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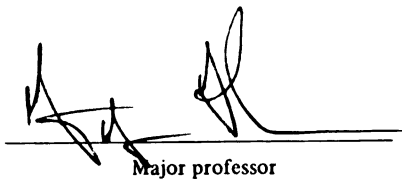
A REVOLUTION OF THE COLORED RACES:
MERGING OF AFRICAN AND INDIAN THOUGHT
IN A NOVEL.

presented by

Shruti Bhawana Tewari

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of the requirements for

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**A REVOLUTION OF THE COLORED RACES: MERGING OF AFRICAN AND
INDIAN THOUGHT IN A NOVEL**

By

Shruti Bhawana Tewari

A Thesis

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

A REVOLUTION OF THE COLORED RACES:
MERGING OF AFRICAN AND INDIAN
THOUGHT IN A NOVEL.

By

Shruti Bhawana Tewari

“We are - a part of a great committee of a darker peoples;” This is what the Indian Princess of the novel *Dark Princess* tells the protagonist, Michael Towns, an African American youth, “... of those who suffer under the arrogance and tyranny of the white world,” (p16). *Dark Princess* by WEB Du Bois deals with the issues the “Darker World faces” (p 19). Using the novel as a jumping off point I intend to look at the influences of African and Indian thought on each other’s cultures and what binds these two together. Recent research has shown influence of Africa in ancient India. The fact that Du Bois decided to merge the two cultures together is ahead of its time. Why did Du Bois use an Indian element in his novel? May be in his exile in Ghana he came across a lot of Indians and found their struggle similar to that of African Americans? This thesis will investigate that and more.

**For all their love and encouragement to my parents: Asha and
Bhushan**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*"...Afrikans all over the world
Moving to the new way
A world of Good people is coming!
We gonna help make that world
We gonna help eliminate the negative
accentuate the positive
yellow folk brown folks and red
folks will too
they hurting"*

Afrikan Revolution by Amiri Baraka¹

INTRODUCTION

"We are - a part of a great committee of a darker peoples;" This is what the Indian Princess of the novel *Dark Princess* tells the protagonist, Michael Towns, an African American youth, "... of those who suffer under the arrogance and tyranny of the white world," (p16). *Dark Princess* by WEB Du Bois deals with the issues the "Darker World faces" (p 19). Using the novel as a jumping off point I intend to look at the influences of African and Indian thought on each other's cultures and what binds these two together in the novel. It may not seem on the outset that the cultures have many things in common, but with deeper probing it becomes more explicit. To begin with, I intend to give a brief introduction to Indian and African

¹ Amiri Baraka, *The Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*

cultures, and then move onto an introduction of *Dark Princess* and the movies and music I will discuss in this paper. Recent research has shown influence of Africa in ancient India. The fact that Du Bois decided to merge the two cultures together is ahead of its time. Why did Du Bois use an Indian element in his novel? Especially since the novel was written before Indian independence? May be in his exile in Ghana he came across a lot of Indians and found their struggle similar to that of African Americans? Whatever the case, it was extremely insightful and has opened up a whole realm of thought for me. This essay intends to investigate issues that are raised by the novel and will hopefully expand into a larger project in the near future.

HISTORY OF HINDUISM AND CONNECTION WITH AFRICA

Surprisingly, there seems to be a significant similarities and links between Hinduism and Africa Churches were extremely important to the black social movements of the late 19th century and early 20th century as both spiritual and social hubs for

their followers, in the same way, Hinduism is as much a way of social life as it is a religion. The caste system, is an integral part of Hindu religious doctrine and practice. The origin of the caste system is not known with certainty, some speculate it came about with the arrival of the Aryans. However, modern theorists assume that caste system arose from racial distinctions, and occupational differentiation.

So what is a caste and why is it significant to this project? I will examine what caste is first and then elaborate on the links between caste, race and India and African links. In general, a caste is an “endogamous hereditary group of families, bearing a common name; often claiming a common descent, as a rule professing to follow the same hereditary calling, clinging to the same customs, especially regarding purity, meals, and marriages, and often further divided into smaller endogamous circles. Moreover, tribes, guilds, or religious communities characterized by particular customs—for example, the Lingayats—could easily be regarded as castes. The status of castes varies in different localities.

