

# W.E.B. Du Bois

*Edited by*  
**Reiland Rabaka**



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**W.E.B. Du Bois**

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# W.E.B. Du Bois

*Edited by*

Reiland Rabaka

*University of Colorado at Boulder, USA*

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# Series Preface

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Twenty years ago the so-called canon wars raged throughout the social sciences in Europe and the anglophone sphere. The argument was then heard in all quarters that deconstruction, globalization, post-colonialism, computerization, queer theory, and other similar forces had rendered 19th century social theory impotent and irrelevant to the analysis of the new cultural environment. Whereas between 1920 and about 1985, serious engagement with Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, and other members of the classical pantheon were required components of theorizing, the backlash against this tradition threatened to relegate this astonishing body of scholarship to a poorly imagined, unnecessary past. Recognizing that this storm is passing, and that younger scholars are rediscovering just how pertinent to contemporary issues the classics have remained, this new series will put at their disposal a set of volumes which aim to provide handy, expert guidance in the search for useable materials from the classical tradition. Volumes treating Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Gilmore, Du Bois, Spencer, Simmel, and Parsons will appear first, to be followed by others covering theorists of similar rank. Each volume will be prepared by a recognized authority, whose task is to locate the best and most useful articles from the scholarly journal literature in English, assemble them in a meaningful pattern which best illuminates a given theorist's lasting importance, and write an introduction by means of which novices, in particular, can confidently discover for themselves why 'the classics' remain vital and necessary to their work. Whereas multi-volume sets with similar intentions appeared some time ago, this series has the virtue of being less cumbersome and more up-to-date, featuring a propitious mix of classic statements in the secondary literature, as well as the newest contributions to the ongoing reappropriation of 'the canon'. Our goal is to provide serious scholars, from novice to senior, with enough material to become conversant with a classic theorist's work, all within the covers of a single volume.

ALAN SICA and DAVID CHALCRAFT  
*Series Editors*

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# Introduction

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## ON DU BOIS'S EPISTEMIC INNOVATIONS AND SOCIOLOGY'S INTELLECTUAL AMNESIA

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (pronounced 'Due-Boyss') was born five years after the Emancipation Proclamation on 23 February 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, a tiny mill town in the Berkshire Mountains. The few African Americans in the area worked as domestics in homes or servants at summer resorts, while the Irish, German and Czech Catholics worked in the town's factories. Du Bois was raised solely by his mother, as his delinquent father went absent before his toddling son turned two. His mother was a domestic and washerwoman, and supported her precocious son through other odd jobs and outright charity from the well-to-do white town residents. Du Bois's father's absence greatly affected him, though perhaps not as much as his mother's paralytic stroke, which his biographer David Levering Lewis (1993, p. 29) reports, 'impaired her left leg or arm, or both'. Du Bois grew up very poor and, consequently, developed a consciousness of his lower class status before he was aware of his race and racism, even though he was the only black child in his all-white school. It was not long, however, before race and racism entered his life, and from his first unforgettable and life-altering experience of anti-black racism he defiantly decided to 'prove to the world that Negroes were just like other people' (Du Bois, 1972c, p. 5; see also Marable, 1986, pp. 5–8; Lewis, 1993, pp. 32–34).

Where Du Bois was excited and excelled in the classroom, he and his mother struggled financially to make ends meet. School was the one place he did not feel the burden and bondage of poverty, and his grades reflected his sense of freedom. In fact, his high school principal, Frank Alvin Hosmer, thought enough of Du Bois's intellectual aptitude to ask one of the wealthy women of Great Barrington to buy the boy's much-needed textbooks. Torn between quitting school and getting a steady job to support himself and his ailing mother, who 'frequently ... suffered from [bouts of] severe depression', according to Manning Marable (1986, p. 3), Du Bois's mother insisted that he get his education, and the townsfolk found odd jobs for the gifted lad that did not conflict with his schoolwork. Upon graduating from high school Du Bois had his heart set on going to Harvard, but his high school did not meet Harvard's academic standards and he, quite frankly, did not have the money to go. The townsfolk, however, decided that he should go to college, and Fisk University, an all-black Congregational institution in Nashville, Tennessee, was deemed more appropriate for a promising young Negro of Du Bois's calibre and comportment.

At Fisk Du Bois discovered the rich diversity of African American culture and he enthusiastically studied Greek, Latin, German, classical literature, philosophy, ethics, chemistry and physics, earning a bachelor's degree in 1888. Still determined to go to Harvard, Du Bois audaciously applied and was accepted as a scholarship student, but Harvard would not accept him as a graduate student because Fisk's curriculum did not meet their entrance requirements. He, therefore, undauntedly entered Harvard as a junior majoring in philosophy. Where Harvard

was academically welcoming to Du Bois, socially it was as racially segregated as the rest of the United States at the time. In his autobiographical writings he reiterated how he was barred from white students' cliques and clubs at Harvard, revealingly writing: 'I was in Harvard, but not of it' (Du Bois, 1968a, p. 136; see also Du Bois, 1960d). Ironically, where he was rejected by Harvard's students he was warmly embraced by many of its professors, several of whom are acknowledged intellectual luminaries, such as, William James, Josiah Royce, George Santayana and Frank Taussig (Rampersad, 1990, pp. 19–47; Lewis, 1993, pp. 85–103). Three months before he earned his second bachelor's degree – *cum laude*, in philosophy – Du Bois petitioned the Harvard Academic Council for scholarship assistance to pursue a PhD in social science. Even at this early age he was already clear on how he wanted to use his PhD in 'the field of *social science* under *political science*', he unapologetically announced, 'with a view to the ultimate application of its principles to the social and economic advancement of the Negro people' (Du Bois, 1997b, p. 7, emphasis in original; see also Broderick, 1959, 1974; Rudwick, 1960a, 1968; Du Bois, 1968a, pp. 148–50; J.B. Moore, 1981; Byerman, 1994).

For his graduate studies Du Bois switched from philosophy to history on the advice of his mentor William James, who candidly cautioned the youth, saying (according to Du Bois), 'there is not much chance for anyone earning a living as a philosopher', let alone a Negro at the end of the nineteenth century. The die was cast, and Du Bois (1968a) completed his master's degree in 1892 under the tutelage of Albert Bushnell Hart, 'studying in history and political science and what would have been sociology if Harvard [as] yet recognized such a field' (p. 149). After earning his master's degree he 'had already made up [his] mind that what was needed was further training in Europe. The German universities were at the top of their reputation', he contended, and '[a]ny American scholar who wanted preferment went to Germany for study' (p. 150). And, to Germany the intellectually indefatigable Du Bois went, studying at the Friedrich-Wilhelm III Universität in Berlin, now known as the University of Berlin, with highly acclaimed social historians and political economists Gustav von Schmoller, Heinrich von Treitschke and Adolf Wagner, among others. One of Friedrich-Wilhelm III Universität's most illustrious graduates, a young fellow by the name of Max Weber, even received a temporary lectureship at his alma mater during Du Bois's second year at the university, before he went on to accept an appointment as a professor of economics at Freiburg University in 1894. Although Du Bois did not officially take any classes with Weber, as is often incorrectly reported, he was extremely impressed with the young German's universalist-leaning lectures (p. 162). Later the two developed a remarkable mutual respect for each other's work, which resulted in Du Bois's invitation to Weber to participate in the 1904 Atlanta University conference on crime, and Weber's invitation to Du Bois to publish an essay on race in the United States in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* (Du Bois, 1906c, 2006; see also Chandler, 2006, 2007). Weber also had *The Souls of Black Folk* translated into German (Broderick, 1958a, 1958b, 1974; Barkin, 1998, 2000; Gilroy, 1993; Edwards, 2001; Orizu, 2001).

Although he completed all of the course requirements and his doctoral dissertation, Du Bois was denied a PhD from Friedrich-Wilhelm III Universität because he ran out of scholarship money, which would have enabled him to stay in Berlin for the additional academic-year needed before a doctoral student could defend their dissertation. In other words, his deeply desired dream of earning a PhD in 'the field of *social science*' from one of the pre-eminent European universities was, unfortunately, dashed only on account of his lack of scholarship

funds and a residency requirement. Dejected but not hopelessly disheartened, Du Bois resolutely returned to Harvard and took his PhD in history in 1895 with a dissertation entitled ‘The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870’, which synthesized his graduate studies in history, sociology and political economy to such an unprecedented and sophisticated extent that it was published as the first volume of the Harvard Historical Monograph Series in 1896. However, even though Du Bois was armed to the teeth with degrees from the most prestigious institutions of his epoch, he encountered great difficulty in landing a job. In his autobiography he wryly wrote, ‘I just got down on my knees and begged for work, anything and anywhere. I began a systematic mail campaign.’ However, ‘I wrote to no white institution’, he exclaimed, perhaps recollecting William James’s advice, ‘I knew there were no openings there’ (p. 184).

