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# The Tragedy of Scholarship

*David Levering Lewis's  
W.E.B. Du Bois*

**Sterling Stuckey**

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*That the group was mainly of women may also have resonated in some deep recess of the male core where proclivities deemed to be feminine by Victorian society reside. In any case, the Zion Sewing Society was the first in a lifetime of similar activities in which collaboration with women proved crucial to Willie's advancement.*

—David Levering Lewis,  
*W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race (1993)*

*As the arts of weaving, dyeing, sewing, & . may easily be acquired, those who exercise them are not considered in Africa as following any particular profession; for almost every slave can weave, and every boy can sew.*

—Mungo Park,  
*Travels into the Interior Districts of Africa (1799)*

One should be steeped in the history and culture of African Americans and have a firm grasp of world history, at least in broad outline, to attempt a biography of W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the most learned and cultured men of the modern era. Moreover, understanding African-American history and culture presupposes some command of disciplines such as folklore, art history, and anthropology—all pathways to West African cultures. But filtered through a consciousness that is color struck and left almost entirely to

its own devices, volume one of David Levering Lewis's *W.E.B. Du Bois*,<sup>1</sup> which purports to cover Du Bois's life from 1868 to 1919, is lacking in the rudiments of sound scholarship. Saddest of all, Lewis, trained in modern European history, does not appear to have assimilated many of Du Bois's publications.

The absence of documentation is so much a part of one's experience with this book, the recognition of distorted evidence so continuous, that one is astonished that Lewis received so much praise from the academic

community. As harsh as the judgment must be, he appears either to have counted on his readers having as little knowledge of Du Bois as he, or on the reader failing to read critically much of this Pulitzer Prize-winning volume. In fact, so much missing documentation places this book on the shifting sand of speculation. Heaven only knows on what Lewis has erected *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963*,<sup>2</sup> the second volume of his study, when Du Bois, from his youth through his forties and later, is distorted beyond recognition in volume one.

A half dozen errors are troubling but less fundamental than those we shall soon examine: (1) Lewis draws heavily on the findings of Roger Lane, who claims incorrectly that Du Bois attended the University of Heidelberg, not Berlin.<sup>3</sup> (2) Lewis does not recognize one of Frederick Douglass's most famous postulates concerning slavery—"He is whipped oftenest who is whipped easiest"—thinking it the formulation of one Charles William Anderson, who repeats it, without quotation marks, in a letter to Du Bois.<sup>4</sup> (3) Lewis refers to Albion Tourgee as a "southern expatriate" and "renegade white southerner" although Tourgee, born in Williamsfield, Ohio, held the rank of lieutenant in the 105th Ohio Regiment and spent time in Confederate prisons.<sup>5</sup> (4) Echoing James S. Pike's *The Prostrate South*, Lewis writes of a "prostrate Confederacy," apparently unaware that the South was not as devastated by the war and Reconstruction as its defenders claimed.<sup>6</sup> (5) Though Du Bois was not allowed to room on campus and was spoken to by just a few students during his entire time as an undergraduate at Harvard, Lewis says that Du Bois segregated himself.<sup>7</sup> (6) Lewis asserts that Du Bois, in 1918, had dined "in Cambridge with William James and been deeply grateful for the pleasure."<sup>8</sup> The problem is that James died in 1910. Sorely trying the patience of the

reader, dozens upon dozens of such errors litter this volume.

Then there is "Willie" Du Bois. Without documentation, Lewis attaches this rather common-sounding diminutive to Du Bois, though the world perceived him, and perceives him yet, as anything but common. Skeptical, this reviewer looked at other biographies and found one, not cited by Lewis, in which the author refers to Du Bois as Willie until age five or six, as Will throughout his elementary and high school years, and thereafter as Du Bois. But Lewis writes that Du Bois was known as Willie throughout his years at Fisk University, and we are told, without documentation, that after graduating from Fisk, Du Bois ceased being Willie. "Du Bois's mood—W. E. B. Du Bois's mood (Willie is no more)," Lewis writes, "ran to euphoria during the next twelve years, and never more than in the fall of 1888 on his way to Harvard."<sup>9</sup>

