

Chapter 3

Giant Steps

W.E.B. DuBois and the Historical Enterprise

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W.E.B. DuBois's historical scholarship has received insufficient attention from American historians, especially considering its importance to developments within the profession. In *Nothing but Freedom*, Eric Foner reveals his own debt to DuBois and notes sardonically that *Black Reconstruction in America* has never been reviewed in the *American Historical Review*.¹ Perhaps the most celebrated text on the formation of the historical profession, Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream*, barely mentions DuBois's name, and certainly gives little weight to his work and contributions to the profession.² Even August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, in *Black History and the Historical Profession*, pay relatively little attention to DuBois. Their main focus for the early part of their study is Carter G. Woodson, and DuBois is featured mainly insofar as he responded to this other historian's work. While they note that DuBois was a "pioneer in black history" and "the most widely learned Negro scholar of the era," they focus only on his earlier histories (*The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade* and *The Negro*). With a rather dismissive wave they mention *Black Reconstruction in America*'s "controversial interpretive framework." They refer to it as an inspiration for "recent generations of scholars, black and white," but do not elaborate on who these people may be and how it gained this status given its framework. Moreover, such references occur as part of the chapter on Woodson, rather than as part of the chapter on generational change, further obscuring DuBois's impact on African American history.³ This paper, then, endeavors to compensate for this neglect among Americanists by highlighting the richness and importance of DuBois's historical writings. In the process it focuses on the various stages of DuBois's development as a historian from his earliest work, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade*, to *Black Folk: Then and Now* published in 1939.

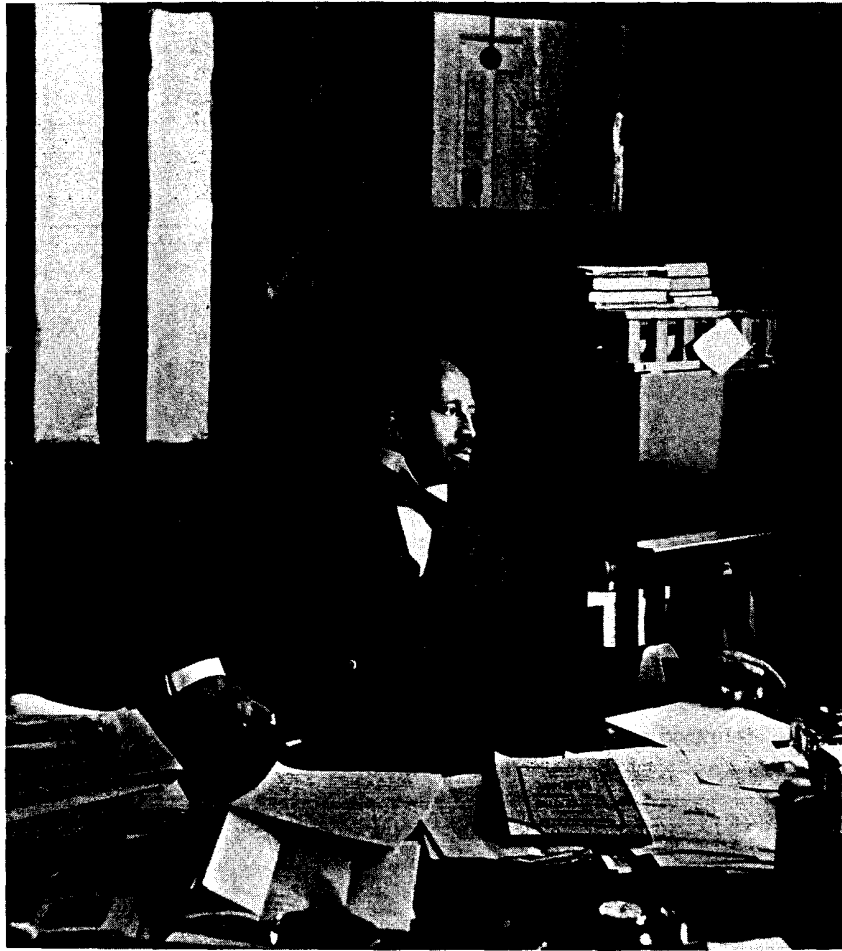


Figure 6. DuBois in the offices of *The Crisis*. Courtesy of the Schomburg Center, New York Public Library.

DuBois's historical writings can be broken up into three groups—the social scientific, the cultural materialist, and the Marxist—each marking a phase in DuBois's development. These parallel the stages of the historical profession's early development outlined by Novick in *That Noble Dream*: first, the emergence of the notion of objectivity, with its belief in "facts" and the inductive method; second, the gradual emergence of a "genteel insurgency" among Progressive historians promoting deductive reasoning; and last, "the stalling of the professional project" in "divergence and dissent" in the period following World War One.⁴ While DuBois paralleled these changes, he either remained apart from the profession's development or, when involved, was virtually unrecognized for his contributions. In part, this was because at each stage of his development DuBois consciously deviated from the work of his white counterparts.

DuBois's early writings, reflected in *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade* and *The Philadelphia Negro*, resembled the output of many scientific historians working at this time, except that in both books he only half-suppressed his idealism and allowed tensions and subtleties to surface that would seldom be evident in other historians' works. The presence of these tensions, I argue, gave texts like *The Philadelphia Negro* a dialectical or dynamic quality wherein the main body of the work articulated a thesis while some of the conclusions seemed to reach for its antithesis. In addition, the fact that DuBois was continually migrating intellectually (in the way Malcolm X would later describe his own intellectual development),⁵ meant that when a text was viewed in conjunction with others, this dialectic appeared as an effort to step from one level of analysis or political theory to another.

DuBois's writings during the second phase, particularly *The Souls of Black Folk*, *John Brown*, and *The Negro*, were "insurgency" plain and simple and not the least "genteel," even though they incorporated ideas that resembled the cultural materialism to be found among some other Progressives.⁶ Here, too, DuBois's work was in motion and could be readily misunderstood if stopped or taken in isolation. Notions like "The Talented Tenth" or his conception of "the Race" might be seen as elitist and, some have argued, even racist, when analyzed separately. When placed alongside one another, they appeared as the internal contradictions that propelled DuBois to newer and more radical interpretations of class and race than those emanating from the intellectuals, like Thomas Carlyle or Alexander Crummell, who had inspired him.

