Marilyn Lake, 'Progressive New World: How Settler Colonialism and Transpacific Exchange Shaped American Reform' (Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2019)

SETTLER COLONIALISM AND PROGRESSIVISM

The ideas of progressives & of the infinite perfectability of the human race belong to democratic ages. Democratic nations care little for what has been, but they are haunted by visions of what will be; in this direction then unbounded imagination ...

ALFRED DEAKIN, Notebooks

"AUSTRALIA IS THE second New World," the Harvard philosopher Josiah Royce declared in the Atlantic Monthly in the first of two articles on his "wandering life in Australasia," written after his visit in 1888. Arriving after a long sea voyage prescribed by his doctor, Royce carried a letter of introduction to the Liberal leader and future prime minister, Alfred Deakin. The two spent an intense week together, walking and talking in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, engaged in conversations that lay the basis for a deep friendship and correspondence lasting more than twenty years.

Their talks also proved crucial to the development of Royce's thought. His reflections on the character of these new communities in the southwest Pacific informed his thinking on the dynamics of social organization more generally. His southern sojourn shaped Royce's development as a progressive philosopher of community and his conception of the "ethical principle of loyalty" as the key bond on which community was built, an idea later elaborated in his 1908 book The Philosophy of Loyalty.

Deakin and Royce were both born in frontier settlements suddenly enriched by the discovery of gold—Deakin in the self-governing British colony of Victoria in southeastern Australia and Royce in Grass Valley in California—and each had enrolled in his local university in 1871. Of his childhood, Royce recalled "a very frequent wonder as to what my elders meant when they said that this was a new community." Deakin also pondered the implications of this distinctive historical condition and thought that insight should come from American writers: "In this new land we look to America ... Hawthorne, Emerson."

New lands, new communities, new worlds. These were shared American and Australian comforts and conceits. Transpacific identifications between them were framed by the chronology of settler colonialism. As Patrick Wolfe has noted, “Historically speaking, Australia followed the United States,” but as “incubators and developers of modernity, Australian settlers would be in the vanguard of a number of democratic movements.” Australian historians have written of the “radical novelty of colonial liberalism” in its conception of society as “an association of sovereign individuals.” Royce was impressed by precisely this novelty, and he pondered the dynamic of political and social association. “Organization, if it succeeds,” he concluded in his second paper for the Atlantic Monthly, “does so by virtue of the loyalty of the individuals, and the result must be in general normal and progressive.”

The building of a new community was the major theme in Royce’s history of California, published in the American Commonwealths Series, edited by Horace Scudder, in 1886. California: From the Conquest in 1846 to the Second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco told of the triumph of the community over the individual. Amid all the facts of the story, Royce wrote, “I have felt running through the one dread of the process whereby a new and great community first came to be conscious of itself.... The story begins with individuals and ends where the community begins to be what it ought to be, viz., all important as against individual doings and interests.” The challenge in the anarchy and violence of the lawless frontier had been to establish moral and political order. How that had been achieved was the question that his history, dedicated to his mother, “a California Pioneer of 1849,” sought to answer. Subtitled “a study of American character,” Royce’s narrative, though recognizing Americans as conquerors, paid no heed to the dispossession and destruction of local Indian communities, a catastrophic process recently characterized as “genocide.”

It was the building of new communities and crafting of ideal social orders that were the focus of the animated discussions between Royce and Deakin in the Australian winter of 1888. Royce was intrigued by Australian colonists’ “socialistic tendencies.” Australia was not simply a second New World; it was a more progressive and adventurous one. In addition to a common English-speaking heritage, “one finds in Australasia a rapid growth taking forms that are partly novel. No English community elsewhere has sought to govern itself in just the new way here exemplified. Here are pure democracies, with what an American must unhesitatingly call strongly socialistic tendencies.” The ownership of railways by the state was already a fact, not merely a theory. Colonists looked to governments to provide for their welfare and manifold needs—Royce cited Deakin’s speech as chief secretary in support of the 1888 Victorian budget as evidence of the full range of state provision expected by electors. “It was this undercurrent of

idealistic socialism," Royce told his American readers in a third article, written for Scribner's in 1891, "that attracted most my attention."

Soon another Australasian innovation would capture the imagination of progressive Americans. In 1893, New Zealand women became the first in the world to win the right to vote (but not stand for election) at the national level. Some American and Australian women had also been enfranchised locally, but it was Australian women's achievement of the right to vote and stand for election across the new Commonwealth of Australia, in 1902, that was hailed by American admirers as "the greatest victory ever won for women," an "object lesson" that would surely "help the cause of human liberty throughout the earth."

