# Decrying White Peril: Interracial Sex and the Rise of Anticolonial Nationalism in the Gold Coast

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In the summer and fall of 1919, the African-owned Gold Coast press was awash with news stories and impassioned commentary about the postwar race riots that had recently devastated Liverpool, Cardiff, and other major port cities in Britain. Angered by the sexual politics underlying the riots, Gold Coast commentators were quick to point out that the ports' white rioters were not the only ones aggrieved by interracial sexual relations. Atu, a regular columnist for the *Gold Coast Leader*, responded to news that black men were targeted for repatriation after being attacked on the ports' streets for "consorting with white women" by reminding his readers "that in their own country white men freely consort with coloured women, forming illicit alliances, and in many cases leaving on the coast abandoned offspring to the precarious protection of needy native families." He continued, "It does not require much skill to diagnose the canting hypocrisy underlying" the riots, but the question now was whether "any sensible man [could] suppose that these men will return to their homes to view with complacency the spectacle of white men associated with coloured women."[1] In a few short lines, Atu vivified the "tensions of empire" created by the movement of African men between metropole and colony, and their different systems of raced and gendered sexual access.[2]

I wish to thank Sandra Greene, Paul Zeleza, Solsiree Del Moral, Abosede George, Oghenetoja Okoh, Corey Capers, Marisa Fuentes, and Kevin Etienne-Cummings, who were instrumental in helping me rearticulate the crux of the core argument presented here during an early stage of writing. I would also like to thank Kofi Baku (University of Ghana, Legon), Eddie Glaude (Princeton University), Ato Quayson (University of Toronto), and Awam Amkpa (New York University) for inviting me to share some of the ideas presented here at their respective institutions, during which questions from Nana Yaw Sapong, Claudius Fergus, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Chika Okeke-Agulu, Emmanuel Kreike, Martin Klein, Gregory Mann, and Renée Blake generated new ways of approaching my sources and arguments. For their insightful feedback and encouragement, I wish to thank Jean Allman, Stephanie Newell, Michael Gomez, Owen White, Silvana Patriarca, David Myers, Wolfgang Mueller, Viranjini Munasinghe, Shelley Wong, Fouad Makki, Dagmawi Woubshet, and Salah Hassan. I am especially indebted to Tera Hunter and Kirsten Swinth for their particularly nuanced readings and detailed comments; to Wendy Belcher and Ato Quayson, who generously read and responded to multiple drafts of this article; to Erin Haney for drawing my attention to the "Unidentified Group Portrait, Ghana" image and for her insightful visual reading of it; and to Kwame Siriboe and Rachel Welsh for their acumen and assistance in wading through three decades of fine print from the *Gold Coast Leader*. Finally, I wish to thank Cris Coffey, Jane Lyle, Megan Vaughan, Robert Schneider, and the *AHR*'s anonymous reviewers for their transformative engagement and careful shepherding of this work.

[1] Atu, "Scrutineer," *Gold Coast Leader*, July 26, 1919.

[2] In their deployment of the phrase "tensions of empire," Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler urge scholars to bring metropole and colony into a single analytic view in order to better account for the full range of tensions that fractured empire, and to foreground struggle in analyses of colonialism

FIGURE 1: While Sekondi had been integrated into Atlantic trade networks since the seventeenth century, when the Dutch and English established trading forts there, its urbanization was catalyzed by the 1903 completion of a railway linking the resource-rich hinterland to the town's natural harbor. With its rapidly expanding male and female African migrant population, as well as a sizable, largely male European population, Sekondi's infrastructure developed in response not only to the city's commercial life, but also to its diverse residents' recreational and material desires. The city was home to a prominent business district, with numerous European-owned trading firms and shops, as well as to a variety of social clubs, drinking spots, and dance venues. After the completion of neighboring Takoradi's deep-water harbor in 1928, Sekondi's regional dominance waned, but as the illuminated building pictured here suggests, it still retained its grandeur in subsequent decades. "Illuminated Building, Sekondi," 1937, CO 1069/39/11, The National Archives, Kew, UK.

Not long after, the *Leader* published a series of commentaries under the provocative title "Immoral Sanitation." The unnamed author of the series' first installment declared that unseemly sexual liaisons between African women and European men had transformed the "social life" of Sekondi, a busy coastal town in the Gold Coast's Western Province, into "a condition of depravity." Elsewhere in the colony, "a woman who boldly acknowledges herself the kept mistress of a European is thrown out of society and virtually looked down upon by men and women of respectability," claimed the writer. In Sekondi, however, he accused "energetic advocates of this dishonourable mode of life" of enticing young women into sexual relationships with European men, whose "carnal lust" was causing the moral deterioration of the town's womenfolk.[3] The claims made in the "Immoral Sanitation" series, argued *Leader* columnist Atu, were more broadly applicable to "other parts

rather than privileging questions of control. See Cooper and Stoler, "Tensions of Empire: Colonial Control and Visions of Rule," *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989): 609–621. See also Stoler and Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in Cooper and Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, Calif., 1997), 1–56.

[3] "Immoral Sanitation," *Gold Coast Leader*, January 3–10, 1920.

of the country where this traffic," which he likened to "prostitution on the part of African women by a class of white men of a low caste," was carried on.[4]

The *Leader*'s lurid tales of illicit relationships between profligate white men and debauched African women during the early twentieth century contrast sharply with historical accounts of respectable marriages between entrepreneurial African women and European men during an earlier time period in coastal West Africa. These unions produced West Africa's prominent Afro-European trading families and are often credited with successfully integrating European men into local West African societies and empowering African women during the long period of contact preceding the nineteenth-century advent of formal colonial rule.[5] Interracial marriages contracted in accordance with African customary law, and less frequently those recognized as lawful by the religious and administrative bodies associated with the European presence on the coast, were indeed regular features of the region's littoral trading enclaves.[6] Constrained by a dearth of sources, scholars have had com-

[4] Atu, "Scrutineer," *Gold Coast Leader*, February 21–28, 1920.

[5] See, for example, George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Athens, Ohio, 2003); Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society, and Trade in Western Africa, 1000–1630* (Boulder, Colo., 1993); Brooks, "A Nhara of the Guinea-Bissau Region: Mãe Aurélia Correia," in Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, eds., *Women and Slavery in Africa* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1997), 295–319; Brooks, "The *Signares* of Saint-Louis and Gorée: Women Entrepreneurs in Eighteenth-Century Senegal," in Nancy J. Hafkin and Edna G. Bay, eds., *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change* (Stanford, Calif., 1976), 19–44; Bruce L. Mouser, "Accommodation and Assimilation in the Landlord-Stranger Relationship," in B. K. Swartz and Raymond E. Dumett, eds., *West African Culture Dynamics: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives* (The Hague, 1980), 495–514. For a powerful reminder that the model of agency and empowerment that the African women involved in these relationships have often been made to represent during the era of the transatlantic slave trade was contingent on their ability to exploit the labor of those they enslaved or to profit from their sale, and was therefore unsustainable, see Wendy Wilson-Fall, "Women Merchants and Slave Depots: Saint-Louis, Senegal and St. Mary's, Madagascar," in Ana Lucia Araujo, ed., *Paths of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Interactions, Identities, and Images* (Amherst, Mass., 2011), 273–303, here 273–275. In a different Atlantic context, Marisa Fuentes also argues for a critical reappraisal of female agency within the sexual economy of slavery and freedom in colonial Barbados; Fuentes, "Power and Historical Figuring: Rachael Pringle Polgreen's Troubled Archive," *Gender and History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 564–584. For a deft critique of romanticized readings of interracial unions between indigenous women and European men in a comparative Atlantic context, see Pamela Scully, "Malintzin, Pocahontas, and Krotoa: Indigenous Women and Myth Models of the Atlantic World," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 6, no. 3 (2005).

[6] On the centuries-long history of marriage between African women and European men and the families they produced in the Gold Coast, see Natalie Everts, " 'Brought Up Well According to European Standards': Helena van der Burgh and Wilhelmina van Naarssen—Two Christian Women from Elmina," in I. van Kessel, ed., *Merchants, Missionaries and Migrants: 300 Years of Dutch-Ghanaian Relations* (Amsterdam, 2002), 101–109; Harvey M. Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans in West Africa: Elminans and Dutchmen on the Gold Coast during the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1989), 85–92; Pernille Ipsen, " 'The Christened Mulatresses': Euro-African Families in a Slave-Trading Town," *William & Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): 371–398; Ipsen, "Koko's Daughters: Danish Men Marrying Ga Women in an Atlantic Slave Trading Port in the Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Copenhagen University, 2008); Adam Jones, "Female Slave-Owners on the Gold Coast: Just a Matter of Money?," in Stephan Palmié, ed., *Slave Cultures and the Cultures of Slavery* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1995), 100–111; M. A. Priestly, "Richard Brew: An Eighteenth-Century Trader at Anomabu," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 4, no. 1 (1959): 29–46; Priestly, "The Emergence of an Elite: A Case Study of a West Coast Family," in P. C. Lloyd, ed., *The New Elites of Tropical Africa* (London, 1966), 87–99; Priestly, *West African Trade and Coast Society: A Family Study* (London, 1969); Ty M. Reese, "Wives, Brokers, and Laborers: Women at Cape Coast, 1750–1807," in Douglas Catterall and Jodi Campbell, eds., *Women in Port: Gendering Communities, Economies, and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities, 1500–1800* (Leiden, 2012), 291–314, here 300–307; Ulrike Sill, *Encounters in Quest of Christian Womanhood: The Basel Mission in Pre- and Early Colonial Ghana* (Leiden, 2010); Randy J. Sparks, *Where the Negroes Are Masters: An African Port in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge, Mass., 2014), 80–86; Larry W. Yarak, "West African Coastal

paratively little to say about the range of coercive and less seemly sexual encounters, including concubinage, prostitution, and rape, that also characterized the interracial sexual economies of West Africa's coastal trading hubs.[7] While it is difficult to speculate about native Gold Coasters' reactions to these relationships prior to the twentieth century, scattered commentary from as early as 1902 in the *Leader*, the colony's most politically radical newspaper, suggests that disquiet over them was not new.[8] With the appearance of the "Immoral Sanitation" series and likeminded commentaries, however, this simmering discontent boiled over into full-blown condemnation of local interracial sexual relations. These rare primary sources vividly illustrate how a diverse group of politically marginalized yet highly politicized Gold Coast men from the colony's embattled intelligentsia, along with disillusioned demobilized soldiers and seamen in post–World War I Britain, used these illicit relationships to challenge the moral legitimacy of British colonial rule.[9] On the one hand, by por-

Slavery in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Afro-European Slaveowners of Elmina," *Ethnohistory* 36, no. 1 (1989): 44–60; Yarak, "A West African Cosmopolis: Elmina (Ghana) in the Nineteenth Century" (paper presented at the Seascapes, Littoral Cultures, and Trans-Oceanic Exchanges Conference, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 2003). For a popular account of the interracial sexual economy of Cape Coast Castle, which primarily focuses on marriage practices but also gestures toward less formal and more exploitative sexual relations, see William St. Clair, *The Door of No Return: The History of Cape Coast Castle and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York, 2007), chap. 6.

[7] Passing references to interracial concubinage and prostitution in the precolonial Gold Coast can be found in Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans in West Africa*, 89; Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia, 2004), 45–46; and John Vogt, *Portuguese Rule on the Gold Coast, 1469–1682* (Athens, Ga., 1979), 234 n. 63. Emmanuel Akyeampong provides a lengthy examination of precolonial and colonial prostitution among the Akan that includes a discussion of interracial prostitution in "Sexuality and Prostitution among the Akan of the Gold Coast, *c*. 1650–1950," *Past and Present*, no. 156 (1997): 144–173. Although the rape of enslaved women during the Middle Passage has been fairly well documented and remembered, the extent of this practice for the pre-embarkation period, during which women were confined in slave forts along the coast, has not. It has, however, been memorialized in the narratives that many of the tour guides of these forts-turned-museums tell visitors in places such as Elmina and Cape Coast. On rape and sexual coercion during the Middle Passage, see "Rape and Sexual Abuse," in Toyin Falola and Amanda Warnock, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Middle Passage* (Westport, Conn., 2007), 316–318; Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York, 2007); Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York, 1987). On the inclusion of rape in the narratives of castle tour guides at Elmina and Cape Coast, see Bayo Holsey, "Transatlantic Dreaming: Slavery, Tourism, and Diasporic Encounters," in Fran Markowitz and Anders H. Stefansson, eds., *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return* (Lanham, Md., 2004), 166–182, here 171; Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana* (Chicago, 2008), chap. 6; and Sandra L. Richards, "What Is to Be Remembered? Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons," *Theatre Journal* 57, no. 4 (2005): 617–637, here 625–627. Recent studies by Rebecca Shumway and Simon Newman have opened a discussion of the sexual victimization of castle slaves by European men. See Shumway, "Castle Slaves of the Eighteenth-Century Gold Coast," *Slavery and Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, published online July 12, 2013, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2013.816520; and Newman, *A New World of Labor: The Development of Plantation Slavery in the British Atlantic* (Philadelphia, 2013), 147–148.

[8] See the following articles from the *Gold Coast Leader*: Dr. J. Murray, "An Address by Dr. J. Murray," December 13, 1902; "Moral Sanitation," December 20, 1902; Lux, "Literary Chat," September 16, 1905; Kwamin Koom, "The African Should Not Be Put to Scorn!," October 3, 1912; "General News: Coomasie," January 11, 1913; "The Whiteman's Prestige and the Colour Question," May 10, 1913; "Tarkwa," June 13, 1914; An Akrampah, "Self Knowledge and Patience Are True Markers of Virtue," October 20, 1915; Atu, "Scrutineer," December 4–11, 1915; A Reader, "Mixed Pickles: Moral Sanitation," August 24, 1918. For a rare example from the late nineteenth century in which Gold Coast pastor and historian Carl Christian Reindorf condemned the profiteering he associated with customary marriages between "mulatto ladies" and white men, see Sill, *Encounters in Quest of Christian Womanhood*, 186.

