Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 2023, **91**, 605–620
https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfae019
Advance access publication 15 March 2024
Article

Above the Color Line: W. E. B. Du Bois's Otherworldly Perspective and a New Racial Order

Christopher White and Matthew W. Hughey*

ABSTRACT

Though W. E. B. Du Bois was critical of traditional religion, he understood the power of religious orientations to the world, including religious attitudes of faith and hope. Although many scholars have commented on Du Bois's secular faith, few have understood the secular, scientific sources that he used to develop it. In this article, we examine how Du Bois built a post-Christian otherworldly perspective in part by drawing from popular science writers who examined the possibilities, both real and imagined, of higher-dimensional spaces and planes of existence. We analyze Du Bois's scholarship, visionary fiction, prayers, and poems to better understand how he repurposed higher-dimensional concepts to envision a post-racial God, reimagine the social order, and develop key ideas that informed his life's work, including the concept of the "color line."

FOR A LONG TIME now, scholars have discussed Du Bois's criticisms of organized religion. Serious investigation of Du Bois's relationship to religion stretches back decades (e.g., Miller 1956; Rudwick 1957; Brodwin 1972; Long 1976; Marable 1985). Studies have largely focused on Du Bois's fraught relationship with Christianity and his understanding of the place of the "Negro Church" in Black life (e.g., Blum 2007; Hufford 1997; Johnson 2012; Pinn 2014; Ramey 2002; Savage 2000; Sinitiere 2012; Wortham 2009). For instance, Dan Green and Edwin Driver contended that Du Bois felt Christianity had strayed far from its "true, divine mission of human inspiration" (Green and Driver 1978, 230), while Marable (1985, 24) argued that Du Bois long cultivated a deep "revulsion of the church." Du Bois was critical of Christianity on both sides of the color line, arguing both that "white Christianity is a miserable failure" (Du Bois 1920, 36) and that the Black church should retreat from irrationality and its "curious custom of emotional fervor" (Du Bois 1903a, 207). Du Bois's skepticism about religion, however, could be quite broad and ecumenical.

* Christopher White, Vassar College, 124 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie NY 12603, USA. Email: chwhite@vassar.edu; Matthew W. Hughey, University of Connecticut, 344 Mansfield Road, Unit 1068, Storrs, CT 06269, USA. Email: matthew.hughey@uconn.edu. The authors wish to thank Stephen C Finley, Biko Mandela Gray, Tracey Hucks and participants at the "Blackness, Myth, and the Human" symposium at Esalen, the Distinguished W. E. B. Du Bois Lecture Series at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the RACE.ED symposium at the University of Edinburgh.

> I do not believe in the existence and rulership of the one God of the Jews; I do not believe in the miraculous birth and the miracles of the Christ of the Christians; I do not believe in many of the tenets of Mohammedanism and Buddhism; and frankly, I do not believe that the Guardian of the Bahai [sic] Faith has any supernatural knowledge of what may happen. (Du Bois [1948] 1978, 223)

The problem, however, was that Du Bois needed religion too much to abandon it entirely. As a result, his perspective on religion was Janus faced. "For all his denunciations of religious dogmas, of belief in miracles, or of churches teaching alleged fairy tales," Edward Blum has written, "Du Bois turned to religious expressions, feelings, and idioms to discuss his life and interpretations of the world.... Here was a man who didn't believe in miracles but had seen them, who wasn't religious but turned to spiritual language to explain his world. Here was a man who placed 'belief' in political systems that denounced belief. Here was a man as complicated and contradictory as the notion of 'secular faith' itself" (Blum 2011, 103–4). The precise nature of Du Bois's "secular faith" continues to vex scholars. Jonathon Kahn's carefully balanced formulation revealed Du Bois as largely a pragmatist who used "religion for ends that have to do with exploring the angled perplexities of human finitude and not the wholeness of godly infinity" (Kahn 2009, 13). Somehow, Du Bois wanted what Kahn called a "deeply devotional religious imagination" that paradoxically made sense of this-worldly problems (Kahn 2009, 13–14).

The pragmatist in Du Bois is important: he wanted a religious orientation that could be deployed for the betterment of his people. To develop it, he sampled and borrowed from a range of traditions. Schrager (1996), Buck (2012), Chidester (2007), Lahiri (2010), Mount (2013), and Rabaka (2015) examined Du Bois's engagements with spiritualism, Hinduism, Islam, the Bahá'í Faith, indigenous African traditions, and the sacralized "negritude" movement. For example, Goyal expertly detailed how Du Bois used Indian Hinduism as a resource for upending "inequality of caste and religion, finding... unity in diversity" (Goyal 2019, 59). Buck showed how Du Bois was inspired by the Bahá'í teachings on racial unity and integration (Buck 2012). And Schrager argued that when fashioning ideas about race and Blackness, Du Bois drew on spiritualist and mystical notions of psychic power. Du Bois also employed pseudo-biblicism, wrote Protestant-like prayers, evidenced a deep-seated respect for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and repeatedly cited Christian figures, concepts, and stories. In his twilight years in Ghana, he wrote poetry that incorporated "hallelujahs," spoke reverently about the "Virgin Mary" and "the Christ," and employed concepts of "heaven" and "hell" as sites of good and evil (Du Bois Graham 1971, 378–79). Du Bois eclectically sutured together diverse spiritual and religious ideas, using them to understand and ameliorate racial inequality. Thus "the Duboisian use of religion" helps establish, as Stallworth once argued, "a foundational truth from which oppressed blacks could obtain enough confidence to gain their rightful place within American society" (Stallworth 2019, 92).

Recently, several scholars have pointed to an additional element in Du Bois's enigmatic spiritual perspective: the centrality of contemporary scientific ideas about invisible spatial dimensions. For instance, Shamoon Zamir, Nicole Waligora-Davis, and Nancy Bentley have shown that Du Bois incorporated the scientific idea that there was a fourth spatial dimension in an intriguing (but unpublished) fictional manuscript. In this manuscript Du Bois explored the idea that race and the American social order could be reimagined from a higher perspective. Christopher White examined this unpublished manuscript in detail, pointing out that progressive reformers, political revolutionaries, and radical thinkers of the time also leveraged higher dimensional notions to rethink the social order (Christopher White 2018). As White argued, the idea that there was an invisible higher space to reality was deployed as a more scientific way of talking about heaven; it was used as the basis for different imaginative practices that

generated altered modes of consciousness; and it helped many see gender, race, and the social order in more expansive contexts (Christopher White 2018).

