“MORE THAN OUR REASONED ACTS”: DU BOISIAN PHILOSOPHY AND IMAGINATIVE FICTION

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

English—Doctor of Philosophy

2019

ABSTRACT

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This dissertation approaches the literary corpus of W.E.B. Du Bois with specific attention paid to understudied speculative texts, what could be classified as Science Fiction presently, and the theoretical elements of Du Bois's scholarly work which inform them. I argue that both that these works—"A Vacation Unique," *The Star of Ethiopia* and "A.D. 2150"—belong in a critical canon of Science Fiction or Speculative Fiction, but that these texts are also vitally linked to Du Bois's political and sociological philosophy. Du Bois's groundbreaking sociological work and theories of human societies as they are organized by concepts of Race, and the complex relationships between individuals and larger groups—including and especially "Sociology Hesitant" and "The Spirit of Modern Europe"—provide the technological and scientific basis for his literary consideration of the possible. Du Bois's literary imagination is oriented toward a future which is not necessarily Utopian, but which is sensitive to the social construction and consequences of Race, and the pathway to a more equitable and just society.

The scientific imagination of Du Bois's literary fiction presents his theoretical vision of Race, Identity, and collective enterprise as it spans centuries and travels long distances among the global descendants of the African Diaspora, and this theoretical, historical view shapes the structure of my analysis. First, in Chapter 1, I seek to establish Du Boisian philosophy as it wields a variety of scientific and sociological concepts to describe and imagine the possibilities of Race and the future in his theoretical works, which Du Bois explicitly connects to the experimental space of imaginative fiction. Chapter 2 focuses on Du Bois's spectacular historical

pageant, *The Star of Ethiopia*, which establishes the foundational past of African Civilizations, and the intellectual technology of Ancient History as a tool for asserting national identity in the present and looking towards the future. Chapter 3 examines Du Bois's fragmentary short story, "A Vacation Unique," as it explores the slippery sociopolitical category of race through the abstract geometrical analogy of the Fourth Dimension. Finally, in conclusion, I look to an explicitly futuristic short story, "A.D. 2150," which projects some of Du Bois's sociological theories into the future, but which is remarkably hesitant to perform sincere forecasting, and demonstrates some of the limits of futurology for Du Boisian thought.

Locating these texts in Du Bois's corpus and critically linking them to his political and sociological work, provides models of understanding their place among the canon of African American literature and Science Fiction. The theoretical possibilities of Du Boisian literary fiction provides not only a framework for reading these particular texts but demonstrates the remarkable intersection of African American Science Fiction and Du Boisian Critical Race Theory more broadly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finding space to thank everyone who would need to be thanked for everything I have needed along a long and winding path to finishing this project is, likely, impossible and while this list may be lengthy, it is far from comprehensive. Working very hard for a long time, and taking a somewhat circuitous route to this point, there have been many people who have provided guidance and support and I only regret that these acknowledgements create the illusion that my life is anything less than a massive and extensive network of loved ones. An academic future seemed, at many points in the past, outside of reach, foreclosed by many decisions, but the adjacency to the Department of Classics at the University of Michigan had provided me with remarkable colleagues who have supported my work since long before they had an academic home. Matthew Newman, Clara Bosak-Schroeder, Harriet Fertik were an incredible cohort for my partner, but they also never hesitated to support me as well, convincing me that I had an academic future as their friend and colleague. I have been similarly fortunate to have a cohort of my own at Michigan State who have never wavered through many days, nights, weeks, months, years. Hanan Aly, Elizabeth Floyd, Nathan Leaman, Michael Marra, Kristina Persenaire, Christi Taylor, and David Watson have provided a home for me, academic and personal. Similarly developing a professional persona and program of scholarship has only been possible with guidance of many people, my committee members past and present—Professors Stephen Arch, Yomaira Figueroa, Gary Hoppenstand, Stephen Rachman, and Terrion Williamson—and most especially my chair Professor Scott Michaelsen. I am proud of my accomplishments and the scholarship I have produced under Professor Michaelsen's supervision and I have benefitted even more from a role model in teaching, research, writing, publishing, and every aspect of the discipline. I have once again, been very fortunate. I have a large family, my parents who have

supported me through many things and kept me close to their alma mater and my alma mater, and beloved grandparents, my father's mother an alumna of Rice and my mother's father and alumnus of the University of Kentucky. My brother and sister, my cousins, aunts, uncles, and many other people who have been with me through everything and who have made it clear to me what academic life can be, even far from home. Even more fortunate, I have always had a partner who was a colleague and co-writer, who blazed many trails and whose example I have followed at every step of this long process. Ellen Lee has always been the first and last reader, and never shared the doubts which have followed me along a long road. Academic life has never felt too large or too small, because it was always a place we had already lived, and where she had always made space for me. Finally, I owe an incalculable debt to Donna Dorothy Lee, who has taught me more thoroughly than anyone I have ever met the promise of the future.

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Introduction: "The Problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line"[1]

The central position of W.E.B. Du Bois in 20th Century African American literature, on its surface, appears to require little explanation or curation. Du Bois's early works, like the densely statistical *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), and his landmark collection of essays on the black experience, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) remain seminal texts in the literary depictions of African American life and arts, establishing Du Bois as the premier scholar and public intellectual of African American letters. Du Bois's expansive influence on political and literary culture[2], social sciences and programs of juridical activism[3], are unparalleled and well studied through the lens of these specific texts and his broad literary reach. Integrating these elements of Du Bois's public persona, the academic and the artistic, the concrete and the abstract, however, can prove more elusive. The historical relationship between Du Bois's literary corpus and his political activism is frequently elided by many biographers, focusing primarily on either Du Bois's literary realism or his speeches and essays, polemic appeals for peace, justice, and civil rights. While Du Bois's work as a realist and pragmatic political thinker cannot be undervalued, I will be focusing on his work as a critical theorist, developing quantitative and qualitative methods of exploring and examining race in society and letters. Du Bois's mammoth corpus and its most peculiar offerings are not unknown, but the through line of his many imaginative and varied texts, I will argue, is one of synthesis and a particular investment in the reconciliation of abstract theories and concrete realities of blackness. Du Bois promises at the end of *The Souls of*

[1] *The Souls of Black Folk* 5
[2] David Levering Lewis's award-winning biography *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Biography 1868-1963* and Arnold Rampersad's *The Art and Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois* are merely among the most prominent of an expansive catalog of scholarly treatments and biographies.
[3] Aldon Morris's *The Scholar Denied* make a convincing case that Du Bois's influence on modern sociology is, if anything, dramatically *under*represented in contemporary scholarship and Manning Marable's *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat* provides a vibrant history of Du Bois's legal activism with the NAACP and throughout his life.

Black Folk "a tale twice told but seldom written"[4] and in his magnum opus, studded with historical facts and personal narratives of exploring the black belt, concludes with a bleak short story of violent racial injustice. The parallel paths of two young men named John, one white and one black, and the inevitable tragedy that follows a young black man in the early 20th century is obscured by the ending to this story as some modicum of peace, if not hope, attends John in his final moment.[5] The story of systemic injustice and its catastrophic consequences, as Du Bois forewarned, is at once the logical outcome of white supremacy and the dramatic rendition, for white audiences perhaps especially, of the very tangible fears which haunted a black America terrorized by the specter of lynching and race riots. The conjunction of these elements, the literary imagination which measures carefully the structure of the world, but is not simply confined by it, is crucial to Du Boisian philosophy and the social sciences which motivate his literary ambitions.

African American literature, broadly, is often historically periodized, tracing first the literature of the 19th Century, written under legal penalty by enslaved men and women as they sought freedom, accounts of their lives under and escape from bondage in the deep South, then Jim Crow, The Harlem Renaissance, and through to the Civil Rights Era and more contemporary fiction. While there is a robust establishment of community and identity through which African American literature is often recognized, attempting to map out the formal elements of "African American Literature" is more nebulous. The dominant presence of obvious political and social turmoil, first in the brutal oppression of slavery and then in the long struggle to assert the rights

[4] *Souls* 5

[5] "they came sweeping like a storm, and he saw in front that haggard white-haired man, whose eyes flashed red with fury. Oh how he pitied him,--pitied him,--and wondered if he had the coiling twisted rope. Then, as the storm burst round him, he rose slowly to his feet and turned his closed eyes toward the Sea. And the world whistled in his ears" (*Souls* 154),

of citizenship promised in the 14th Amendment are, unsurprisingly, common elements of African American literature, but the varied works of African American writers before and after Emancipation resist being so neatly categorized. While there are many theoretical approaches to characterizing African American Literature[6] the necessarily political functions of African American literature, as it first asserted the dignity of those living in bondage and then of those oppressed in Jim Crow is critically important but not necessarily a limitation for Du Bois. Kenneth Warren in particular argues that African American literature as it is commonly understood, occupies a specific historical period, as the result of specific social, historical and political conditions, and this provides a useful tool for reconciling a wide array of texts across genres, regions, and literary traditions. For Du Bois, however, presenting "African American Literature" as it is constructed by the conditions of Jim Crow, as the period after legal restrictions on black literacy had been lifted, but under which specific oppressive conditions dominated African American lives,[7] seems more strictly reactive than his ambitious assertions of a national spirit or identity. While there can be no question that the political and material conditions of blackness are vital to African American literature throughout American history, Du Bois's scientific and literary works are oriented toward more fundamentally generative and imaginative goals. The expression and invention of public literary personae certainly changed for African American writers though large-scale social transitions like Emancipation and created potentially periodized waves of writers and thinkers, and Du Bois was no exception, as someone

[6] Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s *The Signifying Monkey* specifically values Signification and playful dual meaning, Houston A. Baker Jr.'s *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature* focuses on Orality, Karla Holloway's *Legal Fictions* argues for the governmental and juridical positions of African Americans and its effects on African American Literature, to name only a few theoretical positions.

[7] "I think it is important to see that a political and social analysis centered on demonstrating that current inequalities are simply more subtle attempts to reestablish the terms of racial hierarchy that existed for much of the twentieth century misunderstands both the nature of the previous regime and the defining elements of the current one" (Warren 5)

who weathered personally shifts through Jim Crow to the Civil Rights Era. What seems consistent in Du Bois's position, however, is a fundamental emphasis on the expanding rights and dignity of black subjects and communities, and particularly the essential history and sustained growth of his people.

The political dimensions of African American literature, particularly as these short stories, novels, and poems were frequently didactic instruments designed to reveal the conditions of African American life invisible, consciously or unconsciously, to white America, are unquestionably descriptive. For Du Bois, this descriptive literature was also a point of entry into a variety of creative and imaginative enterprises. Sensitive attention to the experiences of blackness were prevalent in Du Bois's fiction and social scientific research but were rarely an end unto themselves. Particularly his more imaginative fiction relied on this mapping of experience and material indexing of black lives as a staging area for imagining the possibilities of move beyond the horizons of existing racial oppression and suffering. The quality of invention and futurity, which seems critical to a variety of African American literatures, persist through the shifting landscape of white supremacy through the Civil War and into Civil Rights. Possibility, then is often presented as transcendental, often spiritual as well as nationalistic, emerging from this material and abstract historical conditions of African American communities, and in this particular intersection of the imagined and the realistic, Du Bois finds specific literary possibilities. Du Bois does not completely abandon the religious traditions in African American literature, and in his own personal life, but his focus on the possible, the future which will emerge not from providence, but from the invention of human intelligence synthesizes his pragmatic social science and his most speculative fiction. Morrison suggests that "the imagination that produces work which bears and invites rereadings, which motions to future

readings as well as contemporary ones, implies a shareable world and an endlessly flexible language,"[8] and this intellectual space, I will argue, is one of Science Fiction. The lifelong project, for Du Bois, of connecting the past and the future, the abstract and the material, the individual and the collective, for black national identity, finds its possibility not by synthesizing sociological theories and the descriptive narratives of oppression. The distinctive speculation which is grounded in the scientific knowledge of society provides possibilities for the past, present, and futures of African Americans which are not limited by reality or dismissed as wishful fantasies.

Science Fiction, as it addresses both the ordered knowledge of scientific modernity or the alien and unrecognizable, presents possibility as it is at once derived from immediate scientific knowledge, and pushing the boundaries of what is currently known. Sam Delaney's "About Five Thousand One Hundred and Seventy Five Words" identifies this aspect of Science Fiction with the "subjunctive" and Du Bois's place in Science Fiction is similarly oriented toward this conception of the possible. Du Bois himself was personally invested in debunking racial pseudoscience and postulating his own theories of the relationship between "race" and "culture"[9] and this advancing scientific impulse motivates his fiction more broadly. The black national identity which Du Bois expressly divorces from biological essentialism in is nevertheless itself a technological development, a rational system by which large-scale collective enterprise becomes possible. The cultural specificity of blackness is attended by tangible material conditions, and this conjunction of sentiment and embodiment results in literary works which must manage both the intellectual framework of sociology and Race and its consequences in society. Progress and

[8] Morrison xii
[9] This will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 2

liberation will not be simply material or psychological but must be composed of these elements in concert, and for Du Bois a sociological framework is similarly composed at once of broad critical theories and the accumulation of data, and empirical information. Utopian thought, often viewed as an essential element of Science Fiction, is common to many African American literary traditions, and Du Bois's political activism and hope for the future can imagined and explored in the laboratory of his fiction.[10] Some of Du Bois's contributions to Science Fiction are already well noted by scholarship and anthologies of Science Fiction,[11] but I argue that the scientific imagination is critical for understanding a wide swath of his entire corpus, as a means of bringing his many works across many genres into conversation with one another. The specific focus on the potential and possibilities of progress, rooted in a concrete past and a robust identity are consistent elements of his prose fiction, particularly as they are read through the lens of his sociological thought.

The boundaries of "Science Fiction" are similarly a nebulous concept for many scholarly conversations within Science Fiction Studies. For my purposes, I am primarily working from Samuel Delaney's emphasis on the "subjunctive," possibility which is both realistic and imaginative, and Darko Suvin's concepts of a "fictive novum" the fundamental interest in the "new" which is not necessarily predictive or futuristic, but which may shed light on what is possible from the current position in material history. The technological emphasis which Frederic Jameson and Suvin both describe as critical to science fiction is, on the one hand, necessary in considering the generic location of Du Bois's texts. On the other hand, for Du Bois

[10] On Science Fiction and Utopia, Darko Suvin argues that "beyond and undirected inquisitiveness, which makes for a semantic game without clear referent, this genre has always been wedded to a hope of finding in the unknown the ideal environment, tribe, state, intelligence, or other aspect of the Supreme Good" (Suvin 5)
[11] Sharee Thomas's *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*, for example, includes Du Bois's short story "The Comet"

the field of scientific discovery simulated and imagined in his fiction is, as alluded to above, frequently social science, the mechanics of government, collective enterprise, and identity. This is, of course, not to say that his stories are indifferent to the material history of science and technology so much as it evinces Du Bois's general conviction that the intellectual technology of race and identity is foundational to African American lives and letters. The presence of race in Science Fiction is self-evident in many cases, and perhaps it is for this reason that it is so frequently unexamined and, as DeWitt Kilgore would argue, absent any attention to the realistic narrative of actual progress.[12] Scholars have cataloged the erasure of non-white science fiction writers,[13] but it is also worth noting that the specific consideration of race as an intellectual technology has also been erased, and this is consideration of Race is paramount in Du Bois's Science Fiction.[14] While the common canon of Science Fiction is often disinterested in considering race or blackness,[15] Science Fiction as a genre which is commonly associated with popular consumption, identity and imagination lends itself well to Du Bois's project of integrating lived experiences with abstract literature and theories of society. The imaginative works of W.E.B. Du Bois are shaped critically by an expansive vision of history, in which the past, present, and future are all continuously engaged with one another, as this is how he understands black national identity and the shared enterprises of a people. Viewed through the

[12] The futuristic imagination in Science Fiction, when it does include non-white characters in society, frequently elides any actual process by which the historical injuries of racist oppression and white supremacy have been overcome, as Kilgore argues "their hope is in a science fiction heralding the arrival of a post-racial future in which the wounds inflicted by current conflicts around race are healed" (Kilgore 16)

[13] Sandra Jackson and Julie E. Moody-Freeman's *The Black Imagination* in its introduction offers some historiography and even more tantalizingly in Sam Delaney's "Racism and Science Fiction" he points out that many earlier writers in pulps and other outlets for speculative fiction were using pseudonyms, and could only be identified by a mailing address, so their actual identities are simply mysterious and likely include marginalized writers of every variety writing in anonymity.

[14] And as Suvin notes "science in this wider sense of methodically systematic cognition cannot be disjoined from the SF innovation" (Suvin 23)

[15] As Andre Carrington notes "to identify with Blackness in and through one's relationship to science fiction entails seeing one's racial background represented only rarely, typically at the margins, seldom in the person of an author, and awkwardly positioned as a consumer" (Carrington 17)

lens of Science Fiction, the possibilities that Du Bois sought to articulate have a clear literary tradition in which they can operate, and critically meditate on race and politics in a fashion that is simultaneously pragmatic and aspirational.[16] Du Bois's focus on the past, understood in this way, is not simply a catalog or index of suffering for black folk but instead becomes a vital tether to the material realities which have shaped the present and from which the future must emerge.[17]

Scientific Romance and technological marvels in classic Science Fiction, however, often clash with technology as it is understood in many varieties of African American literature. Technology, broadly speaking, either as it is represented materially in the weapons of war and subjugation of colonize peoples or along the violently racist pseudo-sciences of the 19th century, is often viewed warily in African American speculative fiction.[18] The possibilities of technological marvels are secondary to the structures of society and abstract sensations of race and identity which are mapped and explored in Du Bois's scientific thought, and in this way the transcendental is never fully absent from Du Boisian scientific thought. The technologies by which African Americans have been systematically oppressed are certainly sufficiently material, but the political and sociological apparatuses which motivated these ideological engines can provide an antidote to the ills of technological oppression. The moral ambiguity of technological advancement, particularly as it fueled global strife and warfare throughout the 20th Century, underscore the absolute necessity of political and sociological apparatuses and the human aspects of organized enterprise. The emphasis on the human operators of technology, and intellectual

[16] As DeWitt Kilgore suggests, for Science Fiction "perhaps the great challenge or potential of contemporary science fiction is to imagine political/social futures in which race does not simply wither away but is transformed, changed into something different and perhaps unexpected" (Kilgore 17)

[17] In "Black to the Future" Mark Dery quotes Sam Delaney arguing that "the historical reason that we've been so impoverished in terms of future images is because, until fairly recently, as a people, we were systematically forbidden any images of our past" (Dery 190-191).

[18] Darryl A. Smith asserts that "Anglo-European sf's discernible enthusiasm for the posthuman Tip of Babylon is regularly reversed by a conscious and scrupulous black penchant for highlighting the Pit of Babylon" (Smith 207)

technology which can motivate these operators aligns neatly with the literary project of articulating the sustained identity and humanity of those oppressed by white supremacy. The speculative and scientific elements of African American literature broadly are outlined clearly in Du Boisian philosophy as it bridges the gaps between the praxis and imagination, and the material and the abstract.

The first chapter outlines this complex philosophical framework through which Du Bois navigates the matrix of African American identity, along the dualistic axes described above, and how the literary interacts with the sociological. Du Boisian Double Consciousness straddles the line between forms of identity, attempts to reconcile abstract and the material elements of identity. Du Boisian sociology similarly maps the contours of black identity along an intellectual framework that incorporates and synthesizes the Pragmatic and the Idealistic in a fashion that allows for the expression and recognition of blackness in a coherent form of notation. The connection, then, between fiction, realism, and science fiction, becomes more sharply focused as this unifying theory of society and the individual motivates Du Bois's fiction which is imaginative but ultimately grounded in scientific thought, what would later be called Science Fiction. This is further linked to American philosophical traditions of Transcendentalism, and Emersonian poetics, which influenced Du Bois directly and through the Emerson's looming influence on philosophers like William James and Josiah Royce, Du Bois's own professors at Harvard. Realistic fiction, though it is oriented toward mimesis and a reproduction of the natural world, is also fundamentally experimental, and affords the author control over the exacting elements of this representation. The rational consciousness guiding the events of realistic fiction, as it is filtered through Du Boisian sociology and philosophy, provides a concrete material basis for understanding and imagining the possibilities of economic and psychological prosperity in

black communities, even as society itself resists such changes. Pushing up against the edges of reality into the realm of the possible but not yet achieved is at the heart of Du Boisian Science Fiction. The potent system of ordering human experience and measuring the aspects of human accomplishment which are the modulated by programmatic injustice, rather than moral defects, allows for the potential of individuals and groups to be properly imagined. The Spirit or Ideal which lingers around black national identity and the possibility of an unexplored opportunity for justice and freedom does not need to be perfectly measured by these tools, but it can be considered once all other material dimensions of race and identity are accounted for. While some mechanics of the universe may be intractable and intrinsic, the elements of humanity which can be manipulated through systemic oppression and injustice can conversely be set right by the actions of men in the spontaneous but ordered flux of human society.

In the second chapter, Du Boisian philosophy and sociology manifest themselves in a dramatic pageant depicting the long history of Africa, the African Diaspora, and eventually the possibility of a future for the descendants of the African Diaspora. *The Star of Ethiopia* represents perhaps Du Bois's most spectacular work of outward facing public literature and scholarship. The historical account of African and African American peoples in global history was not only highly public, performed in grand venues like the Hollywood Bowl, but featured hundreds of performers, a full orchestra, and technically complex displays of lighting and set. Du Bois's investments in the past, as the pageant itself demonstrates, evince a profound interest in the sustained existence of a coherent and continuous identity for the descendants of the African Diaspora. Despite its high profile in the early 20th Century, because it was never published in full by Du Bois, study of the pageant itself is often limited, and for this reason Chapter 2 is accompanied by Appendix A which presents a collated version of the pageant from archival

material. By articulating the history of African and Diasporic peoples, contemporary identity in the 20th Century becomes part of a pattern. The sociological data which Du Bois meticulously cataloged in *The Philadelphia Negro* is not simply an index of misery but instead information which charts the rise and fall of The Spirit of Ethiopia through her people. The dramatic rendition of this long Diasporic history presents audience, black and white, with a potent assertion of the dignity of Diasporic peoples, and for Du Bois's scientific philosophy, the foundational basis of the current state of black national identity, good and bad. Entangled in contemporary academic conversations about the relevance of ancient history and the Classical Studies, Du Bois adeptly inserts Africa and African civilizations into the long-standing historiographical narrative of the ancient Mediterranean. The foundations of "Western Civilization," however flawed and anachronistic this premise may be, Du Bois argued could not exclude Africans and African Americans and in this way the intellectual technologies of white supremacy could be used to undermine whiteness. The pageant closes with the Spirit of Ethiopia, the embodied Ideal of black nationality, overlooking the monuments to the future, constructed by the great rivers of the Diasporic world and Ethiopia's descendants. The vital presentation of the past not only ensures a proper accounting of the present, and the dignity of African Americans, but is a critical aspect of imagining their future.

Chapter 3 offers an even more express and explicit look into Du Boisian theories of social science and the metaphysics of Race, which is at once thoroughly abstract and highly material in character and consequences. Working within the literary genre and theoretical concept of the "fourth dimension," Du Bois's fragmentary short story, likely written while Du

Bois was at Harvard in the 1889 and titled "A Vacation Unique" by Francis Broderick,[19] imagines Race as a fourth dimension of being, and that by translation across this alien geometry, a white student of Harvard can be made black. The stories underlying premise, that Race is an invisible extra dimension, establishes a scientific model for understanding race which at once relies on concrete laws of physics and mathematics but is distinct from biological theories of Race and falsely deterministic pseudoscience. Du Bois's careful consideration of Race as a set of phenomena which are both abstract and material, global and local, can be explored through this non-Euclidean geometry and the murky territory of psychical science at the end of the 19th Century. The story itself follows Cuffy Johnsing, the inventor of this mysterious racial transmogrification process, and his unnamed Fool as they prepared to travel through New England and perform as the amazing black students of Harvard. Directly referencing Edwin Abbott's *Flatland*, Du Bois's short story utilizes a similar geometric analogy to explore the typology of individuals and the shape of society, but his story, peculiarly enough, offers virtually no perspective from the position of the Fool who travelled through the fourth dimension of Race. Instead, the reader is invited to overhear Johnsing's pontifications on society as he and his Fool ride a train to the Berkshire hills. Rather than interrogating the white subject's newfound blackness, the story itself seems to focus on Johnsing's efforts to teach the Fool how to comprehend his newfound blackness. Despite his literal transmogrification, being visibly black is not sufficient to make the Fool "black." The melanin content of skin, or texture of hair, are vital aspects of being identified by society as black, but Du Boisian thought is also sensitive to the sensations of blackness that are not confined to literal physical being. The intellectual and psychical dimensions of Race are examined through the mysterious, but mathematically sound,

[19] Dating the fragments relies on a certain amount of guesswork but Zamir notes that Broderick, in consultation with Du Bois in 1955, appears to confirm the general date.

concept of an invisible fourth dimension which lingers just beyond the horizon of perception in three dimensions.

Skirting the lines of the imaginary, the fantastic, and the scientific, Du Bois once again attempts to reconcile the potentially competing aspects of identity and present model of understanding and charting blackness which synthesizes the variety of experience among black subjects. As the short story evolves,[20] Johnsing's paradigm becomes more intensely focused on prismatic light and color, specifically the "rainbow" and visible light as an aggregation of colors and perspectives. The story, especially in its fragmentary form, lacks a definitive conclusion, but nevertheless clearly presents Johnsing's philosophical lessons as a total system for understanding "the universe in a nutshell" and this totalizing vision of "color" provides a clear link to Du Boisian philosophy. By examining the present through a theoretical apparatus that models Race and the experiences of blackness in this variety of concrete and abstract possibilities, Du Bois's Science Fiction imagines the totality of racial thought in order that edges may become possible even if they are not perfectly visible.

Du Bois's Science Fiction, ultimately, is also futuristic, and in concluding I consider a story that was revised much later in his life and which resembles Du Bois's personal thoughts about his own finitude in the face of a potentially eternal struggle for justice and equality. "A.D. 2150" presents a rather common Science Fiction conceit, that a resident of the present is thrust forwards into time and must come to understand how society has evolved and changed into the alien form they are currently exploring. Du Bois's short story, however, spends less time predicting the social or technological possibilities of the future, and instead recognizes the core

[20] Chapter 3 references Appendix B in which I present a new fragment which has not been included in previous scholarly discussions of "A Vacation Unique," but clearly shares textual features.

of our own society through this defamiliarized landscape of the future. Rather than a fantastic voyage to an alien world, as was the case in many Scientific Romances, however, Du Bois's protagonist is constantly reminded of the continuity between this far-flung future and his own life in New York of the 20th Century. The 200 years which have elapsed have brought many changes, technological and sociological, but the fundamental impulse in society to imagine type or kind, a community and individual identity, though transformed in some capacity does not yield a satisfactory future for a black man. While many of the most hostile forces of white supremacy in society have been alleviated through economic prosperity and equality, the fundamental conflicts among opposing groups exists, and particularly the pointed complaint that the lack of systemic conflicts yields new forms of conflict, dispel a dream of simple utopian futurism. Du Bois's answer, however, is not despair, but simply another voyage into the future, another nap which may yield different results. Du Bois is not necessarily skeptical of the future, but he does present anxiety about futurism and a teleological view of history, and particularly the end of struggles for liberation. The ongoing processes of understanding the past and the present, of mapping the conditions of blackness in every possible register, offer tools for imagining possible futures, but, for Du Bois, this is not fundamentally predictive. The uncertainly of the future yields a steadfast conviction that the collective enterprise undertaken by Diasporic peoples will not lead to a final resolution. The journey to liberation, though progressive, is not strictly bounded, there is no end of time or history, simply the passage of the individual, who leaves behind a legacy in the great collective spirit of a people. On the impulse toward human progress, "the only possible death," Du Bois writes in his last message,[21] "is to lose belief in this truth simply because the great end comes slowly: because time is long." The enduring ideal of national

[21] My Last Message, June 1957.

identity, and the programmatic understanding of the self as it exists in the long scope of history, as a member of a group and as an individual, persists, even as it must continuously reassert itself. The end that Du Bois claims for himself at the end of his life, is not a moment of vanishing, but instead, of well-earned rest. The intellectual machinery that he has put in place for his people, carefully programmed and implemented, may continue to operate and unfold, even when he is no longer present to direct it.

