colonial policy.

Much of the civilizing mission discourse was obviously self-serving. But the perceived gap between western Europe's material development and that of the rest of the world appeared to validate the pronouncements of the colonial civilizers. Late Victorians were convinced that the standards by which they gauged their superiority and justified their global hegemony were both empirically verifiable and increasingly obvious. Before the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, these measures of human achievement were contested only by dissident (and marginalized) intellectuals, and occasionally by disaffected colonial officials. The overwhelming majority of thinkers and political leaders who concerned themselves with colonial issues had little doubt that the scientific and industrial revolutions—at that point still confined to Europe and North America—*had* elevated Western societies far above all others in the understanding and mastery of the material world. Gauges of superiority and inferiority, such as differences in physical appearance and religious beliefs, that had dominated European thinking in the early centuries of overseas expansion remained important. But by the second half of the nineteenth century, European thinkers, whether they were racists or antiracists, expansionists or anti-imperialists, or on the political left or right,<sup>1</sup> shared the conviction that through their scientific discoveries and inventions Westerners had gained an understanding of the workings of the physical world and an ability to tap its resources that were vastly superior to anything achieved by other peoples, past or present.

Many advocates of the civilizing mission ideology sought to capture the attributes that separated industrialized Western societies from those of the colonized peoples by contrasting Europeans (or Americans) with the dominated "others" with reference to a standard set of binary opposites that had racial, gender, and class dimensions. Europeans were, for example, seen to be scientific, energetic, disciplined,

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<sup>1</sup> For examples of leftist, anti-imperialist acceptance of these convictions, see Martine Loutfi's discussion of the views of Jean Jaures in *Littérature et colonialisme* (Paris: Mouton, 1971), p. 119; and Raoul Giradet, *L'Idée coloniale en France, 1871–1962* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972), pp. 96–98, 104–111.

progressive, and punctual, while Africans and Asians were dismissed as superstitious, indolent, reactionary, out of control, and oblivious to time. These dichotomous comparisons were, of course, blatantly essentialist. But the late Victorians were prone to generalizing and stereotyping. They were also determined to classify and categorize all manner of things in the mundane world, and fond of constructing elaborate hypothetical hierarchies of humankind.

For virtually all late Victorian champions of the civilizing mission, the more colonized peoples and cultures were seen to exhibit such traits as fatalism, passivity, and excessive emotionalism, the further down they were placed on imaginary scales of human capacity and evolutionary development, and thus the greater the challenge of civilizing them. For even the best-intentioned Western social theorists and colonial administrators, difference meant inferiority. But there was considerable disagreement between a rather substantial racist majority, who viewed these attributes as innate and permanent (or at least requiring long periods of time for evolutionary remediation), and a minority of colonial reformers, who believed that substantial progress could be made in civilizing stagnant or barbarian peoples such as the Chinese or Indians within a generation, and that even savage peoples such as the Africans or Amerindians could advance over several generations.<sup>2</sup> Those who held to the social evolutionist dogmas interpolated from rather dubious readings of Darwin's writings were convinced that the most benighted of the savage races were doomed to extinction. Some observers, such as the Reverend Frederick Farrar, thought the demise of these lowly peoples who had "not added one iota to the knowledge, the arts, the sciences, the manufactures, the morals of the world,"<sup>3</sup> quite consistent with the workings of nature and God.

Whatever their level of material advancement, "races," such as the

<sup>2</sup> For representative racist views on these issues, see John Crawfurd, "On the Physical and Mental Characteristics of the European and Asiatic Races," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 5 (1867); and Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Influence of Race over the Destinies of Nations* (London, 1862). For samples of long-term evolutionist thinking, see Gustave Le Bon, *The Psychology of Peoples* (London, 1899); and C. S. Wake, "The Psychological Unity of Mankind," *Memoirs Read before the Anthropological Society of London* 3 (1867–1868). Late nineteenth-century nonracist or anti-racist improvers included Jacques Novicov [*L'Avenir de la race blanche* (Paris, 1897)] and Henry Maine [*Short Essays and Reviews on the Educational Policy of the Government of India from the "Englishman"* (Calcutta, 1866)].

<sup>3</sup> "Aptitudes of the Races," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 5 (1867), p. 120. For a less celebratory view of this process that was closely tied to evolutionary thinking, see Alfred Russel Wallace, "The Development of Human Races under the Law of Natural Selection," *Anthropological Review* (1865).

Sikhs of India or the bedouin peoples of the African Sahel, that were deemed to be martial—thus, presumably energetic, active, disciplined, in control, expansive, and adaptive—were ranked high in late Victorian hierarchies of human types. The colonizers' valorization of martial peoples underscores the decidedly masculine bias of the desirable attributes associated with the civilizing mission ideology. Colonial administrations, such as the legendary Indian Civil Service, were staffed entirely by males until World War II, when a shortage of manpower pushed at least the British to recruit women into the colonial service for the first time.<sup>4</sup> The club-centric, sports-obsessed, hard-drinking enclave culture of the European colonizers celebrated muscular, self-controlled, direct, and energetic males. Wives and eligible young females were allowed into these masculine bastions. But their behavior was controlled and their activities constricted by the fiercely enforced social conventions and the physical layout of European quarters that metaphorically and literally set the boundaries of European communities in colonized areas. Within the colonizers' enclaves, the logic of the separate spheres for men and women prevailed, undergirded by a set of paired, dichotomous attributes similar to that associated with the civilizing mission ideology. Thus, such lionized colonial proconsuls as Evelyn Baring (the first Earl of Cromer), who ruled Egypt like a monarch for over two decades, saw no contradiction between their efforts to "liberate" Muslim women from the veil and purdah in the colonies and the influential support that they gave to antisuffragist organizations in Great Britain.<sup>5</sup>

As T. B. Macaulay's often-quoted 1840 caricature of the Bengalis as soft, devious, servile, indolent, and effeminate suggests,<sup>6</sup> feminine qualities were often associated in colonial thinking with dominated, inferior races. Some writers stressed the similarities in the mental makeup of European women and Africans or other colonized peoples; others argued that key female attributes corresponded to those ascribed to the lower orders of humanity. Again the paired oppositions central to the civilizing mission ideology figured prominently in the comparisons. Though clearly (and necessarily) superior in moral attributes, European

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<sup>4</sup> Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), esp. pp. 139–145.

<sup>5</sup> Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 153–154.

<sup>6</sup> In his essay "On Clive," in Macaulay, *Poetry and Prose*, ed. by G. M. Young (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

women—like the colonized peoples—were intuitive, emotional, passive, bound to tradition, and always late.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the assumption that scientific discovery and invention had been historically monopolized by males (despite the accomplishments of contemporaries such as Marie Curie) was taken as proof that women were temperamentally and intellectually unsuited to pursuits, such as engineering and scientific research, that advocates of the civilizing mission ideology viewed as key indicators of the level of societal development. These views not only served to fix the image and position of the European *memsahib* as passive, domestic, apolitical, and vulnerable, they made it all but impossible for indigenous women in colonized societies to obtain serious education in the sciences or technical training. As Ester Boserup and others have demonstrated, institutions and instruction designed to disseminate Western scientific knowledge or tools and techniques among colonized peoples were directed almost totally toward the male portion of subject populations.<sup>8</sup>

The attributes that the colonizers valorized through the civilizing mission ideology were overwhelmingly bourgeois. Rationality, empiricism, progressivism, systematic (hence scientific) inquiry, industriousness, and adaptability were all hallmarks of the capitalist industrial order. New conceptions of time and space that had made possible and were reinforced by that order informed such key civilizing mission attributes as hard work, discipline, curiosity, punctuality, honest dealing, and taking control—the latter rather distinct from the self-control so valued by aristocrats. Implicit in the valorization of these bourgeois traits was approbation of a wider range of processes, attitudes, and behavior that was not usually explicitly discussed in the tomes and tracts of the colonial proponents of the civilizing mission ideology. Ubiquitous complaints by colonial officials regarding the colonized's lack of foresight, their penchant for "squandering" earnings on rites of passage ceremonies or religious devotion, and their resistance to work discipline and overtime suggested they lacked proclivities and abilities that were essential to the mastery of the industrial, capitalist order of the West. Implicitly then, and occasionally explicitly, advocates of the

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<sup>7</sup> For examples of these comparisons, see Arthur de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (Paris, 1853), vol. 1, pp. 150–152; James Hunt, "On the Negro's Place in Nature," *Memoirs Read before the Anthropological Society of London* (1863–1864), p. 10; and Le Bon, *Psychology of Peoples*, pp. 35–36.

<sup>8</sup> *Women's Role in Economic Development* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), chapter 3.

civilizing mission ideology identified the accumulation and reinvestment of wealth, the capacity to anticipate and forecast future trends, and the drive for unbounded productivity and the provision of material abundance<sup>9</sup> as key attributes of the “energetic, reliable, improving”<sup>10</sup> Western bourgeoisie that had been mainly responsible for the scientific and industrial revolutions and European global hegemony.

