Three

Douglass and Du Bois's *Der Schwarze Volksgeist*[1]

Ronald R. Sundstrom

Frederick Douglass (1817–95) and W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963) are critical figures in the political and intellectual history of race in the United States, whose respective visions about race and its conservation remain germane and influential. Contemporary debates around the conservation of race, for example, can be seen to reflect the basic positions that Douglass and Du Bois laid out at the end of the nineteenth century. Just as those who argue that race ought to be conserved turn to Du Bois, those who disagree with Du Bois need to consider both Douglass's arguments and the historical reasons why Du Bois's and Booker T. Washington's strategies for racial justice eclipsed Douglass's. The works of Douglass and Du Bois are pieces of a conversation that must be considered in the context of early black political and intellectual movements, as well as in relationship to each other. This must be done for the sake of proper understanding, but also to avoid making the racist mistake of seeing Du Bois as merely the darker reflection of some European or American pragmatist philosophy.

Douglass, through his work for the abolition of slavery and the enfranchisement and uplift of African Americans, advocated a position of racial assimilation and amalgamation. His critics, such as Alexander Crummell (1819–98) and other early black nationalists, favored emigration, self-separation, and the conservation of black racial identity. Douglass, along with his critics, set the terms of the debate that Du Bois would engage with in his "The Conservation of Races."

Douglass

Although some of the particulars of Douglass's arguments have been rejected, his idealistic vision of human brotherhood, his skepticism about the political

and moral value of race pride and self-segregation, his rejection of race as a political or social category, and his hope that assimilation and racial amalgamation would bring an end to racial oppression and result in a stronger America, more consistent with its founding liberal principles, remain influential in contemporary U.S. racial politics. Taking the progressive and egalitarian elements of Christianity very seriously, Douglass embraced the Biblical doctrine of human brotherhood and employed the combined strategy of assimilation and amalgamation, a strategy that sought to realize the divine ideal of human brotherhood on earth. Douglass, like many white and black intellectuals of his time, was, moreover, an Enlightenment thinker, a nineteenth-century modernist.[2] He believed in progress and the advance and mission of Western civilization. Douglass's modernism, additionally, was marked by a steadfast faith in the inevitability of Western Christendom's advance toward justice and universal human brotherhood:

> There are forces in operation, which must inevitably work the downfall of slavery. "*The arm of the Lord is not shortened,*" and the doom of slavery is certain. I, therefore, leave off where I began, with *hope.* While drawing encouragement from the Declaration of Independence, the great principles it contains, and the genius of American Institutions, my spirit is also cheered by the obvious tendencies of the age.[3]

Another element of Douglass's modernism, which is displayed in his use of Psalm 68:31, is the belief that non-white peoples, particularly in Africa and Asia, would "rise up" and join in this advance of civilization:

> The far off and almost fabulous Pacific rolls in grandeur at our feet. The Celestial Empire, the mystery of ages, is being solved. The fiat of the Almighty, "*Let there be Light,*" has not yet spent its force. No abuse, no outrage whether in taste, sport or avarice, can now hide itself from the all-pervading light. The iron shoe, and crippled foot of China must be seen, in contrast with nature. *Africa must rise and put on her yet unwoven garment. "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand unto God."* (WSFJ 387)[4]

Human brotherhood, for Douglass, was a Christian doctrine that asserted that God created all the peoples of the earth out of "one blood." According to Douglass, this matter was unequivocally supported by Biblical text, and a rejection of it amounted to a rejection of the credibility of the Good Book. Obviously, for his audience and time, such a contention presented an argument against polygenists (who at the time were claiming that blacks were a separate and inferior species) and a powerful dilemma:

> The unity of the human race—the brotherhood of man—the reciprocal duties of all to each, and of each to all, are too plainly taught in the Bible to admit of cavil.—The credit of the Bible is at stake—and if it be too much to say, that it must stand or fall, by the decision of this question, *it is* proper to say, that the value of that sacred Book—as a record of the early history of mankind—must be materially affected, by the decision of the question.[5]

This doctrine, as used by Douglass and the abolitionist movement, was based on the Bible's creation story and Acts 17:26: "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Beyond an account of origins and unity, the doctrine of human brotherhood carried with it the moral injunction that since we are all equally human, we are all equally deserving of human rights.

Although he believed that the Biblical account was correct, for Douglass the doctrine was an essentially religious and moral one that held no matter the biological facts (CN 242–243). Given this position, he had little patience for the American school of polygeny and its argument—a non sequitur that commits the naturalistic fallacy—that the biological inferiority of blacks justifies their being denied human rights. Thus, Douglass takes special aim at the work of the American polygenists Josiah Nott, George Gliddon, Louis Agassiz, and Samuel Morton (CN). In addition to taking issue with their science, he argued that even *if* blacks are a distinct species and even *if* they are inferior, they are, as a part of humanity and children of God, entitled to full human rights:

> What, after all, if they are able to show very good reasons for believing the Negro to have been created precisely as we find him on the Gold Coast—along the Senegal and the Niger—I say, what of all this?—*"A man's a man for a' that."* I sincerely believe, that the weight of the argument is in favor of the unity of origin of the human race, or species—that the arguments on the other side are partial, superficial, utterly subversive of the happiness of man, and insulting to the wisdom of God. Yet, what if we grant they are not so? What, if we grant that the case, on our part, is not made out? Does it follow, that the Negro should be held in contempt? Does it follow, that to enslave and imbrue him is either *just* or *wise*? I think not. Human rights stand upon a common basis; and by all the reason that they are supported, maintained and defended, for one variety of the human family, they are supported, maintained and defended for *all* the human family; because all mankind have the same wants, arising out of a common nature. A diverse origin does not disprove a common nature, nor does it disprove a united destiny. (CN 231)

Douglass, obviously from his amalgamationist position, accepted the existence of biologically distinct races.[6] He accepted a climatist monogenism, which asserted the unity of the human species and that human diversity was due to the climates of the lands in which the races were isolated for centuries. His acceptance of races needs to be qualified, however, because he did not put great weight on what he characterized as merely "technical" distinctions in the brotherhood of humanity (CN). Although he did not deny these "technical distinctions," he believed that their existence ebbed and flowed, and that they were overshadowed by human fraternity.