[9] Linking illicit interracial sex to colonial maladministration, however, was not an altogether new

traying African women as either immoral race traitors or innocents in need of protection from predatory Europeans, these men were able to claim a leadership role as moral stewards of the nation. On the other hand, by casting European men as sexually promiscuous interlopers, they challenged the very idea that Europeans were morally suited to rule the colonial world.

Implicit in colonizing powers' various efforts to control the domain of interracial sex was a keen awareness of its potential to destabilize hierarchies of rule. As Durba Ghosh has astutely pointed out, colonial concerns about the subversive potentialities of these relationships predate the new imperialism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and "the development of scientific racism and biological claims about the genetic differences between Caucasians and others."[10] The nineteenth century did, however, mark a watershed moment in the consolidation of multiple streams of thought about race, class, sexuality, and colonial management, which intensified colonial anxieties about the carnal politics of imperial rule. The prolific body of scholarship on sexuality and empire has made this abundantly clear.[11] Given all this, it is remarkable that colonized populations' own concerns about race mixing and their political uses of those concerns have not received greater attention from scholars of colonialism and anticolonial nationalism. This lacuna is all the more notable given the numerous instances in which interracial sexual relations fomented anticolonial discontent and/or became a staple feature of anticolonial rhetoric across a wide

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phenomenon. During World War I, the *Gold Coast Leader* ran numerous stories that used allegations of German men's promiscuity and coercive sexual practices, among other abuses of power, in neighboring German Togoland to illustrate German misrule. See, for example, Agoha of Quittah, "The Atrocities of the Togo Germans," May 3, 1913; "General News," May 24, 1913; A Reader, "The Germans in Togoland," June 17, 1913; A Native of Aneho, "The Germans in Togoland," September 6, 1913, September 27, 1913, January 3, 1914, January 24, 1914, March 7, 1914, April 25, 1914, and May 2, 1914; Quashie, "Gold Coast and German Togoland," June 13, 1914; A Native of Aneho, "German Policy in Africa," May 20, 1916, and June 17–24, 1916; "Lome," February 17, 1917.

[10] Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (New York, 2006), 10.

[11] A selection of these publications includes Ann Laura Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Colonial Asia," in Micaela di Leonardo, ed., *Gender at the Crossroads: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era* (Berkeley, Calif., 1991), 51–101; Stoler, "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13, no. 1 (1989): 134–161; Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia," in Cooper and Stoler, *Tensions of Empire*, 198–237; Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, Calif., 2002); Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex, and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793–1905* (New York, 1980); Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism* (Charlottesville, Va., 1998); Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India*; Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester, 1990); Ann McGrath, "Consent, Marriage, and Colonialism: Indigenous Australian Women and Colonizer Marriages," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 6, no. 3 (2005); Emmanuelle Saada, *Empire's Children: Race, Filiation, and Citizenship in the French Colonies*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 2012); Owen White, *Children of the French Empire: Miscegenation and Colonial Society in French West Africa, 1895–1960* (New York, 1999). For Africa, in particular, the work of Rachel Jean-Baptiste and Jeremy Rich on colonial Gabon and of Giulia Barrera on colonial Eritrea stands out for its attention to the perspectives of Africans, including African women, with regard to interracial sexual relationships. See Jean-Baptiste, "'A Black Girl Should Not Be with a White Man': Sex, Race, and African Women's Social and Legal Status in Colonial Gabon, c. 1900–1946," *Journal of Women's History* 22, no. 2 (2010): 56–82; Jean-Baptiste, *Marriage, Sexuality, and Urban Life in Twentieth-Century Colonial Libreville, Gabon* (Athens, Ohio, forthcoming 2014); Rich, "'*Une Babylone Noire*': Interracial Unions in Colonial Libreville, c. 1860–1914," *French Colonial History* 4 (2003): 145–169; Barrera, "Colonial Affairs: Italian Men, Eritrean Women, and the Construction of Racial Hierarchies in Colonial Eritrea (1885–1941)" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 2002).

swath of the colonial world. Although he glibly dismisses their political significance, Ronald Hyam cites areas as diverse as Canton, Kabul, South Africa, Kenya, and Bechuanaland where the sexual abuse of native women by European men provoked deep resentment, outbreaks of violence, and anticolonial resistance.[12] Other scholars have taken these concerns more seriously.

Elsbeth Locher-Scholten has documented how indigenous opposition to interracial concubinage formed part of the elite "nascent national consciousness" as early as 1900 in colonial Indonesia. By the late 1920s and 1930s, Indonesian nationalist parties sought the prohibition of interracial concubinage as part of their political agenda.[13] Benjamin Madley and others have shown how the rape of Herero women by German settlers in German Southwest Africa stoked anticolonial resentments and helped catalyze the Herero uprising in 1904.[14] Malagasy nationalists in the 1940s, according to anthropologist Jennifer Cole, warned young women about the dangers of intermarriage, including the disappearance of the Malagasy race through miscegenation.[15] Lisa Lindsay has perceptively parsed the captivating story of how public sympathy for Esther Johnson, a young Nigerian woman sentenced to death for murdering her deceitful British lover, transformed her into a much-feted nationalist symbol. Colonial authorities commuted Johnson's death sentence to life in prison to avoid fomenting nationalist fervor, while Governor-General Nnamdi Azikiwe commemorated the first anniversary of Nigeria's independence by releasing her from prison in 1961, "underscor[ing] her appeal as a symbol of Nigerian nationalism."[16] The eloquent work of Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi, two of the twentieth century's most important anticolonial intellectuals and activists, makes clear how the domain of interracial sexual relations shaped their understanding of the colonized mind, colonial race relations, and the formation of their anticolonial politics and prose.[17] Frances Gouda has pointed out more broadly that anticolonial intellectuals in Asia and Africa used the rape of native women by white men as a metaphor for colonial violence and domination writ large.[18] The metaphor's rhetorical power surely flowed from the actual fact of sexual violence and exploitation.

[12] Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality*, 2–3.

[13] Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "Morals, Harmony, and National Identity: 'Companionate Feminism' in Colonial Indonesia in the 1930s," *Journal of Women's History* 14, no. 4 (2003): 38–58, here 47, 49.

[14] Benjamin Madley, "Patterns of Frontier Genocide, 1803–1910: The Aboriginal Tasmanians, the Yuki of California, and the Herero of Namibia," *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, no. 2 (2004): 167–192, here 183–185; Herik Lundtofte, " 'I believe that the nation as such must be annihilated . . . ': The Radicalization of the German Suppression of the Herero Rising in 1904," in Steven L. B. Jensen, ed., *Genocide: Cases, Comparisons and Contemporary Debates* (Copenhagen, 2003), 15–53, here 27.

[15] Jennifer Cole, *Sex and Salvation: Imagining the Future in Madagascar* (Chicago, 2010), 102.

[16] Lisa A. Lindsay, "A Tragic Romance, a Nationalist Symbol: The Case of the Murdered White Lover in Colonial Nigeria," *Journal of Women's History* 17, no. 2 (2005): 118–141, here 132.

[17] Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris, 1952); Albert Memmi, *Agar* (Paris, 1955); Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé, précédé par Portrait du colonisateur* (Paris, 1957); Memmi, *L'homme dominé* (Paris, 1968). For a critical reading of the sexual politics of Fanon's anticolonial prose, see Greg Thomas, *The Sexual Demon of Colonial Power: Pan-African Embodiment and Erotic Schemes of Empire* (Bloomington, Ind., 2007), chap. 4. For a treatment of Memmi's problematic regard for Fanon, see Charles F. Peterson, *Dubois, Fanon, Cabral: The Margins of Elite Anti-Colonial Leadership* (Lanham, Md., 2007), 95–97.

[18] Frances Gouda, "The Gendered Rhetoric of Colonialism and Anti-Colonialism in Twentieth-Century Indonesia," *Indonesia*, no. 55 (April 1993): 1–22, here 7. For an important comparative case study that de-centers European men as agents of sexual exploitation by probing the link between the rise of "racial nationalism" among subaltern intellectuals in Zanzibar and their interpretation of the

Gold Coasters also made these connections in their public writings. One such writer framed Africa as Europe's "mistress . . . milked for the larder of others," while another used the figure of a young African girl who, abused and discarded by her European lover, died of a broken heart to describe the asymmetrical and destructive relationship between Europe and Africa.[19] When read in isolation, these examples risk being dismissed as anecdotal evidence, but collectively they call upon scholars to take seriously the connections between the domain of interracial sex and anticolonial nationalism, which, as many of these examples suggest, were being forged well before the heyday of political nationalism in the late 1940s and 1950s across much of Africa and Asia. Shifting focus from the myriad meanings of interracial sexual relations for the colonizer to illuminating what they meant for the colonized broadens our understanding of these relationships beyond their role in the formation of empire by demonstrating how they were implicated in its dissolution.

Exploring how Gold Coasters responded to the changing prescriptions and practices that shaped interracial sexual relationships during the early twentieth century allows us to more fully incorporate gender and sexuality's intersection with race into our understanding of the rise of anticolonial nationalism in the Gold Coast. Here Partha Chatterjee's theorization of anticolonial nationalism as a multi-sited and multi-staged process that "creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power" is particularly germane.[20] As in Chatterjee's India, the deeply interventionist and paternalistic nature of British colonialism in the Gold Coast, as elsewhere in Africa, sought to transform African cultures and societies, with particular emphases on women, the family, sexuality, and religion. It is hardly surprising, then, that the " 'inner' domain of national culture" emerged as the first battleground of nationalism throughout much of the continent.[21] What is significant about the Gold Coast case study is that in de-

history of interracial sex between Arab men and African women, which stressed its unequal and coercive nature, see Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington, Ind., 2011), chap. 4.

[19] "The London Aborigines Society and the Empire Resources Development Committee," *Gold Coast Leader*, November 3–17, 1917; Lux, "Literary Chat," ibid., September 16, 1905.

[20] Partha Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 3 (1991): 521–525, here 521. See also Chatterjee, "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India," *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989): 622–633; Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J., 1993).

[21] Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?," 522. The most emblematic cases in point are the "female circumcision controversy" and its link to the rise of nationalism in Kenya, and the mass unveiling campaigns undertaken by French colonial authorities in Algeria and the veil's later symbolic and strategic importance to the Algerian anticolonial movement. For Kenya, see Susan Pedersen, "National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-Making," *Journal of Modern History* 63, no. 4 (1991): 647–680. As cited by Pedersen, see also John Spencer, *The Kenya African Union* (London, 1985), 71–97; Carl G. Rosberg, Jr., and John Nottingham, *The Myth of "Mau Mau": Nationalism in Kenya* (London, 1966), chap. 4; Robert Tignor, *The Colonial Transformation of Kenya: The Kamba, Kikuyu, and Maasai from 1900 to 1939* (Princeton, N.J., 1976), chap. 10; and Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality*, 189–197. For an alternative approach to the "female circumcision controversy," which examines its import in a wider frame than the dichotomy between colonial oppression and anticolonial resistance allows for, see Lynn M. Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley, Calif., 2003). On Algeria, see Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York, 1965), chap. 1; Neil MacMaster, *Burning the Veil: The Algerian War and the "Emancipation" of Muslim Women, 1954–62* (Manchester, 2012); Rick Fantasia and Eric L. Hirsch, "Culture in Rebellion: The Appropriation and Transformation of the Veil in the Algerian Revolution," in Hank Johnston and Bert Klan-

crying "White Peril"—used here to refer to white men's sexual exploitation of African women—anticolonial nationalists did more than claim their own inner domain of sovereignty over the colony's women. They also challenged the very grounds upon which British colonialism legitimated itself by drawing attention to the gap between the civilizing mission's moral rhetoric and the sexual immorality of white men in the colony. In this way we might productively think of the domain of interracial sexual relations as one of the spaces in which anticolonial nationalism begins to make its transition from an inward-looking process of (re)consolidating masculine power to an outward-looking one that is readying itself to lay claim to political power. While control over women remained central to both stages, with few exceptions women were marginalized from the articulation of anticolonial nationalism in the Gold Coast.[22]

In an ongoing historical moment in which press reports in diverse corners of the globe were rife with inflammatory tales of the sexual threat that black men posed to white women—the proverbial Black Peril—Gold Coasters turned this dominant narrative about colonial sexual relations, which they were clearly familiar with, on its head by asserting that white men were the real sexual menace.[23] That they did so without ever deploying the term "White Peril" underscores Ann Stoler's observation that the rhetoric of sexual peril retained its power even when it was "unlabeled."[24] Still, disparities in the prevalence and use of the two terms merit contemplation. For most readers, the phrase "Black Peril" needs little explanation. Its frequent use during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century to whip up hysteria over white women's alleged risk of sexual attack by black men has been well documented for areas as diverse as the settler colonies of southern Africa, Papua

dermans, eds., *Social Movements and Culture* (Minneapolis, 1995), 144–159; Jeffrey Louis Decker, "Terrorism (Un)Veiled: Frantz Fanon and the Women of Algiers," *Cultural Critique*, no. 17 (Winter 1990–1991): 177–195. Although the most sustained unveiling campaigns occurred during the Algerian War when French colonial authorities undertook the dubiously named "emancipation" program to liberate Algerian women from Islamic patriarchy, the French attack on the veil, which formed part of their "civilizing mission," dates back to the early twentieth century. On this longer French colonial preoccupation with the veil, see Bradford Vivian, "The Veil and the Visible," *Western Journal of Communication* 63, no. 2 (1999): 115–139.