In the decades before the Great War, white European males reached the pinnacle of their power and global influence. The civilizing mission ideology both celebrated their ascendancy and set the agenda they intended to pursue for dominated peoples throughout the world. The attributes that male European colonizers ascribed to themselves and sought—to widely varying degrees in different colonial settings and at different social levels—to inculcate in their African or Asian subjects were informed by the underlying scientific and technological gauges of human capacity and social development that were central to the civilizing mission ideology. Both the attributes and the ideology of the dominant in turn shaped European perceptions of and interaction with the colonized peoples of Africa and Asia in a variety of ways. Many apologists for colonial expansion, for example, argued that it was the duty of the more inventive and inquisitive Europeans to conquer and develop the lands of backward or primitive peoples who did not have the knowledge or the tools to exploit the vast resources that surrounded them.<sup>11</sup> Having achieved political control, it was incumbent upon the Western colonizers to replace corrupt and wasteful indigenous regimes with honest and efficient bureaucracies, to reorganize the societies of subjugated peoples in ways the Europeans deemed more rational and more nurturing of individual initiative and enterprise, and to restructure the physical environment of colonized lands in order to bring them into line with European conceptions of time and space.

The Europeans’ superior inventiveness and understanding of the natural world also justified the allotment of tasks in the global economy envisioned by proponents of the civilizing mission. Industrialized Western nations would provide monetary and machine capital and

<sup>9</sup> A stimulating and contentious exploration of these connections can be found in Thomas Haskell’s essays on “Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility,” *American Historical Review* 90, nos. 3 and 4 (1985).

<sup>10</sup> William Greg as quoted in John C. Greene, *Science, Ideology and World View* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> See, for examples, Benjamin Kidd, *The Control of the Tropics* (London: Macmillan, 1898), pp. 14, 39, 52–55, 58, 83–84, 88–90; H. H. Johnson, “British West Africa and the Trade of the Interior,” *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute* 20 (1888–1889), p. 91; and Arthur Girault, *Principes de colonisation et de législation coloniale* (Paris: Larose, 1895), p. 31.



entrepreneurial and managerial skills, while formally colonized and informally dominated overseas territories would supply the primary products, cheap labor, and abundant land that could be developed by Western machines, techniques, and enterprise. Apologists for imperialism argued that Western peoples were entrusted with a mission to civilize because they were active, energetic, and committed to efficiency and progress. It was therefore their duty to put indolent, tradition-bound, and fatalistic peoples to work, to discipline them (whether they be laborers, soldiers, domestic servants, or clerks), and to inculcate within them (insofar as their innate capacities permitted) the rationality, precision, and foresight that were seen as vital sources of Europe's rise to global hegemony. But efforts to fully convert the colonized to the virtues celebrated by the civilizing mission ideology were normally reserved for the Western-educated classes. Through state-supported and missionary education, Western colonizers sought to propagate epistemologies, values, and modes of behavior that had originally served to justify their dominance and continued to be valorized in their rhetoric of governance.

The elite-to-elite emphasis of the transmission of the civilizing mission ideology meant that it was hegemonic in a rather different sense than that envisioned by Gramsci's original formulation of the concept.<sup>12</sup> To begin with, it was inculcated across cultures by colonizer elites onto the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes that Western education and collaboration had brought into being. In addition, the proponents of the civilizing mission viewed it only marginally as an ideology that might be employed to achieve cultural hegemony over the mass of colonized peoples. Few of the latter had anything but the most rudimentary appreciation of the scientific and technological breakthroughs that were vital to Western dominance—as manifested in the colonizers' military power, transportation systems, and machines for extracting mineral and agrarian resources. Only the Western-educated classes among the colonized were exposed to the history of Europe's unprecedented political, economic, and social transformations, and only these groups were expected by their colonial overlords to emulate them by internalizing the tenets of the civilizing mission ideology.

In the pre-World War era, the great majority of Western-educated collaborateur and comprador classes in the colonies readily conceded the West's scientific, technological, and overall material superiority.

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<sup>12</sup> *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. Smith (New York, 1971), pp. 12–14, 55–63, 275–276.



Spokesmen for these classes—often even those who had already begun to agitate for an end to colonial rule<sup>13</sup>—clamored for more Western education and an acceleration of the process of diffusion of Western science and technology in colonized societies. In Bengal in eastern India in the 1860s, for example, a gathering of Indian notables heartily applauded K. M. Banerjea's call for the British to increase opportunities for Indians to receive advanced instruction in the Western sciences. Banerjea dismissed those who defended "Oriental" learning by asking which of them would trust the work of a doctor, engineer, or architect who knew only the mathematics and mechanics of the Sanskrit sutras.<sup>14</sup> What is noteworthy here is not only Banerjea's confusion of Buddhist (hence Pali) sutras and Sanskrit *shastras*, but his internalization of the Western Orientalists' essentialist conception of Asian thinking and learning as a single "Oriental" whole that had stagnated and fallen behind the West in science and mathematics. Just over two decades later, the prominent Bengali reformer and educator Keshub Chunder Sen acknowledged that the diffusion of Western science that had accompanied the British colonization of India had made it possible for the Indians to overcome "ignorance and error" and share the Europeans' quest to explore "the deepest mysteries of the physical world."<sup>15</sup>

Thus, despite the Hindu renaissance that was centered in these decades in Bengal, as S. K. Saha has observed, the presidency's capital, Calcutta, had been reduced to an intellectual outpost of Europe.<sup>16</sup> But perhaps a majority of English-educated Indians did not just revere Western scientific and technological achievements, but they accepted their colonial masters' assumption that responsible, cultivated individuals privileged rationality, empiricism, punctuality, progress, and the other attributes deemed virtuous by proponents of the civilizing mission ideology. Just how widely these values had been propagated in the Indian middle classes is suggested by anthropological research carried out among Indian merchant communities in central Africa in the 1960s. Responses to questions relating to the Indians' attitudes toward the African majority in the countries in which they resided revealed

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Ira Klein, "Indian Nationalism and Anti-Industrialization: The Roots of Gandhian Economics," *South Asia* 3 (1973); and Bade Onimode, *A Political Economy of the African Crisis* (London: Zed, 1988), pp. 14–22 and chapters 6, 9, and 11.

<sup>14</sup> "The Proper Place of Oriental Literature in Indian Collegiate Education," *Proceedings of the Bethune Society* (February 1868), pp. 149, 154.

<sup>15</sup> "Asia's Message to Europe," in Keshub Sen's *Chunder Lectures in India* (London: Cassell, 1901) vol. 2, pp. 51, 61.

<sup>16</sup> "Social Contest of Bengal Renaissance," in David Kopf and Joarder Safiuddin, eds., *Reflections on the Bengal Renaissance* (Dacca: Institute of Bangladesh Studies, 1977), p. 140.

that the migrant merchants considered their hosts “illiterate and incomprehensible savages,” who were lazy and without foresight, child-like in their thinking (and thus incapable of logical deductions), and self-indulgent and morally reprobate.<sup>17</sup>

As the recollections of one of Zimbabwe’s Western-educated, nationalist leaders, Ndabaningi Sithole, make clear, the colonized of sub-Saharan Africa were even more impressed by the Europeans’ mastery of the material world than were their Indian counterparts. Because many African peoples had often been relatively isolated before the abrupt arrival of European explorers, missionaries, and conquerors in the last decades of the nineteenth century, early encounters with these agents of expansive, industrial societies were deeply disorienting and demoralizing:

The first time he ever came into contact with the white man the African was overwhelmed, overawed, puzzled, perplexed, mystified, and dazzled. . . . Motor cars, motor cycles, bicycles, gramophones, telegraphy, the telephone, glittering Western clothes, new ways of ploughing and planting, added to the African’s sense of curiosity and novelty. Never before had the African seen such things. They were beyond his comprehension; they were outside the realm of his experience. He saw. He wondered. He mused. Here then the African came into contact with two-legged gods who chose to dwell among people instead of in the distant mountains.<sup>18</sup>

In part because European observers took these responses by (what they perceived to be) materially impoverished African peoples as evidence of the latter’s racial incapacity for rational thought, discipline, scientific investigation, and technological innovation, there were few opportunities before World War I for colonized Africans to pursue serious training in the sciences, medicine, or engineering, especially at the post-secondary level. Technological diffusion was also limited, and the technical training of Africans was confined largely to the operation and maintenance of the most elementary machines.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, the prescriptions offered by French- and English-educated Africans for the revival of a continent shattered by centuries of the slave trade shared the assumption of the European colonizers that extensive Western

<sup>17</sup> Floyd and Lillian Dotson, *The Indian Minority of Zambia, Rhodesia, and Malawi* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 262–268, 320.

<sup>18</sup> In *African Nationalism* (London, Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 157.