Douglass supported the amalgamation of the biological races and assimilation of black and white Americans into what he imagined as a new sort of American. It is important to note the distinction between assimilation and amalgamation to understand Douglass's project. Assimilation and amalgamation are separate doctrines. Amalgamation does not follow by itself from assimilation, nor vice versa. Early black nationalists, such as Edward Blyden, Martin Delany, and Alexander Crummell, were separatists, but they also thought that blacks needed to assimilate by accepting Christianity and Western civilization (GA 15–31). Booker T. Washington, while not a black nationalist, also accepted an assimilationist-separatist strategy. Thus, Douglass's position, since he held that black and whites would not only assimilate with each other but also amalgamate into an "intermediate race," supported a program of assimilation and amalgamation.

Douglass began to advocate the controversial position of amalgamation during the 1860s. More than a strategy, he thought, it was a process that would naturally occur in the United States over time, eventually creating an intermediate race. He believed that amalgamation, combined with assimilation, would be the "only solid, and final solution" of race prejudice and division in this nation.[7] As he remarked to a reporter the day after his controversial second marriage to Helen Pitts, a white woman,

> There is no division of races. God Almighty made but one race. I adopt the theory that in time the varieties of races will be blended into one. Let us look back when the black and the white people were distinct in this country. In two hundred and fifty years there has grown up a million of intermediate. And this will continue. You may say that Frederick Douglass considers himself a member of the one race which exists."[8]

Douglass's stance on assimilation and amalgamation speaks volumes about his stance on the conservation of race. He equated the preservation of racial distinctiveness with the preservation of racial prejudice. The positions he took on many topics were informed by his stance against racial separatism and the conservation of the "races" in the United States.

Douglass reprobated attempts to build separate "negro pews, negro berths in steamboats, negro cars, Sabbath or week-day schools . . . churches," and so on.[9] He argued that attempts to separate blacks were in the interests of those in favor of slavery and would hinder black uplift. Likewise, he stood against the separatist, emigrationist visions of the American Colonization Society, founded by whites, and the African Civilization Society, founded by blacks.[10]

Although Douglass disfavored racial organizations, he thought it was necessary for African Americans to organize and unify to fight against slavery and racial prejudice, and to struggle for justice.[11] Nonetheless, for Douglass, this political organizing and unification was to be not for reasons of race or culture, but strictly for political reasons. While he expected blacks to unify to fight for the end of slavery and for justice, he railed against separatist accommodations, institutions, and organizations, and urged blacks to act "without distinction of color":

> It will be a long time before we gain all our rights; and although it may seem to conflict with our views of human brotherhood, we shall undoubtedly for many years be compelled to have institutions of a complexional character, in order to

> attain this very idea of human brotherhood. We would, however, advise our brethren to occupy memberships and stations among white persons, and in white institutions, just so fast as our rights are secured to us.[12]

Douglass's "final solution" was the complete assimilation, dispersement, and amalgamation of blacks into the white population. To this end, he vigorously rejected notions of race pride, racial union, and black nationalism.[13] To those who argued that black race pride had to be cultivated to oppose oppression, he responded, "But it may be said that we shall put down race pride in the white people by cultivating race pride among ourselves. The answer to this is that the devils are not cast out by Beelzebub, the prince of devils" (ACP 317).

Race, according to Douglass, cannot be used to fight racism; likewise, self-segregation cannot be used to fight segregation.

Du Bois

Despite the fact that the nature of race and the question of its conservation had been topics of discussion in America at least since the mid-eighteenth century, and had been a principal subject of discussion among the black intelligentsia of the early and mid-nineteenth century, Du Bois, in his "The Conservation of Races," an address presented to the American Negro Academy, solidified and modernized the debate by linking a social conception of race with the question of its conservation.[14] Du Bois was responding to the devaluation of Africans by late-nineteenth-century racial science, the legacy of Douglass's assimilationist-amalgamationist politics, and the impending leadership of Booker T. Washington. Moreover, he was reaching out in intellectual affiliation to Alexander Crummell, early African nationalist leader, Episcopalian minister, Liberian missionary and colonialist, and co-founder and president of the Academy.[15]

One influence on Du Bois that would inform his comments before the American Negro Academy was, to a minor degree, pragmatism.[16] More important influences, however, were the idealism of European, especially Prussian, historiography and the tradition of intellectual and political activism for African American uplift of which Douglass and Crummell were paramount figures. Du Bois, like many intellectuals of his time, was an Enlightenment thinker who accepted the Western European mantra of progress, modernization, and civilization and who, as a member of the black diaspora, included African and African American uplift in this vision of world progress. Unlike Douglass, Du Bois, with the early black nationalists, embraced racial collective identity, racial destiny, and authoritarian collectivism. This package of ideologies, when bound together with the ideology of the advance of Western Christian civilization, formed Ethiopianism, a messianic vision of African civilization (GA).

Du Bois's acceptance of Ethiopianism, and civilizationism in general, is writ large in "The Conservation of the Races." His civilizationism is best displayed in his comment that

> The English nation stood for constitutional liberty and commercial freedom; the German nation for science and philosophy; the Romance nations stood for literature and art, and the other race groups are striving, each in its own way, to develop for civilization its particular message, its particular ideal, which shall help to guide the world nearer and nearer that perfection of human life for which we all long, that "one far off Divine event."[17]

And his Ethiopianism is evident in his comment that the

> complete Negro message of the whole Negro race has not as yet been given to the world: that the messages and ideal of the yellow race have not been completed, and that the striving of the mighty Slavs has but begun. The question is, then: How shall this message be delivered; how shall these various ideals be realized? The answer is plain: By the development of these race groups, not as individuals, but as races. . . . For the development of Negro genius, of Negro literature and art, of Negro spirit, only Negroes bound and welded together, Negroes inspired by one vast ideal, can work out in its fullness the great message we have for humanity. We cannot reverse history; we are subject to the same natural laws as other races, and if the Negro is ever to be a factor in the world's history—if among the gaily colored banners that deck the broad ramparts of civilization is to hang one uncompromising black, then it must be placed there by black hands, fashioned by black heads and hallowed by the travail of 200,000,000 black hearts bearing in one glad song of jubilee. (CR 487)

These comments ought not to be written off as rhetorical flourish or, as some have argued, the mere presentation of a political project.[18] The project was political, but it also was cultural. It advanced a mystical, messianic vision of African diasporic civilization.