Chapter 1: Du Boisian Philosophy and Its Roots

In 1926's "Criteria of Negro Art," W.E.B. Du Bois anticipates the possibility that, to some, art and aesthetics may seem ancillary to the pursuit of social justice, challengingly asking "how is it that an organization like this…a fighting organization which has come up out of the blood and dust of battle, struggling for the right of black men to be ordinary human beings—how is it that an organization of this kind can turn aside to talk about Art?"[1] For decades, the struggle for African American rights and liberation had been divided along lines of tangible versus abstract measures of activism. The prominent public clash between Booker T. Washington and Du Bois himself featured arguments from Washington denouncing the lofty educational goals of Harvard-educated DuBois in favor of practical training in trades which would provide income and the literal sustenance which African Americans, he believed, could not derive from an education in the humanities. Characteristically, Du Bois had a clear response to such concerned imaginary interlocutors. The practical application of the arts, Du Bois insists, is readily apparent as African American art itself serves to establish the dignity and humanity of African Americans,[2] and this utility of artistic expression is, Du Bois claims, vital and necessary for the sustained existence of black communities. Material conditions for African Americans are, indeed, the critical substance of Du Bois's sociological study and methods, exemplified in 1899's *The Philadelphia Negro*, but this expansive mapping of the economic and social violence enacted against black communities does not preclude his impulse toward writing fiction. Du Bois understands well the material conditions necessary to building a future for black communities,

[1] Originally part of an address delivered upon awarding to Carter G. Woodson the NAACP's 12th Spingarn Medal in 1926, but later published in *The Crisis* (vol. 32, 290-297) in October of that year

[2] "I do not doubt that the ultimate art coming from black folk is going to be just as beautiful, and beautiful largely in the same ways, as the art that comes from white folk, or yellow, or red; but the point today is that until the art of the black folk compells [*sic*] recognition they will not be rated as human"; Ibid. 290

but without an intellectual and spiritual framework for organizing black communities and establishing a common enterprise for black folks, these material gains may be ultimately futile, bound to the present without any legacy.

Attempting to fully document Du Bois's footprint in the canon of American and African American literature is a monumental task, as his corpus spans many decades, genres, and a sprawling expanse of political and historical upheaval in the first half of the 20th Century. The thread which binds Du Bois's eclectic catalog of novels, dramas, speeches, and scholarship, I will argue, is the realistic extension of existing structure of history, nation, and race, cognitive estrangement from these paradigms, and the possibility of futures and worlds outside of Jim Crow America, in a mode of Science Fiction. Viewed through the lens of Science Fiction, Du Bois's attempts to reconcile data-driven sociological and speculative fiction, sweeping theories of race and nation alongside densely symbolic drama and fiction, fit more neatly into specific literary traditions and theoretical models. While Du Bois's corpus is often viewed as a staging ground for the conflict between Pragmatism and Idealism,[3] or Du Bois's scientific and spiritual ideals,[4] Science Fiction not only provides a space to reconcile these elements, but actively relies on these intersections. Quantitative methods and close attention to the material conditions of African American communities which undergird Du Bois's sociological research become fertile ground for Du Bois's imaginative fiction and project of political progress. Establishing the

[3] As Zamir notes in *Dark Voices* "The primary focus is on a dialogue between Du Bois's work and the theorization of action, will, and consciousness in the ethical pragmatism of William James, though Du Bois's relation to the reactionary implications of the growth of positivism in the social sciences, the use of Hegelian idealism in defense of manifest destiny, and the revivals of exceptionalist accounts of the nation in several arenas of thought are also considered at length" (Zamir 10-11)

[4] Scholars have commonly read Du Bois's sharp rebuke of some religious belief in *Souls* and other works as an indication that over the course of Du Bois's life, especially as he become more embroiled in Communist politics over the course of the 20th century, Du Bois was agnostic or atheist in his personal life. This claim, however, is readily called into question in more recent discussions of Du Bois's personal and political philosophies, as seen in Jonathon S. Kahn's *Divine Discontent: The Religious Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois* and Edward J. Blum's *W.E.B. Du Bois: American Prophet*.

structure of society and the intricate mechanisms which have dictated, historically and presently, many facets of the lives of black subjects, Du Bois can invent the possibilities of the future[5] which do not rely on providence or beneficence, but instead on the self-directed power of a black nation. Conversely, the possibilities[6] which emerge from Du Bois's Science Fiction, the exploration of alternatives to the grim catalogs of black suffering in sociological reports, provides an antidote to early 20th Century sociology which viewed the poverty of black communities as a necessary consequence of their Race.[7] In concluding "Criteria for Negro art," Du Bois hopes that Black artists will be recognized for the timeless wisdom of their arts[8] and his closing remarks recalls a "story of a folk" seeking the stars and raising "a mighty cry: 'It is the stars, it is the ancient stars, it is the young and everlasting stars!'"[9] Invoking the stars as a potent symbol of continuity between the past and the future, Du Bois emphasizes a pragmatic value to expression, which is both practical and theoretical, and conspicuously establishes a cosmic framework for his program of political active arts.

The towering figure of W.E.B. Du Bois in African American letters has led to considerable disagreement about the specific shape and character of his academic and literary achievements and their influence. Du Bois's role as a social theorist and writer are rarely

[5] So-called "hard" Science Fiction is not simply organized by the grounding reality of scientific thought, but actively simulates the processes of scientific thought, what Jameson terms "a mimesis of scientific discovery" (Jameson "Shifting Contexts of Science Fiction Theory" 244)

[6] What Sam Delany would term "subjunctivity." In Delany's view of Science Fiction, subjunctivity is a critical element, as he argues decisively that "a distinct level of subjunctivity informs all the words in an sf story at a level that is different from that which informs naturalistic fiction, fantasy, or reportage" ("About Five Thousand One Hundred and Seventy Five Words," 62)

[7] As Aldon Morris reports in *The Scholar Denied*, Francis Galton's flawed prescriptive social imagination was commonly reproduced in texts like 1921's *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* noting that "eugenics clearly got an appreciative audience in the American academy and in sociology in the early decades of the twentieth century" (Morris 19)

[8] "And when through art they compell [*sic*] recognition then let the world discover if it will that their art is as new as it is old and as old as new"; Ibid. 297

[9] Ibid. 297. Du Bois frames this quotation as the work of a classmate but does not identify the author and work as William Vaughn Moody and his promethean play *The Fire-Bringer*, respectively.

diminished,[10] but the theoretical and scientific aspects of Du Bois's work, especially in light of his proclamation that "all Art is propaganda and ever must be,"[11] are often questioned. The central Du Boisian theory of Double Consciousness, and the matrix of possible identities which emerge from this frame, are read by some critics as necessarily historical and possibly quite short-sighted. Ernest Allen Jr., for example, sees many scholars "who have misconstrued Du Boisian double consciousness as a broad-based Afro-American *cultural* dilemma,"[12] and notes well that Du Bois's position as an educated middle-class black man, in his own accounting a member of the "talented tenth," may limit his perspective for widely theorizing black experience, a point which Zamir also raises in *Dark Voices*. For Allen, the concept of Double Consciousness may be a lyrical accomplishment for expressing Du Bois's personal feeling, it falls short of Du Bois's theoretical aspirations.[13] This critique, however, relies, as George Ciccariello-Maher notes, on a limited reading of Du Bois's expansive corpus and a narrow view of the multiplicity common to many aspects of Du Bois's theories.[14] Careful study of Du Bois's entire corpus, integrating his scientific and imaginative texts, further explains the broad theoretical strokes which serve as an apparatus both for understanding the structures of society and exploring the possibility of life beyond the limits of this structure. Similarly, the literary approaches to Du Bois are often rather narrow in their purview. The vast majority of scholarship on Du Bois focuses primarily if not exclusively on *The Souls of Black Folk* and while I will argue here that this

[10] Indeed, Aldon Morris's *The Scholar Denied* presents tremendous evidence that Du Bois himself precedes the Chicago School and other scholars credited with inventing the field of modern sociology.
[11] Du Bois "Criteria of Negro Art" p. 295
[12] Allen, "Du Boisian Double Consciousness: The Unsustainable Argument" p. 1
[13] "Du Boisian double-consciousness was not so much a usable concept as an exquisitely crafted metaphor" (Allen 33)
[14] "there is a historical confusion in his argument that Du Bois 'jettisoned' double-consciousness, an argument that only holds water if one either insists on finding the exact phrase in later work or if one defines the concept according to its middle-class character, which Allen so rightly disdains (thereby falling into a patently circular argument" (Ciccariello-Maher 377)

seminal text is a vital instrument for reading the rest of his corpus, its intertext with many other works is critical to managing Du Boisian theories of Race and identity. The focus on *Souls* as an expression of black experiences,[15] though thoroughly accurate, often present the text as a self-contained work of art, descriptive rather than generative.

To properly locate Du Bois's fiction within canons of Science Fiction, it will be useful first to establish the philosophical and sociological theories articulated by Du Bois throughout his life which serve as the basis for both political activism and the "science" motivating his literary fiction. Accounts of Du Bois's life often focus primarily on either Du Bois's political and sociological writing or his works of fiction[16] even within his most commonly cited work, *The Souls of Black Folk*. The form itself of Du Bois's landmark text, an anthology which freely mixes philosophy, sociology, life-writing, and fiction,[17] resists attempts to type or categorize Du Bois's understanding of race, and this tension is reflective of his attention to the material and the immaterial. While there is no mistaking Du Bois's consistent commitment to praxis and activism over the course of his life, and his advocacy for black arts is presented as practical, this rarely excluded the abstract and the theoretical. Beginning with his studies at Harvard, under the tutelage of diverging intellectual and philosophical programs, the Pragmatism of William James and Idealism of Josiah Royce, Du Bois carefully crafts his own synthetic mode of considering race as it is constructed simultaneously by practical experience and the abstract theories and

[15] Arnold Rampersad, for example recognizes the text's undeniable popular appeal for "it's originality and beauty as a portrait of the Afro-American people" (Rampersad 104), Cheryl A. Wall proclaims that *Souls* is "a singular text that resounds throughout the literary tradition of the twentieth century" (Wall 217), and Ronald A. T. Judy, "the principle in a long line of texts that attempt to delineate the genealogy of authentic collective African American enunciation" (Judy 253), to cite only a few of the many scholarly works on *The Souls of Black Folk*

[16] The aforementioned texts from Zamir and Morris, as well as biographical works from David Levering Lewis, among others, focus heavily on the former, while literary critics like Arnold Rampersad and Robert Stepto focus, predictably, on the most overtly fiction aspects of Du Bois's corpus, particularly *The Souls of Black Folk*.

[17] A format Du Bois also common to 1920's *Darkwater* and 1940's *Dusk of Dawn*.

patterns which may emerge from experience.[18] Though Du Bois's philosophical methods of engaging with race evolve over the course of his life, with a growing interest in Dialectical Materialism through his later years, the persistent construction of race alone lines of abstract and spiritual thought is never fully erased from his theories of race and social justice. Du Boisian science itself, though obviously indebted to empiricism and quantitative methods, views the abstract and the theoretical as a possible manifestation of the transcendental, following Emerson.[19] The archly spiritual, religious reckoning of blackness and the categorical spirit of black folk present in *The Souls of Black Folk* was, no doubt, profoundly altered by Du Bois's relationship with Marxism and increasing skepticism about the ethos of American Christianity. Nevertheless, his reflections in *Dusk of Dawn*, some 37 years later, were still heavily premised on a holistic conception of race, in which the abstract emerges from material data and there is room for alternate and unexplored possibilities, what he would call "Chance" in *Sociology Hesitant*. Du Bois's sustained commitment to both Jamesian Pragmatism and Roycian Idealism, is distinctly present in Du his later works as a means of positing race as a totalizing system understood and expressed through a collective consciousness and individual experience. These approaches provide Du Bois with a complex framework within which he can devise systems of notation which attempt to link the material phenomena with abstract formulae, and from this scientific thought, literary apparatuses for exploring new possibilities.

The Scientific Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois

[18] Accounts of Du Bois's education are primarily derived from Zamir's *Dark Voices* and Francis Broderick's dissertation on Du Bois, written in consultation with Du Bois himself. The terms of Pragmatic and Idealistic philosophy which seem most pertinent to Du Bois in these studies place the logic of Pragmatism as a methodology which apprehends reality via experience, whereas the logic of Idealism as a dialectical framework relies on the conscious identity of the subject as a means of apprehending objects.

[19] "a spiritual life has been imparted to nature….in physics, when this is attained, the memory disburthens itself of its cumbrous catalogues of particulars, and carries centuries of observation in a single formula" (Emerson, *Nature*, 29)

Du Bois's recollection of his education and growth as a young scholar in *Dusk of Dawn* clearly reflect on the late 19th century zeitgeist of empirical science, rationalism, and the myths of progress which emerged from this ethos. He says specifically that "above all science was becoming religion; psychology was reducing metaphysics to experiment and a sociology of human action was planned,"[20] and it was in this philosophical context that his sociological thoughts sought to address the limits of empiricism. Despite the religious determinism which often characterized his education at Fisk[21] and crucial to Emersonian philosophy of natural sciences,[22] Du Bois suggests that he was already inclined to seek rational inquiry into the nature of existence. The presumed intrinsic inferiority of African Americans—and African and Asian peoples abroad—derived from 19th century anthropological theories of race, viewed the apparent poverty of colonized people as the material consequence of their essential nature, selecting empirical data only as it fit neatly into their existing reductive theories. Indeed, this hazard of contemporary thought proved useful in Du Bois's unfolding thoughts: "One consideration alone saved me from complete conformity with the thoughts and confusions of then current social trends; and that was the problems of racial and cultural contact. Otherwise I might easily have been simply the current product of my day."[23] Collecting observational data, local and categorical, which shattered the supposed objectivity and science of existing racial categories, cataloging and theorizing his own experiences as a black subject, and observing the despicable

[20] Du Bois, W.E.B. *Dusk of Dawn*. p. 14
[21] "At Fisk a very definite attempt was made to see that we did not lose or question our Christian orthodoxy" Du Bois later notes on page 17 of *Dusk of Dawn*.
[22] In "The American Scholar," Emerson describes a crucial phase of science as a simple accumulation of knowledge from nature itself, saying that "science is nothing but the finding of analogy" ("The American Scholar 45). This view of a deterministic universe is even more clearly articulated in the later essay "Fate" in which Emerson argues that not only does truth emerge from Nature but that "the divine order does not stop where their sight stops….Fate then is a name for facts not yet passed under the fire of thought; for causes which are unpenetrated" (Emerson, *The Conduct of Life* 26).
[23] Du Bois, W.E.B. *Dusk of Dawn*, p. 13

treatment of equally capable African Americans by the supposedly rational, provided Du Bois with alternative methods of generating scientific knowledge: that Race itself was a measure of generating meaning, at the level of a group and an individual. He notes once more in this section that, while at Fisk, he had access to some philosophical coursework which "opened vistas" and "made me determine to go further in this probing for truth." But this academic pursuit was ultimately worthwhile because, "eventually it landed me squarely in the arms of William James of Harvard, for which God be praised"[24]. The evolution of Du Bois's personal and political consciousness was to be heavily indebted to his experiences with William James and Pragmatic methods of organizing identity though experience, which in turn provided the means for characterizing individual reason and will.

James, according to Du Bois's recollection, advised his young student, somewhat ironically that, "'if you must study philosophy you will; but if you can turn aside into something else, do so. It is hard to earn a living with philosophy.'"[25] The program of sociological and historical methods which Du Bois studied at Harvard[26] is consciously linked, in Du Bois's later recollections, to the influence of James, but the ironic note of James's warning against philosophy signals a more complex relationship with Jamesian Pragmatism. Just as Du Bois's cheeky praise to God for delivering him from the conservative religious ideology of Fisk complicates his oft-noted skepticism toward Christianity, the paradoxical mode of claiming to eschew philosophy on account of his relationship with Jamesian Pragmatism informs a close reading of Du Bois's philosophical reckoning of race and history. Discrete objects and phenomena are critical to Du Boisian construction of meaning, but they are properly understood

[24] Ibid. p. 17
[25] Ibid. p. 20
[26] "I was determined to make a scientific conquest of my environment, which would render the emancipation of the Negro race easier and quicker" (Ibid. 16)

through patterns and laws of being which are entangled in less tangible aspects of will and identity. Despite James's own commitment to radical empiricism and his perceived antagonism toward Idealism,[27] his own rendering of Pragmatic methodology readily recognizes and relies upon abstract reason. While Jamesian philosophy may be able to accommodate how "reason" could be shared among a homogenous set of subjects with common and shared social experiences, for Du Bois, the tension between individual experiences and universal experiences was modulated by the experiences common to members of his race, but uncommon to the white masses that surrounded him. In "The Sentiment of Rationality,"[28] James's empirical maxim that "completed theoretic philosophy can thus never be anything more than a completed classification of the world's ingredients" is followed immediately by the note that "its results must always be abstract, since the basis of every classification is the abstract essence embedded in the living fact."[29] For James, the connection between the ingredients of the world, the material traces of existence and the abstract premises which emerge from this set of data is weak as it identifies only the essence of things as they are "embedded in living fact." This relationship between object and essence provides fertile ground for Du Bois to theorize the necessary link between the sociology of black folks and their souls. While Zamir argues that James's influence is limited in Du Bois's early theories of the social and psychic toll of blackness,[30] James's formulations connecting experience and will to theories of being are instructive in reading the material and spiritual processes outlined first in *Souls* and then again in *Dusk of Dawn*. The Praxis of *Souls* is

[27] Zamir states emphatically that "what was important about neo-Kantianism for James as for Du Bois was not its transcendental method or its idealism, but its assumption of the 'primacy of practical reason'" (79)
[28] Originally published in the psychology journal *Mind* in July 1879 and is reproduced in the 1897 collection *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* and subsequent reprints.
[29] James, William. *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, p. 67
[30] Zamir claims specifically that "James's emphasis on contingency and striving in the real world does play a significant part in turning Du Bois toward politically committed social science work....but what is most radical in Du Bois's early work is his ability to confront, through complex descriptions of the outer contours and inner torments of black life in America….in this endeavor James is of little help to him" (46)

revealed to be the coexistence of material and spiritual conditions. Du Bois states willfully in "The Forethought" that "I have sought here to sketch in vague, uncertain outline, the spiritual world in which ten thousand thousand Americans live and strive."[31] His "swift outline" is composed not simply of the fact of black poverty or the suffering of souls, but, indeed, by both "the passion of its human sorrow, and the struggle of its greater souls."[32] The spirit of African Americans, in a Hegelian reckoning of historical "peoples" is determined along the measurement of individual suffering as well as collective suffering, and can thus be theorized, sketched out and understood according to the formulae which emerge from the study of their being, empirical and subjective, a method which has origins in Jamesian philosophy and which will emerge in Du Bois's sociological theories.

James lays a clear foundation for Du Bois's construction of dualistic analysis, as he boldly asserts in "The Dilemma of Determinism"[33] that "I myself believe that all the magnificent achievements of mathematical and physical science—our doctrines of evolution, of uniformity of law, and the rest—proceeded from our indomitable desire to cast the world into a more rational shape in our minds than the shape into which it is thrown there by the crude order of our experience."[34] Experience, though a vital aspect of determining the nature of things, is insufficient unless it is properly governed by a rational consciousness, particularly the human will which can imagine outside of a perfectly mechanistic universe.[35] Though James's Pragmatic

[31] *The Souls of Black Folk,* p. 5
[32] Ibid. p. viii
[33] Originally an address to the Harvard Divinity School and later published in *Unitarian Review* in September of 1884 and reproduced in James's *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*.
[34] James, William. *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, p. 147.
[35] "Especially, since, as James was aware, the mechanistic model was breaking down with the discovery of radiation and speculation about strange and unknown forces. James also have the examples of Fechner and Zöllner, who recognized no rigid distinctions between speculative metaphysics, science and occultism" (267 Skrupskelis)

outlook was often skeptical of the teleologies of Hegalian metaphysics,[36] it is nevertheless capable of positing the sublimated connection between phenomena and provides a Pragmatic basis with which Du Bois can describe a positive *geist* of his people while still fundamentally grounding his theories in lived experiences. This synthetic possibility for positing states of being exists in Du Bois's potent theory of "double-consciousness," as a method of simultaneously theorizing blackness abstractly and characterizing the material lives of black folk. "Of Our Spiritual Striving," despite being originally situated among Du Bois's heavily sociological works in 1897,[37] published in the *Atlantic Monthly* as "The Striving of the Negro People," identifies the miserable condition of his folk as one of both spiritual and material destitution: "this waste of double aims, this seeking to satisfy two unreconciled ideals, has wrought sad havoc with the courage and faith and deeds of ten thousand thousand people,—has sent them often wooing false gods and invoking false means of salvation."[38] Necessarily composed of both faith and deed, the shared experience of being black emerges from the discrete mechanics of society, material and abstract, poverty and prejudice, but are also sublimated into an ethos which hangs over individuals, fettered to their material being, but existing in excess of their empirical existence.

James also provide a method of theorizing this connectedness absent identical sets of experience, in further examining the relationship between abstract theories and the practical data from which they emerge. "How Two Minds Can Know One Things"[39] attempts to reconcile the

[36] "The world must not be regarded as a machine whose final purpose is the making real of any outward good, but rather a contrivance for deepening theoretic consciousness of what goodness and evil in their intrinsic natures are" (*The Will to Believe* 165).
[37] "Yet it is in the very midst of doing research for *The Philadelphia Negro* that Du Bois publishes his finest work on psychological understanding and autobiographical insight. 'The Striving of the Negro People' (1897), published in the *Atlantic Monthly*….later to become 'Of Our Spiritual Strivings,' makes everything that the positivism of *The Philadelphia Negro* excludes the very basis for a true understanding of historical experience' (Zamir 98).
[38] *The Souls of Black Folks*, p. 12
[39] Originally published in *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 2.7 in 1905 and reproduced in the posthumously edited collection James's essays, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, published in 1912.

relationship between consciousness and "pure experience" and imagines how meaning can coexist between minds, how "one identical term, whether physical or psychical…could be the subject of two relations at once."[40] James argues that this expanded notion of consciousness is made possible because consciousness is constructed by knowledge itself, claiming that: "the paradox of the same experience figuring into two consciousnesses seems thus no paradox at all. To be 'conscious' means not simply to be, but to be reported, known, to have awareness of one's being added to that being; and this is just what happens when the appropriative experience supervenes."[41] While he stops short of asserting an element of consciousness that is wholly outside the mechanics of causal reality and the mind as it is anchored to both a physical brain and the experiential phenomena of perceiving the world, such a model of consciousness provides room through which Du Bois can integrate more Idealistic concepts into his evolving attempts to characterize the conditions of race in society as neither entirely material nor spiritual. While it is reasonable to characterize Du Bois's later works as distancing themselves from some of the more overt metaphysics and religiosity of *Souls*, his emphasis on theory and *geist* remains crucial to his political and philosophical writing, as well as his sociological thoughts.

Sociology and a Science of Society

Du Bois, as Morris points out,[42] sees the origins of social sciences in economics[43] but he points out that the limitations of this science was that it merely measured wealth and "took into

[40] James, William. *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 125.
[41] Ibid. p. 132.
[42] Chapter 2 of *The Scholar Denied* offers a detailed account of Du Bois's influences among the German Historical School of Economics and notes specifically that "Schmoller, who became Du Bois's primary German mentor, and the other members of his group rejected grand theories and deductive reasoning" (Morris 2015, 20)
[43] In an 1897 speech before the First Sociological Club at Atlanta University Du Bois declares "there was then but one science which undertook the study of the phenomena of human action and that was the science of political economy" (Program for a Sociological Society 3)

account only a few human activities."[44] While natural laws may never exist for sociology as they exist for physics, Du Bois insists that "there are in life curious and noticeable coincidences – rythm [sic] in life and death."[45] The "abstract classifications" which James believes emerge from observing the "world's ingredients," become for Du Bois the rhythms and patterns which are visible in the organism of society and difficult path of managing the scales of an individual and a mass, which persist in Du Bois's future sociological theories. Sociology, Du Bois would later write in 1905's unpublished "Sociology Hesitant," is necessarily eclectic as it attempts to manage the spontaneity of human will and the apparent patterns which emerge from observing the teeming chaotic mass of human society.[46] Du Bois explains that "a part of this confusion of field was inevitable to any attempt at classifying knowledge, but the major part pointed to a real confusion of mind as to the field and method of Sociology."[47] The construction of organizing or scientific thought surrounding the problems of "society" do not erase the unpredictable aspects of individual human actions by sublimating them into abstract notions of humanity. He sees valuable tools in the Positivistic Sociology, derived from Auguste Comte's theories and robust statistical measurements, but believes that these aspects of sociology must be tempered against each other and properly considered in conjunction with one another. Du Bois notes that Comte, in formulating the study of society as an organic, rather than an inorganic science,[48] emphasizes

[44] Ibid. p. 3
[45] Ibid. p. 3
[46] He will claim in 1905's unpublished "Sociology Hesitant" that the field is "distributed quite impartially under some six of the seven grand divisions of Science: economics, here; ethnology, there; a thing called 'Sociology' hidden under Mental Science, and the things really sociological ranged in a rag-bag and labelled "Social Regulation" (Du Bois "Sociology Hesitant" 1)
[47] Ibid. p. 1.
[48] On page 2 of "Sociology Hesitant" Du Bois appears to be quoting Harriet Martineau's *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, Vol. 2, Book VI which regards "Social Physics" by observing that "now in the inorganic sciences, the elements are much better known to us than the Whole which they constitute; so that in that case we must proceed from the simple to the compound. But the reverse method is necessary in the study of Man and of Society: Man and Society as a whole being better known to us, and more accessible subjects of study than the parts which constitute them" (Comte 82)

"the fact that amid the bewildering complexities of human life ran great highways of common likenesses and agreements in human thoughts and action."[49] The shared experiences which have previously followed lines of Race in Du Bois's reckoning of his own scientific thought have a place among the phenomena that are at once felt acutely in the daily hazards of public life in a white society and the common expectations of this ambient hostility and possibility of racial violence that looms in the psyche and spirit of black subjects. The paradox at the heart of sociological thought, as Du Bois presents it in 1905, that the human lives are organized both by their individuality and their movement within the rhythmic flow of society,[50] leaves room understanding new possibilities in society only after discrete social forces and their logic are accounted for.

The temptation, which emerges from physical sciences, to insist that the laws governing human activity are fundamentally fixed in empirical materiality, runs parallel to a metaphysical Idealism which imagines human will as a manifestation of forces outside the observable universe, and Du Bois rejects either a top-down or bottom-up construction of sociology. The patterns and theories which Du Bois posits are necessary to fully capturing the structure of a society and people, though they do not emerge as natural laws parallel to those in Physics and Chemistry, transcend the simple fact of their material components. Du Bois addresses the impulse toward Laws of Sociology, in the mold of Herbert Spencer, which view society as an abstraction, saying that "it was as though Newton noticing falling as characteristic of matter and explaining this phenomenon as gravitation had straightway sought to study some wierd [sic] entity known as Falling instead of things which fall."[51] Du Bois insists on the material, the

[49] Du Bois, "Sociology Hesitant" 2
[50] Ibid. 5: "A Categorical Imperative pushed all thought toward the Paradox: 1. The evident rythm of human action. 2. The evident incalculability in human action"
[51] Ibid. 2

minute, and the living elements of society, but also insists that they must proceed to the theoretical and categorical[52] and particularly into a cohesive category of kind or type. The primary measure of type in society which Du Bois addresses is, quite predictably, Race, and in his theories of race, Du Bois leaves room for the transcendental, but only as it is grounded in the shared experience of Race.[53] James similarly argued that "the only possible philosophy must be a compromise between an abstract monotony and a concrete heterogeneity. But the only way to mediate between diversity and unity is to class the diverse items as cases of a common essence which is discover in them. Classification of things into extensive 'kinds' is thus the first step; and the classification of their relations and conduct into extensive 'laws' is the last step in their philosophic unification,"[54] but stops short of identifying this philosophic unification as transcendental. The transcendental outside to the philosophical unification which Du Bois sees at the edge of Sociology, revealed only when other social patterns are properly accounted for, possibilities which he terms "Chance."

Sociology, as Du Bois describes it, then should "frankly state the Hypothesis of Law and the Assumption of Chance and seek to determine by study and measurement the limits of each."[55] Sociology represents, for Du Bois, the "greatest possible field of scientific investigation" precisely because it relies on the continued search for meaning on the basis of observation, despite the profound difficulty contemporary sciences have in calculating and classifying the human will. The ability to systematically investigate human beings, individually, as groups, and as a society, and observe their resistance to models of humanity that are either

[52] "the Spencerian Sociologists could only limn a shadowy outline of the meaning and rhythm of human deed to be filled in when scientific measurement and deeper study came to the rescue" (Ibid. 3)
[53] "The deeper differences are spiritual, psychical, differences—undoubtedly based on the physical, but infinitely transcending them" ("The Conservation of Races" 54)
[54] James, William, "The Sentiment of Rationality" 67
[55] Du Bois, W.E.B., "Sociology Hesitant" 6

purely chaotic or ordered.[56] Du Bois concludes "Sociology Hesitant" by positioning humanity, and the study thereof, in this Pragmatic middle position, of material phenomena with an ordering logic, but he articulates even more directly the potential and possibility of something beyond and outside, again, only visible when all other features of humanity are properly classified.[57] The careful measurement of social forces does not establish the laws by which human lives must abide but instead demonstrates the forces which attend and distort the possibilities of society, leaving only "traces of indeterminate forces." The implications for African Americans and other subjects most violently affected by these social forces seems clear and the insistent reference to this "realm of higher human action" as "Chance" provides a clear basis for the imaginative scientific fiction through which alternate realities and futures can be explored. "Chance being the scientific side of inexplicable Will," Du Bois proclaims, "Sociology then, is the science that seeks the limits of Chance in human conduct."[58] The possibilities of human enterprise, though transcendental, are not preordained by divine providence or the eternal structure of the universe, but a spirit crafted from the unbounded creative intelligence of a people. The *geist* which prevailed in Du Bois's racial philosophy, while tempered by Pragmatic emphasis on experience, nevertheless provides a fruitful model for understanding the literary landscapes which become the frontiers of Chance and possibility.

