

Imagining Women's Suffrage

Frontier Landscapes and the Transnational Print Culture of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States

ABSTRACT During the late nineteenth century, the print culture associated with women's suffrage exhibited increasingly transnational connections. Between the 1870s and 1890s, suffragists in the United States, and then Australia and New Zealand, celebrated the early enfranchisement of women in the U.S. West. After the enfranchisement of antipodean women at the turn of the twentieth century, American suffragists in turn gained inspiration from New Zealand and Australia. In the process, suffrage print culture focused on the political and social possibilities associated with the frontier landscapes that defined these regions. However, by envisioning such landscapes as engendering white women's freedom, suffrage print culture conceptually excluded Indigenous peoples from its visions of enfranchisement. The imaginative connections fostered in transnational suffrage print culture further encouraged actual transpacific connections between the suffragists themselves. **KEYWORDS** suffrage, Australia, New Zealand, United States, U.S. West, print culture, landscapes

The *Woman's Journal*, newspaper of the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), expressed a notable interest in antipodean suffrage movements from its earliest editions in the 1870s. An 1873 editorial, preceding an article reprinted from Melbourne's *Argus*, suggested that Australians "evidently enlisted an unusual amount of talent" in their suffrage debates, talent which could have "fully equaled" that of Americans in both "spirit and interest."¹ This begrudging appreciation for suffrage developments beyond the United States existed in conjunction with descriptions of the landscape that characterized the Australian frontier. "Where, scarcely a century since, the eye might wander over trackless wastes, primitive forests, pathless save untamed animals, and blacks [sic]," the British-Australian physician and Boston-based reformer Harriet Clisby wrote of Australia, "we have the

1. "Woman Suffrage in Australia," *Woman's Journal*, December 7, 1873.

spectacle of populous cities, . . . of wide plains covered with countless herds, . . . treasures untold in value, unearthed from the deep-delved caverns of this empire of the Southern cross.”² Clisby’s series, entitled “Sketches of Australia,” appeared in the *Woman’s Journal* between May and November 1873 alongside numerous suffrage reports from the United States.³

The late nineteenth-century women’s suffrage movement and its increasingly sophisticated print culture linked dialogues of political progress with stirring descriptions of frontier landscapes. When social reform newspapers, pamphlets, and other literature offered updates about suffrage developments across the United States and beyond, readers were often encouraged to imagine these new sites of women’s enfranchisement. For suffragists, the landscape constituted not only a physical space of natural beauty, but also a social imaginary charged with political and social possibilities. Settler societies largely envisaged the landscape, a culturally constructed terra firma invaded and colonized by Europeans, as only sparsely inhabited or completely uninhabited. The natural world, the literal and metaphorical “wilderness,” existed in contradistinction to the towns and cities where democracy and voting actually took place.⁴ In this imaginative realm, suffragists drew increasingly important associations between the landscape and a region’s burgeoning potential to become a paradise of women’s freedom.

These suffragists expressed a self-conscious transnationalism in their print culture. In the United States, following a territorial provision for women’s suffrage in 1869, Wyoming came to loom large in both suffrage rhetoric and memory.⁵ To enable the readers of reform periodicals to imagine the freedom women supposedly experienced following their enfranchisement, American suffragists celebrated Wyoming and its distinctive landscape. At the turn of the twentieth century in New Zealand and Australia, an awareness of the significance of Wyoming and its landscape also emerged in print culture. However, Aotearoa New Zealand’s Electoral Act of 1893 and Australia’s Commonwealth Franchise Act of 1902 enfranchised women long before the

2. Harriet Clisby, “Sketches of Australia,” *Woman’s Journal*, May 17, 1873.

3. See Ana Stevenson, “Harriet Clisby’s ‘Sketches of Australia’: Travel Writing and Colonial Refigurations in Boston’s *Woman’s Journal*,” *Women’s History Review* 27, no. 5 (2018): 837–57.

4. Elizabeth Johns, “Landscape Painting in America and Australia in an Urban Century,” *New Worlds from Old: 19th Century Australian & American Landscapes*, eds. Elizabeth Johns, Andrew Sayers, Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser and Amy Ellis (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 1998), 24–25.

5. See Katy Morris, “‘More Reputation Than She Deserves’: Remembering Suffrage in Wyoming,” *Rethinking History* 21, no. 1 (2017): 48–66.

1920 ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. As these British dominions enfranchised women, the antipodes and their distinctive landscapes came to be ideologically and rhetorically placed alongside Wyoming in a transnational suffrage consciousness.

When suffragists referenced other women's movements across these national boundaries, many drew on and challenged existing imaginings of the frontier. Although the frontier was traditionally constructed as no place for women, suffragists celebrated the success of the elective franchise for the women of these regions. By reimagining the frontier as a place for women, they inscribed women's freedom through descriptions of aesthetically beautiful landscapes. Yet this vision of women's enfranchisement was not wholly inclusive: these new suffrage provisions were largely, but not always, restricted to women of European descent. Such imaginings of the Australian landscape contributed to a broader disregard for the citizenship rights of Indigenous peoples. Conversely, since the antipodes were "only" part of the colonial frontier, anti-suffragists excluded these examples as unimportant colonial experiments.

While scholars have explored the deep connections across the transatlantic suffrage movement, transpacific ties remain less scrutinized. Little attention has been paid to the ways in which suffragists conceptualized the freedom that frontier landscapes, near and far, were thought to engender. This article's analysis of suffrage print culture focuses on developments across the Pacific to reveal the significance of the frontier as well as the conceptual possibilities the landscape offered suffragists who sought to imagine the freedoms of enfranchised women.

This article charts how, between the 1870s and 1910, suffragists in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand came to imagine the freedom of enfranchised women. American suffragists began to celebrate women's enfranchisement in the territories of the U.S. West, especially Wyoming, by describing the landscapes of these regions. By the 1890s, as part of a simultaneous and symbiotic process, antipodean suffragists likewise noted these early U.S. successes by describing Wyoming and its landscape. When New Zealand and Australia extended the franchise to women, U.S. suffragists commended these antipodean suffrage provisions as much as the regions themselves, for these regions could equally encompass existing imaginings about the freedoms of enfranchised women on the frontier. White suffragists thus began to appropriate the idea of the frontier for white women at the same time as Indigenous and other women of color

were being excluded from imaginings of the landscape, the franchise, and the “real” nation. In the suffrage print culture of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, the imaginative significance of frontier landscapes enabled and encouraged actual transnational connections between the suffragists themselves.

WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE AND TRANSNATIONALISM: A PACIFIC WORLDVIEW

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, women reformers began organizing across national borders—at first through conferences and then through more institutional settings. Many historians have examined the women’s movement from transatlantic, British Empire, and international perspectives.⁶ However, historians emphasize the need to consider women’s suffrage in not just exclusively Atlantic terms, but also from the standpoint of the Pacific. Such an analysis has implications for new understandings of the gendered history of nation-building and nationalism, as well as democracy and international relations.⁷ The connections fostered between transnational suffrage movements can be envisaged through the concept of imagined community.⁸ Indeed, much transnational suffrage advocacy existed alongside the operations of international women’s organizations such as the World’s Woman’s

6. Transatlantic perspectives: Sandra Stanley Holton, “‘To Educate Women into Rebellion’: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Creation of a Transatlantic Network of Radical Suffragists,” *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 4 (1994): 1112–36; Karen Offen, “Women and the Question of ‘Universal’ Suffrage in 1848: A Transatlantic Comparison of Suffragist Rhetoric,” *NWSA Journal* 11, no. 1 (1999): 150–77; Sandra Adickes, “Sisters, Not Demons: The Influence of British Suffragists on the American Suffrage Movement,” *Women’s History Review* 11, no. 4 (2002): 675–90; Christine Bolt, *Sisterhood Questioned? Race, Class and Internationalism in the American and British Women’s Movements, c.1880s–1970s* (London: Routledge, 2004). British Empire perspectives: Ian Christopher Fletcher, Laura E. Nym Mayhall and Philippa Levine, eds., *Women’s Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation, and Race* (Oxon: Routledge, 2000). International perspectives: Richard J. Evans, *The Feminists: Women’s Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840–1920* (Oxon: Routledge, 1977, 2013); Caroline Daley and Melanie Nolan, eds., *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Perspectives* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994); Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women’s Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Irma Sulkunen, Seija-Leena Nevala-Nurmi, and Pirjo Markkola, eds., *Suffrage, Gender and Citizenship: International Perspectives on Parliamentary Reforms* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).