[22] This would remain the norm throughout the nationalist period despite the fact that women from all sectors of Gold Coast society, from market women to highly educated elite women, were key supporters of and participants in the mass nationalist movement. And as Jean Allman has poignantly argued, even those select few elite women who were central to the articulation of Gold Coast nationalism have been marginalized in subsequent historical accounts of Ghana's nationalist movement. See Allman, "The Disappearing of Hannah Kudjoe: Nationalism, Feminism, and the Tyrannies of History," *Journal of Women's History* 21, no. 3 (2009): 13–35. On the restricted participation of women in anticolonial movements and their marginalization in the subsequent historiography of those movements in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, as well as an attempt to correct these omissions, see Robert J. C. Young, "Women, Gender and Anti-colonialism," in Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford, 2001), 360–382. See also Joyce M. Chadya, "Mother Politics: Anti-colonial Nationalism and the Woman Question in Africa," *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 3 (2003): 153–157; and Susan Geiger, "Women and African Nationalism," *Journal of Women's History* 2, no. 1 (1990): 227–244.

[23] On the familiarity of Gold Coast writers and readers with the uses and abuses of Black Peril accusations, see S. Coleridge-Taylor, "In Defence of the Negro," *Gold Coast Leader*, August 29, 1908; "Editorial Notes," ibid., August 11, 1917; "E.D. Morel on Warpath," ibid., August 21, 1920.

[24] Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 58.

New Guinea, and post–World War I Germany.[25] Rather than reflecting the reality of sexual danger, the racial and gender politics of Black Peril reveal how colonial communities' investments in protecting white women's sexual-cum-racial purity were a means through which they shored up their interests and created racial unity during crises of control, whether real or perceived.[26] Indeed, scholars agree that outbreaks of these panics had little or no correlation to actual sexual crimes. Instead, the primary victims of Black Peril were the black men who were lynched, castrated, or jailed as a result of the false accusations made against them.[27]

White Peril, in stark contrast, has rarely connoted sexual threat. Instead, it has been used to more broadly reference the danger posed to non-Western peoples by Europe's imperial ambitions. Sidney Gulick popularized the term in his 1905 treatise *The White Peril in the Far East*, which argued that Europe's growing power in Asia, if unchecked, would result in the region's long-term underdevelopment, with negative global ramifications.[28] In the United States, writers as differently oriented as

[25] The following references are only a sampling of the robust literature on Black Peril: Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902–1935* (Bloomington, Ind., 2000); John Pape, "Black and White: The 'Perils of Sex' in Colonial Zimbabwe," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16, no. 4 (1990): 699–720; Norman Etherington, "Natal's Black Rape Scare of the 1870s," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15, no. 1 (1988): 36–53; Charles van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886–1914* (Johannesburg, 1982), 45–54; Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1939* (Durham, N.C., 1987); Amirah Inglis, *The White Women's Protection Ordinance: Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Papua* (London, 1975); Inglis, *Not a White Woman Safe: Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Port Moresby, 1920–1934* (Canberra, 1974); Iris Wigger, " 'Black Shame': The Campaign against 'Racial Degeneration' and Female Degradation in Interwar Europe," *Race & Class* 51, no. 3 (2010): 33–46; Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2004), chap. 1. See also E. D. Morel, *The Horror on the Rhine* (London, 1920); Morel, "Black Scourge in Europe: Sexual Horror Let Loose by France on the Rhine," *London Daily Herald*, April 10, 1920. For a critical contemporary response to Morel, see Claude McKay, "A Black Man Replies," *Workers' Dreadnought*, April 24, 1920.

[26] This phenomenon was not limited to colonial contexts. Although the term "Black Peril" was not as widely used in the U.S., the rhetorical power of its "unlabeled potential" was nonetheless profound, making itself most visible in the hysteria that surrounded interracial sex in the post-emancipation period and led to the widespread lynching of black men. See, for example, Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* (New Haven, Conn., 1997), especially chaps. 7 and 8; Ida B. Wells, *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States, 1892–1893–1894* (Chicago, 1895). The 1915 film *Birth of a Nation* potently exemplifies how Black Peril fears were mobilized in the service of southern whites' political interests. For an excellent analysis of the life and times of *Birth of a Nation*, see John Hope Franklin, " 'Birth of a Nation': Propaganda as History," *Massachusetts Review* 20, no. 3 (1979): 417–434. There is, of course, an extensive body of literature that both predates and postdates *Birth of a Nation*, which peddled the same kinds of imagery. For a concise overview of these works, see David Pilgrim, "The Brute Caricature," http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/brute/. On the resonance between Black Peril scares in southern Africa and the southern U.S. in terms of their legitimation of lynching and others forms of vigilantism, see Jeremy C. Martens, "Settler Homes, Manhood and 'Houseboys': An Analysis of Natal's Rape Scare of 1886," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 28, no. 2 (2002): 379–400, here 387–389.

[27] Given how untethered the scares were from the reality of sexual threat facing white women, it is worth asking whether the intense scholarly preoccupation with Black Peril unwittingly normalizes the very phenomenon it seeks to problematize, especially when one considers how little attention has been paid to how colonized populations regarded and mobilized around the sexual threats facing them.

[28] Sidney Lewis Gulick, *The White Peril in the Far East: An Interpretation of the Significance of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York, 1905). Gulick contended that it was only in relation to the reality of White Peril that fears of a third peril, Yellow Peril, had any merit. Also of late-nineteenth-century origin, Yellow Peril, as Gina Marchetti has argued, was "rooted in medieval fears of Genghis Khan and Mongolian invasions of Europe" and "combines racist terror of alien cultures, sexual anxieties, and the belief that the West will be overpowered and enveloped by the irresistible, dark, occult forces of the East." Yellow Peril entered the Western popular imagination after Japan's 1905 victory in the Russo-Japanese

the Reverend William Henry Moses of Philadelphia's Zion Baptist Church and historian William Garrott Brown used White Peril to comment on the racial, political, and economic danger that whites posed to blacks in the U.S. and beyond.[29] Only in the African context has White Peril been associated with sexual threat and fear of interracial sexual relations. In Southern Rhodesia, colonial administrators used it to refer to "the degenerate or naïve behavior of a white woman toward a black man," which allegedly increased the risk of sexual assault or, in the case of "degenerate" white women, led to consensual sex.[30] In South Africa, White Peril denoted the danger posed to "European prestige" by the cohabitation of white men and black women.[31]

Although European men frequently sexually abused and exploited African women, White Peril almost never referenced this quotidian reality, because in the colonial imagination, African women, unlike their white counterparts, did not possess a form of sexuality that could be violated.[32] As a result, such behavior on the part of white men was not criminalized, and to borrow Lynette Jackson's phrase, it was "a fundamental element of white male privilege."[33] Such privileges, however, were not without their price. Bound up in administrators' concerns about "European prestige" was a recognition that white men's sexual appetites were far more than an uncouth reality of colonial life; they threatened its very maintenance by stoking the resentment of subject populations and provoking unsettling questions about European men's moral fitness for rule. Although settler colonial communities claimed that these resentments manifested themselves in sexual attacks against white women, the paucity of such attacks suggests otherwise. These grievances did, however, find expression elsewhere. In his internationally distributed 1921 treatise on interracial sexual relations in South Africa, the early South African nationalist Sol Plaatje re-

War and, in the context of the U.S., was linked to both labor competition between whites and Chinese immigrants and the specter of an economically and militarily ascendant Japan. With regard to the sexual element of Yellow Peril, while it included the idea that Asian women could exercise sexual power over white men for dubious purposes, it primarily referenced the belief that Asian men were sexually deviant and a threat to white women. Marchetti, *Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction* (Berkeley, Calif., 1993), 2–3.

[29] Moses published *The White Peril* in 1919 to raise awareness among "the darker races in general, and the black race in particular," of the "danger of political, industrial, social, and economic slavery or extermination by the white Christian nations of the world." William Henry Moses, as quoted in Matthew S. Hopper, *From Refuge to Strength: The Rise of the African American Church in Philadelphia, 1787–1949* (Philadelphia, 1998), 32. See also Moses, *The White Peril* (Philadelphia, 1919). William Garrott Brown used the term to describe the threat posed to the livelihood of southern blacks by shifts in labor and immigration patterns among whites, which were steadily driving blacks into unemployment and as a result toward the North. Brown, "The White Peril: The Immediate Danger of the Negro," *North American Review* 179, no. 577 (1904): 824–841.

[30] McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue*, 73. See also Oliver Phillips, "The 'Perils' of Sex and the Panics of Race: The Dangers of Interracial Sex in Colonial Southern Rhodesia," in Sylvia Tamale, ed., *African Sexualities: A Reader* (London, 2011), 101–115; and Pape, "Black and White," 701 fn. 10.

[31] McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue*, 70.

[32] On the rarity with which the term "White Peril" referenced the frequent sexual abuse of black women by white men in colonial Zimbabwe, as well as an attempt to shed light on such abuses, see Pape, "Black and White," 701, 710–714; and Elizabeth Schmidt, "Race, Sex, and Domestic Labor: The Question of Female Servants in Southern Rhodesia, 1900–1939," in Karen Tranberg Hansen, ed., *African Encounters with Domesticity* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1992), 221–241, here 234–236.

[33] Lynette A. Jackson, " 'When in the White Man's Town': Zimbabwean Women Remember *Chibeura*," in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger, and Nakanyike Musisi, eds., *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington, Ind., 2002), 191–215, here 196.

framed the question of sexual threat by asking, "Is it a 'Black' or a 'White' Peril?" Plaatje decried "the double standard of justice" that allowed the sexual predations of white men to go unpunished while the pervasive discourse of Black Peril in the South African press branded black men as sexual predators.[34]

If Gold Coast writers left White Peril "unlabeled" in name, they were explicit about what it meant in practice. Their fears were provoked by sexual relationships between young African women and European men, which they regarded as exploitative and morally corrosive, but consensual insofar as the women in question were viewed as willing participants. The line between consent and coercion, particularly in the context of unequal power relations inflected by race, gender, class, and generation, is difficult to discern, but extant sources do not suggest that fear of rape and other forms of sexual violence prompted this outbreak of anxieties over interracial sex in the colony. Indeed, it was the seemingly consensual nature of many of these relationships that provoked such alarm among commentators who believed that once young women were corrupted by monetary and material gain, they voluntarily participated in sexual liaisons with European men. Worse yet, "with their fashionable vices and genteel appearances," they encouraged other "young ladies in town" to cavort with "whitemen . . . from [whom] they can get all necessaries of life."[35] In doing so, they led other women astray and failed to represent their race with honor and respectability. Given the integral role that racial respectability played in demonstrating fitness for self-rule, politically ambitious Gold Coast men saw their nationalist aspirations thwarted by these young women.[36] A striking feature, then, of both White and Black Peril is the central role that black and white women played, not just as victims, but also as agents of their own sexuality, in fomenting anxieties about racial degeneracy and the viability of the body politic, which in turn provoked intensified assertions of patriarchal control on the part of both black and white men. Integrating gender into our analysis reveals the common interests that both groups of men hoped to secure through discourses of sexual peril in ways that a singular focus on race, with its oppositional narrative, might otherwise obscure.

While female sexual libertinage emerged as an obstacle for early Gold Coast nation-builders, these men held their European counterparts, the "promoters of such immoral habits," responsible for destroying female virtue, subverting gender norms, and interfering with their patriarchal prerogatives.[37] But white men's sexual licentiousness not only imperiled young women, and hence the collective future of the Gold Coast nation, it also imperiled white colonial power. By laying bare their

[34] Solomon T. Plaatje, "The Mote and the Beam: An Epic on Sex-Relationship 'twixt White and Black in British South Africa," reprinted in *English in Africa* 3, no. 2 (1976): 85–92, here 92, 89. Plaatje's treatise was first published in New York in 1921. He sold 18,000 copies of it to help subsidize a lecture tour he had undertaken in the U.S. to nurture his growing interest in W. E. B. Du Bois's Pan-Africanism. See Neil Parsons, "Introduction," in Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa* (Middlesex, 2007). For an insightful analysis of Plaatje's treatise within a wider examination of the circulation of Black and White Peril discourses in South Africa, see Lucy Valerie Graham, *State of Peril: Race and Rape in South African Literature* (New York, 2012), 72–78.

[35] "Immoral Sanitation," *Gold Coast Leader*, January 3–10, 1920.

[36] Emily Callaci's work on racial respectability and nationalism in colonial Tanganyika offers an interesting point of comparison, albeit focused on the domain of youth dance rather than interracial sex. Callaci, "Dancehall Politics: Mobility, Sexuality, and Spectacles of Racial Respectability in Late Colonial Tanganyika, 1930s–1961," *Journal of African History* 52, no. 3 (2011): 365–384.

[37] "Immoral Sanitation," January 3–10, 1920.

sexual predations, Gold Coast writers identified white men as the real source of sexual peril, while also giving the lie to the claim that Europeans' moral superiority endowed them with the right to rule over Africans and other subject populations.