The third period, reaching its fruition with the publication of *Black Reconstruction in America* and *Black Folk*, witnessed DuBois's rejection of many Progressive notions and the adoption of Marxist terminology, taking him down paths that few, if any, white American historians were willing to follow. And here Novick's virtual omission of DuBois is crucial, for the latter provided one of the most significant voices of "divergence and dissent" following the Great War. If one were to observe American historians from outside

the borders of the United States and to recognize their contributions to a transatlantic dialogue with German, French, and British as well as Caribbean, African, and Indian scholars, then DuBois would appear less marginal to the development of the profession as a whole. His work represented one part of an "assault on the civilizing mission," to use Michael Adas's term, that was occurring in response to colonialism on the American mainland, in the Pacific rim, and in Africa and South Asia.⁷

By embracing Marxian categories, DuBois made a self-conscious effort to test the foundation stones of the historical profession—objectivity and progress, as defined by the White Man's Burden. In *Black Reconstruction in America*, he endeavored to highlight the limitations of American history and to question its propagandist or mythological aspects.⁸ In the process, his work has become a valuable guide (along with the work of other anticolonial and antiracist writers of the period, from C.L.R. James, Eric Williams, George Padmore, and Kwame Nkrumah within the African diaspora, to Jawarhalal Nehru in India) for historians who wish to move beyond strict class and race analyses toward a history that weaves together class, race, gender, and imperialism.⁹

"The One Thing Needful"

The 1880s and 1890s have been described by Peter Novick and others as the time when notions of objectivity and fact gained ascendancy, when practitioners of "scientific history" came to the fore.¹⁰ A majority of historians embraced an inductive method and rejected the deductive moralism of their predecessors (moralism that had contributed to antislavery movements and the northern position during the Civil War and Reconstruction). A few historians remained committed to the deductive method, like Henry Adams, who challenged others to find the laws on which historical study could be founded, John William Burgess, who applied the Hegelian dialectic to American history, and Frederick Jackson Turner, creator of the frontier thesis.¹¹ But they were few in number. The more popular approach to scientific history derived from the German Leopold von Ranke. Ranke had managed to overturn the Hegelian tradition in Germany, replacing it with a belief that "facts" should be treated objectively and not reshaped to meet the demands of philosophy.¹² This approach was adopted in America by historians like James Ford Rhodes, who wished to rid history of its preconceived notions and theories (or at least those that attacked businessmen like himself); like William A. Dunning, who saw history as "[t]he absorbing and relentless pursuit of the objective fact—of the thing that actually happened in exactly the form and manner of its happening"; like Albert J. Beveridge, biographer of Abraham Lincoln and self-proclaimed imperialist, who maintained that "facts when justly arranged interpret themselves"; and by Ed-

ward Channing, who would be Carter G. Woodson's teacher at Harvard University.¹³

The gap between the two approaches was not unbridgeable.¹⁴ Adams attacked the lack of philosophic integration among the members of the other school, but even so, he himself owed much to Ranke.¹⁵ He would have accepted the compromise between the two schools of thought theorized by Albert Bushnell Hart, DuBois's teacher at Harvard University. In his 1910 article, "Imagination in History," Hart wrote:

Did not Darwin spend twenty years in accumulating data, and in selecting typical phenomena, before he so much as ventured a generalization? In history, too, scattered and apparently unrelated data fall together in harmonious wholes; the mind is led to the discovery of laws; and the explorer into scientific truth is at last able to formulate some of those unsuspected generalizations which explain the whole framework of the universe.¹⁶

And if Darwin's empirical method was insufficient to convince many historians, it was clear enough to an American historian in the nation's imperial heyday that deduction and induction would probably arrive at similar conclusions. After all, "What do speculations of any kind matter?" Hart wrote. "The Harvard baseball team will play Yale just the same, the President will build his freshman dormitories, the Panama Canal will be completed, Theodore Roosevelt will come out on top: why should anybody philosophize?"¹⁷

DuBois conformed to this compromise method. If Arnold Rampersad is correct that DuBois's career was divided between his sociological emphasis and his cultural criticism, then in this first period sociology dominated;¹⁸ and DuBois's sociological method corresponded closely with the inductive method popular among historians. DuBois would write later that

it was James with his pragmatism and Albert Bushnell Hart with his research method, that turned me back from the lovely but sterile land of philosophic speculation, to the social sciences as the field for gathering and interpreting that body of fact which would apply to my program for the Negro.¹⁹

Hart was not noted for racial egalitarianism and believed both that democracy was a Teutonic invention and that "the average of the Negro is very much below that of the white race." And yet Hart had taken a special interest in DuBois, suggesting that the latter write his dissertation on the suppression of the slave trade, promoting its publication, and arranging for DuBois to appear at the American Historical Association's conventions of 1891 and 1909 (the two occasions when he was that organization's president).²⁰ But, while Hart's dismissal of philosophic speculation held sway over any residual Hegelianism DuBois might have brought back from Germany, the inductive research method was unable to eradicate many of the idealistic assumptions that the former student held about race, culture, the

state, and civilization. Of course, for Hart that would hardly matter. DuBois's speculations, whether or not they were given center stage, would not stop the Panama Canal from being built or Roosevelt coming out on top.²¹

DuBois's *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870* deserved the praise Hart afforded it at the time by making it the first monograph in the series of Harvard Historical Studies, and that other scholars, including Eugene Genovese, A. Norman Klein, David Levering Lewis, and DuBois himself, also gave it.²² In addition to showing the extent of American involvement in the slave trade from 1830 to the Civil War,²³ DuBois paid particular attention to the significance of Toussaint Louverture and the revolution in Saint Domingue for developments in American history—a theme he would return to on many occasions.²⁴ While this was not the first notice given to the significance of this man and the revolution he led (Henry Adams in his indictment of Thomas Jefferson had noted some of the same facts),²⁵ DuBois devoted a pivotal chapter to this subject. According to DuBois:

The role which the great Toussaint, called L'Ouverture, played in the history of the United States has seldom been fully appreciated. Representing the age of revolution in America, he rose to leadership through a bloody terror, which contrived a Negro "problem" for the Western Hemisphere, intensified and defined the anti-slavery movement, became one of the causes, and probably the prime one, which led Napoleon to sell Louisiana for a song, and finally, through the interworking of all these effects, rendered certain the final prohibition of the slave-trade by the United States in 1807. (p. 70)²⁶

Two Afro-Trinidadians, Eric Williams and C.L.R. James, would expand on this interpretation, so that many Americanists are now aware that American expansion owed as much to the actions of Haitian revolutionaries as to Jefferson's republican ideology, and, further, that Jefferson was so obsessed by the need to undermine the "slave republic" that he was prepared to try anything to achieve this, even risking an expanded French imperial presence on the American mainland.²⁷ Safeguarding slavery, as DuBois knew, was as important to men like Jefferson as expansion west. Such conclusions would give *Suppression* a freshness that remains today in spite of Hart's cumbersome methods.

DuBois's *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* now has a secure place in the foundational narrative for sociology; this is not so for history. This is unfortunate for a number of reasons. First, the lines between sociology and history were often blurred in spite of attempts by some of the professionals concerned to clearly demarcate them. Second, the black community of Philadelphia was a product of many forces—slavery, emancipation, the underground railroad, migration, and so on—that had occurred long before 1896, when DuBois arrived in the city. Being aware of this, DuBois could not help make the study a work of history as well as sociology.