7. Ellen Carol DuBois, “Woman Suffrage: The View from the Pacific,” *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (2000): 339–40.

8. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 3rd ed. (London: Verso, 1983, 1991, 2006).

Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).⁹ A Pacific worldview reveals the ways in which transnational connections reflected and challenged both pre-conceived understandings of the frontier and women's experiences therein.

Major late nineteenth-century international women's organizations professed to welcome all women from around the globe. In spite of these grand international pronouncements, however, American reformers in particular had a tendency to accentuate connections with women from Europe and its largely white, Protestant colonies and dominions.¹⁰ This dynamic reflected the racial tensions that plagued the American suffrage movement at the end of the nineteenth century.¹¹ From the perspective of the United States, New Zealand and Australia represented an uncontentious extension of Europe and its colonies. This viewpoint presupposed the ideological solidarity between the "white races" that coalesced during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹²

For these white suffragists, however, perceptions of distance and burgeoning personal relationships together shaped the consolidation of whiteness beyond national borders. Indeed, the antipodes were more isolated from the United States than Europe.¹³ The scholars Chris Dixon and Prue Ahrens suggest that western interpretations of the Pacific were "always more imagined than real, signifying a fantasy rather than an understanding of the region."¹⁴ At the same time, a strong emotional culture developed between individuals in international women's organizations.¹⁵ American suffragists

9. Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

10. Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women's Organizations, 1888-1945," *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1573, 1576-77.

11. Barbara Hilkert Andolsen, *Daughters of Jefferson, Daughters of Bootblacks": Racism and American Feminism* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986); Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

12. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Color Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

13. See Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1966, 1983); Donald Denoon, "The Isolation of Australian History," *Australian Historical Studies* 22, no. 87 (1986): 252-60.

14. Chris Dixon and Prue Ahrens, "Traversing the Pacific: Modernity on the Move from Coast to Coast," in *Coast to Coast: Case Histories of Modern Pacific Crossings*, eds. Prue Ahrens and Chris Dixon (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 1-2. See also David Armitage and Alison Bashford, eds. *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

15. Verta Taylor and Leila J. Rupp, "Loving Internationalism: The Emotional Culture of Transnational Women's Organizations, 1888-1945," *Mobilization: An International Journal* 7, no. 2 (2002): 141-58.

could easily identify with late nineteenth-century antipodean suffrage developments, a dynamic that was reciprocal. At the turn of the twentieth century, the historian Marilyn Lake observes, Australian liberals could “declare a transnational allegiance with the United States,” a country they viewed as “the very epitome of a great Anglo-Saxon nation.”¹⁶ Transpacific ties between suffragists were therefore conceived through certain preconceptions about faraway locales as well as personal relationships defined by distance.

In settler societies such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, the political economies of settler colonialism were also shaped by race relations and their sexual and gendered implications.¹⁷ Settler societies formed through cross-cultural encounters between Europeans, predominantly men, and Indigenous.¹⁸ Through what the historian Patrick Wolfe calls the “logic of elimination,” settler colonialism led to the dispossession of Indigenous peoples based on European notions of ownership, land cultivation, and usage.¹⁹ Access to frontier lands was a key aspect of the colonial project. The landscape became a place for white men to conquer and from which white women were ideologically and materially excluded.²⁰ By the late nineteenth century, however, suffragists began to celebrate what they perceived as the utopian possibilities of frontier landscapes, environs which were beyond the gendered restrictions of the metropole.

In spite of actual geographic isolation, suffrage print culture encouraged readers to conceptualize the freedom of women in distant locales—an impetus particularly prominent in the *Woman’s Journal*. Published in Boston by AWSA between 1870 and 1931, the *Woman’s Journal* was the longest-running premier American suffrage newspaper. Its proprietors were the

16. Lake, “British World or New World? Anglo-Saxonism and Australian Engagement with America,” *History Australia* 10, no. 3 (2013): 42.

17. Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds, “Introduction: Making Space in Settler Colonies,” in *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*, eds. Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 4.

18. Lynette Russell, “Introduction,” in *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous-European Encounters in Settler Societies*, ed. Lynette Russell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 1–2.

19. Patrick Wolfe, “Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 868. See also Katie Holmes, Susan Martin, and Kylie Mirmohamadi, *Reading the Garden: The Settlement of Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2008).

20. Kay Schaffer, “Women and the Bush: Australian National Identity and Representations of the Feminine,” *Antipodes* 3, no. 1 (1989): 7–13; Susan Lee Johnson, “A Memory Sweet to Soldiers’: The Significance of Gender in the History of the ‘American West,’” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1993): 495–517.

influential antislavery-suffragist couple, Lucy Stone and Henry B. Blackwell, followed by their daughter Alice Stone Blackwell. The *Woman's Journal* featured articles by prominent women novelists and reformers, including Louisa May Alcott, Julia Ward Howe, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. It did not simply cultivate a national suffrage outlook for, among other social questions, its articles reflected upon anti-imperialism and Irish nationalism.²¹ Even so, the interest the *Woman's Journal* expressed toward antipodean suffrage developments has been largely overlooked.

The *Woman's Journal* actually evinced a sustained interest in Australia and New Zealand. "It seems difficult to realize, in a country so remote as Australia, and so far removed from European civilization," Clisby continued in 1873, "that there can be the amount of wealth and power that there exists, making it second but to few nations in the world."²² Such localized descriptions of geographically distant regions played a central role in creating imagined transnational networks between suffragists. In the absence of international political leverage, suffragists became reliant on "symbolic politics," a form of activism which, according to the political scientist Alison Brysk, "produces collective action through the narrative structuring, interpretive resonance, and projection of affective information."²³ The idyllic, even utopian transnational representations of frontier landscapes became central to suffragists' rhetorical symbolism. In the United States, New Zealand, and Australia, the process of imagining women's freedom elsewhere helped invigorate reformers nationally. It also precipitated a vision of women's enfranchisement that focused on the social possibilities offered by colonized frontier landscapes, at once reformulating the place of women therein.

"HOW GRAND, HOW BEAUTIFUL": IMAGINING WYOMING IN THE UNITED STATES

This tendency to imagine sites of women's enfranchisement did not begin with visions of Australia. The Territory of Wyoming, which provisioned for

21. See Kristin L. Hoganson, "As Badly Off as the Filipinos': U.S. Women's Suffragists and the Imperial Issue at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Women's History* 13, no. 2 (2001): 9–33; Tara M. McCarthy, "Woman Suffrage and Irish Nationalism: Ethnic Appeals and Alliances in America," *Women's History Review* 23, no. 2 (2014): 188–203.

22. Clisby, "Sketches of Australia," *Woman's Journal*, May 17, 1873.

23. Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 54; Alison Brysk, "Hearts and Minds': Bringing Symbolic Politics Back In," *Polity* 27, no. 4 (1995): 561.

women's suffrage in 1869, loomed large for American suffragists. In close succession, the Territory of Utah extended the elective franchise to women in 1870. Historians attribute these early successes to the political mobilization of western suffrage movements, including their ability to mobilize working-class women, as well as to political experimentation, economic necessity, and the greater opportunities afforded to women in frontier societies.²⁴ But the Utah development caused consternation and trepidation. With its large Mormon population and sanctioning of polygamy, suffragists were averse to hailing Utah as a symbol for women's rights in spite of its extension of the franchise.²⁵

Wyoming therefore became the ideological and imaginative site for suffrage success in the United States. In 1871, the suffrage leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony visited Wyoming and other western states to observe the workings of women's enfranchisement. In the National Women's Suffrage Association's (NWSA) newspaper, *Revolution*, Stanton emphasized how Wyoming, "this land of the free, and home of the brave," had secured "justice" for women. Writing from Colorado, the state directly south of Wyoming, Stanton romanticized the natural beauty of the American West:

I have been watching for the last hour a sunset in the Rocky mountains. How grand, how beautiful, are these majestic snow-capped peaks, clothed in the pale green, purple, and amber hues of the departing sun. . . . And now, as I travel with these giants stretching their great arms across the continent, defiantly pushing their heads above the clouds, . . . I shall know that they, too, have moments of tenderness; and love will mingle with my awe as I watch for each coming sunset hour.²⁶

Anthony made similar observations, according to her biographer and fellow suffragist Ida Husted Harper:

[W]e have been moving over the soil that is really the land of the free and the home of the brave—Wyoming, the Territory in which women are the

24. Holly J. McCammon and Karen E. Campbell, "Winning the Vote in the West: The Political Successes of the Women's Suffrage Movements, 1866–1919," *Gender and Society* 15, no. 1 (2001): 55–82; Rebecca J. Mead, *How the Vote Was Won: Woman Suffrage in the Western United States, 1868–1914* (New York: New York University Press, 2004).

