

# [Aliens or civilians in imperium in imperio and tarzan of the apes: the relationsh...](https://assignbuster.com/aliens-or-civilians-in-imperium-in-imperio-and-tarzan-of-the-apes-the-relationship-between-the-body-and-citizenship-in-turn-of-the-century-american-fiction/)

Sutton E. Griggs’s Imperium in Imperio and Edgar Rice Burroughs’s Tarzan of the Apes bring to consideration the connection between the physical body and one’s state of citizenship within the United States. Published on the brink of the twentieth century, in 1899 and 1914 respectively, these works are representative of real social and political issues during an era of turmoil in America. Each novel features a male protagonist on a quest to negotiate between two halves of themselves: natural and cultured. Imperium in Imperio’s Belton and Tarzan of the Apes’s Tarzan work to forge mind and body in order to develop a cohesive sense of identity and exist as equal citizens amongst their Caucasian American-born peers. As demonstrated in these texts, Thomas Jefferson’s “ triangulation,” which holds that “ language, mind and body” are virtually inseparable, applies to men of both black and savage descent, as each protagonist essentially fails on their journey to negotiate between these entities (Karafilis 132). For Belton, this failure is primarily due to the white gaze of others, while for Tarzan, it is based upon his rejection by Jane and nostalgia for atavism in the face of civilization. The paths of Belton and Tarzan differ as Belton yearns to transcend his black body in order to be respected as an American citizen and Tarzan seeks to transcend his atavistic white body in favour of a more educated, civilized self similar to the Americans he encounters on his journey. The key themes of the body and U. S. citizenship are central to both Imperium in Imperio and Tarzan of the Apes. The purpose of this essay is to consider the link between one’s body and ancestral roots, and their ability and desire (or lack thereof) to live as respected, equal American citizens. Reaching this existence becomes an ongoing struggle due to both internal and external factors, suggesting a critique of the exclusionary politics and the social climate of citizenship in late nineteenth, early twentieth century America. In order to explore the relationship between the body and citizenship, it is necessary to contextualize national receptions of both black and savage bodies in America leading up to the turn of the century. Racism against African-Americans draws its roots from Greek and Roman theology which considered black to be “ the colour of evil demons,” and furthermore at the beginning of the 5th century, when monk and theologian Saint John Cassian (ca. 360-435) “ depicted the devil ‘ in the shape of a hideous Negro’” (Jahoda 26). Despite obvious inaccuracy, for many white Americans these early links between evil and blackness served to validate of racist tendencies leading to subjugation, slavery and inequality. As Maria Karafilis explains, African-Americans had, in theory, achieved rights of citizenship and the right to vote by the close of the nineteenth century (125). In reality, however, during the 1890s “ approximately 200 black men were lynched per year,” and a continuing racist ideology persisted that constructed African-Americans as criminal and inferior, leading to their rights and protections (supposedly guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment and the 1875 Civil Rights Act) being systematically stripped away (Karafilis 125). African-American citizens have faced an ongoing struggle to find their place in America free from often fatal discrimination despite various laws enacted to protect them. Imperium in Imperio highlights the struggle over African-American citizenship and rights growing at the turn of the century. Griggs’s character Belton embodies this struggle as a young African-American man seeking a sense of identity and peaceful inclusion in the American nation, but held back by white society’s fixation on his black body. Although Belton is U. S.-born and well educated, he is not entirely respected as an equal citizen due to American’s constrictively racist social structure and unresolved political tensions concerting laws for African-American citizens. In the same historical moment that American racism came to fruition, perceptions of manliness amongst white American society were shifting; Caucasians were not only looking at African-Americans with judgmental eyes, but also into figurative mirrors, questioning the degree to which they were ‘ masculine’ relative to modern constructions of masculinity. In the words of John F. Kasson, “ modernity was understood in terms of the body and how the white male body became a powerful symbol by which to dramatize modernity’s impact and how to resist it” (19). Opposite to the black body, the white atavistic body became a sign of strength of both the individual and the nation, and spectacles of atavism within “ geographies of rugged masculinity” became sites of escapism for comparatively emasculated, modernized men with “ decaying” bodies (Deane 207; Kasson 25). Tarzan emerges as an exaggerated example of this ideal, atavistic white male. For White Americans, equal citizenship was assumed, provided the person in question was born on American soil. In Tarzan of the Apes, however, questions surrounding inherited citizenship and immigration are raised and complicated by Tarzan’s upbringing. Although Tarzan was African-born and embodies a jungle value system, his parents were aristocratic Americans, allowing Tarzan to easily claim citizenship if he so chose. While perhaps the more obvious viewpoint is of Tarzan as that ideal atavistic body, viewing him as an African immigrant leads to further discussion of issues surrounding U. S. citizenship at this time. As Eric Cheyfitz explains, “ Tarzan of the Apes appeared at a time when the second great wave of immigration to the United States, begun in the 1820s, was at its crest” (339). This second wave “ brought a Babel of tongues and an array of complexions” widely considered a threat to American homogeneity, summoning “ Anglo-Saxon America to protect herself at home [from these foreigners]” (Cheyfitz 339-40). Cheyfitz goes on to argue that Tarzan emerges as a “ new American superhero” during a time when foreigners were threatening to become America itself, an interesting point worth building upon and countering in favour of Tarzan representing the African immigrant (339). Tarzan’s body becomes a hybrid between ‘ atavistic white heir’ and ‘ African immigrant’, each of which leads to different conclusions regarding U. S. citizenship. Forging the link between the body and U. S. citizenship in Griggs’s and Burroughs’s novels are a number of fundamental themes: ancestry, (dis)embodiment, language and education, identity and separatism. Each of these themes is central to the novels in question as well as societal elements during the time period in which they were written. When comparing Belton and Tarzan, it is important to consider that their respective black and atavistic white bodies formulate diverse experiences and lead to different conclusions