DuBois was brought to Philadelphia largely on the initiative of Susan P. Wharton, a member of one of the city's oldest and most prominent Quaker families, a family that had endowed the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. Wharton was also a member of the executive committee of the Philadelphia College Settlement, which had been founded in 1892. Her concern for African Americans in South Philadelphia, matched by that of other members of the University community, followed in the wake of the University's relocation from South Philadelphia to West Philadelphia, partly to take advantage of the more open space and cheaper land in that area, but also to escape what was perceived to be a harsh and unsavory environment in South Philadelphia (Provost Charles J. Stillé had referred to this area as "A vile neighborhood, growing viler every day").²⁸ It also coincided with the University's attempts to acquire more land from the city of Philadelphia, and showing a commitment to the city by attempting to combat some of its "social problems" was politic at such a time.²⁹ According to E. Digby Baltzell, Wharton prevailed on the new provost, Charles C. Harrison, to undertake a study of "the Negro Problem" in the city's Seventh Ward, and Samuel McCune Lindsay, a member of the sociology department, secured DuBois's services. The latter arrived in the city in August 1896 and stayed in Philadelphia, living in the heart of the Seventh Ward until January 1898.³⁰

DuBois had learned his sociological method during his sojourn in Germany as a result of his contact with Gustav von Schmoller, Adolf Wagner and Max Weber. Feeling that the "Negro Problem" was essentially a result of ignorance, the accumulation of facts required by this method seemed most appropriate to him, "The Negro problem was in my mind a matter of systematic investigation and intelligent understanding. The world was thinking wrong about race, because it did not know. The ultimate evil was stupidity. The cure for it was knowledge based on scientific investigation."³¹ So, while living in South Philadelphia, DuBois plunged into the work of gathering data. In so doing, he was conforming to the practice of sociologists and historians of his day, and facing many of the same pitfalls as well.

These pitfalls were most obvious in the moralistic characterizations of the community that appeared throughout *The Philadelphia Negro*. Borrowing from the earlier sociological studies of Henry Mayhew and Charles Booth, DuBois defined African Americans according to whether they were "good, bad, [or] indifferent," and many even were included in a category for "dregs" (p. 305).³² The pitfalls were also evident in DuBois's assumptions about the future of certain forms of religious worship among African Americans. While DuBois questioned the widely accepted notion that Christians of African descent necessarily worshiped with more mysticism and fervor than did their white counterparts because of their race, he also felt (and here he was a precursor of E. Franklin Frazier) that where "little noisy missions" led by "wandering preachers" survived in the city, these represented "the older and more demonstrative worship," and "customs [that]

are dying away" (pp. 220–21).³³ Such analysis was based upon his assumption that because secularism and more "rational" approaches to religion were on the rise, these more emotive practices had to be dying out. A closer study of the many storefront churches appearing in the Seventh Ward at this time would have forced DuBois to draw a different conclusion.³⁴

While such pitfalls were present, DuBois clearly transcended the work of other sociologists and historians and took his study well beyond the design and intention of his university sponsors. In particular, he showed clearly what no one had done before — that the black community was both sophisticated and multilayered.³⁵ With regard to the church, once more, he revealed the "differentiating" aspect of black religious life, showing that while the church was "the world in which the Negro moves and acts" (p. 201), this could mean very different things for African Methodists as compared to the more elite Episcopalians and Presbyterians, and the usually less well situated Baptists (pp. 203–4).³⁶ Moreover, while he employed moralistic categories to describe class differences, he nevertheless showed that these differences existed. There was clearly a black elite which, although embattled (it seemed to be losing some of its privileges to the new immigrant groups), nevertheless had a long history of achievements (pp. 111–31). There was also a large middling group of the "respectable working class," servants and regularly employed laborers ("responsible workers") who provided the backbone for the community's many social organizations (pp. 131–46). In addition, DuBois highlighted the tensions that seemed to be emerging around issues of migration and regionalism, suggesting that the migration of single, unattached women into Philadelphia was creating a social problem of some magnitude for the black community (pp. 65–78).³⁷ But here too, DuBois did not rely solely on negative perceptions of the migrants. While working on *The Philadelphia Negro*, he also undertook a study of African Americans in rural Virginia, later published as "The Negroes of Farmville," in which he showed clearly the variegated nature of a black community that was a typical source of Philadelphia's southern migrants at this time.³⁸

"The Final Word" revealed both the strengths and weaknesses of DuBois's analysis. In it, he laid down several "axiomatic propositions" arising from his work. Among these were the fact that "the Negro is here to stay," and the suggestion that "It is to the advantage of all . . . that every Negro should make the best of himself" (p. 388). Here idealistic language entered the text, for instead of the abstractions "to the advantage of all" and "making the best of himself," he might merely have couched his analysis in the less "static or consensual" language of natural rights (whether or not they are making the best of themselves, whatever that may mean, people cannot be denied equal opportunity and treatment). Eliding at this stage the question of rights, partly in an attempt to appeal to white Philadelphians (since to focus on rights might have seemed "sharp with subversive possibili-

ties"³⁹), DuBois moved down the road toward a justification of the status quo. Thus, his third axiom was: "It is the duty of the Negro to raise himself by every effort to the standards of modern civilization and not to lower those standards by any degree." Implicitly, therefore, DuBois was suggesting that many African Americans were not raising themselves to that "standard of modern civilization." And the fourth axiom read: "It is the duty of white people to guard their civilization against debauchment by themselves or others; but in order to do this it is not necessary to hinder and retard the efforts of an earnest people to rise, simply because they lack faith in the ability of that people" (pp. 388-89). Even though DuBois had faith in the earnestness of "his people," he here found them trailing behind a civilization that, however racist and class infected, could be looked up to. And so, by the time DuBois returned to the language of rights and equal opportunity in the final axiom, the damage had been done: "With these duties in mind and with a spirit of self-help, mutual aid and co-operation, the two races should strive side by side to realize the ideals of the republic and make this truly a land of equal opportunity for all men" (p. 389). It is hard not to conclude with DuBois's own words regarding Booker T. Washington, that here he "practically accept[ed] the alleged inferiority of the Negro races."⁴⁰

But even with these pitfalls, DuBois was able to point the way ahead to a new position regarding "the race." For in *The Philadelphia Negro*, DuBois believed he had shown that "the Negro problems are not more hopelessly complex than many others have been." He continued:

Their elements despite their bewildering complication can be kept clearly in view: they are after all the same difficulties over which the world has grown gray: the question as to how far human intelligence can be trusted and trained; as to whether we must always have the poor with us; as to whether it is possible for the mass of men to attain righteousness on earth; and then to this is added the question of questions: after all who are Men? Is every featherless biped to be counted a man and brother? Are all races and types to be joint heirs of the new earth that men have striven to raise in thirty centuries and more? (pp. 385-86)

Clearly, assumptions about progress framed such analysis and legitimated fears that "we not swamp civilization in barbarism and drown genius in indulgence" by seeking "a mythical Humanity" (p. 386). DuBois wished to reassure readers by suggesting that just as the privileged classes of old feared the expansion of democracy and were unwarranted in doing so, those who now feared such extension in America were also misguided:

We who were born to another philosophy hardly realize how deep-seated and plausible this view of human capabilities and powers once was; how utterly incomprehensible this republic would have been to Charlemagne or Charles V or Charles I. We rather hasten to forget that once the courtiers of English kings looked upon the ancestors of most Americans with far greater contempt than these Americans look

upon Negroes—and perhaps, indeed, had more cause. We forget that once French peasants were the “Niggers” of France, and that German princelings once discussed with doubt the brains and humanity of the *bauer*. (p. 386)⁴¹

For DuBois, the world had “glided by blood and iron into a wider humanity, a wider respect for simple manhood unadorned by ancestors or privilege” (p. 386), so it was now possible to see that what separated oppressor from oppressed was not the fact that one was civilized and the other was not, but that one group had the privilege to *claim* itself civilized and the other did not.

