

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD
AND ITS EFFECT ON W.E.B. DU BOIS: A STUDY OF
SUBVERSIVE THEMES IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

A Thesis submitted to the Committee on Graduate Studies in
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ABSTRACT

The Ideology of the Greco-Roman World and its Effect on W.E.B. Du Bois: a Study of Subversive Themes in African-American History

Katrina H.B. Keefer

This thesis explores how the traditional classical education of the European elite acted to demonstrate to W.E.B. Du Bois another view of history, and further examines how Du Bois used the material of the ancient world to convey his then-subversive message of equality. By focusing on Du Bois' early life and accomplishments, then on the ancient world both as it is understood today, and as it was understood and appreciated in his time, we can compare his experience to the contemporary nineteenth century and early twentieth century African-American ideology, and determine how Du Bois uniquely used his mastery of the Classics to further his philosophy and goals. In a close study of Du Bois' own published and unpublished texts and letters, we can see how he used Classical references and language to highlight his erudition and to emphasize the agency of his people within history; prior to Du Bois' time, the agency of Africans in empire-building and ancient architecture was hotly debated, making Du Bois' prevalent Classical metaphors a challenge to accepted views of his period.

Keywords: Du Bois, African-American, Classical, Cultural Themes

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INTRODUCTION

W.E.B Du Bois was one of the most iconic African-American figures of the last two centuries. His influence and determination inspired the statesmen and activists of the Civil Rights movement, and his unswerving belief in the equality of his people uplifted countless black American citizens. His rich rhetoric and fiery editorials provided a voice for a disenfranchised people and demanded respect from the white establishment, while his influence spread well beyond the land of his birth; Du Bois is often credited as one of the fathers of Pan-Africanism,¹ and a powerful symbol of black independence within Africa. In his long and prolific career first as an academic and pioneer in Sociology, Du Bois was a constant champion of his people, proving himself the respected equal of the white educated elite. As an editor and as an activist, Du Bois became one of the preeminent voices of the African-American, demonstrating time and again that a black man could earn respect without offering submission first. Moreover, Du Bois's mastery of the classical world permitted him to demand equality, to claim agency for peoples of African descent in the cherished Greco-Roman world which formed the background for

¹ Pan-Africanism was the movement inspired by men like Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and Edward Wilmot Blyden in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is a socio-political movement which attempts to inspire the differing African nations and cultures to unite in order to present a single front to the outside world, pool resources, and be more able to defend themselves against outside aggression. Ultimately, the movement calls for a unified Africa, and close contact with the cultures resultant from the African diaspora. Ali A. Mazrui, "Pan-Africanism: From Poetry to Power" in *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 35-38; J. Ayo Langley, "Pan-Africanism in Paris, 1924-36" in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Apr., 1969), pp. 69-94; Patricia W. Romero, "W.E.B. DuBois, Pan-Africanists, and Africa 1963-1973" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Jun., 1976), pp. 321-336; John Marcum, "Many Roads to Pan-Africanism" in *Africa Today*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Jan., 1963), pp. 6-9; Wilson C. McWilliams and Jonathon Wise Polier, "Pan-Africanism and the Dilemmas of National Development" in *Phylon*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (1st Qtr., 1964), pp. 44-64; Sonia Delgado-Tall, "The New Negro Movement and the African Heritage in a Pan-Africanist Perspective" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, (Jan., 2001), pp. 288-310; Imanuel Geiss, "Pan-Africanism" in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 4, No. 1, (Jan., 1969), pp. 187-200; Charles F. Andrain, "The Pan-African Movement: The Search for Organization and Community" in *Phylon*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1st Qtr., 1962), pp. 5-17

white identity, and finally, to use the same mythology familiar to the European context as canvas for his subversive metaphors and personal ideology. Du Bois' reliance upon classical metaphors is not unknown² – this thesis' contribution is the theory that Du Bois's known predilection for classical rhetoric as a device for equality hearkens to his early exposure to the Greco-Roman world's literature. His construction of an identification of race and the uplift of non-white ethnicities is therefore based initially upon assumptions drawn from Du Bois' understanding of the ancient world as opposed to the relatively unsegregated and therefore anomalous experience of his Massachusetts youth.

For the time in which he was born and raised, Du Bois was an anomaly. In his later years, he recognized the series of incredible chances which had formed him into the man he became, and was shaken to imagine how much chance could have been involved in his development. Had he been born in the Southern United States, been raised by a woman less determined and hard-working than his mother, or had his school principal not permitted him access to white academic streams of thought, the man who co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and was heralded as a father of Pan-Africanism, might not have been. The writer of numerous books and articles, among them landmark studies of the slave trade and of the black

2 Wilson Moses treated the subject as an explanation of early black nationalism, and more recently, Carrie Cowherd explored elements of the classical language Du Bois employed. Largely, however, prior works have tended to focus upon how Du Bois's language was received, how it influenced others, where it belongs in the discourse of his time, or have explored his works as emblematic of a larger trend. Cowherd's 2003 article served primarily to detail and explain the classical references contained within Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk*. See Carrie Cowherd, "The Wings of Atalanta: Classical Influences on the Souls of Black Folk" ed. Dolan Hubbard's *The Souls of Black Folk: One Hundred Years Later* (University of Missouri Press, 2003) 284-297; Wilson J. Moses, "The Poetics of Ethiopianism: W.E.B. Du Bois and Literary Black Nationalism" in *American Literature*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Nov., 1975), pp. 411-426

inhabitants of Philadelphia, would not have changed the cultural landscape as he did. It is pointless to dwell for long on how the future might have unfolded had Du Bois's unique situation not arisen, but the point must nevertheless be raised if only to highlight the contributions he made to the social evolution of race awareness in America, and to emphasize how tenuous was the series of events that led him to grow into the man he became.

Du Bois's early childhood was spent in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and according to his every recollection, race awareness was not something that particularly touched his life at that point. He was aware that he was darker in colour than his fellows, but it did not prevent his interaction and play with them, nor their families' acceptance of his presence at children's meals, nor his remembered role primarily as a leader of boyhood games.³ Du Bois recalls coming upon the realization that he differed from his playmates "quite placidly", and the greatest difference he saw was in the way in which he saw the world, and his ambitions to rise higher within it. Differences within the Great Barrington of Du Bois's childhood stemmed not from race but from labour and industry, though historians like David Levering Lewis found evidence that the city was less tolerant than Du Bois' memories indicate. Lewis describes a different situation from that which Du Bois's recollections suggest, but admits that most of what Du Bois recalled was supported by fact.⁴ The colour line was more firmly drawn than Du Bois remembers, and the black populace in the city of 3,920 was on its slow descent toward marginalization

3 W.E.B. Du Bois, "Shadow of Years" in *Darkwater: Voices within the Veil* (New York: Dover Editions, 1920, 1999) 7

4 David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc, 1993) 37.

during Du Bois's childhood. Still, it seems clear that he was indeed hailed as a prodigy by white and black citizenry alike, and if his memory or awareness was selective, it was nonetheless accurate in recalling the white elite welcoming him into their homes to play with their children.⁵ In short, Du Bois's earliest recognition of differences was an awareness of class as opposed to race. His family had held land in the region for almost a century by the time he was born, and were well known and accepted.⁶ Far from hailing from recent slave roots as did his contemporary Booker T. Washington, Du Bois was descended from landowning free black Burghardts in Massachusetts, and paternally from the wealthy Du Bois family. The African-American community in Great Barrington was made up of freedmen, and ranged from the wealthy to the poor as evenly as did their white fellows, with most maintaining a strong Protestant work ethic. It was not the small group of land-owning black townfolk who were condemned by the majority of citizens in Du Bois's recollections, but the new Irish Catholic immigrant labourers, and any who might show themselves to be shiftless and foreign.⁷ Du Bois relates the tale of a black cousin who brought home a white wife; the furor which was caused had nothing to do with their racial difference, but instead but stemmed from the fact that her background

5 Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, 15-37, also W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century*, (International Publishers Co., Inc., 1968) 87.

6 As Du Bois recalled, his family was one of the oldest families in the region, and thus held a certain status. See Du Bois, *Autobiography* 83.

7 Du Bois also describes immigrant Irish children throwing racial pejoratives, but adds that they meant little, and were returned in kind by the local children, who ridiculed the Irish. Du Bois aligns himself with the elite children, whom he "knew quite well." This example of racial tensions is one which I would argue had little effect in convincing the young Du Bois that he did or did not belong, as the insults came from children who themselves existed on a lower social stratum than Du Bois's own among the townfolk. See Du Bois, *Autobiography* 82. As Du Bois recalls the matters, by his teen years he was more aware of race as a concern, "but the racial angle was more clearly defined against the Irish than against me. It was a matter of income and ancestry more than color." See Du Bois, *Autobiography* 80, 94; "Shadow of Years" 6

and family history were unknown and likely unsuitable.⁸ To imagine such an anecdote repeated in a contemporary Southern state is to imagine the inevitable tragic conclusion to the tale – the black husband lynched, and mass outrage at such miscegenation. A white woman marrying a black man with no concern save that she might not be of good family is an unfathomable story in most contemporary settings of Du Bois' time. His tale serves again to emphasize the unique position in which he found himself in his youth, and how different his life could have been set in another part of America.

Du Bois's awareness of race therefore came slowly. For example, he recollects his shock at graduating high school with honours to be told that rather than Harvard, the local churches had found a means with which to pay his way to Fisk University in Tennessee, where Du Bois might be among 'his own people'.⁹ It is not unreasonable to suppose that this traumatic exclusion was one of few reminders to the blithely happy young Du Bois of the cultural situation in the United States at that time. The only other mention his various autobiographical accounts make of racial tensions in his youth occurs in his often repeated tale of a newcomer to town, a wealthy new girl who in his high school years refused his calling card¹⁰ because of his race. That both stories are constantly raised in each of his autobiographical accounts suggests how much meaning they held for him even in his nineties.¹¹ In the earlier case, and heavily so in the later after graduation, Du Bois was suddenly given an awareness of race as superseding his prior emphasis on class, and one specifically involving his not belonging to the class of children he associated

⁸ Du Bois, *Autobiography* 96.

⁹ Du Bois, *Darkwater* 7

¹⁰ Du Bois recalls that he and his schoolmates decided to exchange visiting cards with one another.

¹¹ Du Bois, *Autobiography* 94.

with. Where he had evaluated others on their industry and effort instead of on their skin colour,¹² with the reminder of his own difference from his fellows Du Bois had to re-evaluate himself not as a member of the community but as a stranger among people he thought he had known and been accepted among. These community members assumed that he would be happier among 'his own people' in the South rather than among the townsfolk he'd known all his life.

Hitherto, Du Bois's experience with matters of race had been almost entirely academic prior to his graduation and the incident with the calling card. In his studies, Du Bois pursued what was a common scholastic regimen of the time for the white elite in North America, and delved into an examination of the world of the Greeks and Romans, learning their languages and studying their plays and stories. The constant use of myth and of Greco-Roman rhetoric and style in the writings of his later years is proof of the impact his studies had on Du Bois. In every literary effort, he makes reference to the ancient world, often to emphasize race in light of his understanding the racial awareness of the ancient world.¹³ From this constant emphasis, which will be examined in detail

12 Du Bois recalls having grown up with very clear ideas of what wealth and poverty were. "Wealth was the result of work and saving and the rich rightly inherited the earth," he remembers, and in childhood ideals impressed upon him both by his mother and by the community, shiftlessness was "unforgivable." Local standing came from property and known ancestry; an ancestor did not need to be wealthy to bring renown, but that "he existed, lived decently and thus linked the individual to the community," was sufficient to confer status upon his descendants. See Du Bois, *Autobiography* 80.

13 It should be mentioned that while Du Bois may have understood an element of the Classics that largely went unnoticed by white readers, his appreciation for what he read was still tempered by the ideals of his society, the way he was taught, and ultimately, the workings of his own mind. By re-imagining the ancient world peopled with men and women and gods who were not white, Du Bois came closer than the predominant white elite understanding, but he was not an ancient Greek, nor an ancient Roman, and his understanding was simply closer than before, not completely accurate. Modern examinations and explorations of the presence of diverse races in the ancient world owe something to the influence of Du Bois's thinking on modern Afrocentric thought, which in turn demanded recognition from the scholarly community, but it bears repeating that his was still a nineteenth century awareness.

later on, we may assume that Du Bois's study of the Classics provided him with a worldview involving race with which to contrast his own in time. The America in which Du Bois lived modelled itself in statuary, nomenclature, legislation, and artistically as the inheritor of Rome. The treatment of race in the ancient world was thoroughly unlike the treatment in contemporary America, and given the self-conscious efforts of architects and others to highlight similarities between the United States and the Rome which Du Bois had prided himself on knowing in detail, the difference in ideology must have jarred considerably against the constructed past Du Bois placed himself in. With his understanding of race informed as a child by ancient texts more than by conscious everyday experience, Du Bois was in a unique position to observe the world he was thrust into as he journeyed southward to Fisk, and to compare it to the egalitarian attitudes of the Greeks and Romans whom contemporary Americans assumed were their cultural predecessors. Though race tensions did exist in his birthplace, Du Bois's idealization of the ancient world, and his determination to valorize what he read into his everyday life ensured that his awareness of race remained more firmly in the ancient than in the modern world. It was inevitable that with Jim-Crow cars¹⁴ and outright hatred offered at every turn to men and women who were not white, Du Bois should find the America he was in falling short of the ideal it sought.

14 The legislation which forced segregation of African-Americans was often described as 'Jim Crow' after the then-popular comic acts featuring a character called Jim Crow, who was a mocking caricature of white notions of slaves. The Jim Crow character was buffoonish, slovenly and embodied every racial stereotype associated with contemporary post-Reconstruction American society. A Jim Crow car therefore was a railway car reserved and confined to African-Americans alone, and generally was substandard in quality and service. Though there is a tremendous body of literature and material on both the concept of 'Jim Crow' and the ways in which various 'Jim Crow' laws and acts were passed and their effects; this thesis cannot hope to do more than merely mention the term. See Hugh H. Smythe, "The Concept 'Jim Crow'" in *Social Forces*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Oct., 1948 - May, 1949), pp. 45-48 for an examination of the concept, and see "Jim Crow' Cars" in *The Virginia Law Register*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (Sep., 1911), pp. 409-410 for an example of the legislation designed to provide segregated rail cars.

It is unsurprising that he wrote unceasingly in later years of darker-skinned mythological characters, and hinted broadly that his people had a greater claim to the ancient world than the white elite who assumed the Classical world's glory was their inheritance. Considering Du Bois's upbringing and education, his acceptance of the ancient world's race awareness above that of the United States in the late nineteenth century is a logical explanation for many of his reactions and for his frequent use of ancient metaphor. The myths he chose, however, display his ideology in stark relief when examined by a student who like Du Bois himself was initially a scholar of the ancient world as opposed to the modern. In his 1910 book *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*, Du Bois explores the Medea myth, casting his Medea figure in the skin of a child of the African diaspora, and his Jason in the guise of a plantation owner's arrogant son. In his treatment, however, Du Bois provides his reader with dual Jasons, his second Jason an African American who is lulled by white conformity only to realize that his soul truly lies with the abandoned South of his birth, and the Medea-figure he forgot there. Du Bois's black Medea, Zora, in her Jason's absence devotes herself to the uplift and education of her people following her own study of the ancient world. The message is transparent, and speaks of equality of gender as well as of race; Du Bois's black Jason repents his crime, and returns to the woman who loves him, to serve humbly alongside her in the struggle for empowerment. The white Jason is as ruined in Du Bois's tale as the Jason of Euripides, and for the same reasons of arrogance and dishonesty when he abandons his beautiful white wife through adultery and cruelty. The story is a fascinating mixture of the social issues Du Bois saw in sharecropping Alabama and in contemporary Washington,

D.C., and the social problems embodied in the Medea story. By providing the reader with white and black examples of each major figure, and then neatly interweaving their individual stories, with the black tale leading to self-discovery, and the white tale to ruin, Du Bois employs a subversive message of racial contrasts. In his novel the reader is able to see a Jason who can recognize his errors alongside a Jason who cannot, and a Medea who can look to something greater than revenge alongside one who is destroyed by her lover's dishonesty.

Earlier than his re-imagined Medea was a series of essays in a collection titled *The Souls of Black Folk*, in 1903. In it, Du Bois explored issues he felt passionately about, from religion to his own history to education and beyond. In his essay on higher learning, "Of the Wings of Atalanta", Du Bois's use of classical metaphor is in full stride, with a complex and elaborate play on words between the city of Atlanta in which he then taught, the Atlantic ocean across which the slaves were carried from Africa, and the ancient Atalanta, whose race and golden apples were described by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* and by Hesiod in his *Catalogues of Women and Eoiae*. Du Bois employs the mythological Atalanta's temptation by Hippomenes' apples as a cautionary tale for the Atlanta in which he then lived, fashioning the city into an anthropomorphic descendant of the ancient runner whom he then warns about the lure of gold and the doom which awaited Atalanta when her flying feet slowed to permit her wily suitor the win. In his apparently fanciful essay, Du Bois displays his extensive knowledge of the Classics, and then weaves the wordplays he presents his reader with into a warning. In what rapidly becomes a typical display of Du Bois's mastery of words and of myth tempered with ideology, he provides

the solution to the inevitable temptation of gold which he portrays as the doom of the modern city: education of the black inhabitants is his answer. Through their education, the literary elite can in Du Bois's ideal world lead the masses into higher learning and loftier goals than simply riches by applying the lessons they learn in the prose of the ancient world. He argues in his essay that his educated Atlanta will not avoid the hunger for gold, but will be directed beyond the metaphorical apples to kneel "in the Sanctuary of Truth and Freedom and broad Humanity,"¹⁵ her inhabitants enriched more by knowledge than anything else.

It is the frequent connection Du Bois drew between modern injustice and the ancient world that this thesis explores. Accepting his unique childhood experiences, we must recognize Du Bois's reliance on the ancient texts he studied academically in the constant use of Greco-Roman tales and warnings in his later works. The choice to focus on the Classics as opposed to the Middle Ages, for example, is a deliberate one. Du Bois skips the Medieval period in his various essays, brushing it off with one or two mentions of St. Augustine or similar figures, but dwelling in the ancient world in essay after essay. This emphasis demands the inevitable question *why*? The contemporary nineteenth century had its interests in Arthurian legends,¹⁶ and the grandeur of knighthood has

15 W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of the Wings of Atalanta" in *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990. First 1903) 66.

16 From Tennyson's re-examination of the *Morte D'Arthur* or *Lady of Shallot* to Twain's *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, the Middle Ages were a rich source of imagery for nineteenth century writers and poets. For some brief examples of studies of this phenomenon, see Marcia C. Culver, "The Death and Birth of an Epic: Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur'" in *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring, 1982), pp. 51-61; Linda Ray Pratt, "The Holy Grail: Subversion and Revival of a Tradition in Tennyson and T. S. Eliot" in *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Winter, 1973), pp. 307-321; Lee Clark Mitchell, "Lines, Circles, Time Loops, and Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Sep., 1999), pp. 230-248

always had its adherents. Du Bois chose to remind his readers of the world of the ancient Mediterranean basin for a number of reasons. At the time in which he wrote, there was a growing interest in the discoveries along the northern coast of Africa – unearthed pyramids and archaeological discoveries had posed the question in the minds of the educated white elite: who built these things? By the mid nineteenth century, answers ranged from legendary white tribes of biblical Hamites¹⁷ who spread from the Middle East into Africa and educated the 'savages' there to an Indo-European ruling elite who subjugated the native peoples of Africa.¹⁸ Leading academic minds found it impossible to equate the marginalized African peoples which Europe was even then striving to conquer and subjugate with the civilizations who had built the enduring structures at Great Zimbabwe or along the Nile. At the same time, black writers were seeing in the images of tomb art¹⁹ painted in colours they knew intimately, and their answer to the question of ownership and architectural origins was one of resounding recognition. Surely here was evidence of African glory and an ancient past!

Du Bois could not have been unaware of the debates raging among archaeologists and historians, yet notably, he did not write of Egypt, avoiding the quagmire the ongoing arguments had made of the question of who constructed the wonders being uncovered. Instead, Du Bois made references to Carthage and its dark queen Dido, whose Middle Eastern origins ensured that his description of her could not be challenged. Du Bois

17 Philip S. Zachernuk, "Of Origins and Colonial Order: Southern Nigerian Historians and the 'Hamitic Hypothesis' C. 1870-1970" in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (1994), pp. 427-455

18 Stephen Howe, *Afrocentrism, Mythical Pasts and Imagined Homes* (London: Verso, 1998) 115-121

19 Uncovered artwork in Egyptian tombs displayed images of men and women whose faces were brown or black; this fact was heralded as a revelation and proof that Egypt had indeed been a multicultural kingdom.

adroitly bypassed the questions of white or black Egyptians, but played upon the interest in ancient accomplishments to present dark-skinned agency as opposed to white alone. As a medium to permit an exposition of matters of social justice, the Classics were well suited to Du Bois's purposes, given the world's growing awareness of the subject of the distant past in the Mediterranean basin. This is one aspect of Du Bois's use of classical metaphor and allusion. A second is of course his own early experience with it, and the afore-mentioned fact that the America he was exposed to upon leaving Great Barrington was sorely lacking in the racial tolerance of the ancient world as he chose to interpret it – such a contrast would be fuel to his social conscience. Ultimately however, the classical world was pivotal in each of these interpretations, providing Du Bois with a rich historical basis for his belief in racial equality, with rhetorical examples which had inspired the Western world for almost two thousand years, and with a subject to display his own erudition in and thus challenge the white elite at their own game.

Du Bois was hardly the first man of African descent to air claims of primacy and authorship in the ancient world by the 1890's. A trend²⁰ had begun to spread through the Western world following the successful Ethiopian resistance to colonial conquest, and the movement of African uplift was appropriately titled Ethiopianism by concerned whites in

²⁰ In the discourse of equality and African movements, it is essential to here clarify that the term 'Ethiopianism' has two very different meanings depending upon who is using the word. In Africa, Ethiopianism largely refers to the Independent African Church movement, and bears biblical and contemporary overtones informed by the successful resistance by nineteenth century Ethiopia against colonial invaders. The other meaning, which is the one primarily addressed in this thesis, is one where Ethiopia was considered an ancient kingdom which successfully bore civilization and learning into Egypt, and bore a biblical prophetic weight. The two terms can be confused, as each is intimately involved with the uplift of peoples of the African continent and with nationalistic discourse. For an extensive treatment of Ethiopianism as Literary Black Nationalism, see Moses, "The Poetics of Ethiopianism" 415; Teshale Tibebu, "Ethiopia: The 'Anomaly' and 'Paradox' of Africa" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Mar., 1996), pp. 414-430

South Africa.²¹ Largely rooted in Africa, the movement spawned religious and prophetic movements which heralded a new African state, and used claims of past glories to valorize the African people. Well ahead of the Afrocentrism which would take root in the twentieth century, Ethiopianism as a form of nationalist discourse demanded among other things a place in the ancient world for non-white peoples in the imaginations and theories of scholars and popular notions. Du Bois's arguments were more subtle than many preceding him,²² reminding his readers of black claims to antiquity largely through his constant use of classical metaphor, and deliberate reference to non-white mythological characters as a tool for larger efforts in demanding social equality.

Du Bois eventually became one of the fathers of Pan-Africanism, an ideology which owed much to the earlier Ethiopianism of North American scholars, and demanded that African nations form their own union and their own destiny without colonial interference from the various powers which had previously overshadowed African agency. Pan-Africanism's roots lay in many respects in affirming that Africa had been the birthplace and site of many great civilizations – as an emotional rallying cry, the appeal to ancient power was undeniable in providing many uprooted peoples of African descent a connection to something considered worthy of pride.

21 Ethiopianism in the context of the Independent Church movements hails from the term being applied to organizations considered to be breakaways from the churches of European origin, and largely considered to be dangerous by the colonial government. Concurrently, the Ethiopian movement in North America was informed by the desire to associate the movements for equal rights with an African kingdom and its past glories. Another term for Ethiopianism in a sense unconnected with the Independent Church Movement is *negritude*. This form of Ethiopianism is exemplified in Dunbar's 1896 poem "Ode to Ethiopia". See Moses, "The Poetics of Ethiopianism" 413; Gossie Harold Hudson, "Paul Laurence Dunbar: Dialect et La Negritude" in *Phylon*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (3rd Qtr., 1973), pp. 236-247

22 Robert W. July, "Nineteenth-Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden" in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1964), pp. 73-86; Moses, "The Poetics of Ethiopianism" 414-6 *passim*.

CHAPTER 1

W.E.B. DU BOIS'S LIFE

I would have been hailed with approval if I had died at 50. At 75 my death was practically requested. If living does not give value, wisdom and meaning to life, then there is no sense in living at all. If immature and inexperienced men rule the earth, then the earth deserves what it gets: the repetition of age-old mistakes, and wild welcome for what men knew a thousand years ago was disaster. I do not apologize for living long. High on the ramparts of this blistering hell of life, as it must appear to most men, I sit and see the Truth. I look it full in the face, and I will not lie about it, neither to myself or to the world.
 - W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois*, 415.

On February 23rd, 1868, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born to Mary Burghardt and Alfred Du Bois – the sole child of their brief marriage.²³ Soon after his son's birth, Alfred left Great Barrington, Massachusetts, his wife, and his son to seek a future elsewhere for himself and his new family. His reasons for leaving are remembered by Du Bois in his memoirs as being largely due to the stern disapproval of Mary's family over her wedding. Alfred never returned, but left his son with the romantic image of a good-looking nomadic father.

Alfred, my father...was small and beautiful of face and feature, just tinted with the sun, his curly hair chiefly revealing his kinship to Africa. In nature he was a dreamer, - romantic, indolent, kind, unreliable. He had in him the making of a poet, an adventurer, or a Beloved Vagabond...²⁴

23 If indeed they were legitimately married. David Levering Lewis indicates that Alfred was in fact engaged in bigamy, and that Mary and her son chose to imagine Alfred's death following his abandonment of them to keep the truth far away, and to maintain willing amnesia in the matter. See Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*. 21-23

24 Du Bois, *Darkwater* 4.

Du Bois's adored mother Mary was a hardworking woman in her mid-thirties when he was born, and had had a previous son, Adelbert,²⁵ to an affair with her cousin in her youth. Her family claimed descent from a West African slave named Tom who was captured and enslaved by the Dutch. Brought to America, he earned his freedom by risking his life during the Revolution, according to family legend. His wife is described as a "Bantu woman, who sang of Africa to her children."²⁶ The couple had many children, and worked hard enough to provide their family with land. Legend or not, they all assuredly earned their freedom in 1780 when the Bill of Rights freed all slaves in Massachusetts. The Burghardt family was a prolific one, and one which emphasized the value of hard work to each generation. Mary was no exception, and her young son was taught to cherish industry and view laziness and indolence with contempt.

Du Bois's mother was born in 1831 to Othello and Sally Burghardt, and she died shortly after his graduation from the Great Barrington high school in 1884. Following the departure of Alfred, Mary worked in small jobs around the town, eking out a living through hard work rather than charity, though Du Bois believed by his 90s that she had indeed been the recipient of a kind of proud generosity in the offers of work by townsfolk for a struggling mother. During Du Bois's youth, Mary suffered from a stroke, and he habitually walked with her, escorting her to her jobs and home again. Though she lost the use of her left hand and leg, the little family's existence did not grow more difficult. Aunts

25 The elder half brother is only rarely touched upon in Du Bois's memoirs and various autobiographical efforts, and his name is given by Du Bois as Idelbert, despite town records to the contrary, as Lewis notes. See Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, 23.

26 Notably, 'Bantu' describes a south-eastern African, in stark contrast to accounts of a West African Tom. The pair may have met after enslavement, or have had some other means of contact, but the geographic difference is notable. See Du Bois, *Darkwater* 3.

and cousins assisted, food was plentiful, and Mary continued to work in jobs where her son recalls people enjoying her company.²⁷ Du Bois felt very close to her, and happy in a life where people were considerate and compassionate to his family without an excess of well-meant paternalism. "I early came to understand that to be 'on the town,' the recipient of public charity, was the depth not only of misfortune but of a certain guilt. We earned our way."²⁸ During his public school years, Du Bois worked industriously to preclude any need for loan-taking or public charity. Du Bois took his mother's stern lessons about hard work and sobriety to heart; his life was spent without alcohol, and with tremendous dedication and effort.

In his various autobiographical accounts, he recalls that while his childhood was without great wealth, he was able to play and enjoy time with the other children, and that he never recalled any sense of poverty, though he and his mother could easily have been considered impoverished. It is worth mentioning again at this point what Du Bois records as the policies regarding race in his birthplace. Rather than his race being the downtrodden people that they were in other regions in America, Du Bois remembers that it was the Irish and lower class white Americans who were socially considered the lowest level, not those of African descent. His family's lineage was known to their fellow townsfolk, and as landowners and respectable workers, his relatives were held in the same regard as most other families. Du Bois consistently recalls his boyhood as being one where he always had playmates if he wished. As he was somewhat introverted, his

²⁷ Du Bois *Autobiography* 74

²⁸ *Autobiography* 95.

playmates had to seek him out, which he believed in later accounts was a possible reason for the lack of discrimination against him, though his anecdotes indicate that what discrimination there was remained class-based as opposed to race-based. In games, Du Bois was always the leader when it came to “running, exploring, story-telling and the planning of intricate games”.²⁹ The parents of boyhood playmates invited him in to share meals with their families and in some cases to tutor their children, and all in all, Du Bois was aware of his colour only on a superficial level as opposed to a personal one. Prejudice was reserved for those who were lazy or whose ancestry was unknown to a small town with Dutch heritage and New England reticence. By his nineties, Du Bois fondly remembered that there had been “no real discrimination on account of colour – it was all a matter of ability and hard work”.³⁰

Du Bois's paternal line was one he described partially with distaste and partially with reverence and pride.³¹ Du Bois described his grandfather with fascination and an

²⁹ *Dusk of Dawn* 15.

