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Not long ago, when one of the boys went up to bed, he was standing close to the window, undressing himself, and a little bird came fluttering around the window on the outside... Then we opened the window and let it in. It seemed to be crippled or very cold, and it could not fly very well, although it would keep out of our reach. We tried to catch it by running after it, but we soon got tired of that, and we began to throw our hats at it. Sometimes we would strike it with a hat, but that didn't do much good, until the bird was tired of flying, and it got under a bed, and we caught it. Then we went up the hall, and wrung its head off.

After we had wrung its head off, we got the wings, and threw the rest of the bird out of the window. (Johnson 796)

John Johnson Jr. began his 1887 article “The Savagery of Boyhood” with this story, penned by a twelve-year-old pupil. Johnson noted that when the boy spoke about his deed and displayed its gruesome spoils that there was “a tone about his words as of savage complacency, the complacency of the Dyak who recounts his successes in the head-hunt, and gloats over his barbarities as they rise bloody before his mind’s eye” (797). He concluded that the boy’s “barbarous state of mind” was not “exceptional,” arguing instead that it was a normal aspect of boys’ development for them to pass through a savage stage akin to primitive peoples (797). In its focus on the dormancy of the “humane impulse” in the boy as in “the bosom of a Fuegian or a Guacho” (798), Johnson’s essay foreshadows numerous books by American writers in the early twentieth century that equate boys with primitive peoples. Author of Tarzan of the Apes (1912), Edgar Rice Burroughs showed the currency of such views when he made a similar equation in assessing his famous protagonist: “Really Tarzan was but a child, or a primeval man, which is the same thing anyway” (qtd. in Griswold 108). Many of the educational and psychological works about American boys, along with the growing number of boys’ outdoor organizations, sought to solve the imagined “problem” of boyhood, as William Forbush’s The Boy Problem: A Study in Social Pedagogy (1902) had labeled the subject of
American boys' maturation, with a return to the wild that would capitalize on their inclination toward savagery.

Several scholars have argued that Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912) reflects anxieties about masculinity in early twentieth-century America. Annette Wannamaker, for example, proposes that the story's moral is that "middle- or upper-class white boys should be reared in the wilderness, not coddled by a feminized society, if they are to grow into the virile men and future patriarchs they already are destined to become" (55). Gail Bederman interrogates the fraught role of civilization in boys' development to suggest that Burroughs's novel shows that "a man could be powerful if, as a child, he repeated the primitive life of his savage ancestors" (222). A common thread throughout the existing body of scholarship is that the ideal American man of the twentieth century developed from a wild boy returned to his feral roots, counteracting the degenerative affects of culture. This chapter complements these interpretations of *Tarzan of the Apes* by examining how a complex web of popular understandings of Darwinism, evolution, sexual selection, American boyhood and adolescence all influenced Burroughs's depiction of Tarzan's maturation. In particular, it considers how the novel might be read through popular ideas of recapitulation, in which an individual's progress from childhood to adulthood was seen to mirror the epochs of human evolution.

Gillian Beer, in her important study of evolutionary narratives, contends that "evolutionary ideas are even more influential when they become assumptions embedded in the culture than while they are the subject of controversy" (2). *Tarzan of the Apes* drew on popular understandings of Darwinian thought circulating in the early twentieth century when such ideas had become culturally embedded in the theories of boyhood and adolescence. Darwinian thought, particularly in *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), permeated popular ideas of the time about the line between man and ape and the development of humanity, both in terms of evolution and in terms of an individual's coming of age. The absorption of ideas about evolution and sexual selection also informed much American discourse, from the academic to the popular, about the development and training of boys in the early twentieth century.

Despite his British parentage, Tarzan has been widely interpreted as a symbol of American manhood. Wannamaker describes him as "an impossible ideal of American masculinity" (38). More broadly, Kenneth Kidd, in his study of the "feral tale," suggests that the figure of the feral boy "had come to represent the ideal American male self" by the early twentieth century (105). It may seem counterintuitive that wildness—what might seem to be an evolutionary throwback in an era in which racial and species distinction privileged the white human—came to be idealized in the figure of Tarzan. Nevertheless, as the following section shows, contemporary American conceptualizations of child development imagine the process of boys' maturation as replicating the progress of humanity from primitive, tribal
On the Origin of Men

groupings to orderly civilization, and also reveal fears that urban life was inducing degeneration among boys. Within the Tarzan of the Apes narrative, the protagonist is able to embody both of these forms of evolution, as an individual and as a representative of his race, simultaneously advancing from boy to man and from primitive to civilized human.