“This widening of the idea of common Humanity is of slow growth and today but dimly realized,” DuBois wrote, and so it was in his work at this stage. But the direction of his thought leading toward *The Souls of Black Folk* was clear:

We grant full citizenship in the World Commonwealth to the “Anglo-Saxon” (whatever that may mean), the Teuton and the Latin; then with just a shade of reluctance we extend it to the Celt and the Slav. We half deny it to the yellow races of Asia, admit the brown Indians to an ante-room only on the strength of an undeniable past; but with the Negroes of Africa we come to a full stop, and in its heart the civilized world with one accord denies that these come within the pale of nineteenth-century Humanity. (pp. 386–87)

DuBois had started out his work believing that ignorance was the problem, but by its end he had come to realize that the problem was really just the denigration of and denial of status to African Americans. Others who had similar backgrounds to African Americans were entitled to “whiten” themselves, and were given a status never afforded to blacks. Writing in a vein similar to those who are now interrogating the concept of “whiteness,”⁴²

DuBois wrote:

we have, to be sure, a threatening problem of ignorance but the ancestors of most Americans were far more ignorant than the freedmen’s sons; these ex-slaves are poor but not as poor as peasants used to be; crime is rampant but not more so, if as much, as in Italy; but the difference is that the ancestors of the English and the Irish and the Italians were felt to be worth educating, helping and guiding because they were men and brothers, while in America a census which gives a slight indication of the utter disappearance of the American Negro from the earth is greeted with ill-concealed delight. (p. 387)

Certainly, elitist and modernist presumptions about “the ignorance” of all ancestors and the need for “uplift” remained embedded in these pronouncements. Yet such pronouncements were sufficiently democratic in emphasis and in conflict with much of his own elitism to propel DuBois into the cultural relativism found in the next stage of his historical writing. Now “the battle involve[d] more than a mere altruistic interest in an alien people.” It would be “a battle for humanity and human culture” (p. 388).

“Another Thing Needful”

During the period in which he wrote *The Souls of Black Folk* (published in 1903), *John Brown* (1909), and *The Negro* (1915), and for much of the time that he served as editor of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's *Crisis*, DuBois contributed to a Progressive insurgency, sharing the stage with such historians as Carl L. Becker and Charles and Mary Beard. But while other Progressives focused their histories on particular kinds of nonracial social divisions (frequently a non-Marxian, populist version of class struggle), DuBois centered his work on the category of race. This emphasis on race gave DuBois's writings a less than “genteel” air, particularly in the face of this “nadir” in post-Civil War race relations—the rising tide of lynching, race riots, segregation, disfranchisement, and imperialism.⁴³ And while other Progressives usually endorsed notions of progress associated with “the White Man's Burden,” DuBois took an early stand against American expansionism. Thus, although his own category of race harbored romantic assumptions, it nevertheless pushed him toward the anti-imperialist Marxism of his later years.

Having allowed the pragmatism of James and the historical method of Hart to shape his work of the 1890s, DuBois now returned to Hegel and other Idealists, especially Thomas Carlyle. According to David Levering Lewis, DuBois felt an “affinity” for Hegel, “from whose *Phenomenology of Mind* he borrowed more or less intact notions of distinct, hierarchical racial attributes.” Further, “[he] found in the Hegelian World-Spirit, dialectically actualizing itself through history, a profoundly appealing concept.” Lewis continues:

“Lordship and Bondage,” Hegel's lodestar essay, explicated a complex reciprocity of master and slave in which the identities of both could be fully realized only to the extent that the consciousness of one was mediated through that of the other. If the master understood dominance, it was the slave who truly understood the sovereign value of freedom.⁴⁴

Understanding the history of freedom in American society, DuBois believed, necessitated studying slavery, emancipation, and continuing racial discrimination, so that African Americans had to be central to the story.⁴⁵ But since Hegel himself had deliberately excluded Africans from his analysis, it seemed obvious to DuBois that history had been abused: a “Veil” had been placed in front of it and, in the process, people of African descent had been stripped of their “manhood.”

It was this veil that had confounded his earlier social scientific work, DuBois now felt. Clearly, ignorance alone had not been the problem. Racism interfered in important ways with science, preventing the collection of certain facts and distorting those already accumulated. Science and scien-

tific history, for DuBois, were too myopic in their present form to deal with racism, and historians gathered only those facts that were agreeable to themselves and their society. "Before that nameless prejudice," DuBois would write,

[the Negro] stands helpless, dismayed, and well-nigh speechless; before that personal disrespect and mockery, the ridicule and systematic humiliation, the distortion of fact and wanton license of fancy, the cynical ignoring of the better and the boisterous welcoming of the worse, the all-pervading desire to inculcate disdain for everything black, from Toussaint to the devil.⁴⁶

This veil, then, was a close relative of "Orientalism."⁴⁷ Once DuBois acknowledged its existence, he could begin to contemplate alternative cultures, and argue that they were creative and valid on their own terms, turning his reading of Thomas Carlyle into a rigorous critique of American society.⁴⁸ Hence DuBois's emphasis on the Sorrow Songs. These songs symbolized the highest ideals of "the race" and yet they had never been given serious treatment by scholars. DuBois made them central to *The Souls*, embracing their message of hope for a changed world and their implicit critique of exploitation.⁴⁹ Attributing value to black music broadened the confines of Carlyle's criticism of the "cash nexus" and capitalist society from a romanticization of the past and its elites to a belief in the potential of a future based on human creativity.⁵⁰

Employing this cultural critique as his tool, DuBois attempted to "lift the Veil" that had been placed in front of the historical record. In "Of the Dawn of Freedom," DuBois contested many of the conclusions about Reconstruction that were then gaining hold in history departments around the country. Slavery was being downplayed as a cause for the Civil War, but DuBois was categorical in his assessment that the war revolved around the status of Africans in America (*Souls of Black Folk*, p. 10). Most historians were deriding the Freedman's Bureau as a site of corruption and a cause of Reconstruction's failure (for attempting to give too much power and autonomy to the former slaves), but DuBois insisted that the Bureau was "one of the great landmarks of political and social progress" (p. 17). Its failure, DuBois felt, was not in going too far but in being unable or unwilling to go far enough (p. 29). And yet, though he was able to dismiss the conclusions of the new Southern School historians, he remained tied to the old northern interpretations. Thus, he found that the Freedman's Bureau had been held back by "the tyrant and the idler, — the slaveholder who was determined to perpetuate slavery under another name; and the freedman who regarded freedom as perpetual rest, — the Devil and the Deep Sea" (pp. 22–23). While the older vision was preferable to the new, it still harbored prejudices of its own.