when faced with questions of national and social inclusion. Although Tarzan is the more primitive and less native to American culture of the two protagonists, Belton must work harder to find his place within American society. Not only is a sense of inclusion less difficult for Tarzan to achieve, but he slides effortlessly into the hegemonic power role of his male predecessors and contemporaries; because of this type of inheritance, men such as Belton still face subjugation long after technical changes in the Constitution to protect their rights. The degree to which each protagonist is included in the U. S. nation as an equal citizen is based heavily upon perceptions of their bodily appearance. As represented in each text, this echoes a fundamental problem in turn of the century American political structure regarding citizenship on both political and social levels. Exploring the ancestral roots and considering the inheritance of each protagonist is vital to explaining the relationship between the body and U. S. citizenship. At the turn of the century, one’s ancestry (progenitorship, familial lineage) not only contributed to but formulated one’s status in American society as equal (or superior) citizens. Ayelet Shachar introduces a key question surrounding ancestry and citizenship: “ how could it be that political membership, something which is so crucial for our identity, for our rights, for our political voice and for our life opportunities, is distributed on the basis of accidents of birth?” (18). As Shachar explores in his book The Birthright Lottery, considering birth as a source of citizenship leads us to two defining principles: jus soli (“ the law of the soil”) and jus sanguinis (“ the law of blood”) (7). It is interesting to apply these principles to the textual realms of Imperium in Imperio and Tarzan of the Apes, comparing the ancestry of Belton and Tarzan. Belton’s mother, Mrs. Piedmont, is portrayed by Griggs as uneducated through her dialogue (“ His name am Belton Piedmont, after his grandaddy,” she says), and Belton’s father is never introduced to the reader (18). Regardless of the social standing of his parents, Belton fulfils both jus sanguinis and jus soli, and as such, is by all technical accounts considered a U. S. citizen. Technicality aside, however, Belton is not treated as an equal despite his ancestral birthright. Shachar maintains that “[f]or those granted a head start simply because they were born into a flourishing political community, it may be difficult to appreciate the extent to which others are disadvantaged due to the lottery of birthright” (3). While this statement is geared towards those born outside of the U. S., it could not be more fitting in Belton’s case, an American-born citizen who experiences similar disadvantages to those born outside this political community. For example, Belton “ would have made an excellent drummer, salesman, clerk, . . . or any thing of such a nature,” but similar to other Black Americans at the turn of the century, “ the color of his skin shut the doors so tight that he could not even peep in” (Griggs 82). Imperium in Imperio showcases the race problem in America through characters like Belton who, according to their ancestry and birthright inheritance, are equal American citizens to their Caucasian counterparts, but in reality face serious discrimination because of their bodies. Belton’s desire for inclusion within the body politic and white society in general is fulfilled moreso by Griggs’s other protagonist, Bernard, and taking a glance at Bernard’s ancestral situation helps to paint a fuller picture of Belton’s situation. Like Belton, Bernard fulfils both laws of birthright. Although Bernard undeniably faces a great struggle in his journey, his mulatto (read: whitened) skin allows him to navigate through American society much more easily, and be treated as a more equal American citizen than Belton. This is due in part to ancestry, as Bernard’s mother, Fairfax Belgrave, was “ evidently a woman of wealth” and “ with very superior education” (Griggs 56). Bernard’s father meets Bernard on a train to Washington, D. C., introducing himself as “ Senator—from the state of—, chairman of—committee,” a name which, although mysteriously unrevealed to readers, sparks Bernard’s attention as having an international reputation (Griggs 58). The Senator goes on to beg Bernard to dedicate his life’s work to breaking down the “ infernal race prejudice” which, his “ noble-minded wife, branded as a harlot, and you, my own son, stigmatized as a bastard, because it would be suicide for me to let the world know that you both are mine, though you both are the direct descendants of a governor” (Griggs 60). Ironically, Bernard’s rich, educated and powerful ancestral background mobilizes him to take a stand for issues of race, yet without that ancestry, he would have no such platform. Although Belton and Bernard were both born in America, differences between their parents’ social standing and the colour of their skin separate the (dis)advantages they face in society as U. S. citizens. When comparing Tarzan’s experience with Belton’s, it becomes apparent that the primary reason for Belton’s exclusion despite maintaining both principles of birthright is the colour of his skin. Tarzan fulfils only one of these two principles of birthright (jus sanguinis), as his parents, Lord Greystoke and Lady Alice, are American-born aristocrats. Burroughs chooses to write Tarzan as being conceived on American soil, but born in Africa; alas, he fails to fulfill jus soli. Regardless of his birthplace, an element of Tarzan’s body links him to his American parents at the end of the novel, and “ the law of blood” outweighs that of soil: “ Fingerprints prove you Greystoke. Congratulations. D’Arnot” (Burroughs 294). Tarzan’s fingerprints, an aspect of his body, in conjunction with his race, are enough to guarantee him not only American citizenship but inclusion in the superior aristocratic sphere. Taking a few steps backwards to the earliest moments of Tarzan’s encounters with the white explorers, however, their immediate reactions showcase the American perspective on those with African ancestry. As Jeff Berglund observes, Tarzan “ is linked connotatively [by the white party] to the most barbaric of savages, the cannibals,” because of his “ unrecognizable oral expression” and “ perfect figure, muscled as the best of the ancient Roman gladiators must have been muscled” (55; Burroughs 119). The defining moment of realization that the textual Tarzan of the Apes, who has written letters in English, and the physical, ‘ cannibalesque,’ African brute are the same person does not come to Lieutenant D’Arnot until his counterparts have departed. At the moment in the forest when Tarzan reveals himself as “ Tarzan of the Apes,” asking D’Arnot “ Who are you? Can you read this language?,” D’Arnot’s image of Tarzan shifts from an African – a would-be immigrant, an enemy – to an atavistic, white American (Burroughs 230). Cheyfitz explains that “ in all racist ideologies, the line between race and species, between, that is, the human and the animal or the cultural and the natural is radically