25. Patricia Grimshaw, "Women's Suffrage in New Zealand Revisited: Writing from the Margins," in *Suffrage and Beyond*, 27–28. See also Joan Iversen, "The Mormon-Suffrage Relationship: Personal and Political Quandaries," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 11, no. 2–3 (1990): 8–16.

26. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Overland Letters: Wyoming, the Paradise of Women," *Revolution*, July 6, 1871.

recognized political equals of men. Women here can say: "What a magnificent country is ours, where every class and caste, color and sex, may find equal freedom . . ." What a blessed attainment at last; . . . among these everlasting mountains, midway between the Atlantic and Pacific[.]²⁷

The awe with which Stanton and Anthony described their experience of these western landscapes intersects with the larger context of widespread appreciation for nature and environmentalism among women at the end of the nineteenth century.²⁸ Yet their descriptions offered something more than simply just admiration of the natural world.

The associations Stanton and Anthony drew between the landscape and women's enfranchisement in Wyoming were central to how they inscribed the region's capacity to offer women freedom—a freedom, they perceived, unable to be experienced by women elsewhere. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the famous author of the antislavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin: or, Life Among the Lowly* (1852), similarly focused on the landscape and the pastoral in her 1870s Florida travel writings. Florida was a frontier state during this era; like Wyoming, it was perceived to be "untamed by civilization and thus a space where gender conventions had yet to be fully inscribed."²⁹ Gender ideals were less rigid for women settlers in the American West, even as domestic ideology and its "civilizing" effects remained central to the worldview of frontier women and helped to legitimate their efforts.³⁰ The historian Anne F. Hyde argues that perceptions of the American West were linked to its "unique geography," thus creating a "volatile mixture" of landscape and culture. National expectations surrounding the region alternately imagined its sublime beauty or potential as a site of the trial of American ingenuity.³¹ For suffragists, Wyoming's potential to disrupt gendered expectations was visible through its distinctive landscape. By venerating suffrage

27. Susan B. Anthony (c. 1871), in Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony: Including Public Addresses, Her Own Letters and Many from Her Contemporaries during Fifty Years* (Indianapolis: The Bowen-Merrill Company, 1899), 388.

28. Glenda Riley, "'Wimmin Is Everywhere': Conserving and Feminizing Western Landscapes, 1870 to 1940," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1998): 4–23.

29. Susan A. Eacker, "Gender in Paradise: Harriet Beecher Stowe and Postbellum Prose on Florida," *The Journal of Southern History* 64, no. 3 (1998): 496.

30. Robert L. Griswold, "Western Women and the Uses of Domestic Ideology," in *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*, ed. Leon Fink (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 71.

31. Anne F. Hyde, "Cultural Filters: The Significance of Perception in the History of the American West," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (1993): 351.

developments in the American West, suffragists claimed these regions for women. In so doing, suffragists built on certain assumptions about the utopian political and social possibilities of the frontier, including a sense that the landscape could engender progress.

These imaginings continued alongside the long state-by-state suffrage campaign. The *Woman's Journal*, in its July 4, 1890 Independence Day edition, drew specific attention to Wyoming and its admission as a State of the Union that year. Stanton's article, entitled "Wyoming! The First Free State for Women," once again attested to its significance. Observing its pioneering suffrage success of 1869, Stanton described the new state in terms of its size, natural resources, and "the melting snow on her mountains":

[W]e gladly yield it all for that holy land, called Wyoming, redeemed from the great American Desert, where at last women may enjoy the blessings of self-government. . . . Wyoming answers back, and the daughters of the people who have also touched the depths of self-sacrifice, have come up through great tribulations to join in the chorus, "Equal Rights to All."³²

Again, Stanton's rhetorical construction of Wyoming emphasized its capacity as a site of women's freedom. Only months earlier had the NWSA and AWSA, Stanton and Stone's competing suffrage organizations, come together to reconcile and form the National American Woman's Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Since a pamphlet version of this article would later circulate in the antipodes as part of the WCTU's suffrage ephemera, Stanton's perspectives about the freedom of women in the American West directly shaped transnational perceptions about the recently reunited suffrage movement in the United States.

Beyond the *Woman's Journal*, Wyoming was also celebrated in utopian fiction and other suffrage newspapers. Lillie Devereux Blake's "A Divided Republic," an allegory she initially delivered at an 1885 lecture and later published in *A Daring Experiment* (1892), situated Wyoming as the "one spot where women are free." Volumina, a character who personified Blake's reform contemporaries, encouraged "all the women of the United States [to] leave the East, where ancient customs oppress us . . . , and emigrate in a body to the free West, the lofty heights of the mountains and the broad slopes on the coast of the majestic Pacific."³³ Although Blake exaggerated nineteenth-century separate

32. Stanton, "Wyoming! The First Free State for Women," *Woman's Journal*, July 4, 1890.

33. Lillie Devereux Blake, "A Divided Republic: An Allegory of the Future," in Lillie Devereux Blake, *A Daring Experiment and Other Stories* (New York: United States Book Company, 1892), 349.

spheres ideology by portraying a “utopian community of women and dystopian community of men,” she still viewed middle-class women as central to a civilized society.³⁴ Blake’s idealized political community thus mirrored the efforts of those enfranchised white women who resided in the American West. Scenes of democracy in action, however, took place not in Wyoming’s mountains and valleys but in its cities. In 1888, *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* depicted a scene of women voting in the state’s capital, Cheyenne (see Figure 1).³⁵ This cityscape appeared in stark contrast to the florid rhetorical celebration of the state’s landscape espoused by suffragists elsewhere.

Wyoming also provided a concrete example of women’s enfranchisement in the suffrage songs and newspapers of other regions, especially those in the midwestern and western states and territories. J.H. De Voe’s song “South Dakota is Coming” (1888) emphasized the national alongside the specific:

We come from the East and we come from the West;
The North and the South will relieve the oppressed[.] . . .
Rejoice with Wyoming, her daughters are free;
shout for the glad tidings o’er land and o’er sea;
Let mountain and valley reecho the song
Wyoming is free!
Send the glad word along.³⁶

An 1891 poem by Louise Young Stevens likewise celebrated the freedom offered by Wyoming’s landscape. It appeared in the *Woman’s Column*, the short-lived sister publication of the *Woman’s Journal*, edited by Alice Stone Blackwell:

Hail to Wyoming’s lone star of the mountain;
Tinging with light all the radiant West,
Brooding and pointing o’er liberty’s fountain,
Untainted, unstinted, where all can be blest!³⁷

34. Darby Lewes, “Middle-Class Edens: Women’s Nineteenth-Century Utopian Fiction and the Bourgeois Ideal,” *Utopian Studies* 4, no. 1 (1993): 19, 17.

35. “Woman Suffrage in Wyoming Territory. Scene at the polls in Cheyenne,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, November 4, 1888 (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3c06109/>), accessed February 12, 2016.

36. J.H. De Voe, “South Dakota is Coming” (1888), in Danny O. Crew, *Suffragist Sheet Music: An Illustrated Catalogue of Published Music Associated with the Women’s Rights and Suffrage Movement in America, 1795–1921, with Complete Lyrics* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2002), 112.

37. Louise Young Stevens, “Wyoming,” *Woman’s Column*, November 14, 1891.

FRANK LESLIE'S
ILLUSTRATED
NEWSPAPER

No. 1,732.—Vol. LXVII.]