It may be useful to compare Du Bois's talk of the "message" of each race in terms of J. S. Mill's "experiments in living," as Bernard Boxill does.[19] Mill's "experiments of living," however, were not what Du Bois had in mind. In *On Liberty,* Mill argues,

> As it is useful that while mankind are imperfect there should be different opinions, so is it that there should be different experiments of living; that free scope should be given to varieties of character, short of injury to others; and the worth of different modes of life should be proved practically, when anyone thinks fit to try them. It is desirable, in short, that in things which do not primarily concern others individuality should assert itself. Where not the person's own character but the traditions or customs of other people are the rule of conduct, there is wanting one of the principal ingredients of human happiness, and quite the chief ingredient of individual and social progress.[20]

Du Bois's conception of the "messages" of race is mystical and collectivist —not the individualistic, tradition- and culture-challenging experiments that

Mill had in mind. It is a conception influenced by the religious nationalism of Friedrich Schleiermacher and the historical idealism of Johann Gottfried von Herder, as filtered through the Ethiopianism of early black nationalism.[21] It is a reoccurring vision evident in his subsequent works such as *The Souls of Black Folk, Dark Princess,* and *Darkwater,* and in his pageant, *The Star of Ethiopia.*

As Moses argues, Alexander Crummell was an important influence on Du Bois. Many of the ideas within "The Conservation of Races," such as collective racial identity, the destiny of races, African civilizationism, African contributions to world civilization, the conservation of race, anti-assimilationism and anti-amalgamationism, and even the introduction of historical idealism in the language of black uplift, had already been introduced into the debate by Crummell and other blacks.[22] Crummell's works, such as "The Solution of Problems: The Duty and Destiny of Man," "Civilization: The Primal Need of the Race," and "The Race Problem in America," all of which Du Bois was familiar with, contained the above ideas as well as the familiar staples of Crummell's thoughts also apparent in "The Conservation of the Races": elitism and authoritarian collectivism, anti-individualism, and conservative Victorian values. In particular, we see the influence of Crummell when Du Bois, in his speech, goes on about the "heritage of moral iniquity from our past history"; when he urges the Academy to unite "to keep black boys from loafing, gambling and crime," and to "guard the purity of black women and to reduce the vast army of black prostitutes that is today marching to hell"; and when he enjoins the Academy "to sound a note of warning" to "echo in every black cabin in the land" that unless "we conquer our present vices they will conquer us; we are diseased, we are developing criminal tendencies, and an alarmingly large percentage of our men and women are sexually impure" (CR 489–491). In these passages Du Bois was explicitly declaring his affinity with Crummell's belief that moral guardianship played a central role in black uplift.

The idealism of German historiography was another important influence on Du Bois evident in "The Conservation of Races." Du Bois was first exposed to idealism through the works of Thomas Carlyle, and possibly those of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and then through his classes at Harvard with Josiah Royce and George Santayana. During his time at Fisk University, Du Bois had also shown an appreciation for Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, unifier of the Prussian states and victor in the Franco-Prussian war, who accounted for Germanic victory and ascendancy in ethnological and racial terms—a methodology in historiography with roots in the work of Herder and Hegel. His most influential exposure, however, came from his two-year stay at Friedrich-Wilhelm III Universität at Berlin, where he studied under Rudolph von Gneist, Gustav von Schmoller, Adolph Wagner, and, most importantly, Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–96), a prominent social theorist of Prussian unification.[23] Treitschke's view of Prussian history was presented in his seven-

volume *Deutsche Geschichte,* the first volume of which was published in 1879. *Deutsche Geschichte* is an anti-Semitic treatise that put, in the tradition of Fichte, Herder, Hegel, and Humboldt, a racialized notion of *Volk* and *Völkerwanderung* at the center of Germanic historiography.

The link between idealism and German historiography is displayed in Du Bois's talk of history, progress, and his own use of racialized national identity.[24] Du Bois places racialized national identities, along with their individual contributions—an idea with links to Fichte and Herder—at the center of history, making their collective racial contributions the engine of historical progress. He expresses this conception of history most clearly when he remarks, "The history of the world is the history, not of individuals, but of groups, not of nations, but of races, and he who ignores or seeks to override the race idea in human history ignores and overrides the central thought of all history" (CR, 485).

Du Bois's characterization of the race spirit, idea, and ideal is directly comparable to the characterization of the *Volk* spirit, idea, and ideal evident in German historical idealism. For example, Hegel writes, in his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, "The universal premise of this investigation is that world history represents the Idea of the spirit as it displays itself in reality as a series of external forms. The stage of self-consciousness which the spirit has reached manifests itself in world history as the existing national spirit, as a nation which exists in the present."[25] Applying this notion of history to Africa, Hegel claims,

> It has no historical interest of its own, for we find its inhabitants living in barbarism and savagery in a land which has not furnished them with any ingredient of culture. From the earliest historical times, Africa has remained cut off from all contacts with the rest of the world; it is the land of gold, for ever pressing in upon itself, and the land of childhood, removed from the light of self-conscious history and wrapped in the dark mantle of night. (VPW 214; PWH 174)

Thus, for Du Bois, a believer in an idealist notion of history, in which a *Volk* is measured by its participation in world history and its destiny is driven by its *Volksgeist,* it was imperative to invigorate *der schwarze Volksgeist* and lead it out of its slumber in "the dark forests" of Africa to become a "co-worker in the kingdom of culture"[26] and contribute "its particular message, its particular ideal" to the "broad ramparts" of world history: "We are Negroes, members of a vast historic race that from the very dawn of creation has slept, but half awakening in the dark forests of its African fatherland. We are the first fruits of this new nation, the harbinger of that black to-morrow which is yet destined to soften the whiteness of that Teutonic to-day" (CR 489).

In responding to the Hegelian judgment of Africa as a non-player in history, Du Bois was also rejecting the turn-of-the-century social Darwinist judgment of blacks as a people who were doomed to extinction or base servility. Du Bois argued that Africa and Africans had history-creating potential—Du

Bois seemed to think that Toussaint L'Ouverture was an "epitomized expression" of this potential that was to arise from New World blacks—and that it had already partially contributed to world civilization through ancient Egyptian civilization (CR 485).