<sup>19</sup> On British and French educational policies in nineteenth-century Africa and their racist underpinnings, see Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: 1989), chapter 5.

assistance would be essential for Africa's uplift. The Abbé Boilat, for example, a mulatto missionary and educator, worked for the establishment of a secondary school at St. Louis in Senegal, where Western mathematics and sciences would be taught to the sons of the local elite. Boilat also dreamed of an African college that would train indigenous doctors, magistrates, and engineers who would assist the French in extending their empire in the interior of the continent.<sup>20</sup>

Although the Edinburgh-educated surgeon J. A. Horton was less sanguine than Boilat about the aptitude of his fellow Africans for higher education in the Western sciences, he was equally convinced that European tutelage was essential if Africa was to be rescued from chaos and barbarism. Horton viewed "metallurgy and other useful arts" as the key to civilized development, and argued that if they wished to advance, Africans must acquire the learning and techniques of more advanced peoples such as the Europeans.<sup>21</sup> Even the Caribbean-born Edward Blyden, one of the staunchest defenders of African culture and historical achievements in the prewar decades, conceded that Africa's recovery from the ravages of the slave trade depended upon assistance from nations "now foremost in civilization and science" and the return of educated blacks from the United States and Latin America. Blyden charged that if Africa had been integrated into the world market system through regular commerce rather than the slave trade, it would have developed the sort of agriculture and manufacturing and imported steam engines, printing presses, and other machines by which the "comfort, progress, and usefulness of mankind are secured."<sup>22</sup>

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There were those who contested the self-satisfied, ethnocentric, and frequently arrogant presuppositions that informed the civilizing mission ideology in the decades before World War I. The emergence of Japan as an industrial power undermined the widely held conviction that the Europeans' scientific and technological attainments were uniquely Western or dependent on the innate capacities of the white or Caucasian races. Conversely, the modernists' "discovery" of "primitive" art and the well-publicized conversion of a number of rather

<sup>20</sup> *Esquisses sénégalaises* (Paris: Bertrand, 1853), pp. 9–13, 478; and André Villard, *Histoire du Sénégal* (Dakar, 1943), p. 98.

<sup>21</sup> *West African Countries and Peoples* (London: W. J. Johnson, 1868), pp. 1–4; and *Letters on the Political Condition of the Gold Coast* (London: W. J. Johnson, 1870), pp. i–iii.

<sup>22</sup> "Hope for Africa: A Discourse," *Colonization Journal* (August 1861), pp. 7–8; and "The Negro in Ancient History," in *The People of Africa* (New York, 1871), pp. 23–24, 34.

prominent European intellectuals to Hinduism, Buddhism, and other Asian religions suggested the possibility of viable alternatives to European epistemologies, modes of behavior, and ways of organizing societies and the natural world. Some European thinkers, perhaps most famously Paul Valéry and Herman Hesse, actually questioned Western values themselves. They asked whether the obsessive drive for increased productivity and profits and the excessive consumerism that they saw as the hallmarks of Western civilization were leading humanity in directions that were conducive to social well-being and spiritual fulfillment.<sup>23</sup>

Before the outbreak of the war in 1914, these critiques and alternative visions were largely marginalized, dismissed by mainstream politicians and the educated public as the rantings of gloomy radicals and eccentric mystics. But the coming of the Great War and the appalling casualties that resulted from the trench stalemate on the Western Front made a mockery of the European conceit that discovery and invention were necessarily progressive and beneficial to humanity. The mechanized slaughter and the conditions under which the youth of Europe fought the war generated profound challenges to the ideals and assumptions upon which the Europeans had for over a century based their sense of racial superiority and from which they had fashioned that ideological testament to their unmatched hubris, the civilizing mission. Years of carnage in the very heartlands of European civilization demonstrated that Europeans were at least as susceptible to instinctual, irrational responses and primeval drives as the peoples they colonized. The savagery that the war unleashed within Europe, Sigmund Freud observed, should caution the Europeans against assuming that their “fellow-citizens” of the world had “sunk so low” as they had once believed, because the conflict had made it clear that the Europeans themselves had “never risen as high.”<sup>24</sup>

Remarkably (or so it seemed to many at the time), the crisis passed, the empire survived, and the British and French emerged victorious from the war. In fact, in the years following the end of the conflict in 1918, the empires of both powers expanded considerably as Germany's colonies and Turkey's territories in the Levant were divided between

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<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of these divergent challenges to the civilizing mission's underlying assumptions, see Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: 1989), pp. 345–365.

<sup>24</sup> “Reflections on War and Death,” (1915), reprinted in Philip Reiff, ed., *Character and Culture* (New York: Collier, 1963), p. 118. For a fuller discussion of these themes, see Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, chapter 6.

them.<sup>25</sup> Although recruiting British youths into the Indian Civil Service and its African counterparts became more difficult and such influential proponents of French expansionism as Henri Massis conceded that the Europeans' prestige as civilizers had fallen sharply among the colonized peoples,<sup>26</sup> serious efforts were made to revive the badly battered civilizing mission ideology. Colonial apologists, such as Étienne Richet and Albert Bayet, employed new, less obviously hegemonic slogans that emphasized the need for "mutual cooperation" between colonizers and colonized and programs for "development" based on "free exchanges of views" and "mutual respect." But the central tenets of the colonizers' ideology remained the same: European domination of African and Asian peoples was justified by the diffusion of the superior science, technology, epistemologies, and modes of organization that it facilitated. Though the engineer and the businessman may have replaced the district officer and the missionary as the chief agents of the mission to civilize, it continued to be envisioned as an unequal exchange between the advanced, rational, industrious, efficient, and mature societies of the West and the backward, ignorant, indolent, and childlike peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.<sup>27</sup>

For many European intellectuals and a handful of maverick politicians, however, postwar efforts to restore credibility to the civilizing mission ideology were exercises in futility. These critics argued that the war had destroyed any pretense the Europeans might have of moral superiority or their conceit that they were innately more rational than non-Western peoples. They charged that the years of massive and purposeless slaughter in the trenches had made a shambles of proofs of

<sup>25</sup> On the postwar expansion of the French colonial empire, see Christopher M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, *France Overseas: The Great War and the Climax of French Imperialism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981); and for British expansion in the Middle East, see John Darwin, *The British in the Middle East 1918–1922* (London: Macmillan, 1981).

<sup>26</sup> Hugh Tinker, "Structure of the British Imperial Heritage," in Ralph Braibanti, ed., *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966), pp. 61–63; and Henri Massis, *Defense of the West* (London: Faber, 1927), pp. 6, 9, 134. For an insightful discussion of the demoralized state of colonial officialdom in Africa in the post-World War I years, see Robert Delavignette, *Freedom and Authority in West Africa* (London, 1965), pp. 149–150.

<sup>27</sup> For discussions of efforts to revive the civilizing mission ideology in the postwar era, see Raoul Girardet, *L'Idée coloniale en France, 1871–1962* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972), pp. 117–132 and chapter 5; and Thomas August, *The Selling of Empire: British and French Imperialist Propaganda, 1890–1940* (Westport: Greenwood, 1985), pp. 126–140. For a thorough exploration of shifts in colonial policy in the 1920s and 1930s, see Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in British and French Africa* (Cambridge, 1996).

Western superiority based on claims to higher levels of scientific understanding and technological advancement. Though the literature in which this discourse unfolded is substantial,<sup>28</sup> I would like to focus here on the writings of Georges Duhamel, and in particular an incident that he relates in his first novel about the war and returns to repeatedly in his later essays, an incident that provides the focal point for his extensive critique of the civilizing mission ideology. That critique in turn fed the growing doubts about European civilization and its global influence that African and Asian intellectuals and political leaders had begun to voice in the years before 1914. Though African and Asian writers rarely cited European authors for support in their assaults on the civilizing mission ideology and colonialism more generally, both metropolitan and colonial intellectuals were engaged in a common discourse in the decades after World War I, a discourse that proved deeply subversive of the colonizers' hegemonic rhetoric and thus a critical force in the liberation struggles of colonized peoples.

As its title, *Civilisation 1914–1918*, suggests, Duhamel's autobiographical novel about a sergeant in the French medical corps on the Western Front is an exercise in irony.<sup>29</sup> Like so many of the millions of young European males who were funneled into the trenches/tombs of the Western Front and lived long enough to tell about it, Duhamel was profoundly disoriented and disillusioned by his wartime experiences. They seemed to contradict all that he thought he knew or believed about Western civilization. Nothing was as it appeared to be or *ought* to be. As in a Max Ernst painting, reality was grotesquely deformed. Everything was bewilderingly inverted. The massive, mechanized, and increasingly senseless slaughter of young men that resulted from the trench stalemate transformed machines from objects of pride and symbols of advancement to barbarous instruments of shame and horror. From the masters of machines, European men had become their slaves, "bent under the burden of tedious or sorrowful work." Even the scientific breakthroughs that Duhamel, a highly trained surgeon and former laboratory technician, had once thought the most unique, noble, and exalted of Europe's achievements had been enlisted by the forces of hate and destruction to sustain the obscene and irrational

<sup>28</sup> For a fuller discussion of these themes, see Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, chapter 6.