According to Ida Husted Harper, historian of the American women's movement and biographer of Susan B. Anthony, Australian women's political victory was "the most important event in the history of the [world] movement toward woman suffrage." One reason Australian women were successful in winning political power, Harper suggested in the Washington Post, was that "the socialistic experiment there [had] reached its greatest development and one of its features [was] the equal rights of women."

When young Vida Goldstein traveled from Melbourne to Washington in 1902 as the Australasian delegate to the first International Woman Suffrage Conference, she was warmly welcomed by the American organizers as a "sister in language and in blood" and a harbinger of Australia's "new world's promise" and "path of experiment." Ellen Wright Garrison greeted her as the youthful embodiment of modernity:

To Australasia all the world gives ear;

Youthful, audacious, unrestrained and free.

No immemorial bonds of time's decree

Shackle her progress nor excite her fear.

She beckons alder nations in her path

Of bold adventure and experiment.

Alice Stone Blackwell, secretary of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, also drew an analogy between Goldstein's youth and that of the nation she represented:

Amid this bright progressive band

Of women picked from every land,

We have a youthful delegate

To represent a youthful State.

The representative of Colorado women, enfranchised in 1893, expressed the hope that "Australian and American women [would] progress spiritually side by side on the upward path of our common race."

The enfranchisement of women, it was commonly understood, represented a racial triumph as well as a democratic milestone. American and Australian suffragists measured their progress in terms of their advancement beyond the condition of women deemed "traditional," "primitive," "savage," or "feudal." US suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt reassured the international conference that American women, despite their lack of political rights, were advanced in world terms, having escaped traditional "bonds" and "restrictions." They were "unquestionably … less bound by legal and social restrictions than the women of any other country," she told assembled delegates, "unless we except progressive Australia and New Zealand."

Progressive New World offers a new history of progressivism as a transpacific project shaped by Australasian example and the shared experience and racialized order of settler colonialism. Such a perspective allows us to better understand progressivism's ambiguous character as simultaneously democratic and elitist, reformist and coercive, advanced and assimilationist, uplifting and repressive. Appraisals of the political character of progressivism have shifted over past decades, oscillating between stern critique of its elitism and warm sympathy for its democratic impulse. The interpretative framework of settler colonialism helps make sense of, and brings into one analytical lens, progressivism's constitutive contradictions. The project of progressive reform was imbued with settler colonialism's "regime of race," which informed the ascendant politics of "whiteness."

Take the example of the “Australian ballot,” introduced in the self-governing colonies of Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia from 1856 to combat coercion and corruption in elections. This Australian version of the secret ballot was distinctive in introducing the use of a government-printed ballot paper, signed by electoral officials and distributed at the polling booth. Some American reformers, such as Richard Dana in Massachusetts, where the Australian ballot was first introduced in the United States, also advocated the reform to purify the election process. It quickly became evident, however, that the use of an official printed ballot paper, which had to be read and marked by electors in the privacy of a polling booth, made it more difficult for illiterates to cast a valid vote. Many advocates in the north and south of the United States began to promote the Australian ballot as a disenfranchisement measure to eliminate “ignorant” votes.

In the southern states especially, the Australian ballot was promoted as a way to exclude African Americans from voting. Thus, the “father of Georgia disenfranchisement” included the Australian ballot system in a list of the most effective ways of “eliminating Negroes from politics,” while a Democrat campaign song in Arkansas in 1892 assured electors:

The Australian Ballot works like a charm,

It makes them think and scratch,

And when a Negro gets a ballot

He has certainly got his match.

In less than eight years after its 1888 adoption in Massachusetts, some 90 percent of states had followed suit. Rarely in the history of the United States had a reform movement spread so quickly and successfully. One result was a large decline in voter turnout and the effective exclusion of black electors from the political process. Progressive reforms could have profoundly undemocratic outcomes.

Indigenous peoples in both Australia and the United States were usually excluded, as noncitizens, from voting at all. From the late nineteenth century into the twentieth century their communities were in sharp decline as they continued to be forced from their lands, massacred, infected with disease, and subjected to the removal of their children. Birthrates plummeted. Much theoretical work on settler colonialism has emphasized the displacement and destruction of indigenous peoples that underpinned settler colonialism—the “logic of elimination,” in Wolfe’s influential formulation. But

there is also the corollary: Indigenous societies were supplanted by settler communities, who resolved to bring into being new kinds of race-based polities that were not simply "facsimiles" of the old but self-consciously innovative pioneering democracies.

From the mid-nineteenth century, in both Australia and the United States, white self-government was based on manhood suffrage, with settlers enjoying political rights not extended to working-class men in Britain until after World War I. Settler societies were not mere extensions of the Old World. Rather, they were engaged in inventing novel kinds of democratic societies. In defining settler colonialism as a distinctive formation, Lorenzo Veracini has emphasized that settlers were "founders of political orders" who carried their sovereignty with them. Their assumption of sovereign right rested precisely on the denial of the sovereignty and territoriality of indigenous peoples whose lands they occupied.