Although social mobility is possible, the mutual relationship of castes is hierarchically determined: local Brahman groups occupy the highest place, and differences in ritual purity are the main criteria of position in the hierarchy. Most impure are the untouchables, shudras or, to use modern names, the exterior or scheduled castes, which, however, have among themselves numerous divisions, each of which regards itself as superior to others.” (Smith 8).

The link between caste the untouchable/shudra/harijan (all the same caste) in particular, Africa and Africans is extremely interesting as “the term Shudra is first recorded from Sanskrit texts as referring to one of the black aboriginal tribes that the Aryans encountered. It is the name of a black tribe that was adopted into Sanskrit and was subsequently used to denote those blacks that had entered the caste system as the lowest 'varna' or color. They were the black varna. Initially, a distinction was drawn between Shudra and Adivasi (aboriginal blacks outside the caste system). However, in Prakrits the distinction was

blurred, and Shudra was used for any aboriginal. During the Islamic Califate of Hindustan, Arabic became a sacred language, and in Arabic 'sudd' means black (hence the 'bilad as-Sudan' or the Sudan of Africa), and hence Sudra was used for any black, even the blacks imported from Africa."² Until the adoption of the new constitutions in independent India and Pakistan, the untouchables were subjected to many social restrictions, which increased in severity from north to south in India. This relates to the racialized situation in the United States.

VT Rajshekar, in his book *Dalit: The Black Untouchables of India*, states that he will offer an "expose of the historical roots of Nazi racism in the ideology elaborated by the Aryan conquerors of the original black population of the once flourishing Indus Valley civilization, a conquest that marked the introduction of Brahminical Hinduism and the caste system" (Rajshekar 2). This can be equated to the White European's invasion of Africa and starting the slave trade. Rajshekar proves this point

² http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/1335/Anthro/sud_afr.html

as he notes, “The original black peoples of the Indus valley came to be defined in terms of their conquerors-as Untouchables-in much the same way as African-Americans were defined in American history books as slaves rather than captured Africans, obliterating their identity” (Rajshekar 4).

The Dalit, Shudra, or Untouchable who were the original inhabitants of India resembled Africans in physical features, “It is said that India and Africa were one land mass until separated by the ocean. So both the Africans and the Indian Untouchables and tribals had common ancestors.” (Rajshekar 43)

Many observers today say the Civil Rights movement is over and the blacks won. Certainly, significant progress has been made legislatively and socially, but the sad fact remains the racism continues to plague the American consciousness. Likewise, the Indian constitution today formally recognizes the plight of the untouchables, besides banning untouchability, the constitution also provides these groups with specific educational and vocational privileges and grants them special

representation in the Indian parliament.

In his book, *Introduction to the Study of African Classical Civilizations*, Runooko Rashidi, in the Chapter “African Presence in Asia,” states Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop’s conception of the ‘Zone of Confluence.’ ‘The Zone of Confluence’ is the middle ground between the Southern or Black cradle and the Northern or White Cradle. The influence of Africa on Asia is hardly studied and Diop states that it covers more than 90,000 years. “As the first known hominids and modern human populations as simple hunters and gatherers and primitive agriculturalists, as heroic warriors and premier civilizers, as sages and priests, poets and prophets, and even as servants and slaves the Black people have known Asia intimately from the very beginning.” Rashidi goes on to add about the Blacks in Asia, “Who these Blacks are, and what they have done and are now doing are profound questions that beg and demand answers. These answers which we must diligently seek to supply, are not designed merely to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of an elite group, but to further the vision of Pan-Africanism