Another connection between idealism and Du Bois's ideas in "Conservation" can be found in his ideas on the relation of individuals to races. According to Du Bois, given the centrality of race in an idealist conception of history, individuals are mere epitomes of the race to which they belong:

> Turning to real history, there can be no doubt, first, as to the widespread, nay, universal, prevalence of the race idea, the race spirit, the race ideal, and as to its efficiency as the vastest and most ingenious invention for human progress. We, who have been reared and trained under the individualistic philosophy of the Declaration of Independence and the laisser-faire [*sic*] philosophy of Adam Smith, are loath to see and loath to acknowledge this patent fact of human history. *We see the Pharaohs, Caesars, Toussaints and Napoleons of history and forget the vast races of which they were but epitomized expressions.* (CR 485)

The subsumption of individuals to races follows from Du Bois's idealist conception of history. There is more, however, than subsumption going on in the above passage. Du Bois is saying that important individuals, central to the history of each race, are "epitomized expressions" of their races. What Du Bois must mean by "epitomized expression," given his litany of historically "important" individuals, and his view that world history is the result of the expression of each *Volksgeist,* is that individuals are the "epitomized expressions" of *Volksgeist;* they are epitomes of the historically important expressions of each *Volk,* and thus the epitomes of each race's history.[27]

Understanding that he was influenced in important ways by Crummell and by German historical idealism is crucial for the correct exegesis of Du Bois, especially his early works. In asserting this I am minimizing the role of Jamesian pragmatism in "The Conservation of Races"; however, I am not arguing that it had no influence. Moses, on the other hand, takes a stronger position against a Jamesian reading. According to Moses, "The Conservation of Races" is

> a black nationalist manifesto. The document clearly placed the young Du Bois outside the tradition of American liberalism. It foreshadowed his lifelong penchant for racialistic collectivist dogmas, and presaged the Stalinist authoritarianism that would dominate the final years of his intellectual life. Nothing could be more incorrect than to view this young authoritarian mystic as an heir to the liberalism of Thomas Jefferson or the pragmatism of William James. (DCR 289)

Although I agree that "The Conservation of Races" is not a Jeffersonian document, and that it contains some illiberal ideas, I do not agree with Moses's position that James's pragmatism is not evident in Du Bois's speech. Moreover, I disagree with Moses's characterization of "The Conservation" as

a "Crummellian essay" that was a restatement of a mystical Christian idea that Crummell had long preached, the idea that races were "the organisms and ordinance of God" (DCR 284).

Moses's *strict* Crummellian reading of Du Bois is wrong for two reasons. First, Crummell's definition of race, in his "The Race Problem in America," as the "organisms and the ordinance of God," and as "a compact, homogeneous population of one blood, ancestry, and lineage," is a religio-biological conception.[28] Race, for Crummell, was of "divine origin" and not something created by man. In contrast, Du Bois claimed that race was "the vastest and most ingenious *invention* for human progress."

Second, unlike Crummell's conception of race as an "ordinance of God," Du Bois's conception of race, as an invention, was something that groups, given the right circumstances, could not only ignore, but also be rid of: "It [is] the duty of the Americans of Negro descent, as a body to maintain their race identity until this mission of the Negro people is accomplished, and the ideal of human brotherhood has become a practical possibility" (CR 491).

Clearly, Du Bois's conception of race departs from Crummell's. Moreover, Du Bois's talk of race being an invention invites a Jamesian reading, but that is also where a Jamesian reading must stop.[29] There is little that is Jamesian about Du Bois's racial collectivism, his acceptance of authoritarianism, his black nationalism, his yoking of individuals with duties to their race, his talk of racial missions, messages, or ideals, or his claim that individuals are "epitomized expressions" of their races.

The influences of Crummell and idealism come to bear in Du Bois's responses to the ideas of Douglass and Washington. Du Bois has placed race in the center of history and individuals in the center of race; therefore, Douglass's assimilationist and amalgamationist policies were, for Du Bois, policies of "self-obliteration" (CR 488). Du Bois's rejection of Douglass's assimilationism-amalgamationism is explicit in his call for the conservation of race, and his rejection of Douglass's policies is explicit throughout the "The Conservation of Races." Du Bois argued that the destiny of African Americans

> is *not* absorption by the white Americans: that if in America it is to be proven for the first time in the modern world that not only Negroes are capable of evolving individual men like Toussaint, the Savior, but are a nation stored with wonderful possibilities of culture, then their destiny is not a servile imitation of Anglo-Saxon culture, but a stalwart originality which shall unswervingly follow Negro ideals. (CR 487–488)

Moreover, Du Bois argues that the conservation of race is not only an integral part of black uplift but is the duty of each individual black American:

> It is our duty to conserve our physical powers, our intellectual endowments, our spiritual ideals; as a race we must strive by race organization, by race solidarity,

by race unity to the realization of that broader humanity which freely recognizes differences in men, but sternly deprecates inequality in their opportunities of development.

For the accomplishment of these ends we need race organizations: Negro colleges, Negro newspapers, Negro business organizations, a Negro school of literature and art, and an intellectual clearing house, for all these products of the Negro mind, which we may call a Negro Academy. (CR 489)

Du Bois's call for race organizations is a rejection of Douglass's position against black cultural unification and self-segregation. It is also, however, a retort to the anti-intellectualism of Booker T. Washington and to his call for the vocational education of blacks to the exclusion of academic education.

Du Bois thought that it was necessary to conserve race for cultural and political reasons. For Du Bois, the cultural reason that race needed to be conserved, given his idealism, was that each race was invested with a particular cultural "contribution" that arose from its race spirit, its *Volksgeist,* the spiritual and psychic differences that marked each group. The political reason for its conservation, according to Du Bois, was that human brotherhood was not yet a "practical possibility"; thus, racial solidarity was necessary in order for Africans and African Americans to attain justice and uplift. As Du Bois argued, African Americans must conserve race and strive in solidarity to bring about on the stage of world history "the realization of that broader humanity which freely recognizes differences in men, but sternly deprecates inequality in their opportunities of development" (CR 489).[30]

Considering all the influences that Du Bois was juggling in "The Conservation of Races"—black nationalism, idealism, and, to a lesser degree, pragmatism—it should not be surprising that the conception of race that he presented was, as Moses and Lewis remarked, confusing. Despite this confusion, and the worrisome elements of his idealism, I argue that Du Bois has presented a cogent sociohistorical conception of race. Near the beginning of the speech, he relates that it is "hard to come . . . to any definite conclusion" about "the essential" differences of the races. He relates that the visibly physiological criteria once used have been discovered to be too "exasperatingly intermingled" to be useful. Then, he remarks, "The differences between men do not explain all the differences of their history. It declares, as Darwin said, that great as is the physical unlikeness of the various races of man their likenesses are greater . . . " (CR 484–485).