While penned with dramatic flair, Gold Coasters' White Peril commentaries reflected a series of truths about the changing practice and perception of sexual relationships between European men and African women, as well as changing ideas about marriage in the colony. If in earlier centuries marriages between African women and European men were a recognizable phenomenon, by the early twentieth century the entrenched racial prescripts of formal colonial rule had all but rendered intermarriage a relic of the past. In 1915, *Leader* columnist Atu reminisced about bygone "Dutch times" when "conditions were wholly different, marriage relations between black and white being honest . . . and fathers of mulattoes made honest efforts to train up their children."[38] The decline in intermarriage was plainly evident to a visiting German colonial authority, Dr. W. Asmis, who noted in his study of British law and policy in West Africa that "thanks to the healthy race feeling of the British such marriages are extremely uncommon."[39] At the same time, growing numbers of Gold Coasters from the literate elite and newly literate classes, who were typically Christian converts, not only condemned concubinage and polygyny, they also eschewed the institution of customary marriage. Instead, they placed a premium on the practice of Christian marriage, as institutionalized by the 1884 Marriage Ordinance, and the closely allied notion of monogamous companionate marriage.[40] For this group of Gold Coasters, the growing expectation of ordinance marriage and the actual practice of it, where European men and African women were concerned, were completely at odds.

Yet ideas about marriage were by no means uniform. Many elite men, despite generally being Christian themselves, defended the institution of customary marriage. They denounced the imposition of ordinance marriage, which they blamed for inciting wifely insubordination and fomenting moral decay.[41] One *Leader* writer went

[38] Atu, "Scrutineer," *Gold Coast Leader*, December 4–11, 1915.

[39] Dr. W. Asmis, "Law and Policy Relating to the Natives of the Gold Coast and Nigeria," *Journal of the African Society* 12, no. 45 (1912): 17–51, here 48. Asmis's observations about intermarriage, or the lack thereof, were reprinted in "A German Study of British West Africa," *Gold Coast Leader*, May 17, 1913. F. W. Migeod, a long-serving colonial officer in the Gold Coast (1900–1919), similarly commented on the waning practice of intermarriage in the *Gold Coast Leader* under the title "Some Aspects of Thinking Black," September 30, 1916. Several years later, the British palm oil trader and prolific writer J. M. Stuart-Young lamented the paucity of lawful intermarriages in a column titled "Miscegenacious Unions," *Gold Coast Leader*, April 29, 1922.

[40] One focus of the vast literature on marriage practices in the Gold Coast is the introduction of the colonial Marriage Ordinance of 1884, which provided Gold Coasters with an alternative to marriage by customary law. On the advent of the 1884 ordinance, see Shirley Zabel, "Legislative History of the Gold Coast and Lagos Marriage Ordinances: I," *Journal of African Law* 13, no. 2 (1969): 64–79; Zabel and B. Ceylon, "Legislative History of the Gold Coast and Lagos Marriage Ordinances: II," *Journal of African Law* 13, no. 3 (1969): 158–178; Zabel, "Legislative History of the Gold Coast and Lagos Marriage Ordinance: III," *Journal of African Law* 23, no. 1 (1979): 10–36. On the implications of this dual system for women and children, see Takyiwaa Manuh, "Wives, Children, and Intestate Succession in Ghana," in Gwendolyn Mikell, ed., *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Philadelphia, 1997), 77–95, here 79–86.

[41] Stephanie Newell provides a comprehensive yet succinct overview of the social tensions created

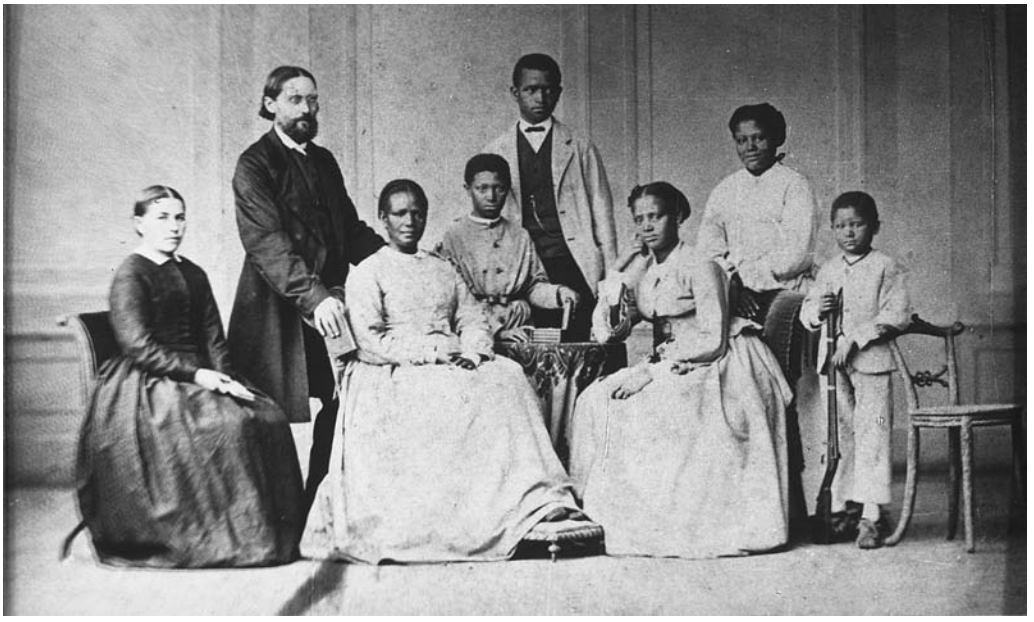

FIGURE 2: Married in 1851, Catherine Zimmerman (née Mulgrave) and Johannes Zimmermann, who are pictured here with their five children and Zimmerman's cousin, were members of the Basel Mission. By the end of the nineteenth century, publicly recognized church-sanctioned intermarriages of this kind were almost unheard of. "The Zimmerman-Mulgrave Family," unknown studio, 1872–1873, Ref. no. QS-30.002.0237.02, Basel Mission Archives/Basel Mission Holdings.

so far as to suggest that monogamous marriages in the colony had created "a pitiable surplusage [*sic*] of girls, and taking advantage of the situation, the official, mercantile agent, mining expert, or any other [European] holding 'bluffing position' enters into the temple of Venus and drinks deeply of the best of our girls."[42] But even proponents of customary marriage, by the first decades of the twentieth century, doubted the legitimacy of such unions when contracted between European men and African women. As one writer for the *Leader* put it, customary marriages between Africans "are sacred to us," but when they were contracted across the color line, "the evil result" is that our "daughters becom[e] temporary wives to Europeans."[43] Thus, re-

by these two competing forms of marriage, as well as the pushback against ordinance marriage by members of the educated elite, in her introduction to *Marita: or The Folly of Love—A Novel* (Leiden, 2002), 1–37. See also Roger Gocking, *Facing Two Ways: Ghana Coastal Communities under Colonial Rule* (Lanham, Md., 1999), chap. 4. Gold Coasters were by no means alone in their varied reception of the 1884 ordinance. It also went into effect in Lagos, which was governed as part of the Gold Coast colony. The ordinance remained in effect even after Lagos became a separate colony in 1886 and thereafter amalgamated with the Southern Nigeria Protectorate to form the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1906. Kristin Mann has published widely on elite Lagosians' responses to the ordinance and the social changes it engendered. See, for example, Mann, "Marriage Choices among the Educated African Elite in Lagos Colony, 1880–1915," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 14, no. 2 (1981): 201–228; Mann, "The Dangers of Dependence: Christian Marriage among Elite Women in Lagos Colony, 1880–1915," *Journal of African History* 24, no. 1 (1983): 37–56; Mann, *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status, and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos* (Cambridge, 1985).

[42] A Reader, "Mixed Pickles: Moral Sanitation," *Gold Coast Leader*, August 24, 1918.

[43] "Lome," *Gold Coast Leader*, February 17, 1917. See also Atu, "Scrutineer," ibid., December 4–11, 1915; "Tarkwa," ibid., March 26, 1921.

gardless of which side of the contentious "marriage question" Gold Coasters fell on, neither camp believed that sexual relationships with European men conferred respectability on the African women who participated in them.

Colonial policymakers' efforts in 1907 and 1909 to stamp out the persistent problem of interracial concubinage only pushed these relationships further into the recesses of colonial society, where they undoubtedly appeared all the more unseemly.[44] Despite their professional and social consequences, European officers, privately employed Europeans (merchants, clerks, miners, planters, and so on), and Gold Coasters continued to pursue these liaisons. Numerous cases in which British government officers were punished for "keeping" local women underscore the persistence of concubinage despite official prohibition.[45] Even French officers stationed in neighboring Ivory Coast attempted to circumvent indigenous sanctions against "temporary marriages" there by crossing into the Gold Coast to find native wives, raising fascinating questions about why these unions were more widely accepted among Gold Coasters, even as growing numbers of them decried the practice.[46] Recently published memoirs confirm that liaisons between local women and European men employed by expatriate trading firms were also commonplace, even though some firms expressly forbade them.[47] As had been the case in earlier centuries, Gold Coasters, typically lineage heads or other male relatives, brokered relationships between their female dependents and European men.[48] During the first half of the twentieth century, a new class of men, often stewards employed by Europeans, as well as entrepreneurially inclined young men in new urban centers, including Takoradi's "pilot boys," acted as middlemen on behalf of Europeans looking for commercial sex.[49] And as women in the colony increasingly sought greater control over their marital arrangements and sexual lives, some of their number independently formed alliances with European men. Thus, despite the colonial state's efforts, in early 1920, when the "Immoral Sanitation" series ran, sexual relationships between European men and African women were an ever-present feature of colonial life. The series and likeminded commentaries, however, marked a decisive moment in the long local history of these relationships by making them more than just the subject of fleeting public criticism; they were now the source of anticolonial agitation.

[44] Anti-concubinage circulars were issued in 1907 by the colony's governor, Sir John Rodger, and then again in 1909 by the secretary of state for the colonies, Lord Crewe. For Rodger's circular, see Secretariat Circular, dated March 25, 1907, enclosed in Governor John Rodger to Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl of Elgin, August 10, 1907, CO 96/459, no. 31137, The National Archives, Kew, UK [hereafter TNA]. For the Crewe Circular, see CO 533/52, no. 45005, TNA.

[45] Carina Ray, *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana* (Athens, Ohio, forthcoming), chaps. 3 and 4.

[46] White, *Children of the French Empire*, 20.

[47] Hans Rudolf Roth, *Because of Kwadua* (Accra, 2008); Hans Buser, *In Ghana at Independence: Stories of a Swiss Salesman*, trans. Anne Blonstein (Basel, 2010).

[48] Ray, *Crossing the Color Line*, chaps. 2 and 3.

[49] "Pilot Boys in Takoradi Area," WRG 24/1/323, Public Records and Archives Administration Department [hereafter PRAAD], Sekondi, Ghana; John Sackey, "A Tale of Takoradi Harbour: A Social History, 1928 to Present," Sekondi, WRG 56/24/1, PRAAD; K. A. Busia, *Report on a Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi* (London, 1950), 108; Akyeampong, "Sexuality and Prostitution among the Akan of the Gold Coast," 145–146.

FIGURE 3: Little is known about this photograph or the people pictured in it, except that it was taken around 1915 and is one of only a handful of pictures in the Basel Mission's prodigious visual archive featuring mixed-race families in the Gold Coast. The men's style of dress, including their pith helmets and characteristic white uniforms, suggests that they may have been French officers. If true, this image offers compelling visual evidence to support the findings of a 1910 French survey which reported that French men stationed in Ivory Coast regularly crossed into the Gold Coast to find temporary native wives. Such a phenomenon would surely have contributed to the growing discontent among some Gold Coasters about white men's sexual predations and the frequency with which they abandoned their mixed-race children. Yet the obvious care and intent with which the group pictured here presented themselves for the camera suggests that even if such family formations were temporary, they could also be cherished and memorialized. "Unidentified Group Portrait, Ghana," photographer unknown, ca. 1915, Basel Mission Gold Coast Photographs, Image no. EEPA 1997-0011-004, Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The politicization of indigenous opposition to sexual relationships between white men and African women in the Gold Coast occurred within a wider Black Atlantic frame. For many Gold Coasters, at home and abroad in postwar Britain, late 1919 and 1920 was a time of turmoil, characterized by a reappraisal of their position within the British Empire, even as they continued to affirm their place in it. This was especially the case for men drawn from the educated elite and the growing class of sub-elites, including maritime laborers.[50] Despite their service to Britain in the Great War, West African seamen and soldiers, educated in the ways of the world through their travels but largely of working-class origin, became the target of unprecedented violence during the race riots that swept the British ports in the summer of 1919.[51] Like the Red Summer in the United States, the social and economic upheaval gripping postwar Britain found dramatic expression in the violent actions of white mobs who indiscriminately attacked black men and destroyed the multiracial and multiethnic settlements these men and their families called home.[52] Black men were blamed not only for taking work away from white British men, but also for taking *their* women. The "sex problem," as one newspaper dubbed it, became the paradigm through which many local and national authorities, everyday observers, and the press rationalized the unprecedented nature of violence perpetrated against black men during the riots.[53] Indeed, the first officially documented lynching in Britain occurred

[50] In the context of the Gold Coast, Stephanie Newell includes "clerks, teachers, middlemen, entrepreneurs and catechists" in the group of newly educated Africans who formed the sub-elite and were "seen to have developed cultural affiliations and economic aspirations that threatened the system of indirect rule in British West Africa." I would add West African maritime laborers to this group of sub-elites. They were widely traveled, often possessed basic literacy skills, and were politicized through their Atlantic connections. Newell, "Local Cosmopolitans in Colonial West Africa," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 46, no. 1 (2011): 103–117, here 108.

[51] Although their numbers skyrocketed during the war, West Africans had long been employed in the British shipping industry. They were recruited as early as the seventeenth century to work on board British ships, but their numbers surged in the mid-nineteenth century with the introduction of steamships and the new racialized hierarchies of labor they created. As historian Diane Frost argues, West Africans "were recruited to perform . . . heavy manual work since it was believed they were better suited to the soaring temperatures that prevailed in the engine rooms," where they worked as donkeymen, greasers, and stokers. Frost, "Racism and Social Segregation: Settlement Patterns of West African Seamen in Liverpool since the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 22, no. 1 (1996): 85–95, here 86. Frost develops these themes further in *Work and Community among West African Migrant Workers since the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool, 1999).