and reunite a family that has been separated for too long.” (Rashidi 89). This is Rashidi’s view in 1992. Was Du Bois a precursor of all of this? Was he ahead of his time in uniting the long lost family of Indians and Africans? WEB Du Bois does state in *The World and Africa* that “first a prehistoric substratum of Negrillos; then the pre Dravidian, a taller, larger type of Negro; then the Dravidians, Negroes with some mixture of Mongloid and later of Caucasian stocks. The Dravidian Negroes laid the basis of Indian culture thousand of years before the Christian era” (p176). Wayne B.Chandler in *African Presence in Early Asia* feels that “Du Bois is correct of course in his identification of the Harappans as Black; however, the Harrappans represented a meshing of the Ethiopian Negrito and the Proto-Australoid solely.”(p86) It then becomes obvious that Du Bois was aware of this thinking and was therefore spanning his Pan-Africanism. The link between African Americans, Indian Dalits/Shudras/Untouchables is similar in the way they are viewed by the “majority” in their social system, and both groups share an obvious link with

Africa.

DISCUSSION OF *DARK PRINCESS*;
INFLUENCE OF GANDHI, MARTIN LUTHER
KING JR AND MALCOLM X

According to Claudia Tate, Du Bois relied on his knowledge and background in other cultures and religions to provide the framework presented in *Dark Princess*, which also served as a vehicle to explore his own personal desires. Unfortunately, historical accuracy tends to take a backseat to personal flights of fantasy in this book. Pointing to his strong ego and respect for historical accuracy, Tate says that, “Although Du Bois saw himself as a modern man, indeed a man of scientific reason, he was for the most of his life a romantic who linked his revolutionary doctrine to his belief in providential history and thereby transformed social data into eroticized cultural metaphors. But, unlike most of his contemporaries, this modern Victorian was not afraid to reveal -- albeit in abstract, idealized, and novelistic forms -- his deepest and most personal desires in his writings” (xxvi). Certainly, the book is tame by contemporary

standards, but the narrative is sluggish and contrived, and Du Bois met with limited success and some criticism as a result of writing *Dark Princess*. Nevertheless, today, Du Bois' fans are legion and they are practically effusive about anything he wrote.

In her introduction, Claudia Tate says that Du Bois may have had *Dark Princess* in mind when he insisted on the right of "black folk to love and enjoy" in "The Criteria of Negro Art." "For in this novel Du Bois not only promoted racial propaganda by countering the ideology of white supremacy with black exceptionalism; he also dared to portray lavishly, indeed wholeheartedly embrace beauty, refinement, and sensuality in the novel and, thereby, reject the stereotypes of unsightliness, coarseness, and wanton sexuality routinely associated with black people" (xx). In this regard, Tate says, "the plot of *Dark Princess* is rather fantastic. Parts I and II -- 'The Exile' and 'The Pullman Porter' -- emphatically rely on romantic conventions to plot racial frustration by mapping it onto the story of courtly love No longer believing in the ethic of

hard work, Matthew becomes an exile in Berlin. Here, he deflects a racist insult from injuring a beautiful woman of color, Princess Kautilya of India. She is the head of an international team of people of color who are forming an organization to resist Western imperialism” (xxi-xxii).

Upon his return to America, Matthew meets the fanatical leader, Perigua; becomes a Pullman porter; and, with Perigua, “plans a strike of the Pullman porters which does not come off. But later, when a fellow-worker, innocent of the charge of insulting the mistress of a Klansman, is lynched, Matthew and Perigua plan to avenge his death by wrecking a train carrying Klan delegates. However, Towns learns that the Princess is on the train -- and hundreds of white lives are saved; however, Towns refuses to tell all he knows of the plot to wreck the train and is sent to Joliet prison.” (Race Discrimination 5)

Sara Andrews, a secretary, who enjoys wide political influence in Chicago, manages to get Towns a pardon. Our protagonist and Sara marry and he becomes a member of the State Legislature.