³⁰ Studies of nineteenth-century New England support the basis of many of Du Bois' claims, indicating the tremendous importance which class and socio-economic status held for communities; it is not unreasonable to suppose that matters of race were judged to be of comparatively less importance than whether a family was established in the region or not. See Kevin M. Sweeney, "Mansion People: Kinship, Class, and Architecture in Western Massachusetts in the Mid Eighteenth Century" in *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Winter, 1984), pp. 231-255; Du Bois *Autobiography* 75; Kunal M. Parker, "State, Citizenship, and Territory: The Legal Construction of Immigrants in Antebellum Massachusetts" in *Law and History Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Autumn, 2001), pp. 583-643

³¹ His father Alfred Du Bois's family originally hailed from France. They had immigrated to America in the early 17th century to settle in Ulster County in New York State. Du Bois's great-grandfather left the state to settle in the Bahamas following the Revolution, hoping to find his fortune. While he indeed found wealth as a planter, he also found a black woman whom he took either as wife or mistress, who bore him two sons. The planter died in 1820, and his white relatives sought to raise the two boys, John and Alexander, who were pale enough of skin to pass for white. Du Bois supposes in his autobiography that his great uncle John was white enough to blend into New York society, and lived out his life as a white man. Alexander, however, refused to take on the persona of a white man, and to learn the trade of shoe making. Instead, he lived as a boat steward, and considered himself a gentleman's son. At 18, Alexander left for Haiti to seek his fortune in the same region where he had been born. It was there that Alexander found his first wife, and returned with a son in 1830. See *Autobiography* 66.

element of respect. At 91, he remembered that Alexander Du Bois “held his head high, took no insults, made few friends. He was not a “Negro”; he was a man!”³² Du Bois first met his grandfather when he was 15 and Alexander was 77. He described his grandfather as charming, compelling and irascible, as well as fond of the fairer sex. At 77, he was considering a sixth wife, to Du Bois's mingled admiration and consternation. For all the respect Du Bois developed throughout his exploration of his grandfather's diaries later in life, he also recognized how damaging Alexander's personality had been to the lives of his children. His disciplinarian approach was justifiable cause and explanation in Du Bois's eyes for the behaviour of his father Alfred, who sought to escape Alexander's influence through travel. In various bibliographical accounts, Du Bois dwells both on the shy humanity he perceived in his grandfather, and the hard, domineering man he felt had driven away Alfred.³³ Alexander above all provided an example for his grandson of a man who was staunchly proud of his race, and unwilling to hide it despite the ability to have done so.³⁴ This stern, difficult man represented an inherited aristocratic legacy and aloof attitude which gave Du Bois justification for a similarly arrogant and stubborn refusal in later years to accept his supposed inferiority in contemporary nineteenth century American society purely on the basis of his skin colour.

Following the death of Mary in 1884, and the continued absence of Alfred,³⁵ Du

32 *Autobiography* 71.

33 “The Shadow of Years” 5.

34 Monica L. Miller, “W.E.B. Du Bois and the Dandy as Diasporic Race Man” in *Callaloo*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Summer, 2003), pp. 738-765

35 Du Bois recalls that his father died in his early childhood. *Dusk of Dawn* 12. However, Lewis suggests that Alfred died much later, and rather than dying, simply fled a marriage which was one of bigamy and therefore illegal. See Lewis, *W.E.B Du Bois: Biography of a Race* 22-23.

Bois considered his post-secondary education. During his high school years, he had been fortunate enough to have an understanding principal who recognized the importance of his native genius, and guided him toward college preparation.³⁶ Frank Hosmer, that principal, was ideologically ahead of his time in urging his sole black pupil to study Greek and Latin and to ready himself for higher learning. As a result of his preparation and his efforts to secure expensive Greek texts for his pupil,³⁷ Du Bois was offered a chance he perhaps would not have had in other states. Despite the difficulties presented by his financial situation as an orphaned, hard-working teenager, the wider Great Barrington community extended the kind of support which did not become charity, but instead, a kind of loan for the future. The wife of one of the mill owners, Mrs. Russell, was also the mother of one of Du Bois's playmates. She provided the costly books with which to study Greek to her son's friend. A local pastor contacted his old churches, and together they gave Du Bois a scholarship to attend Fisk University³⁸ in Tennessee. The support which was provided to Du Bois demonstrated that far from being marginalized due to his race, Du Bois was lauded and encouraged by those around him to flourish academically and strive for still-greater heights.

Du Bois's heart was set on Harvard, but he went south in 1885 despite his family's misgivings and outrage at sending him to a region where discrimination was widespread.

36 Francis L. Broderick, "The Academic Training of W. E. B. DuBois" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Winter, 1958), pp. 10-16

37 The price of his texts was covered by a wealthy white townswoman in a corollary to Du Bois's assertions of racial equality; her willingness to assist in educating him is a notable example of merit being of greater importance than race.

38 Fisk was founded in 1866 to provide education to freedmen and women in Tennessee, and became one of the more influential centres of learning for blacks in America.

Once in Tennessee, Du Bois experienced both widespread racial segregation for the first time, and also was exposed to the people he felt were his. He later described the change of heart he experienced upon travelling South: “A new loyalty and allegiance replaced my Americanism: henceforward I was a Negro.”³⁹ Prior to his journey south, he had met African-Americans as reserved as he was in New England, or interacted with his own extended family as longtime landowners and accepted members of the Massachusetts community. In the south, he found great numbers of men and women with skin like his. “I was thrilled to be for the first time among so many people of my own color...”⁴⁰ At Fisk, Du Bois enthusiastically participated in college life, writing letters to college newspapers at first, and enjoying social gatherings with his peers. Du Bois became part of a group of students who promised to write steadily to one another following their graduation, and journeyed during the summers to work either with his fellows as the manager of a Glee Club, or on his own as a teacher in rural Tennessee and other regions of the southern United States. As a teacher in his summers between 1885 and 1888, he experienced life among impoverished African-Americans in a country where their uplift was barely welcomed. “I travelled not only in space but in time. I touched the very shadow of slavery. I lived and taught school in log cabins built before the Civil War... I touched intimately the lives of the commonest of mankind – people who ranged from barefooted dwellers on dirt floors, with patched rags for clothes, to rough, hard-working farmers, with plain, clean plenty.”⁴¹ He later revisited one of the places he taught, only to find that few if any of his pupils had risen up from their poverty, and some had even been killed,

³⁹ *Autobiography* 108.

⁴⁰ *Autobiography* 107.

⁴¹ *Ibid* 114.

unfairly imprisoned, or had died of sickness or despair. The Fisk years were accordingly very powerful ones for Du Bois, displaying for him the south and his people in both their eager hopes for a future, and in the rural hopelessness he determined to change during the course of his life. "I replaced my hitherto egocentric world by a world centering and whirling about my race in America."⁴²

Du Bois had not forgotten his desire to attend Harvard, and wrote to the registrar to apply upon his graduation from Fisk.⁴³ After some discussion, he was invited to attend, and was awarded the Price Greenleaf scholarship upon the high recommendations of Fisk professors. He was admitted as a junior, however, as the B.A. he had earned from Fisk was not considered adequate for the level of educational excellence Harvard demanded. Du Bois recalls considering this understandable – far from being offended, he jumped at the chance and arrived at Harvard to study for his second B.A. In 1890, he graduated *cum laude* in a class of three hundred and earned nationwide interest as the only black speaker at the ceremony, with an address on Jefferson Davis which praised and condemned the man at the same time as representative of the North European⁴⁴ arrogance which was at that time doing such colonial damage worldwide. Du Bois followed his B.A. with Master's level study of History, and received his M.A. along with the Matthews Scholarship and the H.B. Rogers Memorial Fellowship in Political Science by 1892.⁴⁵

⁴² *Autobiography* 112.

⁴³ Du Bois' course of studies at Fisk were in the humanities, studying Greek, chemistry, physics, general science, German, philosophy and ethics, earning a general BA, and entering Harvard to focus on History and Philosophy. Du Bois also worked as the chief editor of the *Fisk Herald* during his years in Nashville; it was a role he was to spend much of his life performing. See *Autobiography* 112-114.

⁴⁴ Du Bois called Davis 'Teutonic'.

⁴⁵ W.E.B. Du Bois ed H. Aptheker. Letter to Rutherford B. Hayes, May 25, 1891. *The Correspondence of W.E.B. Du Bois: Volume I. Selections 1877-1934* 16.

Having achieved intellectual success at America's premier institution, Du Bois now sought to surpass that standard with experience in European universities to broaden the scope of his academic life. He therefore approached the John F. Slater Fund to secure funding for study abroad with a focus in history and political science. The Fund, headed by former President Rutherford B. Hayes, initially refused Du Bois's application. They had, however, publicly stated that they would willingly offer funding to an American of African descent if he desired to study academically and lift himself above his peers. Du Bois confronted Hayes with this claim, and adroitly manipulated the Fund into doing what they had promised.

If the offer was an experiment, you ought to have had at least one case before withdrawing it; if you have given aid before (and I mean here toward liberal education – not toward training plowmen) then your statement... was partial. From the above facts I think you owe an apology to the Negro people. We ...can't educate ourselves off nothing and we can't have the moral courage to try, if in the midst of our work our friends turn public sentiment against us by making statements which injure us and which they cannot stand by.⁴⁶

He argued eloquently in the above-quoted letter to Hayes, and to his credit, Hayes responded favourably. Du Bois left soon after for Germany to pursue his doctoral work at the University of Berlin. In Europe, Du Bois was once again exposed to a vastly different world from that which he had previously experienced, and his memoirs make frequent mention of his surprise at the equal treatment he received at the hands of his European fellows. The experience altered the way in which he viewed the segregation of blacks in America, and allowed him once again to compare the American experience to that of an older culture. Du Bois's funding was renewed for a second year, but Berlin required three

⁴⁶ Letter to the Honorable Board of Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund, May 1892. *Correspondence* 14.

years' study for him to be granted his Ph.D. from that institution. Funding was not extended for a third year, and Du Bois returned from Germany to complete his study of the Transatlantic Slave Trade at Harvard, ending what he described in his memoirs as "The Age of Miracles".⁴⁷

Du Bois earned nationwide recognition as the first black man to attain a Ph.D from Harvard in 1895. His dissertation, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America: 1638-1870* became the seminal work on the matter for the next seventy years, and was published by Harvard. Had he been white, the offers of employment perhaps would have been numerous, but only three institutions offered him a position, and Du Bois took the first one he was offered, at Wilberforce College in Ohio,⁴⁸ teaching Latin and Greek from 1894 to 1896. Though he clashed with the administration over numerous religious matters, including extemporaneous prayer, Du Bois was grateful for his first position, though it was not one which permitted the fullest exploration of what he had grown to favour academically: social and political history, and the fledgling science of sociology.

Before long, growing dissatisfaction at teaching a subject he was not passionate about swayed Du Bois, and he accepted a position at the University of Pennsylvania in

⁴⁷ "The Shadow of Years" 9.

⁴⁸ Wilberforce has long been linked to black emancipation. Named after a British abolitionist, the college had generations of active black scholars teaching and studying there, among whom was William Sanders Scarborough between 1908 and 1920, now considered the intellectual predecessor to Du Bois in many respects. See Michele Valerie Ronnick, "The African American Classicist William Sanders Scarborough (1852-1926) and the Early Days of CAMWS" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (Feb. - Mar., 2002), pp. 263-266; Michele Valerie Ronnick, "William Sanders Scarborough: The First African American Member of the Modern Language Association" in *PMLA*, Vol. 115, No. 7, Special Millennium Issue (Dec., 2000), pp. 1787-1793

1896. He had sought to be able to teach sociology at Wilberforce but had been refused; at Pennsylvania, he was invited primarily in order to make a study of the Philadelphia black populace. Shortly before leaving Wilberforce, Du Bois married Nina Gomer, and in 1897, became a father with the birth of his son Burghardt, and began his sociological study in Philadelphia. This effort led to Du Bois's second major published work, *The Philadelphia Negro*, completed in 1899.⁴⁹ Still considered a powerful sociological work, the book marked Du Bois's entry into studies of American locales. He fought colour prejudice from his own race in this study, as they were by no means eager to be studied by anyone. In later years, Du Bois recognized that the detail of his project likely limited its readership, but was pleased nonetheless that *The Philadelphia Negro* was considered a seminal piece of sociology.⁵⁰

Following his exhaustive effort in Philadelphia, Du Bois was invited in 1897 to work at Atlanta University teaching History, Economics, and Sociology, and he accepted the position, moving with his wife and son into the deep south. At Atlanta, he began a study of the 'American Negro' and taught sociology to the students there.⁵¹ For thirteen years, Du Bois taught and studied at Atlanta, and saw the hatreds between races without the veil of objectivity and distance he had cultivated at Philadelphia. "I became widely-acquainted with the real condition of my people. At Wilberforce I was their captious

49 Tukufu Zuberi, "W. E. B. Du Bois's Sociology: The Philadelphia Negro and Social Science" in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 595, (Sep., 2004), pp. 146-156

50 "The Shadow of Years" 11

51 Du Bois' Atlanta studies were one of the first continuous sociological surveys in American history. See Lucius T. Outlaw, Jr., "W. E. B. Du Bois on the Study of Social Problems" in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 568, *The Study of African American Problems: W. E. B. Du Bois's Agenda, Then and Now* (Mar., 2000), pp. 281-297; Elliott M. Rudwick, "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Atlanta University Studies on the Negro" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Autumn, 1957), pp. 466-476

critic. In Philadelphia I was their cold and scientific investigator, with microscope and probe. It took but a few years of Atlanta to bring me to hot and indignant defense."⁵² It was at Atlanta that Du Bois saw race riots and lynchings. It was also at Atlanta that his son Burghardt grew ill, and died. Nina was distraught, and in an emotional essay in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois tried to deal with his pain and sense of loss.⁵³ He recalled hearing in 1900 of the knuckle bones of Sam Hose, a lynching victim, being displayed prominently in a storefront further down a street he was walking upon and was unable to go out that day in his physical illness at the horror he felt.⁵⁴ His frustration with the inequalities facing African-Americans affected his life and his work. Following further riots, among them the Atlanta Riot of 1906, Du Bois ceased to be a disinterested observer, and reconsidered his choice of an academic life. Prior to the 1903 publication of *Souls*, Du Bois's writing had primarily been academic and strictly objective. Afterward, the fiery rhetoric of his youth emerged, with the same powerful classical language which he'd been so proud of mastering in his boyhood and which as a man he recognized was the basis of the academic tradition of the elite.

Until that point, Du Bois had believed in an academic career for himself, but

52 "The Shadow of Years" 11. See also Dominic J. Capeci Jr. and Jack C. Knight, "Reckoning with Violence: W. E. B. Du Bois and the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot" in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (Nov., 1996), pp. 727-766

53 Published in 1903, *Souls* became one of the most widely read and discussed collections regarding matters of race and ethnicity in America, influencing luminaries such as Langston Hughes among thousands of others. The collection has been heralded as an Afrocentric work long before the term was coined, or a rite of passage for its readers in their individual journeys toward self-identification. See Richard Cullen Rath, "Echo and Narcissus: The Afrocentric Pragmatism of W. E. B. Du Bois" in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (Sep., 1997), pp. 461-495; Ira Katznelson, "Du Bois's Century" in *Social Science History*, Vol. 23, No. 4, (Winter, 1999), pp. 459-474

54 *Autobiography* 222.

depression and frustration forced what he described later as “the great Decision.”⁵⁵ Du Bois had been approached in 1896 by Booker T. Washington⁵⁶ to teach at Tuskegee, and finally accepted a position to teach for the summer of 1903. In Du Bois's interactions with Washington came the first meeting of two men with very similar goals and differing approaches. Ideologically, and culturally, the two were very different. Washington hailed from slave roots, and had himself been born a slave. He had attended a vocational school, and believed that by hard industry and effort, black men could establish themselves both financially and economically as worthy of respect. Du Bois believed that the men who were gifted with superior abilities should be trained to their utmost and act as advocates to better their people. Du Bois called his belief that of a “Talented Tenth”,⁵⁷ who would prevent the black man in America from forever obeying the rule and leadership of white

55 “The Shadow of Years” 12. Du Bois had been working by that time as an activist, but this represented a decision on his part to move wholly into life as an activist as opposed to an academic.

56 Washington was every whit as influential as Du Bois in his own right, and has many adherents even now. His goal was the same as that of Du Bois: emancipation and equality. His methods differed, as did his background and philosophy. Washington believed firmly in the importance of hard work and in earning recognition through struggle and honesty as opposed to demanding rights which were being ignored. Washington's methods were vastly preferred by the white establishment at his time, with his influence from his school at Tuskegee often governing the hiring or firing of black public employees. In contrast, Du Bois' more fiery desire to change the order of his time was far less popular, and the struggle between the two men stemmed both from their philosophy and from Du Bois characteristically accusing Washington of using his influence to prevent all but his friends from acquiring civil appointments. See Robert J. Norrell, “Booker T. Washington: Understanding the Wizard of Tuskegee” in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, No. 42 (Winter, 2003-2004), pp. 96-109; Booker T. Gardner, “The Educational Contributions of Booker T. Washington” in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Autumn, 1975), pp. 502-518; Donald General, “Booker T. Washington and Progressive Education: An Experimentalist Approach to Curriculum Development” in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (Summer, 2000), pp. 215-234; Monroe N. Work, “Booker T. Washington, Pioneer” in *Journal of Social Forces*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Jan., 1925), pp. 310-315; Charles R. Larson, “The Deification of Booker T. Washington” in *Negro American Literature Forum*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Winter, 1970), pp. 125-126; Donald J. Calista, “Booker T. Washington: Another Look” in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Oct., 1964), pp. 240-255; Louis R. Harlan, “Booker T. Washington in Biographical Perspective” in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 75, No. 6 (Oct., 1970), pp. 1581-1599; Oliver C. Cox, “The Leadership of Booker T. Washington” in *Social Forces*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Oct., 1951), pp. 91-97.

57 Dan S. Green, “W. E. B. Du Bois' Talented Tenth: A Strategy for Racial Advancement” in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 358-366; Juan Battle and Earl Wright II, “W.E.B. Du Bois's Talented Tenth: A Quantitative Assessment” in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 6 (Jul., 2002), pp. 654-672; Rutledge M. Dennis, “Du Bois and the Role of the Educated Elite” in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Autumn, 1977), pp. 388-402

men. Both men were staunchly dedicated to the uplift of their people. But Washington often denigrated higher learning in an effort both to appease white audiences and to emphasize the importance of industrial education. He mocked the idea of a boy sitting down to study the Classics while his fields went unploughed.⁵⁸ Given their differences of approach and the respective influence of each man, it is hardly surprising that they clashed before long. Washington's influence struck Du Bois as unfair, and his control in the political appointments of black men was such that Du Bois believed that, given his distaste for learning and his accommodationist rhetoric, it was dangerous to consider Booker T. Washington the single spokesman for the black race. In his 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois publicly criticized Washington's methods for effecting social change, with foreseeable results. Washington immediately acted to stifle Du Bois's appointment to any larger boards or authorities, believing that Du Bois was seeking to oust and replace him, or to discredit him and destroy the work Washington had done to further the cause of African-Americans.⁵⁹ The conflict between the two men has been covered in exhaustive detail elsewhere,⁶⁰ but it is worth mentioning here that their personal rift widened until most African-Americans were split into two camps based upon

58 See Booker T. Washington, "Relation of Industrial Education to National Progress" in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 33, No. 1, *Industrial Education* (Jan., 1909), pp. 1-12. See also Booker T. Washington, *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 4: 1895-1898* (The University of Illinois Press: 1975, 2000.) 331.

59 Washington worked privately to further the social emancipation of African-Americans, testing judicial leniency by orchestrating trials of lawsuits against segregation. For a detailed exploration into Washington's quiet campaign of litigation and social change, see Louis R. Harlan, "The Secret Life of Booker T. Washington" in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Aug., 1971), pp. 393-416

60 As the primary division between charismatic leaders in the early Civil Rights movement, the conflict between Washington and Du Bois, and the subsequent aligning of other black activists into one camp or another has commanded a whole body of literature surrounding it. See Mark Bauerlein, "Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois: The Origins of a Bitter Intellectual Battle" in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, No. 46 (Winter, 2004-2005), pp. 106-114; Daniel Walden, "The Contemporary Opposition to the Political and Educational Ideas of Booker T. Washington" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Apr., 1960), pp. 103-115

the ideology of either man. Du Bois recalled many incidents which upset him where young black men tried to build new towns or work to better themselves, appealed to Tuskegee for approval, and received no aid or public support, leading to their eventual collapse and failure.⁶¹

Du Bois's essay in *Souls* on Washington ended any question of his working for Tuskegee and sealed the division between the two men. Du Bois additionally later recalled having written letters around this time to the editor of *The Guardian*, a well-regarded newspaper,⁶² which criticized the influence that he believed Tuskegee (and therefore Washington) was employing to direct the tone of the black press.⁶³ William Monroe Trotter, the editor, was strongly influenced by Du Bois' opinions, and attended a meeting at which Washington was to speak, inciting what police termed 'a riot' due to his questioning of Washington and his behaviour. Outraged that his friend was jailed for asking sharp questions, Du Bois travelled in 1904 to Buffalo, New York, to meet with 58 other delegates, who crossed over to the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, and following that meeting incorporated a group in 1905 to fight for African-American rights against the

61 *Autobiography* 240. The polarization of the early Civil Rights movement along the Du Bois-Washington axis had serious consequences for those caught in the crossfire. See Leo J. Alilunas, "What Our Schools Teach About Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Spring, 1973), pp. 176-186; Martin Kilson, "The Washington and Du Bois Leadership Paradigms Reconsidered" in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 568 (Mar., 2000), pp. 298-313; C. Spencer Poxpey, "The Washington-Dubois Controversy and Its Effect on the Negro Problem" in *History of Education Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Summer, 1957), pp. 128-152

62 The newspaper which Du Bois wrote to was the *Boston Guardian*, edited by William Monroe Trotter, a fiery member of the 'Talented Tenth' who butted heads numerous times with the Tuskegee Machine. See William Harrison, "Phylon Profile IX: William Monroe Trotter-Fighter" in *Phylon* (1940-1956), Vol. 7, No. 3 (3rd Qtr., 1946), pp. 237-245; "Remembering William Monroe Trotter: The First and Only Black Man to Be Thrown out of the Oval Office" in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, No. 46 (Winter, 2004-2005), pp. 50-51

63 *Ibid* 246.

influence of Washington and Tuskegee. That group was called "The Niagara Movement".⁶⁴

Drawing upon his editorial experiences, between 1905-1906, Du Bois founded a journal titled *The Moon*⁶⁵ in an attempt to draw wider attention to the problems he perceived in America between the races. This weekly quickly floundered. Undeterred, Du Bois tried again, and the following year founded *The Horizon*.⁶⁶ This Washington monthly was never widely read, but with it, Du Bois continued to finesse his editorial style and message. In 1909, he travelled to New York and met with other activists who shared many of his views, founding what would become the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. By this time, the Niagara Movement had largely lost its impetus, and it merged into the NAACP without incident. The next year, Du Bois founded the journal which became the means for the NAACP to convey its message, *The Crisis*. He also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the NAACP, and it was as editor, writer, and activist that Du Bois finally found the path he would spend the rest of his life following.⁶⁷ During these years he published several works of fiction, including *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*. However, it was as the editor for *The Crisis* that Du Bois became a well-known figure across the United States and especially among African-American households.⁶⁸ His blistering editorials and essays were read and disseminated

64 *Autobiography* 247-250.; Elliott M. Rudwick, "The Niagara Movement" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Jul., 1957), pp. 177-200

65 Paul G. Partington, "The Moon Illustrated Weekly-The Precursor of the Crisis" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Jul., 1963), pp. 206-216

66 Susanna Ashton, "Du Bois's 'Horizon': Documenting Movements of the Color Line" in *MELUS*, Vol. 26, No. 4, *African American Literature* (Winter, 2001), pp. 3-23

67 Arnold Rampersad, "W.E.B. Du Bois as a Man of Literature" in *American Literature*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Mar., 1979), pp. 50-68

68 Elliott M. Rudwick, "W. E. B. Du Bois in the Role of Crisis Editor" in *The Journal of Negro History*,

swiftly, and he gained considerable clout through the familiarity with which he was soon seen. "My career as a scientist was to be swallowed up in my role as master of propaganda... I could not easily break down an inherited reserve; or at times curb a biting, critical tongue."⁶⁹ Du Bois worked in the years prior to World War I to interpret the hindrances and aspirations of African-Americans both to a white audience and to a black readership. "With this organ of propaganda and defense we were able to organize one of the most effective assaults of liberalism upon reaction that the modern world has seen."⁷⁰ He also published a monthly record of blacks lynched in America, an action which caused strife amongst the NAACP's board of directors, some of whom felt that this move was provocative.⁷¹ Nonetheless, Du Bois edited the journal as he saw fit until 1934 despite any efforts to pacify his fiery rhetoric.

During the years of his involvement both with the NAACP and *The Crisis*, Du Bois helped to organize, and also participated in the Race Congress of 1911 along with numerous other engagements and conferences.⁷² He was consistently involved with the various Pan-African Congresses, acting as Secretary as a matter of course. With the NAACP, Du Bois and his fellows ably made the world aware of the injustices being perpetrated against African-Americans by their white countrymen.⁷³ With the Pan-African Congresses, he and others like him offered the idea of union within Africa and a united

Vol. 43, No. 3 (Jul., 1958), pp. 214-240

⁶⁹ *Autobiography* 253.

⁷⁰ *Ibid* 260.

⁷¹ *Ibid* 257.

⁷² Du Bois' first major international event was the Paris Exposition in 1900.

⁷³ August Meier and John H. Bracey, Jr., "The NAACP as a Reform Movement, 1909-1965: 'To Reach the Conscience of America'" in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Feb., 1993), pp. 3-30; Susan D. Carle, "Race, Class, and Legal Ethics in the Early NAACP (1910-1920)" in *Law and History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring, 2002), pp. 97-146

force of nations bound by the same shared origins among other concerns. For all the good done in his lecturing, writing and editorship, however, Du Bois was also subject to the inevitable disappointments resulting from his unbending approach to matters in contrast with more compromising attitudes. The first issue upon the foundation of the NAACP was the continuing matter of his personal enmity toward Booker T. Washington, which the NAACP did not wish to have dividing the African-American people further. With Washington's death in 1915, however, there was afforded an opportunity to unite the two ideological camps, and at the First America Conference in 1916,⁷⁴ Du Bois and the NAACP met with representatives of Tuskegee, and agreed to work unanimously toward racial uplift as opposed to perpetuating divisions.

The next hurdle for Du Bois to overcome was the matter of volunteers for World War I. In the recruitment process was an inherent segregationist policy which many blacks including Du Bois took umbrage over.⁷⁵ African-American volunteers were refused entrance into any regiment besides the four existing 'colored' ones, lynchings and killings escalated prior to the war, bills were drafted to prevent men of African descent from enlisting, and when amended and passed, one recommended that "negroes should be drafted but trained in 'separate' units and somewhat ambiguously permitted men to be drafted for 'labor'."⁷⁶ Rumours abounded that the Germans were working with black men

74 Held at the president of the NAACP Joel E. Spingarn's "Troutbeck" estate in New York State. See Jonathan Scott Holloway, *Confronting the Veil; Abram Harris Jr., E. Franklin Frazier, and Ralph Bunche, 1919-1941* (University of North Carolina Press: 2002)

75 Mark Ellis, "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Formation of Black Opinion in World War I: A Commentary on 'The Damnable Dilemma'" in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (Mar., 1995), pp. 1584-1590; William Jordan, "'The Damnable Dilemma': African-American Accommodation and Protest during World War I" in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (Mar., 1995), pp. 1562-1583

76 *Autobiography* 265.

throughout the United States to rebel, which in popular opinion made it unsafe to trust African-Americans with guns.⁷⁷ The voluntarily segregated black officer corps lost its commander when the United States Army retired him early, and for all the promise of many black soldiers, their treatment within any regiment they entered was limiting and demeaning. In 1917, for example, a group of black soldiers in Texas was goaded and insulted beyond their ability to tolerate and a riot ensued. In the same year, East St. Louis saw white strikers against the war attack and murder black workers. The two incidents displayed wildly disproportionate contrasting punishments to the respective offenders. In Houston, seventeen whites were killed, according to Du Bois. The punishment earned for the rioting soldiers included nineteen hung, and 91 imprisoned, some for life. In East St. Louis, 125 black men were murdered, and of the white strikers, eighteen were fined, and 30 were imprisoned, none for more than fourteen years.⁷⁸ Despite all this, Du Bois publicly urged his race to enlist and fight in Europe, publishing an editorial entitled "Close Ranks" in 1918 which called for black men to forget grievances and stand by their country. Unfortunately, the treatment of the men who enlisted fell far short of whatever patriotic hopes Du Bois had,⁷⁹ and in his later *Autobiography*, he remembered his

⁷⁷ *Ibid* 265.

⁷⁸ *Ibid* 269.

⁷⁹ In World War I there was a strong movement by both African nations and by African-Americans to use their presence in combat as a means of gaining civil rights in return. For example, Blaise Diagne, whom Du Bois met at a Pan-African Congress in 1919 (see Clarence G. Contee, "Du Bois, the NAACP, and the Pan-African Congress of 1919" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Jan., 1972), pp. 13-28), was responsible for bringing thousands of African men to fight in the war on the side of France, for which France promised him they would earn voting privileges and citizen rights. Notably, despite promises of that nature, the nations who sent black soldiers were disappointed in their hopes, as black regiments were prevented from front line combat and the rights of a veteran, and upon their return, were stymied in their efforts to purchase rights through having volunteered for combat. See Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: Black American Troops in World War I* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974); Lucy E. Salyer, "Baptism by Fire: Race, Military Service, and U.S. Citizenship Policy, 1918-1935" in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 91, No. 3 (Dec., 2004), pp. 847-876; Merze Tate, "The War Aims of World War I and World War II and Their Relation to the Darker Peoples of the World" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (Summer, 1943), pp. 521-532;

disillusionment upon learning what those who had agreed with his call had suffered.

I did not believe in war, but I thought that in a fight with America against militarism and for democracy we would be fighting for the emancipation of the Negro race. With the Armistice came disillusion... I heard from the mouths of soldiers the kind of treatment that black men got in the American army... I collected some astonishing documents of systematic slander and attack against Negroes.⁸⁰

Du Bois discovered that upon their return from France, black soldiers were lynched even while in uniform.⁸¹ Far from being welcomed as the heroes and fighters they had shown themselves to be, they were more savagely repressed lest they rise up after experiencing any sense of triumph. For some time, Du Bois lost the faith of his people as the abuses came to light against African-American soldiers; the context of a plea for their efforts in the war by a man whom they believed was a fierce champion of their rights made their

Myron J. Echenberg, "Paying the Blood Tax: Military Conscription in French West Africa, 1914-1929" in *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1975), pp. 171-192; Michael C. Lambert, "From Citizenship to Negritude: 'Making a Difference' in Elite Ideologies of Colonized Francophone West Africa" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Apr., 1993), pp. 239-262; Anne Summers and R. W. Johnson, "World War I Conscription and Social Change in Guinea" in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No. 1, (1978), pp. 25-38; Anson Phelps Stokes, "American Race Relations in War Time" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Autumn, 1945), pp. 535-551; Theodore Hemmingway, "Prelude to Change: Black Carolinians in the War Years, 1914-1920" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (Summer, 1980), pp. 212-227; Matthew Pratt Guterl, "The New Race Consciousness: Race, Nation, and Empire in American Culture, 1910-1925" in *Journal of World History*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Fall, 1999), pp. 307-352; George Q. Flynn, "Selective Service and American Blacks During World War II" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (Winter, 1984), pp. 14-25; Randy Finley, "Black Arkansans and World War One" in *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Autumn, 1990), pp. 249-277; Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology" in *Journal of World History*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Mar., 2004), pp. 31-63

⁸⁰ *Autobiography* 274.