TARZAN'S REHEARSAL OF RECAPITULATION THEORY

In the United States, psychologist G. Stanley Hall was a central figure in the child-study movement, which endeavored to apply scientific methods to the theorization of child development from the 1880s. He published Adolescence in 1904, a thirteen-hundred-page double volume work greatly indebted to Darwin's On the Origin of Species that, despite its length, proved popular and influential. Adolescence was an integral part of heightened psychological and educational interest in this stage of child development in the early twentieth century, a period Joseph Kett describes as “the era of the adolescent” (215). Hall defined adolescence as “extending over a period of ten years from twelve to fourteen to twenty-one or twenty-five in girls and boys, respectively, but the culmination is at fifteen or sixteen” (qtd. in Savage 66). This supposedly turbulent stage was vitally important because, according to Hall’s theory of recapitulation, children progress through the developmental stages of more primitive societies and adolescence corresponded with humanity’s progress from savagery to civilization.

The inspiration for Hall’s concept of recapitulation issued from Darwin’s The Descent of Man, in which he wrote that the gradual evolution of “moral and mental faculties” in human development is seen daily in their development in every infant (151). Whereas evolution did not occur during the life of any one organism, in the theory of recapitulation the intellectual and physical growth of the child could be taken as reenacting the progress of humanity itself. In Hall’s formulation, a prolonged adolescence was essential to successfully exit the childhood period of savagery and ensure sound development into adulthood. Hall remarked in the preface to Adolescence that in “urbanized hothouse life” adolescence is rushed and distanced from nature, such that adolescents tend to “ripen” prematurely (xi). Therefore, Hall emphasizes the importance of ensuring the correct duration and focus of adolescence so as to prevent poor mental and physical health and “juvenile faults, immoralities, and crimes” (which occupy an entire chapter of Adolescence).

In the chapter “Adolescent Races and Their Treatment,” Hall ranks races along a progressive evolutionary chain, comparable to individual human development from child to adolescent to adult. Hall concurred with Darwin’s view in The Descent of Man that humans rose from savage beings to become civilized, proposing that “Natural races are nations in the process of development” (719). Unsurprisingly, Christians of the Western world
were at the adult pinnacle and "primitive" races were childlike, or more specifically, adolescent, as Hall explains: "Most savages in most respects are children, or, because of sexual maturity, more properly, adolescents of adult size" (649). Among the adolescent "races" that had not yet fully developed he listed the Hawaiians, South and North American Indians, the Irish and Africans. In an attempt at empathy, Hall critiques Western colonizers for not allowing native peoples the equivalent of the prolonged adolescence that he advocated for American children, arguing, "Primitive peoples have the same right to linger in the paradise of childhood. To war upon them is to war on children. To commercialize and oppress them with work is child labour on a large scale" (649). As children were being educated along modern pedagogical lines, so too did Hall discuss the bringing of white civilization to primitive peoples as similarly raising them up to maturity. He argued that "those [peoples] who can not or will not" improve were set to follow "to extinction the larger wild animals about them that resist domestication" (649).