“Through graft Sara becomes rich and ambitious. She gives an exclusive little party, including several prominent whites, to launch Matthew for Congress. However, the Princess of Bwodpur, who has been working as a servant and a factory girl "to see it for herself," suddenly appears and spirits Towns away.”
(Race Discrimination, 5-6)

According to the 1928 review, “When the Princess leaves him he goes back to manual labor and Sara secures a divorce. The princess has an ideal of justice to the dark races (although she remains untouched by her own ‘untouchables’)--and she loves Matthew, so she decides to renounce her right to become a ruling monarch, "one whose jewels and motor cars, gowns and servants, palaces and Durbars would make a whole world babble." She, who had been presented at the Court of St. James's, who would not "stoop to English strawberry leaves," goes to the home of Matthew's old mother in Virginia to await the birth of Matthew's child, the next Maharajah of Bwodpur. After the future monarch is born Matthew marries the Princess. So it all turns out better for Matthew

Towns than if he had become a doctor (“Race Discrimination” 5-6).

Finally, the criticism focused on the contrived marriage of whimsy and fact (“The book is well written, but there is enough material in it for several novels, and the plot is flamboyant and unconvincing”), but zeroed in on what appeared to be the biggest problem of all with the book. According to the reviewer, it was the theme of miscegenation which was “ . . . so decidedly controversial that to those who believe in the preservation of racial purity the book will fail to lessen their prejudice” (Race Discrimination, 7). Interestingly, from a politically correct point of view, the effort to appear balanced in their assessment only leads to examples of what DuBois was saying all along about life in America: there was a legitimized form of popular thought about black people in America, characterized by a “wink-wink, nudge-nudge” quality which celebrated blacks who were a “credit to their race” and who could meet the high standards required for admission into mainstream society.

Like the caste system of India, this social framework only serves to heighten the differences between the “haves” and the “have nots,” and history has shown that those with power, prestige, and money are generally unwilling to give them up willingly. The 1928 reviewer concedes that, “There is, however, real meat in *Dark Princess*, and such proof of the author's power that it seems a pity he is not using his talent to show the natural ability of the colored man or the nobility of his character, as in ‘Porgy,’ rather than to dwell, over sensitively, on social injustices which are inevitable in any period of racial transition and development -- of white or black” (“Race Discrimination” 6).

Tate says that while Du Bois believed that this novel was an “inspiring work of race propaganda, ‘a romance with a message’ about ‘the difficulties and realities of race prejudice’ on ‘ambitious self-seekers of all races,’ most of his black contemporaries were not impressed. While *Dark Princess* realistically depicted the frustrations that ambitious black people faced as a consequence of racial prejudice and the corruption of urban

politics, the novel's fantastic plot, its spectacular messianic finale (reminiscent of the Magi's adoration of the Christ child), unrestrained sensuality as well as explicit sexuality overwhelmed most of Du Bois' first readers" (xxiii).

The author's reliance on Indian philosophy to provide a vehicle for his personal ideas about human sexuality makes for some interesting comparisons. The similarities reveal that, even when philosophers in India and the West were struggling with the same problems and sometimes even suggesting similar theories, some Indian thinkers, like their black counterparts in America, were creating their own novel formulations and argumentations.

"Problems that the Indian philosophers raised for consideration, but that their Western counterparts never did, include such matters as the origin (utpatti) and apprehension (jñapti) of truth (pramanya) (West 5). However, the research shows that many of the people of India were experiencing the same types of oppression and discrimination which blacks in America were being subjected to at

the turn of the 20th century. Du Bois' description of race as a socially constructed category melds very well with the extensive caste system in India.

Problems that the Indian philosophers for the most part ignored but that helped shape Western philosophy include the question of whether knowledge arises from experience or from reason and distinctions such as those between analytic and synthetic judgments or between contingent and necessary truths. Indian thought, therefore, provides the historian of Western philosophy with a point of view that may supplement that gained from Western thought."

An examination of Indian thought, then, may "reveal certain inadequacies of Western philosophical thought. It may also make clear that some concepts and distinctions may not be as inevitable as they may otherwise appear." Du Bois attempts to acknowledge these distinctions in "The Maharajah of Bwodpur," but the narrative tends to the flowery extremes of historical accuracy, and it makes the going slow. For example: "The world is a great ripe cherry, gory, rotten -- it must be plucked

lest it fall and smash” (262) and “We will build a world, Matthew, you and I, where the Hungry shall be fed, and only the Lazy shall be empty. Oh, I am mad, mad, Matthew, this day when the golden earth bows and falls into the death of Winter toward the resurrection of Spring!” (283). And, “It is unheard of that a Maharanee without a Maharajah should rule in Bwodpur [and] all is not well in Bwodpur; even the throes of revolution threaten: Moslem and Hindu are at odds; Buddhist and Christian quarrel. Bwodpur needs me, Matthew, but she needs more than me: she needs a Maharajah” (262).