⁸¹ W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, "The Negro Soldier in Service Abroad During the First World War" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (Summer, 1943), pp. 324-334; Todd E. Lewis, "Mob Justice in the 'American Congo': 'Judge Lynch' in Arkansas during the Decade after World War I" in *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Summer, 1993), pp. 156-184; Rufus E. Clement, "Problems of Demobilization and Rehabilitation of the Negro Soldier After World Wars I and II" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (Summer, 1943), pp. 533-542; David H. Onkst, "'First a Negro... Incidentally a Veteran': Black World War Two Veterans and the G. I. Bill of Rights in the Deep South, 1944-1948" in *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Spring, 1998), pp. 517-54; Tyler Stovall, "The Color Line behind the Lines: Racial Violence in France during the Great War" in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 3 (Jun., 1998), pp. 737-769

treatment harder to bear, and made Du Bois into a tool of an establishment which had betrayed them. Du Bois won back a modicum of respect in his denunciation of the abuses of authority and the segregationist tactics employed by white officers in control of African-American soldiers, but his image had suffered a blow.⁸²

Du Bois tended to be uncompromising, and readily acknowledged that he was neither extroverted nor comfortable in the role of leader in a social setting. For all his protests in his autobiographical accounts that he was uninterested in power, Du Bois's strong principles and unflinching moral compunctions left him leading those he could not tolerate obeying. In the NAACP as the editor of the organization's journal, and Director of Publicity and Research, Du Bois frequently came into conflict with the other executives. His refusal to moderate the tone of his editorials despite any political impact on the association with which *The Crisis* was connected proved a problem for the directors of the NAACP. His conflict with Booker T. Washington was not the last dispute Du Bois had with another black leader; Marcus Garvey⁸³ and he each wrote savage denunciations of

82 Mark Ellis, "'Closing Ranks' and 'Seeking Honors': W. E. B. Du Bois in World War I" in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 79, No. 1 (Jun., 1992), pp. 96-124

83 Garvey was an influential leader and one of the fathers of Pan-Africanism along with Du Bois and others. His influence is debated as having been both positive and negative; his goals were the creation of a united African motherland to which he would lead the struggling blacks from America. To that end, Garvey employed fiery rhetoric and impassioned protests to an extent which even the inflammatory Du Bois found dangerous. Among other achievements, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association, which gathered notable political clout, declared himself the President of the unified Africa, and began a freighter line with which he intended to transport the masses who eagerly flocked to him in order to return to Africa. For a brief examination of his tremendous impact on black nationalism, see Clarence Walker, *Deromanticizing Black History: Critical Essays and Reappraisals*. (Knoxville, Tennessee: 1991); M. B. Akpan, "Liberia and the Universal Negro Improvement Association: The Background to the Abortion of Garvey's Scheme for African Colonization" in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1973), pp. 105-127; Emory Tolbert, "Outpost Garveyism and the Unia Rank and File" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (Mar., 1975), pp. 233-253; Wilson Record, "The Negro Intellectual and Negro Nationalism" in *Social Forces*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Oct., 1954), pp. 10-18; Robert H. Brisbane, "His Excellency: The Provincial President of Africa" in *Phylon* (1940-1956), Vol. 10, No. 3 (3rd Qtr., 1949), pp. 257-264; J. Herman Blake, "Black Nationalism" in *Annals of the American*

one another. In this case, Du Bois's issue with Garvey was one where he felt Garvey was too extreme in his views. Their conflict is discussed more fully below but can be summarized here in that Garvey ultimately flouted the law and common morality in his desire to uplift his people. Du Bois was a moralist to his core, and with Garvey's ceremonial parades and steamships, Du Bois viewed his actions as bordering on the illegal and the irresponsible.⁸⁴

During the years following his resignation from Atlanta University and his emergence as an editor and activist, Du Bois was a prolific author not only of scathing editorials, but also of a number of books; plays, works of fiction, and collections of essays and poetry.⁸⁵ In addition to creating his extensive collection of literature, Du Bois attended numerous conferences, exhibitions, and meetings. In 1919 he wrote to President Wilson on behalf of the NAACP regarding the upcoming Peace Conference, and was asked to investigate atrocities committed by American soldiers against their black brethren.⁸⁶ Du Bois also assisted in unearthing the causes and reasons of the east St. Louis

Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 382, (Mar., 1969), pp. 15-25; Paul Gilroy, "Black Fascism" in *Transition*, No. 81/82 (2000), pp. 70-91; John Henrik Clarke, "Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years" in *Transition*, No. 46 (1974), pp. 14-19; Birgit Aron, "The Garvey Movement: Shadow and Substance" in *Phylon* (1940-1956), Vol. 8, No. 4 (4th Qtr., 1947), pp. 337-343; Beryl Satter, "Marcus Garvey, Father Divine and the Gender Politics of Race Difference and Race Neutrality" in *American Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Mar., 1996), pp. 43-76; Paul Carter Harrison, "The Black Star Line: The De-Mystification of Marcus Garvey" in *African American Review*, Vol. 31, No. 4, (Winter, 1997), pp. 713-716; John L. Graves, "The Social Ideas of Marcus Garvey" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Winter, 1962), pp. 65-74; Charlotte Phillips Fein, "Marcus Garvey: His Opinions About Africa" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Autumn, 1964), pp. 446-449

84 Ben F. Rogers, "William E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, and Pan-Africa" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Apr., 1955), pp. 154-165; Elliott M. Rudwick, "DuBois versus Garvey: Race Propagandists at War" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Autumn, 1959), pp. 421-429

85 Paul G. Partington, *W. E. B. DuBois: A Bibliography of his Published Writings* (Whittier, CA: 1977, 1979 (rev. ed.))

86 Shaun L. Gabbidon, "W.E.B. Du Bois: Pioneering American Criminologist" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 5 (May, 2001), pp. 581-599; *Autobiography* 271.; Contee, "Du Bois, the NAACP, and the Pan-African Congress of 1919", 15

murders. In 1920, he published his second collection of essays, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*. He chaired the second Pan-African Congress in 1921 in the belief that for Africans to be free anywhere, they had to be free everywhere. In 1923 he chaired the third Pan-African Congress, and the same year was appointed a special minister to visit Liberia by President Coolidge following the United States' refusal to grant Liberia a much-needed loan.⁸⁷ In 1926, Du Bois forced the resignation of Fayette McKenzie, the last white president of Fisk University, as a part of his belief that black universities should be led by qualified members of their own people under democratic rule. In 1927, Du Bois chaired the fourth Pan-African Congress, having returned from a visit to Russia the previous year where he learned further about Marx and different socio-economic approaches to problems. Between the years of 1930 through 1933, Du Bois struggled with the leadership of the NAACP to cease their frequently moderate approach to social problems, and more importantly to remove white leaders of institutions and organizations. He wished to place them in advisory positions as opposed to a role of either a dictatorial spokesman for the American majority or a paternalistic figure who believed that African-Americans needed white input to self-govern. In reply to Du Bois's increasing radicalism, the NAACP introduced legal strictures which were designed to prevent *The Crisis* from criticizing the NAACP, and Du Bois felt that he had no choice but to leave rather than be muzzled. His efforts toward reform had met with little success, and he returned to his teaching position at Atlanta University in 1934 following his resignation from the NAACP and *The Crisis*.⁸⁸ The NAACP nonetheless praised Du Bois as a brilliant editor

⁸⁷ *Ibid* 273.

⁸⁸ Du Bois's reasons for leaving the NAACP were complicated, and involved tactical decisions, differences of approach, and his changing ideology.

and the founder of a new African-American intellectual elite through his journalistic triumph with *The Crisis*.

The ideas which he expounded in it and in his books and essays transformed the Negro world as well as a large portion of the liberal white world... he has been selected because of his independence of judgement, his fearlessness in expressing his convictions, and his acute and wide-ranging intelligence. A mere yes-man could not have attracted the attention of the world, could not have stimulated the Board itself to further study of various important problems. We shall be the poorer for his loss..⁸⁹

Between the years of 1934 and 1944, Du Bois worked steadily as the chair of Sociology at Atlanta University, as well as teaching in the same department. During these years, he continued to publish prolifically, with his autobiographical *Dusk of Dawn* appearing in 1940. In all cases, he worked tirelessly to bring the world's attention to the treatment of black men and women in America, and to encourage Africa to rise up and unite against colonial expansionary efforts.⁹⁰

Between 1940 and 1944, Du Bois began a new journal which was continued until relatively recently and held a prominent role in African and African-American Studies: *Phylon* was a quarterly published through Atlanta, and while it did not gain the wide readership of *The Crisis*, nor benefit from Du Bois's fierce editorials, it earned academic merit. In 1945, Du Bois served as a consultant for the U.S. Delegation to the foundation of the United Nations, working vainly to halt colonialism.⁹¹ The same year, he presided

⁸⁹ Letter to Du Bois on his resignation, repeated in *Autobiography* 299.

⁹⁰ Anthony Monteiro, "Being an African in the World: The Du Boisian Epistemology" in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 568, *The Study of African American Problems: W. E. B. Du Bois's Agenda, Then and Now* (Mar., 2000), pp. 220-234

⁹¹ The sole mention of Du Bois' position as a consultant in 1945 may be found on the NAACP's own website and public history. "During this period he was active in placing the grievances of African Americans before the United Nations, serving as a consultant to the UN founding convention (1945)"

over the fifth Pan-African Congress. He had at this time returned to the NAACP following an invitation in 1944, though not in the same capacity as before.⁹² In 1947 he edited and presented a NAACP appeal against racist discrimination in the United States,⁹³ and his activities in this regard led to renewed difficulties within the NAACP, as Du Bois's unwavering stance on internal policies of America were contrary to post World War II public opinion. The aging Du Bois was expected to act as a figurehead and lend credence to the board of the NAACP, but not to be so voluble in his expression of his opinions.

[Walter] White... wanted me for window dressing, as one who would boost his prestige with reports which he would use and speeches made at his direction... I myself had not even at the age of 80 felt any serious diminution of my power to work or to follow my ideals... it never occurred to me that I would be expected to act as showpiece or figurehead for someone else.⁹⁴

This was hardly a position which Du Bois could tolerate.⁹⁵ By 1947, Du Bois had resigned again after his opposition to Cold War policies of the U.S. government and NAACP efforts to control him, which involved demands to open and read his mail among other similar tactics Du Bois later called 'dictatorial'.⁹⁶ Du Bois recognized in his choice to leave once more that those who had invited him back were primarily doing so to furnish him with dignity in what they believed to be the final years of his life.

See www.naacp.com/about/history/dubois/index.htm

92 Previously, Du Bois had been a member of the executive and the editor of the organization's journal; as an older man, he was given a desk and an office, and never given the same power as he had possessed prior to his resignation in 1934.

93 Du Bois wrote the "Appeal to the World" which was presented in 1947, demanding recognition of the abuses suffered by blacks in America. Hugh H. Smythe, "The N.A.A.C.P. Petition on the Denial of Human Rights and the United Nations" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Winter, 1948), pp. 88-90

94 *Autobiography* 336.

95 *Ibid* 329-332.

96 *Ibid* 331.

By the end of the 1940's, Du Bois was identified by the United States government as a problematic figure who was potentially subversive and traitorous.⁹⁷ He gave public speeches in which he decried the United States as a place where free speech was not permitted, and where citizens were expected to denounce Russia, communism, socialism, North Korea, China, and fully support any decision the government chose to make.⁹⁸ At the same time, he opposed big business, spending toward war-mongering, and accused the American leadership of being a dictatorship. He was therefore brought along with others in 1950 to stand trial as an agent of a foreign power, because of his connection with socialist groups and his frequent denunciation of the elite who economically and politically marginalized African-Americans.

Far from cowing him into submission, the 1951 trial primarily angered Du Bois, who was exonerated in part due to his popularity. He swiftly identified the reason for his arrest to be an effort to intimidate both him and the people who considered him a figure of importance. Du Bois later wrote of feeling chilled by the thought of other African-Americans who had no such defence as he did,⁹⁹ though they might be as wrongfully accused. Freed, Du Bois nonetheless suffered from subsequent limitations he blamed upon governmental interference and mistrust, and found that his name was no longer taught to students following the events of his trial.

97 William E. Cain, "W. E. B. Du Bois's Autobiography and the Politics of Literature" in *Black American Literature Forum*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 20th-Century Autobiography (Summer, 1990), 301.

98 This is paraphrasing a speech Du Bois made to 15000 people at the Coliseum in Chicago as part of a lecture series he and his wife made in 1950. See *Autobiography* 376-377.

99 *Ibid* 388.

My manuscripts... were refused publication by reputable commercial publishers. My mail was tampered with or withheld. Negro newspapers were warned not to carry my writings nor mention prominently my name. Colleges ceased to invite my lectures and Negro colleges no longer asked for my lectures or my presence at Commencement exercises. From being a person whom every Negro in the nation knew by name at least and hastened always to entertain or praise, churches and Negro conferences refused to mention my past or present existence. The white world which had never liked me but was forced in the past to respect me, now ignored me or deliberately distorted my work... In fine I was rejected of men, refused the right to travel abroad and classed as a 'controversial figure' even after being acquitted of guilt by a Federal court of law.¹⁰⁰

Eventually, Du Bois regained his passport and left America, accepting the invitation of Kwame Nkrumah¹⁰¹ to immigrate to Africa and live his final years in Ghana writing his *Encyclopedia Africana*.¹⁰² Before settling in Accra, Du Bois toured communist China and the Soviet Union, and firmly declared himself pro-communist in his *Autobiography* in a final denunciation of the American democracy which he felt had let down its black populace in the fullest degree. He became a citizen of Ghana in 1963, and suggested a march to support the one planned in August in America the same year by the Civil Rights movement. In July he published his final book, *An ABC of Color*. The turmoil and sense of frustration which Du Bois identified and at the end repudiated led in large part to the

¹⁰⁰*Autobiography* 394-395.

¹⁰¹Like Du Bois, Nkrumah was a founder of Pan-Africanism and a prolific activist and writer. He too was a socialist, and applauded Du Bois's ideals and convictions. See Yakubu Saaka, "Recurrent Themes in Ghanaian Politics: Kwame Nkrumah's Legacy" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Mar., 1994), pp. 263-280; William P. Mahoney, Jr., "Nkrumah in Retrospect" in *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Apr., 1968), pp. 246-250; Kwame Nantambu, "Pan-Africanism Versus Pan-African Nationalism: An Afrocentric Analysis" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 5 (May, 1998), pp. 561-574; Steven Metz, "In Lieu of Orthodoxy: The Socialist Theories of Nkrumah and Nyerere" in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Sep., 1982), pp. 377-392; Michael W. Williams, "Nkrumahism as an Ideological Embodiment of Leftist Thought Within the African World" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Sep., 1984), pp. 117-134.

¹⁰²Clarence G. Contee, "The Encyclopedia Africana Project of W. E. B. Du Bois" in *African Historical Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1971), pp. 77-91

Civil Rights movement,¹⁰³ and it was the day before the historic Washington March that Du Bois died, at the age of 95 in Accra, Ghana, on August 27, 1963. He was honoured with a state funeral by Nkrumah and a moment of silence in Washington, and is still renowned in both Africa and in America for the contribution he made to the uplift of both Pan-Africanism and the African-American people.

¹⁰³Du Bois' famous recognition of the division in every black American between his ethnic identity and his national pride has been cited as a summation of the problems in the United States which sparked the Civil Rights movements. His idea of both the Veil separating black and white Americans, and the double consciousness of the African-American experience have formed an integral part of discourse surrounding the topic in the years since he formulated each theory. See Mary Frances Berry, "Du Bois as Social Activist: Why We Are Not Saved" in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 568, *The Study of African American Problems: W. E. B. Du Bois's Agenda, Then and Now* (Mar., 2000), pp. 100-110; Anne Warfield Rawls, "'Race' as an Interaction Order Phenomenon: W.E.B. Du Bois's 'Double Consciousness' Thesis Revisited" in *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Jul., 2000), pp. 241-274; James B. Stewart, "The Legacy of W. E. B. Du Bois for Contemporary Black Studies" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 53, No. 3, *An Assessment of Black Studies Programs in American Higher Education* (Summer, 1984), pp. 296-311

CHAPTER 2

THE COLOUR OF THE CLASSICS

Her heart cried, up on the World's four corners of the Way, and to it came the Vision Splendid. She gossipped with old Herodotus across the earth to the black and blameless Ethiopians;¹⁰⁴ she saw the sculptured glories of Phidias marbled amid the splendor of the swamp; she listened to Demosthenes and walked the Appian Way with Cornelia--while all New York streamed beneath her window.
-W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* 251.

Du Bois's first scholarly inspirations came from the classical world. In his early years,¹⁰⁵ he studied Virgil, Homer, Horace and Herodotus among others. In these works, Du Bois discovered an approach to matters of race which bore little to no resemblance to that of his contemporary American society. Exposed to the classical approach above any significant awareness of colour in his own life, Du Bois learned that the ancient world was not dominated by men of Saxon descent.

At the time in which Du Bois was educated, the study of Latin, Greek, rhetoric and mathematics were considered the hallmarks of teaching and scholastic pursuit. Indeed, from the time of Homer,¹⁰⁶ emphasis was heavily placed in training each successive generation through an intense study of the glorious past.¹⁰⁷ The Romans urged

104The phrase 'blameless Ethiopians' was a common translation of the Homeric Greek from Book I of the Iliad. See further along.

105At Great Barrington High School and at Fisk University.

106T. J. Morgan, "Literate Education in Classical Athens" in *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 49, No. 1 (1999), pp. 46-61

107Notably, a focus on the ancient world has moved in and out of vogue, primarily falling into disfavour as a result of modernism in the 17th century and in the recent period. See For an examination of the history of the classics as staple for education in Europe, see Edward Kennard Rand, "The Classics in European Education" in *The School Review*, Vol. 18, No. 7 (1910), pp. 441-459. For an examination of classical

their children to study the Greeks, and the classical works of both the Greeks and the Romans became the staple for humanism throughout Europe from thereon in. "The true program of humanism, which is nothing but the ancient program revived, has always pointed men to the treasured ideals of the past and inspired them to action in the present."¹⁰⁸ More than simply inculcating in youth an awareness of the past, however, these classical elements inherent in higher education imply elitism, because of their association with the training of the elite class.¹⁰⁹ It is an accepted reality that education is a privilege of those who can afford either the cost or the time to study matters beyond those of the simple day-to-day requirements of life. Originally prohibited for slaves, education in Reconstruction-Era America was a luxury which many African-Americans struggled to obtain as both a mark of elevation and a portal to a better future.¹¹⁰ Schools were longed-for necessities, and literacy and education were eagerly sought by freed slaves for themselves and for their children. Heated debates already described¹¹¹ existed between the two camps which argued either for a traditional classical education, and the others, who argued for primarily industrial training instead.¹¹² The classics represented

studies in early American education, see Stanley M. Burstein, "The Classics and the American Republic" in *The History Teacher*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Nov., 1996), pp. 29-44

108Edward Kennard Rand, "The Classics in European Education" 459.

109Asa G. Hilliard III, "Equal Educational Opportunity and Quality Education" in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2, New Perspectives on Black Education (Summer, 1978), pp. 110-126

110Kara Miles Turner, "Southern Black School Patrons and the Struggle for Equal Education in the Pre- and Post-Civil Rights Eras" in *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (Spring, 2003), pp. 217-229

111 See Chapter 1 on the conflict between Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee model and Du Bois' Talented Tenth.

112The same arguments existed in Africa, where in Southern Rhodesia, the governor sent for representatives of the Tuskegee Institute in order to determine how best to train the black African masses who eagerly sought to be trained. Conflicts existed between mission schools which focused upon traditional subjects such as the bible, history, and the classics, and the industrial schools which the government wished its repressed subjects to study. In South Africa, education and who was permitted access to it, became a means of control by the apartheid government over the black majority, and a preventative against a rising equal class of educated black elite. See Walton R. Johnson, "Education: Keystone of Apartheid" in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3, *African Education and*

access to a scholarly currency hitherto reserved for the elite – the white upper classes of the Western European tradition.

The great triumphs of the vernacular literatures well into the eighteenth century were commonly composed by men who not only knew the major and minor works of Latin literature better than most Classics Ph.D. candidates today, but who used Latin as a customary language; all were influenced in their formulation by Latin-derived standards and conceptualizations.¹¹³

Mastery of both Latin and Greek represented for disenfranchised black students the key to equality, though few were granted access to any chance of serious study.¹¹⁴ For Du Bois, his high school principal's decision to encourage his interest in higher education meant that he became a rarity for his time: a non-white man who was afforded the opportunity to acquire the intellectual currency of the educated elite. His proficiency in the classics was such that in the summers he spent in rural Tennessee, Du Bois primarily sought to educate his pupils in the works of Cicero as opposed to training them in the vocational studies preferred by the white Southern elite for the emancipated black population. This and his efforts to fight for the right to learn as he had mark Du Bois's association with the literature of the ancient world as a profound one; to him, the classics were a primary key

Social Stratification (Autumn, 1982), pp. 214-237; Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2002); W. Manning Marable, "Booker T. Washington and African Nationalism." in *Phylon* (1960-), Vol. 35, No. 4, (4th Qtr., 1974); Carol Summers, "Educational Controversies: African Activism and Educational Strategies in Southern Rhodesia, 1920-1934." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1, (Mar., 1994); Carol Summers, "Demanding Schools: The Umchingwe Project and African Men's Struggles for Education in Southern Rhodesia, 1928-1934." *African Studies Review*, Vol. 40, No. 2. (Sep., 1997) Notably, the same debates exist in the present day in seeking to differentiate between a vocational and liberal education for youth of all colours. See John Halliday, "Values and Further Education" in *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Mar., 1996), pp. 66-81

¹¹³For a of treatment both the importance of a classical education in preparing thinkers, and for a brief history, see Richard Freis, "The Classics and a Contemporary Liberal Education" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (The Classical Association of the Middle West and South, Inc.: 1982), pp. 349-358

¹¹⁴Maghan Keita, "Deconstructing the Classical Age: Africa and The Unity of the Mediterranean World" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (Spring, 1994), pp. 147-166

to social uplift. I would argue that not only did the works of ancient Greece and Rome represent the intellectual language which might afford a clever pupil acceptance by the educated elite, but the literature which Du Bois first studied also provided examples of a racial awareness which was lacking in contemporary America.

While race has become a major focal point in modern political discourse, ethnicity was of far less importance in the ancient world, as scholars such as Frank Snowden¹¹⁵ and Lloyd A. Thompson have asserted. Thompson argues cogently that to the classical Greeks and Romans, the colour of skin was accepted in vastly different ways from how it is now, the foremost being the emphasis on culture of origin rather than skin hue in defining roles in Antiquity. As Thompson points out, while Romans periodically disparaged the type termed *Aethiopes*¹¹⁶ in their comedies and satires, they also denigrated the *Candida*¹¹⁷ of

115 According to Snowden, the ancient Greeks were well aware of the differences between themselves and what they termed 'Αἰθίοψ', they evidently applied no special pejorative meaning to that definition beyond their typical consideration of non-Greek peoples as barbarian. "Several authors give rather definite information as to what the Greeks thought of the Negro in his native land. Diodorus spoke highly of the civilized Ethiopians who inhabited Meroe and the land adjoining Egypt. He regarded the Ethiopians as the first people to worship the gods, and most Egyptian institutions as derivatives of their civilization. Lucian records that the Ethiopians were the first to deliver the doctrines of astrology to men and that their reputation for wisdom was great. The Greeks also had knowledge of the uncivilized Negro tribesmen who lived beyond Napata and Meroe. Ptolemy attributed their savage habits to the fact that their homes were continually oppressed by the heat, just as continual cold explained the savage behavior of the Scythians. Odysseus regarded Eurybates very highly and gave him a place of esteem among his heralds. A Negro trumpeter on a Homeric shield is one of several devices which Chase is inclined to regard as indication of rank." See Frank M. Snowden, Jr., "The Negro in Ancient Greece" in *American Anthropologist, New Series*, Vol. 50, No. 1, Part 1 (Jan. - Mar., 1948), 37. "Sextus Empiricus writes that beauty is relative, the Negroes preferring the blackest and the most flat-nosed and the Persians approving the whitest and the most hook-nosed. No contempt is apparent in any of these passages. The authors cite the Negroes and Scythians or Thracians as examples of distinct racial opposites." *Ibid* 39.

116 As noted above, Snowden reports the same recognition by the ancient Greeks based on a similar set of traits to those Thompson identifies as those which the Romans used to differentiate an Αἰθίοψ or Aethiopes from themselves. Both the Greeks and Romans identified the Aethiopes as an individual with what I summarize here as black skin, 'a flat nose', 'thick lips', 'wooly hair', and sometimes bowed legs, though these features had little bearing on military prowess or personal honour from accounts examined by both authors. See Snowden, "The Negro in Ancient Greece" 31-32.

117 Thompson uses the Latin word here to differentiate from the English 'white', which holds semantic meanings contrary to the point he is making surrounding ethnicity, barbarism, and cultural differences

northern Europe as being ungainly and ugly and brutish.¹¹⁸ In short, there was no contrast of paleness set against blackness with pale skin considered superior; rather, both types were considered strange to the Roman type as Romans considered it. Moreover, the world was divided by the Romans not into one of white and non-white as it so often is today, but into a world where the norm was one ranging between the pale-skinned Gauls, and the physiognomy of the African type. Among many other examples of Roman literary treatments, Thompson explores Petronius' comedies,¹¹⁹ specifically where main characters struggle to disguise themselves, trying to decide between the 'chalk-white' of the Gallic complexion, and dying themselves black to their toenails to attain a proper Ethiopian look. The characters discard both options as ones which even if successful would still not permit them to fake their race, as they lacked the physical attributes as well as the skin colours of either Gauls or Africans.¹²⁰ He lists the frequently used terminology of Latin literature, clarifying the types as they were seen by the Romans.

...the Mediterranean somatic norm is *albus* ('white', in the sense of pale-brown), the northern 'paleface' is *candidus* - marked by a very white, frosty complexion, blond or red hair, blue eyes, upturned 'snub noses', and an almost obscenely large frame and stature... in the Roman perceptual context, the black African and the 'nordic'... were at two extremes of distance from the Roman somatic norm.¹²¹

between northern Europe in the Roman period and the 'civilized' area of the Mediterranean basin. The translation of *candidus* which would have been standard at Du Bois' time was as follows: *candīdus*, a, um, adj. *candeo*, I. of a shining, dazzling white, white, clear, bright (opp. *niger*, a glistening black; while *albus* is a lustreless white, opp. *ater*, a lustreless black; cf. Serv. ad Verg. G. 3, 82; Isid. Orig. 12, 1, 51; Doed. Syn. III. p. 193 sq.) (class., and in the poets very freq.; in Cic. rare). See Charlton, T. Lewis, *An Elementary Latin Dictionary*. (New York: American Book Company. 1890) Additionally, this dictionary is reported as having been "first published in 1879, and so it would in principle have been accessible to Du Bois when he was a student in the 1880s. " - Personal correspondence with Dr. Faith Wallis, McGill University, Department of History.

¹¹⁸See Lloyd A. Thompson, *Romans and Blacks* (London: Routledge and Oklahoma University Press, 1989): 39.

¹¹⁹See *The Satyricon* of Petronius.

¹²⁰Thompson 64.

¹²¹Thompson 65-66.

Thompson continues defining the *Aethiopes* type as one which for Romans required not only black skin, but also tightly curled hair, large lips, a curly beard, and bowed legs.¹²² Importantly, Thompson's examination of the *Aethiopes* as described in Latin texts clarifies that the Romans themselves distinguished between various other peoples with similar features; notably the inhabitants of the Asian subcontinent.¹²³ "Roman attitudes toward *Aethiopes*, even at their most negative, have nothing to do with the familiar modern phenomenon of *race* and are of a kind very different from those commonly described by social scientists by the terms 'racist', 'racial prejudice', 'colour prejudice', and 'racism'."¹²⁴ Additionally, Thompson goes on to argue that defining an *Aethiops* in a Roman context referred not only to skin colour but also to physical traits as they were perceived by Romans, and that "there was no assumption inherent in the structures of society that neither the black newcomer nor his descendants could 'ever become full members of society because of the visible factor of colour or shape'. Nor was there any predictable link between physical appearance and status."¹²⁵ A Roman descended from an *Aethiops* was not immediately considered herself *Aethiops*. Her complexion might be described as 'swarthy' according to Thompson, but she lost no rank or status by the implication of black ancestry, and indeed, Roman women often used the claim of biological atavism and an *Aethiops* ancestor to justify the results of adultery with an *Aethiops* man.¹²⁶ Thompson

¹²²*Ibid* 64.

¹²³*Ibid* 63.

¹²⁴*Ibid* 157. "... the study of race and ethnicity has often been disregarded because these issues do not always appear as an explicit concern of ancient authors." Denise Eileen McCoskey, "Answering the Multicultural Imperative: A Course on Race and Ethnicity in Antiquity" in *The Classical World*, Vol. 92, No. 6 (Jul. - Aug., 1999), 533-34.

¹²⁵Thompson 158.

¹²⁶Thompson 74-76 *passim*

again emphasizes that having a black relation did not in any sense socially disadvantage or diminish the Roman family from their peers.¹²⁷ Set against more modern notions of race, where having any 'Negro' blood has been an immediate social signifier of inferior status due to one's 'blackness', it is of central importance therefore to note that ancient ideas of race are clearly distinct from those which prevailed into the twentieth century, and accorded with those which Du Bois would have learned in his studies.¹²⁸

In her critiques of twentieth-century Afrocentrist claims, Mary Lefkowitz emphasizes that when an ancient writer mentioned colour, it was due to some additional fact which they wished to impart. She refers to a mistress to one of the Egyptian¹²⁹ Ptolemies, Didyme, whose colour and ethnicity were mentioned by ancient writers as being notable, primarily because of her incredible beauty.¹³⁰ As Lefkowitz points out, if the ancient writers did not make mention of ethnicity, it was because they did not consider it to be of importance in supporting the stories they were telling. Writers like Suetonius, Plutarch and many others assiduously sought to flesh out narratives of their contemporaries and those they felt were noteworthy by repeating the rumours concerning

¹²⁷Thompson 78.

¹²⁸ While Du Bois did not study Pliny or Petronius, their views as indicative of the commonly held opinion of the ancient world would imply that the classical authors whom Du Bois read would likely share such views, and as is discussed below, describe colour in a way which bore little resemblance to Du Bois' America.