<sup>29</sup> The novel was originally published in 1917. The first English translation appeared in 1919 (London: Century Company) with the same title as the original. Direct quotations in this essay are taken from the 1919 translation, and so numbered; otherwise page numbers refer to the 1922 Paris edition, published by Mercure de France.



combat that was destroying Europe from within.<sup>30</sup> The poet Paul Valéry, who shared Duhamel's assessment of the war, lamented the fact that the Europeans' greatest discoveries had been perverted by the need for so "much science to kill so many men, waste so many possessions, and annihilate so many towns in so little time."<sup>31</sup>

The conditions under which the soldiers and Duhamel's protagonist-surgeon lived and the wasteland their combat wrought in northern France made a mockery of the European conviction that their unprecedented mastery of nature was proof of their superiority over all contemporary peoples and past civilizations. The filthy, lice-ridden bodies of the youth of Europe, exposed for weeks on end to the cold and mud of winter in Flanders or the valley of the Somme, fighting with huge rats for their miserable rations or their very limbs, belied the prewar conviction that superior science had given Western man dominion over nature. For Duhamel the flies that swarmed about the open latrines, garbage heaps, and dismembered corpses and carcasses of the unclaimed dead in the no-man's-land moonscape provided an ever-present reminder of the Europeans' reversion to a state of savagery, where they were continually buffeted by the forces of nature. Duhamel's surgeon-protagonist in *Civilisation 1914-1918* is repelled by, but utterly incapable of fending off, the multitude of flies that suck the pus and blood of his patients and the larvae that multiply rapidly in their festering wounds.<sup>32</sup> But the soldiers' vulnerability to the forces of nature represents only one of the inversions Duhamel and other chroniclers of the trench trauma associated with the colossal misuse of science and technology in the war. Duhamel concluded that the Western obsession with inventing new tools and discovering new ways to force nature to support material advancement for its own sake had inevitably led to the trench wasteland where "man had achieved this sad miracle of denaturing nature, of rendering it ignoble and criminal."<sup>33</sup>

The climax of the surgeon's ordeal in Duhamel's *Civilisation 1914-1918* comes in his first encounter with the Ambulance Chirurgicale

<sup>30</sup> Duhamel, *Civilisation*, pp. 257-258, 268-269; *Entretien sur l'esprit européen* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1928), pp. 17-18, 36-39; *La Pensée des âmes*, (Paris: Mercure de France, 1949); and *La possession du monde* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1919), pp. 18-19, 140, 242-245.

<sup>31</sup> "Letters from France I: The Spiritual Crisis," *The Athenaeum* (11 April 1919), p. 182.

<sup>32</sup> *Civilisation*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>33</sup> *Possession du monde*, p. 99. One is reminded here of Celine's obsessive fear of trees, "since [he] had known them to conceal an enemy. Every tree meant a dead man," (*Journey to the End of Night* [New York: New Directions, 1960], p. 53); or Remarque's tortured account of wounded horses who died in no-man's-land "wild with anguish, filled with terror, and groaning." (*All Quiet on the Western Front* [New York: Fawcett Crest, 1975], p. 61.



Automobile (ACA), “the most perfect thing in the line of an ambulance that has been invented . . . the last word in science; it follows the armies with motors, steam-engines, microscopes, laboratories . . .”<sup>34</sup> The sergeant is assigned to minister to the casualties delivered to “the first great repair-shop the wounded man encounters.” The wounded in question are fittingly cuirassiers—traditionally cavalrymen with shining breastplates and plumed helmets—fighting without their horses and sans plumes, since both had proved positively lethal, given the firepower of the opposing armies, in the first months of the war. The sergeant relates that these once “strong, magnificent creatures,” have been shattered and wait “like broken statues” for admission to the ACA. In the midst of the mechanized trench battleground, the cuirassiers are anachronisms, pitiful vestiges of a lost chivalric ethos. They chatter “like well-trained children” about their wounds and fear of anesthesia. In contrast to the active, self-controlled, take-charge European male ideal of the prewar era, the cuirassiers have, as Sandra Gilbert argues for male combatants more generally,<sup>35</sup> been transformed into “passive, dependent, immanent medical object[s].”

In Gilbert’s rendering wounded males are opposed to European women who as nurses and ambulance drivers have become “active, autonomous, and transcendent.” But Duhamel recounts an inversion that must have been even more unsettling for his French and British readers in the postwar decades. The cuirassiers are carried into the ACA by African stretcher-bearers, whom Duhamel initially depicts in some of the stock images of the dominant colonizers. With their “thin black necks, encircled by the [stretcher-bearers’] yokes” and their “shrivelled fingers,” the “little” Malagasies remind him of “sacred monkeys, trained to carry idols.” The sergeant finds the Malagasies “timid,” “docile,” and “obedient,” and compares them (curiously) to “black and serious embryos.” But after the Malagasies place the wounded cuirassiers on the operating tables, a revelatory encounter occurs:

At this moment my glance met that of one of the blacks and I had a sensation of sickness. It was a calm, profound gaze like that of a child or a young dog. The savage was turning his head gently from right to left and looking at the extraordinary beings and objects that surrounded him. His dark pupils lingered lightly over all the marvelous

<sup>34</sup> Quoted passages in the following are taken from the English translation of *Civilization 1914–1918*, chapter 16, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>35</sup> “Soldier’s Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War,” *Signs* 8, no. 3 (1983): 435.

details of the workshop for repairing the human machine. And these eyes, which betrayed no thought, were none the less disquieting. For one moment I was stupid enough to think, "How astonished he must be!" But this silly thought left me, and I no longer felt anything but an insurmountable shame.<sup>36</sup>

The surgeon begins by depicting the African in terms—"child," "young dog," "savage"—that were standard epithets for racists and colonizers alike. But his complacent sense of superiority is shattered by his realization that rather than being impressed by the advanced science and technology that have been packed into the ACA, the "primitive" Malagasy must be appalled or at the very least bewildered by the desperate and costly efforts of the Europeans to repair the devastation wrought by their own civilization's suicidal war. The savage has the exalted doctor and the frenzied activity of the ACA in his "calm, profound gaze"; an exact reversal of the only permissible relationship between Europeans and "savage" or subordinate peoples according to postmodernist readings of European travel literature and colonial memoirs.<sup>37</sup> The surgeon is embarrassed and angered by his realization that the Malagasy is a witness to the Europeans' irrational, but very destructive, tribal war.

The reversion to barbarism and savagery that Duhamel associates with trench warfare is a pervasive theme in participants' accounts of the conflict. Combatants describe themselves as "wild beasts," "primitives," "bushmen," "ape-men," and "mere brutes." Soldiers at the front compare their mud-caked existence to that of prehistoric men who lived in caves or crude holes dug into the earth.<sup>38</sup> In the trenches or behind the lines, the refinements of civilization receded. Decorum was associated with death; modesty became irrelevant to soldiers who used crudely fabricated latrines as places to congregate, gossip, and curse their leaders. In battle, primal instincts—"the furtive cunning of a stoat or weasel"—were the key to survival. Europeans fought, as Fred-eric Manning observed in perfect social evolutionist tropes, like peoples at a "more primitive stage in their development, and . . . [became]

<sup>36</sup> *Civilisation 1914–1918*, pp. 282–283.

<sup>37</sup> See, for examples, Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>38</sup> For samples of the use of these metaphors by infantrymen from each of the major combatant nations on the Western Front, see Roland Rorgeles, *Les croix de Bois* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1919), pp. 62, 113; Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire: The Story of a Squad* (London: 1916); Remarque, *All Quiet*, pp. 103–104, 236–237; and Richard Aldington, *The Death of a Hero* (London: 1984), pp. 255, 264, 267.

nocturnal beasts of prey, hunting each other in packs.”<sup>39</sup> Infantrymen were forced to listen rather than look for incoming shells, which were often fired from miles away and could not be seen until it was too late. Soldiers who lived long enough to become trench veterans did so by developing an acute sensitivity to the sounds of different sizes and sorts of projectiles and gauging by sound how close they would hit to where the soldiers were dug in. Thus, a refined sense of hearing, which the Europeans had associated with savage or primitive peoples since at least the eighteenth century, superseded sight, which had long been regarded as the most developed sense of civilized peoples like the Europeans.<sup>40</sup>

As these examples suggest, the reversion to savagery that the youth of Europe experienced was mainly of the degraded rather than the noble variety of primitivism that European artists and writers had been trying to sort out for centuries. In a moment that borders on black comedy, Duhamel’s surgeon-protagonist fantasizes about escaping the horrors of the trench stalemate by fleeing to the mountains to live among the “savage” blacks. Envisioning, like the impulsive Ernest Psichari who fled to Africa from the Europe of “large stomachs and vain speeches” just before the outbreak of the war,<sup>41</sup> a land where people still lived in a “state of nature,” free from the mechanical outrages inflicted continually on those at the front, the sergeant is shocked to encounter Africans riding bicycles at Soissons, and later clamoring for war decorations. Despondent, he concludes that there are no “real black people” left and no place on earth that has not been contaminated by European civilization.<sup>42</sup>

In the many works he published in the decades after the war, Duhamel elaborated and expanded upon the critique of European civilization and of the civilizing mission ideology that had been initially fueled by his experiences on the Western Front.<sup>43</sup> Like many promi-

<sup>39</sup> Quoted portions from Manning’s *Middle Parts of Fortune* (New York: St. Martins, 1972), pp. 8, 12, 39–40. Other references to Remarque, *All Quiet*, pp. 12–13, 124–125, 236–237; Aldington, *Death of a Hero*, p. 362; and Ludwig Renn, *War* (London: Antony Mott, 1984), pp. 110–111.