Du Bois is clearly exploring some personal fantasies, which, according to all accounts, are based on his unsatisfied, puritan libido rather than his political agenda. “And you must go. Bwodpur - - the darker peoples of the world call you. . . . Kautilya, darling, then I will come -- of course I will come. I will do anything to make the broad straight path of your duty easier to enter. Only one thing I will not do, neither for Wealth nor Power nor Love; and that is to turn your feet from this broad and terrible way. And so to bid you

Godspeed -- to greet you with farewell and to hold you on my heart once more ere I give you up to God -- I come, Kautilya.” “Oh, Matthew -- my beautiful One -- my Man -- come -- come! -- and at sunrise.” “I am coming” (302).

“While it is difficult to say that one view or another can be said to represent either the entire “black” or “Indian” philosophies, there are sufficient commonalties among the mainstream views to allow us to draw some conclusions. On the one hand, the various Indian philosophies contain such a diversity of views, theories, and systems that it is almost impossible to single out characteristics that are common to all of them. Acceptance of the authority of the Vedas characterizes all the orthodox (astika) systems, but not the unorthodox (nastika) systems, such as Carvaka (radical materialism), Buddhism, and Jainism (Smith 5). Three basic concepts form the cornerstone of Indian philosophical thought: the self, or soul (atman), works (karma, or karman), and salvation (moksa).” West goes on to say that aside from the Carvakas,” all Indian philosophies concern

themselves with these three concepts and their interrelations, though this is not to say that they accept the objective validity of these concepts in exactly the same way. Of these three however, the concept of karma (signifying moral efficacy of human actions), seems to be the most typically “Indian.” The concept of atman, not altogether absent in Western thought, corresponds, in a certain sense, to the Western concept of a transcendental or absolute spirit self—important differences notwithstanding. The concept of moksa as the concept of the highest ideal has likewise been one of the concerns of Western thought, especially during the Christian Era, though it probably has never been as important as for the Hindu mind.” West adds that most Indian philosophies assume that moksa is possible, and the “impossibility of moksa” (anirmoksa) is regarded as a material fallacy likely to vitiate a philosophical theory.

“In addition to karma, the lack of two other concerns further differentiates Indian philosophical thought from Western thought in general. Since the time of the Greeks, Western thought has been

concerned with mathematics, and, in the Christian Era, with history. Neither mathematics nor history has ever raised philosophical problems for the Indian. In the lists of prama nas, or ways of knowing accepted by the different schools, there is none that includes mathematical knowledge or historical knowledge. Possibly connected with their indifference toward mathematics is the significant fact that Indian philosophers have not developed formal logic. The theory of the syllogism (a valid deductive argument having two premises and a conclusion) is, however, developed, and much sophistication has been achieved in logical theory. Indian logic offers an instructive example of a logic of cognitions (jñanani) rather than of abstract propositions—a logic not sundered and kept isolated from psychology and the true nature of knowledge, because it is meant to be the logic of man's actual striving to know what is true of the world”(West 5).

W. E. B. Du Bois, as a spokesman for the “Harlem literati,” and, by 1928, a spokesman for black people in America, was in an influential

position to advance the causes for which the NAACP was embracing, but some observers note that this book, at least, probably represented an extension of Du Bois' not-insignificant ego and personal fantasies than a realistic appraisal of the real problems facing blacks in America at the beginning of the 20th century. In its review of *Dark Princess* from 1928, the *New York Times* says that, "Dr. Dubois, the author of 'Darkwater,' again brings forth another book about his race in the story of Matthew Towns, a young negro. Matthew is studying to become a physician, and, after taking honors at the University of Manhattan, finds himself unable to register for obstetrics because of racial discrimination" (1-2). The review says that Du Bois presented a protagonist who left America feeling the country had become ". . . impossible -- unthinkable" and set sails for Europe. In the Berlin café, Du Bois uses the meeting of Town with Princess Kautilya of Bwodpur, to provide the framework by which the reader is provided Du Bois' personal worldview, one which believes in the superiority of the "darker races of the world." The

princess gives Towns a letter to deliver in America to an alleged leader of an organization having as its purpose “. . . a widespread and carefully planned uprising of American blacks” (“Race Discrimination” 4).