¹²⁹ Despite the modern fascination with the ethnicity of ancient Egypt, scholars have yet to settle on an agreement concerning the race of the nation, and for that matter, whether the ethnicity was any different in most cases from that of the general norm found in the ancient Mediterranean basin. See Stephen Nimis, "Egypt in Greco-Roman History and Fiction" in *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, No. 24, (2004), pp. 34-67

¹³⁰ Information surrounding Didyme is found in the memoirs of Ptolemy III Euergetes, who referred to her as one of the natives of the country which the Macedonian Ptolemy lineage had conquered following Alexander the Great's death. See Mary Lefkowitz, *Not Out of Africa; How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History* (New York: Basic Books, 1996) 44.

them. While not in itself indicative of the truth or falsity surrounding the gossip which these writers left the modern world, what was omitted and what was included are of value in determining what the ancient world considered to be important or inconsequential.¹³¹

The ancient Greek city-states possessed an abiding dislike for those they defined as *barbaroi*, anecdotally called for the Greek conclusions in ancient historiography regarding the sounds of languages from other countries. An Athenian was more concerned with establishing another man's status as another Athenian, or as a Spartan, or Theban, than with making judgements regarding his skin colour.¹³² Greek comic playwrights readily mocked the ancestry of their subjects, or their proclivities in order to more aptly lampoon them;¹³³ had race been a matter of interest to the comic playwrights, it would have been considered another weapon in the arsenal they had available with which to tease noted public figures.¹³⁴ She also points out the fascination ancient authors had with gossip and 'scandals' - had they felt that race was shocking or worthy of being repeated as

¹³¹Ibid 45.

¹³²Ibid 45.

¹³³Laura McClure, "Subversive Laughter: The Sayings of Courtesans in Book 13 of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 124, No. 2 (Summer, 2003), pp. 259-294; Ralph M. Rosen and Donald R. Marks, "Comedies of Transgression in Gangsta Rap and Ancient Classical Poetry" in *New Literary History*, Vol. 30, No. 4, Case Studies (Autumn, 1999), pp. 897-928; Anthony T. Edwards, "Aristophanes' Comic Poetics: Tryc, Scatology, Skwmma" in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-), Vol. 121, (1991), pp. 157-179; Stephen Halliwell, "Comic Satire and Freedom of Speech in Classical Athens" in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 111, (1991), pp. 48-70; Stephen Halliwell, "Aristophanic Satire" in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 14(1984), pp. 6-20; Douglas J. Stewart, "Aristophanes and the Pleasures of Anarchy" in *The Antioch Review*, Vol. 25, No. 1, (Spring, 1965), pp. 189-208; Frederick Ahl, "The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and Rome" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 105, No. 2 (Summer, 1984), pp. 174-208; Anton-Herman Chroust, "Plato's Detractors in Antiquity" in *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Sep., 1962), pp. 98-118; P. T. Stevens, "Euripides and the Athenians" in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 76, (1956), pp. 87-94; D. W. T. C. Vessey, "Thoughts on Tacitus' Portrayal of Claudius" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 92, No. 3 (Jul., 1971), pp. 385-409; P. J. Davis, "Ovid's Amores: A Political Reading" in *Classical Philology*, Vol. 94, No. 4 (Oct., 1999), pp. 431-449; A. Palmer, "The Apocolocyntosis of Seneca" in *The Classical Review*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (Jun., 1888), p. 181; Ross Kilpatrick, "Apocolocyntosis and the Vision of Claudius" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (Feb. - Mar., 1979), pp. 193-196

¹³⁴Lefkowitz 29.

an anomaly, it would have been overtly pointed out, an assertion supported by the wealth of information which remains surrounding many classical figures' rumoured sexualities and personal lives in ancient poetry as well as historiography.¹³⁵ Many historical figures¹³⁶ were at war with states in Greece or later with Rome, and again, that no mention is made of their race is notable in emphasizing the lack of interest which the ancient writers largely had surrounding ethnicity as we understand it today.¹³⁷ Nationalist concerns presented more interest to ancient writers than did ethnic matters, ultimately, which presents challenges to modern historiography's obsession with establishing the ethnicity of the ancient world.

For Du Bois's awareness of ethnicity, however, the ancient texts doubtless proved efficacious in recognizing a world which drew the colour line in a far different way from America, if indeed it drew one at all. In his application to Harvard in 1887, Du Bois lists the subjects he had taken to date at Fisk, and at the Great Barrington High School. For Latin, he lists six years as the period he had then spent studying the language, which

135Suetonius for example dwelt extensively in 121 CE upon the rumoured bisexuality of Julius Caesar, the pederasty of Tiberius, and the many excesses of Caligula and Nero in *The Twelve Caesars*, demonstrating the interest the ancient public had in every aspect and element to be had surrounding the famous or infamous popular personalities. Though Suetonius has been criticized for including second-hand sources and gossip of his period, the volume of detail he includes, along with his research in the Imperial Archives suggests that similar ancient writers had sufficient interest in heritage and proclivities to include skin colour had it been important.

136Cleopatra, Jugurtha, Caesar, Hannibal among others; ethnicity or nation is mentioned, but racial slurs on such 'enemies of the state' are surprisingly few and far between. For a treatment of the slurs cast upon Hannibal as a Carthaginian against the unrelenting praise of Hannibal as an individual, see John H. Starks, Jr., "Fides Aeneia: The Transference of Punic Stereotypes in the Aeneid" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (Feb. - Mar., 1999), pp. 255-283

137Notable ancients whom Lefkowitz argues against possessing ethnic interest to the ancient writers which might support Afrocentrist claims regarding their race are Socrates and Cleopatra, both of whom she argues were at one time enemies of the state, be it Athens or Rome, and the very lack of derogatory portrayals of either suggests either that they were not *Aethiopes*, or that the classification of a figure as *Aethiopes* or *Albus* was not interesting enough to be considered damning by ancient authors. See Lefkowitz 29, 35.

underscores the assumption that this list includes his high school years, as by 1888, Du Bois had in graduating only been at Fisk since 1885, leaving three years of Latin to have been studied in his home town.¹³⁸ The sources which he lists as having studied are notable, as they provide interpretations of race which to a young Du Bois would have been startling. In examining them here, I have chosen to categorize each by arbitrary divisions, from epic poem, to poetic style, to rhetoric, to historical narrative, each time exploring first the Latin and then the Greek authors.¹³⁹

Virgil's *Eclogues*¹⁴⁰ are imitative poetry, drawing their inspiration from the earlier Greek *Idylls*, and featuring startlingly inspired rustics within a pastoral setting for characters. According to his book list, Du Bois translated the *Eclogues* in their entirety, permitting this study to produce a detailed examination, paying careful attention to words which define colour of characters. Initially, in the first *Eclogue*, Virgil introduces as one of his two characters a man recently freed – nothing whatsoever points to his ethnicity in the original text, allowing for a wide interpretation of his origins. Asked why he visited Rome, Tityrus replies that he went for “Freedom” translated as “*Libertas*” in the Latin text, and addressed as the goddess of the same name.¹⁴¹ Commonly, *Libertas* was the

138See Application to Harvard, in *Against Racism* 5-12. Specifically, Du Bois lists as follows: “Latin, Studied 6 yrs.” on p. 6, and lists the following authors: Caesar, Cicero, Vergil, Horace, Tacitus and Livy.

139 Du Bois writes of specific Latin texts in his accounts as opposed to ancient Greek texts, suggesting that his preference was for Latin. While this is supposition, it dictated the order of study in this examination.

140Publius Vergilius Maro (70BC-19BC) was a Roman poet cherished by Augustus, whose *Aeneid* was considered to be with Homer's *Iliad* one of the greatest epics of the early world. He was a prolific poet, and was honoured both in Rome and in subsequent centuries continuing into the present.

141 “*Libertas, quae sera tamen respexit inertem, candidior postquam tondenti barba cadebat, respexit tamen et longo post tempore venit.*” (Freedom, who, though late, yet cast her eyes upon me in my sloth, when my beard began to whiten as it fell beneath the scissors) See Virgil, *Eclogue I*, trans H. Rushton Fairclough, *Virgil in Two Volumes: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI* (Cambridge: Harvard, Loeb Classical Library 1916) lines 27-29. Loeb is used here because although the editions and translations are antiquated, they present a closer understanding of the traditions of translation near the time of Du Bois's

patron of the freed slave, and had her temple in Rome.¹⁴² This treatment of the common manumission of the Roman world,¹⁴³ and the resultant conclusions which have been made since in the various scholarly studies surrounding this first Eclogue indicate that freedom is one of the underlying themes in the poem.¹⁴⁴ This pastoral poem ends with the two sighing that they will have to go to the wider reaches of the world, to Africa and to Scythia, to Crete and to what was translated in 1916 as “the Britons, wholly sundered from all the world”.¹⁴⁵ Sundered and divided from the world can either be a pejorative, or a matter of pride, yet as Du Bois proudly defined himself as not possessing a drop of Anglo-Saxon blood,¹⁴⁶ this division of Britain from a world which included Africa is notable.¹⁴⁷ This supports a notion that Du Bois was aware that Africa was part of the classical world, while Britain was set apart both geographically and culturally.

The second *Eclogue* is also pertinent to our study of the ancient world with respect

study.

142Lawrence A. Springer, "The Temple of Libertas on the Aventine" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 8 (May, 1950), pp. 390-391

143David Daube, "Two Early Patterns of Manumission" in *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 36, Parts 1 and 2 (1946), pp. 57-75; Jacob J. Rabinowitz, "Manumission of Slaves in Roman Law and Oriental Law" in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Jan., 1960), pp. 42-45; Thomas E. J. Wiedemann, "The Regularity of Manumission at Rome" in *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1985), pp. 162-175

144Tityras is free both artistically, as a poet reclining beneath a tree, and literally, as a manumitted former slave. Scholars suggest that he exists in the Arcadian (and therefore romanticized rustic) sphere, while Meliboeus, his comrade, is outside. Thus a freedman is poetically exalted beyond another character in an example where a former slave can be the equal to if not superior of another. See Bernard F. Dick, "Vergil's Pastoral Poetic: A Reading of the First Eclogue" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 91, No. 3 (Jul., 1970), 280-287 *passim*.

145 "At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros, pars Scythiam et rapidum Cretae veniemus Oaxen et penitus toto divisus orbe Britannos." See Virgil, *Eclogue I* lines 64-66.

146Du Bois, "Shadow of Years" 5.

147The division has been treated by scholars as both a source of pride to the English and a reference that for the peoples of the ancient Mediterranean, Britain was beyond the ends of the earth, and well beyond the accessible for most. For an examination of the mythological air this afforded English writers, see Josephine Waters Bennett, "Britain among the Fortunate Isles" in *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Apr., 1956), 114-116

to a youthful Du Bois's exploration of it. Here, the rustic poet is calling out for the object of desire, one Alexis. Referred to varyinglly as "his master's pet",¹⁴⁸ or a favourite of his master, Alexis is therefore both an objectified homosexual love-interest, and available for the shepherd's attentions should he welcome them. In the logic of poetry, Alexis has power as the beloved, yet as his master's pet, he is of a lower status overall, reduced to a possession. Continuing into the poem, it is of immediate interest that Alexis is described as white, specifically *candidus*. Given Roman attitudes to colour as we examined in Thompson's work earlier, Alexis is possibly of North European descent, though he possesses a Hellenic name¹⁴⁹; he is white and nonetheless subordinate in the poem.¹⁵⁰ The line where he is described thus is one in which he is chastised for his stubborn refusal of the love offered to him; love offered by the shepherd poet of the *Eclogue*, Corydon, by Amaryllis, and by Menalcas,¹⁵¹ described as "swart", and in the original Latin as *niger*.

*Nonne fuit satius, tristis Amaryllis iras atque superba pati fastidia? nonne
Menalcan, quamvis ille niger, quamvis tu candidus esses?*¹⁵²

To modern scholars like Thompson, this term does not mean 'of African descent', as we have seen, yet in earlier translations, Menalcas was typified by language indicating him to

¹⁴⁸Virgil, *Eclogue II* lines 1-2

¹⁴⁹Slaves could hail from any corner of the Roman Empire; naming conventions do not necessarily say much, as slaves could be renamed and once freed often took their former master's name. Mary L. Gordon, "The Nationality of Slaves under the Early Roman Empire" in *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 14, (1924), pp. 93-111; Clarence A. Forbes, "Supplementary Paper: The Education and Training of Slaves in Antiquity" in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 86, (1955), pp. 321-360; George W. Houston, "The Slave and Freedman Personnel of Public Libraries in Ancient Rome" in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-), Vol. 132, No. 1/2 (Autumn, 2002), pp. 139-176

¹⁵⁰For a treatment where Alexis' white skin is described as being contrasted with the swarthy Menalcas, and Menalcas the preferable of the two, see R. W. Garson, "Theocritean Elements in Virgil's *Eclogues*" in *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (May, 1971), 191

¹⁵¹All three men are rustic shepherds set in the idealized world Virgil creates.

¹⁵²"Was it not better to brook Amaryllis' sullen rage and scornful disdain? Or Menalcas, though he was swart and you are fair?" Virgil, *Eclogue II* lines 14-16.

be a black man.¹⁵³ For Du Bois, studying prior to the work of Snowden and Thompson, there could readily exist a perception that Menalcas as a black man in the sense accepted in the 1880s was being considered as a worthy pursuer of the wilful white Alexis. As such, the text would be subversive and thought-provoking for a mind like that of Du Bois.

By *Eclogue III* we finally meet Menalcas in person, described as a man worthy of respect, a landowning shepherd and rustic poet of esteem. Though in the previous poem, he has been given the descriptor *niger*, Menalcas is free, and has been described as “gracious and urbane throughout”.¹⁵⁴ Surely this would have provided Du Bois with an example of a respected character and a landowner despite his colour, translated as he might.¹⁵⁵ For all the boyhood calls of ‘nigger’ which he later described as meaningless, the Latin word with its pejorative modern connotation cannot have escaped Du Bois’s notice, and in his study of Latin and Virgil specifically, he was provided with a substantially different interpretation from the common one of his time, as well as an example of respect associated with the term. By *Eclogue V*, Menalcas is described as the elder, who must be obeyed by Mopsus with whom he strives at poetry;¹⁵⁶ again, this is an

153 “Was it not better to sustain, the angry days of Amaryllis’ Reign, or still be subject to Menalchas’ sway, tho’ he more black than night, and thou more fair than day?” see Virgil, *Virgil’s Eclogues translated by several hands*. ([London : s.n.], 1684.) Wing / V625 reproduced from Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery

154 E. Adelaide Hahn, “The Characters in the Eclogues” in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 75, (1944), 198

155 For the common translation of the word by 1890, “niger gra, grum, adj. with (poet.) comp. nigrior and sup. Nigerrimus: 1. black, sable, dark, dusky : quae alba sint, quae nigra, dicere: hederæ, V.: Silvæ, gloomy, H.: lucus, O.: caelum pice nigrius, O.: nigerrimus Auster, gloomy, V.: nigros efferre maritos, i. e. kill by poison, Iu.—With acc: (avis) nigra pedes, O.—Prov.: Candida de nigris facere, O.: nigrum in candida vertere, make black white, Iu.—Fig., gloomy, unlucky, ill-omened : hun<*>ine solem Tam nigrum surrexe mihi? H.: ignes, i. e. funeral, H.: hora, of death, Tb.—Black, bad, wicked : nec minus niger, quam Phormio, a blackleg : delectatus sale nigro, malicious, H.” See Lewis, *An Elementary Latin Dictionary*.

156 “*Tu maior; tibi me est æquum parere, Menalca.*” translated as “You are the elder, Menalcas: it is fitting that I obey you..” See Virgil, *Eclogues II* lines 3-5.

underscoring of the respect being offered to a man who is either swarthy, dusky, or black, depending upon how the adjective is translated. It is not so much a matter of a correct translation as it is a matter of Du Bois's interpretation.

In the tenth *Eclogue*, a love-poem urges the poet's object of desire to remain among the Arcadian shepherds, and makes mention of an individual described by the adjective *fuscus*.

Certe sive mihi Phyllis sive esset Amyntas seu quicumque furor (quid tum, si fuscus Amyntas? Et nigrae violae sunt et vaccinia nigra)...¹⁵⁷

The poet goes on to lament that he cannot lie with his beloved while Phyllis makes garlands and Amyntas sings. By explaining that the violet and hyacinth are black, Virgil here is drawing a reference from Theocritus,¹⁵⁸ who pointed out that darker flowers were preferable for garlands, and noted for their beauty.¹⁵⁹ The adjective *fuscus* did not possess the same immediate visual similarity that *niger* might, yet the meaning was considered to be much the same by the 1890s,¹⁶⁰ and the syntactic connection with *niger* in the line would draw the parallel for a young translator like Du Bois. Ultimately, the *Eclogues* provide a number of references to 'blackness' in the various terms used by the Romans, and each one presented does so in a positive light. These mentions and the Latin term *niger* cannot have gone unnoticed by a young black man who had heard similar words

157 "Surely, my darling, whether it were Phyllis or Amyntas, or whoever it were – and what if Amyntas be dark? Violets too, are black, and black are hyacinths..." Virgil, *Eclogue X*, lines 37-39.

158 Theocritus was the author of the Greek *Idylls* which Virgil is referencing; they feature a style which idealizes bucolic settings with poetic shepherds and beautiful country settings.

159 R. W. Garson, "Theocritean Elements in Virgil's *Eclogues*" in *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (May, 1971), 191

160 "fuscō —, —, āre 1. fuscus, to make swarthy, blacken : corpora campo, O.: dentes, O." See Lewis, *Latin Dictionary*.

used as pejoratives toward him by children he disliked.

The second work of poetry by Virgil which Du Bois studied was the *Aeneid*. Couched in an epic framework, and carrying on the tale of a survivor of the destruction of Troy, the *Aeneid* was a means of establishing a connection between Augustan Rome and the heroic world of ancient Greece which the Romans esteemed. The books which Du Bois studied specifically were Books I-IV, tracing first the arrival of Aeneas and his men on the Libyan shore where Carthage was being built, his romance with Dido, the Phoenician queen of Carthage, his recitation of the fall of Troy and his journeys, and his abandonment of Dido, prompting her suicide. What is most notable about these books is that despite translations contemporary to Du Bois which describe various characters as 'fair', the Latin at no point uses words like *albus* or *candidus*,¹⁶¹ making misapprehensions of characters' skin tone common; this confusion was due to 19th century translators using 'fair' in its more archaic sense to mean 'beautiful'. This has created a misunderstanding between the semantic of beauty, and a colour word meaning pale.

Virgil describes northern Africa as a place peopled by competent, unconquerable nations.¹⁶² Dido is surrounded by dangerous groups whom the Romans of Virgil's period respected following both the Jugurthine War¹⁶³ and Rome's incursions into the region

161 The terms used are words like '*pulcher*', meaning 'beautiful', which are translated as 'fair', referring not to skin tone but to physical beauty.

162 "*Sed fines Libyei, genus intractabile bello.*" translated as "but the bordering country is Libyan, a race unconquerable in war." See Virgil, *Aeneid* Book I lines 339-340.

163 Between 112 and 105 BCE, a Roman-trained North African prince, Jugurtha, sought to destroy his two brothers rather than obey their dying father's wish that they share in his kingdom of Numidia. One fled to Rome, begging for assistance, and upon Jugurtha's execution of Romans and Italians in his region, the Roman Senate declared war upon Jugurtha and began a long and protracted campaign in Numidia, which ended with Jugurtha's capture. Jugurtha bribed the man responsible for giving him terms, and

roughly corresponding to modern-day Algeria. Further along in Book I, mention is made of Memnon the Ethiopian,¹⁶⁴ who fought at Troy on the side of Aeneas, the hero of the *Aeneid*. The adjective describing Memnon is not *Aethiopes*, despite his associated mythology, but *nigri*.¹⁶⁵ In Book IV, Virgil calls Africa¹⁶⁶ a triumphant land, though whether he means triumphs for the Romans who fought there, or triumphs for the people therein is debatable.¹⁶⁷ Once again, this poetry would serve to underline the respect held for Africa by the Romans, as opposed to the contempt of the empire-builders of Du Bois's time period, for whom Africa was a dark continent to be subdued and divided whichever way would profit them best.

When Aeneas recounts his travails to Dido¹⁶⁸ in Book III, an extensive treatment is made of slavery, giving voice to Andromache the widow of Hector in her bemoaning the

declared his right to Numidia, which the Senate refused, sending Marcellus and Gaius Marius to Numidia to deal with the problematic African prince. For a detailed ancient treatment, see Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Romans* (Metellus), and Sallust's *The Jugurthine War*. See also Jo-Marie Claassen, "Sallust's Jugurtha: Rebel or Freedom Fighter? On Crossing Crocodile-Infested Waters" in *The Classical World*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (Mar. - Apr., 1993), pp. 273-297

164Memnon is traditionally associated with Ethiopia, though some writers like Martin Bernal have attempted to connect him to ancient Egypt instead. See Frank M. Snowden, Jr., "The Negro in Classical Italy" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (1947), pp. 266-292; R. Drew Griffith, "The Origin of Memnon" in *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Oct., 1998), pp. 212-234; A. D. Fraser, "The Panoply of the Ethiopian Warrior" in *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Jan. - Mar., 1935), pp. 35-45

165"*et nigri Memnonis arma*" translated as "and swarthy Memnon's armour" See Virgil, *Aeneid* Book I line 490.

166Notably, to the Roman civilization, 'Africa' meant North Africa, or such of the continent as Egypt controlled, including Nubia, or the independent kingdoms of Kush or Ethiopia.

167"*ductoresque alii, quos Africa terra triumphis dives alit;*" translated as "...and other lords, whom the African land, rich in triumphs, rears;" See Virgil, *Aeneid* Book IV, lines 37-38.

168Though Du Bois makes reference to Dido in his own writing, it is notable that while she was Queen of Carthage in North Africa, Dido was also a Phoenician from Tyre in the Middle East, and spent much of her time in combat or conflict with neighbouring African kingdoms. Virgil does not use any terminology in describing her to identify her race, evidently considering her nationality to be sufficient description to those curious for more than comments on her beauty, intelligence or leadership. See Keita, "Deconstructing the Classical Age: Africa and The Unity of the Mediterranean World" 154; Edward J. Wolters, "Carthage and Its People" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (Feb., 1952) 192.

events of her enslavement. It is a sympathetic recitation, where Andromache laments the loss of her homeland and the indignity of her captivity as concubine to one of the men who destroyed her city and husband. Given Du Bois's later firm abhorrence for the condition of female slaves in the American context of slavery, this passage must have struck a sympathetic chord.¹⁶⁹ Once a princess, the enslaved Andromache actively envies her sister in law, who was murdered as a virgin bride to appease Achilles' shade at the sack of Troy. The sympathy with which Virgil treats Andromache is notable from a participant to a slave-owning society, and again possesses the information with which Du Bois might contrast his awareness of race in his own country. Andromache was also not identified by Virgil or typically as a black woman, and yet she is clearly described as being a slave following the destruction of Troy. Again, this presents a differing worldview than that of Du Bois's contemporary America.

The other epic poet whom Du Bois studied was the one whom Virgil was seeking to emulate, Homer. Homer's *Iliad* is one of the earliest known epics, and its position as pre-eminent was assured by Virgil's time. Du Bois studied Books I and II of the poem, which trace the argument between Achilles and Agamemnon over their spoils of war. The epic provided an example for Du Bois of the relative importance of race versus class to the ancient Greeks. The various contingents at Troy make it clear that no matter where a chieftain or king might hail from, they were honoured in verse for their effort on the battlefield¹⁷⁰, while those from lower classes were singled out. Though commoners are

¹⁶⁹ See Virgil, Aeneid Book III lines 321-330; Grace Starry West, "Andromache and Dido" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 104, No. 3 (Autumn, 1983), pp. 257-267

¹⁷⁰ As mentioned above, there was a black army at Troy fighting on behalf of their Trojan allies, according to Homer, led by Memnon. See Snowden, "The Negro in Ancient Greece" 34. For extensive treatments

given the chance to speak extensively in the *Iliad*, the difference, between Thersites¹⁷¹ and the aristocrats he chides is made clear.¹⁷² The debate between the two characters makes it clear that rather than being a world divided by racial identity, ancient Greece in the Heroic Age as reported by Homer was divided by nationhood and class. Notable wording is apparent in Book I of the *Iliad* when Zeus is described as having gone to feast with the 'blameless Ethiopians' in Oceania,¹⁷³ making it additionally clear that if anything, the black peoples to the south of the world about which Homer wrote were fit company for the king of the gods. Ultimately, Homer provided Du Bois with a context for the ancient world, and the basic epic which was common knowledge in the Greco-Roman period. The composition of the armies at Troy included men from the Middle East and from Africa, as the contingent led by Memnon of Ethiopia makes clear. Agency is given through a study of Homer's words to peoples who were neither North European nor white in the conception of Du Bois's contemporary America.

In his study of poetry, Du Bois also touched upon Horace, whose *Ars Poetica* I would argue was of great use to him. In these strictures set out to aid a would-be poet in

of the lists of both Achaean and Trojan forces, see T. W. Allen, "The Homeric Catalogue" in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 30, (1910), pp. 292-322; M. L. West, "The Rise of the Greek Epic" in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 108, (1988), pp. 151-172

171 Thersites is a common soldier extensively described by Homer as repugnant in appearance, with bow legs and scant hair. He is considered seditious, yet he is given a lengthy description by the poet, and his speech is a long one. See N. Postlethwaite, "Thersites in the 'Iliad'" in *Greece & Rome, Second Series*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Oct., 1988), pp. 123-136

172 "By giving a commoner a fairly good speech Homer seems to indicate that the ordinary warriors count for something, too. That this happens in a story that is generally informed by aristocratic values makes it all the more relevant" For a discussion of Thersites's speech as an early effort to poetically treat ideas of equality, see Siep Stuurman, "The Voice of Thersites: Reflections on the Origins of the Idea of Equality" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (Apr., 2004), 173

173 "Ζεὺς γὰρ ἔς Ὠκεανὸν μετ' ἀμύμονας Αἰθιοπίας χθιζὸς ἔβη κατὰ δαῖτα..." translated as "for Zeus went yesterday to Oceanus, to the blameless Ethiopians for a feast..." See Homer, trans A.T. Murray, *Homer: The Iliad* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1924.) lines 423-424.

crafting his verse, Horace warns against being unclear, and emphasizes the importance of using as illustrative points the traditional myths. He further entreats his audience to introduce familiar characters, such as a maddened Orestes or untamed Medea.¹⁷⁴ This is notable primarily in that in his own writing, Du Bois closely followed these directions, using traditional motifs even in his innovative treatments of mythical characters. Horace's urgings and stringent rules evidently served a young Du Bois as guidelines for his own poetic efforts, and in his reference to characters an ancient audience would have been familiar with, Du Bois is both writing subversively in his own context, and obeying the Roman writer's rules.

Du Bois in later years strongly encouraged the teaching of M. Tullius Cicero to his students;¹⁷⁵ in his time in Tennessee's rural areas, it was Cicero's *Pro Archia* to which he referred in attempting to convince his students to continue attending classes, as opposed to working their farms. This is noteworthy, as it is not one of the more well-known orations, and because in trying to convince farmers in a rural countryside to value literature in the words of Cicero, or learn Latin for that matter, was putting his own reputation at risk. Nonetheless, Du Bois evidently felt that the content of Cicero's works were of sufficient merit to warrant a possible blow to his own local standing,¹⁷⁶ and his

¹⁷⁴See Horace, *The Art of Poetry*, trans. James Lonsdale, Samuel Lee, *The Works of Horace* (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1908.) 209. This is important primarily given Du Bois's use of the Medea figure in his 1911 *Quest of the Silver Fleece*.

¹⁷⁵In letters to his own daughter Yolande, Du Bois quoted the *Pro Archia* again in an effort to encourage her to be more studious. His repeated use of Cicero as an exemplar for the importance of literature demonstrates the value he placed on the Roman orator's work. *Autobiography* 114. See also Lewis, "Du Bois" 129; Cowherd, "Classical Influences on the Souls of Black Folk" 295.

¹⁷⁶The question raised by Booker T. Washington over the value of a literary education as opposed to a vocational one is highlighted in this matter of Cicero being taught to barely literate youths in Tennessee.

esteem for the Roman orator was great enough that his desire to educate was couched in Ciceronian thought. "...I knew that the doubts of the old folks about book-learning had conquered again, and so, toiling up the hill, and getting as far into the cabin as possible, I put Cicero "pro Archia Poeta" into the simplest English with local applications, and usually convinced them.."¹⁷⁷ The *Pro Archia Poeta* readily corresponds to Du Bois's interests and ideology: in his defence of the poet Archias, Cicero focuses primarily upon the tremendous value of literacy and the intellectual pursuits to any man and culture. Cicero's arguments for his client dwell upon how Rome's duty is to her people, and elaborate upon the importance of studying the past and understanding the written word as impetus to fostering greatness.

*Sed pleni sunt omnes libri, plenae sapientium voces, plena exemplorum vetustas: quae iacerent in tenebris omnia, nisi litterarum lumen accederet.*¹⁷⁸

Cicero emphasizes the importance of familiarity with Greek literature, decrying Latin as being relatively provincial and less high-minded than Greek.¹⁷⁹ In a more modern context, his defence of what were at his time 'the classics' is corollary to the importance of a classical education at Du Bois's time and to Du Bois himself as the beneficiary of such classical training. To the Romans, a Greek education was an essential aspect of being a

¹⁷⁷ See Du Bois, "Of the Meaning of Progress" in *The Souls of Black Folk* 52.

¹⁷⁸ "All literature, all philosophy, all history, abounds with incentives to noble action, incentives which would be buried in black darkness were the light of the written word not flashed upon them." See Cicero, *Pro Archia Poeta*, trans. N.H. Watts, *Cicero: The Speeches. Pro Archia Poeta, Post reditum in Senatu, Post Reditum ad Quirites, De Domo Sua, De Haruspicum Responsis, Pro Plancio*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library. 1923.) 16.

¹⁷⁹ "*Nam si quis minorem gloriae fructum putat ex Graecis versibus percipi quam ex Latinis, vehementer errat, propterea quod Graeca leguntur in omnibus fere gentibus, Latina suis finibus, exiguis sane, continentur.*" translated as "For if anyone thinks that the glory won by the writing of Greek verse is naturally less than that accorded to the poet who writes in Latin, he is entirely in the wrong. Greek literature is read in nearly every nation under heaven, while the vogue of Latin is confined to its own boundaries, and they are, we must grant, narrow." See Cicero, *Pro Archia Poeta*, 31-32.

well-rounded elite.¹⁸⁰ Cicero's defence is typically long, yet his mastery of language and apt ability to convey his themes undoubtedly struck a chord with a young Du Bois, who then carefully used a Ciceronian rhetorical style in his own later writing. The *Pro Archia* at its core is a defence of citizenship for an alleged alien, whose worth to the Roman people in Cicero's mind is invaluable due to his skill and genius with poetry. Like Du Bois's own style, Cicero unites literary and cultural themes with political ends, layering his concepts in order to win over his audience.¹⁸¹ That Cicero influenced Du Bois is certain; that Cicero contributed to Du Bois's unswerving faith in the importance of literature and education for his people in order to give them stimulus for 'noble action' is logical. Cicero's ability to outline what he believes are the hallmarks of a good and upright citizen parallel Du Bois's own assertions regarding his 'Talented Tenth'; both men roundly endorse education and 'abstract studies' as the keystone to becoming schooled in restraint and fortitude.