As the 20th Century wore on, and Du Bois became more directly involved in Marxist ideology, saying in the first chapter of *Dusk of Dawn* that the "problem of the Negro" included

[56] Ibid. 7: "They have neither accepted human life as chaotic nor have they lightly assumed law, the existence of which they could not prove"
[57] Ibid. 9: "Looking over the world we see evidence of the reign of law; as we rise however from the physical to the human there comes not simply complication and interaction of forces but traces of indeterminate force until in the higher human action we have chance—that is actions undermined by the and independent of actions gone before"
[58] Ibid. 9.

seeking "democratic control of the industrial process"[59] also conspicuously includes "spiritual independence."[60] The substance of this "spirit" follows the logic of Race, as Du Bois has previously described it, but it is not limited by simple biology or physical proximity, but also by an abstract measures of "Race."[61] While there is reason to believe that Du Bois's previous notion of the spiritual lives of black folk, a source of angst but also critical to their liberation, was overshadowed by a dialectical materialist approach to history, and Du Bois's own waxing Marxism,[62] the materialism which informs Du Bois's later works is accompanied by a persistent thread of Idealism. Hegelian philosophy, including the St. Louis Hegelians and the work of John Dewey, which were popular in the late 19th Century and transmitted to Du Bois via Josiah Royce's influence, offered Du Bois an alternative to the formal logic of neo-Kantian philosophers. Inflected by an Emersonian Transcendentalism, the Hegelian spirit which Du Bois aligns with a Pragmatic Reason provides a model with which Du Bois can explore "Chance" and indeterminate forces in his reckoning of the universe in the experimental spaces of literary fiction.

Du Bois's theories of a black ethos, the shared soul which inspired the title of *The Souls of Black Folk*, though affected by his investments in Dialectical Materialism, are still present in his reflections on his early philosophical work. *Dusk of Dawn* recognizes the Hegelian

[59] Du Bois, W.E.B. *Dusk of Dawn,* p. 3
[60] Ibid. 3
[61] As Nancy Muller suggests: "Du Bois implemented his own approach to the qualitative and quantitative search for race. He defined race as a group of persons who perhaps share the same blood but extended this to include cultural categories as language and proposed that they 'always share a history" ("Du Boisian Pragmatism and 'The Problem of the Twentieth Century'" 331) and this is very clearly reflected in "The Conservation of Races" where Du Bois asks and answers: "What, then, is a race? It is a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life" ("The Conservation of Races", 53)
[62] "But as the more radical neo-idealists were demonstrating, the road from a post-Hegelian critical idealism to Marx was a logical one for many intellectuals, and Du Bois's career was to follow this very path after the Depression" (Zamir 78).

historiography which motivated sections of *Souls*[63] noting that: "that was our method in the nineteenth century. Just as I was born a member of a colored family so too I was born a member of the colored race….the world was divided into great primary groups of folk who belonged naturally together through heredity of physical traits and cultural affinity."[64] Du Bois, however, quickly distances himself from this thought, explaining "in Europe my friendships and close contact with white folk made my own ideas waver. The eternal walls between races did not seem so stern and exclusive. I began to emphasize the cultural aspects of race."[65] He pushes toward an understanding of race that does not rely entirely on *geist*, especially as it is understood to be intrinsic and binding. Indeed, he points out that the supposed inferiority of his people is predicated on common political experiences of African Americans for whom poverty and isolation are actively induced by white society.[66] The problem, then, for Du Bois is not a matter of dismantling all concept of spirit or *geist* but disentangling the material and spiritual dimensions of race. Du Bois's conviction that the poverty of black folk was the result of overarching socio-economic machinery did not dispel notions of a shared consciousness among his folk, but instead provided a means of explaining their suffering despite their striving spirits. The irrepressible spirit, ironically derived from Hegelian philosophy[67] that denied the historical significance of Africa and Africans, can be properly articulated as a phenomenon which is not

[63] Compare "The History of the World travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of History, Asia the beginning....The East...the Greek and Roman world...the German World" (Hegel 163-164) and "After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son" (*Souls* 10)
[64] Du Bois, W.E.B. *Dusk of Dawn*, p. 100
[65] Ibid. p. 102. Du Bois is likely referring to his various trips to Europe, including but not limited to his idyllic studies in Berlin from 1892 to 1894, and his travels as he attended events like the First Pan-African Conference held in London in 1900 and the Paris Exposition of the same year.
[66] Ibid., p. 102: "Only comparatively few have, under our present economic and social organization, had a chance to show their capabilities."
[67] As David Krell astutely notes, "for both thinkers, self-awareness is the gift of a redoubled sight, with the vision of the one filtered and refined by the vision of the other. Yet I suspect that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is most important for Du Bois because of what Hegel calls the agitated blood and the liquid flow of desirous life, of *Leben* and *Begierde*, the desire of one consciousness to possess another consciousness" (Krell 105)

simply characterized by the material conditions in which it is immersed. Du Bois's growing materialist thought makes up an important basis for theorizing race, but only as it interacts with his more Idealistic notions of race: "with the best will the factual outline of a life misses the essence of its spirit. Thus in my life the chief fact has been race—not so much scientific race, as that deep conviction of myriads of men that congenital differences among the main masses of human beings absolutely condition the individual destiny of every member of a group."[68] From Royce's Hegelian influence, Du Bois searches for methods of joining the material reality of race with its immaterial aspects, psyche and spirit, and follows this logic to his own projects of writing histories, natural and invented.

Just as Jamesian Pragmatism and Hegelian Idealism offer incomplete measures of organizing the experiences of individuals into the coherent web of causal events that comprise "history," Marx, too, fails to provide a sufficiently holistic view of history to suit the complex nature of race[69] as a deterministic pattern which also contains individual wills. Du Bois expresses reservations about the rationalizing drive of consciousness: "I had regarded it as axiomatic that the world wanted to learn the truth and if the truth was sought with even approximate accuracy and painstaking devotion, the world would gladly support this effort….this was, of course, but a young man's idealism, not by any means false, but also never universally true."[70] The nature of desire and will, though extant in Du Bois's thought at this stage of his career,[71] is only partially universal, and reaches toward freedom, not with the categorically ordering universality of

[68] Du Bois, W.E.B. *Dusk of Dawn,* p. 70-71.
[69] "but it was one of Du Bois' many achievements to demonstrate that racism of working-class whites against blacks in both the South and the North during the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the effects of this racism in internally dividing the North American working class, represents a fundamental countervailing tendency within capitalist society—one for which Marx and Engels made no adequate accounting" (Nonini 294)
[70] Du Bois, W.E.B. *Dusk of Dawn,* p. 34-35.
[71] Ibid. p. 68: "more especially, I presume the cultural and spiritual desire to be one's self without interference from others; to enjoy that anarchy of the spirit which is inevitably the goal of all consciousness."

Hegel's *geist,*[72] but instead a free-flowing spirit which determines itself to the best of is ability among the rhythms of the broad social forces it navigates.

Some version of this thought can be seen through Josiah Royce's general introduction to *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, as Royce attempts to manage the chaotic array of different thoughts which can be attributed to a sense of universality, a "World Spirit" which inhabits all things. He argues for a nuanced and intentional organization of thoughts, stating that an eclectic array of theories and philosophies can coexist, but that they do not simply interact and intersect on the basis of their mutual coexistence. Distinct theories and philosophies should, instead, be understood as universal insofar as they can be brought into some holistic alignment, if not an absolute calibration. Royce claims that the available thoughts may seem daunting, "but if you examine further you find that this variety, better studied, is on its more human side largely an expression of the liveliness and individual of the spiritual temperaments of strong men The Truth is not in this case 'in the middle.' The truth is rather 'the whole.'"[73] The construction of meaning, the truth which can be sought from philosophical or sociological inquiry is not to be found in between these Ideals or experiences, but emerges among these parts, making up a whole of knowledge, consciousness, and being. Du Bois echoes this premise in describing the cacophony of voices from his peers in the early 20th Century, saying "my thoughts, the thoughts of Washington, Trotter and others, were expression of social forces more than of our own minds. These forces or ideologies embraced more than our reasoned acts. They included physical, biological and psychological forces; habits, conventions and enactments."[74] Only as these forces reach each other, become part of a theory unified not simply by their proximity, but by their

[72] "To understand this division we must remark that as the State is the universal spiritual life, to which individuals by birth sustain a relation of confidence and habit, and in which they have their existence and reality" (Hegel 164).
[73] Royce, Josiah. *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 15.
[74] Du Bois, W.E.B. *Dusk of Dawn*, p. 48

mutual interaction and intelligibility, does Du Bois see a functional method of defining race and a functional, rational order from which liberation can be imagined. The problem of organizing existence, as Du Bois notes of his own thoughts as he recounts his education at Harvard, can be addressed through the lens of race and the process of attempting to derive racial ideals from sociological evidence, and vice versa.

Josiah Royce, surely aware, as his colleague Henry James was, of the popular success of *The Souls of Black Folk*, wrote his own philosophical treatment of race and surrounding moral, political, and philosophical concepts in 1908's *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems*. In the first section, *Race Questions and Prejudices*, Royce sets out to examine the claims of anthropologists and biologists who claim, in the mode of empirical materialism, to answer definitively the questions of how races are defined and how their relative values are measured. Royce suggests that the difference evident in comparing Africans and Europeans, the material basis for claiming that Africans and Europeans are radically distinct, is a powerful reductive tool for insisting on difference at every level.[75] The pitfall of materialism, or other reductive categories for classifying human beings, are reproduced in the application of empiricism absent a genuine and functional theory for the abstract nature of humanity at the level of the individual and society at large. The answers issued by such empiricists, that racial prejudice and aggression "must come from an appeal to the results of the modern scientific study of the races of men," are ends unto themselves, presenting the answers to their own questions in the form of their own prior studies and the biases inherent in them.[76] Without properly

[75] Royce, Josiah. *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems*, p.5: "This is the problem of dealing with the men who seem to us somehow very widely different from ourselves in physical constitution, in temperament, in all their deeper nature, so that we are tempted to think of them as natural strangers to our soul, while nevertheless we find that they are stubbornly there in our world, and that they are men as much determined to live as we are"
[76] Ibid. p. 7

considering the totality of sentiments and rationales and the relationship between matter and spirit, the myth of progress can overtake anyone, as it threatened to overtake a young Du Bois, had he not been endowed with special sight by the veil of the color line.

Royce points out that the empirical scientism which has and continues to inform discussions of race outside of the contest of self-determined theories of blackness, persons who are capable of uniting sociological data with an experiential understanding of "being a problem," as Du Bois famously claims in *Souls*, fail even by their own standards of rational empiricism. If this system were the product of the specific material conditions of the United States, he demands, then why are the problems of race reproduced in many environs each with distinct material conditions?[77] The necessary integration of these divergent aspects of experience, as Du Bois suggests, is a program for functional knowledge and political activism, predicated on seeking a complete and varied understanding of race in order that we can properly imagine a more just future. As Royce claims "in estimating, in dealing with races, in defining what their supposedly unchangeable characteristics are, in planning what to do with them….we are all prone to confuse the accidental with the essential. We are likely to take for an essential race-characteristic what is a transient incident or a product of special social conditions."[78] Du Bois's education on the study of races in the anthropology of the late 19th Century confirms this persistent conflation of the consequences and causes of a racist society, the broad social forces which obscure the spirit of African Americans and the Chance or possibility for their enterprise. Du Bois consistently attempts to develop robust theories of race which account both for the abstract and material aspects of black lives, not only as a means of dispelling the unfounded assumptions which fuel

[77] Ibid. p. 18-19: Royce notes that among the primarily black population of Jamaica, despite its "unlucky" economic history, and colonial history, "our own present Southern race-problem in the forms which we know best, simply does not exist" and makes similar claims about other Caribbean nations.
[78] Ibid. p. 29-30

popular racism, scientific or otherwise, but in inventing alternative visions of black society.[79] Scientific theories, which were never actually universal or neutral, having always been infiltrated by ideological positions, as Du Bois and Royce note well, and theories of society,[80] were only beneficial to Du Bois, and his project of racial uplift if they could properly manage cause and effect, and distinguish between the accidental and the essential. Du Bois could wield the tools of this intellectual discourse, encouraged by the Pragmatism of James toward sociology, while overwriting the racist assumptions common to scientific and sociological discourse, replacing them with his hard-earned experiences of race.[81] As Du Bois's intellectual life wore on, he became more and more capable of asserting his place in the world and his knowledge as it is derived from many mentors, experiences, and spirits.

Literary Experiments

In the sixth chapter of *Dusk of Dawn*, "The White World," Du Bois's theories come to some literary fruition. He recognizes his predecessors, and the philosophical legacies they leave behind, noting that "all our present frustration in trying to realize individual equality through communism, fascism, and democracy arises from our continual unwillingness to break the intellectual bonds of group and racial exclusiveness."[82] He argues that dialectical materialism,

[79] As Muller suggest: "Du Bois had to develop a conceptual framework within which to assert the logical fallacy of an allegedly inferiority based on so-called racial characteristics. This conceptual framework was the development of a philosophical approach to truth, as both process (science) and conclusion which would present a corrected and more accurate definition of the African-American experience" (Muller 321).
[80] Du Bois points out that despite the shifts toward supposedly scientific models of anthropology that "in the graduate school at Harvard and again in Germany, the emphasis again was altered, and race became a matter of culture and cultural history. The history of the world was paraded before the observation of students. Which was the superior race? Manifestly that which had a history, the white race" (*Dusk of Dawn* 49)
[81] Ibid. 50: "I lived to see every assumption in Hoffman's 'Race Traits and Tendencies' contradicted; but even before that, I doubted the statistical method which he had used. When the matters of race became a question of comparative culture, I was in revolt. I began to see that the cultural equipment attributed to any people depended largely on who estimated it."
[82] Ibid., p. 69

the ascended Authoritarian Ideal, and the promise of Pragmatic individualism, are all only as powerful as their relationship with categories of color and race will permit. He then turns to an imaginary white friend, Roger Van Dieman, a Platonic interlocutor who introduces the anti-Du Boisian theory, presenting the absolute nature of being as it exists in a single, hierarchical vision: "his thesis is simple: the world is composed of Race superimposed on Race; classes superimposed on classes; beneath the whole thing is 'Our Family' in capitals, and under that is God. God seems to be a cousin or at least a blood relative of the Van Diemans."[83] As Du Bois and Van Dieman exchange arguments, Du Bois plays along with the Manichean order[84] established by Van Dieman's monistic logic and an identity established in opposition to the Other. This negative definition of whiteness, and the absence of a well-defined paradigm for Van Dieman's identity, is ultimately its downfall. When asked of the spoils of whiteness—"does it not excel the black and yellow race here?"—Du Bois seizes on this weakness, answering: "it does, but he excellence here raises no envy; only regrets. If this vast Frankenstein monster really served its makers; if it were their minister and not their master, god and kind…then all hail White Imperial Industry! But it does not. It is a beast! Its creators even do not understand it."[85] The depths of The Great War, The Great Depression, and the United States' looming involvement in the Second World War betray the claims of white supremacy, but also undermine the entire project of theorizing such a simple, monotonic hierarchy in society or history. The illusion of control is derived from an inability to imagine anything outside of the Self, outside of a singular chain of being, rather than a more Du Boisian image of a mosaic of heterogenous

[83] Ibid. p. 71
[84] Ibid. p. 72: Van Dieman insists that "I prefer the colors of heaven and day: sunlight hair and sky-blue eyes; straight noses and thin lips, and that incomparable air of haughty aloofness and aristocracy," to which Du Bois replies "and I, on the contrary am a child of twilight and night, and choose intricately curly hair, black eyes, full and luscious features; and that air of humility and wonder which streams from moonlight."
[85] Ibid. p. 75

pieces of an unfailingly complex material, social, and abstract existence. Du Bois finally castigates Van Dieman, charging:

> "You are obsessed by the swiftness of the gliding of the sled at the bottom of the hill. You say: what tremendous power must have caused its speed, and how wonderful is Speed. You think of the rider as the originator and inventor of that vast power….away back on the level stretches of the mountain tops in the forests…this sled was slowly and painfully pushed on its little hesitating start. It took power, but the power of sweating, courageous men, not of demigods. As the sled slowly started and gained momentum, it was the Law of Being that gave it speed, and the grace of God that steered its lone scared passengers"[86]

This Law of Being, which holds captive all men, has only arrived at its current state of white supremacy by happenstance, and the totality of existence, the teeming masses of humanity which drive society, the unpredictable social forces which emerge from these countless vectors of change, is ultimately an expression of Chance.

Du Bois is careful to claim that he, no more than Roger Van Dieman, is a demigod sitting at the reins of society, but he tells his readers and interlocutor that they are to "leave our parable and come to reality."[87] The imaginary analogical space of the sled, which is oriented toward the achievements of all peoples and societies, particularly the ancient origins of humanity in Africa and the Near East, are the ultimate domain of the knowledge Du Bois intends to derive from science and experience. "All this is Truth," he asserts, "but unknown, unapprehended Truth."[88]

[86] Ibid. p. 76
[87] Ibid. p. 76
[88] Ibid. p. 76

Royce had offered similar humility in positing that "we know too little as yet about the natural history of the human mind, our psychology is far too infantile a science, to give us any precise information as to the way in which the inherited, the native, the constitutional aspects of the minds of men really vary with their complexions or with their hair. Yet that, of course, is just what we most want to know."[89] Du Bois does not claim, 32 years later, to have answers that Royce did not, but reiterates his claim that, whatever possibilities can emerge from society will be located in the indeterminate forces, Chance, at the limits of existence, after the substance of existence and its order is properly accounted for. "The colored world therefore must be seen as existing not simply for itself but as a group whose insistent cry may yet become the warning which awakens the world to its truer self and its wider destiny."[90] The manifold apprehension of reality and existence, not just as a human being but with the second sight endowed by life within the veil, is critical not simply for understanding oneself or the socio-political landscape of the present historical moment, but to imagine distant possibilities.

The Souls of Black Folk is preceded by a "The Forethought" in which, as noted above, Du Bois famously states his goal of showing the outline of the spiritual world within The Veil, and 37 years later, *Dusk of Dawn* is prefaced with an Apology. Du Bois reflects on his writing career and the fear that early versions of this text would be "mere autobiography." Instead he notes that the significance of his life is that he was part of a problem and that "The problem of the future world is the charting, by means of intelligent reason, of a path not simply through the resistances of physical force, but through the vaster and far more intricate jungle of ideas conditioned on unconscious and subconscious reflexes of living things."[91] The value of his life was its position

[89] Royce, Josiah. *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems*, p. 33
[90] Du Bois, W.E.B. *Dusk of Dawn*, p. 87.
[91] Ibid. xxxiii

in a narrative and the viability of this narrative in examining possibilities, mapping a landscape which does not yet exist, but which may. The relationship between science and realistic fiction in Emile Zola's *The Experimental Novel*, establishes the vital role of observation and experiment in the contours of realistic fiction,[92] and this is pressed even further in fictional worlds like Du Bois's, organized by the holistic scientific reasoning on the scale of the infinite universe and the individual actor. The fictional worlds of realistic novels offer no greater claim to the substance of reality than the most speculative of fiction,[93] but the specific values of Du Bois's imaginative fiction are not simply philosophically organized but intimately related to his scientific theories. Science Fiction, as it is commonly described by Darko Suvin, is "defined by its estranged techniques of presenting a cognitive novum,"[94] and Du Bois's second sight within the veil and pioneering work as a sociologist and theorist no doubt afford him with intellectual novelties as well as methods of presenting them. Science Fiction is similarly defined by Suvin according to its basis in the powers of humanity itself,[95] mirroring Du Bois's faith in the self-determination of black communities, rather than divine providence or a promise of justice in the fabric of the universe, and the ultimate possibility of Chance, beyond the limits of present society.[96] Du Bois's understanding of himself as the scientist and author, responsible for crafting theory and experience into inventive possibilities, follows one more crucial philosophical influence: Ralph Waldo Emerson.

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[92] Zola, Emile. *The Experimental Novel*., p. 8: "we can easily see that the novelist is equally an observer and an experimentalist. The observer in him gives the facts as he has observed them, suggests the point of departure, displays the solid earth on which his characters are to tread and the phenomena to develop."

[93] As Robert Scholes notes "all systems of notation offer us models of reality rather than descriptions of it" (*Structural Fabulation* 4)

[94] Suvin, Darko. *Positions and Presuppositions in Science Fiction*, p. x

[95] Ibid. p. 34. "utopia is an *historically alternative* wishful construct….constructed by natural intelligent beings—human or humanoid—*by their own forces*, without transcendental support or intervention".

[96] Scholes, p. 18: "we know that the unexpected happens continually in the history of science itself, fiction now has a license to speculate as freely as it may, in the hope of offering us glimmers of a reality hidden from us by our present set of preconceptions"

As a native of Massachusetts and a graduate of Harvard, Du Bois was undoubtedly well aware of the immense shadow cast by Emerson, and we have records of Emersonian philosophy in coursework like William James's Philosophy IV seminar which Du Bois attended. Emerson's influence, particularly the intersection of Emerson's "The American Scholar" and "The Poet," are fashioned by Du Bois into a potent theory of the merits of imaginative fiction and Science Fiction in Du Bois's "The Criteria of Negro Art." Though Emerson makes it very clear that wisdom as he understands it emerges primarily from the natural world and our apprehension of it, "The American Scholar" gives some shape to the mechanisms and value he sees in the application and organization of Reason. "Science" Emerson notes, "is nothing but the finding of analogy, identity, in the most remote parts"[97] and he sees the evolution of contemporary scholarship as part of a broader trend which includes contemporary literature.[98] The variegated aspects of nature, the largest cosmological phenomena and the tiniest biological processes, are, unsurprisingly, the basis of Emerson's scientific philosophy, but also form a recursive basis for the expression of the human soul as a reflection of the universal truths of nature.[99] While Du Bois is less confident in the underlying universality of his sociological thought,[100] as discussed earlier with regard to Idealism, Emerson provides a model for reckoning scientific truth not simply as a collection of material points of data, but as a mechanism within a larger intellectual framework. The universal spirit which binds together all things, large and small, in Emerson's model of knowledge and scholarship appears more forcefully in later texts as part of an absolute

[97] Emerson, "The American Scholar" 45
[98] Ibid. 57: "One of these signs is the fact that the same movement which effected the elevation of what was called the lowest class in the state assumed in literature a very marked and as benign an aspect. Instead of the sublime and beautiful, the near, the low, the common, was explored and poetized."
[99] Ibid. 46: "the ancient precept, 'Know thyself,' and the modern precept, "Study nature,' become at last one maxim"
[100] Morris 2015 p. 27: "Du Bois, therefore, broke from the dominant theoretical stance by arguing that there were no universal laws mechanistically governing human behaviors"

and deterministic structure of the universe, termed "Fate."[101] Unlike Du Boisian Chance, fate is not representative of the unknowable possibility, but merely the unknown limits of the contours of the universe,[102] with a perfection continuity of the sociological and physiological appearance of an individual with their spirit. The possibility of the future, even when its causes and operations are invisible to human perception, is determined by Fate, and here Du Bois diverges from Emerson's universalism. Du Bois's investment in transcendental forces overseeing human actions are well documented in both sociological texts, like "Sociology Hesitant" and more philosophical works like *Dusk of Dawn*, as a means of establishing shared enterprise and plumbing the possible depths of Chance. Where Du Bois is more closely aligned with Emersonian universalism, however, is in the carefully ordered, organized, and directed knowledge of his imaginative fiction. While the universe itself is not predetermined, according to Du Bois's philosophy, the oracular powers of the poet are more closely linked to Emerson's perception of the eternal shape of the universe and its ability to convey the wisdom of the human soul and the scientific mind.

The education of the scholar, for Emerson, is undertaken "by nature, by books, and by action"[103] and in "The Poet" he presents a very similar set of qualities by which the poet understands and expresses the beauty of the universe. The eternal qualities of cognition, in Emersonian universalism, are similarly divided into three qualities "which reappear under different names in every system of thought, whether they be called cause, operation and effect; or more poetically, Jove, Pluto, Neptune; or theologically, the Father, the Spirit and the Son; but

[101] Emerson, *The Conduct of Life*, p. 26: "Fate, then, is the name for facts not yet passed under the fire of thought;—for causes which are unpenetrated"
[102] Ibid. p. 34: "Nature magically suits the man to his fortunes, by making these the fruit of his character"
[103] Emerson, "The American Scholar," p. 52

which we will call here the Knower, the Doer, and the Sayer"[104]. The universal qualities of the Knower, Doer, and Sayer are explained by Emerson as they "stand respectively for the love of truth, for the love of good, and for the love of beauty,"[105] fit neatly into his insistence that the Scholar be educated in the truths of the past, distilled in books, that they engage in the actions and good deeds in the world, and that they observe the transcendental beauty of nature. The Poet and the Scholar, both students and heralds of the wisdom of nature, become intimately linked in Emersonian philosophy and Du Bois establishes a similar bond between art and science in "The Criteria of Negro Art." The Emersonian trinity of truth, good, and beauty, the Knower, the Doer, and the Sayer, emerge for Du Bois as the aspects of the artists who he hopes will compel recognition of black communities and their gifts. Du Bois entreats his audience to imagine "a vision of what the world could be if it were really a beautiful world; if we had the true spirit; if we had the *Seeing Eye*, the *Cunning Hand*, the *Feeling Heart*"[106] and identifies the artist as an apostle of "Beauty," "Goodness," and "Truth." In his stirring defense of artistic expression Du Bois declares that "I am one who tells the truth and exposes evil and seeks with Beauty and for Beauty to set the world right."[107] While Emerson's Poet is an agent of Good insofar as they are further illuminating the continuity between the universe and the human soul[108], and ultimately bound by the Fate of the universe, Du Bois's vision of the spirit, the organizing force which unites individuals and fuels their common enterprise, establishes the possibility of the future, and the potential for active uplift. Du Bois's position as a pioneering Sociologist, articulating and examining the patterns of society place his poetic gaze and revelatory outlook toward a truth that

[104] Emerson, "The Poet," p. 289
[105] Ibid. p. 289
[106] Du Bois, W.E.B. "The Criteria of Negro Art" p. 291. Emphasis mine
[107] Ibid. p. 292
[108] Emerson, "The Poet" p. 293: "The Universe is the externization of the soul"

is not limited by the eternal structures of a Deistic Emersonian universe, but which imagine a viable path to progress.[109]

The transcendental and eternal universe though it is manifest in nature and the human soul, is, for Emerson, ultimately dissolves into the Ideal and Spirit, recognizing not simply Space as a material construct, but also Time.[110] Emerson's universal thought and spirit collapse the past and the future into the structure of the universe, and the temporal boundaries of nature as it is observed in the present,[111] and Imagination, then "is a very high sort of seeing, which does not come by study, but by the intellect being where and what it sees, by sharing the path or circuit of things through forms."[112] Where Emerson sees Platonic forms which represent the highest form of truth and knowledge, and the eternal shape of the universe, the known Truth of nature and the unknown Fate of the universe, Du Bois sharply departs, viewing the imagination at the edges of society and Chance. For Du Bois, the individuals submerged in theories of nation, race, and kind generate an infinite range of possibilities, modulated by the visible and tangible forces of society. The continuity which Emerson views between the Poet and the Scholar, and the Truth they can articulate is more readily differentiable for Du Bois. The artist "has used the truth—not for the sake of truth, not as a scientist seeking truth, but as one upon whom Truth eternally thrusts itself as the highest handmaid of imagination, as the one great vehicle of universal understanding."[113] The descriptive and analytical powers of scientific methods are critical to a Du Boisian approach

[109] Morris suggests that "as a sociologist, [Du Bois] believed that a careful scientific study of Negro artisans would reveal concrete reasons for optimism about the race" (Morris 2015, 76)
[110] Emerson, "Nature" p. 30: "whilst we behold unveiled the nature of Justice and Truth, we learn the difference between the absolute and the conditional or relative….we learn that time and space are relations of matter; that with a perception of truth or a virtuous will they have no affinity"
[111] Emerson, "The Scholar" p. 58: "The scholar is that man who must take up into himself all ability of the time, all the contributions of the past, all hopes of the future."
[112] Emerson, "The Poet" p. 298.
[113] Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art", p. 295

to Truth, but the generative potential of science, the hope Du Bois has for progress and the outside to a deterministic universe, lies in the creative gifts of the poet. Emerson's universal Law into which individual will ultimately dissipates[114] leaves little room for invention, and it is in these contingencies that Du Bois sees the expanse of the unexplored potential of human enterprise. The tangible future, continuously emerging from discrete and immanent moments in the present, emerge from the solid foundation of natural sciences and philosophers, but the activity of building the future is Du Bois's ultimate goal in unifying the abstract and the material.