In the self-governing Australasian colonies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, governments elected by manhood (and increasingly womanhood) suffrage inaugurated a series of radical democratic experiments—including the Australian ballot, the eight-hour day, the abolition of plural voting, public ownership of utilities, a legal minimum wage, wages boards and arbitration courts, workers' compensation, the abolition of child labor, immigration restriction, the political enfranchisement of women, the first children's court, mothers' pensions and a maternity allowance, old age and invalid pensions—inaugurating a reform regime described by contemporaries as "state socialism."

Progressivism was defined by a shift away from a reliance on charity and philanthropy to remedy social ills toward a vision of the state as a vehicle for achieving social justice. Theodore Roosevelt was an influential convert, for example, in his discussions with Vida Goldstein when she visited Washington in 1902. His interest in arbitration systems and a legislated minimum wage, as conveyed to Henry Demarest Lloyd, Carroll Wright, and Victor S. Clark; his decision to hold the First White House conference on "dependent children" in 1909; and his platform as presidential candidate for the Progressive Party in 1912 all spoke to Australian initiatives.

When Roosevelt espoused the cause of progressivism in 1912—a development he conceptualized as "industrial evolution" and "economic evolution"—his platform included a living wage, shorter hours, protective tariffs, the abolition of child labor,

workers' compensation, and woman suffrage. "Individualism" was now excoriated as an outdated, even a "savage," force. "We stand for a living wage," declared Roosevelt at the First National Convention of the Progressive Party in Chicago, where he received a fifty-five-minute standing ovation. "We favor woman suffrage."

Described as "one of the boldest visions in the history of mainstream American politics," this was a program condemned by conservative critics for its radical, even revolutionary, nature and by others as derivative, a mere imitation, a "flung-together program of so-called 'State Socialism,'" a mere rehash of Australasian policy. "Novel as the Roosevelt views may appear," complained one critic, "they are neither new nor strange to any man informed of political currents throughout the world. In brief, they are a rehash of policies long in vogue in Australia and New Zealand."

Charles Pearson had written about the success of state socialism in Australia in his influential work of prophecy*, National Life and Character: A Forecast*, which Roosevelt reviewed and recommended to friends in 1894. In Australia, Pearson had explained, "The State employees are an important element of the population; the State builds railways, founds and maintains schools, tries to regulate the wages and hours of labour, protects native industry, settles the population on the land, and is beginning to organise systems of State insurance." "State Socialism" had succeeded, he wrote, "because it is all-embracing, and able to compel obedience." Superior to European models of social or work-based insurance, it had been "developed by the community for their own needs, and not by State departments for administrative purposes." State payments came from general revenue. The democratic origins of Australasian state experiments were also emphasized by American commentators, such as Henry Demarest Lloyd and Victor S. Clark following their visits to Australia and New Zealand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. "In a democracy," wrote Lloyd in *Newest England,* "in self-government, state-help is self-help."

They were but two of the large group of American reformers, including single taxer Henry George, social commentator Frank Parsons, Californian investigator Harris Weinstock, Stanford professor David Starr Jordan, Ohio State professor M. B. Hammond, Wisconsin professor Richard Ely, Boston feminists Maud Wood Park and Mabel Willard, "ardent suffragist of San Antonio" Marin B. Fenwick, and Woman Christian Temperance Union leader Jessie Ackerman, who traveled across the ocean to see the state experiments for themselves. For Henry George, Australians were "not merely our kinsmen, but [a people who] in character, conditions and future possibilities come closer to us than any other." Returning from his tour in 1890, George told his fellow citizens "there is no country

whose social and political development is so well worth the study of thoughtful Americans."

Henry Demarest Lloyd, whose *Wealth against Commonwealth*—a scathing attack on Standard Oil and corporate corruption—was published in 1894, crossed the Pacific in 1899. "Australian democracy was so successful and progressive," he told an Adelaide journalist, "that Americans … could make a study of it and reap an advantage." Lloyd proved an influential publicist and was treated as an expert on Australasian developments. In *Newest England,* the Chicago journalist extolled "the democratic efflorescence in Australasia," a "renaissance of democracy" featuring progressive taxation, land reforms, old-age pensions, labor legislation, and public ownership of railways and utilities. Impressed, in particular, by the role of New Zealand's system of compulsory industrial arbitration in preventing strikes and upholding labor standards, Lloyd declared happily, "New Zealand was a white man's country if ever there was one." Australasian state socialism, it was commonly understood, enlisted the services of the state to enshrine a white man's standard of living.