Eventually Du Bois was granted a position as a professor of classics, teaching Latin, Greek, German and English, at Wilberforce University, an African Methodist Episcopal institution. He unsuccessfully attempted to add sociology to the curriculum in 1894, and left the school in frustration for the University of Pennsylvania in 1896, where he was hired as an ‘Assistant Instructor’ to research and write a study on the African Americans of Philadelphia. At the University of Pennsylvania, however, he was still not free from frustration, writing in his autobiography, ‘I ignored my pitiful stipend’ and ‘it goes without saying that I did no instructing save once to pilot a pack of idiots through the Negro slums’ (Du Bois, 1968a, p. 197). His Philadelphia study, *The Philadelphia Negro*, although long-overlooked in the history of sociology, was upon its publication in 1899 an unprecedented and innovative work in urban sociology, industrial sociology, historical sociology, sociology of race and sociology of culture (Bulmer, 1991; Bay, 1998; Katz and Sugrue, 1998; Zuberi, 1998; Saint-Arnaud, 2009). The eminent African American sociologist Elijah Anderson has recently asserted in his introduction to a reprint edition of *The Philadelphia Negro*: ‘W.E.B. Du Bois is a founding father of American sociology, but, unfortunately, neither this masterpiece nor much of Du Bois’s other work has been given proper recognition; in fact, it is possible to advance through a graduate programme in sociology in this country without ever hearing about Du Bois’ (Du Bois, 1996b, p. xiv; see also E. Wright, 2002c; Zuckerman, 2004; Morris, 2007). Anderson’s weighted words here help to highlight why the book you now hold in your hands, perhaps, has an added importance. To put it plainly, what this volume offers that is wholly innovative and distinctive is that it brings the watershed work of classical and contemporary, male and female, black and white, national and international sociologists and social theorists together with the express intent of creating critical inventories and thoroughly interrogating *what has been included* and *what has been excluded* when and where we come to W.E.B. Du Bois’s contributions to the discipline of sociology.

### **(Mono)Disciplinary Treason and Transdisciplinary Allegiance: On Disciplinary Decadence and the Dilemma(s) of Du Bois’s Sociological Discourse**

There has long been a growing discussion concerning the gross intellectual injustice of Du Bois’s ‘sociological negation’, especially with respect to the development and professionalization of sociology in the United States (Green and Driver, Chapter 1; see also Green, 1973; Dennis, 1975; Stewart-Cain, 2003). However, there is only so long Du Bois scholars, sociologically oriented or otherwise, can continue to hem and haw about the ways in which he has been

ignored, excluded and erased by the ‘white sociological fraternity’ – meaning, according to Dan Green and Edwin Driver (Chapter 1, p. 15), ‘white sociologists only’. I, too, bemoan and sing a sorrow song, a bitter blues about Du Bois’s fate at the hands of the ‘white sociological fraternity’, but there is another part of me, a part that humbly acknowledges him as an intellectual ancestor, which knows that he would want contemporary Du Bois scholars, especially critical sociologists, to move beyond their meditations on his sociological negation and make concrete contributions, not simply to sociology but to the radical democratic transformation of our respective societies and the wider world. This volume then, in addition, serves as a kind of caveat; one which simultaneously warns against *epistemic apartheid* and also excessive deconstructive criticism without reconstructive correctives or, at the least, the offering of reconstructive alternatives.

In essence, what we have here is a dialectical deconstruction and reconstruction of sociology; in other words, a critical sociology of sociology, if you will. However, and not wanting to appear too intellectually audacious, in the critical spirit of W.E.B. Du Bois my conscience compels me to admit honestly and openly that this volume is also intended as a critique of what has come to be called ‘Du Bois studies.’ Where one is wont to rail against Du Bois’s sociological negation in the history of sociology, it should also be borne in mind that he was, in fact, a *transdisciplinary critical social theorist*, one whose work is not easily situated in the nice and neat conceptions and categories of classical or contemporary sociology, or any other discipline, to strike while the iron is hot (Rabaka, 2007, 2008, 2009, forthcoming).

What has long bothered me about Du Bois studies, and one of the main reasons I humbly accepted the invitation to edit this book, is because of the longstanding tendency to downplay and diminish Du Bois’s contributions to, not simply sociology but, as quiet as it is kept, to Africana Studies, or the dimwitted disposition that seems to sever always and everywhere Du Bois from Africana Studies or, worst of all, the inclination to render Africana Studies utterly invisible or altogether non-existent (Anderson, 1990; Whitten and Torres, 1998; Aldridge and Young, 2000; Bobo and Michel, 2000; Marable, 2000, 2005; Johnson and Lyne, 2002; Bobo *et al.*, 2004; Kopano and Williams, 2004; Conyers, 2005; Johnson and Henderson, 2005; Asante and Karenga, 2006; Gordon and Gordon, 2006a, 2006b; Rooks, 2006; Aldridge and James, 2007; Anderson and Stewart, 2007; Hudson-Weems, 2007; Norment, 2007a, 2007b; Rojas, 2007). Here I am saying as simply as I possibly can that Du Bois has been left in an intellectual vacuum because the transdisciplinary intellectual legacy he bequeathed does not fit into the monodisciplinary motifs of much of contemporary academic discourse. What if when one performs an intellectual archaeology of the development of ‘disciplines’ and the ‘academy’, one comes to the uncomfortable conclusion that the contemporary intense emphasis on ‘multidisciplinarity’ or ‘interdisciplinarity’ is not new at all, but was quite common in the intellectual milieu of bygone epochs? Think for a moment. Think about the ways in which a wide range of academic disciplines have long had critical relationships with, to raise the most obvious example, Karl Marx’s intellectual and political legacy (Shaw, 1975; Nelson and Grossberg, 1988; Carver, 1991; Kitching, 1994; Callari *et al.*, 1995; Magnus and Cullenberg, 1995; Gamble *et al.*, 1999; Robinson, 2000, 2001; Bartolovich and Lazarus, 2002; Mills, 2003).

Most modern – and even some so-called ‘postmodern’ – academics are willing to concede Marx’s seminal contributions to the discourse and development of disciplines as varied as sociology, philosophy, history, political science and economics, why then is my assertion of

Du Bois's transdisciplinary contributions so difficult to conceive, let alone concede? Is this symptomatic of a kind of treason against Du Bois's true transdisciplinarity in favour of a faux allegiance to his supposed monodisciplinary, sociologically negated legacy? Basically, the flat-footed line of logic is as follows: 'Either Du Bois is a sociologist *or* he is an historian, but he cannot be *both* a sociologist *and* an historian. He cannot contribute to both sociology and history.' What is more, it would seem to me that a one-dimensional, monodisciplinary approach to a multidimensional, transdisciplinary critical social theorist such as Du Bois smacks of the very diabolical double-dealing and double-standard that ultimately led him to leave academic sociology – only after, as will be witnessed throughout this volume, a decade and a half of intellectual history-making at Wilberforce University, the University of Pennsylvania and Atlanta University – for Civil Rights activism and Pan-Africanism, among other social causes. Du Bois (1968b, pp. 67–68) detailed the reasons for his departure from academic sociology in *Dusk of Dawn*, sternly stating:

Two considerations thereafter broke in upon my work and eventually disrupted it: first, one could not be a calm, cool, and detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered and starved; and, secondly, there was no such definite demand for scientific work of the sort that I was doing, as I had confidently assumed would be easily forthcoming. I 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 the effort. This was, of course, but a young man's idealism, not by any means false, but also never universally true. (see also Du Bois, 1952, 1960a, 1968a, 1972c, 1978, 2004)