DuBois's *John Brown*, published in 1909, was also shaped by his attempt to dismantle the Veil. This was shown explicitly in the book's preface:

After the work of Sanborn, Hinton, Connelley and Redpath, the only excuse for another life of John Brown is an opportunity to lay new emphasis upon the material which they have so carefully collected, and to treat these facts from a different point of view. The viewpoint in this book is that of the little known but vastly important inner development of the Negro American.⁵¹

DuBois's commitment to a deductive method could not be more clearly stated. He saw John Brown as a Carlylean hero who understood the nature of the "Negro Problem" and acted upon it. DuBois wrote, "this book is at once a record of and a tribute to the man who of all Americans has perhaps come nearest to touching the real souls of black folk."⁵² That "the Negro Problem" was central to *John Brown* can be illustrated by comparing it briefly with another work on Brown, written by Oswald Garrison Villard a year after DuBois's work. For DuBois, Brown's awareness of the significance of slavery led him to take the desperate action at Harper's Ferry. He had realized the manner in which slavery had held back American society, for he had assimilated one truth: "The cost of liberty is less than the price of repression" (p. 435). Above all, Brown was not a "crackpot." For Villard, Brown's actions had little effect on the events leading up to the Civil War, and he was no more than an insane man who, after a "deliverance" behind bars, recognized that his actions had been wrong.⁵³ For DuBois, repression was "fraught with the gravest social consequences" (p. 435) undermining social progress and the spiritual strength of a society, and tending "ever to explosion, murder and war" (p. 442), of which Brown's actions were but the logical extension.

DuBois turned both Carlyle and Hegel on their heads by inverting their views of race. In the process, however, he romanticized the category of race and created a mirror image of their historicism. In his study of Africa in the philosophy of culture, Kwame Anthony Appiah argues that DuBois attempted to overcome racism by developing an alternative category of race. According to DuBois, racial characteristics were not related to biological or intrinsic moral differences, but were sociohistorical in nature—in other words, they were socially constructed. And yet, having taken form, they developed histories and cultures, and these gave races meaning. Thus DuBois could write, "the history of the world is the history, not of individuals, but of groups, not of nations, but of races."⁵⁴ In this history, "races have a 'message' for humanity," and each one differed. One was not better than another; it was merely different. Thus DuBois wished to take a concept of race that was constructed along a vertical, hierarchical axis (one race is better than another) and give it a horizontal reading. But while the attempt to highlight certain "race abilities" might lead to a more equitable estimation of the different contributions of the races, "it might just as easily," according to Appiah, "lead to chauvinism or total incomprehension."⁵⁵ Racial stereotyping might be a by-product of such a method.

Perhaps, then, *The Negro*, published in 1915, represented the culmination of this approach to the analysis of African Americans and race. In this work DuBois brought to bear the latest historical and anthropological knowledge about the African diaspora. With the aid of the then recently published work of Franz Boas (with whom he came in contact while at Atlanta University), DuBois undertook a sophisticated discussion of the history of the cultures of Africa south of the Sahara.⁵⁶ The romantic racialism evident in *The Souls of Black Folk* was very much present in this path-breaking study, but the concern for what lay beyond African American experiences was crucial. Focusing on Africa gave DuBois an acute appreciation of the European colonialism following "the Scramble for Africa" as well as of the efforts of African peoples to resist European power. At a time when European notions of progress still prevailed, DuBois's romanticism would place him nearer to Alexander Crummell (who suggested that African Americans could help lead and "uplift" the people on this "dark" continent)⁵⁷ than it would to the anticolonial writers of twenty years later. But as DuBois commenced writing *The Negro*, the First World War had already begun in Europe; and though its consequences remained unclear to him at this time, the imperial world would be "changed utterly" and "a terrible beauty . . . born."

"Philosophical"

This "terrible beauty" was anticolonial Marxism, or "Black Marxism," as Cedric Robinson has described it (though its adherents reached beyond the African diaspora).⁵⁸ It was certainly not conceived in the war, since anticolonialism of different forms had already been witnessed in many parts of the world (Haiti, Virginia and Demerara, and the western and southern frontiers of the United States in the New World, along with India, Nyasaland, and the Philippines elsewhere, to name but a few).⁵⁹ So too, Marxism was hardly new when the war began. What the war did, in essence, was bring all opponents of imperial capitalism into dialogue. On the one hand, a man like DuBois could now look to the Russian Revolution for an alternative to that "cash nexus," which he had found so disquieting in "Of the Wings of Atalanta" and "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others." On the other hand, in seeking their internationalism, European Marxists now had to consider, though not necessarily welcome, the anticolonial movements developing from India to Africa, Ireland, and (with Garvey) the Americas. Radicals who spoke in terms of class conflict would need to address those who talked in terms of race—Lenin and Stalin would have to speak to the descendants of Louverture and Chilembwe—when before there had seemed no need.⁶⁰

Having earlier criticized Marxian socialists (like Debs) for their failure to consider issues of race, W.E.B. DuBois had, by the 1930s, moved toward his own brand of Black Marxism. This represented a substantial shift in his

writing brought on by a number of events that pushed him into conflict with his Progressive colleagues at the NAACP. First, there was the campaign in 1916 against *The Birth of a Nation*, the movie that had been so carefully crafted around the leading historical interpretations of the Civil War and Reconstruction. This was followed by the U.S. intervention in the First World War, which DuBois had so clearly described as an imperial war, but which he supported in the hope that it would improve the position of "dark" peoples around the world. Following the war, however, the race riots of Chicago and East St. Louis, and the manner in which the world leaders both refused to hear Pan-African demands at the Paris Peace Conference and, endorsed by Woodrow Wilson, reestablished colonialism, brought home to DuBois his mistake. Finally, his increasing consternation was accompanied by a growing awareness (made possible through his Pan-African commitments) that racism in the United States was not exceptional and that colonialism in Africa was matched by colonialism in China, India, and the Philippines.⁶¹ These multiple experiences of racism, he now felt, could be observed collectively using class analysis.