Du Bois, twenty-nine years old, an idealist, under the spell of Crummell, and only three years removed from the nationalist stirrings in Germany, argued that despite the inability of science to define the races,

> There are differences—subtle, delicate and elusive, though they may be—which have silently but definitely separated men into groups. While these subtle forces have generally followed the natural cleavage of common blood, descent and physical peculiarities, they have at other times swept across and ignored these. At all times, however, they have divided human beings into races, which, while

> they perhaps transcend scientific definition, nevertheless, *are clearly defined to the eye of the Historian and Sociologist.* (CR 485; my emphasis)

The "subtle forces" that Du Bois is referring to are social in nature and they divide humanity into races. Although these races escape biological explanation, they are apparent to the investigations of social scientists. As a result of this social dynamic, according to Du Bois, a race is "a vast family of human beings, *generally* of common blood and language, *always* of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life" (CR 485). Du Bois is using "generally" in the sense of "usually"; thus, for Du Bois, race usually follows the "cleavages" of biological difference, but it need not do so.[31] On the other hand, a race, Du Bois argues, always shares certain social features: a common history, traditions, strivings, impulses, and ideals of life.[32]

Du Bois's conception of race is purely social. Although it is not completely divorced from biology, it has, however, subordinated biological differences to the status of an epiphenomenon—sometimes they are there and sometimes not.[33] Therefore, his conception of "race" does not in any way rest on biology. Du Bois reiterates this point when he remarks, "While race differences have followed mainly physical race lines, yet no mere physical distinctions would really define or explain the deeper differences—the cohesiveness and continuity of these groups. The deeper differences are spiritual, psychical, differences—undoubtedly based on the physical, *but infinitely transcending them*" (CR 486).

A Defense of Du Bois's Sociohistorical Conception of Race

In opposition to this reading of Du Bois, K. Anthony Appiah argues that Du Bois has failed in his attempt to substitute "a sociohistorical conception of race for the biological one," and that *he* has instead buried the scientific conception below the surface of his sociohistorical conception.[34] Appiah argues that while Du Bois talks of a sociohistorical conception of race, his sociohistorical criteria do not hold up to examination, and thus at the core of his theory is the outmoded scientific conception of race. Appiah sees support for his argument in Du Bois's talk of "common blood." He asks, "If he has fully transcended the scientific notion, what is the role of this talk about blood?" (UA 25)

Du Bois's talk of "common blood" was figurative. He used the phrases "people of Negro blood" and "black-blooded people of America" as rhetorical devices near the end of his speech when he wanted to emphasize racial unity and collective identity. We should also keep in mind, however, that he was not trying to give a notion of race absolutely divorced from the biological. He

thought, after all, that race occasionally did follow lines of physical difference, and he thought that "race," while social, was *based* on (i.e., inspired by) the physical. The presence of both a social conception of race and references to the biological conception of race does, however, create a tension between the two in his work.

I do not think that Du Bois thought, especially given the fact that he was of mixed racial heritage, that the lines of racial difference in the United States strictly followed lines of physical difference. Further, in his use of the term "blood," he seemed to have in mind the fact that in the United States race is assigned through birth and lineage.[35] Either way, if his talk of "blood" was figurative or if it communicated his belief in African American biological racial difference, it did not lessen his core claim that race is essentially a sociohistorical concept.

Appiah's main argument is aimed at Du Bois's definition of race as "a vast family of human beings, *generally* of common blood and language, *always* of common history, traditions and impulses" (CR 485). Each element of Du Bois's definition, Appiah argues, fails in turn to individuate members of the races—to assign an individual to some race—since each element is an a posteriori property of the various races and not a prior criterion for membership. According to Appiah, the use of "common history, traditions and impulses" to define the races would involve us in circularity. Hence, Appiah argues, what is at the bottom of Du Bois's sociohistorical definition, what Du Bois relies on to do the task of individuation, is the scientific, qua biological, conception. Arguing that Du Bois's sociohistorical notion collapses into a biological conception, and that race is not a legitimate biological category, Appiah then concludes that race is illusory: "The truth is that there are no races: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask 'race' to do for us. The evil that is done is done by the concept and by easy—yet impossible—assumptions as to its application. What we miss through our obsession with the structure of relations of concepts is, simple, reality" (UA 36).

Appiah's claim that the races are illusory rests on the assumption of metaphysical monism—a school of thought that holds there is only one way for categories to be real—that admits the reality only of physical kinds or categories. Given this metaphysical assumption, "simple reality," for Appiah, does not include race or, probably, other social constructs. For race to "do all we ask" of it, given the criteria of metaphysical monism, it would have to be a real physical category; in other words, it would have to be a real biological kind. For it to be able to do the job of individuation, the races would have to be delineated by some biological "essence" such as distinct genetic codes. Since race lacks this biological essence, it is not a real biological category; further, as Appiah argues, since race is not a real biological category, then all that is left for it to be is an illusion.

To defend Du Bois's sociohistorical conception, we must dispense with the

assumption of metaphysical monism in favor of a metaphysical pluralism that admits the reality of social kinds.[36] Metaphysical monism will not give us a fair or adequate assessment of the categories and dynamics of the social world; nor, for that matter, has it done so for the biological sciences. There is little hope, for example, of adequately accounting for biological categories such as "species" or "genes" with the standards of metaphysical monism.[37] Thus, not only does social science demand a shift toward pluralism, biological science demands it as well.

For race to be a real social kind at some site, given metaphysical pluralism, what has to be present are social forces—labels, institutions, individual intentions, laws, mores, values, traditions—combined in a dynamic with enough strength to give the category presence and impact at that site. This is the social view of race that Du Bois offers to us with his sociohistorical conception of race. Du Bois's consciousness about the role of social forces and their power to create categories and make them real in the world, or, if you will, their role in "world-making," is evident in his discussion of his sociohistorical conception of race. For example, in his discussion about what "binds" nations together to make races, he states, "The forces that bind together the . . . nations are, then, first, their race identity and common blood; secondly, and more important, a common history, common laws and religion, similar habits of thought and a conscious striving together for certain ideals of life" (CR 486).

The metaphysical pluralist reading of Du Bois's conception of race also addresses the problem of individuation that Appiah charged it with having. Du Bois's sociohistorical conception of race, given the framework of metaphysical pluralism, does do the job of individuation. It does not, however, do it in the manner of metaphysical monist frameworks—where exclusivity is expected—where for every "thing" in the world there is a constitutive answer to the question, "What is it?"