The relations between Hindus and Christians have always been complicated, but the problems shared by “peoples of color” around the world managed to cut across cultural and geographic borders, thanks in large part to people like Du Bois and his colleagues. According to one theologian, “many Hindus are ready to accept the ethical teachings of the Gospels, particularly the Sermon on the Mount (whose influence on Gandhi is well-known) but reject the theological superstructure. Many adherents of bhakti movements (the Christian influence on which has been grossly exaggerated) feel that the Christian conceptions, which are regarded as a kind of bhakti, do not realize in God the multiplicity of human relations of love and service.”

The theologian goes on to add “educated Hindus, though assimilating some Christian ideas,

often regard missionary propaganda as an attack on their national genius and time-honored institutions and take offense at what they regard as the disrespectful utterances of Christian missionary literature. Further, they are averse to the organization, the reliance on authorities, and the exclusiveness of Islam and Christianity, considering them to be only obstacles to harmonious cooperation.” According to Smith, they subscribe to “Gandhi's opinion that missionaries should confine their activities to humanitarian service. In fact, since independence, many influential Indians, who often also find in Hinduism what might be attractive in Christianity, have viewed conversion with significant disfavor. Movements that advocate a Hindu theism, then, which are designed to rival Islam and Christianity, like the Arya Samaj, make serious efforts to reconvert Christians to the Hindu community. Nonetheless, people seem to tolerate the proximity of Christian converts, even if they transgress Hindu taboos, provided they form a more or less separate community. In this regard, Christians also often form castes or endogamous

bodies, which are analogous to castes. Indeed, they are sometimes admitted to temples forbidden to Hindu untouchables. In Malabar, for example, due to their high economic position, Christians came to be practically equal with Brahmans. Today, nationalism has challenged the more serious-minded Indian Christians to express the genius of their faith in Indian modes and patterns. This has led, since 1921, to the emergence of Christian ashrams in the south” (Smith 7-8).

The influence of Du Bois’ focus on the plight of the downtrodden and oppressed of India had a significant impact on succeeding generations of black activists in America and has provided a source of inspiration for the leaders of both faiths which were to follow. For example, in “The Reconciliation Sutras of Two Twentieth-Century Doctors of Nonviolence: Mahatma K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.,” Purushottama Bilimoria advises that, “Little did the well-attired, English-trained lawyer, fresh from India and thrown off the train at the Pietermaritzburg railway station in Natal Province (South Africa) in 1893, realize that his

chance encounter the next day with an ‘an American Negro who happened to be there’ would have long reverberations across two continents. But the generosity shown by a powerless black American, in a land where he enjoyed no privileges or rights of his ancestors, to an equally disenfranchised and palpably shaken Indian immigrant, would remain in the back of Gandhi's ever-alert mind” (Bilimoria 1). This author says that as “Gandhi learned more about the dispossessed and marginalized, he saw that those supposedly free people had other types of constraints to their freedom as well.”

According to Bilimoria, “While the successful young advocate (Gandhi) went on to fight for the labor and residence rights of Indians, the image of the African American who helped him find lodging in the otherwise whites-only town followed him. He sometimes encountered black Africans as inmates in the jails he would be thrown into for his civil agitations on behalf of the Asian and colored workers in white South Africa” (Bilimoria 4). It was this burgeoning “. . . critic of

imperialism [who] recognized distinctive processes in the continuing enslavement of people of color across the globe” (Bilimoria 5). Gandhi never lost sight of the plight of the descendants of the former slaves and colored people in America, while also acknowledging the more enlightened principles of the U.S. Constitution and of leaders such as Thoreau, Jefferson, Lincoln, and John Dewey (Bilimoria. 2).