DuBois's own criticism of his early work *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade* reveals the degree to which he felt he had adopted Marxist analysis in his work. In 1954, he claimed that he had earlier been ignorant "of the significance of the work of Freud and Marx." After outlining how his education at Harvard and in Germany had made him feel that Marx had already been "superseded" and so he had given "little time to firsthand study of his work," he wrote:

This was important in my interpretation of the history of slavery and the slave-trade. For if the influence of economic motives on the action of mankind ever had clearer illustration it was in the modern history of the African race, and particularly in America. No real conception of this appears in my book. There are some approaches, some allusions, but no complete realization of the application of the philosophy of Karl Marx to my subject. That concept came much later, when I began intensive study of the facts of society, culminating in my *Black Reconstruction* in 1935.

Finally, he concluded his assessment of both the earlier work, and implicitly the method of history from which it sprang: "What I needed was to add to my terribly conscientious search into the facts of the slave-trade the clear concept of Marx on the class struggle for income and power, beneath which all considerations of right or morals were twisted or utterly crushed."⁶²

This twisting of right and morals was most clearly evidenced in the development of the historical profession and in its commitment to "scientific history." DuBois's radical interpretation of Reconstruction would appear so "controversial" because the acceptance of white supremacy and the Southern solutions to the "Negro Question" had become widespread, either implicitly or explicitly, among American historians. In the final chapter of *Black Reconstruction in America*, entitled "The Propaganda of History," Du-

Bois demonstrated the extent of this acceptance of white mythology. "We have too often a deliberate attempt so to change the facts of history," he wrote, "that the story will make pleasant reading for Americans."⁶³ In short, propaganda enabled racist histories to remain unquestioned.

DuBois was keenly aware that the archive that historians had developed was hopelessly biased in favor of elites. "The chief witness in Reconstruction, the emancipated slave himself, has been almost barred from court," he wrote.

His written Reconstruction record has been largely destroyed and nearly always neglected. Only three or four states have preserved the debates in the Reconstruction conventions; there are few biographies of black leaders. The Negro is refused a hearing because he was poor and ignorant. It is therefore assumed that all Negroes in Reconstruction were ignorant and silly and that therefore the history of Reconstruction in any state can quite ignore him. The result is that most unfair caricatures of Negroes have been carefully preserved; but serious speeches, successful administration and upright character are almost universally ignored and forgotten.

Treating African Americans "with silence and contempt" in this way enabled American writers, "with a determination unparalleled in science," to distort "the facts of the greatest critical period of American history as to prove right wrong and wrong right" (p. 721).

"I stand at the end of this writing, literally aghast at what American historians have done to this field" (p. 725), DuBois pronounced. What had the leading American historians, like John William Burgess and William A. Dunning, done? According to DuBois, Burgess was both "frank and determined in his anti-Negro thought" and "a Tory and open apostle of reaction" (pp. 718-19). Yet, DuBois could write, "Subtract from Burgess his belief that only white people can rule, and he is in essential agreement with me" (p. 726). Throughout his major work, *Reconstruction and the Constitution* (1905), Burgess illustrated his racism:

The claim that there is nothing in the colour of the skin from the point of view of political ethics is a great sophism. A black skin means membership in a race of men which has never of itself succeeded in subjecting passion to reason, has never therefore, created any civilization of any kind.⁶⁴

Founding his work on this premise, Burgess suggested that "it is the white man's mission, his duty and his right, to hold the reins of political power in his hands for the civilization of the world and the welfare of mankind" (p. 719).⁶⁵ Burgess's quirky Hegelian approach to history obviously did not allow for the incorporation of black people in his unfolding dialectic. The evolution toward "more and more individual liberty" granted by the American state would exclude African Americans.⁶⁶ And while Burgess would argue that the South had failed to understand "the plans of Providence,"

southerners were at least correct in believing that these plans were completely lost on people of African descent.

William A. Dunning was less dogmatic than Burgess, and DuBois believed that his statements were often judicious.⁶⁷ But even Dunning could declare, in *Reconstruction, Political and Economic*, that during Reconstruction "all forces (in the South) that made for civilization were dominated by a mass of barbarous freedmen." Consequently, he maintained that slavery, or some other system like segregation, was necessary as a method of race control.⁶⁸ Under his aegis "Bourbon historiography," or the school of "political fable," as DuBois described it,⁶⁹ became established at Columbia University. This school produced monograph after monograph detailing the "horrors" of Reconstruction and the grandeur with which rulers of the South had managed to restore "civilization."⁷⁰ At Columbia, Dunning trained historians like Walter L. Fleming, Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, and Charles W. Ramsdell to use scientific methods in conjunction with the propagation of racist belief. According to DuBois, the results of this method were "first, endless sympathy with the white South; second, ridicule, contempt or silence for the Negro; third, a judicial attitude towards the North, which concluded that the North under great misapprehension did a grievous wrong, but eventually saw its mistake and retreated."⁷¹ This amounts to a precis of the screenplay for *The Birth of a Nation*, which DuBois had played such a large part in protesting after its release to general fanfare and presidential acclaim.

Historians and historical novelists⁷² had turned history into an exercise in propaganda—the establishment of white myths. It was now "useless as science and misleading as ethics," DuBois wrote. "It simply shows that with sufficient general agreement and determination among the dominant classes, the truth of history may be utterly distorted and contradicted and changed to any convenient fairy tale that the masters of men wish" (*Black Reconstruction*, pp. 725–26). And if this was true for the history of Reconstruction, it was likely to be the case for American history, and beyond that for people outside the United States. DuBois turned his attention to finding out whether this was true, and if so, replacing propagandist narratives with an alternative, if incomplete, counternarrative.

The result of this endeavor was *Black Folk: Then and Now*, in which DuBois challenged Eugene Guernier's 1933 repetition of "the ancient lie of 1833" (Hegel): "Seule de tous les continents, l'Afrique n'a pas d'histoire."⁷³ He understood the incompleteness of his project, that it would rely in some places on "conjecture and even guesswork," but felt this was preferable to the "widespread lack of knowledge" and the "irritating silence" with regard to Africa and people of African descent (p. vii). Moreover, learning from his survey of American historians and their pretensions to objectivity, DuBois announced his own presuppositions in his preface:

I do not for a moment doubt that my Negro descent and narrow group culture have in many cases predisposed me to interpret my facts too favorably for my race; but there is little danger of long misleading here, for the champions of white folk are legion. The Negro has long been the clown of history; the football of anthropology; and the slave of industry. I am trying to show here why these attitudes can no longer be maintained. I realize that the truth of history lies not in the mouths of partisans but rather in the calm Science that sits between. Her cause I seek to serve, and wherever I fail, I am at least paying Truth the respect of earnest effort. (p. ix)

Truth was for someone in the future to determine; DuBois saw his task less in the effort to establish encyclopedic facts than in debunking false assumptions and lies.⁷⁴

This task was particularly important as the world that American Reconstruction had helped to make, the imperial world of the Scramble for Africa, appeared to be on the verge of implosion in the wake of World War I and the rise of German and Italian fascism. What DuBois wished to do in this study was highlight not only the ways Africans had been sucked into other people's history through slavery and the slave trade, but how through resistance — from Toussaint Louverture to anti-colonial rebels in the Congo, Nyasaland, Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa — they had made that world their own; or to borrow from Paul Gilroy, how they had established a "Black Atlantic."⁷⁵