Victor S. Clark traveled south during 1903 and 1904 at the behest of the US Labor Bureau as part of a tour that included visits to Java and the Philippines. "New Zealand and Australia [were] the most interesting legislative experiment stations in the world," he declared, "and they experiment so actively because their political institutions are extremely democratic. They are doing what people in the United States might do were they able to enforce their will with equal directness through the ballot. Our government is organized on a more conservative basis, and the popular voice manifests itself less directly in legislation."

New England suffragist Maud Wood Park, who had met Vida Goldstein on her lecturing tour in Boston in 1902, toured the east coast of Australia in 1909. Meeting Labor leader (and soon to be prime minister) Andrew Fisher, together with a number of Labor women at parliament house in Melbourne, she was struck by "women's equal standing in the industrial and political organization of the Labor party." The "sense of the political equality of women in a country where they are enfranchised was a deep-rooted conviction." Jessie Ackerman, who traveled regularly to Australia, was also impressed by Labor women's activism:

"The working women have grandly and nobly risen to the discharge of their duty as citizens, so far as actual voting is concerned…. That the results have told is

unmistakably written in political events.... It has altered the very course of a nation, and made a volume of history in a day as it were, all of which is due to the unrelenting, ever-acting energies of organization."

Other American reformers learned about Australian developments—in labor law, the public ownership of utilities, and child and maternal welfare, for example—from Australian visitors to the United States, such as Catherine Helen Spence, who spread the word about mothers' pensions and the first juvenile court (in South Australia) at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, and novelist Miles Franklin and her friend, Alice Henry, who worked with Margaret Dreier Robins at the National Women's Trade Union League from 1906 as editor of the journal *Life and Labor*.

When Henry first stepped ashore in New York, arriving via England, she was given a warm reception. "I was taken in at once and made welcome," she recalled. "At once! At first! A favored visitor from far-away Australia.... It was an introduction to the social workers' world at its best and highest, with close connections to the Labor Movement." In her several lectures to social workers, women's clubs, and suffrage societies, Henry discovered intense interest in how Australia dealt with neglected children, how wages boards worked to secure a living wage, and the use enfranchised women had made of the vote. "Australia was a word to rouse interest in all that circle and I arrived at a moment when Australia was beginning some of her most notable experiments in social legislation, and, Federation having been accomplished, Americans generally were feeling a sense of sisterly interest in this new young country." That interest, she found, was shared by President Roosevelt, whom Henry, like Goldstein before her, met in Washington, where she passed on Australia's "impromptu greetings."

Henry's friend H. B. Higgins, the esteemed president of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, was invited to visit the United States in 1914 by progressive activist Robert Valentine—former commissioner of Indian affairs, confidant of Roosevelt, and, by 1914, working as a self-styled "labor counselor." Valentine introduced Higgins to his stellar network of East Coast progressives, including jurists Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., Louis Brandeis, Learned Hand, and Felix Frankfurter, and labor reformers Elizabeth Glendower Evans, Florence Kelley, and Josephine Goldmark, leaders of the feminist National Consumers League (NCL). Higgins and Frankfurter became close friends and confidants, the two joined in intimate and candid correspondence until shortly before Higgins's death in 1929.

In the United States, Higgins was interviewed by reformers in a number of cities for a range of papers. He was commissioned by the *Harvard Law Review* to write about the Australian minimum wage and industrial arbitration court, an article reprinted by the NCL in its *Minimum Wages Series*. The Australian jurist's ideas were also discussed in the *New Republic,* a journal founded shortly after his 1914 visit in which Herbert Croly, Walter Lippman, Felix Frankfurter, and Learned Hand promoted the legitimate role of trade unions and the imperative of a legal minimum wage. In his advocacy of the minimum wage and collective bargaining, Croly had shown, Higgins suggested to Frankfurter, that he had "caught" Australian ideas.

By 1914, Higgins's path-breaking jurisprudence was widely cited in the United States, and he was welcomed as something of a celebrity. Professor Hammond had lauded the Australian jurist in the *American Economic Review* the year before as a world pioneer of "social democracy": "He has certainly expressed, at greater length and with greater clearness than has anyone else, the ideals which have animated the Australian people and the Australian lawmakers in placing on the statute books the body of social legislation which has drawn the eyes of all the world to Australasia, and which marks the most notable experiment yet made in social democracy." In his famous Harvester judgment of 1907, Higgins had defined the minimum wage as a "living wage" sufficient to meet the needs of workers carefully defined as "human beings living in a civilized community," a white man's wage designed to combat the degradation and exploitation experienced by indentured laborers, "coolies," Pacific Islanders, and slaves. As Jerold Waltman has noted, the idea of a "living wage" was routinely acknowledged in the United States as an Australian invention. Progressive reformers often quoted with approval the Australian standard: a minimum wage is one supporting the "normal needs of the average employee regarded as a human being living in a civilized community."