blurred” (349). To expand, the thin line between bodies that are included in the American nation (white) and those that are not (African) is equally blurred in Tarzan of the Apes. Tarzan embodies both, and evidently, only his Caucasian half comes across as deserving of inclusion in the American nation, while the African half is equated with cannibalism. Another type of ancestral connection evident in Tarzan is Jean-Baptiste Lamarck’s theory of inheritance of acquired characteristics, or Lamarckian inheritance. Once he begins to separate from the anthropoids, Tarzan develops a particular value system without coming in contact with other humans. The most explicit scene depicting this inherited set of morals is Tarzan’s interaction with the Mbongan, Kulonga: “ ere the king’s son had taken a half dozen steps into the clearing a quick noose tightened around his neck. . . . Hand over hand Tarzan drew the struggling black until he had him hanging by his neck in midair” (Burroughs 89-90). Tarzan learns of “ the negro,” “ this sleek and hideous thing of ebony, pulsing with life,” from his English books, but the act of lynching is self-taught, not learnt (Burroughs 86). Tarzan comes across as a racist in the text, and becomes a predator of the Mbongans, lynching one after another, depictive of the countless lynchings taking place in the United States during the same historical moment. Furthermore, Tarzan’s first note written in English and left on his cabin door for the explorers is incredibly revealing: “ THIS IS THE HOUSE OF TARZAN, THE KILLER OF BEASTS AND MANY BLACK MEN. DO NOT HARM THE THINGS WHICH ARE TARZAN’S. TARZAN WATCHES” (Burroughs 126). As Cheyfitz points out, Tarzan identifies himself in terms of “ the assertion of property rights, the casual equation of beasts and blacks, and the declaration of his brutal dominance over [the explorers],” values which were not taught to him by his anthropoid tribe, suggesting a biological inheritance of typically Anglo-Centric American views (353). Tarzan’s inherited value system is representative of the pungent discrimination at the turn of the century. Because of his ancestral roots, Tarzan inherits American citizenship along with a set of values that lead him to feel a sense of hegemonic superiority. Opposingly, because of his ancestry, Belton inherits a type of American citizenship that is socially exclusionary, leading to his development of a sense of alienation within the nation. Further contributing to the connection between the body and U. S. citizenship is the issue of disembodiment, or the need to separate one’s bodily, natural self from their internal, cultured self. In order to explore the theme of disembodiment and embodiment, it is necessary to first define the multiple connotations of these words. In the cases of both Tarzan of the Apes and Imperium in Imperio, the protagonists embody in two ways: physically (through their appearance, their body) and internally (through their individual value systems and the way in which they represent a group of people or a nation). Disembodiment comes into play as the protagonists aim to separate from that which they embody in a number of ways – primarily through language. In essence, a focus on (dis)embodiment leads to consideration of both the literal and figurative connotations of each word. On that note, George Yancy’s theory of “ the phenomenological return of the body” holds that “ to have one’s dark body invaded by the white gaze and then to have that body returned as distorted is a powerful experience of violation” (“ Whiteness” 216-217). Yancy explains that the Other exposes themselves to a white gazer, either consciously or unconsciously, and is returned as a “ fixed entity, a ‘ niggerized’ Black body whose epidermal logic had already foreclosed the possibility of being anything other than what was befitting its lowly sanction” (“ Whiteness” 19). As Yancy points out, the process of “ the phenomenological return of the body” is based on both external and internal factors: externally one’s peers determines their bodily return, while internally, one’s inability to separate that which they embody physically and mentally leads to the prevalence of the bodily or natural self over the mental or cultured self. The journeys of Belton and Tarzan can be explored as acts of disembodiment, negotiating between halves of their hybrid selves. Belton’s hybridity consists of (1) the black body, and (2) the successful, American politician. Primarily, Belton physically embodies the dark-skinned African-American man, a body which carried a great deal of stigma at the time given the political climate. As Jeff Berglund explains, “ it is no longer possible to accept the false picture of the Negro as servile, treacherous, fiendishly sadistic, cowardly, and without loyalty or honor. But viewing him understandingly in modern times and depicting him according to assumptions, distorted and prejudiced, of earlier periods are two different matters” (59). Belton is caught in a period of turmoil and confusion following the Civil War, where these distorted and prejudiced assumptions about African Americans are more uncertain than ever, but certainly still a dominating force in society. From a young age, things like Belton’s raggedy clothing contributed to the stigma attached to his body, as his mother dressed him in “ much-torn pairs of trousers” with a leg from each missing, a coat described as “ a conglomeration of patches of varying sizes and colors,” and feet encased in “ a wornout slipper” and an old farmer’s boot (Griggs 14-15). Belton’s blackness embodies an inescapable ‘ Otherness’ which is portrayed through the eyes of Dr. Zakeland when he first lays eyes on Belton: Belton was a fine specimen of physical manhood. His limbs were well formed, well proportioned and seemed as strong as oak. . . . The doctor’s eyes followed him cadaverously. . . . The doctor said to the postmaster: “ I’ll be durned if that ain’t the finest lookin’ darky I ever put my eye on. If I could get his body to dissect, I’d give one of the finest kegs of whiskey in my cellar.” (Griggs 91)Zakeland gazes upon Belton’s body as “ subjectless;” “ once objectified, [his] bod[y] could be analyzed, categorized, classified, and ordered within the cold gaze of scientific distance” (Yancy, “ Colonial Gazing” 2). It is precisely this type of white gaze upon the black body that leads to the necessity for disembodiment for Belton. Unfortunately for Belton, nothing about his physical appearance does justice to Griggs’s description of his character, or that which he internally embodies in the other half of his hybrid identity (his political self): “ A man of tact, intelligence, and superior education moving in the midst of a mass of ignorant people . . . an uncrowned king” and an “ oratorical gladiator” (15, 29). Within this political self, Belton embodies rhetorical prowess and national unity. In order to separate from the stigma attached to his physical embodiment, Belton focuses on language, trying time and time again to shift the attention of his peers from his blackness to his rhetorical prowess. Despite Belton’s efforts, he is constantly reminded that his physicality