Metaphysical pluralist frameworks abandon the monist standard of exclusivity, and, thus, the mechanics of metaphysical monism, especially regarding the real kinds of biological and social sciences. In systematics, for example, whether some organism belongs to one or another species is ambiguous, and pluralist species conceptions recognize this ambiguity and do not demand clear-cut answers. Likewise, with the kinds of the social sciences, individuation is equally complicated.

To find out whether some person belongs to one or another race at a particular site, social scientists would have to investigate that site and determine what racial labels are in use at that site, what social forces serve in racial formation at that site, and how that particular individual fits into the racial dynamic at that site. In other words, scientists would need to determine how that person is racially labeled at that site, how racial laws, mores, values, and categories affect that person, and how that person labels herself. This system al-

lows in the ambiguity and complexity of the social world, but ambiguity and complexity are what characterize our social worlds and are exactly what a proper ontology of our social worlds must capture.

Race, according to Du Bois, is a real category resulting from "subtle" forces, social forces, that have served through history to bind humans into various groups and divide them from others. Physical difference, although not absent, is not a constitutive part of Du Bois's sociohistorical conception. I conclude, therefore, that Du Bois's sociohistorical conception of race casts it as a real social category whose existence is due solely to social and historical forces; that this conception of race is not an essentialist one, in that it does not posit necessary and sufficient conditions for being a member of a particular race; and that Du Bois's conception of race is not biological.

Conclusion

Despite the success of Du Bois's conception of race, I reject what I see as the problematic elements of his arguments for the ontology and conservation of race. His sociohistorical conception of race is weighed down by superfluous biological beliefs. His idealistic and mystical notions that each race has its own, more or less, "vividly conceived ideals of life," that the "Pharaohs, Caesars, Toussaints and Napoleons of history" were but "epitomized expressions" of their races, and that each race has some specific mission or message serves to tie the bonds of "racial" identity to the point of suffocation.

It is important to note that Du Bois's understanding of race changed, despite Appiah's arguments to the contrary, throughout his life. As time went on, Du Bois's conception became more sociohistorical as he shed the idealism and racial science that marked "The Conservation of Races."[38] Appiah, after recent debates, has also changed his position. In his "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections," Appiah has moved away from a monist notion of race toward one that recognizes its social construction. He has been influenced by Ian Hacking's brand of pluralist metaphysics and his use of "dynamic nominalism" to account for the metaphysical status of social categories. This shift has also changed, somewhat, Appiah's reading of Du Bois.[39] All the same, Appiah, and the other philosophers of race who have similar racial nominalist or racial skeptic inclinations, favor a politic of race that owes its allegiance to Douglass.[40]

Douglass's assimilationist and amalgamationist vision of a world without race, however, has problems that must be attended to. His program is predicated on the positive valuation of European culture and Western progress, and although Douglass does not negatively value people of color, his program devalues their place in society and values the eradication of difference. Furthermore, it is not clear how democratic, equal, and extensive is his program of assimilation and amalgamation. From what we know of the history of Ameri-

can racial politics after the Civil War and Reconstruction, it is evident that the policies of assimilation and amalgamation would have resulted, as Du Bois said, in "self-obliteration" without delivering to this "intermediate race" the promise of human brotherhood. As can be seen in the racial politics of nations such as Brazil and South Africa, where intermediate races are recognized, amalgamation and mixture do not necessarily bring an end to race or to racial oppression.

The respective positions of Douglass and Du Bois are landmarks in the philosophy of race. In theorizing race, and criticizing the hegemonic racial politics of the United States and throughout the world, their legacies must be engaged.

Notes

1. The title of this chapter was inspired by Wilson Jeremiah Moses's reference to W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* in the German in his "Culture, Civilization, and Decline of the West: The Afrocentrism of W. E. B. Du Bois," in Bernard Bell, Emily Grosholz, and James Stewart, eds., *W. E. B. Du Bois on Race and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 246.
2. For a detailed discussion of Enlightenment ideology among nineteenth-century black intellectuals, see the first chapter of Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850–1925* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1978). Henceforth GA.
3. Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" in *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, Series 1, vol. 2, ed. John W. Blassingame (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982 [1852]), p. 387. Henceforth WSFJ.
4. The psalm reads, "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." This verse was a centerpiece of "Ethiopianism" in Africa and throughout the African diaspora. See chapters 1 and 8 of GA for a discussion of Ethiopianism and its incarnation in the works of American black intellectuals. Douglass, as a believer in human brotherhood, rejected the racialist mysticism of Ethiopianism.For Douglass, this verse signified Africa's uplift, its coming role as a part of Western civilization. For others, such as Crummell or Du Bois, it had a racial message.
5. Frederick Douglass, "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered [1854]," in Howard Brotz, ed., *African-American Social and Political Thought, 1850–1920* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1995), p. 231. Henceforth CN.
6. Douglass's "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered" is the best source for his position on race. See also his "The Future of the Negro," "The Future of the Colored Race," and "God Almighty Made But One Race," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, Series 1, vol. 5, ed. John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995 [1884b]). See his "An Address to the Colored People of the United States [1848]," in Brotz, *African-*

American, pp. 208–213, for his arguments against the "Hammite" stories of the origins of non-whites. See his "Prejudice Not Natural," in Brotz, *African-American,* pp. 213–215, for his arguments against the position that racism is a biological fact.