Hall's concept of childhood maturation as mirroring the development of the "race" had a major impact on texts that attempted to grapple with the "boy problem" and, simultaneously, on emergent character training organizations for boys. Theological Professor George Walter Fiske's Boy Life and Self-Government (1910) provides an extensive elaboration of recapitulation theory, and the chapter "The Epochs of Boyhood and Youth" forms a substantial basis of The Handbook for Scoutmasters (1914). In Fiske's formulation, as reproduced in the American Scout Handbook, the epochs of boyhood (or boy societies) corresponded with industrial and governmental epochs, and carried corresponding character traits and allegiances. Whereas boys may vary in their progress, or even skip stages, ages zero to three are described as the "Pre-Historic Period," three to six the "Patriarchal Period," seven to eleven the "Savage Kinship Clan," ten to fourteen "The Tribal Period," thirteen to fifteen "The Feudal Period," fourteen to eighteen "The Revolutionary Period," and seventeen to twenty-four "The Republic" (Seton and Baden-Powell 101). The preadolescent phase represented emergence from savagery into "orderly, tribal organizations" (97), during which loyalty to the gang is paramount. In the following "Feudal" or "Chivalry" period, allegiance passes to a leader or hero, which then segues into the "Revolutionary" or "Self-Assertive" period of "storm and stress" in which boys may become competitive, as well as potentially "restless, obstinate, domineering, combative, self-conscious, bashful or arrogant" (Fiske 156). If the boy has developed "normally," he finally enters the "Co-operative" epoch of "The Republic" in which he governs himself.

The structure of these stages is premised on the idea that a period of boyhood savagery is essential for growth into civilized manhood. Although much of the rhetoric motivating the desire to return boys to the wild proposed that culture was "overcivilizing" boys to the point of weakness and
potential effeminacy, the purpose of a savage boyhood was not to produce a savage man. As boys' development was imagined as rehearsing the evolution of humanity, it was essential for the boy to pass through inferior prehistoric, clan, tribal and revolutionary stages, which were most readily associated with indigenous peoples. For a boy to attain maturation, he needed to reach a stage that mimicked the perceived pinnacle of societal organization, “The Republic,” or the Western ideal of orderly, self-rule.

Fiske’s microcosmic rehearsal of humanity’s development is loosely replicated by Tarzan’s maturation in the first novel of the series. During his childhood, Tarzan is a happy, obedient member of the ape tribe into which he is adopted, adherent to the rules of the group and unaware of his difference from the apes until the age of ten. As in Fiske’s “self period (3–6)” and “clique period (7–11),” Tarzan shows “unquestioned obedience” to his adoptive mother, in place of his father (Fiske 154). In the equivalent of Fiske’s Tribal or Gang period (from ten to fourteen), Tarzan develops a wider allegiance to the apes among whom he lives. He expresses horror on his realization that his physical form is markedly different from the apes and attempts to cover his body in mud to disguise his hairlessness (Burroughs 37). Most significantly, he participates in the bloody ritual of the Dum-Dum with as much vigor as fellow males of the tribe, who act “as one man” (Burroughs 56) in their devouring of a dead ape.

Given Tarzan’s physical difference from the apes, his intellectual superiority as a human and the resentment that his mother’s mate Tublat holds toward him, he does not emulate Fiske’s chivalry period (thirteen to fifteen) in which the gang leader or hero attracts the worship of the boy. (Fiske notes that “precocious street boys” in particular often bypass this stage [158].) Instead, the beginning of the “self-assertive” or revolutionary period is heralded when Tarzan stabs Tublat to death, screaming a “cry of defiance” (Burroughs 58) at tribe leader Kerchak, and tries to further assert his strength in a failed attempt to slay the lioness Sabor. This approximates Fiske’s description of the “storm and stress” of middle adolescence in which the boy may be “restless, obstinate, domineering, combative . . . or arrogant” in his quest for freedom (156). After several more years of developing his strength in the jungle and increasing his knowledge through self-education with the books housed in his parents’ former refuge, Tarzan matures such that he is able kill Sabor for her hide and stab Kerchak to death, ascending to the position of “King” of the Apes. Corresponding with the Republic in terms of human development, in the “cooperative” phase the boy is ready for self-rule and “has learned respect for others” (Fiske 156). This period may prepare the boy for leadership, as it does for Tarzan, who shows concern for his ape subordinates. As a ruler, he is able to provide for the tribe “more bountifully than ever before” (Burroughs 88), but he soon develops beyond the intellectual capacity of the apes and abandons the tribe to be content to rule himself.
CURING OVERREFINEMENT AND THE “STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE”