<sup>40</sup> Léon-François Hoffman, *Le nègre romantique* (Paris, 1973); and Eric J. Leed, *No Man’s Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 126–127.

<sup>41</sup> Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 12–13.

<sup>42</sup> *Civilisation 1914–1918*, p. 268; quoted phrases, *Civilization 1914–1918*, p. 272.

<sup>43</sup> The following discussion is based heavily on relevant sections from *La Possession du monde*, esp. pp. 140, 242–246, 254–256, 264–265; and *Entretien sur l’esprit européen*, pp. 17–18, 20–22, 29–37, 40–46, 50.

nent European intellectuals, from Valéry, André Malraux, and René Guenon to Hermann Hesse, Hermann Keyserling, and E. M. Forster, Duhamel concluded that the war was the inevitable outcome of the Europeans' centuries-old obsession with scientific and industrial advance. They had been so captivated by mechanical progress and material increase that they had neglected the needs of the soul and spirit. They had allowed the spiritual ideals and moral dimensions of Western civilization to wither, while subordinating themselves to the machines they had created to serve them. They had confused industry and science with civilization, and become deluded by the conviction that progress, well-being, and goodness could be equated with the ability to go 100 miles per hour. These misunderstandings had led inexorably to Europe's ruin in a war that had devastated its once-prosperous lands, thrown its societies into turmoil, and aroused the colonized peoples to resistance.

Although at times in his later years Duhamel felt compelled to come to Europe's defense in the face of rising challenges from the colonized world,<sup>44</sup> he believed that the Great War had proved decisive in undermining the image of Europeans as "inscrutable masters," "dazzling and terrible demi-gods." In supporting their colonial rulers in the war, Africans and Asians had discovered that the Europeans' claim that they possessed attributes that entitled them to dominate the rest of humankind was false. The "men of color" found that the Europeans inhabited only a small and divided continent, and that their overlords were not gods but "miserable, bleeding animal[s] (the most extreme of inversions from the Western perspective) . . . devoid of hope and pride." The war had taught the colonized peoples that, despite their claims to have mastered the forces of nature, the Europeans submitted to cold and heat, to epidemics, and to innumerable "perils without names." Not surprisingly, Duhamel argues, the colonized felt little pity for the once-proud masters whom they had grown increasingly determined to resist. But he believed that they must not resist European domination alone. They must also resist the spread of the "cruel" and "dangerous" civilization that the Europeans—and, after the war, their American progeny<sup>45</sup>—sought to impose on the rest of humankind. The war had revealed the unprecedented capacity for barbarity of this so-called civilization, as well as the perils of destructiveness and vacuousness that

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, *Les espoirs et les épreuves*, (Paris: Mercure de France, 1953), pp. 135–136, 186–187.

<sup>45</sup> Duhamel visited America in the late 1920s and came away with decidedly negative impressions that are detailed in his *America the Menace: Scenes from the Life of the Future* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1931).

threatened those who sought to emulate its narrowly materialistic achievements. In the decades after the war, a number of Asian and African intellectuals took up Duhamel's call to resist with important consequences for liberation struggles in the colonized world.

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Mounted by Asian and African thinkers and activists who often received little publicity in Europe or the United States, pre-World War I challenges to assumptions of Western superiority enshrined in the civilizing mission ideology were highly essentialist, mainly reactive rather than proactive, and framed by Western gauges of human achievement and worth. The most extensive and trenchant critiques in the case of India were articulated by the Hindu revivalist Swami Vivekananda (Naren Datta), who had won some measure of fame in the West with a brilliant lecture on Vedanta philosophy at the Conference of World Religions held in conjunction with the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Vivekananda was fond of pitting a highly essentialized spiritual "East" against an equally essentialized materialistic "West." And like the earlier holymen-activists of the Arya Dharm,<sup>46</sup> he claimed that most of the scientific discoveries attributed to Western scientists in the modern era had been pioneered or at least anticipated by the sages of the Vedic age.<sup>47</sup> Vivekananda asserted that after mastering epistemologies devised to explore the mundane world, the ancient Indians (and by inference their modern descendants) had moved on to more exalted, transcendent realms, a line of argument that clearly influenced the thinking of the French philosopher René Guenon in the postwar decades.<sup>48</sup> Vivekananda cautioned his Indian countrymen against the indiscriminate adoption of the values, ways, and material culture of the West, a warning that was powerfully echoed at another level by the writings of Ananda Coomaraswamy, who, like William Morris and his circle in England, called for a concerted effort to preserve and restore the ancient craft skills of the Indian peoples, which he likened to those of Medieval Europe.<sup>49</sup> In what has been

<sup>46</sup> See Mal, *Dayanand* (1962), pp. 66–68, 73, 216; and Dayanda, *Satyarth Prakash*, pp. 292–3.

<sup>47</sup> *Collected Works*, vol. 1, pp. 13, 134; vol. 2, pp. 124, 140–141.

<sup>48</sup> Vivekananda, *Collected Works*, vol. 1, pp. 121, 365. For Guenon's celebration of the higher levels of thinking achieved by Indian philosophers, see *The Crisis of the Modern World* (London, 1924), pp. 24–26, 66–67, 125–126; and *East and West* (London, 1941), pp. 23–26, 36–39, 43–44, 57–62, 68.

<sup>49</sup> Vivekananda, *Collected Works*, vol. 2, pp. 410–411. For Coomaraswamy, see *The Dance of Shiva* (London: Sunrise Turn Press, 1924). For an appreciation of Coomaraswamy's message by an influential European thinker, see Romain Rolland's introduction to this edi-

seen as a premonition of the coming global conflict, Vivekananda predicted, decades before 1914, that unless the West tempered its obsessive materialistic pursuits by adopting the spiritualism of the East, it would “degenerate and fall to pieces.”<sup>50</sup>

Many of Vivekananda's themes had been taken up in the prewar years by two rather different sage-philosophers, Rabindranath Tagore and Aurobindo Ghose, who, like Vivekananda, were both Bengalis who had been extensively exposed to Western learning and culture in their youths. Tagore emerged during the war years as the most eloquent and influential critic of the West, and a gentle advocate of Indian alternatives to remedy the profound distortions and excesses in Western culture that the war had so painfully revealed. But in the prewar decades, knowledge in the West of the concerns of the Hindu revivalists regarding the directions that European civilization was leading the rest of humanity was confined largely to literary and artistic circles, particularly to those, such as the theosophists, that were organized around efforts to acquire and propagate ancient Indian philosophies. Popularists such as Hermann Keyserling had begun in the years before the war to disseminate a rather garbled version of Hinduism to a growing audience in the West. But few Europeans gave credence to the notion that Indian or Chinese learning or values, or those of any other non-Western culture for that matter, might provide meaningful correctives or alternatives to the epistemologies and modes of organization and social interaction dominant in the West. The war changed all of this rather dramatically. Shocked by the self-destructive frenzy that gripped European civilization, Western intellectuals sought answers to what had gone wrong, and some—albeit a small but influential minority—turned to Indian thinkers such as Tagore for tutelage.

In many ways Tagore was the model guru. Born into one of the most intellectually distinguished of modern Bengali families, he was educated privately and consequently allowed to blend Western and Indian learning in his youthful studies. From his father, Devendranath, the founder of the reformist Brama Samaj, Rabindranath inherited a deep spiritualism and a sense of the social ills that needed to be combated

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tion of the work. Among the many works on Morris and the English arts and crafts revival, two of the best are E. P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1955), and Peter Stansky, *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985).