*Atque idem ego hoc contendo, cum ad naturam eximiam et illustrem accesserit ratio quaedam conformatioque doctrinae, tum illud nescio quid praeclarum ac singulare solere exsistere.*¹⁸²

This extensive defence not only of the poet Archias, but of poetry's value itself to a rounded individual, is notable primarily because it is the example Du Bois uses in his anecdotes. It is this oration which he attempted to teach, and which he himself studied as a teenager. The impact of his familiarity with Cicero is evident in Du Bois's writing and

180 Paul R. Murphy, "Cicero's *Pro Archia* and the Periclean Epitaphios" in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 89, (1958), pp. 99-111

181 John Dugan, "How to Make (And Break) a Cicero: 'Epideixis,' Textuality, and Self-Fashioning in the *Pro Archia* and *In Pisonem*" in *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Apr., 2001), pp. 35-77

182 "Yet I do at the same time assert that when to a lofty and brilliant character is applied the moulding influence of abstract studies, the result is often inscrutably and unapproachably noble." Cicero, *Pro Archia* 23.

work, and it is clear that the great Roman orator found a disciple of his beliefs in education in the person of Du Bois, given the frequency with which Du Bois mentions Cicero in his own work, and Du Bois's own rhetoric.

Du Bois also studied Cicero's *Pro Marcello* and his *In Catilinam I-IV*. The former is another exposition and description of what Cicero believed makes a man great, directed specifically at the then-triumphant Julius Caesar, whose forgiveness Marcellus had found, and whose beneficence Cicero was courting. Du Bois only read half of the *Pro Marcello*,¹⁸³ and its influence upon him seems relatively limited, as the language repeats Cicero's frequently-displayed belief in literacy, restraint, humility and compassion as hallmarks of greatness.¹⁸⁴ The events of and the details contained in Cicero's four Orations against Cataline provide greater understanding of the ancient orator, and I argue, compelling evidence that Du Bois was influenced by Cicero's style, persona, and history.¹⁸⁵ The savage denunciation of Cataline¹⁸⁶ displays another side of Cicero, and one which would have appealed to the emotional and passionate Du Bois who himself in later years was no stranger to similar fiery rhetoric. Du Bois echoed the same indignation as he

183 In Du Bois's letter asking admission to Harvard, he lists having read "half the *Pro Marcello*" See *Against Racism*.

184 The tone of the *Pro Marcello* is conciliatory; historically, with the end of the civil war, and Caesar's triumphal armed entrance into Rome, Cicero was in a dangerous position as a man who had chosen to side from personal loyalty with Pompey, Caesar's enemy. The clemency shown by Caesar toward Marcellus despite the latter's efforts to obstruct Caesar's political aims and goals was a clemency Cicero very obviously wished to assure for himself in turn. His oration dwells primarily upon flattering Caesar and praying that his kindness will continue. For further discussion, see Cornelia Catlin Coulter, "Caesar's Clemency" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 7 (Apr., 1931), pp. 513-524.

185 While this thesis cannot delve sufficiently into the similarities either conscious or unconscious between Cicero and Du Bois, it is a matter which must be explored at another time.

186 As consul, Cicero was able to speak harshly to another Roman patrician whom he claimed had sought by bribery and assassination plots to destroy him; with great effort, Cicero was able to unveil and utterly expose Cataline's plotting to the senate, and in his four orations, to display both to the people and to his fellows his righteous indignation and superiority.

trumpeted his own messages of outrage at acts of murder and collusion directed against his people, and had he been able to stand with the same power Cicero held at the time of the four orations, I do not doubt his words would have been as abrasive.

Du Bois's study of oration did not begin and end with the work of Cicero. From his study of Demosthenes' *Λογος Εμψυχος* (*De Corona*), Du Bois was able to see careful rhetoric in defence of citizenship, and the pre-eminence of Athens. Demosthenes¹⁸⁷ was touted by Cicero as the greatest orator of all time, and as such his work provides a further exploration into the means by which language could be used to inflame the hearts of readers. Du Bois's own grasp of language is more than sufficient to suggest that his interest in Cicero likely extended to Demosthenes. *De Corona* was a speech written to defend himself against an accusation later described as likely correct, though the strength of Demosthenes' oration¹⁸⁸ was such that he won his case by an overwhelming majority.¹⁸⁹ For Du Bois, Demosthenes primarily acted as a paramount orator, and while Du Bois's own writing favours Ciceronian triads and style, Demosthenes as the influence on Cicero ensures that in turn, he influenced Du Bois. The heights of prose both men reached were powerful precursors to the language which Du Bois used in his own various orations.

Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* warrants mention at this point both as a standard Latin

187 Demosthenes (384–322 BC) was a prominent ancient Greek orator and statesman of Athens. His renown as an orator has engendered legends of the methods he used to improve his speaking skills, and ensured his study within the classical tradition. See Alfred P. Dorjahn, "On Demosthenes' Ability to Speak Extemporaneously" in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 78, (1947), pp. 69-76

188 Andrew R. Dyck, "The Function and Persuasive Power of Demosthenes' Portrait of Aeschines in the Speech 'On the Crown'" in *Greece & Rome, Second Series*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Apr., 1985), pp. 42-48

189 William E. Gwatkin Jr., "The Legal Arguments in Aischines' against Ktesiphon and Demosthenes' on the Crown" in *Hesperia*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1957), pp. 129-141

text which has been examined in detail by generations of students, but also as a history penned by a master orator and brilliant general. Caesar's conquest of Gaul was a tremendously successful and notorious military adventure, designed to stamp out the constant aggression of the Gauls toward Rome. Notably, the theme of the piece is one of southern, civilized men journeying into the barbarous North, to employ guile and superior arms and tactics against savage, tribal peoples.¹⁹⁰ The reversal in nature from the narratives generally employed in the conquest of the non-white world by colonial empire-builders of Du Bois's period makes Caesar's work stand out. The savage tribes of Gauls whom Caesar subjugated were the same race which two thousand years later proclaimed their innate superiority when compared to the rest of the world,¹⁹¹ and Du Bois's contempt of such proclamations had as fuel his awareness of history. Moreover, the lessons learned by the Gauls - most famously that of division and conquest - cannot have been lost on Du Bois, whose clarion call for a Pan-African state which would in unity seek to better itself and defend itself from imperial aggression was a feature of his later writings. While Caesar's turns of phrase and historical magnitude may have impressed themselves upon Du Bois, I argue that overall, if *De Bello Gallico* provided insight, it did so primarily in a narrative of the conquest of the Gauls from whom the modern European empires hailed initially, and as a reminder of the importance of unity in the face of outside aggression.

190 Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, trans H.J. Edwards. *Caesar: The Gallic War*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1917.)

191 Notably, the nations which engaged in colonial conquest overseas were North European ones. The greatest powers were France, Germany, Britain, and Belgium. Italy possessed a handful of colonies, as did Portugal and Spain, but by far, Britain's influence was best known during the Scramble for Africa. See John S. Galbraith, "Gordon, Mackinnon, and Leopold: The Scramble for Africa, 1876-84" in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Jun., 1971), pp. 369-388; Terence Ranger, "Europeans in Black Africa" in *Journal of World History*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Fall, 1998), pp. 255-268; Robert McCormack, "Airlines and Empires: Great Britain and the 'Scramble for Africa,' 1919-1939" in *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1976), pp. 87-105

Additional examples of historians from the ancient world whom Du Bois studied include Thucydides,¹⁹² Xenophon, Tacitus and Livy, who each provided him with excellent examples for the pursuit of history and its earliest formal study. Tacitus, like Cicero and most other Roman writers, emphasized the importance of good character and education. His *Agricola*, which Du Bois lists as having studied prior to his application to Harvard, focuses on the life of Gn. Julius Agricola, a general of Rome and his father-in-law. Tacitus attempts both to moralize and to accurately recount historical events, using his work to underscore the importance of sobriety, diligence, and hard work as elements of a good man. The *Agricola* blended various themes of history and moral rhetoric in a style similar to that which Du Bois later used in his various essays against social problems he identified, where he neither recounted events with complete objectivity nor simply preached, but sought to combine historical retelling with stern lessons. Notably, Tacitus' recounting of British customs in the *Agricola* serves also to emphasize the relative primitive state of that culture at that time, which he considered to be preferable to the overly civilized peace of Rome. His lengthy examination of the Gallic people he believes to have settled Britain makes it plain that to Roman eyes, these northern Europeans were barbarians and uncivilized, a fact which struck home sufficiently with Du Bois that in his graduation speech from Harvard, he spoke at length of the Teutonic Race

¹⁹²Thucydides (460-395BC) was a Greek historian who is popularly considered the originator of a scientific approach to historical research due to his diligence in collecting data. See W. P. Wallace, "Thucydides" in *Phoenix*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Winter, 1964), pp. 251-261; Lionel Pearson, "Thucydides as Reporter and Critic" in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 78, (1947), pp. 37-60; Malcolm F. McGregor, "The Politics of the Historian Thucydides" in *Phoenix*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Autumn, 1956), pp. 93-102; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The Historian" in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Third Series*, Vol. 91, (1979), pp. 86-97

in a negative light.¹⁹³

Ceterum Britanniam qui mortales initio coluerint, indigenae an advecti, ut inter barbaros parum compertum. Habitus corporum varii atque ex eo argumenta. Namque rutilae Caledoniam habitantium comae, magni artus Germanicam originem adseverant; Silurum colorati vultus, torti plerumque crines... eorum sacra deprehendenda, superstitionum persuasiones sermo haud multum diversus, in deposcendis periculis eadem audacia et, ubi advenere, in detrectandis eadem formido.

“Be this as it may, what race of mortal birth inhabited Britain originally, whether native to the soil or later comers, is a question which, as one would expect among barbarous people, has never received attention. The physique of the people presents many varieties, whence inferences are drawn: the red hair and the large limbs of the inhabitants of Caledonia proclaim their German origin; the swarthy¹⁹⁴ faces of the Silures, the curly quality, in general, of their hair... You will surprise there celebrations of Gallic ceremonies and faith in Gallic superstitions; the language is not very different; there is the same recklessness in courting danger, and, when it comes, the same anxiety to escape it.”¹⁹⁵

This description is not far removed from the studies of race which Du Bois condemned as unscientific at his time, though those distributed at his period were descriptions of non-white peoples using the same terminology, and implying the same barbarism that the Romans applied to the Gallic peoples of Britain in 98 CE.

Of the ancient historians Du Bois studied, Livy¹⁹⁶'s examination of the war with Hannibal¹⁹⁷ provides not only a prose equivalent to Du Bois's study of Virgil, but a historical counterpoint in Livy's exploration of the culture of the Libyan coast where

193 See Du Bois, “Jefferson Davis as a Representative of Civilization” for his scathing examination of Davis as a ‘Teutonic Hero’. -Du Bois, *Against Racism*, 14.

194 The Latin word here is notably NOT *niger*, yet is translated as ‘swarthy’.

195 Tacitus, Agricola, trans. William Peterson, *The Dialogues of Publius Cornelius Tacitus* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1914.)189-190.

196 Livy (59 BC-17AD) is known primarily for his monumental history of Rome. His effort originally comprised 142 books, of which 35 remain whole, with numerous fragments from others. See Philip A. Stadter, “The Structure of Livy's History” in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1972), pp. 287-307

197 The Second Punic War.

Aeneas landed and seduced Queen Dido. As one of the most studied and prolific historians of the ancient world, Livy held a special significance to subsequent historians. His monumental history of Rome remains in complete books and recovered fragments, but not in full, and his contrast in Book XXI between Hannibal and P. Cornelius Scipio with Italy and North Africa as the battlefield was the focus of Du Bois's study. Both Hannibal the Carthaginian, and Scipio, his adversary, are described by Livy in this book,¹⁹⁸ and are neatly compared. Scipio, who took the name Africanus upon his defeat of Hannibal, was an orator and a man of learning, who was renowned as a military genius for his successes in North Africa and in Spain. He typified the type of man that most Romans admired, despite his unconventional dress, and while men like Cato the Elder found his erudition effeminate, Scipio Africanus represented a victorious, intelligent Roman general who succeeded in defending Rome.¹⁹⁹ As a well-educated man, and a successful one capable of scholarship as well as military achievement, the man presented by Livy was one Du Bois could as readily admire as the later Roman writers often did. The predilection of Roman authors to present not only history but also ideological approaches comparable to Du Bois' personal philosophy of education, restraint and morality is important to recognize, as their steadfast definition of what constituted worth and esteem would have tended to agree with and to enhance Du Bois's own moral code.

Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* acted as an effort to set out recent events by a historian in a framework which attempted to employ logic and hard data.

198 Andreola Rossi, "Parallel Lives: Hannibal and Scipio in Livy's Third Decade" in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-), Vol. 134, No. 2

199 James S. Ruebel, "Cato and Scipio Africanus" in *The Classical World*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Nov., 1977), pp. 161-173

Thucydides' personal experience and struggle to be clear, concise, and accurate was an early demonstration of historical techniques which interested Du Bois sufficiently to convince him to pursue History and Classics for his first post-secondary studies. Thucydides frequently challenged the relaxed, Homeric view of the history of Greece, clearly differentiating between hard historical accuracy and poetic exaggeration as well known at that time in Homer's recounting of the Trojan War.²⁰⁰ Like Thucydides, Xenophon was a military man who wrote not from detached research but from first-person experience²⁰¹ of his own campaigns. What is notable about Xenophon's *Anabasis* is that it is history written by a man who experienced the events he is recounting; in this case, the retreat of Greek mercenaries who were hired by a Persian ruler.²⁰² As such, it provided an example for Du Bois of a disciplined historical approach, and additionally an account of an army hired by an ethnicity which would have been as spurned by his contemporary white America as his own race was.

This examination of the Greek and Latin texts Du Bois studied in his youth provides the scholar with an awareness of what forces shaped both his awareness of his self, and his awareness of hierarchies of race. The ancient world considered those of north European descent to be savage and primitive, while considering the inhabitants of Africa to be formidable opponents and worthwhile allies. Moreover, the recognition that as far as

200 "...ὥς Ὅμηρος τοῦτο δεδήλωκεν, εἴ τῳ ἱκανὸς τεκμηριῶσαι." translated as "... as Homer testifies, if he is sufficient witness for anyone." See Thucydides, Book I, trans Charles Forster Smith, *Thucydides in Four Volumes: History of the Peloponnesian War Books I and II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1919.) 17.

201 Though little is known of Thucydides's personal life, he reports himself as having been an Athenian soldier in the Peloponnesian War. See John R. Grant, "Toward Knowing Thucydides" in *Phoenix*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring, 1974), pp. 81-94

202 Xenophon, *Anabasis*, trans Carleton L. Brownson, *Xenophon: Hellenica, Books VI & VII, Anabasis, Books I-III* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1921.) 243-493.

skin colour, the norm of the Mediterranean basin was not the paleness of a German or Saxon, but rather shades dark enough to warrant the word *niger*, and those who bore that adjective were not ostracized but rather praised in poetry for their beauty. Such simple facts to the Romans and Greeks would have been startling revelations to a young black man in the late nineteenth century, providing both awareness of self-worth in an environment lacking in examples of racial marginalization, and a pride in the past which is visible in Du Bois's pursuit initially of knowledge centred in that same Greco-Roman past.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTEXT OF THE TIMES

Who are the people who live here? They are brown and black, curly and crisp-haired, short and tall, and longheaded. Out of them in days without date flowed the beginnings of Egypt; among them rose, later, the centers of culture at Ghana, Melle, and Timbuktu... today they hold some vestige of a mighty past – their work in iron, their weaving and carving, their music and singing, their tribal government, their town-meeting and marketplace...Before the World War tendencies were strongly toward the destruction of independent Africa, the industrial slavery of the mass of the blacks and the encouragement of white immigration, where possible, to hold the blacks in subjugation. Against this idea let us set the conception of a new African World State; a Black Africa... in other words, recognizing for the first time in the history of the modern world that black men are human.²⁰³

The context of the ideological currents which framed Du Bois's career are noteworthy in identifying where Du Bois may be categorized within the context of African-American nationalist ideologies. Both prior to, during, and following Du Bois's life, scholars and activists of African descent looked to the past to provide ideological strength and justification for their claims and arguments, citing stolen glory and forgotten legacies as reason for the sense of disillusionment many young blacks felt. Whether in contemporary colonized Africa or in the same stolen past, these theorists recognized that people of African descent were frequently denied agency and heroes whom they could celebrate.

²⁰³In this essay on Ethiopia, Du Bois makes no attempt to gloss over the harsh realities of life under European colonial rule, citing the Belgian Congo as a hideous example. Against these modern horrors, Du Bois sets his indomitable will and the firm belief that Africa should be self-ruled, and aided in that desire by those who wish to see Africa free. See Du Bois, "The Hands of Ethiopia" in *Darkwater*. 36-37.

Du Bois was among the scholars²⁰⁴ who identified this problem of agency and pride and sought to remedy it, though his methods and approach differed from those of many others. This chapter examines some of the theories that surrounded Du Bois and which have followed from his work, with specific attention being paid to determining how Du Bois fits if at all into the various groups who identified themselves with the intention of uplifting their people. Among the various streams of nationalist thought which began in the nineteenth century are those of Ethiopianism and eventually, Afrocentrism by the early twentieth century. Proponents of these trends historically sought to alter the way in which the history of Africa was written, and how future historians would record it. Activists, scholars, and politicians from the 1820s into the present all used similar terms, referring to ancient Egypt, Nubia,²⁰⁵ Kush,²⁰⁶ and especially

204 Others who were aware of the issue of self-confidence among Africans and African Americans included Booker T. Washington, Tiyo Soga (the South African minister who sought Xhosa uplift), Blaise Diagne, Edward Wilmot Blyden and others who expounded upon the importance of educating men of African descent to feel proud of their ancestry and heritage. In the twentieth century, men like Thompson Samkange (an influential religious elite in what is now Zimbabwe), Marcus Garvey, Chiekh Anta Diop, Steven Biko, Molefi Kete Asante and still more have worked tirelessly around the Civil Rights struggle, Rastafarianism, Black Consciousness and other movements to teach black peoples worldwide to take pride in themselves and their cultural achievements.

205 Nubian influences on Egypt and the Mediterranean world are difficult to trace, and they are often misunderstood when viewed solely in an Afrocentric climate of ethnic matters. Though accepted as providing a link between the civilizations of the Mediterranean basin and sub-Saharan Africa, many of the archaeologists who began excavations on Nubian ruins were trained as Egyptologists, and accordingly, defined Nubian history in terms of Egypt to the detriment of perceived Nubian agency. See William Y. Adams, "Sacred and Secular Polities in Ancient Nubia" in *World Archaeology*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Political Systems (Jun., 1974), pp. 39-51; William Y. Adams, "The First Colonial Empire: Egypt in Nubia, 3200-1200 B.C." in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Jan., 1984), pp. 36-71; S. O. Y. Keita, "Studies and Comments on Ancient Egyptian Biological Relationships" in *History in Africa*, Vol. 20, (1993), pp. 129-154; In Nubia's relationship with Afrocentric claims of "blackness", additionally, Howe points out the difficulty of defining Nubian colour. While Nubians were darker than Egyptians in Egyptian images, the paucity of Nubian self-representation makes assumptions about Nubians problematic. See Stephen Howe, *Afrocentrism*: 138-156 *passim*; L. P. Kirwan, "Nubia and Nubian Origins" in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 140, No. 1 (Feb., 1974), pp. 43-51; Dennis P. van Gerven, David S. Carlson and George J. Armelagos, "Racial History and Bio-Cultural Adaptation of Nubian Archaeological Populations" in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1973), pp. 555-564; Victor Oguejiofor Okafor, "Diop and the African Origin of Civilization: An Afrocentric Analysis" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Dec., 1991), pp. 252-268

206 The Kushite civilization, which existed near what is now northern Sudan, was located within the region of Nubia, though later than the Nubian kingdoms, and primarily existed during the 8th century BC.

Ethiopia²⁰⁷ in an effort to recreate their past as they wished. Ethiopia was crucial to twentieth century African thought, following its successful repelling of invading European colonizers during the Scramble for Africa.²⁰⁸ Additionally, Ethiopia still possesses ideological power for many because of the biblical and classical references to that country and its people. The specifics of the Ethiopianist worldview are simple enough in their emphasis on ancient African glories, and were of tremendous benefit in the formative years of black nationalism between 1860 and 1925 in raising a public sense of black historical self-identity by asserting the blackness of iconic ancient writers.

American proponents were generally considered cultural nationalists or Ethiopianists

Associated with both Nubia and Egypt, it is described by Ethiopianist historiographers such as Drusilla Dunjee Houston in her 1926 book *Wonderful Ethiopians of the Ancient Cushite Empire* as an African civilization which influenced Egypt. Historiography by modern writers regarding Kush has given it an importance primarily in the supposed affiliation with Ethiopia and with Egypt in the Afrocentric imagination. See Dows Dunham, "Notes on the History of Kush 850 B. C.-A. D. 350." *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1946): 378-388.; David N. Edwards, "Meroe and the Sudanic Kingdoms" in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (1998), pp. 175-193; Bruce G. Trigger, "Kerma: The Rise of an African Civilization" in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1976), pp. 1-21; D. M. Dixon, "The Origin of the Kingdom of Kush (Napata-Meroë)" in *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 50, (Dec., 1964), pp. 121-132

207 "The myth of Africa formed the core of a manifestly different order of experiences for Afro-Americans, especially with regard to Ethiopia. More than other African states, Ethiopia had a role in keeping alive the myth of Africa. However, this was not because Ethiopian kings or their subjects ever consciously attempted to portray the kingdom of "Prester John" as a Promised Land, a Zion for the descendants of the African diaspora. Rather, it is because Ethiopia was an ancient Christian state in Africa, a mysterious Africa that in the minds of most latter-day Christian Afro-Americans was otherwise inhabited by unredeemed souls. Myth and mystery were heightened even more by the events of Ethiopia's political history. Political and diplomatic ingenuity, let alone dogged perseverance, enabled Ethiopia somehow to maintain its sovereignty right through the nineteenth-century scramble for Africa by the European nations who partitioned the continent at the Conference of Berlin in 1884." See William A. Shack, "Ethiopia and Afro-Americans: Some Historical Notes, 1920-1970" in *Phylon* (1960-), Vol. 35, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1974) 144; James Henry Breasted, "Recovery and Decipherment of the Monuments of Ancient Ethiopia" in *The Biblical World*, Vol. 32, No. 6 (Dec., 1908), pp. 376-385

208 William R. Scott, "Black Nationalism and the Italo-Ethiopian Conflict 1934-1936" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (Apr., 1978), pp. 118-134; "...when Ethiopia inflicted on Italy, then a major European power, the humiliating military defeat at the Battle of Aduwa (1896) the land of Prester John was permanently ensconced in modern history. As a result, European nations, as well as the United States, were obliged to recognize for the first time an African nation at the full level of international diplomacy. The cumulative effect of these historical-political events was to heighten the mysterious impression Ethiopia conveyed to Afro-Americans as well as to the outside world." Shack, "Ethiopia and Afro-Americans" 144.

prior to the 1960s. Ethiopian references played a dual ideological role in the anti-colonial struggles of the twentieth century in both Africa and America. This importance is attributed to ancient legacies of civilization and culture associated with that culture by modern Afrocentrist historiography, and also to the successful resistance by Ethiopia to colonizing influences during the Scramble for Africa. As a result, the term can be misleading, as depending on the context, references to Ethiopia could refer to movements in Africa or America. The title “Ethiopian” was first applied pejoratively in Africa by colonial authorities toward break-away religious groups which they believed challenged their rule,²⁰⁹ and was used positively in turn by anticolonial groups who wished to associate themselves with a nation which possessed a mythological significance.²¹⁰ References to Ethiopia must be analyzed by the modern scholar to recognize whether they are influenced by myths of a lost fantastic utopian greatness, whether they refer to colonial struggle and resistance, or whether they are actually informed by evidence of ancient texts and accurately reflect the ancient kingdom.

The evolution of Ethiopianism as a cultural phenomenon began in nineteenth century Africa in association with repressive colonist regimes set in opposition to the

209 It was “...a general process of African reaction to European culture, loosely called 'Ethiopianism', of which church separatism was an important feature but by no means the only characteristic. From its beginnings in South Africa in 1884 it created scores of African independent churches; influenced the 1906 poll-tax rebellion in Natal; split the unity of the Lovedale native congregation in 1898; and clouded the last years of Coillard... How far South African Ethiopianism affected British Central Africa it is impossible to estimate exactly.” See George Shepperson, “The Politics of African Church Separatist Movements in British Central Africa, 1892-1916” in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Jul., 1954) 235.

210 “Settlers blamed 'Ethiopian' preachers for plotting against white rule in dark corners of town and country. Officials could often see anti-colonial designs in black religious movements which even missionaries regarded as harmless.” See N. A. Etherington, “The Historical Sociology of Independent Churches in South East Africa” in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 10, Fasc. 2 (1979) 109.

emerging class of mission-educated African elites who recognized the disparity between what they learned and what they observed. While movements existed early on in the nineteenth century,²¹¹ the actual Church of Ethiopia²¹² was founded later in the century. In 1892, the Reverend Mangena Mokone led his group from the Wesleyan Society due to frustration with the racism he saw in the Methodist Church in South Africa, and began the movement.²¹³ The reference in name to a biblical Ethiopia served to unify and embody a protolytic Pan-African feeling among the adherents of the new group. Ethiopianism was perceived as a direct challenge to the white mission authority in Africa, promoting reflection among moderate white missionaries and outrage among the more authoritarian colonists. The lack of visible brotherhood between black and white Christians encouraged the spread of Ethiopianism and defied biblical teachings in the estimation of many less tolerant missionaries, while for colonial authorities, missions had led their converts to believe that blacks could be the equal of whites, and thus threatened the peace.²¹⁴

Ethiopian Churches in Africa often included the slogan “Africa for the Africans”, a

211 Some arguments state that the Christian Xhosa prophet Ntsikana began the movement in 1815 with his foundation of the first African Christian organization, which sought to merge traditional worship with Christianity in a unique fashion. By the 1880s, numerous secessions took place from the mainstream missionary societies, including the Thembu Church in 1884, the Lutheran Bapedi Church in 1889, and the African Church in 1889 also. See Hennie Pretorius and Lizo Jafta, “A Branch Springs Out: African Initiated Churches” in Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, ed. *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 213; C. C. Saunders, “Tile and the Thembu Church: Politics and Independency on the Cape Eastern Frontier in the Late Nineteenth Century” in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (1970), pp. 553-570

212 Ethiopianism in Africa became the language of nationalism, as it was associated with independence movements and social groups. Referring to one of the founders of the African Ethiopian church, James Mata Dwane used the language of Ethiopianism as a vehicle for political agency. “It was in this period that Dwane, with his increasing involvement in African politics, also became aware of Ethiopianism...’In it [Ethiopianism] he saw an effective instrument for translating his educational dreams into reality, if only financial power and property rights could be attained by the rising Ethiopian community.’” See Andrew Paterson, “Education and Segregation in a South African Mission Church: The Merger of the Anglican Church and the Order of Ethiopia, 1900-1908” in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (2003) 589.

213 John L. And Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Vol. 2. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 100.

214 *Of Revelation and Revolution* 105.

message which was shared by Marcus Garvey.²¹⁵ By the early twentieth century, Ethiopian Churches not only found motivation in the rampant inequality and racism surrounding them, but also reacted against their awareness of the white missions' efforts to conquer and colonize Africa for whites.²¹⁶ Ideologically, by the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the African Ethiopian movements drew inspiration from the rhetoric of prominent African-American leaders, among them Du Bois, Garvey, and Washington. Africans attended colleges in the United States, and assisted in the formation of the African National Congress and other similar western style African political associations. In short, the Ethiopian traditions of an imagined Africa provided inspiration for African-Americans like Du Bois, while such men in turn inspired their African students to return and continue to seek change.²¹⁷

For many American authors including Du Bois, Ethiopia possessed a mystic property²¹⁸ which did not always correlate with the actual nation, and derived its potency

215 R. L. Okonkwo, "The Garvey Movement in British West Africa" in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1980) 116. Joseph Booth, an Englishman who worked as a missionary in present-day Malawi, trumpeted the same ideology as Garvey later did. "Booth's prophetic call was not just a religious or moral one; it was for Africa for the Africans, with all the political implications involved." Harry W. Langworthy III, "Joseph Booth, Prophet of Radical Change in Central and South Africa, 1891-1915" in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 16, Fasc. 1 (Feb., 1986) 22.

216 Bengt G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) 54.; George W. Reid, "Missionaries and West African Nationalism" in *Phylon* (1960-), Vol. 39, No. 3 (3rd Qtr., 1978), pp. 225-233; Robert I. Rotberg, "The Rise of African Nationalism: The Case of East and Central Africa" in *World Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Oct., 1962), pp. 75-90; George Shepperson, "The Politics of African Church Separatist Movements in British Central Africa, 1892-1916" in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Jul., 1954), pp. 233-246

217 Peter Walshe, "Christianity and the Anti-Apartheid Struggle: The Prophetic Voice within Divided Churches" in *Christianity in South Africa* 383.

218 "Even for the sake of brevity it would be largely impossible to separate the subject of Ethiopia and Afro-American relations from the ideological context of 'Back to Africa' movements. For more than half a century 'Back to Africa' has been a theme dramatized in the social history of latter-day descendants of Africans in the New World. To a considerably large company of Afro-Americans, Africa has been the source of both reality and myth. On the one hand, Africa was an ideological and inspirational reality- a land in which to experience a new Golden Age; on the other hand, imaginative notions about Africa generated and kept alive the myth of a Promised Land" See Shack, "Ethiopia and Afro-Americans" 143.

from biblical passages such as Psalm 68:31, which reads “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.” This passage was often repeated and well known, and presented an iconic and inspiring example of an African nation within the context of the bible bearing a prophetic and hopeful future.²¹⁹ Alongside the glorification of Ethiopia for nationalist thinkers like Blyden, Du Bois, and later Garvey²²⁰ was an associated belief that as Ethiopia would rise, Europe would fall in turn. Ethiopia and Africa accordingly developed a romantic grandeur in the various poems and references made to both the nation and the people within it. A poem attributed to Du Bois notably extols Ethiopia in the nationalist vein of the time: “Ethiopia, my little daughter, why hast thou lingered and loitered in the Sun? See thy tall sisters, pale and blue of eye – see thy strong brothers, shrewd and slippery haired – see what they have done!”²²¹ This poem presents the then-typical phenomenon of Ethiopianism as an effort by peoples of African descent to view their past within the context of world civilization, reminding themselves that the ascendancy of Europe was relatively recent, and prophesying for Europe the same decline and fall which other empires have experienced in the past. Therefore, American Ethiopianist writers assumed the mantle of prophet for the African peoples, from which they acquire moral superiority to Europeans who practised the slave trade.²²² The influence of Du Bois and thinkers like him in providing evidence and impassioned rhetoric in the first two decades of the twentieth century facilitated the

219 Moses 157-160 *passim*

220 “...the idea of Afro-Americans returning to their homeland did not originate with Garvey, though historians have erroneously assumed this to be the case. More accurate assessment of the historical evidence reveals that as early as 1895, the idea among Afro-Americans of returning to liberate the continent had been extended to include Central and South Africa, over two decades before the Garvey movement gained a foothold in America.” See Shack, “Ethiopia and Afro-Americans” 145.