[52] This article is primarily concerned with West Africans, but they were by no means the only targets of racial violence during the riots. Indeed, the term "black" is used here to refer to a broad range of people who at the time were often referred to as "coloured," including West Indians, West Africans, Portuguese, Indians, Cingalese, Malays, Egyptians, Somalis, and Arabs (generally from Aden). It was also common for members of these groups to describe themselves as "coloured" when not identifying in more specific ways. While I use "black" to refer to this diverse group of people, I retain the usage of "coloured" when quoting directly from source material.

[53] The official and popular focus on the "sex problem" obscured the great degree to which economic tensions underlay the riots. Jacqueline Jenkinson's examination of a series of smaller riots between January 1919 and the outbreak of major rioting in June shows that in each case racial violence was a direct result of competition over jobs. The manifestation of these tensions in violence was spurred by the fact that many of the men involved in the riots had been trained "to react violently to wartime situations [and] acted likewise in times of stress after their demobilization." This observation is supported by reports of the use of wartime fighting tactics by some of the rioters. See "Active Service Tactics," *Evening Express* (Liverpool), June 13, 1919. Jacqueline Jenkinson, "The 1919 Riots," in Panikos Panayi, ed., *Racial Violence in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York, 1996), 92–111, here 93–96. See also Jenkinson, *Black 1919: Riots, Racism and Resistance in Imperial Britain* (Chicago, 2009). On the preoccupation with the "sex problem," as quoted in the *Western Mail*, June 13, 1919, see L. Everett, Asst. Head Constable, Central Police Office, to Under Secretary of State, June 10, 1919,

during the June 1919 rioting in Liverpool. Charles Wootton, a twenty-four-year-old West Indian who had served as a fireman in the navy during the war, was chased to his death by a lynch mob of more than two hundred rioters.[54]

Local authorities responded to the riots by quickly drawing up plans to forcibly send black men back to the colonies.[55] Alarmed by the prospect of disgruntled repatriates stirring up racial trouble, the Colonial Office moved quickly to squash these local schemes, but the damage had already been done.[56] Police in Cardiff reported that some West Indians and West Africans had agreed to repatriate for the sole purpose of "creating racial feeling against white people domiciled in their country."[57] Most, however, refused to return to the colonies.[58] In the view of the chief constable of Cardiff, these men had "made the United Kingdom their home, they have formed attachments with white women and are prepared to stubbornly defend what they call their rights."[59]

While some black commentators quietly called attention to events taking place in Britain and their repercussions for the colonies' white residents, others boldly declared that the riots and repatriation schemes were stoking anticolonial agitation.[60] A self-identified "British coloured soldier" gave voice to his anger in the *Liverpool Post* by calling for the reciprocal return of white colonials to Europe. "All your people who is out there making their living must come back home and make theirs here," he demanded.[61] This sentiment was echoed in the pages of Liverpool's

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HO 45/11017/377969/6, TNA; newspaper clipping from the *Sunday Express* (London), June 15, 1919, HO 45/11017/377969/68, TNA; newspaper clipping from the *Western Mail* (Cardiff), June 13, 1919, HO 45/11017/377969/11, TNA; newspaper clipping from the *Daily Mail* (London), June 13, 1919, HO 45/11017/377969/8, TNA; Chief Constable, Cardiff City Police, to Under Secretary of State, June 18, 1919, HO 45/11017/377969/20, TNA.

[54] While we must be careful to distinguish between incidences of lynching in Britain, like Wootton's, and the cultures of lynching that existed in the southern U.S. and in the settler colonies of southern Africa, a cautious comparison reveals that across time and space, horrific acts of violence against black men have frequently been justified through accusations of interracial sex between black men and white women. For an account of Wootton's lynching, see Head Constable, Liverpool, Report on Racial Riots, June 17, 1919, HO 45/1107/377969/28, TNA. See also Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1984), 300. For a brief overview of the history of lynching in Britain, see Marika Sherwood, "Lynching in Britain," *History Today* 49, no. 3 (1999): 21–23. Elsa Barkley Brown offers a compelling reminder that black women were also victims of lynching in the U.S. in "Imagining Lynching: African American Women, Communities of Struggle, and Collective Memory," in Geneva Smitherman, ed., *African-American Women Speak Out on Anita Hill–Clarence Thomas* (Detroit, 1995), 100–124.

[55] For Liverpool, see Chief Constable Everett to Under Secretary of State, June 10, 1919, HO 45/11017/377969/6, TNA. For Cardiff, see Williams to the Under Secretary of State, June 13, 1919, HO 45/1107/377969/11, TNA.

[56] "Memorandum on the Repatriation of Coloured Men," June 23, 1919, CO 323/814, TNA, also cited in Jenkinson, "The 1919 Riots," 104–105.

[57] Chief Constable, Cardiff City Police, to Under Secretary of State, June 18, 1919, HO 45/11017/377969/20, TNA.

[58] By early July, the Home Office had been able to recruit only 75 West Africans to board the *Batanga*, an Elder Dempster liner that had been hired to repatriate 240 men back to West Africa. See "After Loyal War Service, West Africans Returning Home," *Gold Coast Nation*, July 12, 1919.

[59] Chief Constable, Cardiff City Police, to Under Secretary of State, June 18, 1919, HO 45/11017/377969/20, TNA.

[60] For an example of this kind of subtle invocation, see the comments of Mr. D. T. Aleifasakure Toummanah, secretary of the Ethiopian Hall, in the *Liverpool Post*, June 11, 1919, HO 45/11017/377969/6, TNA.

[61] "Coloured Man's View Point," *Liverpool Post*, June 11, 1919, HO 45/11017/377969/6, TNA.

*Evening Express* by a representative of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society who reminded the British public that its empire was "coloured" and that "legislation resting solely on colour is unthinkable, *except at the risk of dissolution of the Empire*." To this he added, "you cannot prevent the Black man from coming here, because this is the centre of his Empire."[62]

Black men in the ports were well aware that the violence directed at them stemmed not only from competition over jobs, but also from their associations with white women. In a letter published in the *Leader*, representatives of the Black Seamen in Liverpool organization explained that white rioters were angered that "black men [were] co[ur]ting their girls."[63] Others were quick to point out that while black men were being attacked in Britain, Europeans were busy fathering children with African women in the colonies. Fola Thomas, a demobilized West African soldier, called attention to this double standard in a protest letter to the House of Commons: "I beg to ask who are the fathers of those half castes estimated to be over 13,000 molatoes [*sic*] in 1908 in the West Coast of Africa[?] Wasn't their fathers whites and their mothers black?" His invocation of the progeny of these relationships was a common strategy employed by others to illustrate white men's sexual promiscuity and to highlight their lack of paternal responsibility. Eager to indicate that the sexual peccadillos of European men in the colonies did not go unnoticed, Thomas posed the rhetorical question, "Ain't the negroes in Africa have their own feelings as the whites here today[?]" Despite their unease, Thomas concluded, Africans had not *yet* allowed their jealousies to be inflamed to the point of violence.[64]

While the "canting hypocrisy," as Atu put it, evident in the riots embodied a wider set of grievances over unequal access to the rights and privileges that black men believed they were owed as loyal British subjects, it is instructive that these grievances found their most powerful expression in a discourse about unequal access to black and white women's bodies and contested masculinities.[65] As a result, the riots focused the attention of West African seamen and demobilized soldiers, who formed a vocal stratum of the sub-elite, and the colony's intelligentsia on the question of interracial sexual relations at home and abroad.[66] From their shifting locations in the Atlantic world, this group of highly politicized and mobile Gold Coast men authored a trenchant critique of the sexual politics of empire. That the transoceanic circuits of the Atlantic feature so prominently in this story alerts us to the continuing centrality of Africa in the formation of the Black Atlantic world during the early twentieth century. Much of the literature on the Black Atlantic consigns its engagement with Africa to the transatlantic slave trade, or portrays it primarily as an object of

[62] "The Colour Bar: Significance of Race Riots in English Ports," *Evening Express* (Liverpool), June 11, 1919, emphasis added.

[63] A. W. Neizer and Christian Wilson, "Editorial Notes," *Gold Coast Leader*, August 2–9, 1919.

[64] Fola Thomas to the House of Commons via the Colonial Secretaryship, June 13, 1919, CO 554/44, no. 35408, TNA.

[65] Although not focused on the domain of interracial sex, a growing body of literature is examining how colonialism more generally shaped ideas about and practices of masculinity in Africa. See, for example, Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher, *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth, N.H., 2003); and Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana* (Bloomington, Ind., 2005).

[66] Rachel Jean-Baptiste makes a similar observation about the link between post–World War I political and socioeconomic crises and increased scrutiny of interracial sexual relationships between European men and African women in colonial Gabon's public discourse; " 'A Black Girl Should Not Be with a White Man,' " 70.

FIGURE 4: Departing from the dominant narrative of white men who abandoned their mixed-race offspring, Basel Mission catechist William Timothy Evans raised his two daughters in the mission community in Accra and Akropong after his Ga wife, Emma Evans (née Reindorf), died during childbirth in 1900. Evans is pictured here with his daughters Mary Emma and Elizabeth. "Seminary House Father Evans 1909," Gold Coast, Ref. no. QD-30.112.00067, Basel Mission Archives/Basel Mission Holdings.

the diaspora's gaze. Indeed, Paul Gilroy's foundational text *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* marginalized Africa in these very ways.[67] Yet (male) Gold Coasters, and Africans more generally, in their roles as seamen, soldiers, political activists, union members, writers, pressmen, and consumers of news from around the black world, were far from marginal actors in the dynamic world of the early-twentieth-century Black Atlantic. Their lived realities suggest a symbiotic relationship between Black Atlanticism and nationalism, rather than the antithetical one Gilroy proposes.[68]

[67] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993).

[68] On this point, see Laura Chrisman, *Postcolonial Contraventions: Cultural Readings of Race, Imperialism, and Transnationalism* (Manchester, 2003), 91. For studies that emphasize the dynamic presence of West African writers and activists in the Black Atlantic world and the way in which their nationalist aspirations were nurtured within the context of its transnational spaces, see Marc Matera, "Black Internationalism and African and Caribbean Intellectuals in London, 1919–1950" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 2008); and Jinny Prais, "Imperial Travelers: The Formation of West African Urban Culture, Identity, and Citizenship in London and Accra, 1925–1935" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2008); Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln, Neb., 2010); and for a slightly later time period, see Carol Polsgrove, *Ending British Rule in Africa: Writers in a Common Cause* (Manchester, 2009). Importantly, the work of Matera and Prais pays astute attention to the participation of West African women in local and trans-

In the wake of the 1919 race riots, the Gold Coast press brimmed with vivid reports of the violence perpetrated against black men.[69] As the colony's robust reading public quickly became aware of what was happening in the British ports, they glimpsed the hardships faced by the scores of men who left each year to work aboard the shipping lines that plied the Atlantic.[70] The dramatic stories of racism endured by black men in Britain must have resonated with the colony's educated elites, who had once served at the highest levels of the local colonial administration but were pushed out of power through a confluence of factors. Late-nineteenth-century advances in tropical medicine increased the numbers of Europeans employed on the coast, while assertions of African racial inferiority were used to justify the imposition of formal colonial rule.[71] These factors made it physically possible and ideologically necessary to exclude Africans from high office.[72] Meanwhile, the system of indirect rule, introduced at the turn of the century and intensified during the 1910s, endowed the colony's "natural rulers," rather than the intelligentsia, with the right to preside over native affairs.[73] To challenge these exclusions, many educated elites carved out alternative spheres of power and influence through the creation of their own political and social organizations and by harnessing the power of the Gold Coast press.[74]



national networks, while the work of Matera and Boittin considers debates among anticolonial activists in interwar Europe about metropolitan sexual relationships between black men and white women.

[69] "The Salford Negro Colony," *Gold Coast Leader*, July 19, 1919; "Scrutineer," ibid., July 26, 1919; "Editorial Notes" and "A Coloured Empire," ibid., August 2–9, 1919; "Justice," ibid., August 30, 1919; "A Serious Omission," ibid., September 6–13, 1919; "Colour Prejudice," ibid., October 18–November 8, 1919; "Treatment of Blacks in England" and "Fatal Feud in Wales," *Gold Coast Nation*, July 5, 1919; "Official Bid to Stop Colour Riots," "The Colour Bar," and "After Loyal War Service," ibid., July 12, 1919; "Official Bid to Stop Colour Riots (continued)," ibid., July 19–26, 1919.

[70] The colony's diverse reading public comprised several groups: highly literate longstanding coastal elites, most of whom were male, but who also included a small number of women; newly literate and semiliterate readers, often young male migrants to the colony's cities and towns who had received some formal education; and illiterate men and women who received news from their literate counterparts, thereby expanding the circulation of newspaper content beyond just the literate. For an incisive overview of British West Africa's newspaper readerships, see Stephanie Newell, "Articulating Empire: Newspaper Readerships in Colonial West Africa," *New Formations* 73 (2011): 26–42. On the transmission of newspaper content from literate to non-literate Gold Coasters, see John Wilson, "Gold Coast Information," *African Affairs* 43, no. 172 (1944): 111–115; and Stephanie Newell, *West African Literatures: Ways of Reading* (Oxford, 2006), 72–73.

[71] David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850–1928* (Oxford, 1963), 98–100.