<sup>50</sup> From his *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*, as quoted in V. S. Narvane, *Modern Indian Thought* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1964), p. 106. See also *Collected Works*, vol. 4, pp. 410–411.



in his colonized homeland. Both concerns were central to his prolific writings that included poems, novels, plays, and essays. Though more of a mystic than an activist, Tagore promoted community development projects on his family estates. And he later founded an experimental school and university at Shantiniketan, his country refuge, which visitors from the West likened to a holyman's ashram. Although Tagore had attracted a number of artistic friends in Europe and America during his travels abroad in the decades before the war, and although his poetry and novels were admired by Yeats, Auden, and other prominent Western authors, he received international recognition only after winning the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913—the first Asian or African author to be so honored.

The timing was fortuitous. When the war broke out in the following year, Tagore was well-positioned to express the dismay and disbelief that so many Western-educated Africans and Asians felt regarding Europe's bitter and seemingly endless intertribal slaughter. He expressed this disenchantment as a loyal subject of King George and the British Empire—which may also help to explain why he received such a careful hearing from educated British, French, and American audiences during and after the war. During the first months of the war, Tagore learned that he had made a bit of money on one of the poems he had sent to his friend William Rothenstein to be published in London. He instructed Rothenstein to use the proceeds to “buy something” for “our” soldiers in France; a gesture he hoped would “remind them of the anxious love of their countrymen in the distant home.”<sup>51</sup> But loyalty to the British did not deter Tagore from speaking out against the irrationality and cruelty of the conflict, and using it as the starting point for a wide-ranging critique of the values and institutions of the West. The more perceptive of Tagore's Western readers and the more attentive members of the audiences who attended his well-publicized lectures in Europe, the United States, and Japan could not miss his much more subversive subtexts: Such a civilization was not fit to govern and decide the future of most of the rest of humanity; the colonized peoples must draw on their own cultural resources and take charge of their own destinies.

In his reflections on the meanings of the war Tagore returned again and again to the ways in which it had undermined the civilizing mission ideology that had justified and often determined the course of

<sup>51</sup> Mary M. Lago, ed., *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 189, 191.



Western global hegemony. Like Valéry, Hesse, and other critics of the West from within, Tagore explored the ways in which the war had inverted the attributes of the dominant and revealed what the colonizers had trumpeted as unprecedented virtues to be fatal vices. Some of the inversions were incidental, such as Tagore's characterization of the damage to the cathedral town of Rheims as "savage," and others were little more than brief allusions, for example, to science as feminine (the direct antithesis of the masculine metaphors employed in the West<sup>52</sup>) and to Europe as a woman and a child.<sup>53</sup> But many of the inversions were explored in some detail. In a number of his essays and lectures, Tagore scrutinized at some length the colonizers' frequent invocation of material achievement as empirical proof of their racial superiority and fitness to rule less advanced peoples. He charged that the moral and spiritual side of the Europeans' nature had been sapped by their material self-indulgence. As a result, they had lost all sense of restraint (or self-control), as was amply evidenced by the barbaric excesses of trench warfare. Because improvement had come for the Europeans to mean little more than material increase, they could not begin to understand—or teach others—how to lead genuinely fulfilling lives. The much-touted discipline that was thought to be exemplified by their educational systems produced, he averred, little more than dull repetition and stunted minds. The unceasing scramble for profit and material gain that drove Western societies had resulted in a "winning at any cost" mentality that abrogated ethical principles and made a victim of truth, as wartime propaganda had so dramatically demonstrated.

Like Mohandas Gandhi in roughly the same period,<sup>54</sup> Rabindranath Tagore expressed considerable discomfort with railways and other Western devices that advocates of the civilizing mission had celebrated as the key agents of the Europeans' victory over time and space.<sup>55</sup> Forced to rush his meal at a railway restaurant and bewildered by the fast pace at which cinema images flickered across the screen, Tagore

<sup>52</sup> As Carolyn Merchant has convincingly demonstrated in *The Death of Nature* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983).

<sup>53</sup> This discussion of Tagore's responses to the war is based upon the following sources: *Diary of a Westward Voyage* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 68–69, 71–74, 96–97; *Letters from Abroad* (Madras: Ganesan, 1924), pp. 18, 56, 66, 83–85, 130; *Personality* (London: Macmillan, 1917), pp. 50, 52, 169–175, 181–182; and *Nationalism* (London, Macmillan, 1917), pp. 33, 37, 44–45, 77, 91–92. Only additional references and quoted portions of Tagore's writings will be individually cited below.

<sup>54</sup> See Gandhi's writings in *Young India* during the war years.

<sup>55</sup> Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, pp. 221–236.

concluded that the accelerated pace of living made possible by Western machines contributed to disorientation and constant frustration, to individuals and societies out of sync with the rhythms of nature, each other, and their own bodies. He reversed the familiar, environmental determinists' notion that the fast thinking and acting—hence decisive and aggressive—peoples of the colder northern regions were superior to the languid, congenitally unpunctual peoples of the south. The former, Tagore averred, had lost the capacity for aesthetic appreciation, contemplation, and self-reflection. Without these, they were not fit to shape the future course of human development, much less rule the rest of humankind.

In two allegorical plays written in 1922, Tagore built a more general critique of the science- and industry-dominated societies of the West. The first, titled *Muktadhara*, was translated into French as *La Machine* and published in 1929 with a lengthy introduction, filled with anti-industrial polemic, by Marc Elmer. The second, *Raketh Karabi*, was translated into English as *Red Oleanders*. Both plays detail the sorry plight of small kingdoms that come to be dominated by machines. In each case, the misery and oppression they cause spark revolts aimed at destroying the machines and the evil ministers who direct their operations. Like Vivekananda before him, Tagore warned that science and technology alone were not capable of sustaining civilized life. Like Vivekananda, he cautioned his Indian countrymen against an uncritical adoption of all that was Western, and insisted that the West needed to learn patience and self-restraint from India, to acquire the spirituality that India had historically nurtured and shared with all humankind. With the other major holymen-activists of the Hindu revival, Tagore pitted the oneness and cosmopolitanism of Indian civilization against the arrogance and chauvinism of European nationalism. He argued that the nationalist mode of political organization that the Europeans had long seen as one of the key sources of their global dominion had proved to be the tragic flaw that had sealed their descent into war. Unlike Gandhi, Tagore did not reject the industrial civilization of Europe and North America per se, but concluded that if it was to endure, the West must draw on the learning of the "East," which had so much to share. He urged his countrymen to give generously and to recognize the homage that the Europeans paid to India by turning to it for succor in a time of great crisis.

In sharp contrast to Tagore, Aurobindo Ghose felt no obligation to support the British in the Great War. Educated in the best English-language schools in India and later at St. Paul's School and Cambridge University in Britain, Ghose's life had veered from brilliant student

and a stint as a petty bureaucrat in one of India's princely states, to a meteoric career as a revolutionary nationalist that ended with a two-year prison sentence, and finally to an ashram in (French-controlled) Pondicherry in southeast India. Finding refuge in the latter, he began his lifelong quest for realization and soon established himself as one of India's most prolific philosophers and revered holymen. Aurobindo was convinced that the war would bring an end to European political domination and cultural hegemony throughout Asia.<sup>56</sup> In his view, the conflict had laid bare, for all humanity to see, the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the West. Fixing on the trope of disease, he depicted Europe as "weak," "dissolute," "delirious," "impotent," and "broken." He believed that the war had dealt a "death blow" to Europe's moral authority, but that its physical capacity to dominate had not yet dissipated. With the alternative for humanity represented by the militarist, materialist West discredited, Aurobindo reasoned, a new world was waiting to be born. And India—with its rich and ancient spiritual legacy—would play a pivotal role in bringing that world into being.

Of all of the Indian critics of the West, Aurobindo was the only one to probe explicitly the capitalist underpinnings of its insatiable drive for power and wealth and the contradictions that had brought on the war and ensuing global crisis. Aurobindo mocked Woodrow Wilson's version of a new world order with its betrayal of wartime promises of self-determination for the colonized peoples. Though he felt that the Bolshevik revolution had the potential to correct some of the worse abuses of capitalism, Aurobindo concluded that socialism alone could not bring about the process of regeneration that humanity needed to escape the *kali yuga* or age of decline and destruction in which it was ensnared. Only Indian spiritualism and a "resurgent Asia" could check socialism's tendency to increase the "mechanical burden of humanity" and usher in a new age of international peace and social harmony.<sup>57</sup>

Although he was soon to become the pivotal leader of India's drive for independence, Mohandas Gandhi was not a major contributor to the cross-cultural discourse on the meanings of World War I for European global dominance. Despite his emergence in the decade before the war as major protest leader in the civil disobedience struggles against the pass laws in South Africa, Gandhi, like Tagore, felt that he must do "his bit" to support the imperial war effort. He served for some

<sup>56</sup> Aurobindo's responses to the war are set forth in the most detail in his essays on *War and Self-Determination* [Calcutta: Sarojini Chose, n.d. (c. 1924)]; and *After the War* (Pondicherry: Shri Aurobindo Ashram, 1949).