Tarzan’s unfettered development in the jungle is ripe with opportunity for independent physical and psychological tests, from sourcing food to surviving the dangers of snakes and tigers. In contrast, various writers in the early twentieth century attributed flaws in boys, such as delinquency, to the effects of unnatural, industrialized environments. In the American context, the closure of the Western frontier took with it one element of the dream of rugged masculinity (Macleod 45). Steven Mintz argues that several other factors exacerbated fears of emasculation, such as “the lure of pool halls, and the growth of bureaucratic organizations; office work, and age-graded schools, which reduced the opportunities for individual initiative” (192). The overwhelming prevalence of female teachers in schools contributed to concerns that boys were becoming weakened by insufficient exposure to hegemonic masculinity. The answer to overcivilization was found to lie in the outdoors, with numerous organizations for boys founded to connect boys with nature to replicate some aspects of Tarzan’s feral upbringing. Theodore Roosevelt was integral to the formation of the Boone and Crockett Club in 1887, which encouraged big-game hunting and also became a training club for boys (Kimmel 136). Roosevelt subscribed to Hall’s ideas, writing to him in 1899 to assert that some elements of primitivism were essential to cultivating American boyhood:

unless we keep the barbarian virtue, gaining the civilised ones will be of little avail . . . I feel we cannot too strongly insist upon the need for the rough, manly virtues. A nation that cannot fight is not worth its salt, no matter how cultivated and refined it may be . . . It is just so with a boy. (qtd. in Kimmel 166)

Such beliefs in the necessity of physical difficulty and conflict in the formation of idealized, “rough” masculinity as expressed by Roosevelt and Hall had clear Darwinian origins. Darwin proposed that the “struggle for existence” encouraged natural selection and facilitated human attainment of “the rank of manhood” (Descent 674). In situations where life does not pose survival challenges—in parts of the world with “enormous areas of the most fertile land peopled by a few wandering savages, but which are capable of supporting numerous happy homes”—Darwin flags the possibility that “the struggle for existence had not been sufficiently severe to force man upwards to his highest standard” (Descent 168). The process of evolution saw civilized humans rise by gradual steps to the pinnacle of “knowledge, morals and religion” (172). Removed from the struggle to survive in the comforts of civilization, Western men could be seen as having regressed to a less developed state, specifically in the instance of physical strength, but also in character.4
Boys' organizations of the era, particularly in the United States, were structured to encourage boys to return to the wild, and even to replicate a "savage" state to benefit from the "improving" effects of the survival struggle. Robert Baden-Powell's British character training organization, which inspired the American Boy Scout phenomenon, was founded on the precept that modern life, and the Edwardian home and mother, were "softening" British boys and were partially responsible for national degeneration that had seen so many British soldiers unfit to fight in the Second Boer War of 1899–1902. Baden-Powell looks to the "uncivilized" reaches of the Empire for examples of true masculinity, arguing that the frontier, a representative of nature in an uncontaminated state, was perhaps the "last hope for the manhood of Britain" (17). For the development of British male adolescents, this meant that duplication of "savage" life might also impart the hardness and virility of the "uncivilised savage" (Baden-Powell 132).

Given the perception of racial superiority inherent in the British imperial project and the settlement of the United States, there is contradictory admiration for "native" skills and belief that a return to them in part may preserve Western civilization in the scouting movement's central texts on both sides of the Atlantic. Prior to its merger with Baden-Powell's scouting, Ernest Thompson Seton's boys' organization, begun in 1902, was named the Woodcraft Indians "because the idealized Indian of Hiawatha has always stood as the model for outdoor life, woodcraft, and scouting" (Seton and Baden-Powell ix). In the preface to the first American Boy Scout handbook, Seton suggests that Baden-Powell built his British movement "incorporating the principles of the Indians" (ix), and indeed names for awards of achievement, such as "Silver Wolf," were inspired by "the Red Indians of North America" (20). The American handbook is infused with lore derived from Native American cultural practices, such as "Indian" smoke signals, sign language, tepees, wells, rubbing sticks, and archery. The native influence even inspires a detailed description and musical score for performing a "war dance" (156–57). Although the racial politics of the era are slippery, and the admiration expressed for "Indian" culture rests on generalization and stereotype, Tarzan's journey from boy to man follows such an idealized "native" model, by which the physical capacity of American men is strengthened through engagement with the natural world, separated from civilization's "softening" influences that did not encourage the competitiveness that seemed an inherent part of the doctrine of "survival of the fittest."