The expansive and imaginative theories of existence posited by Du Bois in *Dusk of Dawn*, reach a ponderous symbolic peak at its very end. In the second to last paragraph, Du Bois declares:

> Perhaps above all I am proud of a straightforward clearness of reason, in part a gift of the gods, but also to no little degree due to scientific training and inner discipline. By means of this I have met life face to face, I have loved a fight and I have realized that Love is God and Work is his prophet; that is ministers are Age and Death.[115]

God is accompanied by gods, the external training in observational science is entwined with an internal discipline, and the twin agents of the God that is Love are aspects of life that are simultaneously persistent through space and time, and that which is limited by material being. Du Bois's methods, distilled into this august creed, are guided by science and faith, by love and work and the intersection of all these disparate parts are the means by which a total understanding of the universe emerges. Knowledge, as Du Bois imagines it, does not merely

[114] Emerson, *The Conduct of Life*, p. 42: "The Necessity which rudely or softly educates him to the perception that there are no contingencies"
[115] Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, p. 172

persist beyond or outside of the variety of experiences extant in the world and rational theories emerging from experience, but it is only intelligible through this variety. The application and afterlife of knowledge, the progressive future and possibilities of Chance, Du Bois concludes, will ultimately extend beyond his individual life, but he is not deterred, as he is a part of the collective of human life, and the black folk which strive for an unfolding future, and it is no coincidence that his analogy here, is literary. The flux of life, and his own finitude, are tolerable to Du Bois because "I like a good novel and in healthful length of days, there is infinite joy in seeing the Word, the most interesting of continued stories, unfold, even though one misses THE END."[116] The future is not yet written, but it will be, and its unfolding possibilities, may be glimpsed in the imaginary landscapes of Science Fiction.

[116] Ibid. p.172

Chapter 2: "Out of the past is spawned the present and only by a study of the past can we be wise for the future"[1]

The meticulous theoretical framing with which Du Bois imagined the complex relationships between knowledge and experience, and the configuration of individuals in a collective national consciousness, perhaps unsurprisingly, relies on a careful consideration and catalog of historical information. Du Bois's scholarship, at many points in his life, was often dedicated to historical research that was frequently, if not entirely, overlooked by his white contemporaries. The task of simply inventing archives and records of black history was, on its surface, a noble project, shared by many other African American historians, but this extensive archive was also a critical dimension of Du Bois's more imaginative and inventive literary and philosophical works. Du Bois's historical pageant *The Star of Ethiopia*, which he wrote and produced during the 1910s, offered a spectacular outlet for his artistic and political vision, summoning the multitudes of African and diasporic history. Elaborate sets and hundreds of performers brought life to six "gifts" Du Bois believes the world has received from his people and the pageant culminates ultimately in a shining monument to the future. I argue that, in *The Star of Ethiopia*, Du Bois focuses on the history of ancient Africa as a means of laying the foundation for a fledgling black nationality. Egypt and Ethiopia thus play a role similar to the one assigned to ancient Greek and Roman culture in the formation of American and European national identities through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[2] Du Bois therefore does not, strictly speaking articulate diasporic identity though the invocation of Greece and Rome, but

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Parts of this chapter are published in *The International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 32.1.

[1] Letter from W.E.B. Du Bois to Horace R. Cayton http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b073-i287

[2] Classical antiquity has served as the foundation for many different national identities; "Greece and Rome give density, heft, and shape to national cultures that were not long in the making or inventing" (Vasunia and Stephens, p. 6)

he does employ methods familiar from such (white) appropriations. The technology of employing ancient history as an anchor or root for a contemporary national identity is useful for Du Bois, but its particular value is not simply to ground a people in long-standing tradition, but to demonstrate the persistence of a common consciousness and enterprise over vast expanses of time as well as space. In other words, he has recognized the classical tradition as a rhetorical tool that can be used in order to cement the dignity of a people by establishing their ancient roots and imagining a converse projection into the future.

Broad historical projects in African American literature reconstruct the histories that have been denied to African Americans by diaspora and the violent destruction of black communities and families before and after Emancipation, but this backward-looking trend has a variety of political and philosophical functions. While it is impossible to ignore the pragmatic political goals common to much of African American literature, in texts like Du Bois's own *The Souls of Black Folks*,[3] or the fundamentally descriptive attempts to make black subjects visible to white society,[4] the ultimate generative possibility of histories extend far beyond these goals. Literary depictions of the future, however, are themselves varied and complex. The umbrella term of Afrofuturism, seen as a response to historical trends in African American literature,[5] is applied to a range of texts—Utopian, Science Fiction, Fantastic Voyages—and are themselves contrasted with the prophetic religious literary which frequently imagined a miraculous end to slavery. As

[3] As Kenneth Warren argues "To paint in somewhat broad strokes, 'The After-Thought' to W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, in which Du Bois pleads that his 'book fall not still-born into the world-wilderness,' exemplifies an 'instrumental' understanding of his own book as having been written to achieve a social end" (Warren, p. 10)

[4] "On the other hand, Du Bois expresses an 'indexical' view of African American literary writing when he puts forward the 'Sorrow Songs' as evidence of the inner nature and capacity of the Negro race" (Ibid. 10)

[5] Andre Carrington notes that Mark Dery, in establishing the term, "frames the notion that African American expressive culture appears preoccupied with the past, rather than the future, as a casualty of racial oppression." (Carrington, p. 23)

African American literatures moved from retellings of *Exodus* to more tangible utopias, the abstract conception of the past became less obviously applicable to the invention of post-Emancipation prosperity. Though Marxian Empiricism dominates some theories of utopian Science Fiction[6] and futuristic Modernity often relies on the periodization of history which divorces the past from the present,[7] Frederic Jameson recognizes the imaginary space of utopian literature as a site of exploration and possibility, even if utopias are rarely blueprints for political action.[8] For Du Bois, like Jameson, the imaginative value of Science Fiction, utopian or otherwise, is in its articulation of the possible, and the growth of possible futures which emerge from the enterprise of a people capable of locating themselves in history. Du Boisian science and sociology similarly values the past and the ancient roots of the "race" not because ancient traditions must be upheld, nor because the total sum of history can be distilled into solved principles,[9] but as a means of fully understanding the continuously emerging present. Du Boisian Futurism reflects a similar impulse toward process and materiality, which underscores the dramatic rendition of black history in *The Star of Ethiopia*. In particular, the future is articulated as an ongoing project or enterprise, emerging from the foundation of the past, but growing unpredictably into the future. The organization of nationality for African Americans provides the possibility of large-scale enterprise by uniting the masses of black subjects across space, uniting

[6] As Jameson notes the mantra "nothing in the mind that was not first in the senses" filters into a literary Science Fiction in which "our imaginations are hostages to our own mode of production" (Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. xiii)

[7] Jameson distills the common claim that "modernity" is frequently defined by its concept of historicity and its own position as a historic period distinct from the past, and Carrington goes further in noting that "The original futurists hoped to literally destroy all vestiges of their classical civilization to extend the purported virtues of the industrial age into all areas of knowledge" (Carrington, p. 23).

[8] "Indeed, in the case of the Utopian texts, the most reliable political test lies not in any judgment on the individual work in question so much as in its capacity to generate new ones" (Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. xv)

[9] Ernst Bloch notes that Futurism is difficult to reconcile both with a religious vision of a prophetic future that is already written and understood by God, and by Continental philosophy oriented toward absolute Ideals: "the reason for this is invariably that both the archaic-mythical and the urbane-rationalistic cast of mind are contemplative-idealistic, consequently, being merely passive-contemplative, they presuppose a closed world that has already become" (Bloch 1986, p. 4)

many in the pursuit of a common goal, but also ensuring that the fruits of this labor persist beyond the lifespan of any individual subject. The past, in Du Bois's theories of nationality and futurity, is the umbilicus which tethers black subjects to safety as they explore the possibilities of life beyond the dominant system of white supremacy. Staging the expansive history of African Americans in a larger-than-life spectacle and giving a physical form to the spirit of Ethiopia critically maps the present as it links the unshakable foundation of the past to the possibilities of the future.

The Star of Ethiopia has received little scholarly attention compared to other literary works in Du Bois's vast corpus.[10] The pageant presented symbolic episodes of African and African American history to mixed audiences, from black observers personally invested in the historical identity of African Americans to white spectators likely unfamiliar with world history centered on Africa and African peoples. The first iteration of the pageant, written in 1911, was performed in October of 1913, under the title "The People of Peoples and their Gifts to Men" at the National Emancipation Exposition in New York City, directed by Charles Burroughs and other producers.[11] It presented six episodes of in African and diasporic history: the invention of iron smelting in west Africa, the rise of pharaonic Egyptian culture, the dissemination of Islam through north Africa, the plight of enslaved Africans in the transatlantic slave trade, African American struggles to escape bondage and eventual emancipation, and the construction of a monument to the future, the Tower of Light. *The Crisis* published a script and program for the

[10] Notably from historians of American theater, particularly, David Krasner's "'The Pageant is the Thing': Black Nationalism and *The Star of Ethiopia*" and Rebecca Hewett's "'looking at One's Self through the Eyes of Others': Representations of the Progressive Era Middle Class in W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Star of Ethiopia*" but it also is discussed in terms of its relationship to Ethiopianism and receives cursory attention from some Classicists as in Margaret Malamud's *African Americans and The Classics: Antiquity*

[11] In later accounts, Du Bois conflates "The People of Peoples and their Gifts to Men" with *The Star of Ethiopia*; for clarity, I will only refer to this pageant as an earlier version of *The Star of Ethiopia*.

pageant in November of 1913, and these served as a model for future stagings under the new title, *The Star of Ethiopia*. The first of these additional iterations occurred in Washington, DC, in 1915 and largely retained the basic layout of the original pageant, with the notable addition of the incarnation of Ethiopia. Unfortunately, the text of the 1915 is less readily available and lacks a definitive version. Du Bois described the production with exuberance in the December 1915 issue of *The Crisis* but did not include a script or program; we must rely on unpublished materials, some dated and others of uncertain provenance.[12] The pageant was next staged in 1916 in Philadelphia. Du Bois describes this production in the August 1916 issue of *The Crisis*, but again he does not provide a full script or program; rather, his report includes excerpts from the pageant that correspond to previous iterations but feature notable changes from the previous versions. For the purposes of this analysis, I will be focusing primarily on the evolution of the first two scenes of the pageant, which depict the ancient world explicitly, in three versions from 1913, 1915, and 1916, and the relative consistency with which the future is presented over this same span of time.

The historical account of Africans and African Americans in *The Star of Ethiopia* produces a national identity that is directly linked to the history of the ancient Mediterranean,[13] a history that was frequently invoked in European nationalism and which was also present in emerging American nationality. Du Bois's historical pageant was carefully designed to present a diasporic national identity according to theories of nationality that Du Bois himself had

[12] All documents pertaining to the pageant itself are currently in the Special Collections and University Archives at the University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries in the W.E.B. Du Bois Papers. I have included in this chapter references to Appendix A which outlines the versions of the pageant available in the archives and what I believe to be the most complete pageant which emerges from studying these manuscripts.

[13] African American treatments of the "classical" past should be understood in the broader context of modern nationalist movements, in which Greek and Roman antiquity have played a key role. See M. Keita, "Believing in Ethiopians,": "the engagement with Africans in classical space is an engagement with a concept—the 'classical'—created by the modern mind; a concept, at times, imbued with certain racialized presuppositions" (Keita, p. 39)

previously articulated in 1897's "The Conservation of Races." According to Du Bois, Race and by extension, nationality, emerges from shared history which organizes individuals into large groups, linking them together through common ancestors and cultural lineage. The ancient Africans who come to life in *The Star of Ethiopia* and the shining figures around the Tower of Light are inspired by the same spirit of Ethiopia that moves through the history of Africans and African Americans. The pageant presents the historical narrative of African and diasporic peoples, but also demonstrates the persistence of these ancient roots in contemporary culture, a critical element of Du Boisian nationality. In addition to ancient historical foundations, national identity, as Du Bois recognizes it, also emerges from the shared experiences of persons within a collective. National identity becomes durable and sustainable into the future as it draws on both the multitudes making up the nation in the present and the historical lineage of a people's distant past. This theoretical approach, which Du Bois had further explored in 1900 in "The Spirit of Modern Europe,"[14] provides vital framework for the articulation of nationality in *The Star of Ethiopia*. Du Bois's theory of African American nationality not only relies on a historical coexistence of Africa and Egypt alongside Greece and Rome, but also emphasizes the mixture of these ancient civilizations as they persist through history. The presence of ancient Greek and Roman culture in Du Bois's philosophy, as I will show, resonates with classical traditions in Europe and the United States more broadly, and informs the pageant's use of Egypt as a nexus of many civilizations, including African. Du Bois's model of reception, then, is what Emily Greenwood terms "omni-local": by placing Africa in its rightful place in an ancient Mediterranean landscape, Du Bois presents the classical world "through a comparative lens,"

[14] Originally delivered as a speech in 1900 to an all-black audience in Louisville, Kentucky, but appears to have been unpublished until 1988. See Nahum Chandler's, *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Essential Early Essays* for more critical commentary on the history of the essay and its context

thus undermining European claims to ownership and "[offering] us a liberating insight into the omni-local status of the classical."[15] His presentation of ancient history, African and Mediterranean, resonates with classical allusions vital to European and American nationality even as he expands the scope of the classical world to include African civilizations.[16]

For Du Bois, as we see in *The Star of Ethiopia*, the symbolic potential of the ancient Mediterranean was not contingent on its relationship to modern European nationalities. Instead, Du Bois's manipulation of the ancient world is oriented towards its reception among African Americans, and especially toward the project of restoring the broad consciousness of their ancient roots. His reception of classical antiquity shows white audiences and the descendants of the African diaspora alike how to locate African American in a large-scale historical narrative, among peoples ancient and modern. The first scene of *The Star of Ethiopia* depicts ancient Africans as vital actors in world history, but the pageant's second scene goes even further to insist that ancient Egypt was populated by many different peoples, including black Africans. Egypt is woven through Du Bois's accounts of African and diasporic history, but blackness is equally vital to his pageant. "The Spirit of Modern Europe" similarly insists that classical Greece and Rome were not merely derived from African or Egyptian cultures but borrowed from many cultures and forged their culture out of this cross-pollination. The classical world, in Du Bois's pageant and national philosophy, serves as a point of reference which locates black nationality alongside classically inflected national identities in Europe and the United States. It is precisely because the classical world included such an expansive set of cultures and locations that Du Bois

[15] Greenwood, p. 359

[16] Du Bois participates in a tradition of black nationalism following texts like David Walker's *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* and Martin Delaney's *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*. See also Wilson Moses's *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism*.

draws attention to the ancient past and to its far-reaching implications for national identity in his own time and the future.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three parts. First, I discuss Du Bois's early theories of nationality, which imagine a collective spirit derived from common experiences, rather than the political boundaries of a sovereign state, and thus lay the groundwork for a national identity which unites Africans and the African diaspora. While European models of nationalism asserted (inaccurately) a geographical and cultural continuity between modern states and the ancient world, Du Bois focuses on the plurality and conglomeration of many cultures and civilizations in antiquity, an understanding of history that provides a clear basis for a diasporic identity. Second, I show that *The Star of Ethiopia* incorporates these theories into the public and artistic space of the theater. In its presentation of African history, the pageant shows how a persistent and vital spirit among the civilizations of the classical past, the Star of Ethiopia, established African diasporic nationality. While Du Bois gives a prime position to the particularly African "gift" of iron working in his grand historical narrative, the Star of Ethiopia herself oversees this technological advancement alongside complex mixtures and intersections of cultures and civilizations in the ancient past. Tracing the ancient roots of the African diaspora in Du Bois's pageant serves to distinguish the descendants of the African diaspora not simply by the historical achievement of their ancestors, but through the continuous engagement of African peoples and their descendants as they are woven into the history of the world, parallel to other civilizations. Finally, the pageant's futuristic conclusion, when read through the lens of Du Boisian theories of race and nationality, will provide a glimpse into the emphasis he places on ancient history as a necessary component of speculative and imaginative fiction. The long historical narrative of the pageant, in which the dignity of African and diasporic civilizations

weathers colonial violence and the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade, ultimately results in the unbounded possibilities of the future. Just as the spirit of a nation is derived from the experiences of its members, rather than an essential Ideal, the past is not the inscribed destiny of a people, but a foundation upon which the future can be invented and built.

Du Boisian Theories of Nationality

Beginning with one of his earliest academic publications, *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), Du Bois sought to construct a comprehensive picture of African American subjectivity as it emerged from the lives of African Americans—lives that were often erased from white American consciousness. The historical conditions of slavery and the subsequent socio-economic inequality that African Americans endured became the basis for Du Boisian theories of nationality. He sought to account for both the variety of experiences within a national group and the social and political events which laid the foundation for their daily lives. In "The Conservation of Races,"[17] Du Bois dispenses with many of the traditional physiognomic definitions of race[18] and instead understands a race as "a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more of less vividly conceived ideals of life."[19] Although this definition does not entirely eschew ethnic and linguistic markers, it insists that shared experiences and ideals are most crucial to constructing race or kind. Du Bois's definition thus leaves room for ancient Romans,

[17] Originally published in *The American Negro Academy Occasional Papers*, No. 2 in 1897
[18] "The wonderful developments of human history teach that the grosser physical differences of color, hair and bone go but a short way toward explaining the different roles which groups of men have played in Human Progress." (Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," p. 53)
[19] Ibid., p. 53

contemporary Americans and the descendants of the African diaspora to be counted as typological "races" without adhering to inaccurate scientific racism.

Du Bois further developed this thesis into a theoretical approach to nationality in the early twentieth century.[20] His 1900 essay "The Spirit of Modern Europe" attempts to reconcile the varied experiences of individuals within European nations by imagining their collective experience as a Hegelian Ideal. During his time in Paris, London, and Berlin,[21] Du Bois began developing abstract models for describing specific cultures and nationalities of Europe. Seeking a robust definition of "civilization," particularly one which does not rely on racist pseudo-science or Eurocentric historiography, Du Bois describes national identities that can be traced throughout the collective history of a people. In Du Bois's view, the experiences of diverse individuals within a group are distilled into the definitive cultural elements of a nation. As he surveys the histories of European peoples and proto-nationalities, Du Bois exhorts readers: "let us follow the footsteps of the Margrave Frederick[22] to his bleak northern home for his journey there was the beginning of a dogged strife against Nature and the Devil, unparallel in human history."[23] Du Bois argues that establishing a modern German state, against the forces of nature and neighboring peoples, required a shared Ideal of organized industry and government for the Germans to catapult themselves to prominence. Despite all obstacles faced by German political leaders, "this land has risen from a little ridiculed patch of sand to be the greatest power of

[20] Du Bois's relationship with Hegel and German philosophy and his interest in the emergence of German nationality in the late 19th century, particularly under the leadership of Otto von Bismark, are outlined in greater detail in chapter 2 of Shamoon Zamir's *Dark Voices: W.E.B. Du Bois and American Thought 1888-1903* and chapter 4 of Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, which provides a critical account of Du Boisian thought as it reacts to continental philosophy and the construction of Modernism.
[21] In addition to his visits to London and Paris in 1900, Du Bois spent 1892 through 1894 at the University of Berlin.
[22] Frederick I, Elector of Brandenburg, was granted the titles of Margrave and Prince-elector of Brandenburg in 1415, and, according to the history outlined by Du Bois, initiated the rise of the house of Hohenzollern, who retained power in Germany and Prussia into the early 20th century.
[23] Du Bois, *Against Racism: Unpublished Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887–1961*, p. 56

central Europe."[24] Americans, Du Bois notes, may find the authority of government stifling, but this emblematic character of the German capital, "A city without slums and fireproof…ruled by the best of its citizens,"[25] emerges from the shared values that constitute the modern German nation and people.

While Du Bois traces the emergence of national identity in modern Europe, he is less confident about how American society fits under a sweeping national Ideal. Du Bios claims that "the individualistic regime still wields vast power over minds today especially in the American business and social world."[26] Du Bois argues that the categorical cohesion crucial to national identity was not readily available in the American myths of rugged individualism. In "The Conservation of Races," Du Bois criticizes theories of history which prioritize powerful individuals—"the Pharaohs, Caesars, Toussaints and Napoleons of history"[27]—as according to his theory of race, these individuals "were but epitomized expressions" of "the vast races."[28] Just as great individuals could only emerge from a "vast race," the individuals of American society were products of larger groups and cultural Ideals. The American Ideal of a "melting pot," in Du Bois's view, transformed individual "races" into one large conglomerate, and thus potentially obfuscated the distinct cultural Ideals of each group. Du Bois points out that some Americans even regard the model of history which is made by the specific groups, or kinds, as ancient and outmoded,[29] but the antiquity of this model is precisely what imbues it with power and authority.

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[24] Ibid., p.56
[25] Ibid., p. 57
[26] Ibid., p. 50
[27] The juxtaposition of Napoleon Bonaparte and Toussaint L'Ouverture is, for perhaps obvious reasons, a recurring theme among later writers in the African diaspora; see Justine McConnell's *Black Odysseys: The Homeric Odyssey in the African Diaspora Since 1939*, pp. 6–7.
[28] Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," p. 53
[29] Ibid., p. 53–54: "we are apt to think in our American impatience, that while it may have been true in the past that closed race groups made history, that here in conglomerate America *nous avons change tout cela*—we have changed all that, and have no need of this ancient instrument of progress."

In his view, history can only be understood through the lens of differentiable groups, or "races," each with its own specific history, and especially as these histories are followed back into the distant past.

Although the lives of prominent individuals provide some point of reference for the experiences of a place or nation, for Du Bois, European nationality depends on the aggregation of individuals, and particularly the distillation of their experiences into a coherent whole. Du Bois claims that human existence "is more than the discordant half-articulate answers of individual lives—it is the vast and eternal strivings of myriads of lives blended into one varying but continuous whole, which embodies in itself the Idea and Ideals which have guided and are guiding humanity."[30] The overarching "Ideal" or spirit which guides a people and allows a nation to emerge from the teeming masses is critical to the political identity which Du Bois imagine will provide a basis for an African American nationality in the present and future. *The Star of Ethiopia* does not simply chronicle the survival of diasporic peoples through the arc of world history, from the earliest civilizations in Africa to the horrors of the Middle Passage and beyond but insists that the spirit or Ideal overseeing this national identity guides and will guide the nation through historical epochs. In his production of *The Star of Ethiopia*, individual experience and the multitudes present on the stage serve to emphasize individuals within that nation. The transcendental Ideal that unites a people is derived from the existing ideals and practices of individuals within society, and this same Ideal produces a persistent national identity that will ensure a future for that people.

[30] Du Bois, *Against Racism*, p. 51

For Du Bois, furthermore, the cultivation of a shared mythology and unifying Ideal in emerging nations was a particularly applicable technique for the assertion of an African American nationality. African American nationality embodied plurality, and this plurality, in Du Bois's view, was clearly present in national Ideals beginning in the ancient world. According to Du Bois, "the history of the world is not a history of the death of nations, but of their lives—of the unquenchable fire of civilization kindled in Egypt, replenished by Greece, scattered burning by Rome, and gathered, conserved and augmented in the furnace of Europe."[31] Du Bois draws on the classical tradition, and his understanding of a multicultural ancient world, to offer a more complex approach to nationalism, focused not on exceptional individuals but on a shared group identity. The interconnected narratives of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome indicate that, from Du Bois's perspective, culture-states do not invent themselves spontaneously, but that instead they grow and evolve as part of a shared history. Rome, Du Bois observes, represents the longevity of culture and the spirit of an ancient past that provides a basis and foundation for modern Italy.[32] Du Bois claims further that "the great Graeco-Roman civilization borrowed and developed the culture of Africa and India and Judea,"[33] and just as ancient Romans spread this culture throughout the ancient world, later Italians "gave to that old Egyptian-Grecian-Roman civilization, through the Renaissance, a new birth into the world."[34] The syncretism of Roman culture itself, according to Du Bois, was not simply the incorporation of Greek culture into Roman culture, but the aggregation of a variety of cultures in the Mediterranean and Near East.

[31] Ibid., p. 56
[32] Ibid., p. 54: "beneath papal Rome and covered with the dust of centuries, emerging at intervals in grey old ruins, beautiful columns, great arches and stupendous buildings, stand the Rome of the Emperors, the defiant remains of the greatest and most persistent of human governments."
[33] Ibid., p. 60
[34] Ibid., p. 60

The character of Rome was not unattainably "European" for African Americans.[35] Instead, Rome's syncretism offered a model for African Americans to embraces the pluralism of their diasporic heritage and thus to sustain their complex cultural identity across time and space.

The possibility of cultural survival through adaptive and inclusive syncretism also characterizes Du Bois's vision of an Ethiopian spirit that links different peoples, in different times and places. In *The Star of Ethiopia*, Du Bois makes ancient African peoples a foundation for black nationality, on the specific basis of their connection to other ancient peoples. While the nationalist aspirations of the pageant reveal a fascination with African and Egyptian history as precursors to other civilizations, this pageant does not make an argument for African primacy.[36] Du Bois does not glorify the Greco-Roman past (as European nationalists had) or insist on Egyptian supremacy (in the mode of Afrocentricity). Instead, he demonstrates the African American identity which emerges from the elemental cultural artifacts from African civilizations more broadly. Du Bois treats Egypt as a combination of African and Near Eastern influences, and so his narrative may imply that Greco-Roman culture was ultimately influenced by Africa (by way of Egypt). Yet Du Bois shows little interest in describing direct lines of influence from one culture to another, focusing instead on the blending and mixture of different cultures. Indeed, for Du Bois's purposes, the position of ancient Africans as players in a historical narrative populated by different groups and civilizations is critical for positing African American identity, which is neither an extension of African lineage nor defined by its relationship to European cultures. By acknowledging the necessary interaction of peoples in broad historical narratives, Du Bois creates a space in which African Americans are not drawn simply to one side of the

[35] See Greenwood's "Omni-Local Classical Receptions" on the need to "revise assumptions about…the Europeanness of the classical tradition," (Greenwood, p. 355) and how classical receptions beyond Europe prompt these revisions.
[36] The relationship between Pan-Africanism and Afrocentricity will be discussed below in greater detail.

Atlantic or the other, but instead can exist among competing paradigms. Following a model of European nations that (however tenuously) established their ethos and identity by looking backward, African Americans in Du Bois's view, can similarly rely on an ancient African past for the construction of their own identity.