[72] In the early 1880s, Africans filled approximately 20 percent of the higher posts in government service, but by 1908 this number had fallen to less than 2 percent. Africans held only 5 senior service appointments out of a total of 274, and 4 out of the 5 were of comparatively junior rank. Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, 94, 100. See also G. I. C. Eluwa, "Background to the Emergence of the National Congress of British West Africa," *African Studies Review* 14, no. 2 (1971): 205–218, here 205–206.

[73] For an overview of this process of displacement, see Vivian Bickford-Smith, "The Betrayal of Creole Elites, 1880–1920," in Philip D. Morgan and Sean Hawkins, eds., *Black Experience and the Empire* (Oxford, 2004), 194–227.

[74] Kwabena O. Akurang-Parry, " 'Disrespect and Contempt for Our Natural Rulers': The African Intelligentsia and the Effects of British Indirect Rule on Indigenous Rulers in the Gold Coast, c. 1912–1920," *International Journal of Regional and Local History* 2, no. 1 (2006): 43–65, here 44; K. A. B. Jones-Quartey, *A Summary History of the Ghana Press, 1822–1960* (Accra, 1974), 19. Jones-Quartey makes the important observation that "traditional rulers" also made use of the press, mainly through the *Leader*'s rival and information organ of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, the *Gold Coast Nation*. By the early 1920s, both the society and the *Nation* were regarded by the intelligentsia as striking a more conservative tone. See also Stephanie Newell, "Writing Out Imperialism? A Note on Nationalism

During the opening decades of the twentieth century, as Audrey Gadzekpo has observed, "the chief advocates of social and political reform . . . could be found within the ranks of the politician/journalist."[75] Indeed, many of the men who formed part of the early nucleus of the nationalist movement in the Gold Coast, including Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford, Samuel Richard Brew Attoh Ahuma, Frederick Victor Nanka-Bruce, Thomas Hutton-Mills, and James Hutton Brew, were closely associated with indigenous newspapers, either as founders, editors, or investors.[76] A significant number of these men were mixed-race, which only further brandished their credentials as agitators in the eyes of a colonial government that had long regarded them as "discontented and unprincipled . . . mulattoes" and the driving force behind the demand for self-government.[77]

Among the colony's numerous newspapers, the *Gold Coast Leader* was undoubtedly the most politically radical. Founded in 1902, the *Leader* was exceptional for its thirty-year print run and its invitation to all sectors of society to contribute to its pages, whether in the form of reportage, commentary, or letters to the editor.[78] One measure of its influence was its sizable print run, estimated annually at 57,200 in 1912, more than double what it had been just a decade earlier.[79] During his long tenure as its most prominent editor (1919–1930), the famed nationalist figure J. E. Casely Hayford helped forge the paper's pan-African sensibilities and its unrelenting critical engagement with the colonial state.[80] The *Leader* was inevitably closely associated with the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), the region's earliest nationalist organization, which Casely Hayford co-founded in 1920, the very same year the White Peril commentaries ran in the paper.[81]

In an era when government censorship of the indigenous press was less restrictive

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and Political Identity in the African-Owned Newspapers of Colonial Ghana," in Stefan Helgesson, ed., *Exit: Endings and New Beginnings in Literature and Life* (Amsterdam, 2011), 81–94, here 84.

[75] Audrey Sitsofe Gadzekpo, "Women's Engagement with Gold Coast Print Culture from 1857 to 1957" (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 2001), 74–75.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, 88–89. Prominent Gold Coast pressmen who were mixed-race include James Hutton Brew, "pioneer of West African journalism in the 1880s," who successively founded and edited several papers (the *Gold Coast Times, Western Echo*, and *Gold Coast Echo*); F. V. Nanka Bruce (the *Gold Coast Independent*); and J. E. Casely Hayford, the matrilineal descendant of the mid-eighteenth-century Irish slave trader Richard Brew and his wife, Efuah Ansah, the daughter of Eno Baisie Kurentsi (John Currantee), the powerful slave trader and ruler of Anomabo. For James Hutton Brew and F. V. Nanka Bruce, respectively, see Michel R. Doortmont, *The Pen-Pictures of Modern Africans and African Celebrities by Charles Francis Hutchison: A Collective Biography of Elite Society in the Gold Coast Colony* (Leiden, 2005), 137, 148. For Casely Hayford, see Priestly, *West African Trade and Coast Society*, and Priestly, "Richard Brew." Elsewhere in West Africa, mixed-race people also emerged as early constituents of anticolonial movements. See, for example, Hilary Jones, *The Métis of Senegal: Urban Life and Politics in French West Africa* (Bloomington, Ind., 2013).

[78] Newell, "Articulating Empire," 31. The short lifespan of many of the colony's newspapers is vividly illustrated in K. A. B. Jones-Quartey, "The Gold Coast Press, 1822–c. 1930, and the Anglo-African Press, 1825–c. 1930: The Chronologies," *Institute of African Studies: Research Review* 4, no. 2 (1968): 30–46.

[79] For the 1902 figure, see Gadzekpo, "Women's Engagement with Gold Coast Print Culture from 1857 to 1957," 85. For the 1912 figure, see Newell, "Writing Out Imperialism?," 84.

[80] Whether Casely Hayford's own mixed-race genealogy, originating in the bygone era of intermarriage, played any role in the *Leader*'s criticism of illicit interracial relationships in the early twentieth century is unclear, but it is worth noting the possible link, especially since his tenure as editor began in 1919, just when the politicization of indigenous opposition to interracial sexual relations commenced.

[81] Eluwa, "Background to the Emergence of the National Congress of British West Africa," 216. On the link between the *Leader* and the NCBWA, see Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, 375.

than it would later become, a wide range of grievances with the colonial state were aired in the pages of the *Leader*.[82] Newspaper commentaries registered concerns over increased European immigration to the colony, the exclusion of Africans from higher posts in the colonial service, and race-based differences in pay scales for African and European civil servants.[83] A significant cluster of these grievances also involved colonial incursions into the "inner domain of national culture." Many nationalists regarded acts such as the 1884 Marriage Ordinance and the 1892 Native Customs Ordinance, as well as the institutionalization of indirect rule, as unwanted encroachments on native institutions that fomented social chaos. In the immediate postwar period, in particular, demands for political reforms and fuller enfranchisement in recognition of the critical wartime support rendered by the colony to Britain were also a common feature of press commentary. These demands, as Stephanie Newell notes, were made within "the discourse of imperial loyalty," which continued to frame political agitation throughout the 1920s.[84] In this sense, for many Gold Coast nationalists, national independence within the British Empire was the goal at hand.[85]

Significantly, it was grievances over interracial sexual relations that broke this mold by provoking disenfranchised yet highly politicized Gold Coasters to explicitly question whether their interests would be better served outside the bonds of empire. In the wake of the 1919 race riots, this group of men used the *Leader* not only to decry attacks against black men in Britain for cohabiting with or marrying white women, but also to declare that the sexual appetites and mores of European men were corrupting local women and thereby threatening the moral fiber and future of the nation. In this moment, affirmations of their own fitness for self-rule were newly coupled with assertions of European men's lack of fitness for colonial rule.

The *Leader*'s columnists and letter writers agreed that in corrupting female virtue, interracial liaisons imperiled their nationalist aspirations. Nowhere was this strain of thinking better exemplified than in the three-part "Immoral Sanitation" series, which formed part of a larger body of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century newspaper writing in the Gold Coast that "advocated that education be di-

[82] Although government regulation of the press began with the Newspaper Registration Law of 1894, it was not until the 1930s that press censorship in the Gold Coast became an acute issue with the introduction of the Sedition Bill of 1934. See Gadzekpo, "Women's Engagement with Gold Coast Print Culture from 1857 to 1957," 78–80; and Stanley Shaloff, "Press Controls and Sedition Proceedings in the Gold Coast, 1933–39," *African Affairs* 71, no. 284 (1972): 241–263.

[83] For a representative sample of these commentaries appearing in the *Gold Coast Leader*, see A Negro, "Dwin Hwe Kan (Think and Look Ahead)," January 17–24, 1920; "Editorial Notes," May 22–29, 1920; Kobina Sekyi, "The English Colonial's Heaviest Handicap," June 5–12, 1920; "Racial Unity," July 24–31, 1920; "The Native Civil Service and the Native Salaries Committee" and "The African Civil Service," September 11, 1920; "The Police Magistrate and Colour Prejudice," October 2–9, 1920; "The Strangers within Our Gates," October 23, 1920; "Editorial Notes," October 30, 1920; "Noblesse Oblige" and "The Prostitution of Education to Imperialistic Aims," November 20, 1920; "Recognition and Support of Our Institutions," December 11, 1920; "A Distinction without a Difference," "A European Lady M.O.H. for Cape Coast," and "Our White Officials and Their Maintenance," January 22, 1921; "West Africa and the British West African Conference," October 30, 1920; "Recognition and Support of Our Institutions," December 11, 1920; V. H., "The West African Problem," February 12, 1921; and Kobina Sekyi, "Sir Hugh Clifford and the Congress," February 26, 1921. For a brief overview of the controversy surrounding the implementation of indirect rule, see Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, 374–396.

[84] Stephanie Newell, "An Introduction to the Writings of J. G. Mullen, an African Clerk, in the *Gold Coast Leader*, 1916–19," *Africa* 78, no. 3 (2008): 384–400, here 387.

[85] Newell, "Writing Out Imperialism?," 84–85.

rected at preparing girls towards a cultured companionate marriage that would make them good intelligent mothers and wives that could benefit the nation."[86] The commentaries under consideration here also foreshadowed the tensions that emerged more widely in gender relations throughout the colony in the late 1920s and 1930s as women sought various means of resisting increased infringements on their freedom, and more specifically on their labor, marital prospects, and sexuality.[87] While this narrative fits into the larger body of scholarship on "wicked women," a stigmatizing label often given to women in colonial Africa who "push[ed] the boundaries of 'acceptable' behavior," it departs in one critical way.[88] Rather than collaborating with colonial authorities to reassert patriarchal control over the colony's "wayward" young women, the male writers in question used the women's sexual libertinage as proof of the demoralizing influences of European men, and by extension colonial rule, in order to bolster their own patriarchal claims to power.

The title "Immoral Sanitation" satirized the colonial government's acute concerns about sanitation, which were used to legitimize the policy of race-based residential segregation and other much-hated measures to regulate the behavior and movement of Africans.[89] Insalubrious white men are cleverly rendered as the source of moral squalor as they pull black women into their beds with one hand while hypocritically using the other hand to push Africans out of their "sanitary" white en-

[86] Audrey Gadzekpo, "Gender Discourses and Representational Practices in Gold Coast Newspapers," *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies* 1, no. 2 (2001): 1–27, here 5. The series consisted of two articles that appeared under the title "Immoral Sanitation" in the January 3–10 and February 7–14, 1920, editions of the *Leader*, and a third article that appeared in the "Scrutineer" column in the February 21–28, 1920, edition. Each commentary in the series was separately authored. Although subsequent related commentaries throughout 1920 did not directly invoke the "Immoral Sanitation" series, they were preoccupied with the same concerns. These include, but are not limited to, the following, which all appeared in the *Leader*: "Editorial Notes," May 22–29, 1920; Sekyi, "The English Colonial's Heaviest Handicap," June 5–12, 1920; Atu, "Scrutineer," June 5–20; A Reader, "Mixed Pickles," June 19, 1920; "Our Girls," November 13, 1920; Atu, "Scrutineer," November 13, 1920.

[87] On what has become known as the period of "gender chaos" in the Gold Coast, see Jean Allman, "Rounding Up Spinsters: Gender Chaos and Unmarried Women in Colonial Asante," *Journal of African History* 37, no. 2 (1996): 195–214; Penelope A. Roberts, "The State and the Regulation of Marriage: Sefwi Wiawso (Ghana), 1900–1940," in Haleh Afshar, ed., *Women, State, and Ideology: Studies from Africa and Asia* (Albany, N.Y., 1987), 48–69; Emmanuel Akyeampong, " 'Wo pe tam won pe ba' ('You like cloth but you don't want children'): Urbanization, Individualism and Gender Relations in Colonial Ghana, *c*. 1900–39," in David M. Anderson and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Africa's Urban Past* (Oxford, 2000), 222–234. For an earlier moment in which young women in the Gold Coast also sought greater control over their sexual and marital lives, see Sandra Greene, "In the Mix: Women and Ethnicity among the Anlo-Ewe," in Carola Lentz and Paul Nugent, eds., *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention* (New York, 2000), 29–48, here 40. For the wider political context of these developments, see Beverly Grier, "Pawns, Porters, and Petty Traders: Women in the Transition to Cash Crop Agriculture in Colonial Ghana," *Signs* 17, no. 2 (1992): 304–328, here 305.

[88] Dorothy L. Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy, "Wayward Wives, Misfit Mothers, and Disobedient Daughters: 'Wicked' Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 30, no. 1 (1996): 1–9, here 3. See more generally the other essays in this special issue, *Wayward Wives, Misfit Mothers, and Disobedient Daughters*, edited by Hodgson and McCurdy. See also Jean M. Allman, "Of 'Spinsters,' 'Concubines' and 'Wicked Women': Reflections on Gender and Social Change in Colonial Asante," *Gender and History* 3, no. 2 (1991): 176–189.