NEW YORK—FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 24, 1888.

[PRICE, 10 CENTS. BY TRAIL, 15 CENTS PER ANNUM.]



WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN WYOMING TERRITORY.—SCENE AT THE POLLS IN CHEYENNE.
FROM A PHOTO BY KIRKLAND.—SEE PAGE 713.

FIGURE 1. Suffragists often used florid rhetoric to celebrate the landscape, yet the majority of women's voting actually took place in cityscapes. Source: "Woman Suffrage in Wyoming Territory. Scene at the polls in Cheyenne," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, November 4, 1888, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/92516129/>.

Wyoming was frequently discussed in suffrage newspapers such as Abigail Scott Duniway's Portland-based *New Northwest*; Martha Callanan's Iowa-based *Woman's Standard*; and *Woman's Tribune*, the organ of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Organization, edited by Clara Bewick Colby.³⁸

Importantly, the suffrage pronouncements of the early 1890s existed in conjunction with historian Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis. Turner's hypothesis, presented to the American Historical Association in 1893 and later published as a monograph, suggested that the idea of the frontier had shaped American democracy.³⁹ He positioned the frontier, together with westward settlement and migration, as the ideological source of American character over successive generations. With the closure of the frontier, Turner posited, the nation's way of thinking about itself would necessarily be altered. While this thesis was initially of great scholarly import, later generations of scholars have criticized Turner for overlooking the effects of American colonization and expansionism on racial and ethnic minorities, particularly Native Americans.⁴⁰ Nineteenth-century American landscape painting equally depicted what Patrick Brantlinger describes as "extinction discourse," or the perceived gradual disappearance of Indigenous peoples from the landscape.⁴¹ As a result, the frontier thesis inscribed an exclusionary and imperialistic white, masculine vision of democracy. Arguably, the suffrage rhetoric that envisaged women's freedom within western frontier landscapes sought to integrate white women's experiences into this frontier thesis myth.

Suffrage provisions in the western territories and states of the United States led white suffragists to focus on the freedom these landscapes offered

38. For example: Hon. John Minto, "Suffrage Considered in Relation to Citizenship," *New Northwest*, September 8, 1876; "Woman Suffrage in Wyoming," *Woman's Standard*, December 1886; Amelia B. Post, "Resolutions adopted by the Cheyenne, Wyoming, Suffrage Association," *Woman's Tribune*, July 13, 1889; Clara Bewick Colby, "Woman Suffrage in Wyoming," *Woman's Tribune*, September 4, 1897.

39. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920, 1921, 2012), *Project Gutenberg*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm> (accessed July 30, 2014), e-book.

40. Ronald H. Carpenter, "Frederick Jackson Turner and the Rhetorical Impact of the Frontier Thesis," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 63, no. 2 (1977): 117-29; William Cronon, "Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1987): 157-76.

41. Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser, "'all [sic] Nature here is new to Art': Painting the American Landscape, 1800-1900," in *New Worlds from Old*, 89; Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), Ch. 3, "Vanishing Americans."

enfranchised women. By the 1890s, describing Wyoming became a central strategy in advocating for women's suffrage elsewhere in the United States. Where Turner's frontier thesis focused on white men, suffragists sought to reconceptualize the role of women in these regions through arguments that prioritized and even discreetly argued for white women's enfranchisement. This process of imagining and romanticizing political and social developments alongside descriptions of beautiful and distinctive western landscapes would be repeated as part of an emerging transnational interest in the enfranchised women of Wyoming.

"MORE AMERICAN QUOTATIONS, PARTICULARLY AS TO THE STATE OF WYOMING": IMAGINING THE AMERICAN WEST IN THE ANTIPODES

The antipodean suffragists of the 1890s were similarly preoccupied with Wyoming, its women, and its landscape. Many nineteenth-century women's rights reformers gained their "initial impetus" toward envisioning social change from the observation of agitation and social reform elsewhere.⁴² For the print culture associated with women's suffrage in New Zealand and Australia, earlier suffrage successes in the American West offered this sense of inspiration.

During the 1890s, allusions to Wyoming proliferated in antipodean print culture. In the years prior to New Zealand's extension of the elective franchise in 1893, its newspapers offered the example of Wyoming to bolster arguments for colonial suffrage.⁴³ Some echoed Stanton's earlier proclamation of "Wyoming, the Paradise of Women" by describing the state as "A Woman's Paradise," while others offered comparisons between recent suffrage developments in South Australia and Wyoming.⁴⁴ "More American quotations, particularly as to the state of Wyoming followed," the *Marlborough Express* pointedly observed in an 1893 report about a public suffrage meeting.⁴⁵ Australian newspapers similarly singled out Wyoming to reassure readers that women's enfranchisement had not disrupted social cohesion and actually

42. DuBois, "Woman Suffrage," 547.

43. For example: "Twenty Years of Woman's Suffrage," *Clutha Leader*, Vol. XVII, January 16, 1891; "Wyoming Experiences," *Oamaru Mail*, June 30, 1892; "Success of the Women's Franchise," *Clutha Leader*, April 28, 1893; "Success of the Women's Franchise," *Tuapeka Times*, April 26, 1893; T.L.M., "The Effect of Woman Suffrage," *Evening Post*, August 22, 1893.

44. "A Woman's Paradise," *Bush Advocate*, November 8, 1890; "A Woman's Paradise," *Mataura Ensign*, November 14, 1890; "Women Voters," *Bush Advocate*, September 30, 1893.

45. "Female Franchise," *Marlborough Express*, May 23, 1893.

revealed women's positive political influence.⁴⁶ Many antipodean articles focused on how the acquisition of women's suffrage did not disturb and even helped develop Wyoming, first as a territory and then as a state. As Louisa Lawson's Sydney-based newspaper, *Dawn*, noted in its 1893 celebration of New Zealand women's enfranchisement, while "casting about for illustrations of the efficacy and workableness of Womanhood Suffrage" Australians had earlier looked afar to Wyoming, but could now look closer to home.⁴⁷ Overwhelmingly, these allusions to the American West welcomed readers to tangibly imagine these sites of suffrage success.

Such assertions were by no means limited to antipodean newspapers. When Australian suffragist Rose Scott addressed an exclusive men's club in 1892, she regaled her audience with a history of Wyoming's extension of the franchise. Its success, Scott argued, provided evidence to refute the "groundless . . . objections" that anti-suffragists raised. For Scott, Wyoming was "the vanguard of progress and Human Freedom."⁴⁸ An enthusiastic overseas correspondence with reform friends and acquaintances bolstered her commitment to women's suffrage, making Scott truly part of the transnational network of women reformers.⁴⁹ At the turn of the twentieth century, many other Australian social reformers also made increasingly personal networks in the United States.⁵⁰ Scott's belief in the significance of Wyoming mirrored these broader trends. Following their enfranchisement, suffragists from Australia and New Zealand also travelled to the United States and Europe to speak of their recent successes.⁵¹ While Australian women contributed to

46. New Zealand examples: "Woman Suffrage: Meeting of Ladies," *Star*, August 21, 1890; "Woman's Suffrage: Meeting of Ladies," *Press*, August 21, 1890; "Woman Suffrage," *Hawke's Bay Herald*, March 31, 1893; "Female Franchise," *Marlborough Express*, May 23, 1893; "Rev. Dr. Joseph Cook: His Opinions on Prohibition in America," *Asburton Guardian*, August 5, 1895. Australian examples: "Women's Suffrage," *South Australian Register*, January 3, 1890; M. Thomas, "Female Suffrage: To the Editor of the Argus," *Argus*, April 11, 1893; "Womanhood Suffrage in Wyoming," *Australian Town and Country Journal*, April 29, 1893; "Woman's Suffrage in Wyoming, U.S.A.," *Border Watch*, May 17, 1893; "Woman Suffrage in Wyoming," *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, September 10, 1893; "Women's Suffrage," *Freeman's Journal*, December 15, 1894; "Women's Suffrage in Wyoming," *The Mercury* (from *Woman's Signal*), August 30, 1897.

47. "Enfranchisement of Women in New Zealand," *Dawn*, October 2, 1893.