Theodore Roosevelt visited Higgins in his Washington hotel, telling him that he had "been urged by his 'progressive' friends" to meet him. Roosevelt had long been an enthusiast for the settler democracies of the southwest Pacific. The racial dimension of his often-expressed "fellow feeling" was evident in his history of colonizing conquest, *The Winning of the West:* "The average Englishman, American or Australian of today who wishes to recall the feats of power with which his race should be credited in the shadowy dawn of its history may go back to the half-mythical glories of Hengist and Horsa." The settlement of America and Australia were, Roosevelt insisted, key events in world history: "When these continents were settled they contained the largest tracts of fertile, temperate, thinly peopled country on the face of the globe. We cannot rate too highly the importance of their acquisition. Their successful settlement was a feat which by comparison utterly dwarfs all European wars of the last two centuries."

In his review of Pearson's *National Life and Character,* Roosevelt had lauded the settler societies of North America and Australasia as democratic triumphs over European aristocracy:

> Had these regions been under aristocratic governments, Chinese immigration would have been encouraged precisely as the slave trade is encouraged of necessity by any slave-holding oligarchy, and the result would have been even more fatal to the white race; but the democracy, with the clear instinct of race selfishness, saw the race foe, and kept out the dangerous alien. The presence of the negro in our Southern States is a legacy from the time when we were ruled by a trans-oceanic aristocracy.

In their espousal of the twin ideals of political equality and racial exclusion, these English-speaking democracies were extensions of the British world but also repudiations of the economic, social, and political hierarchies that defined Britain itself.

In the New World democracies, settler colonists made themselves and their societies anew. In Old World Britain, "they had been instructed to reverence rank, wealth, landed-proprietorship, state religions and vested interests," flamboyant New Zealand Labor secretary Edward Tregear explained in *Arena,* the radical Boston monthly edited by Benjamin Orange Flower, an enthusiastic convert to the antipodean "Program of Progress." "Economically they had been taught to respect old trade-jargons about 'freedom of contract,' 'supply and demand,' 'liberty of the subject,'" wrote Tregear, "phrases subtly concocted for the repression of all upward industrial effort and for the support of financial privilege." The challenge for settler colonists was to build new political and social orders: "To disentangle themselves from such associations and to dare to think for themselves, then to translate their meditation into action, needed severe and arduous struggle, but it was on the true lines of national evolution and results full of promise have been achieved." The ultimate result of this combined struggle and evolution, Tregear told his American readers, was "progressive legislation."

Settler colonialism was constituted in a triangular system of relationships comprising metropolitan, settler, and indigenous agencies. From the late nineteenth century, reformers in settler societies began to cast themselves as "progressive" in a temporal construction of "double difference"—distinguishing themselves both from Old World feudalism and from Stone Age savagery. Thus did Sam Gompers report in his history of *The Eight-Hour Workday* that when the Australian workingman "inaugurated" shorter hours reform in 1856, "the gloom of the effete monarchical and feudal institutions" was lifted, and "the darkness of ages" ended. Gompers would in fact prove wary of state intervention in industrial relations, preferring "red-blooded rugged independence and

will power" to state protection, which would emasculate American workingmen. In Australia, by contrast, labor reformers advocated extensive state protections precisely to secure white workingmen's manhood in relations of class equality.

Manhood was a key value for nineteenth-century settler colonists, who prided themselves on their manly capacity for "self-government," a prevalent discourse whose salience depended on the settler colonial context. In settler societies, working-class men sought to escape the oppressive and demeaning class relations of feudal, monarchical, aristocratic societies. "The labourer with us," Andrews Norton had asserted, "feels that he is a man and a citizen." But the deepening class exploitation of the late nineteenth century—the "inhumanly long hours of labor and starvation wages" in Ida Van Etten's words—challenged such conceptions. The virtuous republic was under siege by the new antidemocratic forces unleashed by industrial capitalism. The "wage-system of labor" was "crushing the manhood out of sovereign citizens," lamented George McNeill in *The Labor Movement: The Problem of Today*. In this context, many American reformers, including Florence Kelley, Elizabeth Glendower Evans, and Walter Lippman, heralded Australian wages boards—first established in 1896—as ushering in a new era of "economic democracy."

In formulating social and economic goals, reformers on both sides of the Pacific responded to common economic and industrial crises, including economic depression, bitter and widespread strikes, and mass unemployment. In the course of their confrontation with economic turmoil, American policy makers—public officials, social investigators, independent labor reformers, and union and business leaders—located themselves as never before in a larger, international context. While sometimes referring to developments in Europe, the path to reform that beckoned most strongly, as Leon Fink has noted, was the "Australasian road." American interest in industrial arbitration and the need to inscribe remedies to industrial conflict in law—evident in the 1894 Strike Commission; the US Industrial Commission; and local initiatives in Chicago, New York, Colorado, Kansas, and Wisconsin—has been largely ignored in the historiography and thus "lost to posterity."