DuBois's Marxism, then, was anticolonial in essence. This he made abundantly clear in the volume's closing passage:

The Proletariat of the world consists not simply of white European and American workers but overwhelmingly of the dark workers of Asia, Africa, the islands of the sea, and South and Central America. These are the ones who are supporting a superstructure of wealth, luxury, and extravagance. It is the rise of these people that is the rise of the world. (*Black Folk*, p. 383)

Precisely "the modern history of the African race" and the manner in which it linked up to other "subaltern" histories exemplified the Marxian philosophy. Nevertheless, when DuBois finally announced his membership in the U.S. Communist Party in October of 1961, from his new home in Accra, he was not only confirming this link between Marxism and anti-colonialism; he was also transcending Marx, since the latter had stuck to the Eurocentric Hegelian vision of African history.⁷⁶

Conclusion

In this intellectual journey from positivism to anticolonial Marxism, the significance of *The Philadelphia Negro* was profound. Within this work could be found both the highest expression of empirical social science much touted during the 1890s and a glimmering of the idealism of *The Souls of Black Folk*, which ultimately would lead to an assault on positivism similar in

content and scope to Marx's assault on classical political economy. The very dynamic quality of the Philadelphia study highlighted the fact that DuBois's gradual self-transformation from *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade* through *The Souls of Black Folk* to *Black Reconstruction in America* was no leap from the mainstream of the historical profession into polemical essays and "controversial interpretive frameworks," but was rather a series of well-considered steps prompted by the limitations found in each methodology encountered and employed along the way. As such, DuBois's giant steps provide comments on the nature of that profession, its polemical bases, and its propagandist intentions that historians at the end of DuBois's century would do well to heed.

The author would like to thank the participants in the W.E.B. DuBois symposium, especially Robin Kelley, Carl Nightingale, Tom Sugrue, Mia Bay, and Michael Katz, for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

Notes

1. Eric Foner, *Nothing but Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), pp. 5–6; Foner relies on Herbert Aptheker, *Afro-American History: The Modern Era* (New York: Citadel Press, 1971), p. 67.

2. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

3. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986). Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, pp. 5–6; p. 71. Since the book intends to "illuminate the rise and the transformation of black history as a research field" (p. xi) this treatment of DuBois is problematic.

4. Novick, *That Noble Dream*, chaps. 1, 4, 7, and 8.

5. "My whole life had been a chronology of changes," *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), p. 346.

6. Particularly Randolph Bourne, *War and the Intellectuals* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

7. Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology" (paper presented to the Annenberg Seminar in History, Department of History, University of Pennsylvania, April 20, 1995); see also Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), chap. 6.

8. Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990).

9. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993).

10. Novick, *That Noble Dream*, pp. 21–46.

11. W. Stull Holt, *Historical Scholarship in the United States* (London: University of Washington Press, 1967), p. 21.

12. This was an inductive approach very similar to that promoted at the same time by Thomas Babington Macaulay in England. See Macaulay's essay on Ranke in *Critical and Historical Essays* (London: J. M. Dent, 1907), pp. 38–72.

13. Holt, *Historical Scholarship*, pp. 22–23.

14. As Carl L. Becker and Charles A. Beard would point out later, the notion of objectivity employed by the inductive school was itself a theory, and adherence to it entailed implicit assumptions. Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *American Historical Review* 37, 2 (January 1932): 221-36; Beard, "Written History as an Act of Faith," *American Historical Review* 39, 2 (January 1934): 219-29. E. P. Thompson overlooked this point in his critique of Louis Althusser in *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978), pp. 1-210.

15. According to Harvey Wish, "Adams's actual histories were well within Ranke's canons of scientific history; and his own formulas derived from natural science produced no history whatsoever." *The American Historian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 162. See also Henry Steele Commager in *Essays in Historiography*, ed. Marcus Jernegen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 191.

16. Holt, *Historical Scholarship*, p. 21.

17. Novick, *That Noble Dream*, p. 30. The conflict between inductive and deductive historians was not as significant as many felt at the time. Even though heated debates were common, like the one between James Mill and Macaulay in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, those debates would dissipate when conclusions were drawn about the direction of history. Whether or not the inductive or the deductive methods were adopted, both Mill and Macaulay concluded that the history of civilization justified British imperialism in India. For American historians at the end of that century, as Novick writes, "optimism was the great solvent of doubt in the epistemological as in the ideological realm." *That Noble Dream*, p. 105.

18. Arnold Rampersad, in "A Divided Career," *The Art and Imagination of W.E.B. DuBois* (New York: Schocken Books, 1990), pp. 48-67.

19. DuBois, "My Evolving Program for Negro Freedom," in Rayford Logan, ed., *What the Negro Wants* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 39; quoted in Baltzell, introduction to the 1967 edition of *The Philadelphia Negro*, p. xvi.

20. Quoted in Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, p. 5.

21. Most of the abstract formulations in *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969) were to be found in the conclusion, where DuBois discussed the dangers of nations engaging in "moral wrong" and the need for "nations as well as men to do things at the very moment when they ought to be done" (p. 199).

22. Eugene Genovese republished the work in 1959; A. Norman Klein, introduction to the 1969 edition, in *Suppression*, pp. xi-xxvii; David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. DuBois: Biography of a Race* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), pp. 155-61; DuBois, "Apologia," in *Suppression*, pp. xxxi-iv.

23. DuBois, *Suppression*, p. 143; Lewis, *DuBois*, p. 153.

24. One of DuBois's last essays focused on Toussaint Louverture. Eric J. Sundquist, ed., *The Oxford W.E.B. DuBois Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 296-302.

25. Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America During the First Administration of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1921) 1:384-85.

26. See pp. 70-93.

27. Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964); C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (New York: Vintage, 1963); Michael B. Zuckerman, "The Power of Blackness," in *Almost Chosen People: Oblique Biographies in the American Grain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).

28. Edward Potts Cheyney, *History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1790-1940* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940), p. 261.

29. The University's debt to the city is evident in "Proceedings at the Opening of

the Library of the University of Pennsylvania," pamphlet (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1891).

30. Baltzell, "Introduction," to the 1967 edition of *The Philadelphia Negro*, p. xviii.

31. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn*, pp. 3, 51; Baltzell, "Introduction," p. xviii.

32. Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and London Poor* (New York: Harper, 1851); Baltzell, "Introduction," pp. xvii-xviii.

33. E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963).

34. Robert Gregg, *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression: Philadelphia's African Methodists and Southern Migrants* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), chap. 3; Arthur Huff Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis: Negro Cults in the Urban North* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971).

35. He was far more sensitive to such divisions than was his contemporary William Dorsey. See Roger Lane, *William Dorsey's Philadelphia and Ours: On the Past and Future of the Black City in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

36. Gregg, *Sparks*, chaps. 1-3.

37. For a discussion of this, see Joe William Trotter, Jr., "Introduction" to *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 2-3.