But White's book does not examine how Du Bois developed otherworldly and higher-dimensional tropes beyond his unpublished manuscript. In fact, Du Bois used these concepts extensively. In this article, we provide an expansive look at Du Bois's oeuvre, examining his scholarship, fiction, prayers, and poems to show how he used these ideas to reimagine his own spirituality and a post-racial God, envision the social order from a different perspective, and fashion key concepts that informed his life's work, including the idea of the "color line."

COLOR LINES AND RACIAL GEOMETRIES

Du Bois was introduced to dimensional ideas and hyperspace philosophers as a Harvard undergraduate. In the 1888–1889 academic year, he enrolled in William James's Philosophy 4 course on "recent contributions to theistic ethics," a course with topics that ranged from ethics to the academic study of religion. In this course, James introduced his students to hyperspace philosophers such as the mathematician Charles Howard Hinton and the clergyman and educator Edwin A. Abbott. Abbott had recently authored the science fiction work *Flatland* (1884) in which characters moved about in a flat, two-dimensional world; and Hinton had published in 1886 a science fiction–oriented book called *Scientific Romances*, which also contained a fictional narrative about characters in a two-dimensional world.

We know from Du Bois's Philosophy 4 notebook that James held in-class discussions on Hinton's *Scientific Romances*. Du Bois clearly absorbed the key lessons from the works of Abbott and Hinton: that like Flatlanders, we also might live in a world with imperceptible higher spaces and dimensions. Du Bois speculated about this in his notebook. "That there is a fourth dimension in life every sensible man must say. We have a 4th moral dimension separating us from animals. Thus we are cut off certainly from the whole universe only part of which we see" (Du Bois ca. 1889, 14–15). What was the nature of that higher dimension—and was it possible to (imaginatively) occupy it? How would such a vantage point change our ways of thinking about social realities?

Du Bois seems to have been interested in one of Hinton's ideas in particular—that our understanding of the social world could be recast in geometrical terms. Many have wondered about the origins of Du Bois's "color-line" metaphor (e.g., Hughey 2021a; Rath 1997; Wong 2021), but there is circumstantial evidence that Du Bois borrowed this language directly from Hinton's *Scientific Romances*.[1] This book contains fictional narratives and thought experiments about two-dimensional worlds divided by lines. This passage from Hinton's *Scientific Romances* is not unusual:

> Suppose a piece of paper to represent a plane. If it is infinitely extended in every direction, it will represent an infinite plane. It can be divided into two parts by an infinite straight line. A being confined to this plane could not get from one part of it to the other without passing through the line. But suppose another piece of paper laid on the first and extended infinitely, it will represent another infinite plane. If the being moves from the first plane by a motion in the third dimension, it will move into this new plane. And in it finds no line. Let it move to such a position that when it goes back to the first plane it will be on the other side of the line. Then

[1] The "color-line" metaphor was occasionally used to describe divisions between Black and white Americans as early as the Reconstruction Era. For example, Frederick Douglass used the phrase in an 1881 article in the *North American Review*. Du Bois, however, is best known for using and promulgating it. He did so first in *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) and in his "Address to the Nations of the World" (1900).

> let it go back to the first plane. It has appeared now on the other side of the line which divides the infinite plane into two parts. (Hinton 1886, 25–26)

Beings in this imaginary flat world could transcend lines that bisected it, but only if they rose "up" in a third direction above the plane. In that new space, they would enjoy a greater degree of freedom. Hinton wondered about analogous situations in the real world, discussing how the social world was divided by gender and how gender categories might be erased by moving in higher dimensions. He also insisted that his geometric ideas were not merely academic; these ideas might supply us, he said, "with scaffolding, which the mind can make use of in building up its conceptions." The result would be an additional "power of representation" that made possible new ways of imagining the world (cf. Hinton 1886, 31–32).

Hinton's writings were enigmatic and not widely read, but Du Bois took them seriously and put them to use in new ways. He took Hinton's obscure ideas and made them into concepts that would structure global thinking about race for over a century. For instance, in *The Souls of Black Folk* and other writings, Du Bois repurposed spatial and geometric categories to represent and map the social world.[2] Du Bois not only used the image of the color line to structure the boundaries of the racial order; like Hinton, he also sought an imaginative way to rise above and see over it.[3] Du Bois explored this in *Souls*, where he asserted in one arresting passage that he and white writers and scholars had (imaginatively) connected in a space above the color line.

> I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls. From out the caves of evening that swing between the strong-limbed earth and the tracery of the stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn nor condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the Veil. (Du Bois 1903b, 109)

The linear boundary in Du Bois's work was similar to the linear boundary in Hinton's plane world; both were impenetrable boundaries that bisected all things. In Hinton's account, however, if beings were able to move "up" via a mysterious third dimension, they could arrive at a place without the linear boundary. In Du Bois's work, he also moved into a higher-dimensional space—between the "strong-limbed earth and the tracery of the stars"—and found himself conversing across temporal, social, and racial lines with white thinkers such as Shakespeare and Balzac.

HIGHER DIMENSIONS AND RACIAL PERCEPTION IN DU BOIS'S "VACATION UNIQUE"

Du Bois extended these dimensional ideas in unexpected directions. Shortly after reading Hinton's book, Du Bois sketched a fictional narrative in which a white undergraduate became Black via what Du Bois called a higher-dimensional "painless operation." This unpublished narrative survives in fragments and outlines in Du Bois's hand and in a transcription and summary by Francis Broderick that was made in the 1950s from sources that no longer survive (Zamir 1995, 47). Though others have dated this narrative to 1889, either during or just after James's

[2] Du Bois's short-lived journal, *Horizon: A Journal of the Color Line* (1907–1910), also incorporated geometrical thinking and metaphors—including phrases such as "over look," angled perspectives, and lines of division. Ashton contends that "grappling with how to see or break through the color line formed the very rationale of *The Horizon*" (Ashton 2001, 3).

[3] Hinton provided a set of exercises one could use to re-educate the senses in a way that (he believed) bestowed higher-dimensional forms of perception. It is unclear if Du Bois studied these methods (James did, briefly), but it is undeniable that Du Bois believed that one could and should imagine a way above the lines that structured social reality.

Harvard class, there is evidence that Du Bois either wrote it or added to it after 1907.[4] The narrative, which is written on the back of a Harvard College notebook, is called "A Vacation Unique."