[89] On the history of colonial sanitation programs in the Gold Coast, see Thomas S. Gale, "The Struggle against Disease in the Gold Coast: Early Attempts at Urban Sanitary Reform," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 16, no. 2 (1995): 185–203; and Stephen Addae, *The Evolution of Modern Medicine in a Developing Country: Ghana, 1880–1960* (Durham, N.C., 1996), chap. 6. For an excellent case study of the resistance to colonial sanitation measures among the Anlo in southwestern Ghana, see Sandra E. Greene, *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter: A History of Meaning and Memory in Ghana* (Bloomington, Ind., 2002), especially chap. 3.

claves. In the series' first column, the *Leader*'s Sekondi correspondent painted an alarming picture of unruly African women and "immoral whites" recklessly pursuing their selfish desires with no regard for their deleterious effects on society. The correspondent claimed that women, even those who were educated, ended up in the "whiteman's bungalow" after engaging in "gross moral vices" during their youth such that no respectable African man would marry them. These "ladies in silk hats, dainty diaphanous frocks and shining boots about the streets of Seccondee" were, in turn, accused of deceiving their innocent younger counterparts into believing that "advantages [were] derivable under the beneficent care of the Europeans."[90] The correspondent's detailed description of the young women's attire underscores Anne McClintock's observation that "the intense emotive politics of dress" stems from the fact that "for male nationalists, women serve as the visible markers of national homogeneity."[91] But these women and their fancy apparel were not the only problem; the correspondent criticized their mothers, too, describing them as "poor wretched women [who] in their blind folly . . . prefer gold to the virtue of their daughters." Ultimately, however, as "the promoters of such immoral habits," he blamed European men for the depraved condition of Sekondi's social life. White men of lower economic standing, he said, "seize these opportunities to satisfy their carnal lusts at a cheap rate" because they cannot afford to "bring their wives out with them, or often have none." European men were even held accountable for introducing polyandry into the colony by allowing their female consorts to become the lovers of their male colleagues.[92] Nowhere was it ever suggested that African men played a role in brokering these relationships—an omission that implicitly absolved them of complicity in this "traffic," while obscuring the degree to which they continued to place their female relatives, dependents, or associates with European men, even as some of their number decried the practice.

The first installment of the "Immoral Sanitation" series was certainly descriptive, but it was also prescriptive. Women who liaised with Europeans were portrayed as opportunistic "gold diggers," who would never find true love in their serial romances despite their purported claims of being "content and jolly in whitemen's company."[93] Instead, the Sekondi correspondent praised the merits of companionate marriage: "We advise the young ladies that a man and a woman can have in their true relationship, only as two fond and faithful lovers, each finding in the other father, mother, friend, riches and felicity." He implored the town's "inexperienced and unwary" young girls to shun the company of "night wanderers . . . for the future of this country depends on its womanhood."[94] While this was obviously meant to warn

[90] "Immoral Sanitation," *Gold Coast Leader*, January 3–10, 1920.

[91] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, 1995), 365.

[92] "Immoral Sanitation," January 3–10, 1920.

[93] The author's denial of the possibility that love or other forms of affect could coexist alongside or even be forged through exchanges of material resources for sex is mirrored in the failure of scholars today, argue Lynn Thomas and Jennifer Cole, to "explore how sentiment also inhabited such exchanges." Thomas and Cole, "Introduction: Thinking through Love in Africa," in Cole and Thomas, eds., *Love in Africa* (Chicago, 2008), 1–30, here 8.

[94] "Immoral Sanitation," January 3–10, 1920. The columnist's exhortations are an early example of what would become an increasingly common aspect of male leadership and associational life in towns like Sekondi during the 1920s and 1930s, which involved grooming young women for companionate marriage with African men through appropriate forms of socializing. For an insightful discussion of this

FIGURE 5: Foregrounded in this image are two young women shopping for patent leather high heels at the fashionable Czech-owned Bata shoe store in Sekondi. Wearing Western-style frocks and imported hats, the women are assisted by an African clerk. Almost imperceptible at first glance, the mirrored siding of one of the shoe racks contains the reflection of a European man, likely the store manager, peering over the front counter with a wide grin on his face. The image unwittingly conjures the link between female capital accumulation, consumerism, sexual corruption, and European plunder that Gold Coasters made in the pages of the *Leader* during the 1920s and 1930s. "Sekondi: Bata Store, October 1938," Gold Coast, Ref. no. QU-30.003.0489, Basel Mission Archives/Basel Mission Holdings.

young women against engaging in a life of "vice" with white men, and hence an attempt to regulate female sexuality, it must also be read as an expression of male anxiety about the loss of patriarchal authority over Gold Coast women, and in turn the nation. Portrayed as irreverent, these women used their sexuality to assert their independence by accruing for themselves the material benefits of their connections with European men and encouraging other women to do the same. Whatever money they earned, argued another writer, was promptly exchanged for "expensive clothing" at European-owned stores. In this way, "the morality of the country," he continued, was being reduced "in inverse ratio to the rate of advance of the whiteman's profits."[95] Thus, the pleasure and profit of European men was had at the expense of the nation, and by extension the men who rightfully belonged at its helm.

While the Sekondi correspondent portrayed these women as "gold diggers," he did so without providing a sense of the socioeconomic context in which they were living and making decisions.[96] Sekondi provides a stark example of how the forces

phenomenon, see Nate Plageman, *Highlife Saturday Night: Popular Music and Social Change in Urban Ghana* (Bloomington, Ind., 2013), chap. 2.

[95] "Our Girls," *Gold Coast Leader*, November 13, 1920.

[96] The image of the "gold digger" is one that increasingly saturated local depictions of women who

of colonial urbanization created the particular circumstances that made sexuality a key resource for female capital accumulation. The colonial government's creation of an important railway terminus in Sekondi in 1903 transformed the small fishing village, with its natural harbor, into a busy commercial center that linked gold- and timber-producing sites in the hinterland to the Atlantic economy. To satisfy labor demands, colonial policymakers encouraged immigration, which resulted in the rapidly growing town's largely male African population, as well as a sizable population of European men. This, in turn, drew female migrants, who "came to play a crucial role as retailers of food and drink, and providers of recreation and domestic comforts, including the sale of sex."[97] These entrepreneurial endeavors, as Emmanuel Akyeampong notes, "provided women with the opportunity to make money outside the confines of kinship and marriage."[98] With a limited range of opportunities for income generation, strategic partnerships, whether stable or serial, with comparatively financially prosperous men could also dramatically enhance young women's access to resources, both financial and material, as they struggled to make new lives for themselves in the colony's old and new urban enclaves.[99] While women in Sekondi were surely brokering financially lucrative arrangements with African men as well, it was their relationships with European men that catalyzed alarm among Gold Coasters about the sexual corruption of female virtue.

In the series' second installment, its anonymous author wrote of his shock at the "allegation of polyandry on the part of our young girls" and expressed discomfort with its inversion of traditional gender norms. "Polygamy is not strange to the male African but polyandry is a new thing in the history of our country," bemoaned the writer, who attributed it to "the introduction here of Western civilization and Christianity which like veneers cover a lot of sins." Turning the West's civilizing discourse on its head, the author lambasted Europeans for morally corrupting Africans. Lamenting the "sad fate of the country" should this evil go unchecked, he concluded, "it is a pity that our girls, the future mothers of the country, should yield to the temptations of the white man who should know better."[100] Atu, the *Leader*'s "Scrutineer" columnist, went a step further by pointing to "the growing numbers of mulattoes which some members of the [European] race are fostering in the country" and to reports of rampant sexual promiscuity in Europe in order to urge Europeans to examine their own moral shortcomings instead of making "unwarranted attacks on our Race."[101]

It was Atu as well who responded to the "Immoral Sanitation" series with an

formed relationships with European men in the Gold Coast. See Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: How to Play the Game of Life* (Bloomington, Ind., 2002), chap. 6.

[97] Akyeampong, "'Wo pe tam won pe ba,'" 224. This strategy was by no means limited to women in the Gold Coast. For similar examples in Nigeria and Kenya, see Benedict B. B. Naanen, "'Itinerant Gold Mines': Prostitution in the Cross River Basin of Nigeria, 1930–1950," *African Studies Review* 34, no. 2 (1991): 57–79; and Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago, 1990).

[98] Akyeampong, "'Wo pe tam won pe ba,'" 226.

[99] On this practice in Nigeria, see Lindsay, "A Tragic Romance, a Nationalist Symbol," 125. For Gabon, see Rich, "'*Un Babylone Noire*,'" 151.

[100] "Immoral Sanitation," *Gold Coast Leader*, February 7–14, 1920.

[101] Atu's fiery remarks were prompted by the publication of "Memoir on the State of Education in the Gold Coast" by G. W. Morrison, the archdeacon of the Anglican Church in Kumasi, in which he

ardent call for the cessation of these sexual liaisons. "History," he warned, "supplies instances of the decay and fall of nations having been preceded or even hastened by their giving themselves up to licentiousness." To guard against this, he invited his readers to join him "in a crusade to ostracise" the African paramours of European men, whom he described as a "disgrace to the race":

> They are a social evil in themselves and a source of danger to others since they may lure innocent girls from the path of rectitude. They should be treated as social pariahs and refused admission into decent society or other social gatherings and they should be given the cold shoulder whenever encountered.[102]

Here the connection between sexuality and nationalism is made explicit and bears out Joane Nagel's observation that "the moral economy of nationalism is gendered, sexualized, and racialized. National moral economies provide specific places for women and men in the nation, identify desirable and undesirable members by creating gender, sexual, and ethnic boundaries and hierarchies within nations, establish criteria for judging good and bad performances of nationalist masculinity and femininity, and define threats to national moral and sexual integrity."[103] Precisely because nationalism, like colonialism, articulates itself in critical ways through its moral economy, "sex talk," like that contained in these commentaries, becomes endowed with a rhetorical power and political currency that capitalizes on but is not limited to the domain of sex. Characterized by "widespread and varied references to sex, sexual morality, deviance, and normalcy," Todd Shepard's theorization of "sex talk" as a space that enables people to speak about race and empire unfettered by more conventional modes of political discourse seems particularly helpful in understanding the significance of these commentaries beyond their immediately stated claims.[104]

Sex talk emerged as both "a privileged site where wide ranging concerns about difference . . . could be talked about" and a site where differences were papered over.[105] During a period in Gold Coast history when one variant of nationalism in the colony tended toward localization and mapped more closely onto ethnic identities, most famously in the rise of Fanti nationalism in Cape Coast at the turn of the century, the terminology that Gold Coasters employed in their White Peril commentaries consistently pushed beyond the narrowly ethnic: "nation," "country," "African women," and "black women" were staple terms, not "Fanti nation," "Akan women," or similarly ethnic-specific terminology.[106] Indeed, anxiety over sexual re-

claimed that Africans possessed the traits of sexual immorality, dishonesty, conceit, and selfishness. Atu, "Scrutineer," *Gold Coast Leader*, June 5–12, 1920.

[102] Atu, "Scrutineer," *Gold Coast Leader*, February 21–28, 1920.

[103] Joane Nagel, *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality: Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers* (New York, 2003), 146.

[104] Todd Shepard, " 'Something Notably Erotic': Politics, 'Arab Men,' and Sexual Revolution in Post-Decolonization France, 1962–1974," *Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 1 (2012): 80–115, here 82, 83–89.

[105] Ibid., 90.

[106] On the rise of Fanti nationalism, also known as the "Gone Fantee" movement, see S. Tenkorang, "The Founding of Mfantsipim, 1905–1908," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 15, no. 2 (1974): 165–175. On the "local peculiarities" of early nationalism in the Gold Coast, see Kofi K. Saah and Kofi Baku, " 'Do Not Rob Us of Ourselves': Language and Nationalism in Colonial Ghana," in Helen Lauer, Nana Aba Appiah Amfo, and Jemima Asabea Anderson, eds., *Identity Meets Nationality: Voices from the Humanities* (Accra, 2011), 74–99. Stephanie Newell observes that "the word 'nation' is often used in newspaper reports to describe particular ethno-linguistic groups, especially the Fante," but the

lationships between white men and African women in the Gold Coast became a locus of provocation for anticolonial nationalist sentiments that trumped ethnicity, as Gold Coast men, from both the literate elite and the newly literate classes, shared a sense of being collectively imperiled by a common racial other—in this case "immoral whites." These published opinions suggest that it was not just colonizing powers who viewed interracial sex and sexual morality as pivots around which the fate of the nation turned and around which they could mobilize their political ambitions; so too did the colonized. The Gold Coast's White Peril scare played itself out in the pages of the colony's newspapers, and despite Atu's ominous exhortations, there is no evidence to suggest that it resulted in acts of violence against European men or their African paramours. It did, however, open a space for literate and newly literate Gold Coast men to position themselves as the moral stewards of the nation and its women, in contradistinction to dissolute white men.

If chastising "wayward" Gold Coast women was an attempt to reassert male authority locally, by formulating an explicit critique of the sexual immorality of European men, Gold Coasters simultaneously chipped away at the veneer of European moral superiority that underpinned the "civilizing mission." One of the Gold Coast's earliest and most prominent anticolonial nationalists, Kobina Sekyi, who along with Casely Hayford co-founded the NCBWA, contended that European sexual immorality posed a formidable threat to British colonial rule. In describing what he regarded as "the English colonial's heaviest handicap," namely "the Anglo-Saxon form of colour prejudice," Sekyi noted that it was distinguished by an "extraordinarily intense" disdain for foreigners, but even this, he suggested, could be trumped by sexual desire:

> The Englishmen's contempt for foreigners—even in the intensified form which is known as colour prejudice—absolutely vanishes when he is under the domination of the sexual impulse in a foreign land—no Englishman can pretend to abhor the Negress who is his paramour or his lawful wife according to Native Customary Law, whilst he is in a state of sexual or erotic excitement in the presence of such Negress.[107]

While today it is widely acknowledged that access to sex is often a correlate of racial domination, and that the presence of interracial sexual desire does not indicate an absence of racism, Sekyi's remarks remind us that observers in the early-twentieth-century Gold Coast were already linking these two impulses together, albeit in very different ways.[108] By suggesting that British racism was often selectively put on hold

consistency with which White Peril commentaries lacked any reference to particular ethnic groups suggests that they truly were reaching beyond the narrow confines of ethnicity. See Newell, "Entering the Territory of Elites: Literary Activity in Colonial Ghana," in Karin Barber, ed., *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington, Ind., 2006), 211–235, here 233.