cannot be outweighed by his internal strength and mental ability. Belton’s primary motive to disembody is to gain a strong political voice and a sense of inclusion as an American citizen. With time, however, Belton comes to realize that the only way he will maintain the political voice and inclusion that he seeks is by embracing his body, shifting his attention away from the Caucasian-American population and towards his African-American peers within the Imperium. Similar to Belton, Tarzan is depicted as a hybrid figure whose ‘ two bodies’ consist of (1) the atavistic, white male, and (2) the African. While Belton struggles to disembody because of stigma attached to his blackness, Tarzan works to negotiate between these two physical selves that he embodies. His motivation to disembody is fuelled firstly by a sense of alienation and dissatisfaction in his Ape tribe, and further catalyzed by Jane, and the necessity of adapting to her social sphere in order to be with her. Tarzan’s atavistic, white body is described by Burroughs as a “ perfect figure, muscled as the best of the ancient Roman gladiators must have been muscled” (119). This half of Tarzan’s hybrid self is heavily romanticized by Burroughs in his exaggerated descriptions of Tarzan’s effortlessly muscular form, implying that this aspect of Tarzan’s bodily self is positive. On the other hand, Burroughs ensures that the African aspects of his body are linked connotatively [by the white party] to the most barbaric of savages, the cannibals,” because of his “ unrecognizable oral expressional” and the garments he sports similar to the (black-skinned) Mbongan tribe (Berglund 55; Burroughs 119). Ultimately, Tarzan’s African body is depicted as the more negative or burdening part of himself. These depictions hold true to both the American mindset and American race politics at the turn of the century. Tarzan struggles to negotiate between these two physical bodies while simultaneously discovering more and more about that which he internally embodies. As a muscular, white American man, Tarzan embodies the strength and fertility of the American nation, as well as the hyper-masculine roots of American men said to be weakening with modernity (Burroughs 119). Moreover, Tarzan’s white body seems to come along with a set of inherited aristocratic and civilized tendencies. For example, when Tarzan places his mother’s locket around Jane’s neck, he stoops “ gravely like some courtier of old . . . It was a stately and gallant little compliment performed with the grace and dignity of utter unconsciousness of self. It was the hall-mark of his aristocratic birth” (Burroughs 203). With no practical knowledge of romantic mannerisms, Tarzan seems to embody within his American self a naturalized understanding of chivalry, another example of Burroughs’s romanticization of the white male. On the other hand, in his African form (in the gaze of the explorers) Tarzan embodies the same things as the Mbongans: cannibalism, savagery and animal instinct, certainly not the qualities of an ideal American citizen. To Tarzan, this African, jungle-raised portion of his body is homely, or heimlich, while his American half is foreign, or unheimlich (uncanny) and navigating through this tension is far from effortless. In order to successfully integrate into the American nation, Tarzan must not only merge his two halves, but leave behind the jungle in favour of U. S. citizenship, a transition that he is unable to fully commit to. No discussion of the relationship between the body and U. S. citizenship is complete without considering the role of language and education. In both Imperium in Imperio and Tarzan of the Apes, the theme of learning, whether institutional or individual, plays an important role in the development of the protagonists as well as the perceptions and receptions of these men by their peers. This echoes late 19th early 20th century American society just as strongly as it echoes the societal values of today and the ongoing importance placed on (English) language proficiency and education. As Berglund explains, “ Tarzan follows clearly in the tradition of the self-made man. He is the popular embodiment of the American Adam, fulfilling the prophecy of a new beginning in the wilderness” via his exploration of “ the cannon—the house of literature—of western learning” (75; 54). Education and language become not only a necessity in Burroughs’s fictional realm, but a natural process for Caucasian Tarzan, contributing to the notion of ease with which White Americans could become educated. In contrast, for African-Americans at the turn of the century, as M. Christopher Brown II explores, racial inequalities were “ imped[ing] the processes by which institutions of higher education develop human potential and talent . . . [and] interrupt[ing] the ability to create an academic continuum that seeks to be inclusive rather than exclusive” (Brown 2). Brown continues to explain that “[s]egregation systematically reproduced inequalities between racial groups”; towards the latter half of the twentieth century, various races began to be placed within the same academic environment, but at the close of the nineteenth century, separate schools for African Americans and Caucasian Americans were commonplace (2). Griggs paints a picture of the experience of an African American child, Belton, in one of these separate Black schools as well as the opportunities (or lack thereof) for him following the completion of his degree. The significant link between education and the body becomes apparent when comparing Imperium in Imperio and Tarzan of the Apes. For Belton, it is virtually impossible to get the same education as a white man despite his obvious academic competence, whereas for Tarzan, a man literally raised by apes, education comes easily to him – and not only that, but a personal tutor helps him perfect not one but two languages. The dark-skinned Mbongans, however, were immediately written off by D’Arnot and the other Caucasians as incompetent savages, which never speak, rather “ we see them wailing, screaming, or waving their arms and spears” – a more extreme example of racial profiling than in Belton’s case, but equally devastating to their chances at equal learning (Berglund 60). In each novel, the purpose of perfecting the English language and becoming educated circles back to the desire to be considered an equal citizen regardless of skin colour or upbringing. As Maria Karafilis discusses, Griggs “ uses the strategy of developing language to create, recreate, and sustain spaces of democratic political participation in the United States” (125). She continues to explain that “[t]he novel focuses on the use of oratory as a fundamental means of securing and exercising political rights,” Belton’s primary motive for gaining an education and becoming a proficient orator (125). In order to begin developing his rhetorical skill, Belton attends a “ colored school” as a child, where he experiences his first taste of educational segregation, as “ no restraint was put upon the flogging of colored children by their white teachers,” and his teacher, Mr. Leonard, immediately labels him as “ another