Yet when discussing Du Bois's *Autobiography*, written when Du Bois was approaching ninety, Lewis writes: "In Willie's exact, startling words in the *Autobiography* . . ."<sup>10</sup> But how could Du Bois have been using the exact words of the Willie he ceased being on his way to Harvard? Apparently Lewis forgets what he has asserted, as he also refers to Du Bois by the graceless diminutive when Du Bois, in his thirties, was writing *The Souls of Black Folk* and, in his fifties, *Darkwater*. The conclusion seems inescapable, given the absence of documentation supporting the currency of the name and the conditions leading to its disuse, that the name, in this work, is a sign of disrespect, an effort to diminish Du Bois. Lewis's references to Willie, however, appear to be subconscious, and there is in this problem the symptom of a larger problem, in evidence throughout the biography: namely, Lewis's substitution of his consciousness for Du Bois's, perhaps an inevitable by-product of not having immersed himself in Du Bois's writings.

Lewis's carelessness is more serious when he writes that Du Bois, while at Fisk, experienced an "educational safari" that made him "high" for three years. But with the overthrow of Reconstruction, young Du Bois was in a land, he thought, in the grip of bondage, and there is nothing in his writings that indicates that it was an occasion for joyfulness. Not only does the claim raise questions about Du Bois's grasp of reality, it trivializes the oppression of black people. Actually, Du Bois knew that the members of four New England churches were paying for his education, and that there was concern in his family about his going South.<sup>11</sup>

In his *Autobiography*, Du Bois writes that following his mother's death, and before going South, he thought: "Now especially I must succeed as my mother so desperately wanted me to." From the same source, we learn that his future was not entirely in his hands, for before his departure "a sort of guardianship," subtly exercised, "of family and white friends was established." His obligations were many, and he had begun to take the black South seriously before arriving there. In an interview for the Columbia University Oral History Project, he speaks of an early and immediate rapport with southern black culture on first hearing the Negro spiritual: "The first time I ever heard a Negro spiritual was when a troupe came from Hampton, and sang them. I was simply enthralled." He later added, "I was thrilled and moved to tears and seemed to recognize something inherently and deeply my own."<sup>12</sup> Despite differences of opinion about the wisdom of the impending move, he was remarkably grounded:

My family and colored friends rather resented the idea. Their Northern, free Negro prejudice naturally revolted at the idea of sending me to the former land of slavery, either for education or for living. I am rather proud of myself that I did not agree with them. . . . The freed slaves,

if properly led, had a great future. Temporarily they were deprived of their voting privileges, but this was but a passing setback. Black folk were bound in time to play a large role in the South. They needed trained leadership. I was sent to help furnish it.<sup>13</sup>