Could it be the case that Du Bois should more properly be dialectically and simultaneously considered an integral part of the inauguration of sociology *and* an innovative contributor to disciplines as diverse as, say, Africana Studies (Stewart, 1984; Rampersad, 1996; Gomez, 2004; Rabaka, 2007, 2008, 2009), anthropology (Lange, 1983; Harrison and Nonini, 1992; Bay, 1998; Liss, 1998; Daniels, 2000; Farland, 2006; Carbonella and Kasmir, 2008), history (Guzman, 1961; Walden, 1963; Wesley, 1965; Horne, 1986; Marable, 1986; Meier and Rudwick, 1986; Lewis, 1993, 2000; Blight, 1994; Gregg, 1998), philosophy (Holmes, 1970; R.C. Williams, 1983; Gooding-Williams, 1987, 1996, 2009; West, 1989, 1996; Outlaw, 1992, 1996), political science (Cain, 1993; Reed, 1997; Barkin, 2000; Balfour, 2003; Olson, 2004, 2005; Du Bois, 2005b), economics (DeMarco, 1974; Henderson, 1974, 1976; Boston, 1991; Burbridge, 1999), religion (Du Bois, 2000b; Savage, 2000; Forney, 2002; Kahn, 2004, 2009; J. Young, 2004; Blum, 2007; B.L. Johnson, 2008) and education (Sumpter, 1973, 2000; Burks, 1997; Du Bois, 2002; Rabaka, 2003a; R.W. Williams, 2003; Alridge, 2008)? What if concrete examples of Du Bois's seminal contributions to each of the aforementioned fields or disciplines have long been documented and critically debated, but – and here's the real rub – utterly unbeknownst to the large majority of sociologists because they have historically negated or dismissed Du Bois and his discourse, sociological or otherwise? Admittedly, we trod here on treacherous critical theoretical terrain, because to concede Du Bois's transdisciplinary contributions would also mean that we are willing to acknowledge that he was not simply a classical sociologist and that his thought and texts should be rightfully considered alongside the work of Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Vilfred Pareto, Georg Simmel, George Herbert Mead, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer and Thorstein Veblen, among others, but, even more, Du Bois's thought and texts, similar to several of the aforementioned, goes above and beyond or, rather,

*transgresses, transcends and transverses* academic disciplines or specific fields of scholarly inquiry – hence, my characterization of Du Bois as a *transdisciplinary critical social theorist*. The series of critical questions and answers emphasized above points us to the prickly practice of what the critically acclaimed Caribbean American philosopher Lewis Gordon (2006a) has correctly called ‘disciplinary decadence’. In his own words:

*Disciplinary decadence* is the ontologizing or reification of a discipline. In such an attitude, we treat our discipline as though it was never born and has always existed and will never change or, in some cases, die. More than immortal, it is eternal. Yet as something that came into being, it lives, in such an attitude, as a monstrosity, as an instance of a human creation that can never die. Such a perspective brings with it a special fallacy. Its assertion as absolute eventually leads to no room for other disciplinary perspectives, the result of which is the rejection of them for not being one’s own. Thus, if one’s discipline has foreclosed the question of its scope, all that is left for it is a form of ‘applied’ work. Such work militates against thinking. (pp. 4–5, emphasis in original; see also Gordon, 2006b, 2006c)

What is in question here are the borders and boundaries of disciplinary knowledge and the ways in which many, if not most, academicians have repeatedly and unrepentantly rejected *discipline-transcending* or, rather, *transdisciplinary knowledge* – that is, knowledge which *transgresses, transcends and transverses* disciplines or specific fields of scholarly inquiry. This is, also, I should add, symptomatic of what we could call *epistemic closure*, where one is only open to, or seriously engages knowledge emanating from their respective discipline or field and, in the most closed-minded and claustrophobic manner, xenophobically considers knowledge from ‘outside’ of their discipline or field pure folly, ‘foreign’ foolishness, as it were (see Rabaka, 2009, 2010, forthcoming). Continuing his discourse on disciplinary decadence, Gordon (2006a, p. 33) importantly concludes:

Disciplinary decadence, as we have seen, is the process of critical decay within a field or discipline. In such instances, the proponent ontologizes his or her discipline far beyond its scope. Thus, a decadent scientist criticizes the humanities for not being scientific; a decadent literary scholar criticizes scientists and social scientists for not being literary or textual; a decadent social scientist sins in two directions – by criticizing either the humanities for not being social scientific or social science for not being scientific in accord with, say, physics or biology. And, of course, the decadent historian criticizes all for not being historical; the decadent philosopher criticizes all for not being philosophical. The public dimension of evidence is here subordinated by the discipline or field’s functioning, literally, as the world. Thus, although another discipline or field may offer evidence to the contrary, it could, literally, be ignored simply on the basis of not being the point of view of one’s discipline or field.

Here we have come to the question of canonization. Processes of canonization, as renowned sociologist George Ritzer (2006) observed, are not neutral, and histories of sociology are not now and never have been free from the social injustices – for example, the racism, sexism and/or classism – of the respective intellectual milieux and societies in which sociologists live and work (see also Alexander *et al.*, 1997; Ritzer, 2000, 2008a, 2008b; Calhoun, 2002, 2007). When Gordon observes the *epistemic closure* of decadent disciplines, we are given occasion to think long and hard about the ways in which non-white and non-male contributors to sociology have been incessantly ignored, excluded and erased from the history of sociology because of the gate-keeping and disciplinary decadence of the ‘white sociological fraternity’. The question which exasperatingly emerges, then, is: Is the ‘white sociological fraternity’ still

willing to deny the seminal sociological contributions of non-whites, and in this instance, specifically the contributions of W.E.B. Du Bois? Also, a corollary critical question begs to be asked: Is the 'white sociological fraternity' still willing to deny the seminal sociological contributions of women, such as, say, Harriet Martineau, Jane Addams, Anna Julia Cooper, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Marianne Weber, Ida B. Wells, Elsie Clews Parsons, Beatrice Potter Webb and, finally, 'The Chicago Women's School' (for example, Florence Kelley, Edith Abbot, Grace Abbot, Sophonisba Brechinridge, Frances Kellor, Julia Lathrop, Anne Marian MacLean and Marion Talbot) (see Safilios-Rothschild, 1972; Siltanen and Stanworth, 1984; D.E. Smith, 1987, 1990; Sydie, 1987; Wallace, 1989; Stanley, 1990; Deegan, 1991; James and Busia, 1993; Goetting and Fenstermaker, 1995; Laslett and Thorne, 1997; Collins, 1998, 2000a; Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1998; Myers *et al.*, 1998; Ollenburger, 1998; Delamont, 2003; Rege, 2003; Aldridge, 2008)? Sad to say, it seems so, and that is precisely why the present volume holds a heightened intellectual historical importance. However, this book is also concerned with the ways in which the minority of Du Bois scholars who have been willing to concede his seminal contributions to sociology have repeatedly ignored or erased his undisputed inauguration of Africana Studies and, by default, Africana Studies altogether (Rabaka, 2007, 2008, 2009, forthcoming).

When I register my complaint concerning the fact that many, if not most, of the work in Du Bois studies has consistently either, at best, overlooked Du Bois's contributions to Africana Studies or, at worst, rendered his contributions to, *and* Africana Studies in and of itself invisible or entirely non-existent, I am not putting into practice that awful ideology or foul 'perspective' that 'brings with it a special fallacy' that Gordon observed above. Quite the contrary, I am pointing to something altogether different, something a little more illusive or subtle that has seemed to slip through the cracks and crevices of the scholarship on Du Bois. This, therefore, is not a simple case of 'disciplinary decadence' where I incorrigibly argue that 'my discipline is better than yours, you ignoramus!', and where I sanctimoniously believe that my discipline is the end-all and be-all or, rather, the definitive 'last word' in terms of human studies.

What I wish to do here is circumvent the very tired tendency to read or, rather, misread Du Bois in reductive disciplinary terms where his thought is validated and legitimated only insofar as it can be roguishly reframed and/or forced to fit into the arbitrary and artificial academic confines of this or that decadent discipline. The lingering leitmotif of this volume, therefore, is that Du Bois's larger transdisciplinary legacy situates his thought and texts somewhere between and *beyond* sociology and a host of other disciplines – Africana Studies, anthropology, history, philosophy, political science, economics, religion and education, quickly come to mind. Du Bois has been hailed as an historian, sociologist, Marxist, Pan-Africanist and political activist, but never as an early transdisciplinary social theorist with concrete political commitments, to not simply black liberation and racial justice, but to women's liberation and gender justice, the crudely criminalized poor masses and working classes, and racially colonized non-whites worldwide. He has long been praised and criticized by legions of scholars who have interpreted and rigorously reinterpreted his work, often overlooking its deep critical social theoretical dimensions. Here for the first time Du Bois's transdisciplinary critical social theory is not simply put on display but also placed into critical dialogue with a wide range of disciplinary perspectives: from sociology and history, to Africana Studies and Women's Studies; from

economics and education, to philosophy and religion; and, finally, from political science and cultural anthropology, to communications and comparative literature.