<sup>57</sup> Quoted portions from "After the War," pp. 10, 13.

months as an ambulance driver, and later sought to assist British efforts to recruit Indians into the military. When the contradiction between his support of the war and his advocacy of nonviolent resistance was pointed out, Gandhi simply replied that he could not expect to enjoy the benefits of being a citizen of the British Empire without coming to its defense in a time of crisis.<sup>58</sup> But he clearly saw that the war had brutally revealed the limits of Western civilization as a model for the rest of humanity. Even before the war, particularly in a 1909 pamphlet titled “Hind Swaraj,” he had begun to dismiss Western industrial civilization in the absolute terms that were characteristic of his youthful thinking on these issues. Like the holymen-activists who had come before him, such as Vivekananda and Aurobindo, and drawing on prominent critics of industrialism and materialism, such as Tolstoy and Thoreau,<sup>59</sup> Gandhi concluded that it was folly to confuse material advance with social or personal progress. But he went beyond his predecessors in detailing alternative modes of production, social organization, and approaches to nature that might replace those associated with the dominant West. The war strengthened his resolve to resist the spread of industrialization in India, and turned him into a staunch advocate of handicraft revival and village-focused community development. Though often neglected in works that focus on his remarkable impact on India’s drive for independence, these commitments—fed by his witness of the catastrophic Great War—were central to Gandhi’s own sense of mission. As he made clear in an article in *Young India* in 1926, freedom would be illusory if the Indian people merely drove away their British rulers and adopted their fervently nationalistic, industrial civilization wholesale. He urged his countrymen to see that

India’s destiny lies not along the bloody way of the West . . . , but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life. India is in danger of losing her soul. She cannot lose it and live. She must not, therefore, lazily and helplessly say: “I cannot escape the onrush from the West.” She must be strong enough to resist it for her own sake and that of the world.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> For Gandhi’s activities during the war and justifications of his support for the British, see *The Story of My Experiments with Truth: The Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi* (Boston: Beacon, 1957 ed.), pp. 346–348; and Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Collier, 1962), pp. 133, 164–165, 180, 288–290.

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, his address to the YMCA at Colombo in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), which was reprinted in *Young India*, December 8, 1927.

<sup>60</sup> *Young India*, October 7, 1926.

Because most of sub-Saharan Africa had come under European colonial rule only a matter of decades before 1914, the continent's Western-educated classes were a good deal smaller than their counterparts in India. With important exceptions, such as the Sengalese of the *Quatre Communes*,<sup>61</sup> African professionals and intellectuals tended to have fewer avenues of access to institutions of higher learning in Europe and fewer opportunities for artistic and literary collaboration with their British, French, or German counterparts than the Indians. For these reasons, and because the new Western-educated classes of Africa were fragmented like the patchwork of colonial preserves that the continent had become by the end of the Europeans' late nineteenth-century scramble for territory, African responses to the Great War were initially less focused and forceful than those of Indian thinkers such as Tagore and Aurobindo. Only well over a decade after the conflict had ended did they coalesce in a sustained and cogent interrogation of the imperialist apologetics of the civilizing mission ideology. But the delay in the African response cannot be attributed to an absence of popular discontent or disillusioned intellectuals in either the British or French colonies. In the years following the war, anthropologists serving as colonial administrators and European journalists warned of a "most alarming" loss of confidence in their European overlords on the part of the Africans. They reported widespread bitterness over the post-Versailles denial of promises made to the colonized peoples under the duress of war and a general sense that the mad spectacle of the conflict had disabused the Africans of their prewar assumption that the Europeans were more rational and in control—hence more civilized.<sup>62</sup>

These frustrations and a bitter satire of the Europeans' pretensions to superior civilization were evident in René Maran's novel *Batouala*, which was published in 1921 and was the first novel by an author of African descent to win the prestigious Prix Goncourt in the following year. An *évolué* from Martinique, Maran had been educated from childhood in French schools and had served for decades in the French colonial service. His account of the lives of the people of Ubangui-Shari, the locale in central Africa where the novel takes place, tends to vacillate between highly romanticized vignettes of the lives of African

<sup>61</sup> See, Michael Crowder, "Senegal: A Study in French Assimilationist Policy" (London: Methuen, 1967), chapters one and two.

<sup>62</sup> See, for examples, John A. Harris, "The 'New Attitude' of the African," *Fortnightly Review* 108 (1920), pp. 953–960; and G. St. John Orde-Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya* (London: Seeley, Service, 1925), p. 271.

villagers and essentialized depictions of the “natives” as lazy, promiscuous, and fatalistic that are worthy of a European *colon*. But Maran’s skillful exposé of the empty promises of civilizing colonizers added an influential African voice to the chorus of dissent that began to drown out Europeans’ trumpeting of the global mission in the postwar years.

Although Maran’s protagonist, Batouala, admits to an “admiring terror” of the Europeans’ technology—including their bicycles and false teeth—he clearly regards them as flawed humans rather than demigods with supernatural powers. In a series of daring inversions, Maran’s characters compare their superior bodily hygiene to the sweaty, smelly bodies of the colonizers; their affinity with their natural surroundings to the Europeans “worry about everything which lives, crawls, or moves around [them]”; and their “white” lies to the exploitative falsehoods of the colonizers:

The “boundjous” (white people) are worth nothing. They don’t like us. They came to our land just to suppress us. They treat us like liars! Our lies don’t hurt anybody. Yes, at times we elaborate on the truth; that’s because truth almost always needs to be embellished; it is because cassava without salt doesn’t have any taste.

Them, they lie for nothing. They lie as one breathes, with method and memory. And by their lies they establish their superiority over us.<sup>63</sup>

In the rest of the tale that Maran relates, the vaunted colonizers’ mission to civilize is revealed as little more than a string of conscious deceptions and broken promises. In exchange for *corvée* labor and increasingly heavy taxes, Batouala and his people have been promised “roads, bridges and machines which move by fire on iron rails.” But the people of Ubangui-Shari have seen none of these improvements; taxes, Batouala grumbles, have gone only to fill the “pockets of our commandants.” The colonizers have done little more than exploit the Africans, whom they contemptuously regard as slaves or beasts of burden. In their arrogant efforts to suppress the exuberant celebrations and sensual pleasures enjoyed by Batouala and his fellow villagers, the Europeans are destroying the paradisiacal existence the African villagers had once enjoyed.<sup>64</sup>

Maran’s essentialized treatment of Africa and Africans is more or less a twentieth-century rendition of the noble savage trope that had

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<sup>63</sup> *Batouala*, trans. Barbara Beck and Alexandre Mboukou (London: Heinemann, 1973), p. 74.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29–31, 47–50, 75–76.



long been employed by European travelers and intellectuals. In many ways a testament to the thoroughness of his assimilation to French culture, Maran's depiction of the "natives" of Ubangui-Shari might have been written by a compassionate colonial official who had dabbled in ethnology during his tour of duty. In fact, it is probable that he was influenced by the work of anthropologist colleagues in the colonial civil service, and the pioneering studies of the Sierra Leonean James Africanus Horton and his West Indian-born countryman, Edward Blyden. He would certainly have been familiar with the West African ethnologies compiled by the French anthropologist Maurice Delafosse. Delafosse's works in particular had done much to force a rethinking of Western (and Western-educated African) attitudes toward Africa in the decades before and after the First World War.<sup>65</sup> The revision of earlier assessments of African achievement was also powerfully influenced by the "discovery" of African art in the prewar decades by avant-garde European artists of the stature of Derain, Braque, Matisse, and Picasso. The powerful impact of African masks and sculpture on cubism, abstract expressionism, and other modernist artistic movements bolstered once-despairing African intellectuals in their efforts to fight the racist dismissals of African culture and achievement that had been commonplace in nineteenth-century accounts of the "Dark Continent." The accolades of the European arbiters of high culture energized the delegates who journeyed to Paris in 1919 from all the lands of the slave diaspora and Africa itself for the Second Pan-African Congress, convened by W. E. B. DuBois in 1919.<sup>66</sup> Though most of those attending from colonized areas urged a conciliatory and decidedly moderate approach to the postwar settlement,<sup>67</sup> many took up DuBois's call to combat racism and linked that struggle to the need to remake the image of Africa that had long been dominant in the West. With its explicit challenges to the assumptions of the civilizing mission ideology and its acclaim by the French literary establishment, Maran's *Batouala* proved a pivotal, if somewhat eccentric, work.

The extent of Maran's influence on the progenitors of the Négritude movement that dominated the thinking of African intellectuals in French-speaking colonies from the late 1930s onward has been a

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, his monumental survey *The Negroes of Africa*, first published in 1921. On his impact, see Gérard Leclerc, *Anthropologie et colonialisme: Essai sur l'histoire de l'africanisme* (Paris, 1972), pp. 43–52; and Girardet, *L'Idée coloniale*, pp. 158–164.

<sup>66</sup> On these connections, see S. Okechukwu Megu, *Léopold Sedar Senghor et la défense et illustration de la civilisation noire* (Paris, 1968), especially pp. 32–36.