48. Rose Scott, March 1892, 8, in vol. 38 (microfilm): Rose Scott, Miscellaneous Papers re. Woman Suffrage, 1888-1920 (ML MSS,38/38), Scott Family (Rose Scott) Papers, 1777-1952, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

49. Judith A. Allen, *Rose Scott: Vision and Revision in Feminism* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1.

50. See: Lake, "British World or New World?" 46-48.

51. Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, 54.

both sides of the suffrage debate in Britain, many became instrumental in promoting women's suffrage throughout the British Empire after 1902.⁵² Ultimately, as the historian Sharon Crozier-de Rosa argues, it became necessary for these suffragists to refute the arguments of British anti-suffragists; they "felt increasingly able (or driven) to defend their position by articulating a sense of Australian identity and values drawn from a non-British, wider 'new' world."⁵³

The celebration of the American West mirrored the sense of identification that Australian women, in particular, were beginning to make with their own frontier landscape—the bush. European settlers often conceptualized the frontier as a masculine space, meaning women's presence existed in tension with prevailing discourses about adventure, conquest, and progress. The Australian frontier, historians observe, produced a "fantasy of freedom" for white men and a site of "fear and anxiety" for white feminists.⁵⁴ Sociologist Kay Schaffer describes how the landscape was situated as "a feminine *other* against which the *bushman-as-hero* [wa]s constructed."⁵⁵ These tensions coexisted with a literary tradition celebrating the adventures of white men in the Australian bush, epitomized by Francis Adams's *The Australians: A Social Sketch* (1893). But historical and literary examples of white women who identified with the frontier complicate this perspective. For example, Catherine Martin's novel, *An Australian Girl* (1890), imagined the beauty of the frontier and described the bush as "an overwhelmingly positive force."⁵⁶ In the United States and Australia, the descriptions of frontier landscapes circulating in late nineteenth-century suffrage print culture can be positioned in terms of attempts to argue white women into Jackson's frontier thesis as well as broader debates about how white women might engage positively with the frontier.

The WCTU also played an important role in the antipodean suffrage movement as the World's WCTU was influential in both transnational

52. Angela Woollacott, "Australian Women's Metropolitan Activism: From Suffrage, to Imperial Vanguard, to Commonwealth Feminism," in *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire*, 208–10.

53. Sharon Crozier-de Rosa, "The National and the Transnational in British Anti-Suffragists' Views of Australian Women Voters," *History Australia* 10, no. 3 (2013): 52.

54. Lake, "Frontier Feminism and the Marauding White Man," *Journal of Australian Studies* 20, no. 49 (1996): 13.

55. Schaffer, "Women and the Bush," 7. See also: Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Ch. 7, "The Bosom of Unknown Lands."

56. Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, "Identifying with the Frontier: Federation New Woman, Nation and Empire," in *Changing the Victorian Subject*, eds. Maggie Tonkin, Mandy Treagus, Madeleine Seys and Sharon Crozier-De Rosa (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2014), 44–48.

temperance and suffrage activism. As the historian Ian Tyrell explains, its international campaigns were “not unique,” but rather “part of a much larger outreach of American power and culture.”⁵⁷ On account of its grassroots perspective, the WCTU’s antipodean presence was pivotal for the early acquisition of suffrage in New Zealand and Australia.⁵⁸ Importantly, the idea of Wyoming was prevalent in the WCTU’s colonial ephemera. Many of the antipodean newspaper articles that referenced Wyoming’s significance in the suffrage debate articulated a direct or tangential relationship to the WCTU’s colonial branches.⁵⁹ In Australia, the WCTU branch for the state of Victoria circulated leaflets such as “Womanhood Suffrage: Testimony from Wyoming” as well as a version of Stanton’s 1890 article from the *Woman’s Journal*.⁶⁰ Although abridged, the pamphlet entitled “Wyoming—The First Free State for Women” still featured a “brief review of the History of Wyoming, its size, resources, and how it happened to make the experiment of woman suffrage,” proclaiming: “An Act of Congress cut it out of the Great American Desert.”⁶¹ Since the WCTU was one of the largest international organizations to disseminate suffrage-related literature in the antipodes, its presence cannot be underestimated.

To impart ideas about the American suffrage movement (if not Wyoming specifically), AWSA also circulated suffrage ephemera, leaflets, and reports throughout the antipodes. For example, AWSA issued publications such as: Rev. Dr. James Freeman Clarke’s “Woman Suffrage: Reasons For and Against” (1888); Rev. C.C. Harrah’s “Jesus Christ the Emancipator of Woman” (1888); Rev. J.W. Bashford’s “The Bible for Woman Suffrage” (1889); and suffragist Mary A. Livermore’s “The Advancement of Women”

57. Tyrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire*, 2.

58. Grimshaw, “Settler Anxieties, Indigenous Peoples, and Women’s Suffrage in the Colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai’i, 1888 to 1902,” *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (2002): 555–56.

59. For example, “Wyoming Woman ‘Cleaning Up’: From Letter by the W.C.T.U. Franchise Superintendent in ‘The Woman’s Journal,’” *Queensland Times*, October 15, 1892; M. Lila Searle (Colonial Superintendent Woman’s Suffrage, W.C.T.U.), “Woman’s Suffrage,” *The Mercury*, April 8, 1893; M. Thomas, “Female Suffrage,” *Argus*, April 11, 1893; “Women’s Suffrage,” *Freeman’s Journal*, December 15, 1894.

60. “Womanhood Suffrage: Testimony from Wyoming,” *Envelope Series, No. 8* (Melbourne: Victorian W.C.T.U. Alliance, n.d.). See Woman Suffrage [scrapbook], 1888–1894 (compiled by J.T. Fischer), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

61. Stanton, “Wyoming—The First Free State for Women” (abridged), *Envelope Series, No. 5* (Melbourne: Victorian W.C.T.U. Alliance, n.d.). See Woman Suffrage [scrapbook], Mitchell Library.

(n.d.).⁶² But these connections were not unidirectional, as an anecdote about an epistle that Anthony sent to a Hobart suffrage meeting demonstrated:

When Mrs. Dobson was representing Tasmania at the Women's Congress in England, she met Miss Anthony, who sent through her this message to the women of Tasmania: "I am very pleased that my Tasmanian sisters have joined in the great international movement, and through Mrs. Dobson I join hands with them over the sea."

Originally published in Adelaide's *Our Federation*, this anecdote's 1900 republication in the *Woman's Journal* described how Anthony's note had generated "loud applause" from the Tasmanians.⁶³ Notably, by 1900, women had been federally enfranchised in New Zealand and enfranchised at the state level in both South Australia and Western Australia.

As in the United States, suffragists in New Zealand and Australia frequently imagined Wyoming as a site of women's freedom. It did not matter that the United States had not constitutionally enfranchised women. For antipodean suffragists, the knowledge that a pioneering American territory, then state, had done so was enough. The political and social progress of the American West could be envisaged in conjunction with the bush, a distinctly antipodean frontier landscape. Additionally, the American suffrage material circulating in the antipodes demonstrated how British imperial connections existed alongside a growing identification with the United States.

"AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND HAVE OUT-AMERICANIZED AMERICA": IMAGINING THE ANTIPODES IN THE UNITED STATES

The British dominions of New Zealand and Australia extended the elective franchise to women in 1893 and 1902 respectively, far earlier than the United States in 1920. Many perceived the antipodes, like the American West, as the vanguard of progress at the end of the nineteenth century. This influenced the transnational meanings attributed to the early extension of the elective franchise in both New Zealand and Australia.

62. Rev. Dr. James Freeman Clarke, "Woman Suffrage: Reasons for and Against," (to the *Christian Register*), May 10, 1888, *Woman Suffrage Leaflet* I, no. 2 (1888); Rev. C.C. Harrah, "Jesus Christ the Emancipator of Woman," November 15, 1888, *Woman Suffrage Leaflet* I, no. 8 (1888); Rev. J.W. Bashford, "The Bible for Woman Suffrage," October 1, 1889, *Woman Suffrage Leaflet* II, no. 29 (1889); Mary A. Livermore, "The Advancement of Women" (American Woman Suffrage Association, n.d.). See: Woman Suffrage [scrapbook], Mitchell Library.

63. "Australian Items," *Woman's Journal*, September 22, 1900.