The title itself suggests a narrative that takes place outside the realm of everyday life. In this piece a Black Harvard undergraduate attempts to convince a white classmate to undergo a "painless operation" that would transform him into a Black man. The idea was that the two of them could then perform around the United States, making money to offset college expenses. Apparently this racial transformation was not immediately appealing to the white student. The Black protagonist expanded on its useful aspects. "By reason of the fourth dimension of color.... You step into a new and, to most people, entirely unknown region of the universe—you break the bounds of humanity" (in Zamir 1995, 221). And this was not all. "Again you will not only be a Negro but a Negro in an un-thought of and astoundingly incongruous role." He would be both races and neither of them, visible and invisible, rising above everything to a position in which he might even "solve in a measure the problems of Introspection and [the] Fourth Dimension." He would see things others could not see, *including seeing into people in new ways*, "beholding... parts of character invisible to the general run of men." Why not spend a summer in this fantastic higher space? "Spend summer in that portion of space, viewing [the] world's intestines from [a] new point of view" (in Zamir 1995, 221, 223).

The painless operation was completed and the traveling duo toured the United States. At this point, surprising features of white America came into focus. They were eyed suspiciously, asked for character references, denied lodging, assaulted with stories about "how much I did for your People," and subjected to "gaping" looks from men, women, and even ministers of the Church, some of whom muttered disapprovingly that Black youth were now attending Harvard. As Zamir points out, the narrative reflects Du Bois's resentment about the racist hostility he encountered during his own summer travels, at Harvard, and among wealthy whites in the Boston area, including clergy (Zamir 1995, 48–49). Selfish, acquisitive, and dogmatic, whites in the story deploy their religion and culture strategically: it is used to keep Black Americans down. "Anglo-Saxon civilization," the Black protagonist insists, is "built upon the Eternal I"; its "high Episcopal Nicene creed" was to put the heel on the neck of the downtrodden (Zamir 1995, 224). This is a fascinating fragment of visionary fiction from Du Bois that has not been adequately contextualized or understood.

The central motif in "Vacation Unique"—that is, the higher-dimensional transformation from white to Black—also has roots in Hinton's *Scientific Romances*. In this book Hinton describes an imaginary flat world of two dimensions in which men were left-facing isosceles right triangles and women were right-facing isosceles right triangles. Everything in this world had two dimensions: beings moved forward and back as well as left and right but were unaware of a third direction, an impossible bearing that was above and below the surface of their flat world. One day a woman who had been engaged in "abstruse studies" suddenly turned herself into a man. It was as if through imagination or scholarly study she lifted her right-facing form from the surface of her world, flipped it over into a left-facing triangle, and placed it back down into the flat world. Rising above the flat world changed her form and gave her "a strange knowledge of the internal anatomy of the race." In Du Bois's "Vacation Unique" there is a similar narrative, though Du Bois's story foregrounds a racial transformation rather than a sexual one. A radical transformation takes place via movement in a higher dimension, a process that also bestows a new kind of x-ray vision. The pair of students, Du Bois wrote, were able to view the "world's intestines from [a] new point of view" (in Zamir 1995, 221, 223).

[4] Zamir argues that Du Bois drew on Abbott's *Flatland* (1884), but in Du Bois's story he mentions a "Mr. Fields" from *Flatland*. "Mr. Field" actually is a character briefly mentioned in Hinton's *An Episode of Flatland*, which was published in 1907. Perhaps Du Bois drew from both Abbott and Hinton, conflated them, or revised portions of his "Vacation Unique" at different times.

Du Bois spoke often about rising above the world and seeing into the intestines of things. Why could beings who rose into higher-dimensional spaces see the *insides* of everything? In *Flatland*, a two-dimensional square character was lifted from the surface of his flat world into a higher (third) dimensional space, where he saw for the first time everything below him. He saw something particularly striking: he saw "the intestines of all my countrymen in the Land of Two Dimensions." There is a simple geometrical reason for this: if you are a two-dimensional (flat) being living in a flat world, and you rise above the surface of the plane, you can see all aspects of the flat world below you. You even can see into the insides of objects in the plane.[5] In many ways Du Bois blends these higher-dimensional notions with contemporary sociological aspirations to become a disembodied knower. Labeled the "god trick" by Haraway (1988, 581), such an approach involves trying to see "everything from nowhere" (Haraway 1988, 581). Calling this the god trick is appropriate here, for Du Bois was developing Black scholarly insights on the color line into a transcendent view that rises above materialist ways of seeing.[6] "I studied eagerly under teachers who bent in subtle sympathy," Du Bois wrote in *Darkwater*, "feeling themselves some shadow of the Veil and lifting it gently that we darker souls might peer through to other worlds" (Du Bois 1920, 14–15).

Du Bois deployed these ideas in "Vacation Unique" and elsewhere to render Blackness itself as a supernatural subject position. He insisted that Black people possessed a transcendental form of perception:

> Once in a while through all of us there flashes some clairvoyance, some clear idea, of what America really is. We who are dark can see America in a way that white Americans cannot. And seeing our country thus, are we satisfied with its present goals and ideals?" (Du Bois 1926, 290)

Blackness enabled a kind of movement into different, and previously unattainable, temporal and spatial vantage points: Black people could escape the biological trappings of time qua ancestry and space qua segregation. As Bentley has argued,

> Figured as a dimension, being black means being both present and absent in human time and space.... Although he walks and talks in the same streets inhabited by white people, he is aware that his lived experience—his human being—somehow exists elsewhere, in a zone outside what counts as a discernable [sic] reality" (Bentley 2009, 227)

For Du Bois, then, although Blackness could be understood in terms of its social limitations, it also bestowed visionary powers.

ELEVATION AND ALTERED RACIAL PERCEPTION

Seeing things from a higher vantage point was an important preoccupation for Du Bois throughout his life, as it was for others pursuing objective, scientific truths. Du Bois gestured toward such supernatural seeing in his *The Souls of Black Folk* in a famous passage that is usually interpreted in quite a different way. "After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and

[5] Zamir connects Du Bois's use of the intestines trope to William James's more internal and subjective approach to truth (Zamir 1995, 51). Zamir states that Du Bois's story confronts James's longing for medieval "abdominal joyousness" with the racial suffering of Black people (Zamir 1995, 51). Our analysis of Du Bois's use of dimensionality and elevation, however, better explains Du Bois's "intestines" language. Also, Zamir contextualizes Abbott's *Flatland* within the context of American race relations; but Abbott was British and he wrote for a British audience. The "color revolution" discussed in his book had less to do with race in America than with gender and class in the rigid social order of Victorian Britain (see Zamir 1995, 51–52).

[6] For additional commentary on the "God-trick," see Daston and Galison (2010) and Harding (1993).

Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world" (Du Bois 1903b, 3).