7. Douglass, "The Present and Future of the Colored Race in America," in Brotz, *African-American,* p. 268.
8. Douglass, "God Almighty Made But One Race," p. 147. Douglass is equivocating with his use of race. Seemingly, he means by his first two and last uses of "race" something like species, if it is going to be consistent with his third use of race. I would argue that this equivocation was due to his intellectual struggle with race. He devoutly believed in human brotherhood, but the existence of race, which he felt that the evidence would not let him deny, was a stumbling block to the realization of that brotherhood. Thus, he begrudgingly accepted the "technical" divisions of race, all the while diminishing it in the "light" of human brotherhood. For Douglass, racial divisions existed, but in the big, divine picture they did not.
9. Douglass, "The Folly of Racially Exclusive Organizations," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers,* Series 1, vol. 2, pp. 109–111.
10. Douglass, "African Civilization Society" and "The Folly of Colonization," in Brotz, *African-American,* pp. 262–266 and pp. 328–331, respectively.
11. See Douglass's "What Are the Colored People," in Brotz, *African-American,* pp. 203–208, "An Address to the Colored People," and "The Union of the Oppressed for the Sake of Freedom," in *the Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass: Early Years, 1817–1849,* ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: International Publishers, 1950), pp. 399–401. Douglass's support of, and participation in, the Negro convention movement of the middle and late nineteenth century underscores this point.
12. Douglass, "An Address to the Colored People," p. 211. Henceforth ACP.
13. See Douglass's essays in Brotz, *African-American*: "The Present and Future of the Colored Race in America," pp. 268–271; "The Future of the Negro," pp. 307–308; "The Future of the Colored Race," pp. 309–310; and "The Nation's Problem," pp. 316–320. The severity of Douglass's assimilationism in his "The Nation's Problem" is amazing. To the argument that in black unity is strength, Douglass replied, "My position is the reverse of all this. I hold that our union is our weakness" (p. 319). In the paragraphs following that statement he advocates the dispersal of blacks among whites and the complete folding of black interests, identity, and activities into white society.
14. Benjamin Franklin, in his 1751 *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind,* ruminated about the future of whites and advocated for the exclusion of "blacks and tawneys." The nature of race and its conservation were discussed by nineteenth-century black intellectuals such as Edward W. Blyden, Alexander Crummell, Martin R. Delany, Frederick Douglass, and Henry Highland Garnet. See GA.
15. For the relationship between Crummell and Du Bois, see David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), henceforth BR, and Wilson Moses, "W. E. B. Du Bois's 'The Conservation of Races' and Its Context: Idealism, Conservatism and Hero Worship," *The Massachusetts Review* (Summer 1993): 275–294, henceforth DCR.

16. Du Bois's contact with pragmatism occurred during his graduate studies at Harvard. In 1888, after earning a B.A. from Fisk University, Du Bois entered Harvard, where he received his M.A. in 1891 and his Ph.D. in 1895. He was the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard, where he studied, among other things, philosophy. He received instruction from William James, Josiah Royce, and George Santayana, and he developed a friendship with James that extended far beyond his years as a Harvard graduate student. See chapter 5 of BR.
17. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races [1897]," in Brotz, *African-American,* p. 487. Henceforth CR.
18. See Lucius Outlaw, "Against the Grain of Modernity: The Politics of Difference and the Conservation of Race," in his *On Race and Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 135–158. Outlaw gives a political interpretation of Du Bois's notion of individual contributions of the races. According to him, Du Bois's notion of a "Negro message" was simply the political result of black American organization and community building. For Outlaw, this interpretation is key because he wishes to cast Du Bois as a liberal. His interpretation, however, ignores the authoritarian, illiberal, and civilizationist currents in Du Bois's "Conservation." At the time of "Conservation," Du Bois's thoughts on the contributions of the races were less than democratic. For more on Du Bois's illiberal tendencies, see William E Cain, "From Liberalism to Communism: The Political Thought of W. E. B. Du Bois," in Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 456–473.
19. Bernard Boxill, "Du Bois on Cultural Pluralism," in Bell et al., *W. E. B. Du Bois on Race and Culture,* pp. 57–86. Henceforth DCP.
20. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), p. 54.
21. Schleiermacher stated, "Every nation is destined through its peculiar organization and its place in the world to represent a certain side of the divine image . . . for it is God alone who directly assigns to each nationality its definite task on earth and inspires it with a definite spirit in order to glorify himself through each one in a peculiar manner" (as cited in GA 49). Lewis (BR 171) agrees with the Schleiermacher link. Herder, in his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (*Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind,* trans. Frank E. Manuel [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968]; henceforth IPGM), states, "Nations modify themselves, according to time, place, and their internal character: each bears in itself the standard of its perfection, totally independent of all comparison with that of others. Now the more pure and fine the maximum on which a people hit, the more useful the objects to which it applied the exertions of its nobler powers, and lastly, the more firm and exact the bond of union, which most intimately connected all the members of the state, and guided them to this good end; the more stable was the nation itself, and the more brilliant the figure it made in history. The course that we have hitherto taken through certain nations shows how different, according to place, time, and circumstances, was the object for which they strove. With the Chinese it was refined political morality; with the

Hindoos, a kind of retired purity, quiet assiduity in labour, and endurance; with the Phoenicians, the spirit of navigation, and commercial industry. The culture of the Greeks, particularly at Athens, proceeded on the maximum of sensible beauty, both in arts and manners, in science and in political institutions. In Sparta, and in Rome, men emulated the virtues of the patriot and hero; in each, however, in a very different mode" (pp. 98–99). Du Bois encountered historical idealism from various sources, but the two most influential sources were the works of the early black nationalists and his studies in Germany.

22. Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). See also DCR.
23. See BR for Du Bois's exposure to Carlyle (pp. 74–78; 115–116), to Bismarck (pp. 77–78), and to Goethe (p. 139), and for his time at the University of Berlin (pp. 130–149). See also Francis L. Broderick's "German Influence on the Scholarship of W. E. B. Du Bois," *Phylon* 19, no. 4 (1958): 367–371, and chapter 10 of Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* (New York: International Publishers, 1968; henceforth AD) for his discussion of his time in Berlin and his impressions of Treitschke; see chapter 8 for his impressions of Bismarck.
24. These "races" are the divisions of peoples that some nineteenth-century historians recognized as distinct peoples. They are clearly arbitrary, but to nineteenth-century historians they were the divisions that displayed distinct and clashing folk spirits. In the work of some social theorists, such as Humboldt, Hegel, Herder, Thomas Arnold, Matthew Arnold, Carlyle, Emerson, and Robert Knox, this historical notion of races was conflated with the biological notion of races. Thus, in the works of the Arnolds, Knox, and Emerson, for example, there are discussions of the physical mixing and degeneration of these historical/biological races. See chapters 7 through 9 of Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Washington, D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996).
25. G. W. F. Hegel. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte,* vol. 1 (Hamburg: Verlag Von Felix Meiner, 1996), p. 187; henceforth VPW; trans. H. B. Nisbet, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 152, henceforth PWH.
26. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bedford Books, 1997 [1903]), p. 9. Henceforth SBF.
27. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his essay "Fate" (in *The Conduct of Life and Natural History of Intellect and Other Papers* [New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929]), makes a similar point: "The secret of the world is the tie between person and event. Person makes event, and event person. The 'times,' 'the age,' what is that but a few profound persons and a few active persons who epitomize the times?" (p. 39).
28. Alexander Crummell, "The Race Problem in America [1888]," in Brotz, *African-American*, pp. 184–185.
29. Bernard Boxill argues in "Du Bois on Cultural Pluralism" that Du Bois's conception of "race" is Jamesian (DCP 58).
30. An element of Du Bois's political reason for the conservation of race involved the maintenance of dignity, of self-respect, in the face of disdain and rejection. See his comments, in his *Autobiography,* about his social separation from whites while at Harvard (AD 132–39).