Antipodean suffrage developments have often only figured as marginal to international suffrage discussions, an omission that may be a product of the comparatively peaceful acquisition of women's enfranchisement in New Zealand and Australia.⁶⁴ Apart from the Isle of Man, which enfranchised female householders in 1881, New Zealand was the first self-governing colony in the British Empire to enfranchise women.⁶⁵ Since settler fears of Māori men had led to their enfranchisement in New Zealand, it was practical to enfranchise Māori women as well. In contrast, Australia's Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 created precedent for the Commonwealth Franchise Act of 1902 to federally enfranchise white women at the same time as revoking the limited political rights of Aborigines in the south-eastern states.⁶⁶ Largely without reference to such anomalies, these antipodean settler societies were quickly brought into the American suffrage lexicon of the 1890s and 1900s. Far from the bemused references the *Woman's Journal* had offered in the 1870s, American suffrage print culture changed its tone towards New Zealand and Australia when both extended the elective franchise to women. Just as Wyoming had figured prominently within antipodean arguments, women's enfranchisement in New Zealand and Australia became increasingly important for American suffragists.

No longer was Wyoming the foremost example of suffrage success. New Zealand generated particular interest and arguably gained even more

64. Nolan and Daley, "International Feminist Perspectives on Suffrage: An Introduction," in *Suffrage and Beyond*, 2–3. Nation-specific histories: Grimshaw, *Women's Suffrage in New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1972); Betty Searle, *Silk & Calico: Class, Gender & the Vote* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1988); Audrey Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia: A Gift or a Struggle?* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Audrey Oldfield, *Australian Women and the Vote* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Susan Magarey, *Passions of the First Wave Feminists* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Miles Fairburn and Erik Olssen, eds. *Class, Gender and the Vote: Historical Perspectives from New Zealand* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2005).

65. Mayhall, Levine, and Fletcher, "Introduction," in *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire*, xiii.

66. Grimshaw, "Settler Anxieties," 560–61; Clare Wright, "A Splendid Object Lesson: A Transnational Perspective on the Birth of the Australian Nation," *Journal of Women's History* 26, no. 4 (2014): 21. Other anomalies existed in Australia: all white women were federally enfranchised in 1902, but some remained disenfranchised at the state level until 1908. Kirsten Lees, *Votes for Women: The Australian Story* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1995). Despite the disenfranchisement of Aboriginal and all other non-white people, Australia made explicit provisions for the voting rights of Māori men and women resident in Australia. Angela Woollacott suggests that this distinction occurred in the hope that New Zealand would join the federated Australian colonies and also because Australians viewed Māori people as higher in the racial hierarchy than Aboriginal people. Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 203–4.

prominence than Wyoming and Utah in international suffrage debates.⁶⁷ An 1893 article, featured on the front page of the *Woman's Journal*, remarked that New Zealand could “claim an honorable place in history as the first of the English colonies to give women equal political rights with men.” It had progressed more quickly than Britain, though not as fast as Wyoming, the *Woman's Journal* observed, agreeing that New Zealand would become “a peculiar object of interest all over the civilized world.”⁶⁸ Importantly, this article also described the two islands of New Zealand, their situation in the South Pacific near Australia, their mountains and volcanoes, as well as their climate, food sources, and natural resources. These allusions to New Zealand's landscape and geography enabled readers to imagine this inaugural site of suffrage success in a self-governing colony. In 1900, Henry B. Blackwell, co-proprietor of the *Woman's Journal*, expressed a surprised but appreciative reverence toward the fact that New Zealand and American suffragists revealed “identical” reform interests and often came to “similar” conclusions.⁶⁹ By the year's end, he designated New Zealand “the most progressive community in the world.”⁷⁰

Suffragists repeatedly placed the local, the national, and the transnational in dialogue. When South Australia (which included the Northern Territory until 1911) enfranchised women in 1894, another new site of imaginative significance arose. As an 1895 article for the *Woman's Journal*, entitled “The Size of South Australia,” attested:

In South Australia woman suffrage is established by the new law over nearly a million square miles. Women are made voters in a region larger than the combined areas of New York, Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia and the Indian Territory.⁷¹

67. Philippa Ruth Fogarty, “‘The Shrieking Sisterhood’: A Comparative Analysis of the Suffrage Movement in the United States and New Zealand” (M.A. thesis: University of Canterbury, 1988), Ch. 4, “Civilizing Agents: Women's Suffrage in Wyoming and New Zealand”; Raewyn Dalziel, “An Experiment in the Social Laboratory? Suffrage, National Identity, and Mythologies of Race in New Zealand in the 1890s,” in *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire*, 87–88.

68. “New Zealand's Women Given Equal Political Rights,” *Woman's Journal* (from Springfield *Republican*), October 7, 1893.

69. Henry B. Blackwell, “National Council of New Zealand Women,” *Woman's Journal*, August 11, 1900.

70. Ibid., “Woman Suffrage in New Zealand,” *Woman's Journal*, December 30, 1900.

71. Hamilton Wilcox, “The Size of South Australia,” *Woman's Journal*, March 30, 1895.

Though focused on geographical size rather than the landscape, the article served an essentially similar purpose—to establish the idea of a region, a large region, wherein political transformation enabled women to ostensibly experience freedom. In 1900, articles such as “A Cry from Australia” and “From Australia” betrayed further curiosity on the part of the editors of the *Woman’s Journal*.⁷²

Just as the WCTU and AWSA circulated suffrage ephemera throughout the antipodes, NAWSA positioned these colonies as an aspirational example. New Zealand featured prominently in the organization’s Equal Suffrage and Political Equality Series during the 1890s and early 1900s.⁷³ References to Wyoming, together with New Zealand and Australia, were similarly prominent in the *History of Woman Suffrage*, especially Volume IV (edited by Anthony) and Volume V (edited by Husted Harper).⁷⁴ At the 1902 NAWSA convention, which Australian suffragist Vida Goldstein attended, a bemused Carrie Chapman Catt observed how the “little band of Americans who initiated the modern [suffrage] movement” could “least of all” have imagined that “the island continent of Australia, with its associates of New Zealand and Tasmania, then unexplored wildernesses, would become great democracies where self-government would be carried on with such enthusiasm, fervor and wisdom that they would give lessons in methods and principles to all the rest of the world.”⁷⁵ The *History of Woman Suffrage* included only a very short paragraph quoting Goldstein’s speech; instead, it paraphrased her address about suffrage in Australia and New Zealand, which “produced the highest testimony as to its good results in both countries.”⁷⁶ Such attention mirrored a wider turn-of-the-century interest in the pioneering progress of the antipodes, including its labor politics and nascent welfare state. At the 1905 NAWSA convention, Catt noted that, in the acquisition of suffrage, “Australia and New Zealand have out-Americanized America.”⁷⁷

72. Eliza Sproat Turner, “A Cry from Australia,” *Woman’s Journal*, October 22, 1887; “From Australia,” *Woman’s Journal*, August 11, 1900.

73. Dalziel, “Presenting the Enfranchisement of New Zealand Women Abroad,” in *Suffrage and Beyond*, 45.

74. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, eds. *History of Woman Suffrage* [HWS], Vol. IV (Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1902); Ida Husted Harper, ed. HWS, Vol. V (National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922).

75. Carrie Chapman Catt, “The National American Convention of 1902,” in Harper, ed. HWS, Vol. V, 30.

76. Harper, ed. HWS, Vol. V, 49.

77. Catt, “The National American Convention of 1905,” in Harper, ed. HWS, Vol. V, 145.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the ability for American suffragists to imagine and incorporate these new antipodean sites of women's enfranchisement into both their rhetoric and imaginations became nearly as important as the political developments themselves. Together, Wyoming, New Zealand, and Australia enabled the creation of suffrage arguments based around concrete examples. Juxtaposed against the landscape were descriptions of the political and social freedom women might experience in the locales, near and far, in which they were enfranchised.