221 Moses 159.

222 Moses 160-161.

eventual spread of Ethiopianist mysticism within the United States, a process fuelled by the influence of Africans studying in America and by the movements occurring at the same time in Africa. Unlike writers like Garvey who had not had the benefit of a traditional elite education, Du Bois was undoubtedly aware of the ancient references to Ethiopia after his early study of classical texts discussed above.

Like Ethiopia, Egypt plays a central part of the debates and claims surrounding the ancient world, and modern Afrocentrism may be defined in many respects as focusing primarily on ancient Egyptian culture and the belief in the ethnicity of the Egyptians as 'black'.²²³ It is to be noted that Du Bois largely avoided the mythology surrounding Egypt, and in his early years carefully avoided identifying the ancient Egyptians by any charged racial terminology. The popularity of Afrocentric claims to Egypt may be attributed to the work of Egyptologist and Afrocentrist Cheikh Anta Diop in the latter half of the twentieth century.²²⁴ He is largely responsible for having provided a referential terminology to the emerging historical consciousness that found its roots in a distinct ethnicity and its struggle for recognition.²²⁵ More extreme modern proponents of the Afrocentric trend like George G.M. James staunchly assert that Western culture has derived every major innovation from an African thinker or predecessor, publishing volumes of revised histories on the matter in an effort to revise Eurocentric historiography through a largely

223 Herbert J. Foster, "The Ethnicity of the Ancient Egyptians" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Dec., 1974), pp. 175-191; Bernal, Martin. *Black Athena; The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization Vol. I.* (London: Free Association Books Ltd., 1987); Bernal, Martin. *Black Athena; The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization Vol. II; The Archaeological and Documentary Evidence.* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1991.)

224 See O.R. Dathorne, "Africa as Ancestor: Diop as Unifier." *Presence Africaine: Revue Culturelle du Monde Noir*. 1989 (1-2): 121-133.

225 Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*, (Buffalo: Amulefi Publishing Company, 1980).

Egyptian lens.²²⁶ Although the theory has faced many criticisms both justified and unjustified, Afrocentrism remains an ideologically influential force in both political and scholarly dialogues regarding the influence of Africans in civilization. By firmly asserting the 'African-ness' of those ideas and innovations which represent the foundations of Western civilization, Afrocentric theories of history provide an empowering message to African-Americans. "The noble aims of Afrocentrism include a reconstruction of vital values, institutions, and history to end our cultural amnesia and collective identity crisis."²²⁷ Du Bois's own frequent use of mythological and ancient references have played no small part in contributing to the rise of Afrocentrism in the decades following his death and the burgeoning Civil Rights movement.

Edward Wilmot Blyden was an originator of the ideas encompassed in Pan-Africanism along with W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey²²⁸ and others. He was one of the earliest cultural nationalists to emphasize African past glories through his work in Liberia in the 1850s.²²⁹ He too emphasized the idea of 'Africa for the Africans' in his 1872 book by the same name, and criticized African-Americans who did not associate themselves with Africa. Blyden played a part in influencing nationalist African pride and *négritude*²³⁰;

226 George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy: Greek Philosophy is Stolen Egyptian Philosophy* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc., 1954.)

227 William Cobb, Jr, "Out of Africa: The Dilemmas of Afrocentricity" *The Journal of Negro History*, 82.1 (Winter, 1997): 122.

228 Blyden, Du Bois, and Garvey are all considered to be fathers of the Pan-African movement, due to their shared ideologies and lasting influences on their regions. Each was likely aware of the others, and their ideas tended to either be reacted against or shared.

229 Hollis R. Lynch, "Edward W. Blyden: Pioneer West African Nationalist" in *The Journal of African History* Vol. 6, No. 3 (1965): 373.

230 *Négritude*, or "blackness" was a movement pioneered in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century by French-speaking black poets and writers in the Caribbean - primarily Haiti - and in Africa who sought to create a universal black consciousness in reaction to French racism. A notable example of those who championed *négritude* is Aimé Césaire, who coined the term in 1935. While not directly

the former can be compared to that of the South African Reverend Tiyo Soga.²³¹ Soga's letters, articles and journal provided an example of an African Xhosa educated in Scotland who advocated for the rights and uplift of his people until his death in 1871. He taught and converted fellow Africans to Christianity, while asking that they work together for a greater good. His advice to his readers directs respect to whites and to blacks he feels are deserving of it, while he urges that Christian Africans not be overly subservient to "poor Whites of no repute who are no better than yourselves."²³²

Other writers like David Walker²³³ also celebrated black achievement and asserted the primacy of Africans in the development of Western civilization, though none approached the stature of Soga or Blyden prior to the emergence of Washington and Du Bois. For some one means to claiming this primacy was to re-imagine ancient writers as being of African descent.²³⁴ As Howe points out, Afrocentric authors are closely related in this to early African-American cultural nationalists in their content and assertions.

The very first known Afro-American political texts already contained the

relevant to the argument at hand, the phenomenon of *négritude* is of importance in the larger picture of emergent black consciousness and solidarity in the period within which Du Bois wrote. Du Bois has been considered an active proponent of *négritude*, though the term did not arise until Césaire coined it. Like other similar movements, Du Bois's name has been associated with this one following his death. See W. F. Feuser, "Afro-American Literature and Negritude" in *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Autumn, 1976), pp. 289-308; W. A. Jeanpierre, "African Negritude: Black American Soul" in *Africa Today*, Vol. 14, No. 6 (Dec., 1967), pp. 10-11; David M. Rafky, "The Semantics of Negritude" in *American Speech*, Vol. 45, No. 1/2 (Spring - Summer, 1970), pp. 30-44; Abiola Irele, "Negritude-Literature and Ideology" in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Dec., 1965), pp. 499-526; Ali A. Mazrui, "Negritude and Negrology" in *Africa Today*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Jun. - Jul., 1969), pp. 11-12; Abiola Irele, "A Defence of Negritude" in *Transition*, No. 13 (Mar. - Apr., 1964), pp. 9-11; Ivor Chipkin, "The Sublime Object of Blackness (Le sublime objet de la "négritude")" in *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, Vol. 42, Cahier 167 (2002), pp. 569-583.

231 Tiyo Soga, ed. Donovan Williams, *The Journal and Selected Writings of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*. (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1983) 9.

232 Tiyo Soga, *Journal of Tiyo Soga* 173.

233 Walker wrote around the time of Soga's birth.

234 Howe 36-39 *passim*

themes which were to re-echo through all the subsequent decades: identification with ancient Egypt as a great black civilization, at least partly the creation of 'Ethiopians', 'Negroes', 'Cushites', or 'sons of Ham'; belief that civilization originated in Africa and was carried thence to Greece and the world; assertion that this past greatness was a source both of racial pride and of hope for future achievement.²³⁵

Many writers popularly sought to emphasize the contribution of Africa to ancient civilization and impose their own historiography into the way African history is recognized by the European body of academic thought. But while not an erroneous assertion by any means, the lengths to which it is often taken have provoked controversy in the scholarly community,²³⁶ and were often viewed as extremist demagoguery as opposed to scholarly historiography by Du Bois among others.

Du Bois's Ethiopianism and mysticism is of a different variety than that of later writers. Rather than seeking to claim and re-imagine ancient figures in African skin-tones as the Afrocentrists did, Du Bois celebrated his idealized historical Ethiopia, and wrote glowingly in furtherance of overt social change. In essence, Du Bois's cultural nationalism was directed toward the future, as opposed to focusing primarily on reclaiming the past. This is an important distinction which generally presents Du Bois's ideology as Pan-Africanist or bearing a resemblance to Ethiopianism or *négritude*, but not Afrocentrist.

²³⁵ Howe provides evidence of this in David Walker's 1829 book *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*. See Howe 36; Hasan Crockett, "The Incendiary Pamphlet: David Walker's Appeal in Georgia" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 86, No. 3 (Summer, 2001), pp. 305-318; William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, "Walker's Appeal Comes to Charleston: A Note and Documents" in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (Jul., 1974), pp. 287-292

²³⁶ The tremendous backlash after Bernal's *Black Athena* provide an excellent example of the debates which are sparked by Afrocentrist theories and historiography. Lefkowitz's *Not Out of Africa* is a denunciation of extremist Afrocentrist constructions of ancient history.

One notable example of a personality who manipulated the black ideological trends of his time and in doing so found himself at odds with Du Bois was Marcus Garvey, already introduced above. Much more so than the comparatively moderate Du Bois, Garvey influenced the theories and ideas of Afrocentrism, infusing his extremist beliefs into the later movements. He lived for some time in Jamaica and in Harlem as a political figure with his Universal Negro Improvement Association, within which he was considered the Provisional President of Africa, and he is recorded in many images parading in full quasi-military uniform with his many African 'noble' advisors. Garvey died in London in 1940 after his deportation from the United States pursuant to charges for mail fraud. The cause of African Americans and the esteem in which men like Du Bois were held had been seriously damaged by the lynching of returning black soldiers from World War One,²³⁷ and Garvey's radical philosophy was expounded upon at a time when African Americans badly needed hope. Garvey's theories and works speak of "Africa for the Africans" like so many African proponents of nationalist pride before him,²³⁸ though he dreamt of an African Negro empire led by aristocrats whose race defined their right to rule as opposed to an Africa which was ruled by the African people. His philosophy further equated Africa with 'Paradise', and returning to Africa as the right of all his African-American people. He applied a liberal dose of prophetic religion and revenge into his opinions, urging the Negro to rise up, as he claimed that God willed him to.

237 Du Bois, "Of Work and Wealth" in *Darkwater* 54-55.

238 For a treatment of Garvey's impact on the African continent's various nationalist efforts, see R. L. Okonkwo, "The Garvey Movement in British West Africa" 106; Michael O. West, "The Seeds Are Sown: The Impact of Garveyism in Zimbabwe in the Interwar Years" in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2/3 (2002), pp. 335-362

Beat the Negro, brutalize the Negro, kill the Negro, burn the Negro, imprison the Negro, scoff at the Negro, deride the Negro, it may come back to you one of these fine days, ...today the Negro seems to be the footstool of the other races and nations of the world; tomorrow the Negro may occupy the highest rung on the great human ladder.²³⁹

The racial climate when Garvey formulated and popularized his theories was tremendously unstable, with race riots erupting between whites and blacks in multiple American cities from 1898 to 1943. Against the backdrop of turn of the century lynching, the World Wars and the economic slump of the Great Depression, African Americans who watched the increasing marginalization of their people were hungry for prophecies such as those which Garvey offered, no matter whether or not he provided evidence to support his rhetoric.²⁴⁰ Heralding Garvey as a visionary, many did immigrate to Africa a few at a time, seeking a return to their peoples' birthplace.

But when we come to consider the history of man, was not the Negro a power, was he not great once? Yes, honest students of history can recall the day when Egypt, Ethiopia and Timbuctoo towered in their civilizations, towered above Europe, towered above Asia. When Europe was inhabited by a race of cannibals, a race of savages, naked men, heathens and pagans, Africa was peopled with a race of cultured black men, who were masters of art, science and literature; men who were cultured and refined; men who were, it was said, like the gods. Even the great poets of old sang in beautiful sonnets of the delight it afforded the gods to be in companionship with the Ethiopians... If the world fails to give you consideration, because you are black men, because you are Negroes, four hundred millions of you shall, through organizations, shake the pillars of the universe and bring down creation, even as Sampson brought down the temple upon his head and upon the heads of Philistines.²⁴¹

239 See Marcus Garvey, "Philosophy and Opinions" in Molefi Kete Asante, *African Intellectual Heritage* 407.

240 Garvey's plans to return to a waiting "motherland" never worked, and according to modern historians, while he earned status as a hero of sorts, Garvey's philosophies were shaky at best, and fraudulent at worst. See Robbie Shilliam, "What About Marcus Garvey? Race and the Transformation of Sovereignty Debate." *Review of International Studies* 2006 32(3): 379-400

241 Garvey 407.

Garvey's appropriation of Du Bois's careful mythological constructions provided later Afrocentrists with ample fuel for extremism once he had added the prophetic demagoguery and charismatic rhetoric which brought him such popular success. His models of history drew upon Ethiopianism of the American kind, providing a foundation through his romanticism and flights of fancy for still more idealized beliefs in his followers surrounding Africa, though ironically, he himself did not visit the continent. Garvey's Africa was a blank utopia waiting to be settled by the "new Negro" he envisioned, possessed of a glorious history which whites had stolen from the inheritors of Egypt and Ethiopia.²⁴² Because of the quasi-religious language employed by Garvey, he and his followers were heavily criticized by Du Bois for diluting and distorting the historiography he had established and warping his goals and language, but Garvey played to the African American hunger at the time for solutions, prophecies and hope. Garvey possessed a view of the world as heavily influenced by race as that of white Europeans centuries prior to his time. "Little in Garvey's view of history was original: he merely put into even more polemical – and vastly more popularly accessible – form the by then conventional themes of several generations of Afro-American chroniclers. But... Garvey's message had a worldwide influence. The characteristic rhetoric of Afrocentric ideas about the past, even today, owes more to Garvey than to anyone else."²⁴³ One of his most notable and ferocious critics was Du Bois,²⁴⁴ who described him harshly. "Marcus Garvey is, without doubt, the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in America and in the

²⁴² Garvey 406.

²⁴³ Howe 76-77.

²⁴⁴ Though as with all the fathers of Pan-Africanism, Garvey did not limit his hatred to Du Bois, but also disliked Blaise Diagne. Ironically for men devoted to the idea of unity in Africa, the various thinkers who expounded on the theory all cordially despised one another.

world. He is either a lunatic or a traitor.”²⁴⁵ Despite such criticisms, Garvey is considered a nearly-mythical figure in his native Jamaica and in the United States for his contributions and influence, and his ideas in turn spread to Africa to influence and alter nationalist ideas in the continent he wished to re-colonize.²⁴⁶

It must be remembered that in the nineteenth century, the pro-African cultural nationalist stance was necessary within the larger cultural milieu and context of contemporary European historiography. At the time of the emergence of African-American nationalism, accepted historical thought was that Egypt and all visible remnants of African civilizations had been ruled over and built by white cultures. For centuries, European scholars believed Africans incapable of building anything of merit, a belief roundly rejected by African intellectuals and nationalists along with the afore-mentioned African American historians and scholars, including of course Du Bois. It was the standard belief of many serious early scholars that, while Egypt had made significant contributions, the kingdom's glories had emerged because of its white rulership.²⁴⁷ Theories existed regarding a mythical 'Hamite'²⁴⁸ race of light-skinned Indo-European speaking Egyptian or Aryan people who spread throughout Egypt and Africa and ruled over the dark-skinned subjects whom Europeans saw in their conquest of Africa. Sir

245 Du Bois, "The Crisis", Vol 28, May 1924: 8-9.

246 Beverly Hamilton, "The Legendary Marcus Garvey." *Jamaica Journal* 1991 24(1): 54-58.

247 Howe 115.

248 Edith R. Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis; Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective" in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1969), pp. 521-532; J. F. Ade. Ajayi and E. J. Alagoa, "Black Africa: The Historians' Perspective" in *Daedalus*, Vol. 103, No. 2, Slavery, Colonialism, and Racism (Spring, 1974), pp. 125-134; Philip S. Zachernuk, "Of Origins and Colonial Order: Southern Nigerian Historians and the 'Hamitic Hypothesis' C. 1870-1970" in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (1994), pp. 427-455; Andrew Apter, "Africa, Empire, and Anthropology: A Philological Exploration of Anthropology's Heart of Darkness" in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 28, (1999), pp. 577-598

Harry Johnston was an early proponent of this mythological origin for African culture by the 1890s, theorizing that the mysterious pale-skinned race had intermingled with its subject populace and therefore degenerated. Such a degeneration was cited primarily to explain the ruins found in West Africa and Egypt, which European explorers and traders did not see repeated by more modern African kingdoms and therefore assumed could not have been the product of black Africans.²⁴⁹ Johnston accorded the white race the title of 'sons of Ham', tracing their origins to the biblical stories regarding Noah.²⁵⁰ Charles G. Seligman asserted in 1930 that all notable archaeological sites owed their construction to Hamites,²⁵¹ while anthropologist Sir Grafton Elliot Smith claimed in 1911 that any infusion of Negro blood would act as a dragging force upon great civilizations, slowing their technological growth and leading to their ruin.²⁵² Such beliefs in inherently "white" cultural African supremacy were maintained even into the 1960s, and provided significant impetus to fuelling American Ethiopianist and Afrocentric historiography first in the nineteenth century, then later in the twentieth.²⁵³

249 "The Ful-be would seem to be the remains (in some districts much "Negrified") of an ancient white immigration from North Africa that was driven south by incoming Hamites and Berbers. The Hamites are represented in Africa by the ancient Egyptians and modern Copts, the Red Sea and Somaliland tribes, the Gala, and a large proportion of the Abyssinian population. A thin stream of ancient Hamite stock lost its language in penetrating into the countries round the Victoria Nyanza and Tanganyika, but founded the cattle-keeping aristocracy of those parts." See Harry H. Johnston, "The Mammalian Fauna of Africa: 1.--The Primates or Man-like Mammals" in *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 19, No. 76 (Jul., 1920) 257

250 Genesis 9:20-25

251 C. G. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, 4th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1966)

252 For consideration of what Elliot Smith's theories have provided in terms of modern ideas of race, see H.A. Waldron, "The Study of the Human Remains from Nubia: The Contribution of Grafton Elliot Smith and his Colleagues to Palaeopathology." *Medical History*. 2000 44(3): 363-388

253 Howe 115-17 *passim*; Wyatt MacGaffey, "Concepts of Race in the Historiography of Northeast Africa" in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1966), pp. 1-17; Patrick Brantlinger, "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent" in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Autumn, 1985), pp. 166-203

In this climate of racially-charged inaccuracy and repression, which began in the Eurocentric opinions of the early nineteenth century, it is hardly surprising that some scholars sought to challenge the contentious ideas presented within historical spheres regarding the origins of African kingdoms and the originators of African monuments. Walker's *Appeal* specifically refers to the Pyramids and the agriculture of Egypt as being the work of Africans as opposed to white invaders or conquerors - an early example of the trends we have above examined which asserted that Africans had developed civilizations of their own, without white rulers.²⁵⁴ With translations of hieroglyphics available upon completion of the decipherment of the Egyptian language by 1836,²⁵⁵ new information was soon made accessible for historians of Africa concerning ancient Egypt; until that point, it must be remembered, European scholars had relied upon Greek translations of Egyptian texts and histories, which accordingly lent themselves to misunderstandings and misapprehensions regarding Egyptian cultural practices and beliefs. Greek historians tended to make an effort to associate Hellenic culture with the clearly older civilization in Egypt,²⁵⁶ while translated Egyptian texts established few if any relationships of the sort which ancient Greeks did. Herodotus is a notable and favoured example of an ancient historian who is often cited in the historiography associated with Afrocentrism. Historians such as Diop, Asante and Martin Bernal related Egyptian practices to Greek religious and cultural practices without much evidence beyond ancient assertions, which themselves

254 Howe 36.

255 Discovered in 1799, the Rosetta Stone's trilingual nature permitted the eventual translation of Egyptian hieroglyphics – something impossible to intellectuals following the Dark Ages. See F. Ll. Griffith, "The Decipherment of the Hieroglyphs" in *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 37, (Dec., 1951)39.

256 B. Perrin, "The Ethics and Amenities of Greek Historiography" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1897), pp. 255-274; Ian S. Moyer, "Herodotus and an Egyptian Mirage: The Genealogies of the Theban Priests" in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 122, (2002), pp. 70-90

were rarely supported. As a result of the new information regarding Egypt available to researchers by the mid-nineteenth century without need for Greek interpretations, scholars were supplied with evidence with which to challenge the notion that there had never been an indigenous African culture or kingdom worth recognizing.²⁵⁷

Theories regarding race and ethnicity as viewed through the lens of the efforts by mid-nineteenth century writers looking to the past were not technically inaccurate, but erred primarily by applying modern ideals of race upon the distant past. This point is essential, as the majority of writers from Garvey onward dwelt on the hue of an ancient figure's skin, which as discussed above was of severely limited importance to the peoples of the Greco-Roman period. The majority of Diop's *African Origins of Civilization* is concerned with establishing the similarities between Egyptian imagery and modern photographs of Africans; he uses as justification for the 'blackness' of ancient Egyptians the colours used by them in representing their deities, identifying Isis and Osiris as being painted black.²⁵⁸ For Diop, it made no sense for a 'white' people to fabricate images of their deities in a colour not their own, and he therefore classified ancient Egyptians as

257 Scholarship ranged from those drawing from historical evidence and translations - to those apparently fabricating much of their rationales, but examples of scholars who staunchly asserted African indigenous primacy in the origins of ruins and cultures include James Pennington, David Walker, Henry Highland Garnet, and Robert B. Lewis, whose contributions in an Ethiopianist or African cultural nationalist vein emerged during the 1840's. See Howe 36-38 and Moses 150. See Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, "Black Power -- The Debate in 1840" in *Phylon* (1960-), Vol. 29, No. 1 (1st Qtr., 1968), pp. 19-26; Charles P. Henry, "The Political Role of the 'Bad Nigger'" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Jun., 1981), pp. 461-482; David Walker and Henry Highland Garnet, *Walker's Appeal, with a Brief Sketch of His Life; And Also Garnet's Address to the Slaves of the United States of America*. (August 12, 2005 [EBook #16516])

258 This is hardly a unique viewpoint, as the two-volume work by Martin Bernal makes abundantly clear in seeking to associate modern ideas of colour with ancient events and characters both real and imagined. See Bernal, *Black Athena*.

'black'.²⁵⁹

Inaccuracies aside, it is hardly surprising that assertions of Egypt's "blackness" were well received by a group of people who had been suppressed and downtrodden by white America; their obsession with race, evident in both cultural nationalist texts and later Afrocentric historiography, in large part emphasizes the cultural climate of the United States following the post-Civil War Reconstruction.²⁶⁰ Writers of the time dwelt upon their own emotions and sense of kinship with glories of a rich Nubian, Ethiopian, or Egyptian past, and even when no evidence supported their claims, their theories remained popular.²⁶¹ Du Bois too focused on his sense of connection with a distant past wherein those of African descent were not limited by their skin colour. In his first popular book, Du Bois firmly asserted the place of blacks in the ancient world, hinting at Ethiopianist antecedents ideologically, but carefully avoiding too much detail and therefore avoiding controversy. "The shadow of a mighty Negro past flits through the tale of Ethiopia the Shadowy and of Egypt the Sphinx. Throughout history, the powers of single black men flash here and there like falling stars, and die sometimes before the world has rightly

²⁵⁹ Diop 77.

²⁶⁰ As slaves, African-Americans did not have time to remember their histories from Africa because of the effort of merely surviving, and as a result, were deprived of a history they were eager to re-discover. Day to day labour, and the forced separation of family units posed an often insurmountable obstacle in seeking to maintain traditions between generations. While oral narratives and remembered music provided some memory, hard evidence was scarce until black nationalist writers began to uncover and disprove such biased theories as the Hamitic Hypothesis.

²⁶¹ Much of the remaining historiography is sensationalist as opposed to scholarly, comprising moving personal stories to illuminate writers' sense of connection with the past. Edward Wilmot Blyden visited Egypt in 1866 and wrote of being struck by a sense of awe, feeling that what he saw was the work of his ancestors. He exhorted his fellows to "Retake your fame" with this awareness of their right to cultural legacies. Hollis Ralph Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden; Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832-1912* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) 55.

gauged their brightness.”²⁶²

In seeking to apply modern definitions of 'blackness' or 'whiteness' to the ancient aesthetic, where citizenship and nationality mattered more than race, nationalist and later Afrocentrist writers applied constructed versions of history to achieve politicized aims, as their critics have noted. In examining figures from the ancient world and claiming that they were 'black', these authors and scholars use historiography to suit their agendas and justify their unsubstantiated claims regarding ancient ethnicity with suppositions and lack of evidence.²⁶³ Du Bois in contrast differentiates himself from these writers and from their ideology in his use of words which typically avoid asserting the 'blackness' of ancient figures. This suggests that Du Bois, through his familiarity with the ancient texts, was more aware of the lesser relevance of colour to the ancients, and secure in his ability to use words like 'swarthy' to identify a classical character without fear of inaccuracy.

Chronological errors riddle the grander claims regarding ancient ethnicity and intellectual primacy, such as George G.M. James's claim that Aristotle stole his philosophy from black writers at the Great Library of Alexandria.²⁶⁴ This theory assumes

262 Du Bois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” in *Souls of Black Folk* 9.

263 Diop assumes that the Arabic ethnic group is descended from black kingdoms, on the assumption that Arabs ruled over parts of the North African coastline, and traded with or warred with Kushite groups. In asserting this, Diop additionally claims that there is no truly Arabic group, but simply an intermingling of Black and White which forms what he describes as the “so-called Semitic world”. See Diop 124. Citing one source alone, and geographic extents within the aegis of “Africa”, Diop's suppositions are nonetheless seriously considered by many Afrocentric authors, and he follows this train of thought by asserting that Arabs are of Negro blood, claiming the Prophet in turn to have been “Negro”, or mixed-breed. See Diop 127.

264 Lefkowitz further challenges James' assertion, along with that of his many intellectual heirs such as ben-Jochannan, in using as evidence the “silence of history”, which she asserts can as readily be turned to claim that Aristotle stole his philosophy from Gymnosophists in India, because history is silent on whether he accompanied Alexander to India. Assertions that Aristotle's *On the Soul* is a reworded *Book*

that Aristotle stole the contents of the Library in 333 B.C. alongside Alexander. In a flat denial, Lefkowitz points out that ancient sources never place Aristotle at Alexandria because Aristotle was Alexander's tutor in his youth, and did not accompany him on his military adventures. Alexandria itself was founded in 331 B.C., and Aristotle died in 322. The actual library was assembled in 297 by Demetrius of Phaleron, a pupil of Aristotle's. Such a serious chronological error has gone unanswered according to critics of Afrocentrism, and instead, similar claims supported by lack of evidence as proof are submitted.²⁶⁵ This predilection for sourceless claims is a far cry from more careful application of rules of evidence and scholarship within the academic world as demonstrated by Du Bois,²⁶⁶ and largely supports his concerns about the effects that Garveyism might have upon later writers.

The continuing obsession with race within the United States has ensured that the generations of first Ethiopianists, then cultural nationalists, and finally Afrocentrists have grown increasingly influenced by a self-referential fascination with ethnic origins and ideas of 'black' and 'white'. The ideologies which surrounded Du Bois and which he himself both influenced and was aware of possessed the potential to bring into the understanding of African history and the Classics a different way of interpreting the ancient writers. African-American cultural nationalists and Ethiopianists were justified in

of the Dead imply that anyone claiming they are directly connected has read neither, since aside from references to souls, the books bear little resemblance to one another. The criticisms Lefkowitz levels at James and his followers are grave, charging them with a nearly-complete lack of evidence for their claims and what she defines as irresponsible treatment of ancient sources. See Lefkowitz, 135-144 *passim*

265 See Lefkowitz 187.

266 Though Du Bois has been described as having overly simplified and valorized contemporary Africa, he seemed to have avoided the flights of fancy regarding ancient Africa which other writers have indulged in.

their nineteenth century historiography that there had been an African contribution to culture. Where they differed from the theories of men like Garvey and his followers was in their deliberate use of the glorious past to valorize a glorious future where they hoped blacks might reclaim their legacy and partake in a world within which they were accepted. Instead of being any of these things, all too often the Afrocentrism which replaced the earlier theories of men like Du Bois has become a vehicle to further conflict, justify racial supremacy, and dismiss academic rules of discourse and research. It is an example of an idea which, when exposed to external pressures and internal emotional frustration, has stretched well beyond the positive origins and the beneficial viewpoints presented, and into one where ideology cannot be challenged or debated.

In determining Du Bois's place in the evolution of historiography as it surrounds black agency in the ancient world, it is abundantly clear both from his vehement rebuttal and from his methodology that Du Bois did not belong among the early nationalist writers whose work possessed great passion but little scholarly research. His Ethiopianism was of a different nature from what was widely practiced, largely informed by his deeper appreciation for the classical world, and his greater understanding of the themes and matters which concerned the Greeks and Romans. As opposed to the assertion of the ancient importance of Africa, Du Bois tended to make it clear in his work that Africa's agency was a given in the ancient world - it was to the modern reader that he wrote, and his work did not waste words attempting to prove a historical fact Du Bois was familiar with. Rather than display any doubt over the role of non-whites, Du Bois proceeded with unshakeable knowledge and awareness of his subject matter to step beyond the arguments

over ancient race, and launch into his social and cultural agendas through classical terminology.

CHAPTER 4

W.E.B. DU BOIS'S CLASSICAL METAPHORS

Have you ever seen a cotton-field white with the harvest, - its golden fleece hovering above the black earth like a silvery cloud edged with dark green... I have sometimes half suspected that here the winged ram Chrysomallus left that Fleece after which Jason and his Argonauts went vaguely wandering into the shadowy East three thousand years ago; and certainly one might frame a pretty and not far-fetched analogy of witchery and dragon's teeth, and blood and armed men, between the ancient and the modern Quest of the Golden Fleece in the Black Sea. - W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of the Quest of the Golden Fleece" in *Souls of Black Folk*, 100.

We have explored Du Bois's childhood and education, and the intellectual climate preceding, surrounding and following his life. In order to see how these factors united in his existent literary efforts, we now turn to examining the classical references Du Bois made, and the use to which he put them. Du Bois's familiarity with the ancient world and his own passion for the classical stories he studied in his youth formed the impetus for his own use of classical myth and metaphor. He recognized that the classics had become an intellectual currency among the elite of his time, and in displaying his own familiarity, he claimed a rightful place among the educated elite. In addition, Du Bois used the metaphors of the Greco-Roman world to articulate his own message, and subversively to place non-white agency in the spotlight for his readership. His first popular work featured essays which not only highlighted the issues which were contemporary to Du Bois's time, but also typified his lifelong preference for using ancient myths as a broad canvas upon which to explore his beliefs and philosophy.