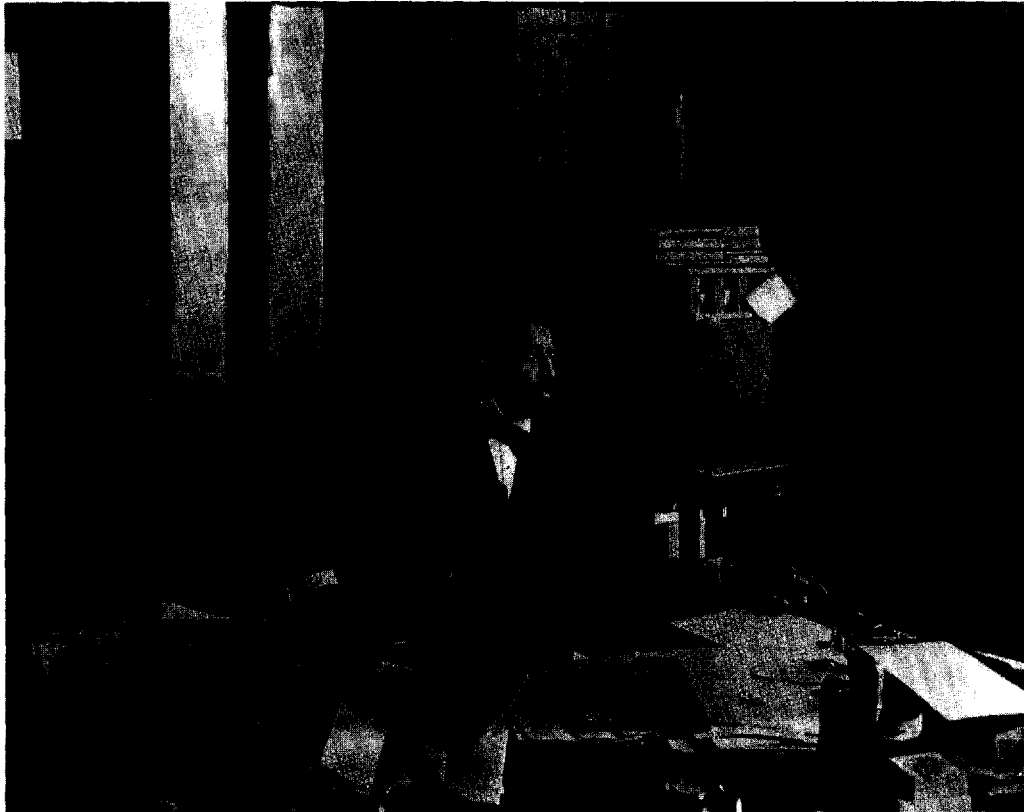
He exclaimed, "Ah! the wonder of that journey with its faint spice of adventure, as I entered the land of slaves."<sup>14</sup>

With black victims of lynching numbering close to 2,000 between 1885 and 1894, he wrote sadly, "Each death was a scar upon my soul."<sup>15</sup> Rather than three years of being "high," Du Bois described his time at Fisk as three years of "growth and development," not free of a certain horror:

I saw discrimination in ways of which I had never dreamed; the separation of passengers on the railways of the South was just beginning; the race separation in living quarters throughout the cities and towns was manifest; the public disdain and even insult in race contact on the street continually took my breath; I came in contact for the first time with a sort of violence that I had never realized in New England . . .<sup>16</sup>

Not only did he go South for formal study, he wanted to know something of his people in the countryside. What he learned there made possible the mastery of black culture that he later revealed with elegance and power. Indeed, no other academic of his time, black or white, had the experience of actually living with people, over periods of months, who had been slaves. This is an aspect of Du Bois's life that has received virtually no attention for what it reveals of the quest for enlightenment that took him beyond formal boundaries:

I was not compelled to do this, for my scholarship was sufficient to support me, but that



*W.E.B. Du Bois*  
*Courtesy of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture*

was not the point. I had heard about the country in the South as the real seat of slavery. I wanted to know it.

Needless to say the experience was invaluable. I traveled not only in space but in time. I touched the very shadow of slavery. I lived and taught school in log cabins built before the Civil War. . . . I touched intimately the lives of the commonest of mankind—people who ranged from bare-footed dwellers on dirt floors, with patched rags for clothes, to rough, hard-working farmers, with plain, clean plenty.<sup>17</sup>

It did not hurt that Fisk had produced the Jubilee Singers, or that Du Bois had heard the

Hampton troupe before reaching the South. Moreover, the road from Fisk to the countryside was also somewhat smoothed by the presence at Fisk of a number of students who, years older than he, were once slaves. Even so, there was no substitute, as he was first to acknowledge, for knowing the peasantry itself, many of whom had been slaves into adulthood. The setting, therefore, was in many ways an anthropologist's dream. Unencumbered by most of the misconceptions about blacks that abounded in American universities, and without a sense of how his learning might transform areas of specialization yet to be determined, Du Bois's unusual intelligence was not his only advantage. With

such qualities of mind and character, he was able, with considerable ease, to move among his people.