Considering the above discussion of disciplinary decadence, it will be important for my readers to bear in mind that each piece selected for inclusion here, without regard to its disciplinary origin or intended disciplinary audience, has been chosen with the critical understanding that Du Bois's transdisciplinarity, especially where his contributions to sociology are concerned, demands that we commit monodisciplinary treason and suspend our academic allegiances to this or that discipline in favour of a fuller and more nuanced comprehension of his intellectually innovative thought and texts which, if truth be told, continue to *transgress*, *transcend* and *transverse* the arbitrary and artificial academic and disciplinary borders and boundaries, the conflicted colour-lines and yawning racial chasms and the jingoism and gender injustice of traditional single phenomenon-focused, monodisciplinary disciplines. Du Bois's conception of sociology is, indeed, different from much of what currently passes as sociology, and part of what is genuinely distinctive about his contributions to sociology is his unrepentant disregard for disciplinary borders and boundaries. Methodologically, however, his sociological roots come rushing to the fore. The bulk of his body of work speaks in a special way to his unique sociological heritage (Meier, 1959; Richards, 1970; Dennis, 1972, 1996a; Broderick, 1974; Rudwick, 1974; Jones, 1976; Gilkes, 1996; Katznelson, 1999; Lemert, 2000b).

Therefore, most of the work included here undeniably demonstrates that Du Bois employed a wide range of sociological research methods: from quantitative methods to qualitative methods; from archival methods to ethnographic methods; from content analysis to longitudinal study; and, from participant observation to experimental methods. What is more, Robert Wortham's 'W.E.B. Du Bois's Urban Sociology' even goes so far as to accent Du Bois's 'early "trademark" approach to sociological research design, *methodological triangulation*', emphasizing Du Bois's innovative methodological sophistication. Clearly, then, it is not the intention of the present compendium to attempt to finalize Du Bois's 'imminent canonization' (Zuckerman, 2004, p. 7) within sociology, but something altogether different: first, to demonstrate that his thought and texts simultaneously and seminally contributed to the discourse and development of sociology, and spawned several subdisciplines within sociology in which it has been either ignored, excluded or erased; second, to emphasize not simply Du Bois's transdisciplinarity, but also the transdisciplinarity of 'early' or 'classical' sociology in general; and, finally, to call into question the *intellectual amnesia*, *epistemic apartheid* and inherently exclusive nature of the process(es) of canonization, sociological or otherwise (Deena, 2001; Tucker, 2002; Hunter, 2004). Du Bois's distinctive transdisciplinary contributions to the discourse and development of sociology are, perhaps, best explored by critically engaging the ways in which Du Bois scholars' have utilized his work as paradigms and points of departure within several of the subdisciplines of sociology. Many of the sociological subdisciplines that prominently engage Du Bois's thought and texts help to highlight the distinctiveness of his contributions to sociology and, ironically, his characteristic transdisciplinarity, which simultaneously places him both *within* and *without* sociology.

To say that Du Bois's thought and texts stand both *within* and *without* sociology is, quite simply, to say that 'traditional' disciplinary and subdisciplinary definitions of sociology, or any other discipline for that matter, are not now and never have been 'pure' and/or neutral. Neither Marx, nor Weber, nor Durkheim held 'pure' and/or neutral conceptions of sociology,

which means, then, that there is room or, rather, there is enough intellectual space for the conceptions and contributions of innumerable sociologically negated non-white and non-male sociologists. It is, therefore, with keeping this critical understanding in mind that the present volume is divided into six sections, each of which highlights a different subdiscipline – or, in most instances, set of subdisciplines – predicated on, or pertinent to Du Bois's distinct transdisciplinary contributions to sociology. As will be discussed in greater detail below, the first section, 'Du Bois and the Disciplinary Decadence of Sociology', seeks to provide readers with crucial intellectual histories and critical engagements of Du Bois's sociological negation within, and the *intellectual amnesia* and *epistemic apartheid* of both classical and contemporary sociology. In other words, the first section is concerned with Du Bois's neglected place within *the history of sociology*. It is, consequently, a revisionist history of sociology or, rather, *sociological historical revisionism*, which brings Du Bois from the margin to the sociological centre. The remainder of this introduction, therefore, will offer the reader brief synopses of the book's six ensuing sections.

### **Du Bois and the Disciplinary Decadence of Sociology: Exploring Issues of Intellectual Historical Amnesia and Epistemic Apartheid**

Any authentic – let alone *critical* – engagement of W.E.B. Du Bois's contributions to sociology almost invariably must begin with his unique personal, political and, of course, intellectual pedigree (Du Bois, 1952, 1968a, 1968b; Broderick, 1959, 1974; Rudwick, 1982a, 1982b; Marable, 1986; Rampersad, 1990; Gilroy, 1993; Lewis, 1993, 2000; Zamir, 1995, 2008; Reed, 1997; Gooding-Williams, 2009). When compared with the work of his pioneering sociological peers, especially the work of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, the distinctiveness of Du Bois's contributions lie not in the fact that he was African American, or that he trekked from Fisk to Harvard to the University of Berlin and, then, back to Harvard ultimately to become the first African American to earn a PhD from that auspicious institution in 1895. Quite the contrary, what remains remarkable about his contributions has nothing to do with his race, gender or class, but more to do with the often-overlooked fact that unlike Marx, Weber or Durkheim, Du Bois's primary sociological preoccupation was to develop a social science specific to the special needs of the United States of America (Du Bois, 1898, 1939, 1954, 1970b, 1978, 1980a, 1985a, 1995b, 1996b [1899], 1997a, 2004).

As many of the essays in this part illustrate, Du Bois arguably endeavoured the first major studies, empirical or otherwise, in the history of American sociology. Also, he established the 'first American school of sociology', with the Atlanta University school of sociology (1895–1925) pre-dating the University of Chicago school of sociology (1915–30) by two decades (Du Bois, 1940, 1969d; see also Gabbidon, 1999; Wright, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2008; R.A. Wortham, 2005a; Wright and Calhoun, 2006). The essays gathered here, then, have three main objectives: first, to provide readers with a sense of Du Bois's unique personal, political and intellectual pedigree; second, to demonstrate how he utilized what he learned at Fisk, Harvard and the University of Berlin in ways and for purposes often not fully fathomed by his professors and peers (none of whom were 'sociologists' in the sense in which the term is used today and, in point of fact, none of whom have been canonized, or are being considered for canonization within the discipline of sociology à la Du Bois); and, third, to emphasize that no matter what Du Bois appropriated from his professors and peers at Fisk, Harvard and the

University of Berlin it is extremely intellectually disingenuous and indicative of an intense *intellectual amnesia* and *epistemic apartheid* to seek incessantly to make his contributions to sociology somehow, always and ever, derivative of or consequent to his having studied with European (for example, Gustav von Schmoller, Heinrich von Treitschke and Adolf Wagner) and European American (for example, William James, Josiah Royce, George Santayana and Albert Bushnell Hart) professors (Lewis, 1993, pp. 179–210; see also Edwards, 2001). None of the aforementioned – no, not a single one of them – dared to do what Du Bois did: which is to say – and here I purposely repeat myself – he inaugurated a tradition or ‘school’ of empirical social scientific research primarily preoccupied with the most pressing problems confronting the citizens of the United States of America. What is even more impressive is the wide range and wide reach of Du Bois’s contributions to sociology, which, as will be witnessed in this volume, includes undeniable offerings to urban sociology, rural sociology, sociology of race, sociology of class, sociology of religion, sociology of education, sociology of crime and – undoubtedly unlike any of his fabled professors or the long-sanctioned ‘sociological trinity’ of Marx, Weber and Durkheim – seminal and significant male–feminist/male–womanist contributions to sociology of gender (Yellin, 1973; McKay, 1985, 1990; Gilkes, 1996; James, 1997; Collins, 2000b; Griffin, 2000; Pauley, 2000; Lemons, 2001; Rabaka, 2004, 2007; Gillman and Weinbaum, 2007; see also Sargent, 1981; Vogel, 1983; Hearn, 1987, 1991; Bologh, 1990; Di Stephano, 1991, forthcoming; Erickson, 1993; Lehmann, 1994).