The conventional interpretation of this is certainly correct—that Black Americans see themselves through the eyes of contemptuous, racist whites, which leads, according to Du Bois, to a kind of "double consciousness." But the passage also repurposes higher-dimensional concepts and refers to an altered way of seeing the social order from "the other world." The passage suggests that Black Americans, like Flatlanders with higher-dimensional (in)sight, peer *inside* themselves and *inside* white people because they have been given a new vantage point. Du Bois sometimes calls this *second-sight*; at other times he uses a word more familiar in contemporary American spiritual circles: *clairvoyance*.

After *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois continued to use imagery of elevation and altered vantage points to trouble racial perception (cf. Hughey 2021b, 2020). "High in the tower, where I sit above the loud complaining of the human sea, I know many souls that toss and whirl and pass, but none there are that intrigue me more than the Souls of White Folk"—this is the bracing opening of "The Souls of White Folk" (Hughey 1920, 29). He looks down at white people and is disturbed. "Of them I am singularly clairvoyant. I see in and through them. I view them from unusual points of vantage" (Du Bois 1920, 29). Though elsewhere he observes that racial exclusion and hierarchy produce new forms of sight and insight, what he says here is different. He observes something more hidden and sinister—the twisted, ugly insides of a naked and afraid race:

> Not as a foreigner do I come.... Mine is not the knowledge of the traveler or the colonial composite of dear memories, words and wonder. Nor yet is my knowledge that which servants have of masters, or mass of class, or capitalist of artisan. Rather I see these souls undressed and from the back and side. I see the working of their entrails. I know their thoughts and they know that I know. (Du Bois 1920, 29)

This is a creative expansion of the kind of intestinal seeing found in Abbott's *Flatland*. Du Bois's higher form of vision makes whites embarrassed and enraged. They threaten him. They complain that he is bitter and pessimistic. "And yet as they preach and strut and shout and threaten, crouching as they clutch at rags of facts and fancies to hide their nakedness, they go twisting, flying by my tired eyes and I see them ever stripped—ugly, human" (Du Bois 1920, 29). Thus, in "The Souls of White Folks" (1920), Du Bois identifies a way of reversing the racial gaze. Black people were seen as the problem, as "objects of contempt and pity" as he put in earlier in *Souls* (Du Bois 1903b, 3); but here Du Bois brings whiteness into focus as the problem, seeing clearly the intestinal dynamics of white fear, rage, and cruelty.

Du Bois also sometimes uses the trope of higher elevation to solve the problem of the Veil. Du Bois's "veil" concept does a lot of work: it marks both the ideological and material segregation of space and is a symbol of "moral and spiritual paralysis which evil fate has inflicted upon American Blacks and Whites, an illness curable only by some kind of divine intervention" (Savory 1972, 334–35). For example, in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois writes of his early years, especially his racial alienation at Harvard, when he "had thereafter no desire to tear down that veil" but that he instead "lived above it in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows. That sky was bluest when I could beat my mates at examination-time, or beat them at a foot-race, or even beat their stringy heads" (Du Bois 1903b, 2). Du Bois demonstrates his personal triumph over racial segregation and disproves its attendant rationale of white superiority by imaginatively occupying a new space: a uniquely privileged and spiritualized position that is both a blue sky and also a post-Christian otherworld akin to "heaven." Du Bois makes a similar move

in wake of the death of his only son. Acknowledging that "Within the Veil was he born.... I saw the shadow of the Veil as it passed over my baby" (Du Bois 1903b, 209). His death allowed the boy to escape the "wretched of my race" and to instead become befriended by both "Love" and "Wisdom," for he now lived "above the Veil" (Du Bois 1903b, 214).

The trope of higher elevation accomplished one final task for Du Bois: it allowed him to attack the higher/lower race distinction being made in nineteenth-century evolutionary social theories. Du Bois used elevation to contest the positioning of Black people as a naturally "lower race" on the terrestrial levels of the "Great Chain of Being"—a Platonic and Aristotelian schemata referenced by philosophers, naturalists, social scientists, and other architects of scientific racism.[7] Nineteenth-century racial categories were distributed not along a horizontal spectrum but rather along vertical rungs from the lowest inferior groups to the highest "civilizations." The Great Chain of Being notion buttressed "the sincere and passionate belief," Du Bois himself remarked in *Souls*, "that somewhere between men and cattle, God created a *tertium quid*, and called it a Negro" (Du Bois 1903b, 89). Bennett argued that Du Bois labored to accomplish something he called "the great chain of being come undone, life itself unfettered and moving in all directions" (Bennett 2020, 4). But Du Bois did not simply release Blackness from these conceptual chains. He propelled Black life on an upward trajectory. He used elevation to lift Blackness toward the divine and metaphysical.

VISIONARY FICTIONS

Though Du Bois seems to have believed that his "Vacation Unique" was not effective or publishable,[8] he continued to experiment with fiction that reimagined race and the social order from higher vantage points. Du Bois was interested in fiction—and poetry and art—because he sensed that, as much as he was committed to sociology, he knew it was not enough to inspire a radical re-imagining of the racial order. Even his well-known scholarly works, including *The Souls of Black Folk* and *Darkwater*, reflect on the problems of race and injustice using poetry, prayer, songs, and short fiction—a kind of "guerilla wordfare," according to Reiland Rabaka, that he deployed to "critique and combat the various types of domination and discrimination in his time" (in Joo 2019, 107). He used whatever resources were at his disposal. "All art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists," Du Bois wrote in 1926 (295). Art and fiction revealed new truths, they persuaded others, and they helped people imagine new possibilities. "I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda for gaining the right of black folk to love and enjoy. I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda" (Du Bois 1926, 295). For these reasons, Du Bois's fiction is an important part of his effort to fashion otherworldly perspectives that critiqued the social order and envisioned a new one. As Winters remarks, Du Bois's use of poems, spirituals, and "sorrow songs" implicitly offers a powerful way to rethink the relationship between racial loss, remembrance, and hope... [and] implicitly challenges narratives and imaginaries that deny or easily reconcile the traumatic underside of the nation's history, especially in the context of black American strivings and struggles" (Winters 2016, 54).

[7] Du Bois would have been well-versed with the "Great Chain of Being" and its implementation in racial typologies that placed the "Negro" between human and animal. For example, Charles White's *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man, and in Different Animals and Vegetables* placed "Negros" on the bottom of the chain near animals: "In whatever respect the African differs from the European, the particularity brings him nearer to the ape" (Charles White 1799, 67); Robert Knox's *The Races of Men* drew parallels between the "Negro" and the "Oran Outan" as distinct from the "European" (Knox 1851, 402-405); and Ernst Haeckel's *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* employed the chain with a vertical depiction of the "negro" below that of "Apollo Belvedere" and just above a "young chimpanzee" (Haeckel 1868, 555).