Du Bois's interest in classical antiquity as a model for African American identity, furthermore, must also be contextualized within broader trends in the development of American nationality. The Roman foundational myth had played a key role in previous accounts of American history according to which America, like Rome, was the continuation of previous civilizations in radically new environs.[37] While Du Bois does not cite the *Aeneid* in his discussion of nationality, he is invested in the problem of how to define African Americans both as a people rooted in a long history and as a new nation. John Shields has shown that *Aeneid,* which traces the journey of Trojan heroes to Italy, provided a model for the construction and critique of American identity, including in the works of African American writers (particularly Phillis Wheatley).[38] The character of Aeneas, who not only founds a new people (the Romans) on a new continent but also serves to link this new people to the heroic past of Troy, resonates with the complex diasporic history of African Americans. A unifying African American identity does not overwrite the complex histories of its individual members or insist on a single way of being African American, nor does it resist the shared diasporic experiences of African Americans. Instead, the rich array of cultures and identities among African Americans serves as a basis for its inclusion among these national Ideals. Just as early American appropriation of

[37] For an expansive account of this particular narrative framing of American literary and political identity, see John Shields's *The American Aeneas: Classical Origins of the American Self*

[38] Shields's treatment of African American literature is primarily oriented towards Phillis Wheatley's poetry, which wields epic textual features and classical allusion to establish American and African American ideals of freedom and equality, viewing Wheatley "as unconscious hero of her own intertextual epic, one promoting virtue of an improved pietas, Wheatley as poet/persona embodies a feminine type of Aeneas" (Shields, p. 234)

classical antiquity attempted to balance the gravity of ancient history with a distance from contemporary Europe, Du Bois's historical pageant seeks to present African American nationality as a part of world history, but not one that is exclusively derived from Greco-Roman antiquity.[39]

Nationality and Antiquity in *The Star of Ethiopia*

Du Bois's corpus throughout his life places a similar emphasis on histories of Africa and of the African diaspora as a crucial element of the emerging national identity he imagined for black subjects. He impresses upon his listeners "how manifest it is, then, that the man or the nation that would know itself must first know the vast organization of which it forms a part."[40] Yet these histories had been erased or excluded from social memory. Nationality and identity for black subjects, he insists, can emerge from a similar mechanism as the result of culture and art persisting through the long history of African and diasporic peoples,[41] and coalescing into something transcendental and timeless. Literary depictions of African and diasporic history, then, are oriented towards a telling of histories that have been erased or excluded from social memory, and Du Bois would recall in 1939 that his prior interest in writing fictional and non-fictional histories of Africa[42] were necessary antidotes to the prevalent thought that "the Negro has no history."[43] He recalls a "sudden awakening" in 1906 in response to a commencement address

[39] As Joy Connolly notes "In America, the humanists' construction allows classical culture to serve as a common source of identification and differentiation for the European settlers without sapping the authority of their cultures of origin" (Connolly, p. 79)
[40] Du Bois, *Against Racism*, p. 52
[41] Ibid., p. 52: "In a day when the battle of humanity is being fought with unprecedented fierceness and when the brunt of that battle is about to fall upon the shoulders of a black nation which though larger than the Greek state is half shrinking from its high mission to dabble in the mud of selfishness it is well to pause in our perplexity and critically study the path before us.'
[42] For Fiction, see W.E.B. Du Bois's "The Story of Africa," *The Crisis*, 8 1914, pp. 234-5. For non-fiction, *The Negro* (2014[1915]) and also its successor, *Black Folks Then and Now* (2007[1939]) which reproduces much of the same historiography.
[43] Du Bois, *Black Folk Then and Now*, p. xxxi

delivered by Franz Boas at Atlanta University in which Boas told his audience, "'You need not be ashamed of your African past," and then he recounted the history of the black kingdoms south of the Sahara for a thousand years."[44] In his speech, Boas also posited a striking link between African Americans and ancient Romans: he noted, "at the time when the early kingdom of Babylonia flourished the same disparaging remarks that are now made regarding the Negro might have been made regarding the ancestors of the ancient Romans…then a barbarous horde that never made any contribution to the advance of that civilization that was confined to parts of Asia, and still they were destined to develop a culture which has become the foundation of and in integral part of our own."[45] For Boas, Romans and descendants of the African diaspora are alike in that both are the targets of ill-founded and historically contingent disparagement. Du Bois develops the link between classical antiquity and African Americans in a new direction. With his historical pageants, he offers African American viewers, likely historically alienated from their own cultural history,[46] a method for recognizing themselves in the long narrative of world history.

The scope of *The Star of Ethiopia*, which attempts to map out the spirit of African and African American identity throughout history, predictably opens in a distant past inhabited only by Africans. The pageant begins its first episode "in the deep and beast-bred forests of Africa,"[47] juxtaposing the ancient Africans with lions and other beasts. The primitiveness of these "savage"

[44] Ibid., p. xxxi
[45] Boas, p. 314
[46] While some elements of oral traditions, language, and religious practice obviously survived the oppression and erasure enacted wittingly and unwittingly throughout the transatlantic slave trade, the process of severing persons from families and cultures on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean as well as the disintegration of social structures in a practice of bondage that routinely separated children from parents, sibling from sibling, individual from spouse, resulted in a condition of kinlessness among enslaved African Americans. For more thorough treatments of this subject, see Saidiya Hartman's, *Lose Your Mother* and Hortense Spillers's "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book."
[47] Du Bois "The National Emancipation Exposition," p. 339

figures, however, is not contrasted with a "civilized" group. Instead, viewers are told that they will witness the moment when "mankind first learned the welding of iron, and thus defense against the living and the dead."[48] Praying to an unnamed god, the Africans are visited by a mysterious light and a veiled woman bearing the gifts of iron and fire. The seemingly divine inspiration of metalworking results in the sudden explosion of craft and culture: "huts arise, beasts are brought in and there is joy, feasting and dancing."[49] The technology of iron working and its diffusion among Africans is clearly identified as a moment of self-determination, the "civilization" of Africans being the result of their own distinctive inventions. From the earliest moments in human history, Du Bois insists, there has been African accomplishment. Du Bois disarms popular histories, which portray Africans as savages who receive the gift of civilization from white Europeans, by presenting the earliest civilizing technologies as an emergent African "gift" to the world. The drama stages the ancient historical roots of African American identity, which slavery had historically displaced from popular consciousness, and allows them to be witnessed.[50] The basis of African American nationality was not simply present in the ancient world but was worthy of careful study and grand spectacle.

As the pageant grows in size and scope, these ancient episodes, as well as the mechanisms by which the gifts of culture are rendered, become more clearly articulated. The outlines of the 1915 production,[51] and other later versions of the pageant, present the same scene,

[48] Ibid., p. 339
[49] Ibid., p. 339
[50] Historical pageants of the early 20th century commonly appealed to internal and external audiences; see D. Krasner's, "'The Pageant is the Thing': Black Nationalism and *The Star of Ethiopia*": "broadly speaking, pageants extolled the virtues of American history through historic reenactments of major events and actively participated in the burgeoning spirit of cultural nationalism through their enactment of immigrant identity." Though not a group of recent immigrants, the history of American Americans has been similarly occluded from the view of white Americans as well as African Americans themselves.
[51] The shape of the pageant over the course of five outlines is very consistent, with only some details changing, largely depending on the sponsoring organization. For a more detailed accounting of these variations, see Appendix A

and the similar description of African "savages," but describe their action in greater detail. Rather than simply cowering from the lightning, the actors in the 1915 production are seen praying to Shango, a powerful Yoruba *orisha* associated with lightning, and he, along with the incarnation of Ethiopia, appears to answer their prayers. Shango delivers the "Star of Faith"[52] to Ethiopia who, in turn, approaches the savages, and, in the light of this star, develops the art of welding iron. The seemingly miraculous appearance of the Veiled Woman, delivering unto humanity great cultural and artisanal gifts, appears in the 1915 version as the direct result of the spiritual consciousness of the so-called "savages." In this case, however, their "savagery" is dispelled through the realization of a distinctly African spirit and civilization.

Du Bois's use of Ethiopia as a symbol of Africa or an African spirit emerges from nineteenth-century traditions of Ethiopianism among African Americans, which was derived from black nationalists' liberatory readings of Psalms 68:31: "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God."[53] Du Bois presents the figure of Ethiopia as the heart of a diasporic identity and manifestation of a common spirit that unites the descendants of the African diaspora. Du Bois's model of a nationality as a Hegelian spirit which emerges from the lives of Africans, rather than an essential element of Africa or Africans, seeks to integrate African American nationality into the broadest historical narrative. The symbolic value of Ethiopia as a long-standing emblem of African and diasporic identity provides an Ideal upon

[52] Du Bois, *The Star of Ethiopia* (MS 312, mums312-b233-i046 Series 12) 1. This particular outline has a slight variation from the majority of others in the same year, which feature the "Star of Freedom". This particularly ecclesiastical variant is cited here only because the "Star of Faith" is also attested in the account of the 1916 pageant in *Crisis* 12, cited below.

[53] Even before the Civil War, Ethiopianism was influential among clergy like Daniel Alexander Payne and Alexander Crummell (the subject of an entire chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk*), and artists like Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Frances Harper. For more detail, see Wilson Moses's, "The Poetics of Ethiopianism: W.E.B. Du Bois and Literary Black Nationalism, particularly p. 13

which African American identity can be built,[54] and Du Bois seems to participate directly in this historical goal. The possibilities of constructing identity around ancient foundations, for Du Bois, are connect to a historiographical account of Africans and diasporic people, not at all dissimilar to the classical foundations of Western humanism. The mythological imagination of an Ethiopian spirit overlooking the national identity of diasporic people, in *The Star of Ethiopia*, is very intentionally brought into contact with an ancient Egyptian civilization. The meeting between Ethiopia and Egypt, when read in the context of "The Spirit of Modern Europe," establishes a site of cultural exchange and coexistence that incorporates many ancient African and Mediterranean peoples within Egypt.

Du Bois does not construct African American nationality on the basis of direct descent from classical civilizations. Rather, he views the spirit of African American national identity as part of an existing historical narrative into which diasporic peoples are already integrated. Where the first episode of the pageant presents Africans as an isolated group braving the wilderness, the next episode is heavily oriented towards the position of Africans among other peoples in the ancient world. The pageant's second scene makes similarly bold claims about the "Gift of Civilization" rendered unto the world. Banners borne across the stage declare: "The Second Gift of the Negro to the world, being the Gift of the Nile. This picture tells how the meeting of Negro and Semite in ancient days made the civilization of Egypt the first in the world."[55] This syncretic view of culture, prominently featured in the above theories of nationality, is consistent through

[54] "Ethiopianism may be defined as the effort of the English-speaking Black or African person to view his past enslavement and present cultural dependency in terms of the broader history of civilization." (Moses "Poetics of Ethiopianism," p. 416)
[55] Du Bois, "National Emancipation Exposition," p. 339

subsequent versions of this scene.[56] In the 1913 pageant's script, the action unfolded on stage as the crowd of "savages" circles the Egyptian court, listening as fifty veiled figures enter the stage with The Sphinx, The Pyramid, the Obelisk and the Empty Throng of the Pharaoh, all borne by oxen. "Suddenly," the script prescribes, "A black chieftain appears in the entrance, with the Uraeus in one hand and the winged Beetle in the other"[57] and under his leadership, the "savages" are unveiled, newly clothed "in the splendor of the Egyptian court."[58] The figures of Queen Candace of Ethiopia and the Queen of Sheba[59] appear as a regal procession dances through the remaining scene, accompanied by thunderous drums until the scene draws to a close. The black chieftain, who bears the emblems of Egyptian political and religious power, oversees the intersection of peoples, whom heralds identify as "Negro and Semite."[60] In this way, Du Bois imagines the invention of civilization in this cultural myth as fundamentally syncretic, diverging from essential claims about the exclusively African character of Egyptian civilization common to some theories of black nationality. Rather than staking a claim to Egypt as an intrinsically "black" space or civilization, Du Bois organizes the narrative of Egyptian culture and civilization to include black Africans, and he positions them within this history, rather than as the rightful owners of this history.

The effect of positing black nationality as part of a broad historical framework, shared among different civilizations and peoples, becomes even more stark as it is integrated into the symbolic model of the 1915 version of the pageant. Here, the second scene, which the 1914

[56] Egyptian motifs are rather common in African American literature but are much more frequently oriented toward the reception of the book of Exodus; see Eddie Glaude, Jr.'s *Exodus!: Religion, Race, and Nation in Early Nineteenth-Century Black American*.
[57] Du Bois, "National Emancipation Exposition," p. 339
[58] Ibid., p. 339
[59] See figure 1 in Appendix A for images of these characters in costume.
[60] Ibid., p. 339

outline titles "The Dream of Egypt," opens onto a "beautiful Egyptian temple," a view which appears frequently in the photographs of the pageants staged in New York in 1913 and Philadelphia in 1916. The elaborate set design of 1916 is replete with hieroglyphs, which were less prominently featured in the previous set design, a winged solar disc and a much larger façade featuring painted columns.[61]

In terms of the narrative, this scene is revised along the same model as the first scene: it incorporates the incarnation of Ethiopia into its treatment of history and places greater emphasis on the interaction between the people and the symbolic representation of the Spirit of Ethiopia. The culture clash is staged as a literal battle, with "the war cry of the savages [ringing] out,"[62] but as "they are about to attack the Egyptians…they discover Ethiopia and the Star of Faith."[63] The resulting fraternization and the exchange of gifts does not emerge from an existing black presence among the Egyptians, as with the previous version's black chieftain, but instead, Egyptian priests choose the chief of the Africans to become Pharaoh. The mutual admiration between two cultures, the Egyptians and the unnamed black Africans, is represented in the symbolic economy established previously, as Ethiopia and Shango attend the marriage of the new pharaoh to a princess of Egypt. The great civilization of Egypt, likely recognizable to any viewer of this pageant, emerges as the direct result of this marriage of peoples, which is overseen by the divine inspiration of the Star of Faith. The scene closes with Ethiopia delivering the newly acquired "Star of Faith" to Shango, and it is Shango who leads all performers off the stage, with a specific note that the Egyptians go last. Again, neither people, Egyptian nor African, is established as supreme, as the gift is bestowed by the Egyptians, but under the power and

[61] See figures 2 and 3 in Appendix A
[62] Du Bois, *The Star of Ethiopia* (MS 312, mums312-b233-i046 Series 12), p. 2
[63] Ibid., p. 2

leadership of the Ethiopians. By emphasizing the meeting of these peoples, Du Bois shows how the interplay and interaction between them leads to the invention of civilization. The foundation of modern black identity, then, is not only rooted in the ancient world, but also relies on the variety of peoples present in the ancient Mediterranean. This syncretic vision of foundational ancient history is even more visible in the 1916 revision of the pageant, which invokes an even wider range of places and peoples. The Dark Herald, who narrates the pageant, proclaims that viewers shall "see how beneath the Mountains of the Moon, alike in the Valley of Father Nile in the ancient Negro-land and Atlantis the Black Race ruled and strove and fought and sought the Star of Faith and Freedom."[64] Envisioning black figures in Atlantis, a Greek mythological space, as well as Egypt, Du Bois reinforces the intermingling of historically significant peoples in the ancient world. When he specifically implicates Greek antiquity in this version of *The Star of Ethiopia*, furthermore, Du Bois underlines the political value of African history for African Americans. His account of the African past parallels the invocation of a classical past by those establishing modern European nations.

By offering a holistic treatment of ancient history in *The Star of Ethiopia*, Du Bois avoids commenting on the possibility of African primacy among ancient civilizations, a concern that is common in Afrocentric scholarship.[65] While it may seem that Du Bois's pageant (as well as his historical account, 1915's *The Negro*) would provide a valuable source for theories of world history, the genealogies between Du Bois and Afrocentric scholars are hard to trace. Though it is highly unlikely that George James, author of *Stolen Legacy*, or Cheikh Anta Diop, author of *Antériorité des civilisations négres*, were unfamiliar with Du Bois's body of work, neither cites

[64] W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Drama among Black Folk," p. 169
[65] For a more thorough treatment of scholarly traditions in Afrocentricity, see Stephen Howe's *Afrocentrism*. On position Egypt as a fundamentally African civilization in the contexts of Afrocentricity and classical Scholarship, see Howe's "Egyptian Athena, African Egypt, Egyptian Africa"

Du Bois or these texts in their seminal works.[66] Similarly Du Bois's Ethiopian writings may have had some influence on the work of Marcus Garvey, but it is difficult to ascertain direct connection as Du Bois and Garvey had limited contact with one another and an acrimonious relationship overall, and Du Bois rarely engaged explicitly with Pan-African scholarship.[67] *The Star of Ethiopia* points to a conception of history in which ancient Africa has a symbiotic relationship with ancient Greece and Rome, in which Greece and Rome are neither wholly derived from nor competing with African civilization. Du Bois's vision of how civilization was "kindled in Egypt" and "replenished in Greece," established in "The Spirit of Modern Europe," readily folds African peoples into the long historical narrative of growth and exchange in ancient Egypt, which includes Greeks and Romans as well.[68] Because the lineage of diasporic identity is not predicated on the purity of African civilizations or the unbroken line of a single culture, this nationality can be reconstituted and sustained by revisiting and restoring contemporary African Americans to this conception of black nationality. And perhaps most pressingly for Du Bois, just as the past provides structures for understanding the present, rather than determining the narrow pathway under which individuals must exist, the pluralistic, multi-faceted spirit which guides African American people leaves room for expansive possibilities of the future.

The Tower of Light and Speculative Futures

[66] Some scholars have noted the plausible connection between Du Bois and Diop, but the lack of direct citation may suggest that Du Bois's literary and historical works were not of particular interest to Diop's historiographical theories. See I. Wallerstein, *Africa: The Politics of Independence and Unity*, p. 130 (footnote): "other scholars, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, had earlier presented the argument that the ancient Egyptians were Negroes."
[67] For more on Garvey's relationship to Ethiopian and ancient African theories, see Robbie Shilliam's "'Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth Her Hands unto God'"; for more on Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, see C. Grant's *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey*. Wilson Moses also points in the introduction to the 2007 edition of *Black Folk Then and Now* that "Du Bois's lack of interest in relating his ideas to a preexisting Pan-African intellectual tradition is conspicuous."
[68] Du Bois, *Against Racism*, p. 56

As the pageant moves forward in history from the flourishing of Egyptian antiquity, through the rise and fall of Islam in north Africa and the sorrowful depths of the transatlantic slave trade, Ethiopia herself falls dormant. She rises again in North America, reborn in the flames of a torch thrown by John Brown,[69] and dispels all ghosts of slavery that would haunt the newly freedmen and women. Though this takes an explicitly ecclesiastical form in this version of the pageant, the ensuring visions of the unfolding future and the erection of the Tower of Light as a beacon to this unwritten history, takes many forms. The pluralism which inflected Du Bois's theories of nationality and cultural exchange is matched by an overriding analogy of carefully laid stones, forming a sturdy foundation for the future under the careful guidance of many figures under the auspices of Ethiopia herself. The pageant itself stops short of rendering the future in a lively performance of its actors, portraying even in the most fantastic of terms the events of history that had already been written. In refusing to depict an unwritten future, Du Bois highlights the expansive possibilities which can emerge from the collective enterprise of the African American people he has hoped to inspire and the course he believes they have already charted. The Tower of Light, far from a portent of divine approval or assured victory, is instead the symbolic culmination of Du Boisian theories of race and nationality.

The Tower of Light itself does not appear in the 1913 version of the pageant, and instead the heralds pronounce the pageant concluded having shown in the final scene the triumph of Emancipation, labeled "the Gift of Hope,"[70] but subsequent versions consistently culminate in Ethiopia summoning the great rivers of the world to lead African and diasporic peoples and lay the stones: KNOWLEDGE, LABOR, SCIENCE, JUSTICE, ART, and LOVE. The prominent

[69] Du Bois, *The Star of Ethiopia* (MS 312, mums312-b233-i046 Series 12), p. 3
[70] Du Bois "The National Emancipation Exposition," p. 341

position of science as the descendent of knowledge and labor, seems apt given Du Bois's critical investment in a structured approach to knowledge and predicative reason once all data is properly collected, organized, and acted upon. The revelation that Du Bois's sociological and theoretical impulses are given a specific name of Science by the end of his pageant underscores the critical dimensions of his futuristic thought as the domain of shared enterprise, and the application of intellectual technology in the form of race. Science Fiction, as it provides social dimensions to scientific thought by thrusting them into arts and literature,[71] similarly recognizes that the practical fruits of scientific discovery lie in the machinery of society making use of novel or inventive scientific thought. Du Boisian futurism and the injection of his scientific thoughts into a didactic and popular medium, such as a pageant, resembles a vision of Science Fiction that is "inherently, and radically, future-oriented."[72] Du Bois locates the technological growth and liberation of African American peoples through the potent analogy of a guiding spirit, and views this particular model of national or communal identity as a technological necessity in and of itself, that the nation must build itself in order to invent its future prosperity. The dramatic incarnation of national identity is woven throughout the long history of African American enterprise and imagination, intervening in the versions of Western history which intentionally erase and neglect the lives and contributions of Africans and African Americans.

The Star of Ethiopia clearly eschews the literary possibility of projecting Du Bois's personal imagination of the future into the history of his people, what Csicsery-Ronay might term "Future History," but the sweeping sociological premises of Du Bois's scholarship which

[71] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, for example, suggests that Science Fiction "embeds scientific-technical concepts in the broad sphere of human interests and actions…explicitly attaching social value to them" (Csicsery-Ronay, p. 3) and further insists that "one of the distinctive attractions of the genre is the way it places abstract information about technology and science in the service of figuration and narrative" (Csicsery-Ronay, p. 114)
[72] Ibid., p. 3

infuse his pageant with irresistible possibilities may resemble "Imaginary Science." While the popular appeal of the pageant, and especially its fanciful depiction of war and violence, political change and upheaval, may seem antithetical the scientific thought Du Bois embeds in *The Star of Ethiopia*, the dissemination of these sociological theories is a scientific project in and of itself.[73] Providing audiences with access to his theoretical inventions is not simply a matter of didactic education, but of establishing the common understanding of what is possible and what can be imagined in light of these theoretical premises.[74] The aspirational ending to Du Bois's pageant, which relies on the presence of "Science" as a foundation for the incredible labors of generations of Africans and African Americans, is grounded in the historical reality of the past, even that which has been obscured by colonial and racial violence. The text itself functions a vehicle not simply for the history of African and diasporic people, but for the potent effect of normalizing and dramatizing the unifying effects of national thought. The fictive utility of this imaginary space, bound within the logic of Du Boisian theories of collective identity and enterprise, uniting the abstract and the material elements of a black nationality, is in and of itself, a vital technology.

In *The Crisis* 12.4, Du Bois's recollection of the pageant in 1916 drives further the complex and necessary interaction of these moving parts, the foundation stones for the shining beacon of the future, the Tower of Light. While the stones are laid in this particular order, first LABOR, then KNOWLEDGE, then SCIENCE, then JUSTICE, Du Bois clarifies that "Labor doth build on Knowledge; how Justice tempers Science."[75] While the social sphere has clear connections to Du Bois's sociological imagination, the structure of Science in his pageant, tempered by Justice, suggests that it is critical to inject the social into the scientific, as it is the

[73] "as long as scientific ideas are widely circulated they become part of an enormous fluid social narrative, assimilated simultaneously to old and new concerns" (Csicsery-Ronay, p. 114).
[74] SF thrives on maximum credible rationalization" (Csicsery-Ronay, p. 138).
[75] Du Bois "The Drama among Black Folk," p. 171

scientific into the social. The benevolent guidance of African and diasporic peoples, under the rule of Ethiopia and the great rivers she summons, is, perhaps predictably in Du Boisian thought, assembled from concrete and transcendental elements. The guiding spirit of Ethiopia and the theoretical basis of shared experience and identity are tempered by the pragmatic concerns of the masses, and the transcendental virtues of beauty and love, giving shape to this community along the lines of powerful systems of control. Applying the lessons of the past, and the data gathered from carefully studying and understanding histories, individual and national, further illuminates the technological principles which Du Bois believes underwrite all social and scientific endeavor and the cybernetic vision of this self-sustaining nation.[76] The structures of information itself requires a robust organization of history and data, as well as proper guardians of this history to serve as a functional basis for community.[77] The possibility of homeostatic equilibrium, or other systems of feedback, is inhibited not simply by the flow of information, but in the competitive structures of a capitalist society.[78] Du Bois's emphasis, then, on the transcendental values and community which contains but is not limited to the individual, is crucial to approaching, much less exploring, a shared future. The chaotic unfolding of the present is, once again, not determined by inherited traditions of the past, or the impulse toward individual conquest of present resources, but is instead guided toward the future which can only emerge from the collected work of an entire people. It is probably helpful too that Du Bois's historical and immediate conception of broad, group identity is also resilient to the transient categories which

[76] "properly speaking, the community extends only so far as there extends an effectual transmission of information" (Weiner, p. 158)
[77] "as in the case of the individual, not all information which is available to the race to one time is accessible without special effort" (Ibid., p. 158)
[78] "it is thus a market game as played between perfectly intelligent, perfectly ruthless operators" (Ibid., p. 159)

change over time and which may not adequately anticipate the future, or the shape of the white society which surrounds black communities.

The Star of Ethiopia itself was well received. It was praised by white viewers like Philadelphia's Charlotte Abbey, M.D. who lamented only that it should have been better attended by whites,[79] and numerous black newspapers (*The Kansas City Sun*, *The Iowa State Bystander*, *The Denver Star*, and *The Pioneer Press* of Martinsburg, West Virginia) reported on it. As early as 1916, Du Bois received requests for a script of *The Star of Ethiopia* so that local high schools, NAACP chapter, church groups, and other organizations of varying sizes could stage their own version of the popular pageant.[80] Although Du Bois continued to receive these requests for many years after the pageant's last production in 1925,[81] he politely declined most of them citing both the considerable expense of staging the pageant and his wish that *The Star of Ethiopia* only ever be staged under his personal direction.[82]

Du Bois's conception of a nation as a "culture-state," which is organized by the conglomeration of individual experiences into a coherent ideal, is visible in other literary works, but takes a distinctive form in *The Star of Ethiopia*. The bustling spectacle of hundreds upon hundreds of performers presents a clear demonstration of the history of African Americans, their

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[79] *Evening Public Ledger*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 24 May 1916, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045211/1916-05-24/ed-1/seq-10/, accessed 3 December, 2017, p. 10: "it is to be regretted that more white people did not witness the Pageant of 'The Star of Ethiopia' given by the colored race on the 16th, 18th, and 20th of this month."

[80] Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, MS 312, mums312-b009-i335 Series 1A, letter from George H. Woodson to W. E. B. Du Bois, July 22, 1916.

[81] The latest in the archives are from 1945, from Elizabeth C. Marlow with a prompt response from Du Bois: Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, MS 312, mums312-b105-i241 Series 1A and mums312-b106-i392 Series 1A, letter from Elizabeth C. Marlow to W. E. B. Du Bois, April 2, 1945 and letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Elizabeth C. Marlow, April 4, 1945.

[82] Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, MS 312, mums312-b009-i143 Series 1A, letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Horace E. Deemer, September 15, 1916.

multitudes united by a common spirit.[83] The political ambitions of the pageant itself may threaten to overshadow the dramatic form of *The Star of Ethiopia*, but ultimately Du Bois's political and artistic ambitions reinforce one another. By invoking the spirit of Ethiopia[84] as she is threaded through African history, Du Bois establishes the philosophical and spiritual aspects of African American identity, while remaining firmly grounded in the historical basis and political reality of blackness. The overwhelming scope of the pageant emphasizes both the depth and breadth of African and African American history, demonstrating the spirit which underwrites African American history and informs the lives of African Americans, following the political philosophy of "The Spirit of Modern Europe." As William Chancy Langdon stated in the *Bulletin of the American Pageant Association* in 1914, "pageantry is the drama of a community,"[85] and the distillation of the multitude of African American voices into the triumphant narrative of *The Star of Ethiopia* is an attempt to realize Du Bois's theories of nationalism, to establish in perpetuity the shared enterprise of African and diasporic people.

As Du Bois describes his own investment and interest in producing such elaborate pageants, which he does multiple times in different issues of *The Crisis*, his political and philosophical goals are always foregrounded. After the success of the 1913 pageant at the National Emancipation Exposition, Du Bois writes that he was inspired by the possibility of theatre:

[83] Krasner points out that Du Bois's 'interest in *The Star of Ethiopia* was to show that African Americans have indeed contributed to the rise of civilization and to show, further, that this contribution was as rich and diverse as the Anglo-European' (Krasner, "The Pageant Is the Thing," p. 108).
[84] Du Bois's explicitly Ethiopian pageant is working within Ethiopianist traditions mentioned above, but also imaginative Ethiopian novels like Pauline Hopkins's *Of One Blood* (1901) and anti-colonial polemic like J. E. Casely Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911).
[85] Krasner, "'The Pageant is the Thing,'" p. 111.

> Then came my dream. It seemed to me that it might be possible with such a demonstration to get people interested in this development of Negro drama to teach on the one hand the colored people themselves the meaning of their history and their rich, emotional life through a new theatre, and on the other, to reveal the Negro to the white world as a human, feeling thing.[86]

The didactic quality of Du Bois's pageant, similar to his sociological texts and other works of fiction, is ultimately multi-faceted, and designed to reach audiences inside and outside the African American community, to provide parallel messages of empowerment for members within the community, and to present the humanity of African Americans to those outside the community. The nationality and nationalism imagined by Du Bois, though it is proudly black, is not fundamentally organized by political or economic separation from white society. By establishing the history of the African diaspora within a larger history of antiquity, and even in proximity to the distinguished cultures of the ancient Mediterranean past, Du Bois asserts the dignity of his people, not as they overwrite other histories, but specifically because they are part of this broader cultural narrative. The interrelated cultures and civilizations in the ancient Mediterranean do not simply have room for African peoples. Rather, the specific characters of national identities are recognizable only when they exist alongside one another. The multiplicity and syncretism that Du Bois presents as critical elements of African American nationality are also critical to Du Bois's vision of Western civilization, a civilization that descends from the ancient Mediterranean world inhabited by the Spirit of Ethiopia, and which strives toward the unknown and unknowable future.

[86] Du Bois, "The Drama among Black Folk," p. 171.