If we were momentarily to entertain the lame but long-standing assertion that Du Bois’s contributions to sociology are consequent to his studies with his European and European American professors, then a couple of critical questions continue to linger: Why is it that his professors, who lived lives unsullied by American apartheid, anti-black racism, lynching, racial colonialism and other forms of racial oppression – why didn’t one of them inaugurate sociology in the USA? Why is it that with all of the unhampered access to intellectual resources and research opportunities – why didn’t one of them place the sociology of race on the inchoate sociological agenda? Could it be that Du Bois’s contributions to sociology are much more than mere derivatives of his professors’ thought and texts and, more plausibly, intellectual artefacts which reveal that he developed a dialectical relationship and critical rapport, not simply with his professors’ work, but with the thought and texts of the early establishers of what has come to be called ‘sociology’? Many of the essays in the ‘Du Bois and the Disciplinary Decadence of Sociology’ part provide answers to these questions, often while simultaneously raising other alternative critical questions. Admittedly, the dialectical thought that Du Bois’s discourse and many of the better texts in Du Bois’s studies inspires is part of the reason why his legacy has been repeatedly resuscitated, not simply with respect to sociology but, even more, with regard to a wide range of intellectual enterprises and political pursuits (Rabaka, 2008).

Two undisputed classics in Du Bois studies, especially with respect to sociology, initiate the discourse in this section. The first essay is, of course, Dan Green and Edwin Driver’s ‘W.E.B. Du Bois: A Case in the Sociology of Sociological Negation’ (Chapter 1), and the second essay is Elliott Rudwick’s ‘Note on a Forgotten Black Sociologist: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Sociological Profession’ (Chapter 2). The Green and Driver piece continues to provide the best discussion of both Du Bois’s contributions to sociology and, what they term, his ‘sociological negation’. Similar to Green and Driver, Rudwick’s work situates Du Bois’s thought and texts within the history of sociology, especially in the USA, and offers one of the earliest and most

scathing indictments of the intellectual disingenuousness, not simply of sociology but of the *intellectual amnesia* and *epistemic apartheid* of the American academy as well. Barrington Edwards's 'W.E.B. Du Bois between Worlds: Berlin, Empirical Social Research, and the Race Question' (Chapter 3) provides the reader with a window into the unique world of Du Bois's academic training and early offerings to social science. Edwards brilliantly broaches the subject of Du Bois's academic training at Harvard and the University of Berlin, as well as how his work built on and went well beyond his graduate studies and dissertation. He goes to great lengths to demonstrate that though Du Bois did imbibe the methods of the German school of historical economics at the University of Berlin and Albert Bushnell Hart's historical research methods at Harvard, Du Bois's true distinction lies in the fact that he 'successfully broke away from the standard biological deterministic orientation' of both Berlin and Harvard and 'recast the race question within a credible scientific framework' (p. 51). Edwards's essay ultimately emphasizes the social scientific importance of several of Du Bois's pre-*Philadelphia Negro* publications – such as, 'The Renaissance of Ethics: A Critical Comparison of Scholastic and Modern Ethics' (1889), *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (1896), 'The Conservation of Races' (1897) and 'The Study of the Negro Problems' (1898) – and, therefore, ironically reveals much about both Du Bois's sociological negation and Du Bois's methodological sophistication.

This part ends with Elliott Rudwick's 1957 classic 'W.E.B. Du Bois and the Atlanta University Studies on the Negro' (Chapter 4) and Earl Wright's riposte 'W.E.B. Du Bois and the Atlanta University Studies on the Negro, *Revisited*' (Chapter 5). Rudwick reviews Du Bois's Atlanta University Studies and, after acknowledging their pioneering importance for American sociology, ultimately decries their 'methodological deficiencies'. Wright's essay, in a most unprecedented manner, respectfully takes Rudwick's essay to task by demonstrating that Rudwick may have misunderstood the purposes of the Atlanta University Studies and the American apartheid conditions under which they were conducted and completed. Wright's research also reveals that Rudwick's (mis)interpretation and subtle claim of the sociological 'insignificance' of most of the more innovative aspects of the Atlanta University Studies may have been motivated by Du Bois's radical politics and embrace of democratic socialism (and eventually communism) in his later life. Wright's piece is important because it demonstrates that even when Du Bois's thought and texts have been considered for their sociological significance, and even when race or racism were not necessarily issues in the interpretation or, rather, misinterpretation of Du Bois thought and texts, his increasingly insurgent intellectualism, black nationalism, black Marxism, Pan-Africanism and anti-war activism have been alternative obstacles to the sincere assessment of the sociological significance of his work.

### **Du Bois and the Early Development of Urban and Rural Sociology: *The Philadelphia Negro* and the Sociology of the Souls of Black Farming Folk**

This part engages Du Bois's pioneering contributions to urban and rural sociology. It begins by building on the research of the last essay of the previous section, re-emphasizing the importance of the Atlanta University school of sociology. In 'W.E.B. Du Bois and the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory' (Chapter 6), Earl Wright employs Martin Bulmer's (1984) 'model of a school' to demonstrate deftly *why* and *how* the Atlanta University school of sociology

under Du Bois's auspices should officially be considered 'the first American school of sociology'. Similar to Wright's contribution to this part, Robert Williams's 'The Early Social Science of W.E.B. Du Bois' (Chapter 7) provides the reader with an outline of the sprawling social scientific scheme and scope of Du Bois's Atlanta University annual conferences and publications. However, Williams's work stands in stark contrast to Wright's insofar as Williams's piece puts a greater emphasis on how Du Bois's Atlanta University publications are actually indicative of the intellectual aftermath of 'The Study of the Negro Problems' (1898), 'The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study' (1898), and *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899). As Du Bois's contributions to rural sociology have been virtually overlooked, Williams's accent on 'The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study' (1898) is extremely important here. Hopefully soon serious rural sociologists will critically consider Du Bois's other major contributions to rural sociology – 'The Negro in the Black Belt: Some Social Sketches' (1899), 'The Negro Landholder of Georgia' (1901) and 'The Negro Farmer' (1904), each of which, including 'The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia', were undertaken under the auspices of and published by the US Department of Labour (see Du Bois, 1980a). Du Bois made another significant contribution to rural sociology with 'The Sharecropping System in Lowndes County, Alabama' (1906b) but, according to Herbert Aptheker, the manuscript was destroyed, Du Bois believed, 'due to the radical nature of its findings and its condemnation of the then dominant system under which the vast majority of black people – and many white people – lived in the South' (Du Bois, 1980a, p. 1; see also Du Bois, 1969d; Turley, 1994; Rabaka, forthcoming).

The remaining essays in this part offer distinctly different interpretations of Du Bois's contributions to urban sociology, and his classic *The Philadelphia Negro* in specific. First, Robert Wortham's 'W.E.B. Du Bois's Urban Sociology: Reflections on African American Quality of Life in Philadelphia' (Chapter 8) offers an intense analytical discussion of the methodological sophistication of *The Philadelphia Negro*, noting Du Bois's 'early 'trademark' approach to sociological research design, *methodological triangulation*'. The last essay of this part, Tukufu Zuberi's 'W.E.B. Du Bois's Sociology: *The Philadelphia Negro* and Social Science' (Chapter 9) outlines the innovative features of *The Philadelphia Negro* before ultimately giving way to an extremely important discussion of the ironic and often-overlooked fact that 'Du Bois sought to explain the African Americans' plight from a moral perspective that accepted a peculiar and mainstream, or Eurocentric, view of civilization' (p. 153). Zuberi is careful to emphasize that Du Bois increasingly grew more radical as he grew older and transcended many – if not, I have argued, *most* – of his more Eurocentric, elitist and assimilationist modes of interpretation, eventually coming to accent the *racial colonial* and *racial capitalist* 'economic side' of African and African American exploitation and oppression in watershed works, such as: *Darkwater*, *The Gift of Black Folk*, *Black Reconstruction*, *Black Folk, Then and Now*, *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace*, and *The World and Africa* (Du Bois, 1939, 1945, 1965, 1969a, 1970b, 1995b; see also Lewis, 1993, 2000; Zuberi, 1998; Burbridge, 1999; Rabaka, 2007, 2008; Saint-Arnaud, 2009).