[8] The original version of "Vacation Unique" has, in pencil and Du Bois's own hand, the word "UNPROPHETABLE" (in Zamir 1995, 221).

Du Bois's guerrilla wordfare involved imaginative fiction, published and unpublished, beginning with "Vacation Unique" and including five published novels: *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911), *Dark Princess* (1928), and the trilogy called "The Black Flame," consisting of *The Ordeal of Mansart* (1957), *Mansart Builds a School* (1959), and *Worlds of Color* (1961). In two works in particular he deployed higher dimensions to imagine a better future—in an unpublished essay named "The Princess Steel" (composed over 1908–1910) and in "The Comet" (published in 1920 in *Darkwater*).

"The Princess Steel" takes place on the top story of the (semi-fictional) Whistler building[9] in New York City, where a Black sociologist, busy in his laboratory, was making new discoveries. In a newspaper advertisement this sociologist invited the general public to come to his lab for a demonstration, and the tale's white narrator and wife decide to go. Their first shock was seeing the panoramic view of the city from Professor Johnson's laboratory; the second was discovering that this laboratory belonged to a professor who happened to be Black (Du Bois [ca. 1908–1910] 2015, 822). As it turned out, this Black professor saw and knew things that they could not. The professor showed the couple what he described as "the Great Chronicle"—a library of "everyday facts, births, deaths, marriages, sickness, houses, schools, churches, organizations" (Du Bois [ca. 1908–1910] 2015, 823). The panoptical library was part sociological archive and part biblical Book of Life. It was an impossibly complete record of the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of all people. High atop the city, this otherworldly sociological laboratory glimpsed the material and spiritual dimensions of life.

Professor Johnson had also devised a remarkable technology and was anxious to demonstrate its power. He manipulated a few levers, and this technology projected the image of a beautiful sphere in mid-air. On this sphere he was able to plot all events, worldlines, and trajectories. It was a machine that created a three-dimensional representation of all things. But unexpected readings also sometimes appeared, he told the couple, "curious counter-curves and shadows and crossings." Johnson concluded that there was a social "over-life" shaping events. This over-life was not metaphysical, he said, but it did exist on some higher plane of reality. "You know we can see the great that is far by means of the telescope and the small that is near by the means of the microscope. We can see the Far Great and the Near Small but not the Great Near" (Du Bois [ca. 1908–1910] 2015, 823). What was the "Great Near" and what did it mean to see it? Johnson's technology, which he called a Megascope, saw the Great Near, the "Over-life," of all things. It saw the invisible laws and forces that governed all things. This was a remarkable sociological laboratory, modeled more on divine superpowers than on anything possible within social science.

For the white couple it became apparent that they were "dealing with a crank, not with a scientist" (Du Bois [ca. 1908–1910] 2015, 824). (This same criticism was leveled at Hinton. To some, he seemed obsessed or mentally ill.) Nevertheless, the couple stepped into the Megascope technology and attempted to use it. It showed them remarkable things. As they looked out at the urban steel and concrete landscape, the Megascope revealed a set of mythical narratives behind the modern city—a complex, exploitative history of modern steel production. They saw things that were hard to calculate, the operations of power, capitalism, and whiteness. The couple left the building bewildered.

That the view from above could trouble racial perception is also the theme in Du Bois's postapocalyptic narrative "The Comet." After a comet containing "deadly gases" killed nearly all the inhabitants of New York City, the story's protagonist, a Black man known as both "Jim" and "the messenger," emerged, searching desperately for other survivors. He met a sole survivor,

[9] Du Bois places the quasi-autobiographical Professor Johnson high above the world in the Whistler Building, which alludes to both the fictional tower in which Black people "sit above the loud complaining of the human sea" in "The Souls of White Folk" as well to the factual, newly-erected (1908) Singer Building of New York City, which at the time of Du Bois's writing was the tallest building in the world.

a wealthy white woman named Julia. After exploring New York City and finding only devastation, they realized they were the last ones alive. They retreated to the offices of Julia's father, which were perched high in "the Metropolitan Tower"—another skyscraper.[10] After reaching the office, they ascended further to the roof where "below lay the dark shadows of the city and afar was the shining of the sea." From this high vantage point, they discovered new possibilities for social relationships and race. Once again, the skyscraper became the site where the scale and scope of perception could be altered.

In "The Comet," Du Bois moved beyond the sociological panoptics of "The Princess Steel" to develop a post-Christian otherworldly myth of revelatory insight. Once Jim and Julia sought refuge at the pinnacle of the Metropolitan Tower, Julia had a prophetic vision of humanity's oneness and equality, a vision that transcended the racial divisions that shaped both sociological theory and everyday American prejudices. As Julia gazed out over the world, she saw something new:

> A vision of the world had risen before her. Slowly the mighty prophecy of her destiny overwhelmed her. Above the dead past hovered the Angel of Annunciation. She was no mere woman. She was neither high nor low, white nor black, rich nor poor. She was primal woman; mighty mother of all men to come and Bride of Life. She looked upon the man beside her and forgot all else but his manhood, his strong, vigorous manhood—his sorrow and sacrifice. She saw him glorified. He was no longer a thing apart, a creature below, a strange outcast of another clime and blood, but her Brother Humanity incarnate, Son of God and great All-Father of the race to be. (Du Bois 1920, 269)

There are resonances here with the book of Genesis and the miraculous annunciation of the angel who spoke to the Virgin Mary. In Du Bois's retelling, Julia and Jim were set to become a mixed-raced couple, establishing a new humanity free from the artificial barriers of race. Like the biblical Mary, Julia heard a kind of revelatory announcement of something new. Atop this skyscraper, above the world of race qua death, she saw Jim with new eyes: "She looked at him now with strength and confidence. He did not look like men as she had always pictured men; but he acted like one and she was content" (Du Bois 1920, 263).

Du Bois also incorporated African folkloric and mystical elements in this narrative. Whereas Julia looked forward to gaining a new sense of post-racial humanity, Jim looked backward to reclaim a lost history:

> In fascinated silence the man gazed at the heavens and dropped his rockets to the floor. Memories of memories stirred to life in the dead recesses of his mind. The shackles seemed to rattle and fall from his soul. Up from the crass and crushing and cringing of his caste leaped the lone majesty of kings long dead. He arose within the shadows, tall, straight, and stern with power in his eyes and ghostly scepters hovering to his grasp. It was as though some mighty Pharaoh lived again, or curled Assyrian lord. He turned and looked upon the lady, and found her gazing straight at him. (Du Bois 1920, 270)

Jim did not find humanity in a new revelatory inspiration as Julia did but rather in an older historical tradition that had been stolen. Du Bois's idealistic conceptualizations of Africa "represented by the figure of fatherland, ancestral memory, and *romantic* history" (Gikandi 2005) function in the story to combat the racist trope of Blackness as uncivilized and ahistorical.[11]

[10] Again, Du Bois picks a building that was once the tallest in the world: The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company Tower, completed in 1909, was the tallest building in the world from 1909 to 1913 (having surpassed the height of the Singer Tower).