Chapter 3: "The world is the dream of the infinite"[1]

While the *Star of Ethiopia* presents a vision of Race and collective identity organized by the long scope of history which unites countless individuals under a unified black identity, imagining Race in the present shifts Du Bois's focus onto the individual subject. Du Bois's sociological thought which attempted to map broadly the expanse of black experiences through time and space, statistically and historically, could be conversely explored through the granular individual experiences which make up this sprawling set of data. In some of Du Bois's earliest writings, this desire to explore the possibilities of understanding the individual among the sweeping abstract social forces of race rely both on his literary studies, and the scientific and philosophical thought critical to Science Fiction. As Shamoon Zamir has noted in 1995's *Dark Voices*, and I have examined in chapter 1, Du Bois's studies of Pragmatic and Idealistic philosophy in William James's Philosophy IV course influenced his own theories of race and identity. In particular, the potential for "science" to map[2] the shape and structure society and establish the social possibilities which could emerge from more complete sociological mapping has particular analogical instruments in Du Bois's literary imagination of this period. As Du Bois sketches out in his notes, "the aim of Science is to predict phenomena" (Du Bois, Philosophy IV Notebook, p. 11) and the speculative capabilities of scientific thought rely on orderly and concrete principles to imagine the future. Du Bois's sociological thoughts are similarly oriented toward properly mapping the material conditions of race, and the social consequences of this socio-economic history, and his literary speculation finds a particular instrument in his studies with William James. The physical and geometrical understanding of the universe as

[1] (From "Philosophy IV Notebook" page 15 http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b230-i008)
[2] "I would say that strict Science could confine itself to the Humian view, to seek to give a functional account of nature and thus make a surface map which would unify nature (Du Bois, Philosophy IV Notebook, p. 11)

fundamentally dimensional and spatial, and geometry as a descriptive mathematical accounting of these qualities gives way Non-Euclidean Geometry, and particularly the spatial imaginary which has coherent and concrete rules not present in the natural world as we understand it: the fourth dimension. The potent metaphor of dimensionality, and the contemporary philosophical interest in the fourth dimension by mathematicians like Charles Howard Hinton and physicist and spiritualist Johann Karl Friedrich Zöllner, provides Du Bois's short story with a scientific basis for imagining the experiences of race that are simultaneously concrete and abstract, idiosyncratic and programmatic.

Du Bois's "fourth dimension" interest takes the form of a short story, which was likely written while at Harvard perhaps similar to the fortnightly themes written for his English 12 coursework.[3] Due to the story's fragmentary nature, and its unusual place in the archives, as Zamir notes, clearly inscribed on reused leaves of paper which contain academic writing on presumably unrelated topics[4] this particular story has received relatively little scholarly and critical attention. The story itself does not have a name as it was written by Du Bois and it is only through Zamir's archival work that we arrive at its assumed title, "A Vacation Unique."[5] Zamir's contention that the story was likely written while Du Bois was a student at Harvard seems sufficiently reasonable, particularly as it seems somewhat unlikely that Du Bois would have

[3] The archive at Amherst features 53 manuscripts on themes varying widely, from the description of a toothache, to the best way to eat orange, and many accounts of trips to nearby downs in New England, including the Berkshire Hills which will take on particular significance and fragments of the short story.

[4] Vivisection and railroads, which seem wholly unrelated, but offer interesting insights into Du Bois's education and interests at Harvard generally. Similarly, the writing on government control of railroads cites the philosophy of James Martineau who features prominently in the Philosophy IV Notebook, underlining the interconnectedness of these ideas if not actual overlap.

[5] Zamir notes that Du Bois's original manuscripts, http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b230-i011, the story itself is untitled, and that the title was supplied by Francis Broderick in the course of writing his dissertation on Du Bois. Zamir's appendix contains a version of the story transcribed from Broderick's papers in the Schomberg Collection, but because these are sufficiently dissimilar from the fragments in Du Bois's hand, and of some uncertain provenance, my analysis will focus entirely on documents from the Du Bois collection at UMass Amherst.

reused old pages from his Harvard notebooks long after he had left Harvard, and he confirms that Broderick's dating of the story in June of 1891 corresponds roughly with the course notes.[6] Zamir further notes that there likely could other fragments lost over the course of his life or archived in the W.E.B. Du Bois Centre in Accra, and, indeed, I believe I have found in the archives in Amherst another fragment which appears to revisit and expand a particular fragment. While "To the Berkshire hills" closely resembles the many composition exercises written about frequent trips to the New England countryside, including specifically the hills of Berkshire, the style clearly diverges from Du Bois's descriptive, or even lyrical, accounts of the landscape, and instead is focalized through a character who I will identify as Cuffy Johnsing, the primary speaker in "A Vacation Unique."[7] It is less clear how Du Bois viewed this story, as the common anthologies of his corpus do not appear to make particular mention of it, and while it is possible it was published somewhere, its absence is notable. Zamir's claim that Du Bois had abandoned this project later in life, hinging on the script of an older Du Bois, labeling the fragments "UNPROPHETABLE"[8] is, at the very least, mitigated somewhat by the integration of this turn of phrase, "unprophetable" into the body of the 1896 fragment. While speculation on the ultimate fate of this short story may not yield any definitive answers on its full history, the possibilities of this story and fourth dimensional analogy clearly had some intellectual value to Du Bois years after it had been first developed.

[6] Zamir, pp. 219
[7] Appendix B includes my own transcriptions of the original fragments first published by Zamir, with some emendations and paleographical suggestions, as well as a transcription of the document labeled "To the Berkshire hills, ca. 1896" http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b230-i051, and a fuller accounting of the specific links to the original story fragments. For the purposes of citation in this chapter, I have included the original pagination in on both documents, indicated with parenthetical numbers
[8] Zamir, pp. 218-219

The assembled fragments offer a rather limited narrative plot, following the initial offer from the mysterious Cuffy Johnsing to transform, via "a painless operation," a white student of Harvard into a black man, and together they would form a traveling show, dazzling white audiences with the marvel of black students at Harvard. Only the very slightest hint of this actual show is given, in the very last fragment, and instead the focus is squarely on the character of Cuffy Johnsing himself, and the tutelage his unwitting white "fool" receives as he agrees to participate in this outlandish "vacation" into the experiences of blackness, and the otherworldly qualities of this racial "fourth dimension." Though spiritual and theological theorists had proposed the existence of a human soul or essence in a "fourth dimension" as early as the 17th Century,[9] and unified space-time theories of the 18th Century,[10] a more abstract notion of the fourth dimension takes shape in the early 19th Century. August Möbius in 1827's seminal *Der barycentrische Calcul* explores concepts which become critical to Projective Geometry and imagining dimensional space. In discussing the radial symmetry of two-dimensional shapes, Möbius noted that while these shapes, outlines of his hands in one example, could not be made congruent with any translations or rotations in their own two-dimensional place, they could be reconciled easily by rotation through the perpendicular third dimension. From this experiment, Möbius logically hypothesized that he could perform the same translation with radially symmetrical three-dimensional objects, a left and right glove, if they could be similarly rotated along a perpendicular axis in a higher, fourth dimension. This imaginary space, and the possibilities of non-Euclidean geometry as a vehicle for exploring rigorous and rational systems

[9] Henry More's *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, for example that while the material being occupies three dimensions ("Materiales res omnes *in se* consideratae *trinis* tantummodo Dimensionibus") but that there is a fourth which may be the domain of spirits ("*quarta haec dimensio* quam appello *Spiritudiem essentialem*") (More, p. 384)
[10] In Physics volumes like like Joseph-Legrange *Mecanique Analytique* (1788) which outlines models for understanding movement through time and space.

which are not bound to the laws of observable natural spaces, provides the speculative fiction with tools with which uncharted horizons can be in and explored.[11] The speculative aspects of Du Bois's short story, and particularly the analogical uses of a "fourth dimension" which is infused with supernatural or scientific potential, and in the case of a metaphysicist like Johann Karl Friedrich Zoellner both at once, affords Du Bois a literary space for the sociological possibilities of Science Fiction.

Locating Science Fiction specifically among speculative and realistic genres, as I discussed some in chapter 1, offers a vital glimpse into the pragmatic investments in Du Boisian philosophy and literary fiction. The "fictive novum,"[12] which Darko Suvin argues is critical to Science Fiction, provides a clear middle position, between modes of fiction which merely describe the natural world and those which are completely unbound from it[13]. For a variety of fourth dimensional fictions the possibilities of non-Euclidean geometry present a similar compromise between the perfectly unreal and the limitations of the natural world. While Suvin accepts the necessary compromise between scientific imagination and the aspirational invention of science fiction,[14] his arch emphasis on SF as a form that eschews naturalistic or mimetic obscures the critical relationship between empirical observation, scientific discovery, and the emergent possibility of the future. While Du Bois uses the *novum* of the fourth dimension and the scientific analogy for the abstract and transcendental qualities of race to press against the

[11] For a broad overview of this phenomenon in 19th century novels, see Mark Blacklock's "The Higher Spaces of the Late Nineteenth-Century Novel"
[12] In Suvin's terms the "*novum* or cognitive innovation is an important difference superadded to or infused into the author's empirically "known" (Suvin, "The State of the Art in Science Fiction Theory, p. 36) and represents the kernel of invention critical to SF.
[13] "what are the limits of SF as a literary genre which is to be understood by differentiating it from the mimetic or mundane ('naturalistic') as well as supernatural or metaphysical ('fantastic') genres" (Ibid., p. 33)
[14] "if the *novum* is the necessary condition of SF (differentiating it from 'naturalistic fiction), the validation of the novelty by scientifically methodical cognition into which the read is inexorably led is the *sufficient* condition for SF" (Ibid., p. 37)

boundaries of common understandings of race as intrinsic and totalizing, his story is ultimately grounded in the same experiential data that drives his sociological thoughts. Science Fiction, for Du Bois's purpose, is oriented toward invention and the new, but it is also fundamentally organized by a mimetic understanding of race as it is experienced both in the abstract and concrete, for the individual and the group. While Suvin's theoretical framework focuses primarily on the materiality of scientific *novum*,[15] the mathematical impulse of Edwin Abbott and W.E.B. Du Bois relies on imaginary space that is not a simple extension of material reality, but a complex alternative model for imagining social dynamics. For this chapter specifically, I am interested in the concept of a model[16] as a literary tool for mapping and explaining phenomena and even manipulating the cognitive frameworks of sociology and science as they pertain to race immediately and presently, rather than as forecasting tools (a concept which will be explored in the conclusion).[17] The specific mechanics of race, which Du Bois was formulating in his studies at Harvard and would continue developing throughout his life, and the statistical reckoning of black lives can be readily manipulated and misinterpreted if they are not also approached from the proper dimensional perspective.

Trends in realism and Science Fiction among narratives of Race, and particularly "passing," likely deserve attention through this scientific and sociological model, but tracing this history is confounded by how early Du Bois's text appears in this chronology. The complexity of Colorism and the possibility of "passing" are, even when Du Bois is writing in the 1890s, a

[15] As Csicsery-Ronay argues "like Bloch, Suvin treats the science-fictional novum as both an indicator and a mediator of horizons of possibility. But for Suvin these horizons are strictly limited to science—the expansion of human knowledge of, and power in, the manipulable material world" (Csicsery-Ronay, pp. 49-50)
[16] Donella Meadows asserts that "a model is simply an ordered set of assumptions about a complex system. It is an attempt to understand some aspect of the infinitely varied world by selecting from perceptions and past experience a set of general observations applicable to the problems at hand" (Meadows, p. 20)
[17] For a more complete critical look at the futuristic impulses of scientific modeling and Science Fiction, see Charles Elkins's "Science Fiction versus Futurology".

recognizable and established literary phenomenon[18] the specific narrative of transformation and conscious transition through race, through performance or scientific technology, primarily postdates Du Bois's story. James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* provides a vital template for the passing narrative, the psychological drama of occupying a liminal space between racial identities and, in the case of Johnson's narrative, the shameful betrayal of a black man passing for white. This potent literary tradition of passing narratives was upended in 1931 by George Schuyler's raucously satirical *Black No More* in which skin whitening technology wreaks havoc on the structure of society, revealing the arbitrary social construction of race, and ultimately inverting notions of racial purity in contemporary society. While the intertextual relationship between these texts and "A Vacation Unique" is unquestionably worth examining, for the purposes of this chapter, I am invested in studying this particular text as a manifestation of Du Bois's Science Fiction interests. Because "A Vacation Unique" has little, if any, notable publication history, and it predates these texts, it seems reasonable to discuss the story less in terms of its potential to influence existing literary trends and instead in relation to Du Boisian philosophy and social science. Indeed, the fragments of the story, though they are sparse, feature direct allusions to Edwin Abbott's seminal fourth dimension novella, *Flatland*, and appear in close proximity to notes on William James's Philosophy IV lectures, and direct reference to C.H. Hinton.[19] When viewed alongside these

[18] Relevant texts include historical dramas like Frank J. Webb's *The Garies and their Friends* (1857), tragic mulatto stories like Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859), and slave narratives that rely on the possibility of passing like William and Ellen Craft's *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (1860).

[19] Du Bois writes in the Philosophy IV Notebook: "(Hegel, Spinoza, Buddha) C.H. Hinton, Scientific Romances '4th dimension') That there is a fourth dimension in life every sensible man must say. We have a 4th moral dimension separating us from animals. Thus we are cut off entirely from the whole universe only part of which we see." (Du Bois, Philosophy IV Notebook, pp. 30-31). For a more thorough treatment of C.H. Hinton's relationship with William James and the possibilities of the fourth dimension in Jamesian philosophy, see chapter 4 of Throesch's *Before Einstein*.

specific referents and concepts, the more exacting uses of Science Fiction as a creative and scientific theoretical apparatus become clear.[20]

As a student at Harvard, Du Bois's coursework often balanced a variety of disciplinary and philosophical methods, and though he showed aptitude in natural sciences, he was primarily motivated to apply his scientific thinking to expressly political studies and particularly creative writing.[21] Du Bois juggled rigorous surveys of ethical philosophy, histories of railroads and constitutional law, and eventually broad surveys of Western philosophy, Descartes to Leibniz and Hegel to Kant with George Santayana and, particularly Philosophy II: Psychology and Logic and Philosophy IV: Ethics both with William James. As Du Bois worked through the robust curriculum of Jamesian Pragmatism and attempted to rigorously theorize the relationships between mind and matter, he was similarly captivated by increasingly abstract theories of race as an operative category common to both social and psychological subjectivity. Bold abstractions like "Science is Mathematics. Mathematics is Identity. Science is Identity" ornament his extensive notes on James's Philosophy IV, and this particular foray into complex but concrete notational systems is readily connected, in his course notes and creative writing, to non-Euclidean geometry and the fourth dimension. The possibility of the fourth dimension, as a space this is at once invisible but present, rationally organized by rules but not limited by the existing paradigms of conventional space was apparently vital to James's lectures on philosophy. Mathematician C.H. Hinton is quoted by James in Philosophy IV notebooks and enters Du

[20] And as scholars like Nicole A. Waligora-Davis have noted, Du Bois's interest in the fourth dimension persists throughout his life, as part of his investment in the scientific and theoretical models for understanding and articulating Race.

[21] "His first year courses favored the sciences….though he scored A's in all his science courses, the following year the exact sciences disappeared from his schedule without explanation. Perhaps chemistry and geology seemed too remote from Negro problems and deprived Du Bois of an adequate outlet for what he regarded as his talent for creative writing" (Broderick, p. 15)

Bois's notes, as mentioned above, and Hinton's own theories of the dimensional and spatial existence provide a useful model for Du Boisian philosophy. Hinton imagines it is possible that extra dimensions are fundamentally relational, and that if spatial reality is limited for some beings and not others, then a clear hierarchy of visibility emerges.[22] On the other hand, he imagines that "the other alternative is that we have a four-dimensional existence" and "in this case our proportions in it must be infinitely minute, or we should be conscious of them."[23] Rather than being the dream of higher dimensional beings, he also postulates that these protrusions of ourselves into the "fourth dimension," however it is conceived, must be "in the ultimate particles of matter" accessible only in the greatest extreme of our being. While the former model is crucial to the plotting and analogy of Abbott's *Flatland*, "A Vacation Unique" seems to manipulate this slippery relationship between higher and lower dimensional perception, and the passage through the barrier of the color line, what Du Bois would eventually call "the veil." The possibilities of the transcendental, the extremities of material existence may be invisible but can become knowable and understandable in the outline of this new dimension.

Identity and the Fourth Dimension

The Science Fiction implications of "A Vacation Unique," then, are ordered less by the specific technologies surrounding Race or the imagined future of race so much as the analogical inquiry into and discovery of the terrain of Race. As Jameson notes, "hard" Science Fiction is often characterized by a "mimesis of scientific discovery" or "the Great Deduction…an experience not at all as closely related to the problem-solving form of detective stories."[24] The

[22] "If we are in three dimensions only while there are really four dimensions, then we must be relatively to those beings who exist in four dimensions, as lines and planes in relation to us….in this case we must exist only in the mind of the being that conceives us" (Hinton, *Scientific Romances*, p. 30).
[23] Ibid., p. 31
[24] Jameson, "Shifting Contexts of Science Fiction Theory," p. 244

didactic elements of Cuffy Johnsing's character, the "rainbow" perspective he imparts on the Fool and reader draws attention to the construction of knowledge common to even the most realistic fiction,[25] and the scientific potential of theorizing this system of knowledge.[26] The relationship between realism and the imaginary spaces of Science Fiction, in Du Bois's sociological thought, is not restricted to a perfect scientific reckoning of Race, but is also present in the process of developing the material experience into an abstract theory. Science Fiction, like critical theory, imagines not only a totalizing system of understanding[27] but the textual apparatus to imagine their contours as they pertain to individual subjects, relating individual experiences and the theoretical models which emerge from collective experiences. The complex, Dualistic nature of Race in Du Boisian philosophy not only traces the sociological discourse that Du Bois maps in his data-driven social science, but also the radical analogical reconfiguration of how the material and abstract elements of race and be perceived (or not) at the level of the individual. "A Vacation Unique," though inflected by the individual and collective understanding of race, and white racial framing, examines these logics without assuming their veracity, calling into question the very basis of visible racial dimensions by revealing the existence of a higher dimension of Race. In this experimental space, Du Bois can establish an exploratory model of understanding Race while also incorporating the diffuse and contradictory sensations of being an individual pulled between dimensions and along competing axes of political and social history.

[25] An as Delany points out the sliding scale of subjunctivity, and the possible in fiction is a sliding scale within SF as well: "Events that have not happened include several sub-categories….Events that have not happened include those events that might happen: these are your technological and sociological predictive tales" (Delany, "about Five Thousand One Hundred and Seventy Five Words," p. 62)

[26] As Freedman argues "there is probably no text which is a perfect and pure embodiment of SF but, on the other hand, there are perhaps relatively few texts which lack the SF tendency altogether" (Freedman, p. 182).

[27] "critical theory, then, may be defined as dialectical thought: this is, thought which (in principle) can take nothing less than the totality of the social field for its object" (Freedman, p. 181).

The first fragment introduces immediately the character of Cuffy Johnsing, an enterprising figure who quickly makes promises similar to the traveling snake oil salesmen common to many 19th century tales. Even more provocatively, Johnsing is addressing in the second person an unnamed interlocutor, and promising a voyage that is equal parts invigorating and dangerous, one that we will come to understand will expose a white subject (and reader) to the most curious dimensions of race.[28] Johnsing's pitch is handily accompanied by his calling card and an office at "999 Holworthy," reasonably off Harvard's campus and perhaps entirely fictional,[29] and a hasty critique of the student[30] and his surroundings. Students playing baseball are snidely compared to ancient and modern philosophers[31]but dismissed as "luffer-heads." The Crispus Attucks monument in Boston Common[32] strikes Johnsing as more worthy than it does his interlocutor, but ultimately views all memorials to the past with similar contempt[33] saying emphatically "I'm constitutionally opposed to parks, commons, and the like."[34] Societies ancient and modern have little to offer Cuffy Johnsing as they are limited in their perception of dimensional space, and it is not only the proper consideration of Race which interests Johnsing, but the perspective afforded by dimensional translation. The experiences and sensations of being racialized by society are unquestionably vital to understanding blackness, as their absence will construct a wholly new racial position and perspective[35] and this method of exploring the

[28] "Now here I have a very choice article, something unique and entirely new; warranted not to cloy, bracing refreshing, healthy, safe, remunerative and dangerous—you are interested? Of course you are." (Du Bois, "Harvard Notes," p. 4)
[29] Contemporary addresses on Holworthy only go today as high as 192.
[30] "you may call at my room at any time barring study hours when you are presumably least engaged" (Ibid., p. 4)
[31] "There now lies Epicurus flat on his back with a 'good hit! Steal your second! Foul out' and a pipe; and here's your John Stuart Mill with a Hurry!" (Ibid., p. 4)
[32] Quite topical for Du Bois's story as it was unveiled in November of 1888 to commemorate the victims of the Boston Massacre.
[33] "at which date according to J. Homer, DD. LLD., the Greeks erected a young pile to Mr. Achilles in commemoration of a certain brawl,--how tall was Alexander Pa?" (Ibid., p. 7)
[34] Ibid., p. 7
[35] "you will not only be a Negro but a Negro in an unthought of and astoundingly incongruous role. Having in this manner reached an entirely unique and strange position you will be in position to solve in a measure the problems of

universe is the only antidote to Johnsing's general disinterest in society and history. Most interestingly, the Fool is told that this "vacation" will be told that their "view of mankind in general will have a striking resemblance to the view which Mr. Field of Flatland had of Mr. Dash's of Lineland intestines."[36] The visceral and bodily description of this vantage point, particularly as it is adjacent to notes about the practice of vivisection, calls to mind a variety of scientific taxonomies of "higher" and "lower" creatures or dimensions, and interestingly the newly black observer is granted this vital insight. Closer examination of *Flatland*, however, reveals a more nuanced understanding the precise implications of dimensional sight and observation.

Edwin Abbott's novella, a highly satirical treatment of social stratification in contemporary society, is told from the perspective of a humble polygon, A Square, and recounts first the intricate customs of polygonal society in Flatland, and then voyages to exotic lands, first in one-dimensional Lineland and then in three-dimensional Sphereland. In a Swiftian journey of the tiny, provincial Lineland,[37] a primitive despotic Monarchy (as contrasted with the theocratic oligarchy of Flatland), the discourse of the intestinal is critical to the little Monarch. A Square is told, because two-dimensional society does not permit subjects of Lineland to move past one another, much less see beyond their immediate neighbors, society is ordered by the specific tones of each line segment's voice. Male Lines are even more complex as they have two voices, "a bass at one and a tenor at the other of his extremities"[38] and it is this masculine tenor voice that emerges from the "intestines"[39] of the Monarch of Lineland. It is unclear entirely who Cuffy

Introspection and Fourth Dimension…beholding too parts of character invisible to the general run of men" (Ibid., p. 8).

[36] Ibid., p. 8.

[37] The Linelanders are even described conspicuously as "Lilliputian" (Abbott, p. 60) by the visiting Square.

[38] Ibid., p. 56.

[39] Ibid., p. 54.

Johnsing views as "Mr. Dash" of Lineland as the lines, even the Monarch is not given a particularly clear name, nor is it clear if "Mr. Field" should be interpreted with A Square or another polygon,[40] but the sensory description of "intestines" enters a somewhat different register. Occupying an extra dimension beyond the actual perception of Lines and Dashes does not immediately provide A Square with a clear understanding of the Monarch's physiology, and it is only after the structure of society, and the necessity of the specific needs of voice and appearance are explained to A Square that it properly conceives of this unusual creature. The exchange of knowledge, which Cuffy Johnsing imagines as the paramount achievement of his Fool's transformation, relies on a similar experience of alienation and inhabiting this new spatial framework. While the intimate and personal life of the Monarch must be revealed to A Square[41] and inflects his understanding of their miniature society, the converse does not appear possible for his interlocutor. The Monarch of Lineland begs for an explanation to the terms "right" and "left" and the Square can only explain that in order that he demonstrate such movement, he must leave the visible plane of one-dimensional existence. Space is total for the one-dimensional though incomplete,[42] but the Monarch dismisses A Square slipping out of sight along the axis perpendicular to Lineland as sorcery. The scientific thought which could imagine the possible extra dimension, is absent both from the Monarch and A Square, but by viewing the two-

[40] White notes that in C.H. Hinton's *An Episode of Flatland* (1907) does have a passing mention of a "Mr. Field" but this seems like a coincidence as Du Bois's text very likely predates Hinton's, something which is explained further in Appendix B.

[41] And the zero-dimensional points are described later as solipsistic universes unto themselves: "Behold yon miserable creature. That Point is a Being like ourselves, but confined to the non-dimensional Gulf. He is himself his own World, his own Universe; of any other than himself he can form no conception…he has no cognizance even of the number Two; nor has he a thought of Plurality; for he is himself his One and All, being really Nothing" (Ibid., p. 91)

[42] A Square explains that they are moving "Out of *your* World. Out of *your* Space. For your space is not the true Space. True Space is a plane" (Ibid., p. 61).

dimensional, and drawing from this observation knowledge of new lands, A Square becomes primed to receive the wisdom of "higher" dimensions.

A Square is merely an observer of one-dimensional space, and he fails entirely to convince the little Monarch of his own specific reality, much less the abstract understanding of a dimension that cannot be perceived by the universe as it is observed by lines and dashes. Cuffy Johnsing, on the other hand, is clearly successful in literally translating his Fool, the lower being in his charge, into and across a fourth dimension, and in this way Du Bois radically shifts the narrative focus from his hypotext. While A Square has a rational basis for understanding, in the beginning, the totality of his own two-dimensional space, he cannot, it seems conceive of any higher dimensions which may lurk just outside of his own rigidly ordered society. The irony of telling the Monarch that "True Space is a Plane"[43] is utterly lost on the hapless polygon, perhaps specifically because he is so embroiled in the structures of his own society which Johnsing furiously rebukes. The humble Square, a member of the professional class, more distinguished than triangular laborers and soldiers and less than pentagonal gentlemen and six or more-sided nobility, outlines the complex processes of society, in which angles are measured by eye, baby triangles are scrutinized for equilateral perfection, and the minutia of two-dimensional life dominates his every waking thought. There is even in Flatland a historical crisis of color, in which painted shapes can obscure their sided-ness, disrupting the structure of polygonal aristocracy and inducing chaos as the lower classes could enter the halls of power disguised as aristocrats.[44] This history, however, and the potent analogies to social strata and even race, are not readily accessible to A Square, who ultimately can only imagine extra dimension when

[43] Ibid., p. 61
[44] Ibid., p. 31

literally and tangibly confronted by them. Where Cuffy Johnsing already promises to "break the bounds of humanity"[45] the abstract possibilities of a third dimension are met by A Square with the same skepticism that the Monarch treated the self-evident existence of a second dimension.

After returning from Lineland, A Square is presented with the fanciful thinking of his own grandson, perhaps specifically because he is not yet indoctrinated perfectly by the rules of polygonal society, who points out that mathematical notations for area demonstrate a logical relationship between one-dimensional lines and the area of two-dimensional shapes. The precocious polygon observes that "if a point by moving three inches, makes a Line of three inches represented by 3; and if a straight line of three inches, moving parallel to itself, makes a Square of three inches represented by 3^2, it must be that a square of three inches every way, moving somehow parallel to itself (but I don't see how) must make a Something else (but I don't see what) of three inches every way—and this must be represented by 3^3"[46] Despite having just attempted to instruct the Monarch of this distinct abstract possibility, A Square can only approach this abstract theory as nonsense, counter to the observable structure of nature. He is interrupted by a mysterious intrusion: "straightaway I became conscious of a Presence in the room, and a chilling breath thrilled through my very being,"[47] and this visitor, a Sphere, is no less confusing to the Flatlanders than A Square himself had been to Lineland. Just as A Square had hoped that his own extradimensional presence would convince the Monarch of a dimension beyond his own, the Sphere attempts to demonstrate the truth obvious to him, but with remarkably different aspects of perception. While the spatial perceptions of A Square in Lineland focused on observing the fixity of creatures along the line of existence, never passing one

[45] Du Bois, Harvard Notes, p. 8
[46] Abbott, p. 65
[47] Ibid. p. 65

another or changing relative position, the Sphere's vision of Flatland emphasizes it openness and transparency. From the invisible position "above" and beyond two-dimensional space the Sphere "discerned all that you speak of as *solid* (by which you mean 'enclosed on four sides'), you houses, your churches, your very chests and safes, yes even your insides and stomachs, all lying open and exposed to my view."[48] While viewing the intestines of a Linelander was an exercise in mutual explanation and understanding the subject position of a line, the vantage point of the third dimension is characterized by power over the observed. The social structures which order Flatland are revealed to be byproducts of physical reality and not a continuous manifestation of reality, and this skepticism of social dynamics as scientific necessities is mirrored by Cuffy Johnsing's contempt for lineage and society. It is not entirely clear how or why A Square's position in society or the universe has selected them for fantastic voyage through the dimensions, but Johnsing is very clear that there are vital criteria which assisted him in selecting his subject. The Fool is told bluntly that "I will merely say that I have chosen you for the trip because in most particulars you fill the bill surprisingly well—you are old enough, you are tall enough, you are fool enough—I am sorry you have a distinguished ancestry—other things being equal I prefer a man with no ancestry at all not even a father—I should have been please [sic] to make the acquaintance of Adam."[49] The limited understanding of black subjectivity in his white Fool presents Cuffy with the opportunity to explore freshly the experiences of race and the fourth dimension of being, and could only be enhanced by a subject removed from the tethers of aristocracy and a distinguished lineage. A Square, though a relatively humble polygon is nevertheless embroiled in the politics of aristocracy, including and especially by way of his prescient grandson, himself a noble hexagon. While Johnsing leaves no room in "A Vacation

[48] Ibid. 69.
[49] Harvard Notes 9

Unique" for the Fool to resist or even discuss the procedures necessary to imagining the fourth dimension and passing through it, the Sphere must press harder on A Square to dislodge him from his two-dimensional thought.