black nigger brat” (Griggs 16, 20). By juxtaposing Belton’s mistreatment against Mr. Leonard’s encouraging treatment of Bernard, Griggs foreshadows Belton’s lifelong battle with prejudice through this first experience in the academic environment. Upon graduation, Belton approaches Stowe University “ feeling that he, a Negro, was privileged to enter college,” and through college Belton’s political ideology of the peaceful coexistence of the races takes form (Griggs 38). When he “ discovered that [a] colored man was vice-president of the faculty,” Belton’s dreams “ of the equality of the races” begins to materialize in reality, shocked and delighted to see “ a colored man on equal terms with the white college professors” (Griggs 40; 41). As Belton comes to realize, however, this sort of equality is short-lived and heavily segregated. His first brush with politics is at Stowe University, fuelled by seeing a coloured teacher at a sister University in Nashville eating “ at the same table with the white teachers, while Belton’s teacher ate with the students” (Griggs 43). This discrimination “ burned him,” and upon returning to Stowe University, Belton informed his fellow students “ that they ought to perfect a secret organization and have a password . . . : ‘ Equality or Death’” (Griggs 43). Belton and his new society create a spectacular protest during lunch, with each member “ bearing a small white board on which was printed in clear type: ‘ Equality or Death,’” and when they refused to “ move an inch until the matter was adjusted,” the “ faculty of white teachers beat a hasty retreat and held up the white flag! They agreed that the colored teacher should eat with them” (Griggs 44-45). As Griggs explains, “ this was Belton’s first taste of rebellion against the whites for the securing of rights denied simply because of color” (45). Belton’s successful rebellion provides him with a newfound confidence in his potential for political influence, fuelled by racism within the academic sphere. Along with gaining a political voice in the educational sphere, Belton’s story is surrounded by the development of rhetorical prowess in his effort to be seen as an equal American citizen. As Karafilis suggests, Belton’s “ words gain meaning and power because the classical rhetorical forms in which they are delivered are understandable to white society” (131). After giving an awe-inspiring speech, the white judges of the speech contest admit that “ that black nigger has beat the yellow one all to pieces this time, but we don’t like to see nigger blood triumph over any Anglo-Saxon blood,” and wonder, “ Ain’t there any loop-hole where we can give it to Bernard, anyhow?” (Griggs 31). Despite recognising his oratorical skill, the judges fixate on Belton’s black body, proving that no level of talent will enable him to separate from his body in the eyes of white America. Beginning to lose hope in the power of the spoken word, Belton shifts his focus to the “ potentially more disembodied space of written language,” or the use of a “ mightier weapon, the pen” (Karafilis 139; Griggs 147). During the dissection scene, Belton leaves a note in Zackland’s handwriting, stating: “ DOCTORS: I have stepped out for a short while. Don’t touch the nigger until I come. Zackland” (Griggs 98). Although this buys him some time to escape, it is only a momentary disembodiment which comes to an end the moment the doctors lift up the sheet to discover a decoy body in Belton’s place. Evidently, Belton has little success with the equality he seeks in the educational realm, as well as outside of it, putting to work the skills he has gained within it. All that Belton has learned only helps him in a society separate from the majority of America’s population: the Imperium. Tarzan’s need to disembody begins with a sense of alienation from his Ape tribe, in which he “ held a peculiar position . . . The older males either ignored him entirely or else hated him so vindictively that but for his wondrous agility and speed and the fierce protection of the huge Kala he would have dispatched at an early age” (Burroughs 66). Like Belton, Tarzan is subjugated within his society, and language becomes a starting point for him to separate from the beastly orality of the Ape language. Discovering a plethora of literature in his parents’ old cabin, Tarzan teaches himself to read “ with the help of the great dictionary and the active intelligence of a healthy mind endowed by inheritance with more than ordinary reasoning powers” (Burroughs 65). Evidently, Tarzan’s miraculous ability to teach himself English is assumed to be due in part to Lamarckian inheritance of upper-class traits (namely excelling in more ways than the average civilian). As such, the civilized part of Tarzan and the ease with which he adapts to the educational environment becomes naturalized by materializing prior to his contact with civilization outside of the jungle. Misreading comes into play when he begins to socialize with the white explorers and they equate him with the cannibal Mbongans: “ Yes, Miss Porter, they were—cannibals . . . When your forest god left you he was doubtless hurrying to the feast” (Burroughs 225). Although Tarzan is unaware of this assessment, he certainly understands the importance of speech, and “ senses an inherent connection between the written word, the self-created English book and whiteness: he intuits that writing is a means of communication between white humans, not just between paper and reader” (Berglund 60). Experimenting with numerous methods of communication, Tarzan tries to develop the English language skills that he has taught himself, internalizing the necessity of English competence in order to be socially accepted by the Porter clan. Tarzan is originally failed by oratory as he has taught himself the English language in a strangely reversed fashion and is unable to speak it. He finally connects with D’Arnot through writing, and asks him to “ Teach me the language of men;” with that, Tarzan takes his largest step yet towards embracing his civilized self (Burroughs 233). This development leads to rapid fluency of both English and French; so rapid that it is an arguably unbelievable aspect of Burroughs’s text, yet an important one. His ability to learn at a heightened pace contributes to Burroughs’s romanticization of the academic competence of Caucasians, and juxtaposed against the barbaric orality of the Mbongans, this idealization is taken even further. Separating mind from body is much easier for Tarzan than Belton, due entirely to race. If Burroughs had written Tarzan as a black character, one could argue that he would have been equated with the Mbongans so fully that the explorers would not likely have essayed communication. By virtue of his whiteness, however masked by his savage body, Tarzan is placed on a more level playing field with his civilized, modernized counterparts than Belton is ever able to reach. Another theme of interest linked to the connection between the body and U. S. citizenship is that of identity in Imperium in Imperio and Tarzan of the Apes. Along with political and social inclusion, one of the primary motives for working to negotiate