[11] This conceptualization was most famously pronounced by Hegel: "For [Africa] is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit" (Hegel [1892] 1991, 92).

In the end both "The Princess Steel" and "The Comet" generated new visions of race and the social order from high vantage points.[12] Although the young Du Bois in particular was enamored with science, he came to see that more humanistic approaches were needed for Black liberation. As early as 1899 he had become disenchanted with value neutral science as a solution.

> At the very time when my studies were most successful, there cut across this plan which I had as a scientist, a red ray which could not be ignored. I remember when it first, as it were, startled me to my feet.... Sam Hose had been lynched, and they said that his knuckles were on exhibition at a grocery store farther down on Mitchell Street, along which I was walking.... one could not be a calm, cool, and detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered and starved. (Du Bois [1940] 2007, 67)

Visionary fiction allowed Du Bois an escape from the detached language, methods, and conventions of early twentieth-century sociology. Though he never completely jettisoned these methods, he sought a kind of middle position between finding facts and fostering hope for the future. In his fiction he imagined new visions of the world glimpsed from extreme heights in higher dimensional spaces.

THE PERSONAL ASPECTS OF DU BOIS'S DEVELOPING OTHERWORLDLY PERSPECTIVE

Beginning at a young age, Du Bois experimented with geometrical and higher-dimensional concepts to develop an otherworldly orientation that could be scientifically sound, personally satisfying, and hopeful about the future. By the time he went to college, he knew that Christianity in the United States, white and Black, was problematic. White Christians used their religion to advance an agenda of white supremacy, and Black Christians were too enamored with emotional revivals and other forms of what Du Bois dubbed "pythian madness" (Du Bois 1903b, 190). When Du Bois went to Harvard, he encountered liberal Protestants who, like him, wanted to develop what they believed were reasonable and pragmatic forms of faith.

Du Bois worked through some of these issues in the 1889 notebook he kept for James's class. Perhaps it was possible to exchange the older, anthropomorphic God with something else—something more abstract and perhaps even scientific? That "there is a fourth dimension in life every sensible man must say. We have a 4th moral dimension separating us from animals. Thus we are cut off certainly from the whole universe only part of which we see. But by thus enlarging your view what is God?" (Du Bois ca. 1889, 14–15). There is no evidence of a personal God here—and certainly as he aged he entirely repudiated such a God—but a God who could not as easily be co-opted for nationalist or white supremacist purposes. In an America in which the Christian God was usually identified with whiteness, this must have been an appealing possibility. "Sit not longer blind, Lord God, deaf to our prayer and dumb to our dumb suffering," Du Bois wrote later in *Darkwater* (Du Bois 1920, 27). "Surely Thou, too, art not white, O Lord, a pale, bloodless, heartless thing!" (Du Bois 1920, 27). Surely, God was not white!

Du Bois continued to think about how to understand and mobilize an impersonal, non-white God. In a journal entry from 1893, Du Bois wondered what this might look like. Was the divine best understood as an impersonal type of space or (to use a Jamesian formulation) a higher mode of consciousness? He acknowledged the "wild *sehnsucht* for Eternity that makes my heart

[12] As Joo states, Du Bois possessed a "politically utopian imagination" that insisted on "the inclusion of the literary, fiction, and imaginary as well as the affective, intimate, and personal in combating the objective and material injustices of racism.... It is from his creative 'racially impossible,' fictions that he develops the theories of race found in his essays" (Joo 2019, 122).

sick now and then" (Du Bois 1985a, 28), borrowing the Romantic term for unrequited yearning for an Absolute. Du Bois made an effort to reformulate the Absolute using a new metaphor: the good, the beautiful, and the true—these were life's three dimensions. "Mayhap God is the fourth, but for that very reason incomprehensible." (Du Bois 1985a, 28). This four-dimensional system was a "wretched" metaphor, Du Bois confessed, but "it roughly represents my attitude toward the world" (Du Bois 1985a, 28). The metaphor was geometrical, and God was coextensive with a spatial coordinate: God resided in an unknown direction—*perhaps*. From that unknown space, God was able to see all things laid out. If anyone else were to occupy, even momentarily, that kind of high space, they too would see things differently.

Du Bois conceived of God as an impersonal, creative force that could be *worked with* (cf. Hughey 2023). In a letter to a correspondent written in 1948, Du Bois acknowledged the existence of "a vague Force which in some incomprehensible way, dominates all life and change" (Du Bois [1948] 1978, 223). Du Bois continued, remarking, "I recognize such Force, and if you wish to call it God, I do not object" (Du Bois [1948] 1978, 223). Du Bois also spoke of this impersonal God in other writings. In *Prayers for Dark People* (Du Bois 1980), Du Bois evoked an abstract higher power or "God" over sixty times. He clearly did not believe prayer functioned as a "petition" to a "King of the world" who would "change the course of world events" (Du Bois 1929); this was an old-fashioned and errant view. In his *Prayers* Du Bois fashioned prayers that were not petitions for divine intercession but rather aids to reflection. These prayers were ways to contemplate divine perfection and pathways toward new spiritual attitudes or activist orientations. God was invoked as a force in the background that was fundamentally unknowable. As Matthew Hughey has written, "One could certainly read *Prayers* as little more than a pragmatic use of 'spiritual grammar' to couch Du Bois's analysis in the *lingua franca* of religious tradition.... But such isolated interpretations are greatly strained by Du Bois's own hermeneutics" (Hughey 2022, 650–51). These prayers were platforms for higher forms of thinking and acting. "We must not be content with plans, ambitions, and resolves," Du Bois wrote in one prayer, "with part of a message or part of an education, but be set and determined to fulfill the promise and complete the task and secure the full training. Such men and women alone does God save by lifting them above and raising them to higher worlds and wider prospects" (Du Bois 1980, 27).