The Empirical Eye and Mathematical Models

The illusion of a True Space in Flatland is disarmed as the notions of privacy and individuality that could be preserved in the mind of A Square as he learned of the hidden inner lives of Linelanders as all buildings, all spaces, all bodies, all minds.[50] The social strata which hinge on two-dimensionality, and the specific limitations of sight in two-dimensions,[51] fall away and when stripped bare of this socially constructed view of Space, and the Sphere hopes, as Cuffy Johnsing does, that this will stimulate new and exciting theories of being, but the Sphere is initially disappointed. When no analogy or abstract reasoning of geometric principles could convince A Square that the Sphere's appearance and disappearance were not mere sorcery, the Sphere vows to "proclaim the truth" of the third dimension by "deeds, and not words."[52] Where Cuffy Johnsing promises a "painless operation," the Sphere in desperate frustration, after all demonstrations of the third dimension fail, drags A Square into Spaceland against his will. A Square is devastated by this rupture of two-dimensional thought recounting, "an unspeakable horror seized me. There was a darkness; then a dizzy sickening sensation of sight that was not like seeing; I saw a Line that was no Line; Space that was not Space; I was myself and not myself."[53] The psychological horror of transformation, though not absent from "A Vacation

[50] "I, who see all things, discerned last night the phantasmal vision of Lineland written upon your brain" (Abbott, p. 71).
[51] "in order to see into Space you ought to have an eye not on your perimeter but on your side, that is, on what you would probably call your inside; but we in Spaceland should call it your side" (Ibid., p. 69).
[52] Ibid., p. 71.
[53] Ibid., p. 77

Unique," is decidedly muted, with only the barest hint of the Fool's objection as Cuffy quashes any potential complaint or outburst. Cuffy tells the Fool that "you [sic] hair with becoming modesty has slunk back, cringing, ashamed either of its owner or its owner's owners and your countenance which before the application of lampblack was open and winning has suddenly become to the last degree repulsive," and in immediate reaction says "you don't feel? Pish! Hold your tongue—your feelings have played but small part in history." [54] The individual experiences of the Fool, as outlined prior, are, at most, a distraction from the historical project of exploring the fourth dimension, and the tutelage of Johnsing will dominate subsequent fragments. While A Square is destined for a journey of self-discovery, the Fool is, ultimately, a test subject and an instrument for the scientific and philosophical inquiry of Cuffy Johnsing.

At this point, liberated from his previously two-dimensional paradigms, A Square becomes a zealous convert of the higher dimensions. The religion of the polygons, led by perfect circles, regard *omnividence*, the ability to see from above, as the ultimate expression of divinity,[55] but is disillusioned by the mission of the Sphere. The Sphere believes that, finally, there is a prophet to spread the gospel of three dimensions, but A Square's logical progression from Lineland to Spaceland, inspires in him a recursive transcendental ideal. Having experienced his own transition from the mighty extradimensional being overlooking one-dimensional lines to a flat and hollow polygon from the lofty vantagepoint of the third dimension, A Square can only imagine that this journey will continue indefinitely.[56] To A Square's disappointment, the Sphere rejects and possible fourth dimension as "utterly inconceivable." Just as A Square had dismissed

[54] Du Bois, Harvard Notes, pp. 9-10.
[55] "to see all things, or as they express it, *omnividence*, is the attribute of God alone" (Abbott, p. 80).
[56] "my Lord has shown me the intestines of all my countrymen in the Land of Two Dimensions by taking me with him into the land of Three. What therefore more easy now than to take his servant on a second journey into the blessed region of the Fourth Dimension, where I shall look down with him once more upon this land of Three Dimensions, and see the inside of every three-dimensional house." (Ibid. 86)

his grandson's abstract geometrical progression from a number to its square and cube, the Sphere insists that because it cannot properly locate or experience this extra dimension, then it cannot be empirically posited or believed. Cast down from Spaceland for insisting on the "Progress of Truth,"[57] A Square become a tragic figure, imprisoned for his extradimensional heresy,[58] hoping only that his dimensional consciousness could someday inspire others to similarly open their minds. Fittingly, A Square recognizes both that he is of a type, but that the simple logic of two dimensions is insufficient to describe his total geometrical being, as one element in a transcendental series of dimensions.[59] The metatexual implications, and the didactic qualities of this satire, are made explicit in the dedication which exhorts "solid humanity" to recognize both their own extraordinary position as residents of a "higher" dimension, and the imaginative possibilities of many more.[60] The uses of non-Euclidean geometry, particularly as it could be explicitly theological, as was the case for Abbott, or psycho-social, as it appears in Du Bois's story, is boldly synthetic, joining together these discourses and encouraging more unified theories of being.[61] Geometry had long been considered the concrete branch of mathematics, as Henderson notes "Euclidean geometry had the virtue of being founded on a small set of precise definitions and being demonstrable by means of geometric constructions, physical models of

[57] Ibid., p. 88
[58] "Prometheus up in Spaceland was bound for bringing down fire for mortals, but I—poor Flatland Prometheus—lie here in prison for bringing down nothing to my countrymen" (Ibid., p. 100)
[59] "Yet I exist in the hope that these memoirs, in some manner, I know not how, may find their way to the minds of humanity in Some Dimension, and may stir up a race of rebels who shall refuse to be confined to limited Dimensionality" (Ibid., p. 100)
[60] In full the dedication reads: To/The Inhabitants of SPACE in GENERAL/And H.C. IN PARTICULAR/This Work is Dedicated/By a Humble Native of Flatland/In the Hope that/Even as he was Initiated into the Mysteries/Of THREE Dimensions/Having been previously conversant/With ONLY TWO/ So the Citizens of that Celestial Region/May aspire yet higher and higher/To the Secrets of FOUR FIVE or EVEN SIX Dimensions/Thereby contributing/To the Enlargement of THE IMAGINATION/And the possible Development/Of that most rare and excellent Gift of MODESTY/Among the Superior Races/Of SOLID HUMANITY" (*Flatland*, p. Dedication)
[61] As Richards argues of Victorian mathematics "with geometry, humans seemed to have bridged the Cartesian gap between mind and body, to have transcended the confines of subjective being and attained a true understanding of the external world" (Richards, p. 2)

abstract truth."[62] For Du Bois, the literary possibilities of non-Euclidean geometry and the fourth dimension allowed for the exploration of models and sign systems, those which operated under a logic that was at once sensitive to the shape of the natural world but not limited by the observable universe.

Developing mathematical models which undermined the view of geometry as specifically naturalistic and descriptive[63] had a clear impact on Du Bois and his appropriation of the fourth dimension in "A Vacation Unique," but his interests in the intersections of science and imagination spread far beyond this mathematical conceit. Du Bois was certainly not uninterested in the spatial and material aspects of Race,[64] but the vibrant analogy critical to "A Vacation Unique" was, perhaps predictably, color and the spectra of visible and invisible light, and the numinous presence of the metaphysical looming over the material world. The Science Fiction aspirations of the story and the didactic mode established in the aggressively conversational Cuffy Johnsing and his impressionable charge. As has been established, the simple experience of being made physically black is insufficient to impart the Fool with the actual subjectivity of blackness, and in this way, the sustained instruction of Johnsing is necessary to meaningfully inhabit this position. But the arch emphasis on the subject position of A Square in *Flatland* is curiously absent from "A Vacation Unique." Because the Fool does not have a lifetime of black experiences to make sense of his newfound racial position, Johnsing must rely on a theoretical model which emerges from this lifetime of experiences, vital scientific and Emersonian principle

[62] Henderson, p. 456
[63] "The revelation that Euclidean geometry might itself be merely conventional, one symbolic system among others, mean that not only the belief in 'exact' knowledge but even the dream of transparent representation had 'fallen to pieces'" (Ibid., p. 457)
[64] For a more specific discussion of Du Boisian political philosophy and spatiality see Robert Williams's "Politics, Rights, and Spatiality in W.E.B. Du Bois's 'Address to the Country' (1906)" as he notes generally that "space arises from social relations and social practices that are constituted in the multiform dimensions of the world" (Williams, p. 338), and that this is a critical focus of Du Bois's political thought in the early 20th Century.

in Du Boisian thought, as seen in Chapter 1. For the character of Cuffy Johnsing, in the original fragments and the revised fragment, the conflation of performance, on stage and in life, and the presentation of racial identity, which is at once ordered by external social pressures and internal identity, presents a critical account of race which is neither perfectly nor impossibly rendered into a comprehensible, teachable theory.

As Johnsing and his Fool prepare for their performances, and are presumably traveling by rail, at least during some conversations, the simplest activities are inflected by the totalizing system of race, under the "fourth dimension of color."[65] Learning that the simplest of tasks require their own strategies and techniques to travel by rail or eat in a dining car are on the one hand obvious facts of life for black citizens in the late 19th Century,[66] but represent an intricate system that must be acquired by this artificially black individual. "Your ordinary jackass may go through the world gratis," Johnsing warns his Fool but "with the fourth dimension of color why bless you—its 'What is it? Why so?' I'm afraid I can't keep you overnight or give you a peacable meal of victuals or refrain from telling you how much I did for your people!"[67] The excuses, probing questions, and irritating overtures which the Fool must learn to navigate if they are to successfully manage their newfound racial identity are conspicuously the subtle comments of white liberals in polite society, not simply the hostile aggression of avowed racists. The complexity of social dynamics, within and among groups require an understanding of these many planes of existence, and how to seamlessly shuttle back and forth between them, understanding these systems even as they are invisible to one another, simultaneously overlapping and

[65] Du Bois, Harvard notes, p. 10.
[66] Du Bois's own interest in rail travel is surely relevant on its own, but it seems necessary to note that rail cars were common sites of legal and juridical contests to determine the rights of black citizens to access public good, and that this story is likely only a handful of years prior to Plessy v Ferguson (1896)
[67] Ibid., p. 10-11

contradictory. Reality, as A Square had implored readers to recognize, was not threatened by the existence of higher dimensions because it is impossible to find an upper limit of dimension existence, rendering one highest dimension the "True Space." Any figure in n-dimensional space could be imagined as the face of solid in n+1-dimensional space and thus transcendence is not found within any particular dimension but among their infinite totality. The inspiration which A Square acquires through his dimensional voyages may serve as model for how the Fool will develop his identity as a black man, but it is conspicuous that in Du Bois's version, inspiration must be theorized first and implemented second. Theoretical models which attempt to describe natural phenomena are still vital to the processes of theorizing race, but do not occupy a privileged position akin to the Sphere's understanding of "True Space." Just as consistent systems like an Elliptic Geometry, in which parallel lines do converge, provide insights into the possibilities of naturalistic geometric spaces without threatening to overthrow them, the competing systems of racial dynamics and identity can and must coexist in this Du Boisian model. Much like A Square, the transmuted Fool enters strange and unusual spaces, not by virtue of escaping reality as he understood it, but by moving through dimensions of space and time previously invisible but always present.

The rapid pace of scientific discovery at the end of the 19th Century provided Du Bois with an experimental environment in which the possibilities of scientific achievement was readily conflated with sociological change. According to Darryl A. Smith, the end of the 19th Century gives rise to Science Fiction stories about the zenith of humanity through technology, the Singularity or Spike, through "frenetic, unprecedented change in material reality."[68] The fabric of reality, he argues, is not simply organized by concrete matter, but instead is shaped by

[68] Smith, p. 206

the complex interactions of space and time which are beginning to unravel traditional physics and yield a convergence of the dimensional reckonings of the universe.[69] As perspective dominates the thoughts of Cuffy Johnsing, and the wisdom he imparts upon the Fool, the analogy of color and parallax become prominent features of the second to last fragment in the original short stories, which was subsequently revisited and expanded. Johnsing is at his most exuberant and offers apparent guidance while in a rail car "to the Berkshire Hills!" as he and his companion "are sitting and the world is flying past."[70] Without insisting too much on an analogy of an inertial frame, maintaining its own dynamic logic relative to itself and distinct from the world outside of the inertial framework, Du Bois present a vision of the world which is local to Johnsing and at the very most once again indifferent toward the common social framing.

Johnsing exhorts the Fool to recognize to the interactions of sun and rain, of the light and its diffusion through the natural prism of rainfall. Johnsing exclaims that "I love this grimly unconscious old world this conservative old Widower whose son persists in setting yesternight first as it did 6000 years ago and who has never added an extra tint to the rainbow."[71] The cosmology in place is a but murky, perhaps conflating the "son" and the "sun" but most notably the world of natural processes which in the fourth millennium BCE would become increasingly controlled by the technologies of human civilization, beginning in Mesopotamia. The rise of human technologies, however, is clearly insufficient, in Johnsing's view, for establishing the appropriate perspective on the world as it is made up of colors. The towering sun, though it illuminates the world, overpowers all other perspective with its blinding white light, and for this

[69] "This relatively new techno-social consciousness was further determined by new, radical, speculative meditations in the physical sciences, which suggested that sensual reality might well have everything to do with protean geometry of what was beginning to be conceived as a *continuum* of space and time together inseparably structuring the world" (Smith, p. 206).
[70] Du Bois, Harvard Notes, p. 11.
[71] Ibid., p. 11.

reason Johnsing explains the critical balance of light and its mediating prism, and the rejuvenating qualities of the rain and the ensuring rainbow. The rain, Johnsing insists, "does not come down in an angry raging flood…but it comes lovingly in a drizzle and the parched forests drink slowly and thankfully and only Man is discontented."[72] The colors which emerge from the dissipating storm—"grey, pink, red, blue"—are quickly overpowered by "your sun to dazzle and glare."[73] The Fool's personal responsibility for the sun notwithstanding, the analogy seems quite potent, that the unassailable and omnipresent glare of society cannot be erased but instead must be modulated by existing optical apparatuses. The mystified sight of Du Bois's more spiritual writing[74] becomes instead the philosophical product of naturalistic and scientific analogy. The way of seeing the world is not a matter of revelation, but interpretation of nature along the varying axes of perception. Observing the play between a blinding sun and the mediating storm, Johnsing finally posits "see my Fool this is life in a nut-shell."[75] The analogies of color and movement are present in this fragment but will take on an even more overt character as they are revisited in a later rewriting. At the bottom of this final fragment, Du Bois has already begun, perhaps at a later date, to consider the play of work and linguistic translation as part of this system of theory and analogy, and one which will be integrated into the next fragment: the term "unprophetable."

The Rainbow and the Spectrum of Visible Light

[72] Ibid., p. 11.
[73] Ibid., p. 11.
[74] As Edward Blum points out, *The Souls of Black Folk* views race itself as a cosmic sight, a prophetic gift which affords "a new window into cosmic realities" (Blum, p. 97) and the spiritual aspects of the fourth dimension will be discussed further below.
[75] Ibid., p. 11.

The revisions to this fragment, possibly many years after the fact, retain very clear connections, to the Berkshire Hills themselves, the exuberant velocity of rail travel, watching "the world, with its joys and telegraph poles, is flying fast,"[76] and the rain, but the target of Johnsing's scorn as shifted. The happy recounting of their exciting surroundings is interrupted by Johnsing himself, dissatisfied with the mundane and dreary language which fails to convey the sincere truth of nature or his sentiments.[77] Johnsing rants about the dilution of sincerity how many small details of life, from ham sandwiches to moustaches, are compared to the splendor of the natural world, the "Joy and Soul" which emerges from the songs of the birds which is occluded by "unprophetable" attempts to wield language so clumsily. The subjective use of language is rejected by Johnsing not merely because it is inexact, but because it seems willfully ignorant of the great contexts of beauty, joy, and soul. Johnsing vows that he will "describe in unconventional terms and skirt the barn of famous Robin Hood lest perchance I use senseless clatter."[78] The curious rejection of particular positions on the use of language is, again, not an overture toward the correct use according to structures of society, as his examples of misuse are common and acceptable, but those which are ignore of the wide spectrum of experiences, and natural phenomena which cut across cultural boundaries. The "perpetual sunglare" which Johnsing identifies as the answered prayers of "bimanous malcontents" [79] is contrasted with the sunset sky, a similar cosmological phenomenon. Just as the misuse of spiritual language is an affront to Johnsing's philosophical mind, the sun's light as it dazzles but does not illuminate through color rankles at his desire to understand and describe the features of the natural world.

[76] Du Bois, To The Berkshire Hills, p. 1.
[77] "Oh Hell! How stale flat and unprophetable is this our everyday language and how divorced from fact!" (Ibid., p. 1)
[78] Ibid., p. 1
[79] Ibid., p. 2

If this fragment is properly dated to 1896, as the archives presently suggest, this would also correspond with Du Bois's burgeoning sociological research and output at the end of the 19th century.[80] Du Bois's evolving views of the tension between the individual and the collective identity, through statistical aggregation or a national spirit, may be linked to this scientific thought pertaining to the transcendental and the multiplicity perspective. By insisting on meaning as it is constructed through the diffusion of light through many lenses, and according to the shared experience of movement in an inertial frame, Du Bois once again seeks to reconcile the scientific knowledge which emerges from the overlapping but incongruent dimensions. Chandler maintains that "the transcendental is not, and can never be, a position; or, it is *only* position, always partial and hence nonsimple….this is to say, if there is parallax, there can never be only one. And the unresolvability of parallax will have always been a reminder of the only fundamental possibility of imagination, understanding, and hope."[81] Chandler argues further that the parallax, the "practice of thought which does not arrive at a unanimous or common understanding of difference as a simple formation,"[82] is necessarily generative. The multiplicity of identity along lines of race and community, individuals and societies, is irresolvable, but in this lack of simplicity, emerges dramatic possibilities for invention and understanding across and through the dimensions of racial consciousness. Again, in this fragment we see echoes of the original, the "grimly unconscious world" the "widower, who [sic] son persists in sitting with no more grace than six thousand years ago and who has never added a single tint to the rainbow,"[83] but here the nutshell of the universe is given a much clearer name and identity.

[80] For a more detailed history of Du Bois's sociological research in this period, see Chandler's "The Possible Form of an interlocution: W.E.B. Du Bois and Max Weber in Correspondence, 1904-1905" (2006).
[81] Chandler, "The Possible Form of an Interlocution," p. 18.
[82] Ibid., p. 20
[83] Du Bois, To The Berkshire Hills, p. 2

The failure to contribute meaningfully to the rainbow, the charge against the son/sun is given its own specific purpose; the lack of color is itself a way to "celebrate the enthronement of Teutonic Stupidity."[84] The formerly white Fool is not simply educated in the analogy of visible light, and the balance between a dazzling sun and the rain, but has demonstrated for them, the shortcomings of white society and civilization. Johnsing pushes further to say that this is "a nutshell of a universe. (which fool is called philosophy)."[85] While originally Johnsing claimed to offer, in a nutshell, a model for understanding "life," he is now offering a microcosm of the universe and identifying this powerful systemic analogizing as "philosophy."[86] Integrating the national identity of whiteness as "Teutonic," a phrase which will feature prominently in *The Souls of Black Folk*, and a concept of European national identity that is critical to his essay "The Spirit of Modern Europe,"[87] and the transcendental uses of language in measuring the natural world offers yet another insight into the intersections of congruent and incongruent dimensions in Du Bois's social scientific models. Reiland Rabaka argues that "one of the most intriguing issues that Du Bois's discourse on race and racism bring to the fore is the often-overlooked fact that it is possible to reject biology-based concepts of race and any and all forms of racism without denying the socio-historic and politico-economic reality of race and racism."[88] The reality of race, and the white racial framing which, independent of it validity or stupidity, has dictated the course of many black lives, as individuals and as a group, and the historical valuation of ideal are necessary components of any history of race and racism. Even more strikingly is that this is being explained to the Fool who is, in reality but not appearance, white.

[84] Ibid., p. 2.
[85] Ibid., p. 2
[86] Ibid., p. 2
[87] See Ch. 2 for a more detailed treatment of this essay.
[88] Rabaka, p. 25.

The artificial valuation of whiteness and white ideals, though they may be more immediately relevant to the Fool than the plight of black folks, is also invisible to white subjects. The history of racial and transcendental philosophy the Fool ultimately receives includes lessons in understanding his former white self through this excursion into and across the fourth dimension. The process of this change, which is explicitly temporary in "A Vacation Unique," nevertheless requires a dramatic reconfiguration of the abstract and transcendental subjectivity of the Fool, which simulates the continuity of racial thought and identity across time and space.[89] Cuffy Johnsing's injection of "Joy and Soul" in this revision of the fragment seems to direct even more attention to the transcendental experiences of crossing the fourth dimension, and the spiritual discourse which would become a complement to his data-driven sociological texts in the early 20th century. The social science which motivates "A Vacation Unique" as a work of Science Fiction, like much of Du Boisian philosophy and sociology, is tinged with spiritual and metaphysical analogies which also provide a critical understanding of this multiplicity and abstraction, particularly though the sustained analogy of the fourth dimension.

Another famous proponent of fourth dimensional physics and metaphysics, Johann Karl Friedrich Zoellner, was sensitive to the tension between observation and experience, the external and internal sets of data which motivate scientific principles, and how this confusion of the objective and the empirical is difficult to reconcile with philosophy. Zoellner remarked "indeed, if *everything* perceivable is a conception produced in us by *unknown* causes, the distinguished characteristic of the *objective* reality from the *subjective* reality (phantasma) cannot be sought in nature, but in accidental attributes of that process producing conceptions."[90] Zoellner's

[89] Even if utter abandonment of race concepts and race-consciousness were possible, the material and morphological, religious and rancorous, public and private consequences of the last five hundred years of extremely racialized human existence…would remain" (Rabaka, p. 25).
[90] Zoellner, p. 236.

perception of reality as both the product of observation and the medium through which observations are possible, though readily abused by a con artist like Henry Slade, provides a window through which physics and geometry can account for the cognitive framing of its human subjects. Du Boisian sociology similarly notes that simple observation in often indifferent to the reality of lived individual experiences, which risk being flattened and erased as they are inserted into large datasets. Sociological data itself is a product of the society it hopes to study and must be properly located among the framework of, in Du Bois's case, a totalizing system of Race. The ideals which are enshrined in the structures of social power cannot be ignored as they lurk beneath and beyond the material aspects of society, independent of how they are interpreted as supernatural or merely abstract. The uses of non-Euclidean geometry for Zoellner[91] could also be closely linked to the need to reconcile the presentation of supernatural phenomena with empirical scientific inquiry which would demand a material trace to justify such an emphasis on the unknowable and invisible. In the hands of Henry Slade and Johann Zoellner, this became a dangerous apparatus for obscuring a lack of actual observable data to support metaphysical theories. But for Du Bois, the spiritual and religious referents which appear throughout his sociological and Science Fiction writing are not oriented towards justifying mysteries, but instead as a way of properly accounting for the vibrant but numinous sensations of navigating race and society, as the Fool finds in "A Vacation Unique." The diaphanous barrier between the soul and the psyche, common to Zoellner and other psychical researchers, including William

[91] Treitel suggests that Zoellner was working in the context of non-Euclidean geometry "by mathematicians like Gauss, Riemann, Lobatschewski, Bolyai, and Klein" but also the popular physicist Hermann von Helmholtz who "had discerned in the fourth dimension both a weapon with which to attack Kantian idealism and a foundation with which to underpin a rigorous scientific empiricism" (Treitel, pp. 8-9)

James,[92] became in Du Bois's potent scientific imagination, the Veil, the immutable spatial barrier that could only be skirted through the fourth dimension.

As Janet Oppenheim notes of the popular 19th Century intersection of spiritualists and psychical researchers that Victorian spiritualism "came from the men and women who searched for some incontrovertible reassurance of fundamental cosmic order and purpose, especially reassurance that life on earth was not the totality of human existence."[93] She goes on to clarify that while spiritualists were committed to parting the veil of death, and accessing human spirits whose material bodies had already departed, psychical researchers, like William James and possibly Du Bois, were drawn to these possibilities as they might fit into broader scientific frameworks.[94] Though Oppenheim notes that many scientists were then susceptible to chicanery and empirical "evidence" of mysterious phenomena, like Zoellner, the willingness to approach and understand the ephemeral and the transcendental were vital to Du Boisian philosophy. Du Bois's sociological research attempted to map the material conditions of black communities, while his literary text plumbed the qualities of blackness which emerged when its material aspects could be manipulated as in Cuffy Johnsing's mysterious process. The totality of the material condition of blackness must be properly accounted for in order that the psychical remainders could be examined and understood. The exterior surface of race, and the mysteries to be plumbed were not on the other side of a deathly veil, but the veil of the color line as Du Bois would describe it in 1903. Du Bois too sought to expand the understanding of "life on earth" but rather than seeking a spiritual existence beyond time on earth, Du Bois imagines a shocking

[92] James himself was a president of the Society for Psychical Research, see Oppenheim, p. 135 for a more detailed history.
[93] Oppenheim, p. 2
[94] "psychical researchers, on the other hand, trod with greater circumspection and even, in some cases, skepticism" (Oppenheim, p. 3)

display of the psychical toll of race on subjects white and black. The fourth dimension, and the scientific imaginary of "A Vacation Unique," present Du Boisian sociology, and Science Fiction, as coterminous, and one of the many vehicles with which Du Bois seeks to capture the plurality and complexity of blackness, in order that it's present shape can be accounted for and preserved for the future.

Conclusion: "It is much more difficult in theory than actually to say the last goodbye"[1]

As W.E.B. Du Bois saw more and more of the 20th Century, past the height of Modernism and the cataclysmic global conflicts which ravaged the world, and to the independence of African nations, including Ghana where he would spend the last years of his life, the looming possibilities of the future weighed on Du Bois's consciousness and Science Fiction. Appropriately, one of his most unambiguous Science Fiction stories, after 1920's "The Comet," the futuristic "AD 2150" is a tale of a long slumber whisking an unnamed protagonist hundreds of years into the future from Du Bois's vantage point in the 20th Century.[2] While Du Bois's story makes some overtures to the technologies of the future, and the structure of society shaped by technological marvels, the story itself, ultimately, offers little in the way of a satisfying conclusion. Just as Du Bois's models for understanding and conceiving of race were fundamentally organized by the concrete data, the facts of reality which could be collated and aggregated in his sociological research, his visions for the future were similarly reluctant to posit the absolute outside of racial thought and politics. Where Du Bois's visions of the future are willing to imagine the logical extension of contemporary technologies—impossibly swift mass transit and increasingly available aviation, the inevitable growth of urban areas—the specter of Race, even where it has seemingly passed out of the fabric of society, as a resident of 2150 insists, still haunts our protagonist. The possibility of change, no matter how deliberate, tantalizes, but the flow of history cannot be properly conceived from perspective of the

[1] "My last message, June 1957." W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries

[2] The text itself was clearly edited over the course of Du Bois's life and dates have been changed in a way that is rather easy to discern on the manuscript. Originally the story was clearly written in 1924 and imagined a journey roughly 75 years into the future to the auspicious year 2000. Dates and numerical references, however, in the typed version found in Du Bois's papers in Amherst, are scratched out, and replaced with dates setting the journey of 200 years, from 1950 to 2150.

individual, only along the continuous lives of a people. The theoretical apparatuses and the machinery of a nation and people, will endure, and this affords Du Bois and all other persons, a modicum of rest.

While the most popular hypotext for any future story, H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, unquestionably provides some referent for "A.D. 2150," the conspicuous absence of any physical engine for time travel, the cultural continuity of Du Bois's trip a few hundred years forward, rather than hundreds of thousands, may suggest other critical referents. Edward Bellemy's wildly popular *Looking Backward* was not only an aspirational Utopia story about the rise of "Nationalism" and Socialist programs creating an ideal society but was also a crucially public text.[3] Locating future societies in the vein of a Science Fictional continuity with existing social structures, in which the fictive novum observed are recognizable extensions of contemporary society, rather than a scientific romance, accentuates the political valence of utopian thought. Futuristic visions of African American prosperity, similarly entangled in the social and political machinery government,[4] predate Du Bois's first iteration of this story in 1924, and but rather than imagining the dream of prosperity and a future beyond contemporary woes, Du Bois considers the limits of government and technology. As in many imaginative future stories, Du Bois's unnamed, first-person protagonist, awakens surprised to find themself outside of their own time,[5] but the process of awakening is one of profound violence. The ability to transport

[3] "Bellamy Societies" and "Nationalist Societies" in which members would celebrate and discuss Bellamy's utopian ideas became somewhat common and even became relevant to debates over socialism and industrial capitalism in Europe, according to Carl J. Guarneri's "An American Utopia in Its Global Audiences."
[4] E.A. Johnson's *Light Ahead for the Negro* (1904) centers on successful governmental programs, like The Freedman's Bureau, for racial uplift, whereas Sutton Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* imagines a secessionist coup, in which a black nation is formed from the infrastructure of the United States after it has been infiltrated by black radicals.
[5] *Looking Backward* and *Light Ahead for the Negro* both share this conceit.

oneself beyond their own time, in Du Bois's literary imagination,[6] is to circumvent the machinery of the historical universe.