38. DuBois, "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study," *Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Labor* 3 (January 1898).

39. Daniel T. Rodgers, *Contested Truths: Keywords in American Politics Since Independence* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), p. 47.

40. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dutton, 1995), p. 36.

41. A recent version of this statement is to be found in the movie *The Commitments*, where the protagonist explains to the members of his band that they should play soul music because "the Irish are the blacks of Europe, and the Dubliners are the blacks of Ireland."

42. See David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991); *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness* (London: Verso, 1994); and Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, Vol. 1, *Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London: Verso, 1994).

43. Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901* (New York: Dial, 1954).

44. Lewis, *DuBois*, pp. 139-40.

45. With this in mind, it is not surprising that DuBois should have both begun and ended his essay "Of the Dawn of Freedom," a study of the years 1861 to 1872, with the oft-quoted phrase: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line." *Souls of Black Folk*, pp. 10, 29.

46. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk*, p. 7.

47. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

48. It must be remembered that Carlyle himself had denied the significance of Africans to history; Eugene R. August, ed., *Thomas Carlyle's "The Nigger Question" and John Stuart Mill's "The Negro Question"* (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1971). He provided inspiration for DuBois, however, in his characterization of any kind of work as important, for "all work, even cotton-spinning is alone noble." Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. 155. This approach to culture was later employed by scholars like Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1975); and E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966), who endeavored to theorize and valorize working-class culture. See Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, p. 11; Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity*

in *Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 55–89 for related discussions of Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*.

49. Just as William Morris was inspired by Icelandic people and their myths, and was able to move beyond feelings of stagnation and despair to realize that there were worlds beyond that of Gradgrind, so DuBois was inspired by the Sorrow Songs; E. P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London: Merlin Press, 1977), pp. 175–91.

50. See, for example, the final passage of *Souls of Black Folk*, p. 187. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, p. 125.

51. DuBois, *John Brown*, in Julius Lester, ed., *The Seventh Son: The Thought and Writings of W.E.B. DuBois* (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 432.

52. DuBois, *John Brown*. In *The Art and Imagination of W.E.B. DuBois*, Rampersad maintains that DuBois placed the Carlylean hero John Brown into the historical framework of Hippolyte Taine. According to Rampersad, Brown's martyrdom was shown to be the result of forces arising from his race, milieu, and moment, together with "those psychological qualities and accidents that set him apart from other men subjected to the same pressures" (p. 110). There is no evidence that DuBois used Taine directly, and his ideas were derived more from German than French thinkers. Nevertheless, slavery and "the Negro Problem" in DuBois's writings certainly corresponded to Taine's notion of the milieu.

53. Oswald Garrison Villard, *John Brown* (London: Constable, 1910), pp. 588–89.

54. Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 28. See Robert Gregg, "Beyond Boundaries, Beyond the Whale," *American Quarterly*, 45, 4 (December 1993): 631–38.

55. Appiah, *My Father's House*, p. 94.

56. DuBois, *The Negro* (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus-Thomson, 1975); Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, p. 6.

57. Appiah, *My Father's House*, p. 28.

58. Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism* (London: Zed Press, 1983).

59. C.L.R. James's *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (New York: Charles H. Kerr, 1995) focuses on the African and African American revolts mentioned here. L. S. Stavrianos, in *Global Rift: The Third World Comes of Age* (New York: William Morrow, 1981), highlights this intersection of Marxism and anticolonialism following the First World War and the Russian Revolution, chaps. 19–22.

60. Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1990), pp. xi–xv, and 119–92 discusses this nexus between Marx and black protest.

61. Paul Gilroy has placed considerable emphasis on the novel *Dark Princess* (1928) in turning DuBois toward a more internationalist perspective. The importance of this text lies in DuBois's attempt to bring together an African American radical and a South Asian princess, who becomes a trade union radical and political activist in the United States. The work shows clearly DuBois's awareness that the experiences of exploitative labor were shared by a proletariat made up of "yellow, brown, and black peoples," and that, while unique in many respects, African experiences were not wholly exceptional. Many of the ideas put forward in *Dark Princess* were emerging in DuBois's thought as early as his comments on the war in the Philippines in *The Souls* and were influenced by his attendance at the London Races Conference of 1911, but the novel is very much a product of the 1920s. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, pp. 140–45. See also Lewis, *DuBois*, pp. 440–42.

62. DuBois, "Apologia," pp. xxxi–ii, xxxiv.

63. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Atheneum, 1979), p. 713.
64. William Burgess, *Reconstruction and the Constitution* (New York: Scribners, 1903), pp. viii-ix, 133.
65. Wish, *American Historian*, p. 232; and DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, p. 719.
66. For Burgess's brush with Hegelianism and his racism, see Rodgers, *Contested Truths*, pp. 164-66.
67. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, p. 719.
68. Wish, *American Historian*, p. 232.
69. DuBois in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *The Correspondence of W.E.B. DuBois* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), p. 150.
70. DuBois in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *The Book Reviews of W.E.B. DuBois* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press), p. 14.
71. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, p. 719. See also his penetrating review of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips's *American Negro Slavery* (1918). DuBois wrote: "The Negro as a responsible human being has no place in the book. . . . Nowhere is there an adequate conception of 'darkies,' 'niggers' and 'negroes' (words liberally used throughout the book) as making a mass of humanity with all the usual human reactions." Phillips established arguments, according to DuBois, "by innuendo and assumption." Aptheker, *Book Reviews*, p. 58. See also I. A. Newby, *The Defense of Jim Crow* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1965), p. 3.
72. The line between historians and historical novelists was a fine one at this time. Woodrow Wilson's *History of the American People* (1895) inspired Reverend Thomas Dixon (a former Princeton student) to write *The Clansman* (1905), which in turn led to the creation of D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). Thus looking only at the output of historians seriously underestimates their influence during the first three decades of the twentieth century.
73. DuBois, "Alone of all the continents, Africa has no history," *Black Folk: Then and Now* (New York: Kraus-Thomson, 1975), p. 219.
74. However, DuBois never gave up on the idea of producing an *Encyclopedia Africana*. Given the imperial genealogy of encyclopedias (the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* having one of its origins in the attempt of Scottish intellectuals at the end of the eighteenth century to improve their standing in the British empire), DuBois's commitment to this idea revealed the degree to which he remained unwilling to contest notions of "historical truth," even when it meant participating in the re-creation of a genre that had been instrumental in theorizing African inferiority.
75. DuBois, *Black Folk*. For DuBois's most extensive treatment of Toussaint and Saint Domingue, see pp. 145-76; for twentieth-century rebellions see pp. 380-81. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, pp. 1-40. See also James, *History of Pan-African Revolt*, which was similar to *Black Folk* in many respects.
76. Klein, Introduction to DuBois, *Suppression*, p. xi.