Aware that he was listening to those who sang the spirituals in slavery, he came to believe that their religious services were carried out by a "priest" before the altar of "the old-time religion." In fact, he thought the music he heard remained the real thing because of still-existing conditions of bondage. That is what he meant by traveling in time, being carried back to the slave condition, which was as close as anyone of his generation had come to knowing slavery in its absence. Within little over a decade, in *Souls*, he began putting it all together, and he summarized his argument: "Those who have not thus witnessed the frenzy of a Negro revival in the untouched backwoods of the South can but dimly realize the religious feeling of the slave . . ." <sup>18</sup>

The conclusion that Du Bois's alleged safari was among black people appears inescapable, for there is relatively little mention of whites in Lewis's account of Du Bois's Fisk years. More especially, he writes that the safari was "among the fascinating and barbarous," which he follows with: "He would finally meet other people of color like himself. They were still a mystery, these vibrant people . . ." <sup>19</sup> Except possibly in Lewis's mind, there was no safari.

Du Bois's days in the countryside were a direct influence on his approach to writing history and provided the "fieldwork" for him to become, in his genius, the first great—though not thought of that way—American anthropologist. In fact, for breadth of understanding of black culture in America, and for how it relates to Africa, "Of the Faith of the Fathers," from *Souls*, has not been approached by any anthropologist.

In this signal text, Du Bois rejected the notion that with no African institutions having survived, there was no cultural continuity be-

tween West Africans and enslaved Africans in America. Focusing on the slave preacher, slave music, and dance (the Frenzy), he argued that it took at least a century, possibly longer, before slave religion became significantly Christian. Generations prior to that development, an intricate process involving the exchange of heathen rites, he argued, occurred on the plantations of the South. His treatment of this exchange reveals how slaves found an African foundation for unity long before Christianity made inroads in the slave community, a formulation that has not been eclipsed. None of this is considered analytically by Lewis, whose remarks about *Souls* are too often merely descriptive.

Indeed, despite the originality and power of Du Bois's reflections on slave religion, especially his identification of the preacher, the music, and the Shout as central to slave culture, Lewis gives routine attention to "Of the Faith of the Fathers" in his treatment of individual chapters in *Souls*. The closest he comes to a discussion of these key aspects of black culture is to declare that "Willie" described them "wonderfully."<sup>20</sup> There is no interpretation or analysis of the religion of the backwoods because Lewis is not at home with black culture. On the contrary, Du Bois's magnificent breakthrough in studying slave culture inspired in Lewis yet another reference to Willie.

In his *Autobiography*, Du Bois reveals how he came to conceive of what freedom meant to the slave in "The Coming of the Lord," a chapter of *Black Reconstruction in America*, one of the great works of American history. Inviting us to reflect on the meaning of his presence as a student among ex-slaves, to consider their cycle of dreams, sorrow, and resignation, he remarks in the *Autobiography*: "Those whose eyes 25 and more years before [circa 1861] had seen 'the glory of the coming of the lord,' saw in every present hindrance and help a dark fatalism bound to

bring all things right in His good time." And he writes in "The Coming of the Lord" that "to most of the four million blacks emancipated by Civil War, God was real. They knew Him. They had met him personally in many a wild orgy of religious frenzy, or in the black stillness of the night. His plan for them was clear; they were to suffer and be degraded, and then afterward by Divine edict, raised to manhood and power . . ." <sup>21</sup>

He had witnessed, in the backwoods, a form of worship that, exploding with emotion, later served as his model for how freedom was received by the slave.<sup>22</sup> There was, in that regard, no sudden disjunction between slavery and emancipation. In fact, he shows us that the momentum of slave culture carried over into the new and highly uncertain condition, the spirit of slave religion firing the reaction of the newly emancipated. He returns to his summers in the backwoods to characterize the response of slaves to freedom, the mounting rhythm of his prose ordering the expectations and determination of the enslaved:

There came the slow looming of emancipation. Crowds and armies of the unknown, inscrutable, unfathomable Yankees; cruelty behind and before; rumors of a new slave trade; but slowly, continuously, the wild truth, the bitter truth, the magic truth came surging through. There was to be a new freedom! And a black nation went tramping after the armies no matter what it suffered; no matter how it was treated; no matter how it died.<sup>23</sup>