Prayers prefigures Du Bois's later attitudes toward the supernatural possibilities of Blackness. For example, in the "Clairvoyance of Black Folk" (originally in 1914 and then revised and published in *Darkwater* as "Prayers of God"), Black subjects discover things that the conventional Judeo-Christian God cannot. "Thou art dumb" Du Bois writes of God in a repeated refrain. Blackness even rises above God, achieving a kind of reversal in which God supplicates to Black people (Du Bois 1920, 252):

> Prayest Thou, Lord, and to me?
> *Thou* needest me?
> Thou *needest* me?
> Thou needest *me*?
> Poor, wounded soul!
> Of this I never dreamed. I thought—
> *Courage, God,*
> *I come!*

This may be experimental and interrogative. And its meaning is certainly ambiguous. But it is clear that Du Bois makes discourse *with* divinity part of his ongoing ontological reconstitution of Blackness, one that involves incorporating into Blackness something otherworldly. Du Bois develops these ideas in other places, including *Darkwater*, where he recalls his youthful

discovery that Blackness existed in "higher spaces." "As time flew I felt not so much disowned and rejected as rather drawn up into higher spaces and made part of a mightier mission. At times I almost pitied my pale companions, who were not of the Lord's anointed and who saw in their dreams no splendid quests of golden fleeces" (Du Bois 1920, 12).

By middle age and later life, Du Bois employed an eclectic vocabulary drawn not only from Christianity but also from spiritualism, psychical research, occult movements, and mythology. His use of language such as *second sight* and *clairvoyance*, his deployment of other mystical terms and categories, and his appeal to the synthesis of magic and science as embodied in Shelley's *Frankenstein* and in his many references to "this modern Prometheus"—all contributed to Du Bois's effort to limn a prophetic spiritual identity that involved something we might call otherworldly seeing.

CONCLUSION

How do we grasp the many-sided personal and political dimensions of W. E. B. Du Bois's nuanced thinking? In this article, we have examined the unexpected ways in which Du Bois reworked contemporary spatial and geometric ideas, including higher-dimensional notions, to represent and map the social world. In fact, Du Bois may have adapted the idea of the color line from ideas developed by several mathematicians and higher-dimensional philosophers. But Du Bois not only used geometric categories to understand better the structures of the racial order; he also sought imaginative ways to rise above and see over them. He explored this in *The Souls of Black Folk*, the "The Souls of White Folk," and other analytical writings, where in arresting passages he spoke from a position above the social order. In that higher space, between the earth and the "tracery of the stars" (Du Bois 1903b, 109), he saw things that only a person in a higher dimension could see: he saw not just all social facts but also the psychological and even spiritual dynamics that shaped current and future events. This prophetic elevation allowed Du Bois to render Blackness as a kind of supernatural subject position. "Once in a while through all of us there flashes some clairvoyance, some clear idea," he wrote, "of what America really is. We who are dark can see America in a way that white Americans cannot. And seeing our country thus, are we satisfied with its present goals and ideals?" (Du Bois 1926, 291).

These were not merely intellectual moves. For Du Bois they were also deeply personal, related at every turn to a problem that he wrestled with throughout his life—namely, how to recover something useful from religion when religious institutions had proven themselves to be dogmatic, corrupt, and racist. His childhood Christianity was woven into the hierarchical racial order in America; yet he could not do away with religion entirely, in part because he believed that it provided powerful forms of inspiration and motivation, things people would need to fight against white supremacy. "The cure wasn't simply telling people the truth," he stated in a 1960 interview, "it was inducing them to act on the truth" (Du Bois 1960). Higher-dimensional notions made it possible for Du Bois to mobilize an otherworldly spiritual perspective that avoided the extremes of dogmatic religion on the one hand and scientific rationalism on the other. And, not least, this kind of otherworldly orientation made a new kind of hope possible.

A letter that Du Bois wrote near the end of his life makes this clear. In 1957 Du Bois composed a short note and gave it to his wife with instructions to open it after his death. He said it was "to be given to the world." "One thing alone I charge you," he wrote. "Live and believe in Life. Always human beings will live and progress to greater, broader and fuller Life. The only possible death is to lose belief in this truth simply because this greater end comes slowly."[13]

[13] June 26, 1957. A message "to be given to the world," he sealed and gave to his wife, "to be opened after my death." He died August 27, 1963. The letter was published as Du Bois 1964.

There was no other death than this despairing loss of belief in a better future. Du Bois had been subjected to racism and discrimination throughout his life; he had been regarded by teachers and colleagues as a subhuman creature "somewhere between men and cattle" (Du Bois 1903b, 89); and he had witnessed many other examples of white violence and racism. Yet, in this clairvoyant moment and others like it, he seems to have found a way of seeing a racial order not yet born and trying to bring it into existence. Perhaps in this final note to the world, as he pondered his own death, he had a glimpse of a new geography, an impossible landscape without racial hierarchies, color lines or other boundaries that had vexed and constrained him.

REFERENCES

Abbott, Edwin. 1884. *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*. London: Seeley & Co.

Ashton, Susanna. 2001. "Du Bois's 'Horizon': Documenting Movements of the Color." *MELUS* 26 (4): 3–23.

Bennett, Joshua. 2020. *Being Property Once Myself: Blackness and the End of Man*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bentley, Nancy. 2009. "Du Bois, Kinlessness, and the Catachrestic Novel." *Novel* 42 (2): 223–30.

Blum, Edward J. 2007. *W. E. B. Du Bois: American Prophet*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

——. 2011. "'I Have Seen Miracles in My Life': W.E.B. Du Bois and the Religious Limits of Secularism." In *Secular Faith*, edited by Vincent W. Lloyd and Elliot A. Ratzman, 102–1125. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.

Brodwin, Stanley. 1972. "The Veil Transcended: Form and Meaning in WEB DuBois' 'The Souls of Black Folk.'" *Journal of Black Studies* 2 (3): 303–22.

Buck, Christopher. 2012. "The Interracial 'Baha'i Movement' and the Black Intelligentsia: The Case of WEB Du Bois." *Journal of Religious History* 36 (4): 542–62.

Chidester, David. 2007. *Religious Animals, Refuge of the Gods, and the Spirit of Revolt: W.E.B. Du Bois' Representations of Indigenous African Religion*. Augusta, GA: Mercer University Press.

Daston, Lorraine, and Peter Galison. 2010. *Objectivity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Du Bois, Shirley Graham. 1971. "Ghana Calls." In *His Day Is Marching on: A Memoir of W. E. B. Du Bois*, 378–79. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.

Du Bois, W. E. B. ca. 1889. *"Philosophy IV notebook." (MS 312)*. Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, Amherst, MA.

——. 1903a. *The Negro Church: Report of a Social Study Made Under the Direction of Atlanta University*. Atlanta: Atlanta University Press.

——. 1903b. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co.

——. 1920. *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

——. 1926. "Criteria of Negro Art." *The Crisis* 32 (6): 290–97.