## Du Bois and the Sociology of Race: The Sociology of the Souls of Black and White (Among Other) Folk

Du Bois's contributions to sociology are most readily accepted when and where we come to the sociology of race and, to a certain extent, the sociology of class (Green, 1973; Dennis, 1975; Green and Smith, 1983; Marshall, 1994; Edwards, 2001; Stewart-Cain, 2003; Morris, 2007). This part demonstrates that even though Du Bois is customarily quarantined to the sociology of race – that is, if and/or when engagements of his work register within the world of sociology – the fact remains that very few sociologists have really and truly grasped and seriously grappled with his conceptions of race and critiques of racism, and even fewer sociologists have explored and extrapolated his innovative *sociology of racial classes* – that is, his critiques of the political economy of race, racism, racial violence, racial colonialism, racial capitalism, the racialization of gender and sexuality, blackness, whiteness and, of course, white supremacy, and the ways in which each of the aforementioned are related, in one way or another, to a person's perceived social, political and economic status, or lack thereof (Rabaka, forthcoming). To provide the reader with a sense of Du Bois's pioneering contributions to the sociology of race and *racial(ized) classes* we begin with lionized sociologist Charles Lemert's 'A Classic from the Other Side of the Veil: Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk*' (Chapter 10), which asks and acutely answers the question, 'Why has W.E.B. Du Bois not mattered more to sociologists?' (p. 163), all the while emphasizing the sociological significance of Du Bois and his most popular book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. In 'The Souls of White Folk: W.E.B. Du Bois's Critique of White Supremacy and Contributions to Critical White Studies' (Chapter 11) the present author argues that Du Bois not only inaugurated 'Black Studies' but, ironically, 'White Studies' or, rather 'Critical White Studies'. The essay offers an *epistemic archaeology* of Du Bois's critique of whiteness, white privilege and white supremacy, which lucidly demonstrates that he was simultaneously and dialectically developing a discourse on the political economy of the racialization, and also the racial colonization, of not simply non-whites but whites as well (see also Green and Smith, 1983; Lemert, 2000a; Rabaka, 2007).

John Shuford's 'Four Du Boisian Contributions to Critical Race Theory' (Chapter 12) helps to highlight the sociological significance of critical race theory, and discursively demonstrates that the most obvious bridge between critical race theory and sociology revolves around Du Bois's concepts of race and racial classes, as well as his critiques of racism and racial colonization. Where Shuford and I hint at Du Bois's conception of 'black gifts' and 'white indebtedness' in our respective essays, Shannon Sullivan's 'Remembering the Gift: W.E.B. Du Bois on the Unconscious and Economic Operations of Racism' (Chapter 13) contributes an engaged (re)reading of Du Bois's 'gift theory' that emphasizes the ways in which his sociology of racial class(es) or, rather, his *classical critical race theory* was in deep discursive dialogue with the pragmatism of William James, the historical economics of Gustav von Schmoller, the psychology of Sigmund Freud and the radical political philosophy of Karl Marx.

## Du Bois and the Sociology of Gender: 'The Damnation of Women' and the Sociology of the Souls of Black Female Folk

Continuing the discourse on Du Bois's contributions to the sociology of race and the sociology of class, this part ups the ante by bringing the omnipresent (albeit often ignored or

erased) variable of gender into the sociological mix. Where the watchword of the previous section was Du Bois's *sociology of racial classes*, here the leitmotif revolves around what can only be properly referred to as Du Bois's distinctive inauguration and critical conception of *the sociology of racially gendered classes*. Although often-overlooked in favour of his more renowned writings on race and racism, Du Bois made several significant contributions to the sociology of gender, feminist sociology, Marxist feminism, black feminism and womanist social theory (Yellin, 1973; Aptheker, 1975; McKay, 1985, 1990; Gilkes, 1996; James, 1997; Collins, 2000b; Griffin, 2000; Pauley, 2000; Lemons, 2001; Weinbaum, 2001; Rabaka, 2004, 2007, forthcoming; Gillman and Weinbaum, 2007). For instance, many of the highbrow and heavy-handed sociologists who would peremptorily dismiss Du Bois's sociological significance might be shocked to know that even though none of the members of their treasured 'sociological trinity' – that is, neither Marx, Weber nor Durkheim – made noteworthy contributions to the sociology of gender, Du Bois published several dozen articles, essays, novels and poems of feminist and/or womanist importance. A brief list of examples of his work in this area would undoubtedly include: 'A Woman' (1893); 'The Work of Negro Women in Society' (1902); *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911a); 'The Woman' (1911); 'The Black Mother' (1912); 'Suffering Suffragettes' (1912); 'Suffrage Workers' (1912); 'Votes for Women' (1912); 'Hail Columbia!' (1913); 'The Burden of Black Women' (1914); 'Woman Suffrage' (1915); 'Votes for Women' (1917); 'The Damnation of Women' (1920); 'The Freedom of Womanhood' (1924); 'So the Girl Marries' (1928); *Dark Princess* (1928); 'The Vision of Phillis the Blessed: An Allegory of Negro American Literature in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries' (1941); 'Sex and Racism' (1957); and, 'Greetings to Women' (1959).

The essays collected in this part bring Du Bois's dialectic to bear on his *sociology of racially gendered classes* by simultaneously critiquing *and* appreciating his evolving thought on racism, sexism and capitalism as overlapping and interlocking systems of exploitation, oppression and violence. Betsy Lucal's 'Race, Class, and Gender in the Work of W.E.B. Du Bois: An Exploratory Study' (Chapter 14) and Angela Hattery and Earl Smith's 'William Edward Burghardt Du Bois and the Concepts of Race, Class and Gender' (Chapter 15) both demonstrate, as Lucal declares, that 'Du Bois's sociological perspective was prescient: he was well ahead of the rest of his discipline in his grasp of the importance of the interrelatedness of race, class, and gender' (p. 270). Hattery and Smith's essay directly builds on but, ultimately, goes beyond Lucal's text by more explicitly 'pulling [Du Bois] from the dustbin of American sociology' and then unequivocally 'showing the *contemporaneous* nature of his work' (p. 276, emphasis in original).

In 'W.E.B. Du Bois and "The Damnation of Women": An Essay on Africana Anti-Sexist Critical Social Theory' (Chapter 16), the present writer endeavours an intellectual archaeology of 'the roots of Du Bois's anti-sexist radicalism' by critically engaging 'The Damnation of Women' as 'a male-feminist manifesto'. Where my essay situates Du Bois's male-feminism within the black feminist traditions of Josephine St Pierre Ruffin, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell, among other members of the Black Women's Club Movement, Lawrie Balfour's 'Representative Women: Slavery, Citizenship, and Feminist Theory in Du Bois's "Damnation of Women"' (Chapter 17) offers an alternative analysis of 'The Damnation of Women' as an early *sociology of black women's enslavement* that cogently makes a case, not only for Du Bois to be taken more seriously by sociologists of gender, but also for his contributions to contemporary feminist historians, feminist political theorists and feminist

theorists of citizenship. The last two essays which constitute the latter half of this part each in one way or another demonstrate Du Bois's – however controversial and contradictory – commitments and contributions to *the sociology of black women* and *the sociology of black mothers*, as well as his – again, however controversial and contradictory – commitments and contributions to women's decolonization and women's liberation.

### **Du Bois and the Sociology of Religion: The Sociology of the Souls of Religious Black and White (Among Other) Folk**

'Ironically,' Edward Blum (2005b, p. 371) bluntly observed, 'the soulful side of the man whose most famous book is titled *The Souls of Black Folk* is least well known or appreciated'. Furthermore, Phil Zuckerman (Chapter 18) maintained that Du Bois should be 'considered the first American sociologist of religion' (p. 333), and bemoaned the fact that 'nearly all recently published sociology of religion survey texts fail to mention his name' (p. 333), let alone critically engage his watershed work. This part, therefore, seeks to provide the reader with a critical overview of Du Bois's major contributions to the sociology of religion and the ways in which his innovative research methods and modes of analysis, not simply distinguish his sociology of religion from that of the 'recognized founders of the sociology of religion' (again, Marx, Weber and Durkheim) but, in point of fact, this part demonstrates that Du Bois's pioneering paradigm went well beyond the 'brilliant insights' of the 'sociological trinity' because his sociology of religion was endeavoured with 'what today would constitute standard sociological research methods' (p. 336), according to Zuckerman. Once again, then, Du Bois's methodological innovations and sociological sophistication comes rushing to the fore.