31. Robert Gooding-Williams makes this point in his "Outlaw, Appiah, and Du Bois's 'The Conservation of Races,'" in Bell et al., *W. E. B. Du Bois on Race and Culture,* p. 49.
32. Du Bois's sociohistorical definition provides another link with German historical idealism. Du Bois's conception of race is similar, for both its dependence on sociohistorical indicators and its vagueness, to Herder's conception of *Volk.* According to Manuel, in his introduction to his translation of IPGM, "Herder's use of the term *Volk* is characteristically loose. It embraces the chosen people of Israel, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Romans, the Germans, as well as tiny tribes of American Indians and Negroes in the African bush. A *Volk* is virtually any group that has a name and a culture. If there is a mythology, a folk poetry, a separate religion, a cuisine, a recognizably different pattern of sense perceptions, the *Volk* is identifiable" (IPGM xvii). Of course, Du Bois differs from Herder since he sees the people of Africa and of its diaspora as one, although, following Herder, he recognized a plurality of divisions among European and Asian peoples. Herder is a difficult figure in the history of the idea of "race." He denied the formal existence of the "races"—which he understood as the idea that groups of humanity were subspecies and had separate and distinct origins. However, he used a climatist notion of race to explain human diversity.
33. At one point Du Bois seems to suggest that the physical differences are ultimately the result of the social ones: "The whole process which has brought about these race differentiations has been a growth, and the great characteristic of this has been the differentiation of spiritual and mental differences between great races of mankind and the *integration* of physical differences" (CR 486).
34. K. Anthony Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race," in Henry Louis Gates Jr., ed., *"Race," Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) p. 34. Henceforth UA.
35. This interpretation is Michael Root's. See his discussion of Du Bois in chapter 8 of his forthcoming *How to Divide the World.*
36. The metaphysical pluralism I have in mind here is the kind defended by Root, "How We Divide the World," *Philosophy of Science* 67 (2000): 628–639; Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Ronald R. Sundstrom, "Race as a Human Kind," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 28, no. 1 (2000): 93–117.
37. John Dupré, "Natural Kinds and Biological Taxa," *Philosophical Review* 90 (1981): 82–83. See also Philip Kitcher, "Species," *Philosophy of Science* 51 (1984): 309–333.
38. Appiah failed to see how Du Bois's understanding of race evolved because of his own commitment to a metaphysical monist framework. For Appiah, no matter how much Du Bois stressed the social, Du Bois's continuing use of the term "race" meant that he needed to continually rely, as an impossible referent, on the biological conception of race. For a discussion of how Du Bois's understanding of race evolved from his conception given in "The Conservation," see BR 173–174. Du Bois's growing commitment to a purely social conception of race is displayed

in the first chapter of his *The Souls of Black Folk*, and in the postscript, credo, and chapters 1 and 2 of *Darkwater*. In his *Dusk of Dawn*, a further commitment is seen in chapters 5 through 7, and from the postlude of his *Autobiography* comes one of his most powerful and moving statements about the social nature of race: "And then—the Veil, the Veil of color. It drops as drops the night on southern seas—vast, sudden, unanswering. There is Hate behind it, and Cruelty and Tears. As one peers through its intricate, unfathomable pattern of ancient, old, old design, one sees blood and guilt and misunderstanding. And yet it hangs there, this Veil, between then and now, between Pale and Colored and Black and White—between You and Me. *Surely it is but a thought-thing,* tenuous, intangible; yet just as surely is it true and terrible and not in our little day may you and I lift it. We may feverishly unravel its edges and even climb slow with giant shears to where its ringed and gilded top nestles close to the throne of Eternity. But as we work and climb we shall see through streaming eyes and hear with aching ears, lynching and murder, cheating and despising, degrading and lying, so flashed and flashed through this vast hanging darkness that the Doer never sees the Deed and the Victim knows not the Victor and Each hate All in wild and bitter ignorance" (AD 412).

39. A. Appiah, "Race, Culture, Identity," in A. Appiah and A. Gutman, eds., *Color Conscious* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 30–105.
40. Ronald R. Sundstrom. "Racial Nominalism," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33, no. 2 (2002): 193–210.

Four

On the Use and Abuse of Race in Philosophy

Nietzsche, Jews, and Race

Jacqueline Scott

In terms of race, Nietzsche is popularly dismissed as an anti-Semite. His views on race have either been used to reject his writings altogether or been ruled ancillary to the rest of his writings. As a result, little has been written on his concept of race and its role in his writings in general. I will investigate Nietzsche's use of race by looking at the way he contended with "the Jewish Question"—*the* race issue of his time. I will avoid evaluating either Nietzsche personally or his project as to whether he or it was anti-Semitic or racist.[1] Instead, my goal is to ascertain the role that race played in his philosophical projects. I will show that just as Nietzsche battled with the problem of decadence, he also battled with the problem that race (and in particular Jews) played in his call for cultural revitalization. As I have argued elsewhere, Nietzsche's positive philosophy can be characterized as attempts to treat himself and his culture for the disease of decadence, and in this paper I will further argue that his battles with the prevailing uses of "race" are an example of these attempted treatments.[2] There is a distinction between Nietzsche's public and private writings on Jews. In the public writings (those published in his lifetime), one witnesses his attempts to be diplomatic and to distinguish himself from the anti-Semitism of his time. In his private writings (his letters and unpublished notebooks), he is less diplomatic and his attacks are often *ad hominem*. Because my concern here is to analyze the role that Nietzsche assigned to Jews and race in his philosophical projects (as opposed to judging the extent of his racism and anti-Semitism), I will focus on references to them in his published works.

In the end, I will show that Nietzsche's theories of race, and his attempt to revalue the prevailing concept of it, are a telling example of his positive treatments for the ills of his culture. In other words, race and decadence are closely connected in Nietzsche's published works. Because decadence is integral to