The first example of his use of classical metaphor for this purpose appears in his 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*. The most notable of the essays collected within is "Of the Wings of Atalanta", an exposition within which Du Bois crafts a layered message from a mix of Ovid²⁶⁷ and Hesiod's myths of Atalanta.²⁶⁸ This essay is revealed to be a masterful extended metaphor in which he compares the city of Atlanta where he then taught with the mythological Atalanta of the ancient world. The classical Atalanta was a beautiful girl who outran her suitors and had each of them killed until lured by the golden apples of the Hesperides²⁶⁹ and the guile of her final suitor Hippomenes. In Hesiod's version, Atalanta was a skillful huntress who demanded of her father that she marry only a man who was her equal. Accordingly, she challenged each to a footrace, with herself as the prize if she was beaten, and her would-be husband's head if she won. From Hesiod's fragmentary account, Hippomenes accepted the challenge, but brought three golden apples as gifts from Aphrodite, which he tossed before his opponent, slowing her as she stooped to snatch each up. Where the difficulty lies in the details of the myth is in the multiple variations of the tale existent. In some, it is Melanion who raced Atalanta, while the apples were from the Hesperides.²⁷⁰ In others it is Hippomenes and Aphrodite's gift

267 Publius Ovidius Naso, known generally as Ovid, was a Roman poet generally ranked alongside Virgil and Horace as a canonic poet of Latin verse. His works ranged from the wryly humorous to the more serious, treating subjects from mythological transformations to romantic advice. Ovid was banished for political reasons from Rome by the Emperor Augustus in AD8. See R. M. Fransson, "Ovid Rox" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 86, No. 2 (Dec., 1990 - Jan., 1991), pp. 176-182; Stephen Hinds, "Defamiliarizing Latin Literature, from Petrarch to Pulp Fiction" in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-), Vol. 135, No. 1 (Spring, 2005), pp. 49-81; Maurice P. Cunningham, "Ovid's Poetics" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 6 (Mar., 1958), pp. 253-259; Alan H. F. Griffin, "Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'" in *Greece & Rome, Second Series*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Apr., 1977), pp. 57-70

268 Atalanta is first seen in Hesiod's "Catalogues of Women and Eoiae", 163-167.

269 The Hesperides were mythologically a group of nymphs who tended a garden near the mountains of Atlas in Northern Africa within which was a tree of immortality. See W. R. Connor, "Seized by the Nymphs: Nympholepsy and Symbolic Expression in Classical Greece" in *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Oct., 1988), pp. 155-189; A. R. Littlewood, "The Symbolism of the Apple in Greek and Roman Literature" in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 72, (1968), pp. 147-181

270 See Judith M. Barringer, "Atalanta as Model: The Hunter and the Hunted" in *Classical Antiquity*, Vol.

from her island home of Cyprus.²⁷¹

Du Bois's essay is at first glance a comparative piece in which the author fancifully demonstrates the breadth of his knowledge by spinning a web of words to anthropomorphize a city in a particular way: it should be immediately noticeable that in his elaborate use of mythological references, Du Bois is reminding his readers of his recognition and familiarity with ancient texts. His position as an assertive black intellectual in an era of segregation and an African-American man in 1903 who did not make any effort to diminish his natural gifts before a critical white world is underscored in this essay by his obvious familiarity with the subject and the ease with which he spins this supposedly fanciful exposition. Du Bois meets two aims: he presents himself as meriting the recognition of an equivalent white scholar and he connects non-Germanic²⁷² peoples to the classical world.

Drawing his readers toward the main theme of his essay through lyricism and classical references, Du Bois launches into a direct comparison between the already-mythologized²⁷³ Atlanta he has valorized for his audience, and the ancient world's Atalanta, re-telling the tale of Hippomenes and the golden apples her suitor cunningly

15, No. 1 (Apr., 1996), pp. 48-76; V. Emeljanow, "Ovidian Mannerism: An Analysis of the Venus and Adonis Episode in Met. X 503-738" in *Mnemosyne, Fourth Series*, Vol. 22, Fasc. 1 (1969), pp. 67-76; S. C. R. Swain, "A Note on Iliad 9.524-99: The Story of Meleager" in *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (1988), pp. 271-276 (274)

271 Ovid's Atalanta is caught through golden apples from Cyprus, given by the Goddess of Love to Hippomenes. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Book X, ll. 645-679.

272 Neither the Greeks nor the Romans were Germanic, but their cultural history had largely been appropriated by Du Bois's time by Germanic peoples like the British and the French.

273 By the time Du Bois begins re-telling the myth, he has compared modern-day Atlanta to Lachesis, presenting the city as a woman.

tossed in her path during their footrace in Boetia.

Perhaps Atlanta was not christened for the winged maiden of dull Boeotia; you know the tale, - how swarthy Atalanta, tall and wild, would marry only him who outraced her; and how the wily Hippomenes laid three golden apples of gold in the way. She fled like a shadow, paused, startled over the first apple, but even as he stretched his hand, fled again; hovered over the second, then slipping from his hot grasp, flew over river, vale, and hill; but as she lingered over the third, his arms fell round her, and looking on each other, the blazing passion of their love profaned the sanctuary of Love, and they were cursed. If Atlanta be not named for Atalanta, she ought to have been.²⁷⁴

Notably, Du Bois does not elaborate on the mythological character's destruction of her unsuccessful suitors, nor how in Ovid's version, it was apples as gifts from Venus that were thrown. He also avoids the mythological conclusion that it was Hippomenes' subsequent inadequate appreciation of the Goddess of Love that cursed the couple to defile Demeter's temple and be changed into lions as punishment.

In his re-telling, Du Bois subtly asserts his right to be evoking classical imagery by describing Atalanta as "swarthy", highlighting his deep-seated belief in the then-debated right of non-whites to have agency in the ancient world.²⁷⁵ He initially begins an elaborate series of classical metaphors, re-imagining his Atlanta stretching "long iron ways to greet the busy Mercury in his coming."²⁷⁶ For a classicist, Du Bois's introduction of Mercury,²⁷⁷ a major deity, demands attention. In the ancient world, Mercury was a god

²⁷⁴ Du Bois, "Atalanta" 60.

²⁷⁵ Given the translation of '*niger*' we have explored in Chapter 2, which Lewis and Short gave as 'swarthy' or 'dusky', it is also not impossible that Du Bois's use of the adjective hearkens to a subtle assertion that his Atalanta is best defined using the same ancient word. As Atalanta was featured in both Greek and Latin poetry, to apply the Latin adjective to her and translate it as 'swarthy' is hardly implausible, and the word specifically used by Du Bois here suggests a relationship linguistically, whether conscious or unconscious.

²⁷⁶ Du Bois, "Atalanta" 60.

²⁷⁷ Mercury is the Roman title of Hermes; the Romans tended to appropriate Greek deities and conflate

of travellers, a messenger, a guide for the dead,²⁷⁸ a deity of fertility,²⁷⁹ and a patron of thievery.²⁸⁰ Atlanta could easily be greeting any of these aspects of the Classical god in a multivalent metaphor which can be turned in any way that a reader could wish. As guide for the dead, Mercury could well be aiding Atlanta's victims of lynching. When Du Bois published this book, he had also recently lost his infant son to childhood sickness, and witnessed unrest and murders in the his adoptive city. Mercury as a god of death cannot have been far from his mind. As patron of thievery, Mercury could be participating in the exploitation of the Reconstruction-era sharecroppers by the industrial economy.²⁸¹ As deity of fertility, Mercury could readily be associated either with the population growth of the city, or with the sexual exploitation of black women by white men which Du Bois frequently condemned in the Southern States.²⁸² Finally, as messenger, Mercury could

them with similar gods of their own.

278 Hermes is described as the "Guide of Souls" who leads the dead to Charon's boat at Styx by some scholars. See Francis A. Sullivan, "Charon, the Ferryman of the Dead" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Oct., 1950), pp. 11-17; Hermes is also venerated through the creation of stone piles and monuments, some of which bear phallic symbolism in a mixture of fertility and death. See Hetty Goldman, "The Origin of the Greek Herm" in *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Jan. - Mar., 1942), pp. 58-68

279 Hermes' early origins are discussed as being Babylonian, and his divine influence largely concerned with spring and fertility as a Cthonic (See Scott Scullion, "Olympian and Chthonian" in *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Apr., 1994), pp. 75-119 for an examination of the difference between Olympian and Cthonic deities in the ancient world) god of the earth. Though this view may no longer be held, during the time when Du Bois wrote, it was considered valid, lending credence to a possible interpretation of the deity. See A. L. Frothingham, "Babylonian Origin of Hermes the Snake-God, and of the Caduceus I" in *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1916), pp. 175-211

280 B. R. Fredericks, "Divine Wit vs. Divine Folly: Mercury and Apollo in "Metamorphoses" 1-2" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Feb. - Mar., 1977), pp. 244-249; George M. Calhoun, "Homer's Gods-Myth and Marchen" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (1939), pp. 1-28

281 Du Bois expounds upon his outrage over sharecropping in Souls, discussing it in the essay "Of the Quest of the Golden Fleece", 100-118. See also A. F. Robertson, "On Sharecropping" in *Man*, New Series, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Sep., 1980), pp. 411-429; Louis Ferleger, "Sharecropping Contracts in the Late-Nineteenth-Century South" in *Agricultural History*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Summer, 1993), pp. 31-46; Susan A. Mann, "Slavery, Sharecropping, and Sexual Inequality" in *Signs*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Summer, 1989), pp. 774-798; Ralph Shlomowitz, "The Origins of Southern Sharecropping" in *Agricultural History*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Jul., 1979), pp. 557-575; Ian Ochiltree, "Mastering the Sharecroppers: Land, Labour and the Search for Independence in the US South and South Africa" in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Mar., 2004), pp. 41-61

282 Du Bois's essay on the extensive abuse of black women in the South may be found in *Darkwater*, "The Damnation of Women" (95-108). See John Mayfield, "'The Soul of a Man!': William Gilmore Simms

simply be acting as a link to the rest of America, especially the industrialized Northern states, and to New England from which Du Bois himself came, which he often commented on as having sent so many teachers south.

Having set out a prophetic warning in his direct comparison earlier, Du Bois continues in a classical vein by further mythologizing the regions of America with respect to their attitudes.

There is thrifty Mercury of new England, Pluto of the North, and Ceres of the West; and there, too, is the half forgotten Apollo of the South, under whose aegis the maiden ran, - and as she ran she forgot him, even as there in Boeotia Venus was forgot.²⁸³

Once again, Du Bois mentions Mercury, this time as representative of “thrifty... New England”,²⁸⁴ which provides a new and different interpretation for the deity as patron of merchants, as opposed to those we have just touched on. Du Bois associates Pluto²⁸⁵ with the North, making reference to notions of wealth and money with his identification and differentiates between the industrial northern midwest and his birthplace. Ceres is

and the Myths of Southern Manhood" in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Autumn, 1995), pp. 477-500; Anthony S. Parent, Jr. and Susan Brown Wallace, "Childhood and Sexual Identity under Slavery" in *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Jan., 1993), pp. 363-401; Stephanie M. H. Camp, "The Pleasures of Resistance: Enslaved Women and Body Politics in the Plantation South, 1830-1861" in Vol. 68, No. 3 (Aug., 2002), pp. 533-572

283 Du Bois, "Atalanta" 61.

284 See also in "Of the Sons of Master and Man", p.123 where Du Bois speaks of "Thrifty and avaricious Yankees"

285 Pluto, or Hades as the Greeks knew him, was associated with the dead, wealth, fertility, and the underworld. It was a poetic device used by Virgil, Homer, and Ovid to describe their heroes at some stage venturing into Hades' gloomy realm to retrieve or communicate with fallen comrades or loved ones. Aristophanes in fact mocks the device by having his protagonist in *Frogs* make a similar journey to test the Greek tragedians against one another. See Georg Luck, "Virgil and the Mystery Religions" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 94, No. 2 (Summer, 1973), pp. 147-166; H. J. Rose, "Myth and Ritual in Classical Civilisation" in *Mnemosyne, Fourth Series*, Vol. 3, Fasc. 4 (1950), pp. 281-287; H. J. Rose, "The Core of Mythology" in *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (May, 1932), pp. 129-136; Martha Habash, "Dionysos' Roles in Aristophanes' *Frogs*" in *Mnemosyne, Fourth Series*, Vol. 55, Fasc. 1 (2002), pp. 1-17

heralded as the West, appropriately enough with her connection to grain and fertile earth,²⁸⁶ and the final god Du Bois re-envisioned is Apollo as emblematic of the South. Initially described by Du Bois as half-forgotten, this Southern Apollo is an inherently dualistic figure, overlooked by Atlanta in his most romantic and noble form, yet as any Classicist knows, Apollo is hardly a kind and gentle god.²⁸⁷ In his re-imagining of the ancient Classical deities, Du Bois is reclaiming the divine and re-imagining them in the context he desires.

He next provides a subsequent recitation of the virtues and vices of the same 'Southern gentleman' he chastises his mythological Atlanta for having forgotten at his romanticized best in her modernized incarnation. Apollo in Du Bois's examples provides an excellent representation for the idealized handsome, boyish planter, who possessed both refinement and callous cruelty in equal measure. Classically, Apollo's forcible conquests were notorious among men and women both,²⁸⁸ and the comparison between his ruthless and arrogant use of mortals as sexual playthings renders instructive an examination of the South's historical abuse of slaves in a similar fashion. While Apollo

286 Robert Parker, "The 'Hymn to Demeter' and the 'Homeric Hymns'" in *Greece & Rome, Second Series*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Apr., 1991), pp. 1-17

287 For an extensive examination of Apollo as a paradoxical figure both representing culture and refinement, and also representing cruelty and savagery, see Marcel Detienne and Anne Doueihi, "Apollo's Slaughterhouse" in *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), pp. 46-53

288 Apollo coerces Leucothoe to grant him sexual favours and she is buried alive by her father as payment, while his spurned lover Clytie withers into a tree due to his abandonment of her in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Book IV, ll 204-262.. For further examples and discussions of Apollonian conquests and behaviour, see Anne Pippin Burnett, "Human Resistance and Divine Persuasion in Euripides' 'Ion'" in *Classical Philology*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Apr., 1962), pp. 89-103; Jennifer Larson, "Handmaidens of Artemis?" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 92, No. 3 (Feb. - Mar., 1997), pp. 249-257; John Gibert, "Apollo's Sacrifice: The Limits of a Metaphor in Greek Tragedy" in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 101, (2003), pp. 159-206.

was an oracular god of music, logical thought and medicine,²⁸⁹ he was also a vengeful deity who spread plague among the armies at Troy, and cursed Cassandra for having refused him with accurate prophetic powers which no one would believe. Like Apollo, the white South bore a veneer of civilization while displaying callousness to its slaves and vengeful self-indulgence when not offered complete subservience. Apollo was a deity associated after 750 BCE with colonization,²⁹⁰ offering a figure to be associated in Du Bois's chronological context with the empire-building which at that time was fragmenting contemporary Africa. Eternally beautiful, a cruel Apollo flayed alive the satyr Marsyas for daring to try and compare their musical talents – the pair were considered equally talented until Apollo made the contest unfair, exploiting his divinity and changing the rules of the competition into a challenge which was impossible for his pipe-playing opponent to complete successfully.²⁹¹ In a similar manner, white colonizers in Africa by the turn of the century had systematically cheated the less technologically sophisticated conquered peoples in the Belgian Congo and Southern Rhodesia, most notoriously in the latter with the Rudd Concession, which took blatant advantage of illiteracy in causing the signing over of all rights to land to Cecil Rhodes.²⁹² Apollo was notoriously competitive and harsh

289 Apollo's chase of Daphne displays the Roman perception of the god as seen by Ovid: "... the revealer of present, past and future; through my power, the lyre and song make harmony; my arrow is sure in aim... the power of healing is my discovery; I am called the Healer throughout all the world" Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Book I, ll 514-523.

290 "Being the god of colonists, Apollo influenced his priests at Delphi to give divine guidance, as to where the expedition should proceed. This was during the height of the colonizing era circa 750-550 BCE. Apollo's title was "Archigetes" (leader of colonists). According to one legend, it was Apollo who helped either Cretan or Arcadian colonists found the city of Troy." - Encyclopedia Mythica online. See also W. G. Forrest, "Colonisation and the Rise of Delphi" in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Apr., 1957), pp. 160-175

291 Joanna Nizyńska, "Marsyas's Howl: The Myth of Marsyas in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Zbigniew Herbert's 'Apollo and Marsyas'" in *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Spring, 2001), pp. 151-169. See also Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Book 6 lines 383-400.

292 For more information, see David Chanaiwa, "The Army and Politics in Pre-Industrial Africa: The Ndebele Nation, 1822-1893" in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Sep., 1976) 59; I. R. Phimister, "Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand" in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Oct., 1974), pp.

in his judgements against any who did not venerate him completely, mirroring equally harsh enforcement of unquestioning obedience which was demanded by white owners of their black slaves in the face of ferocious repression and callous mistreatment. In mythology, Apollo was connected with his half-brother Hermes as the patron of thieves,²⁹³ a second metaphorical meaning doubtless considered by Du Bois given his later literary association of the South with sharecropping and exploitative theft.

This, then, is the deity whom Du Bois associates with the South. The Apollo who ravished fleeing maidens is a well-considered embodiment of the planter who sired children to be sold as slaves on his unwilling black slave-women, and is as paradoxical as the dichotomy inherent in the elegant and honourable gentleman who could so easily abuse and kill other human beings for the crime of colour. In his elaboration of this Apollonian figure of the Southern man, Du Bois neither completely condemns nor completely flatters the romantic ideal, instead treating both the good and the bad as things to be either respected or discarded on their individual merit by the reader but not judged by the writer.

As a 'City of a Hundred Hills', Atlanta in Du Bois's essay is an inheritor of Rome, which only boasted seven famous hills. The first glimpse of the myths Du Bois intends to explore, however, lies in his reference to Atlanta as "The new Lachesis, spinner of web and woof for the world."²⁹⁴ Du Bois immediately provides his reader with multiple

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293 The infant Hermes fashioned the first lyre, and exchanged it for the cattle he stole from his divine sibling according to Ovid.

294 Du Bois, "Atlanta" 60.

meanings in this comparison with the spinner of men's Fates, from references to the cotton industry and the capitalism which drove Atlanta in the economy of the Reconstruction-era United States, to a comparison of the span of mens' lives, and finally to the interplay of two differing threads which can be interpreted as the opposition of black and white in the city in which the writer lived. In briefly fashioning Atlanta as the mythological spinner for his readers, Du Bois highlights his knowledge of the ancient world's myths, and plays with meaning.

He then returns to his initial metaphor, visualizing his re-imagined anthropomorphized city in ancient raiment. "Here stands this black young Atalanta, girding herself for the race that must be run... but what if some ruthless or wily Hippomenes lay golden apples before her?"²⁹⁵ and concludes that she must inevitably fall to the golden apples that will be flung in her path by forces she cannot control. In a brief shift from Classical to Judeo-Christian language, Du Bois emphasizes his fear of greed destroying his young character, and confesses that he fears it will corrupt the quest of an emerging people toward "Goodness and Beauty and Truth."²⁹⁶ As he finishes this passage, Du Bois asks his readers whether freedom and virtue must "too degenerate into a dusty quest of gold – into lawless lust with Hippomenes?"²⁹⁷ With this question, Du Bois has guided his readers toward a depressing climax without much hope for a positive outcome. Reminding us of the Atlanta-Atalanta comparison and with it of his own erudition, Du Bois returns to the city itself, warning his modern maiden of the dangers of greed and

²⁹⁵ *Ibid* 63.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid* 63.

²⁹⁷ Du Bois, "Atalanta" 63.

commercialism lest like Ovid's Atalanta, she be tempted to profane the sacred and draw down divine wrath. Du Bois continues to compare the two characters' identities, listing the various obstacles which his re-imagined figure must overcome, ending with the racial question as the greatest of them all. "How heavy a journey for weary feet!" he writes sympathetically, "What wings must Atlanta have..."²⁹⁸ Du Bois in describing the issue of race in the South has carefully explored the white elite by this time, and in a nod to equity he does not paint his own people as being without fault in contrast. Rather, he proceeds to expound on the condition and character of the former slaves, again neither extolling virtues nor condemning vices, but acknowledging both as present amongst the population of freedmen and their families, and warning all against what he reminds his readers is "the temptations of Hippomenes"²⁹⁹ in a return to his original classical metaphor. With this nod to fairness, Du Bois alleviates a hypothetical contemporary reader's concern that he might be being unjust to white Southerners. In his willingness to outline the faults of his own people, Du Bois ensures that the faults of the whites about whom he writes must also be considered.

Du Bois leaves his sustained comparison then, abruptly shifting to a pastoral scene where he identifies the lone hill of Atlanta that is not crowned by a factory, but instead by a university. He makes a direct reference to the ancient Athenian school at Akademia,³⁰⁰ connecting it with the place of learning in Atlanta, and associating the ancient Greek

²⁹⁸ Ibid 60-61.

²⁹⁹ Ibid 62.

³⁰⁰ R. E. Wycherley, "Peripatos: The Athenian Philosophical Scene--II" in *Greece & Rome, Second Series*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Mar., 1962), pp. 2-21; Anton-Hermann Chroust, "Aristotle Leaves the Academy" in *Greece & Rome, Second Series*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Apr., 1967), pp. 39-43

pupils with the “dark and heavy-haired”³⁰¹ children who sought after knowledge. He writes of his eager pupils gathering to sing “in the music of the morning sacrifice. In a half-dozen classrooms they gather – here to follow the love-song of Dido, there to listen to the tale of Troy divine.”³⁰² Du Bois was not hired to teach of Carthage or Troy but of Sociology to his pupils, making into both fancy and intentional lyricism this recitation of ancient myths being taught to the students of Atlanta University. Once again, he is writing in furtherance of social uplift, describing an idyllic setting where black youth are engaged in an activity once forbidden by the white society of the southern United States.

He extols this romanticized pursuit of truth and knowledge, selecting for his examples Dido, Queen of Carthage in North Africa, and the Troy in Asia Minor which the Achaeans destroyed in the *Iliad*. Both examples are geographically peripheral to the mainland Greek world which was so cherished by the white elite of Du Bois's time, and by having his eager pupils in this valorization studying stories at the edges of the accepted world, he is making his fantasy more palatable to white readers and highlighting the agency and connection between his idealized students and the marginalized adversaries of ancient myth. Du Bois once again reminds his readers that the tales of Greece and Rome were not of Northern peoples³⁰³ as a rule, but more often of peoples in the Mediterranean Basin and North Africa. The message he is subtly imparting is intensified when Du Bois discounts more than two thousand years as he presents the sons of freed slaves at Atlanta as the true inheritors of this ancient knowledge. “The riddle of existence is the college

³⁰¹ *Souls of Black Folk* 63.

³⁰² *Ibid* 63.

³⁰³ What Thompson calls 'Nordic' in his translation of *candida*.

curriculum that was laid before the Pharoahs, that was taught in the groves by Plato, that formed the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, and is to-day laid before freedmen's sons by Atlanta University."³⁰⁴ It is worth noting the omission of steps between Plato and Georgia – Du Bois is herein making a case for a classical education's merit and worth to African-American students, and urging his readers to recognize the importance of teaching non-whites their true inheritance.

Indeed, as he continues in his rhapsodic evaluation of education at Atlanta, Du Bois finally makes mention of other institutions, but he exalts his own above Yale, Columbia, Oxford, and Leipzig, seeing the problem of race in the South as a goad to “realize for men, both black and white, the broadest possibilities of life, to seek the better and the best.. - all this is the burden of their talk and dream.”³⁰⁵ He calls Atlanta a “green oasis, where hot anger cools and the bitterness of disappointment is sweetened by the springs and breezes of Parnassus.”³⁰⁶ Once again, Du Bois draws attention to his Classical connection, firmly placing African-American schools alongside Parnassus, the most hallowed centre of learning in Greco-Roman mythology where the very Muses rest and reside.³⁰⁷

Du Bois's answer to the question of Atlanta's seduction by wealth is thus answered resoundingly – he sees the education and uplift of her citizenry as the greatest hope of a

304 Ibid 64.

305 Ibid 64.

306 Ibid 64.

307 Parnassus has taken on a modern semantic also with its frequent mention in literature and comparisons such as the one Du Bois makes here. Mentioned by Homer in the *Odyssey*, Parnassus has become a soothing region of learning and peace in the collective consciousness of the West.

future. In celebrating teaching and identifying the importance of higher education in building the most basic foundations of a society, Du Bois heralds his university as the key to guiding his mythological character over the hurdle of greed into a brighter future of hope and truth. To underscore this conclusion, Du Bois repeats his original metaphor of the running girl lured by apples, with his proposed education guiding her “over and beyond them, and leav(ing) her kneeling in the Sanctuary of Truth and Freedom and broad Humanity, virgin and undefiled.”³⁰⁸ He roundly condemns the South for having neglected the education of its poor and refusing funding for colleges and universities due to colour prejudice and commercial selfishness. In a final, resounding endorsement, Du Bois trumpets the need for workers who truly love their work, and the education of men to be rounded and strong individuals, thereby birthing a better nation on the model of Plato's Republic.

He ends his essay in an oracular vein, writing of night falling over Atlanta, and the mist hiding her from view. “When night falls on the City of a Hundred Hills, a wind gathers itself from the seas and comes murmuring westward... And they say that yon gray mist is the tunic of Atalanta pausing over her golden apples.”³⁰⁹ In a final display of his ability to layer meanings upon meanings, Du Bois leaves his reader with a play on words in hinting that the fog which obscures Atlanta from his readers' view hails from the Atlantic. This is a similar name for a conclusion to an essay which ultimately plays on the similarities of names, and in this case, a name for the ocean which was the primary venue

308 Ibid 66.

309 Ibid 67.

for the slave trade about which Du Bois published his first book. This final shade of meaning can be no accident in the hands of a writer like Du Bois, and his reference to “yon gray mist” murmuring westward is one final possible connection to be made for his readers before he leaves us with his final cry for Atlanta to flee Hippomenes.

Eight years later, with his publication of the novel *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*, Du Bois expanded considerably upon a metaphor he outlined in the same collection of essays as that in which he presented the 1903 Atalanta extended comparison. In an essay titled “Of the Quest of the Golden Fleece”, he introduces the idea that Jason's theft of the golden fleece of Colchis was being revisited in the exploitation of plantation workers in the Southern United States, and the 'theft' of their cotton 'fleece'. As presented in *Souls of Black Folk*, the idea is contained in no more than an introductory paragraph for an essay which primarily explores the realities of conditions for sharecroppers in the so-called 'Black Belt' of the post-Reconstruction South.³¹⁰

The classical mythology beginning again with Hesiod which surrounds Jason's voyage to Colchis³¹¹ and his theft of the Golden Fleece have long been interpreted as a

310 The region defined by the term comprises a crescent of States inhabited by a large population of African-American workers. Booker T. Washington identified it in *Up From Slavery* as being “first used to designate a part of the country which was distinguished by the colour of the soil. The part of the country possessing this thick, dark, and naturally rich soil was, of course, the part of the South where the slaves were most profitable, and consequently they were taken there in the largest numbers. Later and especially since the war, the term seems to be used wholly in a political sense—that is, to designate the counties where the black people outnumber the white.” See Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996 [1901]) 52. It encompasses land from southwest Tennessee to central Mississippi, and then stretches eastward through Alabama to Georgia. For a modern definition published in January 2000, see <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ruralamerica/ra151/ra151d.pdf>

311 In summary, Jason and his crew voyage to Colchis on the Black Sea to obtain a magical Golden Fleece which had belonged to the ram Chrysomallus. It is, however, a sacred artifact of the city, and before he will relinquish it, the king sets Jason a series of impossible tasks. However, the gods have been

story of the known and the 'other'. As with the education examples Du Bois used in his Atlanta-Atalanta comparison, Medea represents a female character who was traditionally marginalized by the mainland Greek culture. Like Dido, Medea was a royal foreigner with roots in the East, and like Virgil's Carthaginian queen, Medea's infatuation with the epic hero is unwilling and forcible at divine hands.³¹²

In Apollonius of Rhodes' 3rd century BCE *Argonautica's* third Book, Medea the princess of Colchis is coerced by Eros to aid Jason in his tasks. Unlike Dido, however, Medea is a powerful magic-user, and Jason's plight is far more immediate than that of Aeneas. Despite being described by Apollonius of Rhodes as a fair and delicate maiden who weeps in sorrow upon her recognition of the magical love she feels for Jason,³¹³ Medea is paradoxically also skilled with charms and potions,³¹⁴ and when she makes solemn oaths with Jason, she does so by clasping his right hand with her own as equal heroes might.³¹⁵ Without Medea's assistance in advising Jason how to defeat the tasks her

watching, and Eros afflicts the princess Medea with an unstoppable passion for Jason, forcing her to betray her father and secretly seek out Jason, providing advice and magical aid to survive the tests he has been set. She assists Jason throughout his testing, finally actively charming the final task, which is avoiding the wyrm guarding the Fleece itself. Cast out from her home for the aid she renders, Medea accompanies Jason as her and his crew flee the wrath of the king of Colchis, who pursues them both for their theft of his daughter and for the way the pair have tricked him.

312 See R. M. Henry, "Medea and Dido" in *The Classical Review*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Jul., 1930), pp. 97-108; Myra L. Uhlfelder, "Medea, Ariadne, and Dido" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 7 (Apr., 1955), pp. 310-312

313 See Apollonius Rhodius, Book III *The Argonautica* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1951) 213, 225, 237- 251 *passim*

314 "The same emotionally immature and helpless Medea is the competent, unfrightened servant of Hecate, the cool instructress of Jason in taming the bulls, the calm soother of the dragon.." See R. L. Hunter, "Medea's Flight: The Fourth Book of the *Argonautica*" in *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 37, No. 1 (1987) 129

315 See Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 301. For a lengthy examination of how in both Euripides' and Apollonius' treatments, Medea is considered in a heroic light, see Donald J. Mastronarde's "General Introduction" to Euripides, *Medea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 9, 18, 31. "That Medea protects Jason as a mother cares for her child is an idea which has already been suggested in the description of gathering night in the third book." See also Hunter, "Medea's Flight" 132. See also for a treatment of oaths in Euripides' tragedies Judith Fletcher, "Women and Oaths in Euripides" in *Theatre*

father sets him, her potent spellcraft in lulling the serpent to sleep that he might steal away the Fleece, and finally her struggle with the bronze giant Talos in Book IV, Jason would be slain several times over.³¹⁶ Her defeat of Talos is described in similar heroic terms to a masculine hero's single combat with a mighty foe, and it is through Medea's potions that Jason is given heroic strength and prowess with which to face the otherwise fatal tasks of sowing dragon's teeth, yoking fiery oxen, and besting the soldiers who spring from the furrows of sown teeth.³¹⁷

Following the events narrated by Apollonius,³¹⁸ Medea and Jason eventually settle in Corinth, and it is the events which take place there which ultimately have elevated Medea from an advisor of a familiar hero in the epic tradition into an infamous myth in her own right.³¹⁹ First mentioned without Jason in Hesiod's *Theogony*,³²⁰ Medea and Jason's tragedy was most famously revisited by Euripides in his 431 BCE tragedy

Medea.³²¹ By Euripides' time, the myths around Medea were well established, and it is

Journal, Vol. 55, No. 1, Ancient Theatre (Mar., 2003), pp. 29-44

316 For an examination of the heroic Medea, and the dichotomy between her presentation as an innocent maiden and conversely as a powerful witch, see Andrew R. Dyck, "On the Way from Colchis to Corinth: Medea in Book 4 of the 'Argonautica'" in *Hermes*, Vol. 117, No. 4 (1989), pp. 455-470

317 Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 279-289 *passim*.

318 The Medea myth has such scope that she has been described in multiple ways by multiple authors, and the disparity between versions is either artistic, or due to different tales being conflated by later writers like Hesiod.