This part opens with Phil Zuckerman's 'The Sociology of Religion of W.E.B. Du Bois' (Chapter 18) and Robert Wortham's 'Du Bois and the Sociology of Religion: Rediscovering a Founding Figure' (Chapter 19), which both accent the innovative nature of Du Bois's sociology of religion, and specifically his monumental methodological contributions. Curtis Evans's 'W.E.B. Du Bois: Interpreting Religion and the Problem of the Negro Church' (Chapter 20) and Robert Wortham's 'W.E.B. Du Bois, the Black Church, and the Sociological Study of Religion' (Chapter 21) each focus on Du Bois's *sociology of African American religion* and *sociology of the African American church*. Evans applauds Du Bois's methodological innovations with regard to the study of religion, but importantly takes him to task for his often Eurocentric and often elitist interpretation of African American religious culture and practices. The section closes with Wortham, similar to Evans, acknowledging Du Bois's methodological innovations with regard to the study of religion but then going further to provide a systematic analysis of Du Bois's major studies of African American religion and the African American church (for example, *The Philadelphia Negro* (1996b), *The Negro Church*, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1969b) and *Morals and Manners Among Negro Americans*), eventually bringing the reader's attention to Du Bois's ruminations on the 'religious economy' of the African American church. In the end, these essays collectively speak, not simply to Du Bois's contributions to the sociology of religion, but also to history of religion, philosophy of religion, anthropology of religion, psychology of religion, religious economy and political theology, among others (see also Blum, 2007; Hufford, 1997; Kahn, 2004, 2009).

## Du Bois and the Sociology of Education and Crime: Critiquing the (Mis)Education and Criminalization of Black (Among Other) Folk

The final part of this volume is concerned with Du Bois's contributions to the sociology of education and the sociology of crime. It can be easily argued that although Du Bois made many donations to these subdisciplines, his thought and texts have not been engaged in the depth and detail that they deserve. In 'W.E.B. Du Bois: His Evolving Theory of Education' (Chapter 22), Myrtle Glascoe offers an informed overview of Du Bois's increasingly critical educational theory and praxis, especially with respect to African American uplift and the development of American democracy. The major motifs of Du Bois's sociology of education revolve around his intense focus on educational leadership, the cultural foundations of education and education in the interest of human liberation and social transformation. Glascoe surveys a wide range of Du Bois's educational thought and dexterously demonstrates that Du Bois maintained a life-long interest in education's impact on society, and society's influence on education.

When and where Du Bois's educational theory is invoked, most scholars usually attempt to dismiss it quickly because of his greatly and often grossly misunderstood assertions in his infamous 1903 essay, 'The Talented Tenth'. Dan Green's 'W.E.B. Du Bois's Talented Tenth: A Strategy for Racial Advancement' (Chapter 23) and Rutledge Dennis's 'Du Bois and the Role of the Educated Elite' (Chapter 24) both situate 'The Talented Tenth' within the world of the intellectual history-making debate Du Bois engaged in with Booker T. Washington. Green and Dennis give ample discussion to Du Bois's alleged 'educational elitism' and Washington's 'accommodationism'. Green offers a systematic discussion of 'The Talented Tenth' and African American history at the turn of the twentieth century, and Dennis develops a critical discussion of the connections Du Bois made between educational leadership and African American/Pan-African liberation from the turn of the twentieth century through to the middle of the twentieth century. Each of the essays gathered here simultaneously critique Du Bois's 'educational elitism' while also appreciating the often-overlooked fact that he published 'The Talented Tenth' when he was thirty-five years old and continued to deepen dialectically and develop his critical educational theory and radical pedagogical praxis a great deal throughout the remaining sixty years of his life. 'The Talented Tenth', then, is but one early articulation of Du Bois's educational thought that should not be taken as the only or 'most representative' example of his educational thought (see also Goldstein, 1972; Sumpter, 1973, 2000; E. Smith, 1975; Brody, 1981; Neal, 1984; Nwankwo, 1989; Hufford, 1999; J.M. Moore, 2003; Rabaka, 2003a, 2008; Alridge, 2008).

This volume concludes with an innovative essay by Shaun Gabbidon that not only critically calls Du Bois's exclusion in and erasure from criminology and criminal justice discourse into question but, even more, it audaciously asserts that he should be recognized as 'one of the first scientific American criminologists' (p. 484). In 'An Argument for Including W.E.B. Du Bois in the Criminology/Criminal Justice Literature' (Chapter 25), Gabbidon surveys Du Bois's contributions to the sociology of crime by examining his long-overlooked works, such as, 'The Negro and Crime' (1899), *The Black North* (1901), 'The Spawn of Slavery: The Convict Lease-System in the South' (1901), and *Some Notes on Negro Crime* (1904), along with his better known discussions of the criminalization of African Americans and African American crime in *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899). Gabbidon expiates his contention that Du Bois

should be considered ‘one of the first scientific American criminologists’ by revealing that Du Bois developed his discourse on crime to such a deft degree that he published pioneering studies that distinguished between the urban and rural crime and criminalization of African Americans. Gabbidon’s essay, then, not only points to Du Bois’s pioneering place in the sociology of crime, but also the ways in which his work pre-figured and could provide a critical paradigm for discourse concerned with civil rights law, critical race theory, the prison industrial complex, prison reform, social policy and social justice (see also Gabbidon, 1996, 2000, 2007).

Undoubtedly Du Bois’s insurgent intellectual and radical political legacy does not fit nicely and neatly into the arbitrary and artificial academic disciplines of the twenty-first century. However, admitting this does not mean that his work has not made, and cannot continue to make crucial contributions to certain disciplines (and/or subdisciplines). This volume, therefore, is humbly offered with the understanding that Du Bois stood and continues to stand both *within* and *without* the borders and boundaries of classical and contemporary sociology. Allow me, in closing, to make myself perfectly clear: This compendium is not intended as a contribution towards W.E.B. Du Bois’s canonization within sociology as much as it is a complete rejection of the very violent conception and exclusive nature of a sociological, or any other kind of canon. In other words, this volume is a conscious contribution towards *decanonization*, if you will, as well as an unrepentant reminder of how the process(es) of canonization are almost always and in every instance predicated on conceptual colonization, rote racialization, patriarchal politics, bourgeois bureaucratism, intellectual amnesia and epistemic apartheid. Du Bois has always stood and, if truth be told, continues to stand alone, and whether the sociological establishment recognizes his work or not does not in any way diminish its sociological significance. In fact, the proof-positive of Du Bois’s sociological significance will be witnessed in the works of the subsequent sections of this volume.

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## Part I

# Du Bois and The Disciplinary Decadence of Sociology: Exploring Issues of Intellectual Historical Amnesia and Epistemic Apartheid

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# W. E. B. DuBois: A Case in the Sociology of Sociological Negation

W. E. B. DUBOIS ON SOCIOLOGY

By DAN S. GREEN and EDWIN D. DRIVER

## *W. E. B. DuBois*

The life of William Edward Burghardt DuBois spans the modern era of the black Americans; born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts in 1868, or shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation, he died in Accra, Ghana in 1963, on the eve of a massive civil rights rally in Washington, D.C. Noteworthy, too, is the coincidence of his lifetime with the origins of sociology and its evolution to its current scientific and applied status. By his contributions to social justice and social equity and to the world of letters and social science, DuBois gains membership among the few giants of human and creative enterprise.