"THE HISTORY OF WYOMING SHOULD CLOSE THE DEBATE ON THIS SUBJECT": THE POLITICIZATION OF IMAGINED SITES OF SUFFRAGE

Even so, the settler societies to first achieve women's suffrage were small and geographically marginal to the transnational women's movement.⁷⁸ Always shaped by a perception of distance, the growing rhetorical and imaginative appeal of these locales went far beyond their population size or international political significance. Given these sites' historical association with pioneering, suffragists and anti-suffragists alternately imagined Wyoming, New Zealand, and Australia as sites of progress—or, indeed, failure.

Suffragists purposefully imagined Wyoming, and then the antipodes, as categorically successful social experiments. As Stanton's article in the *Woman's Journal* observed in 1890, "The history of Wyoming should close the debate on this subject, as we now have abundant facts of long standing to contradict all the absurd suppositions and soul-harrowing prophecies of the opposition."⁷⁹ In the United States, this impulse existed almost in tandem with Stanton and Anthony's desire to take ownership of suffrage history, which they realized through the six volumes of the *History of Woman Suffrage*.⁸⁰ The representation of Wyoming, New Zealand, and Australia therein attested to the suffragists' vision of their movement's transnational significance. The Sydney-based *Dawn* also testified to the benefits and normality of women's suffrage in Wyoming.⁸¹ Following Stanton, Scott's 1892 speech argued that women's suffrage, as "a condition of human nature," was "very

78. Grimshaw, "Women's Suffrage in New Zealand Revisited," 26.

79. Stanton, "Wyoming," *Woman's Journal*, 1890.

80. Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), Ch. 4, "Inventing Women's History: 1880–1886."

81. For example: "South Australia," *Dawn*, November 8, 1889; "A New Charity," *Dawn*, July 1, 1893.

much the same all over the world,” a point that its “unqualified success” in Wyoming demonstrated.⁸² In their own histories and memorializations, suffragists reiterated the significance of imagining the early suffrage successes of Wyoming and the antipodes.

But transnational debates and tensions existed even among suffragists. When New Zealand statesman, historian, and poet William Pember Reeves defended women’s suffrage in parliament during 1890, he concluded:

Let us look abroad to the western states of America. Is the state of Wyoming a place where there is effeminacy in government? Are the cowboys and ranchmen of Wyoming a class among who you look in order to find softness . . . in fighting the battle of life and settling the questions of the day? And yet there we find political power and give it to women.⁸³

A masculine conceptualization of the frontier could thus remain at the heart of pro-suffrage arguments, sometimes to directly counter the concerns of anti-suffragists. Upon the publication of W. Sidney Smith’s *Outlines of the Woman’s Franchise Movement in New Zealand* (1905), however, the *Woman’s Journal* reported that this monograph sought to provide a more accurate representation than Reeves’s earlier *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand* (1902). According to Henry Blackwell, Reeves undercut the reform efforts of women and the significance of suffrage as a political development.⁸⁴

For more radical reformers, these settler societies could represent sites of failure or ambivalence. Emma Goldman, the Jewish Russian immigrant, anarchist, and feminist who would later be deported from the United States during the Red Scare of 1919, did not oppose women’s suffrage. But she did condemn its conservatizing effect on the women’s movement. “See what woman has accomplished—in Australia, New Zealand, Finland, the Scandinavian countries, and in our own four States, Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah,” Goldman emphasized, paraphrasing the suffragists themselves. The real question, for Goldman, was whether or not women’s political inclusion had instigated significant social change beyond enfranchisement itself, a reality she found wanting.⁸⁵

82. Scott, March 1892, 9.

83. William Pember Reeve, New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, LXVIII, 1890, in Fogarty, “The Shrieking Sisterhood,” 98.

84. Blackwell, “Woman Suffrage in New Zealand,” *Woman’s Journal*, December 30, 1905.

85. Emma Goldman, “Woman Suffrage” (n.d.), in *The Traffic in Women and Other Essays on Feminism*, ed. Alix Schulman (New York: Times Change Press, 1970), 54.

Anti-suffragists questioned the success of women's enfranchisement more vigorously. The fact that Wyoming, and particularly New Zealand and Australia, were "only" frontier societies worked to undermine their achievements and instead relegate these developments to the status of unimportant colonial experiments. Anti-suffragists constructed Wyoming as either an anomaly or a failure. Frederick E. Bevill, revealed to be the anonymous "Citizen" who wrote *The Female Suffrage Movement: Its Claims, Objects & Consequences* (1896), emphasized that Wyoming was not populous and "on the very fringe of civilization," further quoting a Mr. Bryce, who concluded: "It is impossible to get respectable women out to vote except every two or three years on some emotional question, such as prohibition or temperance legislation."⁸⁶ The tendency to undermine or trivialize women's suffrage, or perpetuate the myth of a women's voting block, continued into the twentieth century. In 1909, describing "How Woman Suffrage Came to Wyoming," the Sydney-based *Watchman* concluded:

The answer that has come laughing down the years—the soft, quiet laugh of the cowman which scarcely carries across the Black Hills and the Missouri River—is this:

"There were no women in Wyoming in 1874."⁸⁷

Although the article made reference to an erroneous date, it nonetheless reflected on Anthony's role in the "long fight" during which she had "travelled slowly westward," along the "Union Pacific, until it reached the Wyoming cattle ranges, and the Legislature in session in Cheyenne."⁸⁸ Even anti-suffrage arguments had the potential to imaginatively emphasize the significance of Wyoming and its landscape, though without the rhetorical flourish of the suffragists themselves.

Suffragists and anti-suffragists alike, whether they perceived Wyoming and the antipodes as successful or unimportant social experiments, gestured toward the supposed political and geographical marginality of these regions. Transnational print culture, regardless of political persuasion, still encouraged readers to imagine how these sites of women's enfranchisement were defined by their frontier landscapes. But the centrality of the nation never wholly disappeared. As the antipodes gained ever greater rhetorical significance in

86. *The Female Suffrage Movement: Its Claims, Objects & Consequences* (Sydney: D.S. Townsend & Co., 1896), 3–4.

87. "How Woman Suffrage Came to Wyoming," *Watchman*, November 18, 1909.

88. *Ibid.*

the United States, NAWSA's state-by-state campaign receded alongside the shift to secure a constitutional suffrage amendment. In this sense, national differences remained paramount even within universalistic and transnational exchanges. But there were conceptual limits to which women voters were encompassed in such visions.

**"THE EYE MIGHT WANDER OVER TRACKLESS WASTES":
EXCLUSIONARY IMAGININGS**

Suffragists, both implicitly and explicitly, expressed ever-present anxieties about Indigenous peoples and racial hierarchy. A focus on exactly how transnational print culture positioned the landscape further contextualizes how suffrage debates excluded Indigenous populations and people of color from visions of the elective franchise. Australia was particularly complicit in the construction of an imagined frontier that excluded Indigenous peoples.

Across the United States in the late nineteenth century, as many historians have revealed, the active racism of white suffrage leaders undermined any real potential for interracial solidarity across the women's movement.⁸⁹ When the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution provisioned for African American manhood suffrage in 1868 and 1870 respectively, some white suffragists responded by critiquing what they understood as deeply gendered political hypocrisy. In response, many used highly racist rhetoric to highlight the exclusion of African American women.⁹⁰ White suffragists also used American Indian women as political symbols to validate the "civilizing" qualities of white womanhood and endorse white American expansionism.⁹¹ By century's end, white suffragists largely ignored the development of exclusionary race-based suffrage legislation, such as literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and extrajudicial intimidation.

As the historian Rebecca Mead suggests, suffrage movements in the American West, New Zealand, and Australia were based around the need for white men and women "to build and defend their brave new worlds against

89. Nancie Caraway, *Segregated Sisterhood: Racism and the Politics of American Feminism* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991); Faye E. Dudden, *Fighting Chance: The Struggle over Woman Suffrage and Black Suffrage in Reconstruction America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

90. Jen McDaniel, "White Suffragist Dis/Entitlement: The *Revolution* and the Rhetoric of Racism," *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers* 30, no. 2 (2013): 243–64.