Reformers in both countries aimed to reinvigorate democracy and extend self-government—to white women, workers, citizens, and voters, but not to African Americans, "Asiatics," or Pacific Islanders, who would be segregated, excluded, or deported, or to surviving indigenous peoples and foreign immigrants, who would be assimilated and absorbed. In her collection of lectures, *Democracy and Social Ethics,* Jane Addams, founder of Hull House in Chicago, explained the challenge of working

with local immigrant communities. As “primitive people” with “untrained minds,” “South Italian peasants” needed appropriate training to prepare them for democracy. The capacity for and right to exercise self-government were conceptualized in racialized settler-colonial terms. Nonwhite races might, perhaps, gradually attain that capacity through education and training, both at home and in overseas territories. An active state was an expansive state, and advancement rested on the project of assimilation at home and abroad.

One of Alfred Deakin’s first acts as chief secretary in the Victorian government in 1886, two years before he met Royce, was to preside over the introduction of the Aborigines’ Protection Act, which marked the beginning of “the assimilation era” in Australian policy with regard to Aboriginal peoples. Proposed by the Aborigines’ Protection Board, the act was in part an economic measure aimed at saving money and in part an initiative to defuse Aboriginal political activism on the Coranderrk reserve northeast of Melbourne.

The goal was to absorb the mixed-descent Aboriginal population into the white community. They would “merge the half-castes and quarter castes into the general population,” Deakin told parliament. “Full blood” Aborigines were expected to soon “die out.” They were “a nearly extinct race,” Deakin observed, invoking the familiar evolutionary trope, “and therefore the expense attending their maintenance ought to become less and less.” Aborigines of mixed descent, once living among the general population, “might be educated to earn their own living” and thus become “useful members of society.” The effects of the act were rather less benign, causing the breakup of Aboriginal families and communities and thus exacerbating their loss of culture, language, ceremony, and land.

In the United States, the Dawes Act, passed just one year later, in 1887, was a key component of the federal government’s new Indian assimilation campaign. Its allotment policy similarly provided for the gradual breakup of reservations and the absorption of Indians into the white community under what has been criticized as a “vanishing policy.” Henry Dawes and like-minded legislators believed that the future for Native Americans required them to “follow the white man’s road” in settling on individual homesteads alongside white settlers rushing to take up “surplus” land. The Dawes Act ultimately reduced federally recognized Native American landholdings by about ninety million acres, thus clearing the way for the rapid expansion of settler colonization across the continent and the exploitation of vast natural resources, “so handled,” as Roosevelt put it, “to be in the interests of the actual settler.”

In Australia and the United States, it was assumed that surviving indigenous peoples must be trained—coerced if necessary—to live and work like white people. Historians of American progressivism have noted the focus of urban reformers on assimilating new immigrants to American culture—the process of "Americanization"—but they have generally not included the simultaneous programs in Indian assimilation in the same analytical frame. It is time to consider how the study of indigenous histories in the context of settler colonialism might illuminate more broadly our understanding of progressivism.

Also in Australia and the United States, the assimilation and education policies directed at indigenous peoples—especially children, through boarding and mission schools—and the continuing appropriation of indigenous lands, through breaking treaties and breaking up reserves and reservations, were central to, indeed definitive of, the progressive vision of advancement, efficiency, and modernity. The attacks on indigenous cultures, language, and ceremony and the removal and training of Aboriginal and Native American children were not peripheral to progressive goals but a prime example of the broader strategy of "Putting Children First." And just as children were considered the key to the national future, so white maternal authority escaped the bounds of the private domain to reshape public life. Progressivism was a transnational reform movement focused on realizing its aims through nation building, state intervention, and the enactment of reform in family life, the home, and the workplace, domains increasingly defined as central to national life.

In the United States, "field matrons" were appointed with the significant responsibility of "civilizing" Indian families, especially in their own homes and communities. Commissioners of Indian affairs were pleased to report on their progress. In one place, where Indians who had "sturdily resisted all civilizing influences, especially schools," the field matron had gathered the children up and "obtained a strong hold for good upon every family." At another place, "sewing schools, weekly clubs and simple Sabbath services" had brought self-respect to young men and women. The field matrons had enabled "something hopeful and widening" in Native Americans' narrow lives of poverty, dirt, and degradation until they had at last dared to become "progressives."

Across the Pacific, Australian women reformers also claimed a special role in progressive programs focused on the welfare of children, the protection of the home, and the care of "dependent" natives. Radical activists such as Mary Bennett, Ada Bromham, Edith Jones, and Constance Cooke lobbied, with little success, for a supervisory role in the protectionist regimes that governed Aboriginal lives at the state

level and recognition of Aboriginal women's rights as mothers. In the United States, where Indian affairs came under federal jurisdiction, the new programs in Indian assimilation initiated unprecedented levels of federal activism and a huge expansion in the federal bureaucracy. Long before the establishment of the Children's Bureau and the Women's Bureau, the Indian Service brought large numbers of women into the federal workforce to implement policies formulated in considerable part by female-dominated Indian reform groups.