——. 1929. *Manuscript on Prayer. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312)*. Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

——. 1960. *Oral history interview of W. E. B. Du Bois by William Ingersoll, ca. June 1960. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312)*. Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, Amherst, MA.

——. 1964. "The Last Message of Dr. W. E. B. DuBois to the World." *The Journal of Negro History* 49 (2): 149.

——. [1948] 1978. Letter to E. Pina Morena, November 15. In *The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois, Vol.* 3, edited by H. Aptheker, 223. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

——. 1980. *Prayers for Dark People*. Edited by Herbert Aptheker. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

——. 1985a. "Celebrating His Twenty-Fifth Birthday (1993)." In *Against Racism: Unpublished Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887–1961*, edited by Herbert Aptheker, 26–29. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

——. [1940] 2007. *Dusk of Dawn*. New York: Oxford University Press.

——. [ca. 1908–1910] 2015. "The Steel Princess." *PMLA* 130 (3): 819–28.

Gikandi, Simon. 2005. "W. E. B. DuBois and the Identity of Africa." *Gefame: Journal of African Studies* 2 (1): http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.4761563.0002.101.

Goyal, Yogita. 2019. "On Transnational Analogy: Thinking Race and Caste with W. E. B. Du Bois and Rabindranath Tagore." *Atlantic Studies* 16 (1): 54–71.

Green, Dan S. and Edwin D. Driver. 1978. *W. E. B. Du Bois on Sociology and the Black Community*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Haeckel, Ernst. 1868. *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte*. Berlin: Rhymer.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14 (3): 575–99.
Harding, Sandra. 1993. "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is 'Strong Objectivity'?" In *Feminist Epistemologies*, edited by Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter, 49–82. New York: Routledge.
Hegel, G. W. F. [1892] 1991. *The Philosophy of History*. New York: Prometheus.
Hinton, Charles H. 1886. *Scientific Romances*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Lim.
Hughey, Matthew W. 2023 "The Sociological Spirituality of W. E. B. Du Bois's *Prayers for Dark People*." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 61 (S1): 7-26.
——. 2020. "'The Souls of White Folk' (1920–2020): A Century of Peril and Prophecy." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43 (8): 1307–32.
——. 2021a. "Prometheus as Racial Allegory: The Sociological Poetics of W. E. B. Du Bois." *Journal of African American Studies* 25 (1): 102–23.
——. 2021b. "Debating Du Bois's *Darkwater*: From Hymn of Hate to Pathos and Power." *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 28 (3): 263–85.
——. 2022. "More than Metaphors: Will Sociology Search for the Soul of Du Bois? (A Review of W. E. B. Du Bois's *Prayers for Dark People*)." *Sociological Forum* 37 (2): 647–52.
Hufford, Don. 1997. "The Religious Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois." *Journal of Religious Thought* 53/54 (2/1): 73–94.
Johnson, Terrence L. 2012. *Tragic Soul Life: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Moral Crisis Facing American Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Joo, Hee-Jung Serenity. 2019. "Racial Impossibility and Critical Failure in W.E.B. Du Bois's *Darkwater*." *Science Fiction Studies* 46 (1): 106–26.
Kahn, Jonathan S. 2009. *Divine Discontent: The Religious Imagination of W. E. B. Du Bois*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Knox, Robert. 1851. *The Races of Men: A Fragment*. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard.
Lahiri, Madhumita. 2010. "World Romance: Genre, Internationalism, and W.E.B. Du Bois." *Callaloo* 33 (2): 537–52.
Long, Charles H. 1976. "The Oppressive Elements in Religion and the Religions of the Oppressed." *Harvard Theological Review* 69 (3–4): 397–412.
Marable, Manning. 1985. "The Black Faith of W. E. B. Du Bois: Sociocultural and Political Dimensions of Black Religion." *Southern Quarterly* 23 (3): 15–33.
Miller, Robert Moats. 1956. "The Attitudes of American Protestantism Toward the Negro, 1919–1939." *The Journal of Negro History* 41 (3): 215–40.
Mount, Guy Emerson. 2013. "A Troubled Modernity: W.E.B. Du Bois, 'The Black Church,' and the Problem of Causality." In *'Abdu'l-Bahá's Journey West*, 85–110. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Pinn, Anthony B. 2014. "Reading Du Bois through Religion and Religious Commitment." *The Journal of Religion* 94 (3): 370–82.
Rabaka, Reiland. 2015. *The Negritude Movement: W.E.B. Du Bois, Leon Damas, Aime Cesaire, Leopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon, and the Evolution of an Insurgent Idea*. Lexington, KY: Lexington Books.
Rath, Richard Cullen. 1997. "Echo and Narcissus: The Afrocentric Pragmatism of W.E.B. Du Bois." *The Journal of American History* 84 (2): 461–95.
Ramey, Lauri. 2002. "The Theology of the Lyric Tradition in African American Spirituals." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70 (2): 347–63.
Rudwick, Elliott M. 1957. "W.E.B. Du Bois and the Atlanta University Studies on the Negro." *The Journal of Negro Education* 26 (4): 466–76.
Savage, Barbara Dianne. 2000. "W. E. B. Du Bois and 'The Negro Church.'" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 568 (1): 235–49.
Savory, Jerold J. 1972. "The Rending of the Veil in W. E. B. Du Bois's 'The Souls of Black Folk.'" *CLA Journal* 15 (3): 334–37.
Schrager, Cynthia D. 1996. "Both Sides of the Veil: Race, Science, and Mysticism in W. E. B. Du Bois." *American Quarterly* 48 (4): 551–86.
Sinitiere, Phillip Luke. 2012. "Of Faith and Fiction: Teaching W. E. B. Du Bois and Religion." *The History Teacher* 45 (3): 421–36.
Stallworth, Dwayne R. 2019. *Existential Togetherness: Toward a Common Black Religious Heritage*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.
White, Charles. 1799. *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man, and in Different Animals and Vegetables*. London: C. Dilly.

White, Christopher G. 2018. *Other Worlds: Spirituality and the Search for Invisible Dimensions*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Winters, Joseph R. 2016. *Hope Draped in Black*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Wong, Edlie. 2021. "Black Lives Matter, W.E.B. Du Bois's World Color Line, and the Question of Relation." *PMLA* 136 (3): 463–69.
Wortham, Robert A. 2009. "W. E. B. Du Bois, the Black Church, and the Sociological Study of Religion." *Sociological Spectrum* 29 (2): 144–72.
Zamir, Shamoon. 1995. *Dark Voices: W. E. B. Du Bois and American Thought, 1888–1903*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.