[107] Sekyi, "The English Colonial's Heaviest Handicap," June 5–12, 1920.

[108] Scholars from across the disciplines have made this observation. See, for example, Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York, 1981); Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London, 1995); bell hooks, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance," in Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner, eds., *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, revised ed. (Malden, Mass., 2006), 366–380; Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward*

to allow for the "congregation of white men and black women by night and in some cases even in broad daylight," Sekyi displayed an awareness of racism's malleability, if not its multiple manifestations.[109] More than that, his observations reveal that colonial authorities were by no means alone in recognizing that the sexual license of European men and their access to colonized women were both a product of colonial power and a threat to its maintenance.

Sekyi made it absolutely clear that he found race mixing repugnant, whether between white men and African women or African men and white women, and in this way he sympathized with the feelings of disgust that motivated white port dwellers to "blindly and unthinkingly take the law into their own hands." What he found egregious, however, was the arrogance of Anglo-Saxons, which he believed prevented them from comprehending that many Africans shared these same feelings of revulsion toward race mixture. Africans, he proclaimed, were equally capable of viewing Europeans as sexually immoral:

> It is very difficult for the average Englishman to believe that there are even now in Africa men and women who consider it the worst possible disgrace for a respectable woman to be seen in frequent association with white men and that such men and women consider white people most immoral and disrespectful in their attitude towards women, seeing how very freely they mix with their women at social gatherings, and seeing that in the ballroom their customs permit such liberties to be taken with other people's wives, as if taken by black men with black married women, would not very long ago, in these parts have resulted in successful suits for *ayi-fer* or seduction.[110]

By foregrounding African perspectives on the sexual behavior of British men and women in the colonies and contrasting it with what he deemed the stricter codes of sexual morality governing interactions between African men and women, Sekyi unpinned an integral part of the civilizing mission's rhetoric. Elsewhere he contended that if there was a lack of sexual morality among Africans, it was due to ongoing processes of "general Europeanisation."[111] In short, Sekyi's multilayered argument positioned Europeans not as bearers of civilization, but as an obstacle to it.

These rare press commentaries from 1919 and 1920 provide a decidedly male set of perspectives that reflect the predominantly male authorship of Gold Coast newspapers at the time. It would be a mistake to assume that concerns over interracial sex in the 1920s and earlier were the sole preserve of the colony's men; however, without a similar corpus of writing attributable to women for this time period, it is difficult to gauge how closely their concerns mirrored those of their male counterparts.[112] By the 1930s, a small group of highly educated elite Gold Coast women were

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*the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1968). Ann Stoler has probed this connection in a number of her publications, but see especially *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 41–78.

[109] Sekyi, "The English Colonial's Heaviest Handicap," June 5–12, 1920.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Kobina Sekyi, "Archdeacon Morrison's 'Moral Causes,'" *Gold Coast Leader*, May 22–29, 1920.

[112] Elite women were writing letters and other forms of commentary in the Gold Coast press as early as the late nineteenth century, but the common practice of writing anonymously makes identifying them difficult. Audrey Gadzekpo captures how anonymity acted as a double-edged sword for female writers of the time: "Anonymity may have allowed women to stretch the boundaries of the possible, but it has also exacted a great historical price by concealing the identities of many noteworthy women writers and perpetuating their invisibility in the Gold Coast press"; Gadzekpo, "The Hidden History of Women in

writing openly in the colony's press, and they often used their columns to promote companionate marriage and moral uplift among the colony's female population.[113] The most prolific of these women, Mabel Dove, is best known for her columns written under the shared pen name of Marjorie Mensah in Accra's *West Africa Times* (1931–1934), founded by nationalist leader J. B. Danquah.[114] A playwright as well, in the final year of her tenure at the *West Africa Times* she serialized *A Woman in Jade*, a play that provides a fictional account of scandalous sexual relationships between local women and European men in the colony, from the rare perspective of an African woman.

*A Woman in Jade* attests to the fact that the moral purity concerns articulated in the White Peril episode in 1920 were not fleeting. Like male nationalists before her, Dove painted a bleak picture of where young African women's sexual adventures took them. In the tragic figure of Baake, a "frock girl" who sabotages her marriage prospects to a respectable African lawyer in search of romance and adventure with European men, Dove renders such women beyond rehabilitation, consigning them instead to life in the "whiteman's bungalow."[115] Her harshest criticism, however, was reserved for European men. Through the figure of a sixteen-year-old mixed-race girl, Beryl, whose white father abandoned her African mother upon learning that she was pregnant, Dove inverts the classic colonial trope of the African seductress who lures her European lover into a downward spiral of moral-cum-racial descent. "Dove's version of the 'white man on the West African Coast' narrative," argues Stephanie Newell, "[lays] the blame for immorality . . . squarely at the feet of the colonial man who dallies with local women and refuses to take responsibility for the outcome."[116] If white men were unwilling or unable to care for their own offspring, how could they be regarded as morally fit guardians of the colonial world? By raising this question, Dove, like Atu and numerous other Gold Coasters before her, challenged colonialism's paternalistic ideology while expressing her own concerns about the reproductive consequences of these illicit relationships for native families on the coast who were left to shoulder the responsibilities shirked by absentee white fathers.

But Dove did not limit her critique to interracial relationships between African women and European men. Writing as Ebun Alakija in 1936, she railed against "our supposed intelligent men" who returned from abroad with European wives because,

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Ghanaian Print Culture," in Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí, ed., *African Gender Studies: A Reader* (New York, 2005), 279–296, here 292. For more on the gendered politics of anonymity and pseudonymity in British colonial West African newspapers, see Stephanie Newell, *The Power to Name: A History of Anonymity in Colonial West Africa* (Athens, Ohio, 2013), chaps. 5–6. On the publication of letters to the editor from elite Gold Coast women in the late-nineteenth-century Gold Coast press, see Kwabena O. Akurang-Parry, "Aspects of Elite Women's Activism in the Gold Coast, 1874–1890," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37, no. 3 (2004): 463–482, here 477–478.

[113] See Gadzekpo, "Gender Discourses and Representational Practices in Gold Coast Newspapers," and Prais, "Imperial Travelers," 237–325.

[114] Dove also wrote as Dama Dumas in the *African Morning Post* (1935–1940), as Ebun Alakija in the *Nigerian Daily Times* (1936–1937), and as Akosuah Dzatsui in the *Accra Evening News* (1950s and 1960s). Mabel Dove, *Selected Writings of a Pioneer West African Feminist*, ed. Stephanie Newell and Audrey Gadzekpo (Nottingham, 2004), xii.

[115] In the context of the Gold Coast, the phrase "frock girls" referred to African women who donned European dress and were enamored by the cosmopolitan lifestyle and material culture of the colony's urban centers.

[116] Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana*, 126.

in her words, "marriage with another race is pure disintegration and it is viewed by intelligent Europeans and Africans with contempt."[117] Instead, she commended "intertribal marriages" among Africans as an essential ingredient of African unity, development, and pride. As was the case for Dove's male counterparts in the previous decade, the domain of interracial sex provoked nationalist sentiments that trumped ethnicity. Riffing off of Marcus Garvey, she concluded her column by calling for an end to mixed-race marriages: "African men for African women and European men for European women, for the salvation of the race lies in its purity."[118] Here, and in *A Woman In Jade*, she posits interracial relationships as a source of contagion, capable of threatening the body politic, not unlike Kobina Sekyi and Atu. It is striking that Sekyi, one of the earliest anticolonial nationalists; Atu, the fiery *Leader* columnist who consistently struck an anticolonial chord in his "Scrutineer" column; and Dove, certainly one of the earliest female anticolonial nationalists, and the first woman to be popularly elected to the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly in 1954, all articulated their nationalist aspirations in conversation with their anxieties over interracial sexual relationships. That these anxieties ebbed and flowed over the decades is in keeping with Chatterjee's observation that nationalism's "course cannot be described by selecting from history two points of origin and culmination and joining them by a straight line." Rather, "it is in the shifts, slides, discontinuities, the unintended moves, what is suppressed as much as what is asserted," that the history of nationalism emerges.[119]

Nationalists' concern over the sexual exploitation of the Gold Coast's young women by European men resurfaced even after the colony achieved independence from Britain in 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, who renamed the new nation Ghana. In 1963, Nkrumah received a letter from a distressed Ghanaian civil servant who was, in his own words, "becoming increasingly concerned about the way expatriate personnel treat our women in this country."[120] Echoing some of the complaints of the "Immoral Sanitation" series four decades earlier, the civil servant claimed that "throughout the country" Europeans "court our girls freely, some have babies by them, and eventually throw them overboard without so much as making a provision for the maintenance of the children much less for the mother." Such behavior "smacks of racial superiority which is intolerable in our present age," he said, exhorting Nkrumah to implement "drastic" measures to stop it.[121] Signaling that these claims were taken seriously, Nkrumah's minister of justice advised the drafting of legislation broadly aimed at protecting school-age girls from sexual exploitation

[117] Dove, *Selected Writings of a Pioneer West African Feminist*, 92. It must be noted that the number of African men residing in the British West African colonies with their white wives during the interwar years was extraordinarily small. Thus Dove's comments are best understood as underscoring the extraordinary visibility of interracially married African men despite their forming a tiny minority of the colonies' elite intelligentsia. On the colonial policies that prevented the vast majority of black men from settling in the British West African colonies with their white wives, see Carina Ray, " 'The White Wife Problem': Sex, Race and the Contested Politics of Repatriation to Interwar British West Africa," *Gender and History* 21, no. 3 (2009): 628–646.

[118] Dove, *Selected Writing of a Pioneer West African Feminist*, 92.

[119] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Tokyo, 1986), vii.

[120] "Welfare of Women in Ghana," Appendix, 1963, ADM 13/2/101, PRAAD, Accra, Ghana. I wish to thank Jeremy Pool for bringing this document to my attention.

[121] Ibid.

and out-of-wedlock impregnation, as well as ensuring the maintenance of any child born out of wedlock.[122] With the exception of a clause rendering expatriates "liable to deportation," the proposed legislation was applicable to men of all races and nationalities, including Ghanaians. What is striking about this example, nonetheless, is that the provocation remained the domain of interracial sex.

THAT WHITE MEN SEXUALLY VICTIMIZED and exploited colonized women with impunity is a widely accepted fact. But these abuses were more than a quotidian reality of colonialism and other regimes of racial oppression—slavery, Jim Crow, and apartheid among them; they were also a constitutive part of the political movements that brought these regimes to an end. Recent pathbreaking studies by Crystal Feimster and Danielle McGuire have convincingly demonstrated that the pervasive sexual abuse of black women by white men was a longstanding central concern of black political activists in the United States.[123] Their work, along with an earlier body of innovative scholarship, has expanded our understanding of racialized sexual violence beyond its foundational role in sustaining white supremacy by documenting how these abuses influenced the range of movements, from abolition to Black Power, that challenged the successive systems of racial oppression that structured American society.[124]

The case of the Gold Coast suggests that even when interracial rape and other forms of overt sexual terror were not involved, sexual exploitation had political consequences. In decrying the sexual corruption of Gold Coast women by European men in the colony and the violent attacks against black men who cohabited with or married white women in Britain, Gold Coasters in the early decades of the twentieth century were calling for equality. While this is in keeping with the well-documented demand for greater parity and autonomy within the British Empire that followed World War I, what has not been significantly appreciated is that colonized subjects, even at this early stage, were calling for the end of empire should they fall short of

[122] Ibid.

[123] Crystal N. Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009); Danielle L. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (New York, 2010).

[124] For a sample of important works that probe the intersection between race, gender, and sexuality in shaping the lives and emancipatory strategies of black communities, especially among women, see Gail Bederman, " 'Civilization,' the Decline of Middle-Class Manliness, and Ida B. Wells's Antilynching Campaign (1892–94)," *Radical History Review* 52 (Winter 1992): 5–30; Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," *Public Culture* 7, no. 1 (1994): 107–146; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1996); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994); Darlene Clark Hine, *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-construction of American History* (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1994); Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997); Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2004); Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York, 1985); White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894–1994* (New York, 1999). On the role of interracial rape and the sexual exploitation of enslaved women in abolitionists' campaigns against slavery, see Harriet Ann Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, ed. Jean Fagan Yellin (Cambridge, Mass., 2009); and Kristin Hoganson, "Garrisonian Abolitionists and the Rhetoric of Gender, 1850–1860," *American Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (1993): 558–595.

achieving equality.[125] One Gold Coaster summed up this revolutionary caveat when he noted that "the funny part of the [riots] is that the same white men who in their country cannot bear the presence of the black, take . . . black women [as] wives with whom they breed when they come out to the black man's country . . . If the world would like to enjoy peace and goodwill towards men, there must be brotherhood unlimited by race, colour, or creed, *or, in the alternative, the colour line must be drawn everywhere—white men keeping to their countries and the blacks to theirs*."[126] Within four decades, the empire would fall, but to more fully understand the diversity of factors that led to its dissolution, we must grapple with the political consequences of these kinds of racialized sexual grievances.

[125] For new research on the political and social consequences of World War I in Europe and the colonies, see Santanu Das, ed., *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge, 2011).

[126] A Reader, "Mixed Pickles: Colour Prejudice," *Gold Coast Leader*, October 18–November 8, 1919, emphasis added. The significance of this quote is made fully appreciable in Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, 2008), a global history of the strategies of exclusion enacted to preserve the racial purity of "white men's countries" in the face of the struggle for racial equality in the early twentieth century.

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