Hall's Adolescence prefigures Baden-Powell's model of "savage" life as the ideal way to build the character of boys. He suggests that the optimum conditions for the education of the child, or more specifically the boy, are not the "modern school" but in the country where "trial, predatory, hunting, fishing, fighting, roving, idle, playing proclivities could be indulged" (Hall x). Partially in response to cultural ideas about the wild as the best place in which to shape boys into men, scouting was vigorously embraced.
in the United States at a time during which the question of the education of boys had become paramount and in which the mythology of white conquest still permeated masculine ideals. Between 1910 and 1919, the Boy Scouts recruited 300,000 members (Mintz 192). Seton felt that urban industrial life was thrusting badness upon boys, having begun the Woodcraft Indians "to combat the system that has turned such a large proportion of our robust, manly, self-reliant boyhood into a lot of flatchested cigarette-smokers, with shaky nerves and doubtful vitality" (xii). The American Scouting handbook began with the idea that boy life had changed as a result of cities and industry and had fostered degeneracy:

Every American boy, a hundred years ago, lived either on a farm or in such close touch with farm life that he reaped its benefits. He had all the practical knowledge that comes from country surrounding; that is, he could ride, shoot, skate, run, swim; he was handy with tools; he knew the woods; he was physically strong, self-reliant, resourceful, well-developed in body and brain. [. . .] We have lived to see an unfortunate change. Partly through the growth of immense cities, with the consequent specialization of industry, so that each individual has been required to do one small specialty and shut his eyes to everything else, with the resultant perpetual narrowing of the mental horizon. Partly through the decay of small farming . . . And partly through the stereotyped forms of religion losing their hold, we see a very different type of youth in the country to-day. (Seton and Baden-Powell xi)

The disconnection between man and nature encouraged by civilized life and lamented in the "boy problem" texts and Boy Scout handbooks mentioned in the preceding is mirrored in Burroughs's novel. Where the adult Tarzan is a capable protector of Jane in the jungle, her father, the American Professor Archimedes Q. Porter, and his assistant, Samuel T. Philander, for all of their learning, are rendered useless and bumbling in the jungle, comically debating the correct terminology for a lion as the wild creature stalks them. The nerve and physical strain of being cast upon the African shore leads Professor Porter to "bury [ . . . ] his old face in [Jane's] shoulder, he sobbed quietly like a tired child" (Burroughs 177). Similarly, William Cecil Clayton, the "Lord Greystoke" who assumes Tarzan's rightful position in Britain, is continually associated with the excessively effeminate trappings of civilization. Burroughs intersperses brief vignettes into the jungle narrative, in which Clayton dines at a restaurant with a "silver bowl of scented water" to clean his fingers and a piece of "snowy damask" to dry them upon (70), and elsewhere reference is made to his "soft voice" in the House of Lords (85). In contrast, Tarzan has experienced an extreme version of the historical model of boyhood that Seton laments as lost to city life, and develops both body and brain to the peak of human capabilities.
Evolving Beyond the Racialized Savage

The connection between the perceived overrefinement of men and the raison d’être of the growing number of boys’ groups discussed earlier is also evident in the work of Reverend William Forbush, founder of the Knights of King Arthur in 1893 and author of *The Boy Problem*, which is listed as recommended reading in the first handbook for American Scoutmasters. Forbush’s model of recapitulation postulated that the child passes up “through every grade of animal life from the simplest and lowest to the highest and most complex” (9). After rehearsing the history of the animal world, the child continues his “climb [ . . . ] up the ancestral tree” by “repeating the history of his own race-life from savagery unto civilization” (9). Forbush, like Hall, situates the “Heathen population,” in the adolescent period. In a call for intervention in the development of American boys, Forbush points out that missionaries are sent to countries in which primitive peoples live to instill morals and religions, whereas “we seem to think our own little folks can possess [these qualities] by some innate providential instinct” (157). His conception of recapitulation and argument for the need for childhood instruction to train out primitivism prompts questions about Tarzan’s depiction as in innate possession of civilized qualities and about the situation of the native Africans in such a conception of evolution from animal to child to adolescent to adult. As I shall suggest, the novel effectively distinguishes Tarzan’s process of individual development from child to adult from that of the native peoples, who are situated in an animal rather than human phase of development.