between the body and a sense of equal citizenship in these novels is the desire to develop a cohesive sense of identity. As Freud explores, although the theme of “ the double” is most commonly associated with “ reflections in mirrors, with shadows, guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and the fear of death,” its applications extend to “ all those unfulfilled but possible futures to which we still like to cling in phantasy, all those strivings of the ego which adverse external circumstances have crushed” (9-10). Interestingly, both Griggs and Burroughs choose to include characters which seem to mirror the identities that Belton and Tarzan work to achieve. In Belton’s case, Bernard acts as a sort of double, while in Tarzan’s case the double is his brother, Clayton. Arguably, in the both cases, these “ doubles” function as materializations of these “ unfulfilled but possible futures,” or representations of that which they hope to someday become (Freud 10). Each instance of attempted disembodiment in these novels showcases the protagonists’ desires to secure an identity which mirrors that of their doubles. Griggs’s and Burroughs’s inclusion of these imagined doubles offer the readers a more concrete illustration of the final product of political and societal inclusion towards which Belton and Tarzan aim. In Imperium in Imperio, Belton’s desire for inclusion in the body politic of white America in general fulfilled moreso by Griggs’s second protagonist, Bernard. Although Bernard undeniably faces turmoil on his journey, his mulatto (read: whitened) skin allows him to navigate through American society more easily and without a great deal of subjugation, blending into the political and social spheres in a way that Belton wishes he could. For the first half of the novel, Griggs describes each man’s journey through their education and eventual job hunt; evidently, this process of development is much easier for Bernard as he is favoured by his teachers and finds a job in politics. It is not until the latter half of the novel that Bernard begins to appear in less of a golden light to Belton: “ Belton was actually shocked at the haggard appearance of his old play-fellow. It was such a contrast from the brilliant, glowing, handsome Bernard of former days” (Griggs 111). Interestingly, at this point in the novel the Imperium is growing, and Belton surfaces as a leader within that separate sphere while Bernard loses the limelight. The downfall of Belton’s ideal other half, Bernard, suggests that blackness is more than skin deep, it is internalized; Bernard is mulatto, and although his appearance does not strongly reflect this part of himself, he ultimately faces a similar fate to Belton, the necessity for a separate space outside of the U. S. nation. Similarly, in Tarzan of the Apes, a type of double for Tarzan’s civilized self materializes through his brother, Clayton. Burroughs makes the connection between brothers explicit by juxtaposing the differing actions of the two Lord Greystokes in a similar situation: Lord Greystoke wiped his greasy fingers upon his naked thighs and took up the trail of Kulonga, the son of Mbonga, the king; while in far-off London another Lord Greystoke, the younger brother of the real Lord Greystoke’s father, sent back his chops to the club’s chef because they were underdone, and when he had finished his repast he dipped his finger-ends into a silver bowl of scented water and dried them upon a piece of snowy damask. (Burroughs 88)This scene demonstrates the purely opposite upbringing of the two brothers, showcasing a heightened version of Tarzan’s civilized self. Unlike Belton and Bernard, Tarzan and Clayton are not only peers but brothers, even bearing the same name (Lord Greystoke) without knowing it. Tarzan works to shift his identity as a “ forest god” to a more civilized version of himself with the help of D’Arnot, who “ labored assiduously to make of Tarzan of the Apes a polished gentleman in so far as nicety of manners and speech were concerned” (Burroughs 260). Tarzan rapidly learns to act more like his Greystoke double in his meal mannerisms, as “[t]he knife and fork, so contemptuously flung aside a month before, Tarzan now manipulated as exquisitely as did the polished D’Arnot” (Burroughs 260). This moment marks Tarzan’s transition into a polished gentleman like Clayton, his “ double.” Moreover, on the topic of identity, the protagonists’ desires to integrate as equals into society, despite struggles fuelled by their non-white bodies, contribute to their quest to develop a strong sense of personhood within the U. S. nation. Unfortunately, both Belton and Tarzan face misreading by their peers based on their appearance. Each instance of misreading hinders their ability to integrate, thereby complicating their senses of identity. As Yancy explores, “[W. E. B.] Du Bois began to experience a disjointed relationship with his body . . . [He] is forced into a state of doubleness, seeing himself as the Other (the inferior Black) through the gaze of the . . . One (the superior white)” (“ Whiteness” 235). Ultimately, the Other begins to “ internalize the white gaze,” and as such, insecurity over physical difference becomes “ a secret buried within their personality, as a ‘ submerged’ side of the self” (Yancy, “ Whiteness” 233; Otten 229). The concept of the One accepting or denying the Other has both personal and collective implications. At the personal level, the One (in the case of both of these texts, the white American) is challenged to not only accept the Other (the black man, the savage), but enable him to assimilate into the One’s environment (Anglo-centric American political, cultural and aristocratic body) despite his Otherness. This critical lens can be pushed beyond race and explored in terms of Tarzan’s African body, which is also subject to the white gaze, leading to his necessary disembodiment. Notions of assimilation or integration into society contribute to the journey of each protagonist on their quest for a sense of identity. Time and time again, Belton faces misreading at the discretion of white America. For example, When Belton boards the front coach of a train, a group of white men approach him threatening, “‘ Get out of this coach. We don’t allow niggers in first-class coaches.’ . . . When they got to the platform, instead of carrying [Belton] across they tossed him off the train into the muddy ditch” (Griggs 89). Incidents like this lead Belton into a depression, as “ everything seemed to grow darker and darker for him . . . unable to find a fit place to earn his daily bread, all because of the color of his skin” (Griggs 85). This deep sadness is catalyzed by constant disappointment from his American peers. No matter what Belton does to ‘ whiten’ himself, the education he pursues, the employment he seeks, and so forth, he is constantly subject to the scrutinizing white gaze, and as such, unable to integrate successfully into the social sphere. This has a detrimental impact on Belton’s sense of identity and bludgeons his confidence at the potential of merging together body and mind to create a successful hybridized self fit for U. S. inclusion. In an effort to separate from his black body and the white gaze, Belton shifts his focus to disguise, disembodying by entirely removing himself from the equation in order to peek in on a faculty meeting featuring the school’s coloured teacher. When spotted, Belton, “ unthinkingly, jumped into the chicken house. . . . The teachers decided that they had been visited by a Negro, hunting for chickens” (Griggs 42-43). This is a powerful scene in the novel, evoking an understanding of the internalized prejudice felt by subjugated African-Americans. Belton subconsciously disguises himself as the epitome of the dreaded subjugated self that he tries to depart from, the Other, by slipping directly into a racist stereotype to excuse his curiosity. This demonstrates the power of the external gaze on Belton’s sense of self, as he evidently identifies with that which he is internally trying to escape. Between Belton’s inability to successfully merge into the social circles of Anglo-centric America and the internalization of prejudice, his quest for a sense of collaborative independence and inclusion is brought to a halt, leading to eventual separation. In Tarzan’s case, once he meets the explorers a transition from atavism to the civilized half of his hybrid being is rapidly accelerated. Once he learns to speak, Tarzan expresses to D’Arnot the depth of his desire to journey to American: “ We shall start to-morrow. I do not like it here longer. I should rather die than remain here” (Burroughs 252). Alas, the pair begins their journey, spending a week amongst civilized Frenchmen where “ the ape-man, keenly observant, learned but of the ways of men” (Burroughs 259). Shortly thereafter, Burroughs describes Tarzan as operating “ a great black car” and coming to Jane’s rescue in Baltimore; his disembodiment from savage to gentleman would seem complete (Burroughs 277). Evidently, for Tarzan, incorporation into the American nation is significantly easier than for Belton. The Africanness of Tarzan’s body classifies him as an Other, but given modern conceptions of masculinity, the atavistic white aspect of his body is something to be admired by Anglo-centric America rather than abhorred. As such, he is welcomed by the white explorers despite them thinking him strange; in comparison to their perception of the black Mbongans, he is “ a perfectly godlike white man tanned to a dusky brown” (Burroughs 177). He is even taken under the wing of D’Arnot, who admittedly owes Tarzan his life, but is in no way obligated to help him to the extent that he does. So, for Tarzan, a sense of inclusion is at first seemingly seamless. With time, however, it becomes more complicated as the one person Tarzan hopes to be accepted by is Jane Porter, and in the end, she rejects him for the ‘ already American’ Clayton. Like Belton, Tarzan struggles to be socially accepted into the nation because of stigma attached to his Africanized body. It is important to note that embedded in each of these examples are moments of Tarzan’s atavism resurfacing: the more civilized he becomes, the stronger becomes his urges to return to the jungle. Likewise, the more educated and experienced Belton becomes, the less accepted into the nation he feels, although not due to a lacking desire. For each protagonist, a cohesive sense of identity is a fuelling factor to the desire to disembody in favour of feeling like equal American citizens. This leads to a discussion of separatism and regression, a significant final theme to the relationship between the body and U. S. citizenship. In both Imperium in Imperio and Tarzan of the Apes, despite the protagonists’ efforts to separate body from mind and work towards a more inclusive sense of American citizenship, they ultimately choose to separate from Anglo-Centric American society in favour of separate, unsubjugated spaces. As postcolonial theorist Amar Acheraïou explains, in the early nineteenth century century, the concept of hybridity, first employed by Charles Darwin in 1837 in the context of plant cross-fertilization, was purely biological and suggested fixed essence of a certain being (88). The term grew into prominence in political and social debates over time, and in the mid- to late-nineteenth century became connected with racial degeneration, or supremacist race politics based on a Darwinian evolutionary model (Acheraïou 88). In fact, hybridity was “[d]ismissed as monstrous” and “ deemed a serious threat to socio-political order and racial purity” (88). In Acheraïou’s definition of the term, he is concerned primarily with racial hybridity, or the mixture of white and non-white peoples, which carried a heavy stigma at the turn of the century. This definition extends to the merging between natural and cultured selves, precisely the type of hybridity sought by Belton and Tarzan. To varying degrees, however, both protagonists fail to achieve this hybridization, and for both men, failure is primarily due to rejection: Belton feels rejected by the white majority of the American population, while Tarzan is rejected by one specific person, Jane, who embodies aristocratic white America at its finest. This rejection catalyzes a type of “ return of the repressed,” or, in this case, a resurfacing of an aspect of the self that the protagonists have intentionally repressed in favour of shifting to a more hybridized persona. When it becomes apparent that the desired hybridization that these men seek is unreachable, they begin to regress and look towards separation from the American nation. That being said, both Belton and Tarzan still develop irrevocable hybrid selves; they embody a mixture between the natural and the cultured insofar as all that they have learned and worked towards on their journeys cannot be erased. When he leaves Stowe University, Belton organizes a weekly journal which “ began to lift up its voice against frauds at the polls and to champion the cause of honest elections. It contended that practicing frauds was debauching the young men, the flower of the Anglo-Saxon race” (Griggs 80). When the journal’s authorship is traced to him, “ the politicians gave the school board orders to dump Belton forthwith, on the ground that they could not afford to feed and clothe a man who would so vigorously ‘ attack Southern Institutions’” (Griggs 80). In effect, Belton quickly discovers the necessity of a separate space within the American nation for the Others to conglomerate in hiding from the racist white gaze: this separate space in Imperium in Imperio is represented first by the University, and more explicitly later by the Imperium. Throughout the novel, up until the introduction of the Imperium, Belton is described as highly rhetorically skilled, and often times his speeches are mentioned but never transcribed by Griggs. Belton explains to Bernard that the Imperium is “[a]nother government, complete in every detail, exercising the sovereign right of life and death over its subjects, [which] has been organized and maintained within the United States for many years” (Griggs 117). Only within the Imperium, a “ nation within a nation,” a community made up entirely of people who have been racialized and thereby excluded