By 1898, women constituted 42 percent of all Indian Bureau employees and a full 62 percent in the Indian School Service. The Indian Bureau also employed for the first time large numbers of indigenous employees, men and women such as Marie Baldwin, in positions that sustained "the first generation of Native professional and white-collar workers." One effect was to forge solidarity between tribes and encourage an identity as "Indian" that would become the basis of a new progressive cultural and political organization: the Society of American Indians (SAI).

Sometimes called the "Red Progressives," the SAI was formed in 1911 by Native intellectuals, including Charles Eastman, Thomas Sloan, and Marie Baldwin, with the support of the progressive commissioner for Indian affairs, Robert Valentine—a close friend of Felix Frankfurter and Theodore Roosevelt, for whom he campaigned in 1912. A quintessential progressive in his vision, methods, and goals, Valentine also became a pioneer in the field of industrial relations in which capacity he invited H. B. Higgins to Boston and Washington. Valentine's sudden death in 1916 from a heart attack, at the age of forty-six, meant that his multifaceted progressive activism has since been little remembered.

The story of transpacific reform campaigns can best be understood through the lens of personal friendships, shared enthusiasms, and professional networks. Ideas circulated through conversation, conferences, and correspondence. The interpretative framework of settler colonialism illuminates the subjective affinities of American and Australian reformers—their often stated sense of "fellow feeling" and "racial kinship"—and their sensibilities as "pioneers" of "new lands," as "path-breakers" and builders of "new communities." "I know myself what all the feelings are when you're young and in a young country and feel that you're turning over the fly leaf to a new history," said Tom, the protagonist of Victor S. Clark's short story "Chippewa Country." Tom was not "just a frontiersman," Clark informs us; "he was a pioneer." And Clark was not just a writer and labor investigator; he was also a devoted colonial administrator committed to building modern communities in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippines.

Settler colonialism shaped a sense of kinship across the Pacific. Josiah Royce referred to Australians as “our southern fellow countrymen,” while for Henry George they were “far southern kinsmen.” Victor Clark hailed the “kindred Federation of the South Pacific.” Newspaper reports and magazine stories encouraged identification through shared histories. In a sketch of New South Wales in 1901, the year of the founding of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Washington Post reported that Australian “settlers, like American frontiers men at the present day, often had to work hard with a gun ready to hand, for natives … appeared to resist the continual encroachments on their hunting grounds, while the bush concealed numbers of white desperadoes.”

To Catherine Spence, on her lecture tour in 1893, the United States “felt more nearly of kin” than did Old World Europe. The United States and Australia were both the “children of Europe,” she wrote. “Americans look on Australians as nearer to them than the English themselves, and wherever—in railway trains, or street cars, or at any gathering, or in private houses—it transpired that I was from Australia immediately eager questions were asked and a cordial welcome was offered.” Spence was invited to stay or enjoy a family’s hospitality in more than forty private residences. Clearly she felt at home. A sense of self shaped by the triangular relations of settler colonialism animated subjective affinities, common ideals, and progressive political commitments.

Just as settlers in standard postcolonial narratives “pioneered” the “wilderness,” so too progressives cast themselves as natural “pioneers” of labor reforms, women’s rights, and children’s services. “I have been surveyor and miner and many other things,” declared New Zealand secretary of labor, Edward Tregear, “and always ahead of civilization—a pioneer.” Clara Barton, president of the American Red Cross Association, praised Susan B. Anthony at the first International Woman Suffrage Conference as “the woman who has trodden the trackless fields of the pioneer till the thorns are buried in roses.” Frederic C. Howe praised Wisconsin for its “progressive legislation” that made the state “so widely known as a pioneer.” Writing to Lord Bryce, H. B. Higgins thanked the English statesman for his praise and explained that his arbitration court judgments were “anxious and toilsome work”: “I have to blaze my own track through the bush.” Perhaps an Englishman might have found the labor legislation crude, because unprecedented, but these were, as Higgins explained, “new communities.”

Australians and Americans were proud to be citizens of “young nations,” Carrie Chapman Catt observed, “untrammeled by tradition and custom.” “It is well known that new countries are far more free from the mandates of custom and conventionality than old ones,” she told the First International Woman Suffrage Conference, “and that

dissenters from established usage are far more willing to adopt new ideas and extend new liberties than those bound by traditional belief." Yet as Australian visitors frequently observed, Americans were shackled by conservative political institutions, whose elitist, undemocratic character was shaped in the late eighteenth century by the founders of a settler colonial republic forged more than one hundred years before.