Referring to the style and vocabulary of DuBois's writings, Max Weber said that they "remind me sometimes of Gladstone's idioms although the spirit is a different one."<sup>1</sup> John Gunther<sup>2</sup> accorded DuBois the high respect which he gave Bernard Shaw and Albert Einstein, and several other commentators hail him as one of the few great intellectuals and leaders whom the United States has had privilege to claim.<sup>3</sup> Recognizing his achievements, the National Institute of Arts and Letters elected him to membership in 1944; it was not until seventeen years later that a second black American, Langston Hughes, was elected to this august body of 250 artists, writers, and musicians. Unfortunately, as a cursory survey clearly shows, DuBois's scholarly brilliance and contributions to civil rights and liberties as well as to black pride and higher morality are little known to lay persons. Even more disconcerting is the failure of scholars, especially sociologists, to acknowledge that DuBois began his career as a sociologist and spent his early years (1896-1910) using an empirical approach to the study of human society. Myrdal, one of the rare sociologists who has shown appreciation for DuBois's sociological contributions, as his classic *An American Dilemma* shows, says that he has "always considered it a shame that this great American has been kept in the shadow or forgotten."<sup>4</sup> His neglect by the sociological profession is discussed in detail later in this paper.

During 1896-1910, DuBois was an unusually productive sociologist. His major sociological work, *The Philadelphia Negro*, based on a social sur-

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Aptheker, ed., *The Correspondence of W.E.B. DuBois* (Amherst, 1973), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> John Gunther, *Inside U.S.A.* (New York, 1947), p. 651.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Dan S. Green, *The Truth Shall Make Ye Free: The Sociology of W.E.B. DuBois* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1973); John Henrick Clarke, et al., eds., *Black Titan: W.E.B. DuBois* (Boston, 1970), pp. 3, 13, 23, 36, 41, 131.

<sup>4</sup> Gunnar Myrdal, personal correspondence, March 26, 1969.

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vey and participant observation, was written in 1899, two years after publication of Durkheim's *Le Suicide*. It is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, empirical monograph published in United States sociology. His *Atlanta University Studies* initiated the technique of measuring social change through continuous resurveys of particular social phenomena; they remain classic statements about conditions for blacks at the turn of the century. In addition, DuBois authored some unpublished papers as well as over thirty published papers ranging from community studies to explanations of criminality among blacks. His sociological writings stand alone as the significant body of descriptive and empirically based information about black Americans in the early twentieth century.

DuBois was generally critical of many of his sociological peers and their work, claiming that they were unnecessarily impeding the new discipline by providing an armchair, theoretical orientation rather than an inductive, empirical approach. His primary concern was to make a science of sociology by emulating the orientation of the physical sciences. He had entered sociology with the hope that it would be the panacea for the race problem; he felt that knowledge was the key, and that ignorance and misinformation, in large part, the problem. He sought "the truth" by means of his empirical investigations, which, he felt, would alleviate the problem by bringing the facts to well-intentioned, but ignorant whites.

Early in his life he dedicated himself to this goal; however, as a practicing sociologist he slowly began to realize that mere facts, as valid as they might be, would not provide the solution. With this realization, he left the academy to become an activist and propagandist for his race. He wrote: "Two considerations . . . broke in upon my work and eventually disrupted it: First, one could not be a calm, cool, and detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered, and starved; and secondly, there was no such definite demand for scientific work of the sort that I was doing as I had confidently assumed would be easily forthcoming."<sup>5</sup>

Before leaving the academy, in 1910, DuBois produced, both in quantity and quality, some of the finest examples of sociological analysis of his era. How ironic it is that the white sociological profession ignored his empirical work but yet began around 1920 to emphasize the empirical, inductive approach to sociological study.

As noted above, DuBois's sociological writings offer a rich and sophisticated body of empirically grounded sociological information. Interspersed throughout these writings are various and relevant prescriptions and proscriptions for the then inchoate discipline of sociology. DuBois never set forth a formal statement of his conception(s) of sociology, which is somewhat out of character because he was a prolific writer

<sup>5</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois* (New York, 1968), p. 222.

and sociology was very important to him. Moreover, he was so outspoken about how sociologists should perceive and analyze social phenomena. His conception of the new discipline can, however, be constructed from his early writings, primarily those of his early sociological period, 1896 to 1910.

### *The Value of Sociology*

In one of his earliest comments about the fledgling discipline of sociology, DuBois noted that sociology was concerned with current conditions and methods of social regeneration.<sup>6</sup> Although he clearly favored an empirical approach, he did not at that time consider sociology a science because it had neither definitely stated laws nor any body of carefully systematized facts. Nevertheless, he thought that the sociological study of society had begun to provide some evidence of social laws and he was optimistic about sociology's future. Sociology, he wrote, was a "vast and fruitful field of inquiry into the mysterious phenomena of human action."<sup>7</sup> Similarly, he noted that sociology had studied all phases of society, and, even given its imperfect or crude methods, had collected a great body of data: "the phenomenon of society are worth the most careful and systematic study, and whether or not this study may eventually lead to a systematic body of knowledge deserving the name of science, it cannot in any case fail to give the world a mass of truth worth the knowing."<sup>8</sup> His statement appears as accurate and timely today as it was then more than seventy years ago.

Defining sociology more explicitly, he wrote that it attempts to study "the mighty subject of human cooperation in modern society."<sup>9</sup> But the study of society is both slow and difficult, and sociologists cannot lay claim to laws and accurate measurements as is common in the hard sciences. Another difficulty is that the facts with which sociology must deal are extremely multitudinous and intricate. Although no startling laws had been discovered, and perhaps none ever would be, he continued to remain positive regarding the future of sociology. He claimed, for example, that sociology was responsible for collecting "a mass of material of supreme interest and value and of such nature that no modern thinker who is interested in the conditions and destiny of human beings can afford to ignore its methods and results."<sup>10</sup> Later he reaffirmed this point, stating that everyone feels the necessity of sociological study because of the widespread ignorance of social facts

<sup>6</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "A Program for a Sociological Society" (Unpublished Ms., DuBois papers, Schomburg Library, New York City); (material used from notes by Frances Broderick).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "The Study of the Negro Problems," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, XVI (January, 1898), 1-23.

<sup>9</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "Post Graduate Work in Sociology at Atlanta University" (Unpublished Ms. of speech delivered in Athens, Georgia, ca. 1900, DuBois papers, Schomburg Library, New York City); (material used from notes by Francis Broderick).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

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and processes in our times; he stated that with regard to social facts "we still linger in a Middle Age of credulity and superstition."<sup>11</sup>

He observed that the development of sociology was going through a 'trying' period: "It is the period of observation, research and comparison — work always wearisome, often aimless, without well-settled principles and guiding lines, and subject ever to the pertinent criticism: what after all, has been accomplished?"<sup>12</sup> A few years later he claimed that "The present condition of sociological study is peculiar and in many respects critical":

Amid a multitude of interesting facts and conditions we are groping after a science — after reliable methods of observation and measurement, and after some enlightening way of systematizing and arranging the mass of accumulated material. Moreover the very immensity of the task gives us pause. What after all are we trying to do but to make a science of human action? And yet such a task seems so preposterous that there is scarce a sociologist the world over that would acknowledge such a plan.<sup>13</sup>

Elaborating on his conception of sociology, he wrote that "we have sought to build upon a plan the breadth of which is not limited even by the ends of the world; and have taken all human action for our province."<sup>14</sup> But the appropriate unit of investigation was individual or real man. There had been, he continued, some attempts to replace this perplexing element with more tractable concepts such as economic man because he is guaranteed to act from a singular motive with little or nothing left to chance: "But common sense won and real men were studied — not metaphysical lay figures."<sup>15</sup>

DuBois used census data in many of his sociological studies; however, he noted that such data are sensitive only to the broader and more simple aspects of human society. The national census was unsuited to measure "the more delicate and intricate questions of social life."<sup>16</sup> He called for use of more detailed studies which had become known by the rather indefinite term "Social Study": Such investigations... seek to go further and deeper than a national census and study indefinitely and, within limits, exhaustively, the conditions of life and action in certain localities.<sup>17</sup> The use of this type of study is a difficult undertaking; nevertheless, the Social Study approaches "as nearly as anything the ideal of measuring and classifying human action."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "The Laboratory in Sociology at Atlanta University," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, XXI (May, 1903), 100-63.

<sup>12</sup> DuBois, "The Study of the Negro Problems," *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "The Atlanta Conferences," *Voice of the Negro*, I (March, 1904), 85.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "Sociology Hesitant" (Unpublished Ms., DuBois papers, Schomburg Library, New York City); (material used from notes by Francis Broderick).

<sup>16</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "The Twelfth Census and the Negro Problems," *The Southern Workman*, XXIX (May, 1900), 306.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*