Bilimoria beautifully adds that “in the deep south of sub-Saharan Africa, Gandhi drew world attention in 1907 as he led the first-ever successful satyagraha, or active resistance based on non-violent principles. This movement would gradually sweep across the rest of the world, beginning with its adoption for the nationalist freedom struggle in India under Gandhi's own leadership. As a result, it also managed to motivate the black-led Civil Rights campaign in the United States and culminated only at the end of the 20th century with South Africa's own emancipation from apartheid.” Bilimoria also notes that “Gandhi frequently made a point of inquiring with “deep empathy” concerning the

struggles and challenges facing the "Negroes" in America. Gandhi felt blacks in America suffered the same horrid social stigma as did the "untouchables" at the lowest rungs of India's caste system. Further, Gandhi maintained high aspirations for the spirit of the American "Negroes" to be able to overcome the obstructing social and political barriers, which in some ways were less traditionally or irredeemably textured than in India's own weighty past. Du Bois connected with the plight of the Indian and Gandhi connected with the challenges facing blacks in America. Like the Civil Rights movement in America, progress in India also required a lengthy period of time. Racism and discrimination were fought through the " . . . convergent ingenuity of itinerant Indian freedom fighters and preacher-advocates of a home-grown peaceful voice against the proscription of 'Negroes, Jews, and women' from mainstream American life. Inspired by the ideas of Ruskin, Emerson, and Thoreau, Gandhi's radical journals from the humble printing press in Phoenix Settlement outside Durban reached America, usually through contacts in

Britain and Europe. African Americans began to attend conferences in England and Paris on Pan-African and Colored Peoples Congresses, where followers of Gandhi articulated the rationale of the common plight of ‘brown and black races’” (Bilimoria 4). In this regard, among the participants from the United States was our own W. E. B. Du Bois, whose acquaintance (and that of the other flamboyant all-African leader, Marcus Garvey) with expatriate Indian nationalists led to a steady stream of them on conference and lecture tours of America (usually to New York and subsequently to the American South) (Bilimoria 5).

John Haymes Holmes likened Gandhi to a “Social Jesus” who was fighting for the wretched and oppressed peoples of the earth. The idea of the wretched is well known from Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, he states in the book: “The well-being and the progress of Europe have been built up on the sweat and the dead bodies of Negroes, Arabs, Indians and the yellow races. We have decided not to overlook this any longer.” (Fanon, 96)

Du Bois had characterized the nature of oppression and racist climates of supremacist systems in India and America as being fundamentally similar. Du Bois also emphasized that the nonviolent resistance tactics used by Gandhi were highly effective in calling attention to the downtrodden of India, and that “. . . there is today in the world but one living maker of miracles, and that is Mahatma Gandhi. He stops eating, and three hundred million Indians, together with the British Empire, hold their breath until they can talk together; yet all that America sees in Gandhi is a joke, but the real joke is America.” (Bilimoria 6)

“Each major step in Gandhi's struggle--his imprisonment, virtual impeachment for sedition, jubilant court-case speeches, fasting, successful satyagrahas such as the Salt March--and his personal messages to "The Negroes of America," were noted in the leading black papers, magazines, and independent church newsletters. In particular, the noted NAACP journal *Crisis* (subtitled "A Record of Darker Races" and stamped with seven Hindu swastikas), edited since 1910 by Du Bois,

along with (Garvey's) the *Negro World*, *Atlanta Daily World*, *Chicago Defender*, *Christian Century*, and others, stepped up coverage of Gandhi in 1920s and 1930s. Articles featured the increasing traffic between Gandhi's India and the American South, beginning with the first African-American delegation to meet Mohandas Gandhi in 1936 (led by Howard Thurman). Gandhi's moving interview with Sue Bailey Thurman is reported in Thurman's monograph "Head and Heart," alongside a rare photograph of a Gandhi, now deep in India's crisis, with Sue Bailey (the original of which is in Emory's Special Collections). In 1947, Bilimoria says that black America joined in the celebrations of India's hard-earned Independence with a delegation, which was headed by Mordecai Johnson (of Howard) and Benjamin Mays (of Morehouse)." (Bilimoria. 4-5).