Forbush’s call to action is but one example of the ways in which “boy problem” books emphasize the need for adult intervention in the training of boys; yet, to an extent, with his lack of exposure to human norms in childhood and adolescence, Tarzan relies on instinct or heredity to shape his masculinity. In Burroughs’s original novel, Tarzan is a descendant of the British aristocracy and does not leave the African jungle until its conclusion, once he has developed into a man and follows his love interest, Jane, to the United States. Tarzan is the son of John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, and Lady Alice Greystoke, who are compelled to visit a British West Coast African Colony because of reports of another European power, likely Belgium, recruiting “simple native inhabitants” for an army marshaled to plunder rubber and ivory. The Englishmen in Africa report that the natives are held in “virtual slavery” and Clayton is sent to investigate the “unfair treatment of black British subjects” (5–6). The implicit suggestion is that British imperialism has dealt fairly with the infantilized native peoples and can be seen as their protectors, whereas the friendly European power, Belgium, is exploitative. The British are depicted as not only moral in their imperial dealings, but also, through Lord Greystoke, as having a strong genetic heritage. He is described as “a strong, virile man—mentally, morally and physically” (6).
In Hall's formulation of adolescent races, he maintained that heredity "so outweighs civilization and schooling" (650), in opposition with Forbush's emphasis on education as essential for both primitive peoples and children. Tarzan's racial inheritance follows Hall's model by elevating him above the ape and native Africans despite his savage upbringing. Regardless of his lack of exposure to the cultural norms of Britain or America, Tarzan is instantly averse to eating human flesh, a reaction that is attributed to "heredity instinct" (Burroughs 73). The apes have no such prohibition against cannibalism, which Gustav Jahoda calls "the most powerful symbol of savagery" (97), just like the native African tribe who also eat their own type. This shared transgression reinforces the Darwinian implication of a correspondence between apes and the "lower races." Tarzan also begins to feel shame at his nakedness without any human instruction in the indecency of nudity. He believes that clothing is a marker of humanity and he therefore decides to steal something with which to cover his body from the black village because "nothing seemed to him a more distinguishing badge of manhood than ornaments and clothing" (Burroughs 95). By the age of eighteen, Tarzan has also taught himself to read and write without any instruction, an improbable accomplishment that creates a sharp distinction between the intellectual potential of white men in comparison with the Africans. The wild ape-boy becomes an intelligent, caring man who can fend for himself by virtue of his genetic inheritance that prompts him to make these recognitions. Importantly, however, through his exposure to wild environments in which he must fend for himself, Tarzan reaches a peak of masculinity unequaled by boys raised in American or British cities who have not passed through savage phases of childhood.

Whereas Tarzan's coming of age can be read as a parallel to understandings of stages of child development as mirroring human evolution, the novel does not suggest that the transformation to adulthood always brings with it the status of being a fully evolved being. Specifically, the African tribes presented in the novel are situated more fittingly in Forbush's model in which the child (or primitive as child) may inhabit an animal stage of development, or a stage located partway between animal and human. Darwin's The Origin of Species did not support the notion of a hierarchical ladder of being—a continual upward ascent of humanity—instead favoring an "inextricable web of affinities" (Beer 19). Whereas Beer observes that "the idea of a common progenitor gave an egalitarian basis to theories of development, whether of race or of species" (109), Darwin's formulation of a common ancestor for apes and humans and suggestion of a link between apes and the "lower races" contributed to popular intrigue for a "missing link" or apelike man. Harriet Ritvo notes that theories of evolution in the late Victorian period not only assumed the existence of a past form that was "intermediate between humans and apes, at least in the sense of having given rise to both modern groups," but that "the rhetoric of evolution
could also be deployed to suggest that forms connecting humans with apes existed in the present" (57). The search for a living being that embodied the connection between human and ape was most clearly evident in "freak show"-style exhibitions of humans and exhibitions and hyperbolic tales of gorillas in the wild.