Death, as understood by Du Bois, is a "long, deep and endless sleep."[7] Death and eternal rest, Du Bois proclaims in his final note, are a "privilege," that cherish the work to which he has dedicated his life, and what is unfinished can be "handed onto others for endless days to be finished." Peace is the eternal reward which Du Bois imagines awaits him after a long life of endless quest for justice, and his peaceful rest is insured by the future generations, the many descendant of this struggle who carry on this monumental labor. The rest which Du Bois awaits, however, is dramatically interrupted, the protagonist torn from their eternal slumber[8] and the physical and spiritual pains of reanimation.[9] The future, no matter it's potential for technological marvels—sprawling urban spaces, affordable individual flying machines, and even some sense of racial harmony—is nevertheless inhospitable to the 20th Century traveler. The long arc of history established throughout Du Bois's corpus, whether in the ancient past or the imagined future, maintains its continuity through the endless chain of discrete units of humanity, individuals and groups. Even when confronted with futuristic tolerance of a harmoniously integrated society, seeing a diner which welcomed black patrons the same as white, the protagonist is haunted by their own position in history.[10] While futuristic and utopian literature

[6] For a more careful consideration of how Du Bois may be interpolated with the protagonist of this story, see Nagueyalti Warren's "W.E.B. Du Bois Looks at the Future from Beyond the Grave."
[7] "My last message, June 1957." W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries
[8] "Slowly I awoke from the dead. First came the memory of Peace and Nothingness—the sense of having rested infinitely" (Du Bois, "A.D. 2150," p. 1)
[9] "afterward came the sharp physical pain of reincarnation, the sense of boundless hurt and ill, stabbing and pricking and grinding. Finally as this subsided there poured down the spiritual burden; all the sorry, apprehension and fear of life mingling with some new strength and zest and determination" (Ibid., p. 1)
[10] "I remembered that the matter of colored people getting meals was one of the great problems of my other life so that when I came opposite the really beautiful, small and quiet restaurant I naturally hesitated" (Ibid., p. 3)

may have an optimistic political valence in many cases, including potentially Du Bois's,[11] the treatment of this future, through the lens of the 20th Century presents Du Boisian philosophy of history as segmented by its discrete units. The process of history, though it is continuous and may not have a rigid, linear progression, is nevertheless greater than any individual, and progress itself is difficult to measure from the perspective of an individual rooted in a specific historical moment. Du Boisian theories of progress are similarly limited not because the future cannot yield progress, but because the future does not belong to the dead. Du Bois's own finitude is, again, in his words, the final reward for a lifetime of service, and a necessary element of his own position in the sequence of ancestors and descendants. The future is not simply inaccessible because it is not written, or because the dynamics of spacetime place it outside of our reach, but because the totality of our being, spirit and matter, is also measured in finite time. Finding one's place in history, as in the collective spirit or identity of a people, provides not only data by which individuals can be cataloged as sociological data, but among the many persons who have inhabited the spaces, physical and psychical, of Race, viewing progress according to this continuity.

The Du Boisian protagonist questions onlookers about the state of society, slowly being informed that questions of race, social class, and gender have been gradually eroded in society, without erasing individuality and identity,[12] and asks pointedly if history has ended, "that you have no problems in life."[13] The onlooker is shocked by this suggestion and presents a litany of cultural conflicts looming: melody and noise, impressionists and realists, the family group and

[11] For an account of Du Bois's views on possible futures away from segregation and this story see Derrick P. Alridge's "On the Education of Black Folk: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Paradox of Segregation."
[12] When asking if intermarriage threatens diversity, the protagonist is told "'on the contrary…it conserves it. You see we marry rather thoughtfully these days and think carefully of preserving traits and appearances and tendencies" (Du Bois, "A.D. 2150," p. 6)
[13] Ibid., p. 6

the free spirit, faith and fact, anarchy and socialism, heredity and disease, death and immortality.[14] The pertinence of the final entries seems most dramatic and gives way to the problem which finally drives away the protagonist to sleep for another 200 years, hoping to see progress. Conflict itself, the onlooker says, is the irrepressible feature of humanity, but that the tools for resolving conflict, violence and war, are no longer considered viable and suitable, that conflict simmers without ever reaching any conclusions.[15] Du Bois, a sincere pacifist himself, seems to evince some skepticism, about this view of history, in which violence is not simply inevitable but necessary. Whether or not the revolution looms in this future world, or if revolution was critical to the changes which have already taken place in society, is unclear, but the structure of society without the racial conflicts of the 20th Century are still, seemingly, unsatisfactory. The irreconcilable duality of many human experiences, between models of representation, intrinsic and acquired traits, and the relationship between the group and the individual, are all critical to Du Boisian philosophy. In identifying these dialectics as elemental and part of ongoing sources of conflict, the basic formulation of Du Boisian philosophy, which does not attempt to establish identity in any dominant position, but instead, among these positions, is underscored. The end of an individual life is not the end of any struggle, and is instead a source of ongoing, progressive labor, the shared enterprise of a people, and the necessary social dynamic which drives a people toward progress without a teleological end, and an infinite succession of discrete, finite persons.

Du Boisian philosophy, as it had approached the past, and present, regards the future as the logical extension of known and unknown aspects of black subjectivity, and the work of

[14] Ibid., pp. 6-7
[15] "we're all pacifists and mollycoddles. We can't even kill lions and elephants. We haven't sense enough to settle our problems" (Ibid., p. 7)

creating this future is the ultimate enterprise of any individual, independent of their personal ability to occupy this future. The individual is not erased from this narrative of the future but joins the aggregation of ancestors and precursors which feeds into the machinery of the present, the social projects which will someday become both their own past and future. Exploring the future, in Du Bois's imagination, resists offering any specific guidance, nevertheless provides a profound faith both in the endless struggle and its possible rewards. The theoretical models which unite these different temporal positions, move along yet another axis as the critical representation of black subjectivity is stretched between persons, physical space, dimensions, and now time, and this ultimate unification provides, perhaps, the most transcendental possibility for Du Boisian Science Fiction. What persists, Du Bois argues, is not the individual, or even their legacy, but their recorded position and the potential to establish an outpost on the edges of existence, even the tiniest foothold on which future struggles and conflict may push outward from the boundaries of the known, into the unknown. The imagined future of 2150, does not at all preclude this possibility, and, indeed, the dissatisfied traveler does not despair of the futility of a future search, but simply "died again, but with a certain quiet content."[16] Death, itself, is no barrier to future awakenings, but most importantly, it is a small price to pay to inscribe one's name in history. The traveler is "willing to take another nap of 200 years for the sake of seeing Progress."[17] Utopia, and perhaps Science Fiction more broadly, for Du Bois are not the domain of hope, so much as they are the domain of enduring truth, the model which represents no more or no less than the absolute possibility of Progress.

[16] Ibid., p. 7
[17] Ibid., p. 7

APPENDICES

Appendix A: *The Star of Ethiopia*

The Collected Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst contains roughly eight (8) outlines of varying length and polish which are labeled clearly as programs for *The Star of Ethiopia*, written by Du Bois himself and in one case (an unusual case that will be discussed later) a "continuity" by Charles Burroughs. Burroughs, from the information available appears to have directed the four pageants that were staged in 1913, 1915, 1916, and 1925, in New York, Washington DC, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles, respectively. While the structure of the episodes within the pageant are reasonably consistent from the original program for the 1913 pageant published in *The Crisis* 7.1 to the excerpts in *The Crisis* 12.4 describing the 1916 pageant—The Gift of Iron in ancient Africa, The Gift of Civilization in ancient Egypt, The conflict between Islam and "Fetish" in North Africa, The Valley of Humiliation in slavery, the Battle for Emancipation, and The Vision Everlasting erecting the Tower of Light—the specifics of staging vary between the different outlines in the archives. The number of musical cues, dance cues, and lighting are not perfectly consistent between versions, and many simply use numerical notation for music cues and letter notation for dance cues. The archival version of the pageant cited above (http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b233-i046) seems to correspond closely with a program of music (http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b290-i055) and pageant marches (http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b290-i054). This particular version of the pageant is unusually ecclesiastical, with the other versions in the archives describing Ethiopia carrying the Star of Freedom, this version, describes instead the Star of Faith, and features Christian iconography (a crucifix, the "great cross," and a "Pillar of Light" founded on "THE FEAR OF GOD") not found elsewhere. On the other hand, the excerpts of the 1916 pageant in

Philadelphia from *The Crisis* 12.4 also includes these same Christian features, so I am inclined to believe that even if previous versions of the pageant did not include them, the 1916 version in Philadelphia did. There is also one radically different version of the pageant (http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b233-i083) which, as mentioned above, is the only version to include any credit other than Du Bois himself. This version is much longer than any other, with great descriptive detail and integrated stage directions around the central edifice of The Black Rock, which exists in other versions, but receive much greater attention in this version. Though it is dated to 1914 in the archives, I suspect that it was actually written much later. The great detail of this version includes a procession of soldiers who attend Ethiopia as she marches, flaming sword in hand, to victory over the bondage of her people, maroons, Haitians, Revolutionary soldiers led by Crispus Attucks, men and Palmares, Soldiers of 1812, Civil War soldiers led by Colonel Shaw, and eventually "World War" soldiers led by Charles Young. Charles Young, a close friend of Du Bois, a colleague at Wilberforce, and the composer of the original music in *The Star of Ethiopia*, had aggressively sought assignment in World War I, but was not selected for active duty, likely due to his race and the possibility that this would see him promoted to the rank of brigadier general, outranking many white officers. While it is not impossible that a text written in 1914 would refer to the conflict as "World War" it may have been unusual, and it would certainly be unusually prescient for it to insist that the United States would enter the war and that Young would seek to serve in it. Young's death in 1922 may also have convinced Du Bois (who helped arrange the honor guard for Young's remains and helped his widow, Ada Young, secure her pension (http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b020-i236)) to honor him in this pageant, and no other versions contain this detail about soldiers attending Ethiopia. It may also be useful to note that we have an extant "Prelude to Episode 1"

(http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b233-i092) which does not have a clear connection to any other fragments or outlines in the archives, but which directly addresses the "Men and Women of California" indicating that it corresponds with the 1925 pageant in Los Angeles. This prelude advertises the episodes of the pageant common to all versions of the pageant but specifically describes the "search for Resurrection" in the penultimate episode. These terms do not appear in the other seven versions in the archives, but do appear in this long unusual variation, with the fifth episode being named in this version, and only this version, "The Search for the Star of Freedom". While this is perhaps not definitive proof that this version corresponds with the 1925 production of *The Star of Ethiopia*, it seems likely that this combination of characteristics may call into question the 1914 date and may offer insights into the growth of the pageant between 1916 and 1925. Below I have reproduced a typed transcription of the pageant outline which I believe corresponds to the 1916 pageant in Philadelphia. All parts are typed on the manuscript are typed with the exception of the lighting cues which were written presumably in Du Bois's hand, and all errors are preserved. Then I have reproduced the lists of musical and dance cues which seem to line up well with this outline, according to handwritten stage directions on these documents. Further below are images printed in *The Crisis* depicting the costumes for various characters and the sets of the Egyptian temples described in section 2 of this chapter.

http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b233-i046

A PAGEANT

"THE STAR OF ETHIOPIA"

Written and copyrighted

By

W.E. Burghardt DuBois

SCENE I

THE GIFT OF FAITH

EPISODE I. Blue and White

(1) A storm with thunder, lightning and wind and roar of wild beasts in the darkness. (2) African savages rush in, fleeing the storm. The savages cry out and the Chief prays to the Thunder God in the Black Rock and offers blood sacrifice.

EPISODE II. Crimson and White

(3) The roll of tom-toms is heard and in a crimson light (4) Shango, the Thunder God, rises on the Black Rock and after him (5) Ethiopia and her four Sprites. He hands Ethiopia the Star of Faith. Ethiopia slowly approaches the savages. They lifting earth to the Star discover the welding of iron. The anvils ring (6) they build and weld and start on a great foray to kill and tame the wild beasts leaving Ethiopia alone with the blazing Star. (7) (A)

SCENE II.

THE DREAM OF EGYPT

EPISODE III. White

(8) A beautiful Egyptian temple appears. (9) The Egyptians file out of the temple led by charting Priests. They worship.

EPISODE IV. Crimson and White

(10) The war cry of the savages rings out and they come triumphant (11) They are about to attack the Egyptians when they discover Ethiopia and the Star of Faith. Gradually they fratermize with the Egyptians and exchange gifts. The Priests choose the Chief as Pharoah.

EPISODE V. White and Crimson

(12) Ra-Nesi, the Pharoah, marries a princess of Egypt. They are crowned (13) and the court celebrates (B) (14) Ethiopia delivers the Star of Faith to Shango and he leads all out (15) the Egyptians going last.

SCENE III

THE GLORY OF ETHIOPIA

EPISODE VI. White

(16) As they disappear Ethiopia on the Black Rock stretches forth her hands unto God. The Cross descends, the Holy Family appears and the three kings – Black, white and yellow appear in the foreground. They see the Christ Child and hear the Angels (17) The African Fathers offer Christianity to the world.

EPISODE VII. Blue green red

(18) An Ethiopian temple appears and out of it rides (19) Candace. She embraces Christianity. After her swarm of hosts of the Crescent led by Mansa Musa (20) against them come the hosts of Fetish led by the Queen of Sheba (21) Candace entertains them. (22) (C)

EPISODE VIII. Red blue

(23) Disputes arise and there ensues the great battle of Islam and Fetish. Candace and her followers gather around Ethiopia and the Cross. As both sides are exhausted white Christians appear. They start to succor the Cross but soon yield to the slave traders. Ethiopia defends The Cross with a sword of flame but the exhausted Candace is chained and enslaved. The Christians and Mohammedans chain and enslave all the people. At last the traders set fire to the Black Rock. Ethiopia burns lifting the Cross to God and the Rock becomes her tomb. There is darkness.

(Intermission of ten minutes)

White – All colors and White

SCENE IV.

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION

EPISODE IX. Orange and White

(24) In the gloom groans and the rattle of chains are heard. Ghosts dance (D) followed by the Dance of the Ocean (25) (E) Then the light increases and the slaves enter (26) Finally the gay dance of the cotton pickers brings the full light. (27) (F) The Black Rock remains with the figure of Ethiopia prone upon it.

EPISODE X. White and Red

(28) As the cotton pickers dance Osceola's Seminoles enter (29) (G) The Abolitionists gather and talk and appeal in vain until John Brown lights a flaming torch and throws it toward the Black Rock. Hefalls dead, but Angels arise and sing Ethiopia to life (30) She slowly rises on the

Rock winged with the Cross in one hand, a flaming sword in the other and twelve apostles of ~~the~~ Negro Christianity around her. (31)

EPISODE XI. Red and White

The great march of Ethiopia. She waves her sword (32) The roll of tom-toms is heard and the Furies of Insurrection rush in led by Nat Turner. She waves her sword again and to the march of "Walk Together Children" (33) Touissaint and the Haytians march in. Ethiopia waves her sword a third time and to the tune of "Marching Though Georgia" the soldiers and the Civil war march in (34) The tune of John Brown's Body" is heard and his white soul marches by last, (35) followed by the apostles and Ethiopia.

SCENE V.

THE VISION EVERLASTING

EPISODE XII. White blue White

(36) The Freedmen enter jubilant (37) They go about varied occupations and distractions (E) The ghosts of slavery interfere and oppress. Ethiopia and the apostles approach. The ghosts raise the lynching gibbet. The ghosts slowly yield as Ethiopia proceeds. She changes the gibbet to a crucifix (38) The ghosts rush out and the apostles lay the founding stone of the Pillar of Light: THE FEAR OF GOD, and place the Cross on high.

EPISODE XIII. White and all colors

(39) Ethiopia calls the five Rivers./(J) The yellow Mississippi leads for the Freedmen (40) They plan the Tower of Light and lay the stone KNOWLEDGE. The Congo leads in the Kushites and they lay the stone LABOR (41) The Nile leads the Egyptians and they lay the stone SCIENCE (42) The Niger leads the Mohammedans and they lay the stone JUSTICE (43) The blue Orinoko

leads the marching maidens who bring ART (K) (44) The star-bearing children appear with the capstone LOVE (L) (45) which touches the great Cross. Above all appears the Star of Faith. A great song arises and all march out (46)

MUSIC OF THE PAGEANT

http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b290-i055)

Scene I. EPISODE I.

1. Trumpets

2. Young's Prelude Primitive (Band)

EPISODE II.

3. (Trumpets) – Tom-toms

4. Take Nabanje (Band)

5. Darkness Descends (Band)

6. Welding Music (Band)

7. Chant of Savages (Band and Voices)

Sc. II. EPISODE III.

8. Trumpets

9. Aida March (Band)

EPISODE IV.

10. Trumpets

11. Bamboula (Band)

EPISODE V.

12. Trumpets

13. Young's Egyptian Chant (Band and Voices)

13. Pov Piti Lolotte (Band)

15. Aida March (Band)

Sc. III. EPISODE VI.

16. Trumpets

17. Joy to the World (Voices)

EPISODE VII.

18. Trumpets

19. Bamboula (Band)

20. The Hadan (Voices)

21. Take Nabanje (Band)

22. Dance (Band)

EPISODE VIII.

23. Trumpets

Sc. IV EPISODE IX.

24. By the Waters of Babylon (Voices)

25. Dance (Band)

26. Nobody Knows (Voices)

27. M’sieu Bainjo (Band and Voices)

EPISODE X.

28. Trumpets

29. Red Shawl; Big Chief (Band)

30. Onaway (Voices)

31. Young’s Darkness Descends (Bands)

EPISODE XI.

32. Trumpets and Tom-toms

33. Walk Together (Band and Voices)

34. Marching Through Georgia (Band)

35. John Brown’s Body (Band and Voices)

Sc. V EPISODE XII.

36. Trumpets

37. Swing Along (Voices)

38. Were You There (Voices)

EPISODE XIII.

39. Trumpets

40. O Southland (Band and Voices)

41. Bamboula (Band)

42. Aida March (Band)

43. Hadan (Voices)

44. Coleridge Taylor's Imaginary Ballet (Band)

45. Dance of Priestesses (Aida) – (Band)

46. Hallelujah Chorus (Voices)

EPISODE II.

7 March of 100 Kushites (A)

EPISODE V.

14 Celebrations of Egyptian court maidens (B)

EPISODE VII.

22 Celebration before Candace (C) (12)

EPISODE IX.

24 March of the Ghosts and Death and Pain (D) (Motherless Child)

25 Solo Salute to the Ocean (E)

27 Play of the Cotton Pickers (F)

EPISODE X.

29 War March of the Indians (G)

EPISODE XII

Minuet of Freedmen (H)

EPISODE XIII

39 ½ March of the Rivers (J) Rocks and Mountains

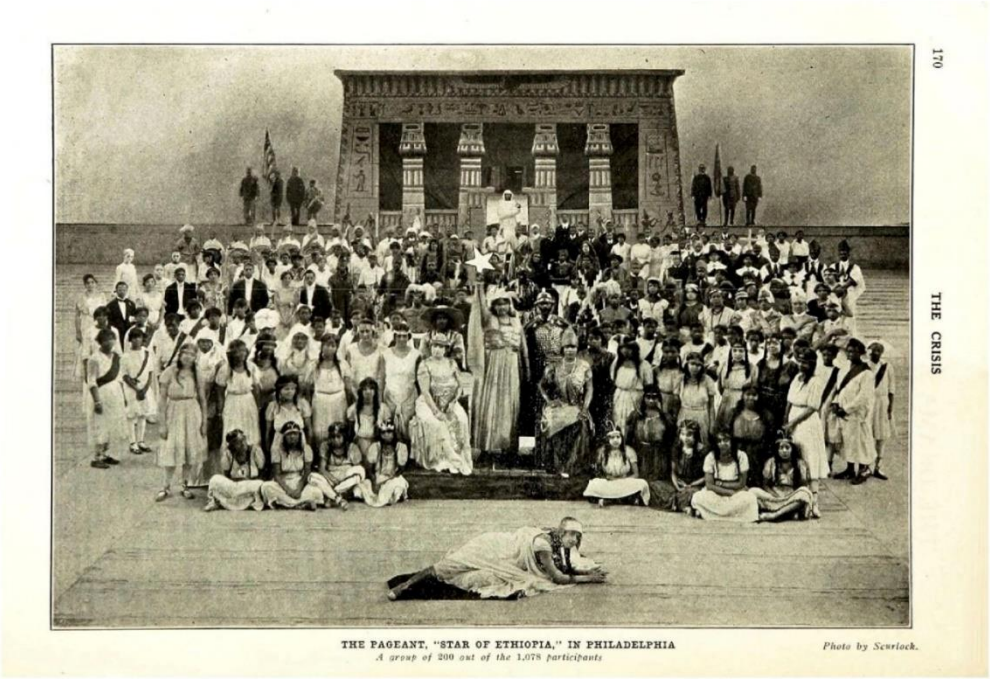
44 March of the Maidens of Art (K)

45 March of the Children (L)

Figure 1: Photograph: The Queen of Sheba, Ethiopia, and Candace of Meroe

W. E. B. Du Bois, 'The Star of Ethiopia', *The Crisis*, 11, 1915, pp. 90-94 (90). The Modernist Journals Project (searchable database). Brown and Tulsa Universities, ongoing. http://modjourn.org

Figure 2: Photograph: pageant performers posed in front of Egyptian temple



W. E. B. Du Bois, 'The Drama among Black Folk', *The Crisis*, 12, 1916, pp. 169-73 (170). The Modernist Journals Project (searchable database). Brown and Tulsa Universities, ongoing. http://modjourn.org

Figure 3: Photograph: pageant leads posed in front of Egyptian temple

W. E. B. Du Bois, 'The Drama among Black Folk', *The Crisis*, 12, 1916, pp. 169-73 (172). The Modernist Journals Project (searchable database). Brown and Tulsa Universities, ongoing. http://modjourn.org

Appendix B: "A Vacation Unique"

As the body of this chapter hopefully makes clear, the original fragments, found within the archives at Amherst, are reasonably well connected, both by their proximity to one another and the flow of text across these pages. The textual similarities between the fragments as they appear in "Harvard Notes, 1889" and the pages labeled "To The Berkshire Hills, 1896," I believe, speak largely for themselves, with shared words, phrases, and concepts. Similarly, the date of 1896 seems highly plausible as this document resembles others from Du Bois's papers that can be more conclusively connected to his work at Wilberforce. I have also included in this appendix my own transcriptions of these fragments, which are written in Du Bois's hand, and distinctive style of writing. I have maintained as many original errors and specific characters as possible in order that these transcripts maintain the closest fidelity to the original documents. Words that are smudged or otherwise difficult to read, appear in red in my transcriptions and may benefit from closer textual criticism. I have maintained the pagination of the fragments in "Harvard Notes, 1889" for the sake of convenience in locating specific fragments in that digitally archived document and they appear in parentheses where there are page breaks for the original fragments. The fragment founds in "Berkshire Hills, 1896," is, unfortunately, more tantalizing, but less certain in its connection to other documents in the archives. Each of the two pages is numbered at the top of each page and are clearly labeled "9" and "10." Searching the digital archives for pages similarly numbered or otherwise similar in appearance or content to those short story fragments, has not yielded nay particularly convincing results so far, but may indicate the existence of even further fragments, in some archives somewhere.

“A Vacation Unique”

(4) Now here I have a very choice article, something unique and entirely new; warranted not to cloy, bracing refreshing, healthy, safe, remunerative and dangerous—you are interested? Of course you are. For particulars you may call at my room at any time barring study hours when you presumably least engaged, hm! My card

Cuffy Johnsing

999 Holworthy

Good day I must leave you here.—ah! To get a little fresh air on the common. There now lies Epicurus flat on his back with a “good hit! Steal your second! Foul out” and a pipe; and here’s your John Stuart Mill with a Hurry! Babylon’s falling sic vita, the Night is coming, O I Die Horatio—what luffer-heads. The Crispus Attucks monument—you think then, sir the commemoration inappropriate? My dear fellow you are just

(7) years behind the time—at which date according to J. Homer, DD. LLD., the Greeks erected a young pile to Mr. Achilles in commemoration of a certain brawl,--how tall was Alexander Pa? Now I’m constitutionally opposed to parks, commons, and the like. They are nuisances—like the rest of the world—but I must hasten home to my fool—the car is going and I go
++

This then is the plan; after a painless operation performed by one of my friends you will appear as a Negro, a full-fledged darky; we will then set out through the land of the Free and Home of the Brave as two readers giving 40 or 50 entertainments during the vacation; now mark you the advantages; by becoming a Nigger you step into a new and, to most people, entirely unknown region of the

(8) universe—you break the bounds of humanity and become a—er—Colored man. Again you will not only be a Negro but a Negro in an unthought of an astoundingly incongruous role. Having in this manner reached an entirely unique and strange position you will be in position to solve in a measure the problems of Introspection and Fourth Dimension, for you will have an opportunity of beholding yourself in your seaside and mountain visit and beholding too parts of character invisible to the general run of men, and your view of mankind in general will have a striking resemblance to the view which Mr. Field of Flatland had of Mr. Dash’s of Lineland intestines. I might mention many other striking advantage

(9) in this vacation-tide lark—but I’ll not. I will merely say that I have chosen you for the trip because in most particulars you fill the bill surprisingly well—you are old enough, you are tall enough, you are fool enough—I am sorry you have a distinguished ancestry—other things being equal I prefer a man with no ancestry at all not even a father—I should have been please to make the acquaintance of Adam.++++++++++++++++++++
you are now sir a negro and let me say my friend did a remarkably good job—you Anglo-Saxon lips, of the Sir Walter Scott pretty red pouting variety have gained thickness with color, you hair with becoming modesty has slunk back, cringing, ashamed either of its owner or its owner’s and your countenance which before the

(10) application of lampblack was open and winning has suddenly become to the last degree repulsive. You don't feel? Pish! Hold your tongue—your feelings have played but small part in history. Now sir this veneer will last just three months at which date without further ado like the one-pors shivy it will all drop off just in time for you to register, "Harvard '90" Sept 26, 1889. Presto! Away not to the street, to the world, to the world that gaping—gapes.
++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

You have your letters of recommendation? Ah that's good boy know you my fool your ordinary jackass may go through the world gratis by your jackass with the fourth dimension of color why bless you—its "What is it? Why so? I'm afraid I can't keep you overnight or

(11) give you a peacable meal of victuals or refrain from telling how much I did for your People!
++
To the Berkshire Hills! We are sitting and the world is flying past O I love this grimly unconscious old world this conservative old Widower whose son persists in setting yesternight first as it did 6000 years ago and who has never added an extra tint to the rainbow. It is a beautiful day! The does not come down in an angry raging flood and angry with its task it sought to choke the Earth—but it comes lovingly in a drizzle and the parched forests drink slowly and thankfully and only Man is discontented—see now in the west it is breaking away—grey, pink, red, blue—psh! Now comes your sun to dazzle and glare—see my Fool this is life in a nut-shell
++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

(12)Good afternoon: I am one of two students at Harvard College (Now you needn't start and look surprised and say with your eyebrows "what Niggers in Harvard!) who are giving a series of readings this summer to help pay our expenses next year

UNPROPHETABLE

“To The Berkshire Hills”

(1) To the Berkshire Hills. I am sitting on plush and the world with its joys and telegraph poles is flying fast. The day is—O Hell! How stale flat and unprophetable is this our everyday language and how divorced from fact! Wherefore should I tell you, fool, that on that on this morn the thrush did lack kin in the sun and pour forth his Joy and Soul, when you never say a thmuch and know and in faith I never did myself—why should I call yon hillock beautiful when every school girls calls her ham sandwich the same; has forsooth a mustache the same loveliness as a sunset sky. Then hencefore I will describe in unconventional terms and skirt the barn of famous Robin Hood lest perchance I use senseless clatter. It is a watery day and for the particles suspended in air I can scarce see the other railroad track. The ground is thirsty

(2) and the water does not come down in thundering clots masses but slowly and carefully to let it drink its fill: those days of love—days of plenty rest and revere when nature does not laugh but smiles and every thing is contented except the fat man in front, the nervous woman on the other side the aisle and the whole world of bimanous malcontents who twist and grunt and feel wet and pray for perpetual sunglare—there it comes in the west—grey pink red, blue,--O I love this grimly unconscious old world; the old Whig widower, who son persist in sitting tonight with no more grace than six thousand years ago and who has never even added a single tint to the rainbow to celebrate the enthronement of Teutonic Stupidity. My fool, this is a nutshell of a universe. (which fool is called philosophy)
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