"In Martin Luther King Jr., (black) America found the matured spirit of an indigenous Mahatma, prepared to lay down his life for an all-out struggle against the continuing oppression of its "untouchables." The on-going process of reconciling nonviolence with violence-prone

authorities and racist institutions, however, was a long time in the making in racialized America, as in colonial Africa and British India. This is how the fervently productive and politically significant threads were woven between the Indian freedom movement with its transnational advocates and a fledgling African-American liberatory consciousness, beginning with Pan-African advocates like Du Bois and Garvey, and continuing well into the post-World War years, through to Indian Independence and the civil rights movement in the South.” (Bilimoria 7).

Religion is very significant in *Dark Princess*. To begin with the Princess is called Kautilya, and her son is named, ChandraGupta, these were actual characters that existed in Indian History. “Kautilya (more popularly known as Chanakya), was a Brahmin minister under Chandragupta Maurya. Kautilya wrote a treatise called *Arthashastra*, a book, written in Sanskrit, which discusses theories and principles of governing a state. The title, *Arthashastra*, which means "the Science of Material Gain" or "Science

of Polity", does not leave any doubts about its ends. According to Kautilya, the ruler should use any means to attain his goal and his actions required no moral sanction. The only problems discussed are of the most practical kind. Though the kings were allowed a free rein, the citizens were subject to a rigid set of rules. Arthashastra remains unique in all of Indian literature because of its total absence of specious reasoning, or its unabashed advocacy of realpolitik, and scholars continued to study it for its clear-cut arguments and formal prose till the twelfth century. Espionage and the liberal use of provocative agents is recommended on a large scale. Murder and false accusations were to be used by a king's secret agents without any thoughts to morals or ethics. There are chapters for kings to help them keep in check the premature ambitions of their sons, and likewise chapters intended to help princes to thwart their fathers' domineering authority. However, Kautilya ruefully admits that it is just as difficult to detect an official's dishonesty, as it is to discover how much water the swimming fish drinks. Kautilya helped the young

Chandragupta Maurya, who was a Vaishya, to ascend to the Nanda throne in 321 BC. Kautilya's counsel is particularly remarkable because the young Maurya's supporters were not as well armed as the Nandas. Kautilya continued to help Chandragupta Maurya in his campaigns and his influence was crucial in consolidating the great Mauryan Empire. Political theorists have often likened him to Machiavelli”.³

W.E.B. Du Bois said, on the launch of his groundbreaking 1903 treatise *The Souls of Black Folk*, “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line”—a prescient statement. Setting out to show to the reader “the strange meaning of being black here in the dawning of the Twentieth Century,” Du Bois explains the meaning of the emancipation, and its effect, and his views on the role of the leaders of his race. The theme of religion is very significant by the end of the novel, after Kautilya’s and Michael’s son, Chandragupta is born there is a series of invocations of various Gods-Christian, Hindu, Islam. The child is viewed

³ <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/History/Ancient/Kautilya.html>

as a savior and is called, “Messenger and Messiah to all the Darker Worlds.” The Messiah” is a child from a union of Black and Indian, and is the messenger to all the Darker Worlds.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study there was an emphasis on creation, including the actual conception of a child, promoting a new generation, which cannot fit easily into any category, save that of “non-white.” These two cultures and people, the Africans and Indians around the world, share a common history, a past filled with oppression, and they also share the concept of rebellion. In addition, the proposal of unifying these two peoples takes place throughout many time periods and countries. DuBois’ suggestion of a “Congress of Colored People,” seems plausible. In reality, the new generation of these people, will be the “Messiah” or the “Messenger,” and colored people every where will have a platform to stand together in unity, and do not have to “suffer under the arrogance and tyranny of the white world” any longer. The music

that unites the people of the “Darker World” will soon have children that will inhabit this place and that hopefully will make living on Earth a whole different ball game.

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