Popular knowledge of Darwin’s theories was co-opted by showman P. T. Barnum’s American Museum. In addition to his later exhibition of two “Living Aztecs,” who sated public curiosity for living links with ancient or primitive societies, in 1860 Barnum promptly took advantage of the sensation generated by The Origin of Species by exhibiting “The Man Monkey” or “Missing Link.” William Henry Johnson was a short-statured, microcephalic black man born in the United States who was exhibited as a captured specimen found by explorers searching for gorillas in Africa. “The Monkey Man” was a purported “mixture” of human and animal. His invented history proclaimed that he came to the museum walking on all fours and, with exposure to civilization, had since been taught to walk upright. The racist premise behind such a conception of evolution, which was shared by Tarzan of the Apes, was that black races represented a middle stage between ape and white humans.

The novel promotes such a racist chain of humanity rather than Darwin’s “web of affinities,” with the native blacks in Africa clearly differentiated from the humanity of Tarzan and overtly associated with animals. Upon the stranding of the Greystokes after the shipboard mutiny, Clayton expresses his fear of “savage beasts” but also potentially “still more savage men” (Burroughs 16), which implies that some native races sit below animals in their degree of barbarism. Tarzan initially does not recognize a “Negro” as being a human like himself. His failure to perceive the black man’s humanity replicates Darwin’s conception of races as “sub-species.” Darwin’s conclusion was built on his observation that the Negro and the European were such distinct peoples that a naturalist would consider specimens of each to be “good and true species” (Descent 678). In the books that Tarzan finds in his parents’ cabin, which he uses to teach himself to read, he discovers an illustration of the “negro.” He is initially repulsed when he encounters a real black person, who he sees as “a sleek and hideous thing of ebony, pulsing with life,” unlike the “dull dead print” of the illustration (Burroughs 69). The horror is compounded when Tarzan becomes a spectator to the murder of a man by “the blacks,” and wonders at “cruel brutality of his own kind” (81). Darwin postulated that savages were “utterly indifferent to the suffering of strangers, or even delight in witnessing them” (Descent 142), but Tarzan, in contrast with the “savages,” instinctively feels empathy and avoids harming other white humans. His instinctual repulsion at the act of murder shows at once his hereditary inheritance of the potential to assume civilized adulthood and the corresponding lack of this innate humanity in the native Africans.
SAVAGE BOY BECOMES IDEALIZED MAN

Tarzan's compulsion to fend for himself from a young age has fostered his development into a form of manhood that is unobtainable by those raised in civilization. Gail Bederman ascribes Tarzan's "perfect masculinity" to two factors, "his white racial superiority, inherited from his civilized Anglo-Saxon parents, and his savage jungle childhood with the primitive apes" (221). Jane apologetically compares her male companions with Tarzan and then argues that:

"a white man above the ordinary in physique and intelligence could never, I grant you, have lived a year alone and naked in this tropical jungle; but this man not only surpasses the average white man in strength and agility, but far transcends our trained athletes and "strong men" as they surpass a day old babe." (Burroughs 196)

The comparison of the developed man with the infant evokes theories of recapitulation. Yet it amends Hall's construction of the white race as fully matured adult. Tarzan of the Apes describes the highest specimens of masculine strength as athletic white men yet these men are trumped by Tarzan. It logically follows that civilized white manhood does not represent full adult development, just as the novel represents the savage African tribes as caught in an immature and even animalistic developmental phase. In Hall's terms, civilized white men might be the products of a truncated adolescence, which upholds the view that an extended upbringing in the wild, with appropriate racial heredity, is the only route to complete male development. Eric Cheyfitz reads the novel as depicting an evolutionary process in which Tarzan "translates himself from ape into man" (18), yet because of his idealized boyhood, he can be read as having evolved into a superior form of masculinity than other white men in Britain and America.