Transpacific comparisons highlighted the limits to Americans' readiness and ability to adopt new ideas and implement desired reforms. A federal constitution that inscribed states' rights and the principle of individual liberty, together with a long-established two-party system that marginalized minorities and women, entrenched formidable barriers to change. Individualism and voluntarism remained powerful creeds in American public life, as Catherine Spence found at the International Congress of Charities, Correction and Philanthropy in Chicago in 1893 and Victor Clark affirmed to his friend Edward Tregear ten years later. At every turn, American reformers were "horribly fettered by the shackles" of their constitution, as H. B. Higgins, fresh from battles at the Australian constitutional conventions, told his friend Felix Frankfurter.

Convinced that "socialistic" action was "the trend of modern thought, in spite of protests from individualists," Catherine Spence was taken aback by the criticism she encountered at the Chicago congress, forced to assert that state assistance to relieve destitution should be regarded not as a form of pauperizing charity but as a fundamental modern "right." Nine years later, Jane Addams advocated a new form of "social ethics," recognizing that the charitable relationship between benefactor and beneficiary institutionalized an inequality that belied the ideal of democracy. For Australian progressives, however, it was legislative enactment, not simply the espousal of "social ethics," that was necessary to secure social justice.

In 1918, Felix Frankfurter wrote wistfully to Higgins of "the difficulty of translating ideals into institutions" in his country. Victor Clark blamed the preponderance of farmers in the United States for American conservatism, telling Edward Tregear that more than in Australia and New Zealand, the "hayseed" still ruled the United States. He pointed out that contrary to the stereotype, Australia was a more urban nation than the United States, with 47 percent of Australians living in cities of more than four thousand people, compared with only 37 percent of Americans. Resistance to radical reform was deeply rooted in the great republic.

Despite significant achievements at the state and municipal levels in the United States before World War I, progressivism remained largely aspirational at the federal level until the re-alignment of political forces in the 1930s saw the introduction of comprehensive labor and welfare reform in the New Deal. Title IV (Aid to Dependent Children) of the Social Security Act nationalized mothers' pensions in 1935, while the Fair Labor Standards Act introduced the first minimum wage at the national level in 1938. In the same decade, the Collier reforms in Indian administration gestured toward an end to settler governance and a new era of self-determination.

Progressive New World charts the intellectual, political, and personal exchanges between progressive reformers in the United States and Australasia in the context of the triangular relations between Old World Europe, settler societies, and indigenous peoples. An examination of diaries, letters, memoirs, journal articles, and other writings allows us to examine the making of the subjective identifications and political ideals that animated progressive visions of reform and shaped many American reform initiatives.

The book opens with a kind of prehistory to progressivism: an account of the friendship between an American man of letters, Charles Eliot Norton, and English-Australian historian, journalist, and politician Charles Henry Pearson that explores the ways in which a shared moral revulsion and political outrage at the English class system fueled a passion for democracy in settler colonies. Tragically, its realization rested on the dispossession, displacement, and destruction of indigenous peoples, characterized by Pearson in *National Life and Character*, in a classic instance of disavowal, as "evanescent races" doomed to extinction.

The book concludes with a discussion of indigenous engagement with progressivism in the early twentieth century, evident in the formation of the Society of American Indians—the "Red Progressives"—and the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association, political mobilizations that testified not only to the power of progressivism as a political idea but also to its imaginative limits and repressive underpinnings. Although largely ignored in histories of American Indian policy, the period between the 1890s and the 1920s was a time of survival, adaptation, resistance, and innovation. Similarly, in Australia, these decades saw Aboriginal people's first modern political mobilizations, also conducted in the name of "progressivism."

Even as “experts” continued to proclaim the imminent extinction of the native peoples of Australia and America—“the fate of the Australian Blacks will be that of the American Indian—they will vanish from the face of the earth” proclaimed visiting American anthropologist William Lloyd Warner in Australia on a research trip in the 1920s—this period saw the rise of indigenous political movements in Australia and the United States, demanding an end to settler governance and recognition of indigenous rights—to land, citizenship, their children, and culture—in differently imagined new worlds.

Progressives might have cared little for what had been, as Alfred Deakin suggested, focusing their imaginings on the future. From an indigenous perspective, however, real advancement demanded a new engagement with the past; an acknowledgment of the historic injustice perpetrated in the name of progress; and a new respect for traditional peoples, their territories and cultures. Indigenous progressives demanded acknowledgment of the legacies of settler colonialism, and they called its white beneficiaries to account. They created their own self-styled “progressive” organizations to “talk back to civilization”—to demand recognition and redress, the return of “land in their own country,” and equal citizenship rights for their peoples.