319 The well known myth focuses on an older, married Medea, who is informed by Jason that he intends to set her aside in favour of the virginal Greek princess of Corinth, named variously dependent upon which version is read. Medea, who has born Jason two sons at this stage, is outraged by his treachery, and plans to have revenge for her proposed exile and abandonment. She therefore sends a poisoned gift to her rival, which kills both the girl and the king of Corinth, thus depriving Jason of his planned new marriage, and murders her children, leaving Jason without bride, home or heirs. The versions differ in how her children die or when, and how Medea escapes justice if at all.

320 Hesiod presents a first mention of Medea as the daughter of Aeëtes who was then stolen away by Aeson after aiding him in his tasks See Hesiod, "Theogony" in *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1914) 151, 153.

321 See Robert B. Palmer, "An Apology for Jason: A Study of Euripides' 'Medea' " in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Nov., 1957), pp. 49-55 For dating, see Donald J. Mastronarde's "General Introduction" *Medea* 4.

worthwhile to mention that the play in 431 may have been an artistic deviation of the accepted tradition at that point.³²² In Hesiod's *Phocais*,³²³ Medea's famous infanticide is referred to, and that tradition wherein she was wrongly blamed for murdering her sons may have been better known at the time when Euripides wrote the tragedy in which it is decidedly Medea who kills her sons to spite their father. According to Hesiod,

...while Medea was living in Corinth, she poisoned Creon, who was ruler of that city at that time, and because she feared his friends and kinfolk, fled to Athens. However, since her sons were too young to go along with her, she left them at the altar of Hera Acraea, thinking that their father would see to their safety. But the relatives of Creon killed them and spread the story that Medea had killed her own children as well as Creon.³²⁴

In summary, Euripides' play discusses the ending of Jason and Medea's relationship. Having stolen the Golden Fleece from Medea's father with her assistance, Jason and his wife have returned to his homeland of Greece, and he now plans to put her aside to marry the Princess of Corinth and secure a stable future for himself and for his two children by Medea. Upon discovering Jason's plans and being informed that she is to be exiled lest she cause any trouble to the happy pair, Medea is first devastated by her husband's betrayal, and then, furious, punishes both his bride-to-be, her father, and finally Jason, escaping justice in a dragon-borne chariot which carries her to her sanctuary in Athens. Her revenge includes presenting her rival with a robe and crown, both poisoned through Medea's witchcraft to immolate their intended recipient, the princess of Corinth,

322 Euripides was known for deliberately altering well known myths to present a new and powerful variation and startle his audience, who were accustomed to seeing the same myths and legends in dramatic form. See Geoffrey Arnott, "Euripides and the Unexpected" in *Greece & Rome, Second Series*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Apr., 1973), pp. 49-64

323 Hesiod, "Phocais" in *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1914)

324 Hesiod, "The Phocais" 535

and her hapless royal father. Most notoriously, Medea murders her own children³²⁵ both to spite their father Jason, and ironically to protect them from the suffering they would face when her destruction of Jason's new bride and father-in-law are revealed.³²⁶ That Medea is presented by Euripides as a dangerous, powerful woman, and moreso as a sympathetic figure despite her crimes makes the play notorious and the subject of scholarly debate.³²⁷ While Jason's action might have been understandable to the Athenian audience watching the tragedy, he was a figure from Greece's heroic past, and by slighting the powerful woman he wed, he is betraying a solemn oath sworn before Zeus to esteem her as his wife. In this betrayal, Jason evokes divine wrath as an oathbreaker, and Medea's presentation in the position usually reserved for a dramatic divine appearance suggests that she is presented in part by Euripides as acting with divine authority.³²⁸ Notably, Euripides presents Medea as the equal of Aegeus, the king of Athens whom she meets and secures a refuge with before enacting her revenge. In an ancient Greek context, equating a female figure with a male ruler is a deviation from the norm, and presents an immediate problem, as women were marginalized and largely without rights at the time in which the play was presented.³²⁹ Beyond even the question of gender rights in the ancient world,

325 Medea's difficulty in performing this task is famous, and her efforts to convince herself have provided ample material for subsequent writers to explore and examine her motivations and reasoning. See Helene Foley, "Medea's Divided Self" in *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Apr., 1989), pp. 61-85

326 Her worry over their fate may be a reference to a well-known variation of the myth as recorded in Hesiod, where her children do indeed die to vengeful Corinthians.

327 See Herbert Musurillo, "Euripides' Medea: A Reconsideration" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (Jan., 1966), pp. 52-74

328 Traditionally in Greek tragedy, if a god's intervention was required to neatly unravel the tragic complexity of a given play, an actor representing the god would be hoisted by a crane behind the set to bestow divine judgement. From this tradition we have the term *deus ex machina*, and Medea's appearance in the dragon-borne chariot in the position usually reserved for the deity serves to highlight the justice of her actions.

329 See G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, "Some Observations on the Property Rights of Athenian Women" in *The Classical Review*, New Series, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Dec., 1970), pp. 273-278

there was the matter additionally of bias toward foreigners, and the importance of citizenship.³³⁰ Medea is both a woman and a foreigner from outside the Greek mainland. Finally, Medea is a devotee of Hecate, a dangerous and enigmatic goddess of poisons and skills which have borne the title 'witchcraft' for centuries.³³¹ Her status thus seems designedly one where she represents much that the ancient Greek audience would have feared or disdained. Yet she goes unpunished in every version of the myth,³³² escaping from her destroyed husband to take refuge in Athens,³³³ and when she is exposed there in her effort to poison the then-unknown Theseus, she flees successfully once again. Medea is the archetypical 'other', yet in her triumph, she becomes a figure well worth the debates her character has evoked in fields ranging from psychology to political science, and the endless versions of her story in art, literature, and drama.³³⁴

It is this potent and complex mythological cycle which Du Bois explored in his 1911 fictional examination of contemporary sharecropping in the Black Belt, *The Quest*

330 See O. W. Reinmuth, "The Ephebate and Citizenship in Attica" in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 79, (1948), pp. 211-231; Marilyn Katz, "Ideology and 'The Status of Women' in Ancient Greece" in *History and Theory*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Dec., 1992), pp. 70-97

331 Hecate is mentioned by Hesiod in his *Theogony*, 109-111 as a nurse of the young and of the wilderness. She is debatably a foreign goddess from Anatolia, naturalized early on in Greece. See William Berg, "Hecate: Greek or 'Anatolian'?" in *Numen*, Vol. 21, Fasc. 2 (Aug., 1974), pp. 128-140; She evolved over time to be associated with witchcraft and magic, and feared as well as worshipped. See Patricia A. Marquardt, "A Portrait of Hecate" in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 102, No. 3 (Autumn, 1981), pp. 243-260 See also the Encyclopaedia Britannica's entry on Hecate from the 1911 version at <http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Hecate>

332 See J. O. De G. Hanson, "The Secret of Medea's Success" in *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Apr., 1965), pp. 54-61; S. P. Mills, "The Sorrows of Medea" in *Classical Philology*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (The University of Chicago Press, Oct., 1980), pp. 289-296

333 See Pavlos Sfyroeras, "The Ironies of Salvation: The Aigeus Scene in Euripides' Medea" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (Dec., 1994 - Jan., 1995), pp. 125-142; J. Roger Dunkle, "The Aigeus Episode and the Theme of Euripides' Medea" in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 100, (1969), pp. 97-107

334 See Amy Wygant, "Medea, Poison, and the Epistemology of Error in Phèdre" in *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Jan., 2000), pp. 62-71

of the *Silver Fleece*.³³⁵ By choosing the Medea/Jason cycle, Du Bois was applying the language of alterity and marginalization to his African-American figures – as we have seen, Medea is the 'other' who nonetheless triumphs.³³⁶ The novel features a Medea-character called Zora. Like her mythological prototype, Zora is connected intimately to notions of witchcraft and paganism, though her relationship can also be construed as one to an earlier, uniquely African religion as perceived through a European Christian lens. Repeatedly throughout the novel, Zora exclaims that “My mammy's a witch!”³³⁷, even likening her to Hecate when she learns the story of Jason and Medea from the male protagonist.

“Listen, till I tell you of the Golden Fleece.”
Then she too heard the story of Jason. Breathless she listened.. then her face clouded. “Do you s'pose mammy's the witch?” she asked dubiously.
“No; she wouldn't give her own flesh and blood to help the thieving Jason.”³³⁸

Like Medea, Zora also claims royal descent, despite her impoverished status in the South. “You see, mammy's pappy was a king's son, and kings don't work. I don't work; mostly I dreams.”³³⁹ As Zora's entrance appears on the heels of the New England teacher Miss Taylor's arrival in Alabama and with Taylor's immediate connection between cotton and

335 The novel concerns the Post-Reconstruction story of Zora and Bles' Alwyn, two young blacks in the rural South, and the interactions they have with various characters including Miss Mary Taylor, a well-meaning but close-minded New England schoolteacher, Miis Vanderpool, an erudite but jaded socialite, Miss Smith, a good-hearted teacher without the closed mind of Taylor, and the Cresswell plantation owners, whose actions have done such damage to the local people.

336 Du Bois's interest in identity and alterity as personified by what he describes as “the Veil” is highlighted in the Atlanta-Atalanta comparison where he refers to marginalized mythological figures for the lessons of his lyrical students, and in his use of Medea it is again underscored. See Winfried Siemerling, “W.E.B. Du Bois, Hegel, and the Staging of Alterity” in *Callaloo*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter, 2001), pp. 325-333

337 W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2004 [1911]) 44- 46 *passim*

338 *Ibid* 56-57.

339 *Ibid* 48.

the Golden Fleece, Zora's identification as Medea is natural. Du Bois presents his readers with as elaborate a metaphor as he did with Atlanta and Atalanta in 1903, explicitly providing his audience with the tale he intends to tell.

"The Golden Fleece--it's the Silver Fleece!"

"What's that?" he asked.

"Have you never heard of the Golden Fleece, Bles?"

...

"Bles," she said impulsively, "shall I tell you of the Golden Fleece?"

"Yes'm, please," he said

She settled herself almost luxuriously, and began the story of Jason and the Argonauts. ...he said, slowly:

"All yon is Jason's."

"What?" she asked, puzzled.

He pointed with one sweep of his long arm to the quivering mass of green-gold foliage that swept from swamp to horizon.

"All yon golden fleece is Jason's now," he repeated.

"I thought it was--Cresswell's," she said.

"That's what I mean."

She suddenly understood that the story had sunk deeply.

"I am glad to hear you say that," she said methodically, "for Jason was a brave adventurer--"

"I thought he was a thief."

"Oh, well--those were other times."

"The Cresswells are thieves now."

Miss Taylor answered sharply.

"Bles, I am ashamed to hear you talk so of your neighbors simply because they are white."

But Bles continued.

"This is the Black Sea," he said, pointing to the dull cabins that crouched here and there upon the earth, with the dark twinkling of their black folk darting out to see the strangers ride by. Despite herself Miss Taylor caught the allegory and half whispered, "Lo! the King himself!" as a black man almost rose from the tangled earth at their side.³⁴⁰

Zora's immediate bond with Bles, the young male protagonist, draws the obvious parallel with Medea and Jason, and hints to the reader that Bles will play the role of Jason in Du Bois's narrative. Bles convinces Zora to leave her swamp and come with him into the

³⁴⁰ *Ibid* 31, 35-36.

civilized schoolroom setting, completing the Jason symbolism as he metaphorically takes Zora from her home into a different realm entirely, changing her irrevocably in the process of education. The metaphor is maintained with the similarity between Medea's journey from the unknown Eastern region around Colchis to the relative civilization of ancient Greece and Corinth. Like Jason also, Bles' intentions toward Zora are made clear with his desire to marry her and her eager acceptance of him as her future husband.

It is here however that Du Bois extends his metaphor as he introduces a white Jason-figure to the narrative. Harry Cresswell is presented as the quintessential planter's son to the reader; he is handsome, cruel, educated, and privileged. "He was a man of thirty-five, smooth and white, slight, well-bred and masterful."³⁴¹ Harry disapproves of former slaves being educated, and acts as the primary agent for working to disenfranchise any he sees, especially Zora. His interest in her is made manifest in the first meeting with him, and as the novel continues, it is made clear that Harry and Zora have some dark past together. He seeks out Miss Taylor specifically to demand that Zora be sent away from school, characterizing him as a man who like Jason wishes to marginalize the Medea-figure and dispossess her at his whim. Hints are given that a white man has trafficked with Zora's mammy Elspeth, and demands Zora for his company. Whether in this Elspeth is presented in the continuing role of Hecate, or as Hera to force the Medea character into union with a foreign man is unclear, but the suggestion is implicit that Zora has ample reason to flee. "It was... the keener, more metallic sound of white men's cries... Zora, however, leapt to her feet and fled into the night, while the hag screamed after her and

³⁴¹ *Ibid* 81.

cursed.... "Where's Zora?" some one yelled, with an oath. "Damn it, where is she? I haven't seen her for a year, you old devil."³⁴²

Upon Bles' oath to Zora to wed her,³⁴³ it is revealed that she is not the maiden that Medea was, having already been claimed by Cresswell prior to her meeting with Bles. Like Medea, Zora's explanation of this makes it unclear whether she had any choice in the matter, but as she recounts it to Bles, she deeply regrets the past relationship. "He was our master, and all the other girls that gathered there did his will; I- I" she choked and faltered... "I began running away, and they hunted me through the swamps."³⁴⁴ Despite any hinted collusion or acquiescence, the suggestion in the text is that Zora was unwilling to be an object of Cresswell's desires; like Jason, however, Bles repudiates and abandons her for the 'crime' she has committed, leaving Zora writhing and weeping on the ground in anguish without her beloved. The blame is squarely placed upon the white Jason-figure by Du Bois through the older school-teacher, who lectures Miss Taylor sternly. "You are going to marry a man who sought Zora's ruin when she was yet a child because you think of his aristocratic pose and pretensions built on poverty, crime, and exploitation of six generations of serfs."³⁴⁵ In her abandonment by Bles and her ruin by Harry, Zora is thus

342 The implication is that Elspeth has prostituted local women to Harry Cresswell specifically, as one who lives at the hut in the swamp is shown later on holding a mulatto child who greatly resembles the Cresswells. This and an earlier comment by Zora together suggest that she too has undergone this prostitution, and underscore the hint that Harry too represents a Jason figure in the larger narrative. *Ibid* 96-97.

343 Notably, like Apollonius's Medea, Zora suffers weeping upon a bed through the kindling of her love for Bles.

344 *Ibid* 170.

345 In contrasting Miss Taylor to Zora in their sexual and romantic connections respectively to Harry Cresswell, Du Bois presents two alternative readings of Mary Taylor: she could either be given to us as the Corinthian princess-figure whom Jason intended to abandon Medea to, or she could be the parallel figure matching the white Jason we've been presented with in the form of Harry. Mary is hinted at being either figure again when Miss Smith calls her to task for her interest in Bles, the black Jason figure, but

presented as a Medea character once more, distraught by the perfidy of men and incapable of denying her impassioned love of the one who has left her. Like the character she is modelled after, Zora recovers quickly, and begins to act to assert her own independence.

During this narrative, Bles and Zora have planted a crop of cotton from seeds described as magical, owned by Elspeth the witch. "...she mumbled, 'I'se got the seed – I'se got it – wonder seed, sowed wid three spells of Obi in the old land ten thousand moons ago. But you couldn't plant it... it would kill you.'"³⁴⁶ In secret the pair sow and cultivate a harvest Du Bois continuously describes as "The Silver Fleece" of the book's title. Following Bles' abandonment, Zora alone readies the cotton into bales and when she attempts to get fair price for it, it is Harry Cresswell who cheats Zora out of the Silver Fleece, completing his characterization as representative of Jason's position as a thief. Ultimately he is emphatically proclaimed the Jason character at this stage, as he has committed a theft of the Fleece, and Zora's hatred of him is described in similar terminology to her fury at seeing Jason in *Medea*. Upon discovering that it is Harry who has come to claim the Fleece, Zora experiences a resurgence of emotion. "Somewhere way down in the depths of her nature the primal tiger awoke and snarled.. as she sensed the hot breath of him she felt herself purring in a half heard whisper. 'I should not like – to

her private racism prevents her interest developing beyond an assumption that Bles is to blame for her interest. *Ibid* 180.

346 The obvious parallel to made with the original myth is explicit as the Jason figure sows seeds Elspeth claims might kill him, tempered by a Medea figure who is described as being unafraid of any magical spells placed upon them. Upon Zora's preparations of the earth for Bles' planting, Du Bois draws the reader's attention to the metaphor he is presenting. "Slowly Zora forgot her blood and pain. Who would win – the witch, or Jason?" *Ibid* 96

kill you.'... They had stolen the Silver Fleece... Into her first despair had crept, in one fierce moment, grim determination."³⁴⁷ Zora goes to work as a maid with another white female character, and it is at this stage that Du Bois presents Zora educating herself with the assistance of Mrs. Vanderpool's library, experiencing Homer and Demosthenes in rich and vibrant detail. Made self-aware and connected to a non-white past as Du Bois himself was, Zora is empowered, and by the end of the novel, returns to the sharecropping region to succeed and buy land for cultivation in the swamp. In altering the familiar tragic mythology, Du Bois is here presenting his audience with his own ideology regarding how a modern and African-American Medea might elevate herself beyond the destructive hunger for revenge, through education and conscious awareness. Bles returns too, having briefly pursued a love interest in Washington, only to realize that it is Zora he truly seeks. The pair forgive one another in a resoundingly triumphant scene, and Zora accepts Bles back as her partner and equal. In stark contrast to the happy ending for Bles and Zora, Harry Cresswell and his new wife Mary suffer the consequence of Harry's hedonism, with strong suggestions that Harry has contracted syphilis. "You must have no other children, Mr. Cresswell." "Why?" "Because the sins of the father are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."³⁴⁸ Mary gives birth to a dead infant, and is neglected by her feckless husband, returning to the plantation herself, hating her husband and unhealthy. The Cresswells' aristocratic monopoly on the surrounding land is ruined thanks to Zora's brilliant advocacy in the local law courts, and the final blow as Harry's father dying upon his realization that his sole living grandchild is one gotten illegitimately by

³⁴⁷ Yet the determination Zora feels is toward a better path than her mythical predecessor; she feels the temptation in the passage toward vengeance and righteous retribution, and discards it in favour of what she describes as "The Way" *Ibid* 187-189 *passim*.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid* 338.

Harry upon an African-American girl at Elspeth's shack in the swamp.³⁴⁹ With his death and Harry disowned, the white Jason is duly punished, and Du Bois's Medea has the revenge she might have desired without the bloody violence of the ancient character. The final scenes come quickly, as if Du Bois were employing a *deus ex machina* in the matured Zora's ability to work her will on her birthplace, appropriately given the way Medea's role ends in Euripides' play.

The Quest of the Silver Fleece never enjoyed the same popular interest as did *Souls of Black Folk*. It was criticized for being too complex and difficult to get into by readers.³⁵⁰ In subsequent books, Du Bois returned to his essay format, presenting readers with collections of philosophy, narrative and theory. He consistently made classical references, though rarely with the same explicit concentration as with "Of the Wings of Atalanta" and *Quest*. Du Bois began his essay "The Hands of Ethiopia" with a classical reference to Africa in 1930's collection of essays. " "*Semper novi quid ex Africa*" cried the Roman proconsul, and he voiced the verdict of forty centuries."³⁵¹ The collection is rife with similar references, most numbering a handful of sentences at most. Du Bois's point was clear in his use of ancient myths and history; he asserted his right to the ancient world, and his intellectual claim to a time when people who were not white ruled the known world.

349 *Ibid* 428.

350 Maurice Lee, "Du Bois the Novelist: White Influence, Black Spirit, and The Quest of the Silver Fleece" in *African American Review*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 389-400; Arlene A. Elder, "Swamp versus Plantation: Symbolic Structure in W. E. B. DuBois' *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*" in *Phylon* (1960-), Vol. 34, No. 4 (4th Qtr., 1973), pp. 358-367.

351 W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Hands of Ethiopia" *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* 32.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

I will not believe that all that was must be, that all the shameful drama of the past must be done again today before the sunlight sweeps the silver seas. If I cry amid this roar of elemental forces, must my cry be in vain, because it is but a cry, -- a small and human cry amid Promethean gloom?

...why will this Soul of White Folk, -- this modern Prometheus, -- hang bound by his own binding, tethered by a fable of the past? I hear his mighty cry reverberating through the world, "I am white!" Well and good, O Prometheus, divine thief! Is not the world wide enough for two colors, for many little shinings of the sun? Why, then, devour your own vitals if I answer even as proudly, "I am black!" -Du Bois, "The Souls of White Folk" in *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* 29

Incidents of classical metaphors as highlights of or emphasis to Du Bois's lifelong message of recognition for blacks are too many to be encompassed in the span of this thesis. The examples discussed in chapter 4 are the most extensive examples of the classical language and mythology Du Bois consistently employed in his many works both published and unpublished. To explore each with the same detail would be the work of a lifetime, as in his eighty years of work, Du Bois's efforts are estimated at nearly three thousand discrete pieces, and have yet to be completely documented.³⁵² The examination above, however, demonstrates a representative example of the use to which Du Bois

³⁵² The best example of Du Bois's works is the comprehensive effort by Paul G. Partington in 1972. He introduced his revised edition with the caveat that after seventeen years of research, he did not believe any definitive bibliography of Du Bois's copious writings was within reach, as Du Bois submitted articles to journals like *Pravda* and more, noting his submission but not always keeping a copy for his papers. By 1979, Partington had catalogued 2482 works, then publishing a supplement in 1984 adding a further 320 entries to his previous work and acknowledging the extensive papers as yet uncatalogued. His efforts have been the closest to a complete and comprehensive treatment of Du Bois's tremendous body of work, and demonstrate how difficult it would be to examine each with the detail required. See Paul G. Partington, *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Bibliography of His Published Writings*. (Whittier: Self-published, 1979. [1977]); Paul G. Partington, *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Bibliography of His Published Writings Supplement*. (Whittier: Self-published. 1984).

regularly put his classical education.

From the exploration of Du Bois's early life and background in chapter 1, it is clear that his many claims of a halcyon and largely tolerant experience cannot be overturned. Though Lewis's biography of Du Bois indicates that a boyhood in Great Barrington may not have been quite so idyllic as Du Bois recalled, the major points remain unchallenged by any information as yet known. To all intents and purpose, it remains understood that the small Massachusetts community was supportive and proud of their prodigal son, and Du Bois's assertions regarding the encouragement and support of Principal Frank Hosmer, and the generous contributions of Greek texts by townsfolk underscore the theory that it was not in Great Barrington that Du Bois experienced racial tensions or intolerance. When he longed for an expensive book, the white shopkeep did not dissuade the young black boy, but instead suggested Du Bois pay for it in instalments.³⁵³ From this evidence, it is a logical assumption that Du Bois's memories of a youth where his skin colour was not at issue were accurate, and that by the time he journeyed south to Fisk, he did so with the confidence of a young man who was secure in his individual pride.

Moreso, Du Bois travelled with an additional confidence supported by the examination of the Latin and Greek he studied while in Great Barrington, and later at Fisk also. In his exploration of the ancient world, the young Du Bois was exposed to a culture where ethnicity was of vastly lesser importance than citizenship and effort. He translated

³⁵³ *Autobiography* 87.

poems where the adjective *niger* was no insult,³⁵⁴ and no pejorative meaning was attached to the skin tones of characters. He read of ancient glory along the coasts of North Africa,³⁵⁵ and mentions of Ethiopia as a place where the king of the gods himself visited and was a guest.³⁵⁶ Du Bois's studies are documented by later biographers like Lewis, and all agree that he proved an apt and eager pupil, happily attempting to translate everything he could find, including the Greek letters on the altar-cloth at the local church.³⁵⁷ In his education in Latin, Greek, and in the literature and mythology of the classical world, Du Bois was provided with the same example of past glories which had motivated the white empire-builders of his time to attempt to appropriate the ancient cultures for their own.³⁵⁸

People tend to create their gods in their own image; in looking to the ancient world for examples, the white elite of Du Bois's time assuredly re-imagined the figures of ancient Greece and Rome as resembling themselves. The contempt offered to claims that black empires had constructed any civilizations in Africa was proof that the elites of Germanic³⁵⁹ descent who had conquered much of the world in the nineteenth century simply could not imagine non-white agency. Like those who dominated the academic

354 Menalcas's descriptor in Virgil's *Eclogue* provided Du Bois with a different usage of a word he doubtless experienced in the larger context of American racial prejudice, but without any intimation of inferiority.

355 Both the Roman conquests against Jugurtha, the epic tale of Dido at Carthage, and the kingdoms of ancient Egypt.

356 Du Bois's mention in *Quest of the Silver Fleece* of "Black and Blameless Ethiopians" makes it abundantly clear that the then-common translation of the Homeric turn of phrase from the *Iliad* remained with him.

357 Ibid 89.

358 References by British authors to Jove and other Roman gods hint explicitly at a conscious emulation, as does the many theatrical works written by French, German, and British authors which revisit the familiar classical myths of the ancient world.

359 The term Du Bois uses for the North European whites was 'Teutonic' when he differentiates his people from the empire builders of his time, or Anglo-Saxons when he is displaying particular contempt for perceived British arrogance. See Du Bois, "The Shadow of Years" 4; "Jefferson Davis as a Representative of Civilization" in *Unpublished Papers* 14-16.

tradition of his time, Du Bois too envisioned people like him in the classical context; the difference was that while his view was still biased, it was far closer to accuracy than beliefs featuring an entirely white cast of classical heroes. His essays and novels make mention of ancient figures, using adjectives like 'swarthy' and 'black', again making it clear that as far as Du Bois was concerned, those figures of antiquity were not of Germanic descent. Du Bois's first major published book, his PhD dissertation on the suppression of the slave-trade, makes it abundantly clear that far from assuming that slavery had a racial bias initially, the necessity of slavery in the early years of the colonization of North America was due to economic demands, and moreover that the matter of race in the early years of slavery was less a concern, and only later became a justification for the continued enslavement of peoples.³⁶⁰ Had Du Bois not been presented early in his life with tangible evidence that ethnicity bore no relevance to ancient slavery, his passion to trace the economic and sociological history of slavery's abolishment in America might not have borne fruit. It is impossible to dwell on speculation, but the exposure Du Bois enjoyed in his youth is compelling substantiation of an argument for the positive influence of Du Bois's classical education.

The ancient world provided Du Bois not only with solid proof of glories for non-white peoples, but also justification for his sense of moral outrage when he observed and experienced marginalization due to his race. With his awareness and beliefs surrounding the rightful place of the black man in history, dismissal and casual spitefulness³⁶¹ would

³⁶⁰ Du Bois, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870*. (New York: Dover, 1970 [1896]).15-30 *passim*.

³⁶¹ "Little mean-nesses" as Du Bois described them in an Oral Interview at age 91. See Du Bois, W.E.B. Interviewed by Moses Asch for Smithsonian Folkways. 1961.

have been fuel to a sense of righteous indignation. Du Bois's sense of connection to the classical world and its citizens could only have been heightened by the cultural similarities between his own sober upbringing and the Roman virtues of moral sternness and uncompromising discipline as reported by Livy. These connections gave Du Bois a strong sense of individual confidence, fuelled by the justifiable pride of his townfolks' support.

Du Bois was not the only black intellectual to be aware of the extensive historical contribution of the kingdoms of ancient Africa, or the liberal ethnic variations of Rome and Greece. Frederick Douglass and William Sanders Scarborough both made an effort to study the classical traditions of the ancient world, working through Greek and Latin and looking to the past for examples of nationalist pride. However, unlike his ideological predecessors, Du Bois was afforded the kind of education previously exclusive to the white elite, and was trained to a level the marginalized earlier scholars were forbidden.³⁶² Neither forbidden to learn nor actively forced to hide his activities, Du Bois's scholarship flourished and earned him respect among the educated elite, both black and white. He was termed a nationalist thinker, a Pan-Africanist, and an Ethiopianist of the American kind discussed in chapter 3. Like Edward Wilmot Blyden, his fellow Father of Pan-Africanism, Du Bois was an educated man who found a deep kinship with an ancient African past;

³⁶² Douglass' early education was technically a criminal act by his teacher, as educating a slave at that time was against the law. Like Douglass, Scarborough was surreptitiously educated, eventually rising to prominence and publishing an elementary Greek textbook widely used in the 19th century. See Ronnick, Michele Valerie Ronnick. "The African American Classicist William Sanders Scarborough (1852-1926) and the Early Days of CAMWS"; Michele Valerie Ronnick, "William Sanders Scarborough: The First African American Member of the Modern Language Association"; Wolfgang Mieder, "'Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You': Frederick Douglass's Proverbial Struggle for Civil Rights" in *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 114, No. 453 (Summer, 2001), pp. 331-357; Benjamin Quarles, "Douglass' Mind in the Making" in *Phylon* (1940-1956), Vol. 6, No. 1 (1st Qtr., 1945), pp. 5-12

unlike Blyden, Du Bois remained in the United States, enduring repression and discrimination and determinedly fighting for equality until his final emigration to Ghana.

Toward the end of his life, Du Bois willingly relinquished any deliberate effort to influence the thriving Civil Rights movement, encouraging the young leaders and thinkers to act without his guidance, saying proudly,

“... I have been encouraged by the fact that the young people, the students, have resumed leadership... now, suddenly, without any encouragement on my part, and little encouragement on the part of others... they fought. And it was hard fighting... They've kept it up... That gives me a degree of satisfaction. Evidently, the older people like myself are not needed just now, there are younger people who are going on, and doing their own thinking. And I congratulate them upon it. They don't need any advice from me. Perhaps I need some from them.”³⁶³

Du Bois subsequently retired to Accra, and worked upon various ambitious projects designed to bring Africa's role in history to a wider global awareness. His drive to emphasize the agency of non-whites in history and demand recognition by his contemporary world was consistently underscored by his easy, familiar use of classical language ranging from Greek and Latin quotations inserted into his essays and articles to his references to mythological figures and ancient historical personalities.

Ultimately, it cannot be debated that Du Bois demonstrated his classical education with precision and regularity, employing mythological references in furtherance of his ideology and beliefs. His copious publications are dotted with mentions of Cicero, Herodotus, Homer, Virgil and others, along with their remaining works. His childhood

³⁶³ Du Bois, Interviewed by Moses Asch for Smithsonian Folkways. 1961.

studies evidently provided Du Bois with a lasting, lifelong recognition and awareness of a classical past, and a mastery of the ideas which had become the intellectual currency for the elite of the past few centuries in the West. Du Bois was ahead of his time in asserting non-white agency for the ancient world, but in writing as he did, he presented a confident, intelligent man with all the passion of an individual who stands on solid ground in his claims and assertions. From this foundation, Du Bois was able to recognize where the elites of his time had grievously erred in their dismissal of black agency, and assiduously correct their assumptions while concomitantly proclaiming the potential of blacks, and the glory of an ancient world he'd first discovered as a boy.

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