<sup>67</sup> Crowder, *Colonial West Africa*, pp. 408–412.



matter of some dispute.<sup>68</sup> But both Maran's efforts to reconstruct pre-colonial life and culture and his challenges to the colonizers' arguments for continuing their domination in Africa, which were grounded in the civilizing mission ideology, figure importantly in the work of the most influential of the Négritude poets. Maran's background as an *évolué* and a scion of the slave diaspora also reflected the convergence of transcontinental influences, energy, and creativity that converged in the Pan-African Congresses in the 1920s and in the Négritude movement in the following decade.

As Léopold Senghor fondly recalls in his reflections on his intellectual development and philosophical concerns,<sup>69</sup> the circle of Négritude writers began to coalesce in Paris in the early 1930s. He credits Aimé Césaire, a poet from Martinique, for the name of the movement, and sees its genesis in the contributions to the short-lived journal *L'Étudiant Noir* and the lively exchanges among the expatriate students and intellectuals drawn to the great universities of Paris from throughout the empire in the interwar decades. Most of the poems that articulated the major themes of Négritude were published after World War II, beginning with the seminal 1948 *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française*. But a number of works that were privately circulated in the late 1930s and Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, first published in fragments in 1938, suggest the continuing power of recollections of the trauma of the First World War in the African awakening.

In Senghor's evocative "Neige sur Paris,"<sup>70</sup> the poet awakes to find the city covered with newly fallen snow. Though encouraged by the thought that the pure white snow might help to soften the deep divisions that threaten to plunge Europe once again into war and heal the wounds of a Spain already "torn apart" by civil war, Senghor conjurs up the "white hands" that conquered Africa, enslaved its peoples, and cut down its forests for "railway sleepers." He mocks the mission of the colonizers as indifferent to the destruction of the great forests as they are to the suffering they have inflicted on the African people:

They cut down the forests of Africa to save Civilization, for there  
was a shortage of human raw-material.

<sup>68</sup> Dorothy S. Blair, *African Literature in French* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 18–20.

<sup>69</sup> See *Ce que je crois* (Paris: 1988), pp. 136–152.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted portions are taken from the superb translation of "Snow upon Paris," by John Reed and Clive Wake in Senghor, *Selected Poems* (Oxford: 1964).

And he laments the betrayal of his people by those posing as peace-makers, suggesting the ignoble machinations of the Western leaders at Versailles:

Lord, I know I will not bring out my store of hatred against  
the diplomats who flash their long teeth  
And tomorrow will barter black flesh.

In “For Koras and Balafong,” which he dedicated to René Maran, Senghor flees from the factory chimneys and violent conflict of Europe to the refuge of his childhood home, the land of the Serer, south of Dakar along the coast of Senegal. Throughout the poem he celebrates the music and dance, the sensuality and beauty of his people and their communion with the natural world—all central themes in the corpus of Négritude writings. But like Maran, he turns these into inversions of the European societies from which he has fled and that have been defiled by the violence of the Great War. His journey to the land of his ancestors is

. . . guided through thorns and signs by Verdun, yes Verdun  
the dog that kept guard over the innocence of Europe.

In his travels, Senghor passes the Somme, the Seine, the Rhine, and the “savage Slav rivers” all “red under the Archangel’s sword.” Amid the rhythmic sounds of African celebration, he hears:

Like the summons to judgment, the burst of the trumpet over the  
snowy graveyards of Europe.

He implores the earth of his desert land to wash him clean “from all contagions of civilized man,” and prays to the black African night to deliver him from

. . . arguments and sophistries of salons, from  
pirouetting pretexts, from calculated hatred and humane  
butchery.

These final passages recall the powerful inversions that provide some of the most memorable passages in the verse of Senghor’s collaborators and cofounders of the Négritude movement in the 1930s. There is Léon Damas’s iconoclastic rejection of the costume of his assimilated self:

I feel ridiculous  
 in their shoes  
 in their evening suits,  
 in their starched shirts,  
 in their hard collars  
 in their monocles  
 in their bowler hats.<sup>71</sup>

And in Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, perhaps the most stirring of the Négritude writers' defiant mockeries of the standards by which the Europeans had for centuries disparaged their people and justified their dominance over them:

Heia [praise] for those who have never invented anything  
 those who never explored anything  
 those who never tamed anything  
 those who give themselves up to the essence of all things  
 ignorant of surfaces but struck by the movement of all things  
 free of the desire to tame but familiar with the play of the world.<sup>72</sup>

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The discourse centered on the meanings of the Great War for the future of the science- and technology-oriented civilization pioneered in the West was, I believe, the first genuinely global intellectual exchange. Though the African slave trade had prompted intellectual responses from throughout the Atlantic basin, the post-World War I discourse was the product of the interchange between thinkers from the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia. At one level, the postwar discourse became a site for the contestation of the presuppositions of the civilizing mission ideology that had undergirded the West's global hegemony. At another, it raised fundamental questions about the effects of industrialization in the West itself as well as the ways in which that process was being transferred to colonized areas in Asia and Africa. For nearly two decades, philosophers, social commentators, and political activists scrutinized the ends to which scientific learning and tech-

<sup>71</sup> From "Solde," published in *Pigments* (Paris: 1962) and quoted in Abiola Irele, "Négritude or Black Cultural Nationalism," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 3, no. 3 (1965): 503.

<sup>72</sup> From *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, translated as *Return to My Native Land* by John Berger and Anna Bostock (Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 75.

nological innovation had been put since the industrial watershed. Their profound doubts about the long-term effects of the process itself on human development would not be matched until the rise of the global environmentalist discourse that began in the 1960s and continues to the present.

Although unprecedented in its global dimensions, in the colonized areas of Africa and Asia postwar challenges to the industrial order and the civilizing mission ideology were confined largely to the Western-educated elite. Colonized intellectuals, with such notable (and partial) exceptions as Tagore and Aurobindo, critiqued the hegemonic assumptions of the West in European languages for audiences that consisted largely of Western-educated professionals, politicians, and academics.<sup>73</sup> Even those who wrote in Asian or African languages were also compelled to publish and speak in “strong”<sup>74</sup> languages such as English or French if they wished to participate in the postwar discourse. And as Ngugi wa Thiong’o reminds us, the cage of language set the limits and had much to do with fixing the agenda of that interchange.<sup>75</sup> Not only did Indian and African intellectuals draw on the arguments of Western thinkers such as Tolstoy, Bergson, Thoreau, and Valéry, but the issues they addressed were largely defined by European and, to a lesser extent, American participants in the global discourse. In this sense, the postwar Indian and African assault on the civilizing mission was as reactive as Antenor Firmin’s nineteenth-century refutations of “scientific” proofs for African racial inferiority or Edward Blyden’s defense of African culture. Even the essentialized stress on the spirituality of Indian civilization or the naturalness of African culture was grounded in tropes employed for centuries by European travelers, novelists, and Orientalists. As the reception of Maran and Tagore (or Vivekananda before them and Senghor afterward) also suggests, Robert Hughes’s “cultural cringe”<sup>76</sup> was very much in evidence. European approbation had much to do with the hearing that Asian or African thinkers

<sup>73</sup> These patterns are stressed by Paul Sorum in his treatment of the origins of Négritude in *Intellectuals and Decolonization in France* (Chapel Hill, N.C. University of North Carolina Press, 1977), pp. 213–214.

<sup>74</sup> For a discussion of this useful concept, see Talal Asad, “Two European Images of Non-European Rule,” in Asad, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (New York: Humanities Press, 1973), pp. 103–118.

<sup>75</sup> *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1986).

<sup>76</sup> “The Decline of the City of Mahagonny,” *The New Republic* (28 June 1990), pp. 27–28.

received not only in the West, but among the Western-educated, elite circles they addressed in colonial settings.

Although the terms of the discourse between colonizer and colonized remained the same in many respects, the Great War had done much to alter its tone and meaning for Indian and African participants. The crisis of the West and the appalling flaws in Western civilization that it revealed did much to break the psychological bondage of the colonized elite, which, as Ashis Nandy has argued,<sup>77</sup> was at once the most insidious and demoralizing of the colonizers' hegemonic devices. World War I provided myriad openings for the reassertion—often in the guise of reinvention—of colonized cultures that were dramatically manifested in the inversions in the postwar writings of Indian and African thinkers of the attributes valorized by the prewar champions of the civilizing mission. The crisis of the Great War gave credence to Gandhi's contention that the path for humanity cleared by the industrial West was neither morally or socially enabling nor ultimately sustainable. And though the circle in which the postwar discourse unfolded was initially small, in the following decades it contributed much to the counterhegemonic ideas of the Western-educated intellectuals of Asia and Africa, ideas that were taken up by the peasants and urban laborers who joined them in the revolt against the European colonial order.

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<sup>77</sup> *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), esp. pp. xi–xiii.