Darwin saw sexual selection as central to the process of evolution, particularly in the distant past. The operation of sexual selection in Tarzan of the Apes contributes to the depiction of civilization, paradoxically, as an impediment to the ascent of humanity. Although Darwin viewed "savage" races as curbing the action of sexual selection (through practices such as communal marriage, infanticide, early betrothals and the low estimation of women; see Descent 655), if we focus on the transposition of Tarzan's romance with Jane from Africa to America, the norms of civilized matchmaking prevent Jane from making the ideal selection for her mate. When in Africa, Jane follows her primal instincts to select the most vigorous mate, a natural condition that she later describes in "prosaic Wisconsin" as a "spell of enchantment," ascribing a kind of fantastic state to the natural world (Burroughs 238). Although she attributes her initial desires to be with Tarzan to "mental reversion to type," she later realizes that she has made a mistake in agreeing to marry Tarzan's cousin, William Cecil Clayton, solely
because of his civility. Although Tarzan could easily restore himself to his rightful title and resume control of his family's property (and restore Jane's love) by drawing attention to the fingerprint evidence of his heredity, his refusal to take these spoils from Clayton and Jane ultimately demonstrates his moral and physical superiority to other men and renders the failure of sexual selection as a tragic element of the narrative.

Tarzan of the Apes evidences the popular uptake of Darwinian ideas as they filtered through transatlantic popular culture and into the body of works that sought to answer the American "boy problem" in the early twentieth century. Darwinian thought influenced understandings of how to strengthen American boys in a growing number of boys' outdoor organizations and circulated through the Tarzan novels and back to the real world with the formation of "Tarzan Clans" for boys. Darwinian-inspired theories of recapitulation infused works that sought to answer a perceived crisis in American masculinity, finding the solution in the facilitation of savage boyhoods. As the ultimate example of masculinity acquired in the wild, Tarzan progresses through developmental stages that mirror humans' evolution from primitive to civilized. Whereas civilization itself stands in the way of Jane selecting the right mate at the novel's close, a sequel, foreshadowed at the conclusion of Tarzan of the Apes, holds out the promise of telling "what came of his noble act of self-renunciation" (277). In retrospect, we know that in the novel's sequel, The Return of Tarzan (1913), the wild boy is acknowledged as the origin of the ideal man and, finally, the ideal husband.

NOTES

1. Marianna Torgovnick, conversely, suggests that "we tend to think of the novels as British" because of Tarzan's relationship to the British aristocracy (42).
2. Hall was, of course, not the first to draw an association between savagery and childhood. For a thorough treatment of conceptions of the savage as childlike from the eighteenth century, see Gustav Jahoda's Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture (especially the chapter "From Ancestor to Child").
3. See, for example, Macleod (45); Kimmel (15).
4. Darwin himself, however, claimed that he had not seen evidence of any regression to "utter barbarism" in reality (Descent 181).
5. This passage repeats many of the ideas expressed in Forbush's The Boy Problem, which laments that city boys are "less potent in grasp, attention and efficiency . . . living between walls and pavements and among a thousand distractions and allurements, than country boys, with their freedom, contact with nature and wild life and opportunity for origination in work and play in woodland, pasture, and carpenter shop in the barn" (156).
6. In The Descent of Man Darwin made direct comparisons between the mental powers and "taste for the beautiful" of the "higher animals" and "the lower and barbarous races" (605).
7. In 1882, Krao Farini, a girl from Siam (Thailand) afflicted with hypertrichosis, a condition that causes excessive hair growth, was exhibited in London
as "The Missing Link." She was billed as "living proof of Darwin’s theories of the Descent of Man" and the "perfect specimen of the step between man and monkey" ("Krao"). She subsequently toured the United States in museums and then a circus menagerie, finally settling in Brooklyn where she later appeared as a "bearded lady" at Coney Island. For a detailed examination of Krao and Darwinism, see Durbach.

8. Tarzan is described as having had the training of a "wild beast" (Burroughs 225), which could be seen as an impediment to his figuration as more highly evolved than civilized white men and associate him with the "animalistic" natives. Nevertheless, Tarzan’s difference from the apes is consistently highlighted. For example, his higher intelligence makes him quicker than the apes with whom he is raised and when he is in combat with the huge gorilla Bolgani, the noble aspects of his human heredity are emphasised: "In his veins, though, flowed the blood of the best of a race of mighty fighters, and back of this was the training of his short lifetime among the fierce brutes of the jungle" (48).

WORKS CITED

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