91. Gail H. Landsman, "The 'Other' as Political Symbol: Images of Indians in the Woman Suffrage Movement," *Ethnohistory* 39, no. 3 (1992): 247–84.

resentful indigenes.”⁹² Indeed, the World’s WCTU and its support for women’s enfranchisement partially related to the possibility of women voting to influence alcohol legislation. As the historian Mariana Valverde argues, the WCTU’s “racialization of drink” in settler societies reflected missionary discourse; it “believed that ‘native races’ were quickly becoming corrupted by white males’ drinking habits because, like children, they lacked the will-power and foresight to carefully govern their consumption.”⁹³ The WCTU’s racialization of the alcohol question can thus be seen as connected with the racially exclusionary emphasis of women’s suffrage more broadly.

Most suffragists experienced the privileges afforded white women, yet some expressed greater concern about racial equality than others. As William Lloyd Garrison Jr., son of the antislavery luminary of the same name, reported to the *Woman’s Journal* in 1894, “fresh testimony” about the “ballot in New Zealand” revealed citizens to be “untrammled not only as regards sex.”⁹⁴ Although Rose Scott personally advocated for the interests of the elusive “all women,” her influence in Australian suffrage debates did not secure Indigenous rights alongside that of white women.⁹⁵ While many suffragists eschewed the racism of their fellow settlers, women’s political equality still came at the broader expense of racial equality.⁹⁶ Racially exclusive suffrage provisions were therefore celebrated alongside suffragists’ soliloquies about the beauty and freedoms of frontier landscapes—vistas which were often assumed to be uncultivated and therefore unclaimed.

This process was particularly true of nineteenth-century imaginings of the Australian landscape. The Australian continent’s seeming lack of cultivation bewildered European explorers and settlers, who were otherwise fascinated with its distinctive biota. Since Enlightenment thought “theorized ‘the human’ in terms of a progressive separation from nature,” the historian Kay Anderson argues, British settler encounters with Aboriginal people tested their “limit of faith in a shared humanness defined in terms of the capacity to improve the natural/wild environment and the natural/animal self within

92. Mead, *How the Vote Was Won*, 13.

93. Mariana Valverde, “‘Racial Poison’: Drink, Male Vice, and Degeneration in First-Wave Feminism,” in *Women’s Suffrage in the British Empire*, 35.

94. William Lloyd Garrison, “More Facts from New Zealand,” *Woman’s Journal*, September 22, 1894.

95. Allen, *Rose Scott*, 1–2.

96. Grimshaw, “Settler Anxieties,” 553–72. See also Teri L. Caraway, “Inclusion and Democratization: Class, Gender, Race, and the Extension of Suffrage,” *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 4 (2004): 443–60.

the human.”⁹⁷ For many settlers, Aboriginal people “represented a natural, and not cultural presence within the landscape.”⁹⁸ Such assumptions would influence both scientific discourse and art. Certain influential nineteenth-century artists such as Joseph Lycett and Eugene von Guérard depicted Aboriginal people as emanating from the wilderness, yet other trends in Australian landscape painting tended to altogether excise Indigenous people from representations of the landscape.⁹⁹

Self-government in the Australian colonies was therefore not merely the result of progressive reform; it was underpinned by these violent, racialized, and gendered visions of the frontier.¹⁰⁰ Returning to Clisby, whose writings in the *Woman’s Journal* imagined Australia as “pathless save untamed animals, and blacks,” sheds greater light on this issue. Her “Sketches of Australia,” which expressed a belief that Indigenous people were “rapidly passing away before the steps of the white man,” articulated prevailing attitudes about racial hierarchy.¹⁰¹ Clisby also reiterated the “doomed race” theory which, by the late nineteenth century, positioned Indigenous peoples as a disappearing part of the landscape and doomed to extinction.¹⁰² Actively or passively, such aesthetic and scientific discourses enabled settlers and suffragists to justify Indigenous disenfranchisement. As historian Susan Magarey notes of Australian women’s federal enfranchisement by 1902, “Citizenship, as defined by the right to vote, could be sexually inclusive, because it had just been made racially and ethnically exclusive.”¹⁰³

Suffragists’ focus on the political and social progress of frontier societies such as Australia thus consolidated whiteness in a way that worked to re-establish white supremacy. The ability to imagine and even identify with frontier landscapes presented an opportunity for white women to consider

97. Kay Anderson, *Race and the Crisis of Humanism* (Abingdon: University College London Press, 2007), 108 and Ch. 3, “Australia’s ‘State of Nature.’”

98. Rod Macneil, “Time after Time: Temporal Frontier Boundaries in Colonial Images of Australian Landscape,” in *Colonial Frontiers*, 48.

99. Andrew Sayers, “The Shaping of Australian Landscape Painting,” in *New Worlds from Old*, 55–57; Jeanette Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral: The Making of a White Landscape* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Press, 2007).

100. Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies*, 154.

101. Clisby, “Sketches of Australia,” *Woman’s Journal*, August 9, 1873.

102. Russell McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880–1939* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997); Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*, Ch. 4, “Humanitarian Causes: Antislavery and Saving Aboriginals” and Ch. 6, “The Dusk of the Dreamtime.” See further: Stevenson, “Harriet Clisby’s ‘Sketches of Australia.’”

103. Magarey, *Passions of the First Wave Feminists*, 155.

their freedoms beyond the metropolis. Repeatedly, however, imagining the potential for the landscape to offer white women freedom actively excluded Indigenous peoples. Indeed, the visions of frontier landscapes developed in suffrage print culture positioned white settlers—male and female—as unambiguously distinct from the landscape. Ultimately, the suffrage successes and innovations of settler societies validated and consolidated the dispossession of Indigenous peoples through the ongoing appropriation of a real, as well as an imagined, frontier.

“UNTAINTED, UNSTINTED, WHERE ALL CAN BE BLEST!”

CONCLUDING REMARKS

“The age of democracy began with the systematic disfranchisement of women,” John Markoff observes.¹⁰⁴ And yet, by the end of the nineteenth century, suffrage movements were not just national struggles, but “an international crusade drawing on universalistic principles.”¹⁰⁵ Beginning in the 1870s, transnational print culture networks came to celebrate geographically isolated sites of women’s enfranchisement. In the United States, Wyoming was celebrated in the newspapers, pamphlets, and ephemera of the WCTU, as well as NAWSA and its forebears. It was soon joined by New Zealand and Australia during the 1890s and 1900s. Antipodean suffragists also celebrated Wyoming, just as American suffragists would in turn hail suffrage provisions in New Zealand and Australia.

The imaginative import suffragists attributed to the frontier landscapes of these settler societies was a defining aspect of such dialogues. Transnational networks of suffrage print culture constructed a perception of regional difference but also sameness toward the freedoms such landscapes were thought to offer women, without necessarily pausing to reflect that white women were often alone guaranteed such freedoms. Indeed, the associations white women increasingly drew between their own freedom and the landscape coexisted with suffrage provisions that were actively or effectively racially exclusive, as well as the increasing circumscription of Indigenous populations. This conveys just how limited suffragists’ universalistic visions

104. John Markoff, “Margins, Centres, and Democracy: The Paradigmatic History of Women’s Suffrage,” *Signs* 29, no. 1 (2003): 85.

105. Francisco O. Ramirez, Yasemin Soysal and Suzanne Shanahan, “The Changing Logic of Political Citizenship: Cross-National Acquisition of Women’s Suffrage Rights, 1890 to 1990,” *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 5 (1997): 736.

of women's enfranchisement actually were. Imagining the freedoms suffrage would engender ultimately connected otherwise geographically isolated white women at the end of the nineteenth century. But their celebrations of suffrage successes across national borders became yet another way to consolidate connections based upon whiteness and European heritage. Imagining frontier landscapes thus emerged as a key factor in how transnational suffrage print culture envisioned the elective franchise.

ANA STEVENSON is a postdoctoral research fellow in the International Studies Group at the University of the Free State, South Africa.

NOTE

My thanks for the insightful comments of Dr. Lisa Featherstone, Dr. Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, and Dr. Sheilagh Ilona O'Brien offered on early versions of this article. Thanks also to Professor Carroll Pursell for recalling to me the timeliness of Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier thesis," as well as to the editor and anonymous reviewers for their astute feedback. The research for this article was generously supported by an AHA/CAL Mentoring Bursary and the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium. The Australian and New Zealand newspapers could not have been accessed without the support of Trove, National Library of Australia and Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand. This article is dedicated to Kenneth Gwyn ("Papa Ken"), who hailed from Wyoming.