from the American nation as equal citizens, does Griggs choose to transcribe the lengthy and persuasive speeches of Belton. This is a quite significant to the mechanics of the novel, as it demonstrates that the words of African Americans can only truly be heard by others of the same race who are able to separate mind from body as their bodies are one and the same. Within these separate spaces, the school and the Imperium, Belton becomes a powerful player and may use his political voice to exercise change, while outside of them he remains unheard and segregated. In one of his moving Imperium speeches, Belton argues that “[o]ther races which have obtained their freedom erect monuments over bloody spots where they slew their fellow men” (Griggs 147). He continues, “[m]ay God favor us to obtain our freedom without having to dot our land with these relics of barbaric ages” (Griggs 147). Instead of obtaining freedom within the American nation by violent means (a more militant stance which Bernard takes), Belton works towards peaceful separation. However, even amidst a separate political space within which his civilized self can function hidden from the white gaze, Belton’s anti-militant plan to assimilate ultimately fails under the Imperium’s growingly separatist agenda, leading to his execution. This suggests that attempting to peacefully incorporate into the American nation is futile, both on an individual and collective level, serving as a critique of the real, exclusionary politics of the time. Similarly, each time Tarzan seems to make progress in his transition from savage to gentleman, he ends up taking a step backwards as his atavism breaks through. For example, while in the civilized village with D’Arnot, Tarzan is jokingly challenged to conquer a lion, and after persuasion, accepts: “ Tarzan had no sooner entered the jungle than he took to the trees, and it was with a feeling of exultant freedom that he swung once more through the forest branches. This was the life! ah, how he loved it!” (Burroughs 264). Tarzan’s atavism even resurfaces once he appears to have transformed into a gentleman at the end of the novel in his determination to win Jane’s heart: “ Scarcely had [Canler] taken a single step ere a heavy hand closed upon his arm with a grip of steel. Another hand shot to his throat and in a moment he was being shaken high above the floor, as a cat might shake a mouse” (Burroughs 287). Each of these examples showcase Tarzan’s internal struggle to merge the atavistic and civilized halves of himself. Despite his efforts, Tarzan is unable to successfully hybridize, as his atavism tendencies are seemingly more powerful than his cultured self, and, as Burroughs implies, he returns to the jungle. However, unlike Belton, Tarzan has a choice, and he chooses Africa over America. Along with this choice, Tarzan maintains all of the cultural knowledge he has gained throughout his journey; alas, like Belton, he has in some ways become a hybrid being. Along with this choice, Tarzan maintains all of the cultural knowledge he has gained throughout his journey; alas, like Belton, he has in some ways become a hybrid being. As previously touched upon, Belton’s and Tarzan’s separatist stances at the end of each novel are complicated by the fact that they inevitably maintain all of the cultural knowledge they have gained on their journeys to becoming accepted as equal American citizens. For Belton, despite his inclusionary political stance, disembodiment is a constant and ultimate failure, leaving readers with a bleak message representative of the state of the Anglo-centric American nation at the end of the nineteenth century; avid patriotism does not guarantee equal citizenship. For Tarzan, a much more successful hybrid is formed as his atavistic and civilized selves meet and conflict throughout the novel, ultimately providing him with a choice between the two. His choosing atavism over civilization is representative of the state of masculinity in the face of turn of the century American modernism. At the same time, however, his choice to reject civilization depicts a certain disgust felt by Others towards the American nation given their exclusionary policies towards non-whites. Essentially, a fully rounded identity encompassing both the atavistic and cultural selves does not come to fruition in either of these cases. In the end, the protagonists return to their original states of being before attempted disembodiment: the members of Imperium maintain a public sphere separate from the white-dominated public of the U. S. nation, ultimately leading to Belton’s demise, and Tarzan returns to the jungle. A comparison between the transformations of these two characters brings to the light the significance of race, suggesting the impossibility for Black men to bridge the gap between their physical and cultural selves in contrast to their white peers. In conclusion, Tarzan and Belton each work towards being treated as equal American citizens but struggle due to stigmas attached to their bodies. The protagonists essay to negotiate between body and mind to form a unified hybrid identity. To borrow a phrase from Yancy, “ with regard to the Black/native/colonized, what is seen is what is known, and what is known is what is seen. Moreover, what is known and seen or seen and known is what is there;” so long as there is a racist white gaze involved, disembodiment is virtually impossible for the Other ( “ Colonial Gazing” 7). Belton and Tarzan each represent a much wider issue of the exclusionary politics and social climate of political and social citizenship in modern, Anglo-centric America. Within the discourse of modern American citizenship, the difficulty any and all non-white Americans face in securing an unobstructed place within the nation is indicative of the problematic nature of citizenship after colonialism. In order to find this unobstructed place, it is necessary to merge the natural and civilized selves into one cohesive being, and when it comes to racial politics, disembodiment becomes a primary factor in working towards this type of hybridization. Although the circumstances of each protagonist are quite different, both examples maintain the wider message that turn of the century American political and social circles were highly exclusionary for non-natives, or anyone who is not considered the same as the majority: Caucasian, American-born people with American parents. These novels contribute to racial political discourse insofar as they bring to life the opinions and experiences of two entirely separate voices which become irrevocably linked by comparison: that of Sutton E. Griggs (1872-1933), African American, and Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875-1950), Caucasian American adventurer. Works CitedAcheraïou, Amar. Questioning Hybridity, Postcolonialism and Globalization. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print. Berglund, Jeff. “ Write, White, Rite: Literacy, Imperialism, Race, and Cannibalism in Edgar Rice Burroughs’ Tarzan of the Apes.” Studies in American Fiction 27. 1 (1999): 53-76. LION. Web. Brown, M. Christopher II. 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