Like so many connections that, however subtle, are obvious once pointed out, here is another between "Of the Faith of the Fathers" and "The Coming of the Lord" that serves as a powerful example of the impact of *Souls* on Du Bois's later work. From the former: "Finally the Frenzy or 'Shouting,' when the Spirit of the Lord passed by, and, seizing the

devotee, made him mad with supernatural joy." From the latter:

There was joy in the South. It rose like perfume—like a prayer. Men stood quivering. Slim dark girls, wild and beautiful with wrinkled hair, wept silently; young women, black, tawny, white and golden, lifted shivering hands, and old and broken mothers, black and gray, raised great voices and shouted to God across the fields, and up to the mountains.<sup>24</sup>

Lewis mocks Du Bois's claim that at Fisk he came to identify more with his own people than with whites, accusing him of being borderline "delusional," for starters. The reader will note that Lewis ascribes possible pathology to Du Bois for having found happiness in the presence of his people, but not for enjoying his walks "beneath the elms of Harvard . . ." *Darkwater* and the *Autobiography* are the texts on which he bases his attack:

Visions of his classmates forming the vanguard of African-American progress, with himself in the lead pointing the way, danced in his head. In *Darkwater*, the memoir closest in time to the Fisk experience, as well as in the closing-years *Autobiography*, Willie's reanimation of his 1880s' mood borders on the delusional (even making allowance for epic prose). He is "captain of [his] soul and master of [his] fate." He wills "and lo!" his people "came dancing about [him]—riotous in color, gay in laughter, full of sympathy." He prophesies for the race an early arrival in the Promised Land: "Through the leadership of men like myself and my fellows we are going to have these enslaved Israelites out of the still enduring bondage in short order."<sup>25</sup>

Nothing in that paragraph argues that Du Bois, as Lewis asserts, placed himself above others at Fisk, alone leading his classmates.

Actually, Du Bois informs us in the Columbia Oral History interview, which Lewis on occasion cites, that to lead Fisk men and women was no easy task, stating that some Fisk students were "keen" enough for him to have to "work harder." In truth, Du Bois himself provided the context for the passage from *Darkwater* when in *Souls*, in 1903, he envisioned himself sitting with Shakespeare and moving "arm and arm with Balzac and Dumas," and asked: "Is this the life you long to change into the dull red hideousness of Georgia?"<sup>26</sup> He would not have his dreams circumscribed by racists.

Du Bois's assessment of the mulatto phenomenon at Fisk is not what Lewis would have us believe. Not once, for example, does he comment favorably on either the scholarship or the intelligence of his mulatto classmates, reserving that praise for dark-skinned blacks, such as one who went on to chair an academic department at Howard University, of which there is no mention in the Lewis biography. In fact, what we are not told about the subject of this book far exceeds in importance what the author has chosen to include, or is aware of. The mulatto theme is one of the few themes of this work that is sounded consistently, claiming the reader's attention beyond Fisk and largely, in Lewis's view, defining Du Bois's life.

This theme appears in ways we have not seen before. The author discusses mulattos, even in slavery, without acknowledging the instruments of power and violence at the disposal of white men in relating to black women. Instead, Lewis offers "concupiscence, hypocrisy, and paradox" as the culprits. For him, the light-skinned issue of white sexual privilege represent models for the race at Fisk. He argues, without documentation, that such light-skinned Negroes "set the tone and defined the institutional character," "a tone and character that, although curiously imitative of the cavalier and lady of the Old South, had no truck with antebellum values when it came to racial rights." But we would find these students in conflict with their slave-holding fathers, ill at ease with their mulatto heritage, and resentful of the abuse of their mothers, a position not recognized by Lewis, who presents the novel thesis that "to the extent advantages flowed from it," mulattos "were the beneficiaries of the slave system."<sup>27</sup> In whose eyes, one must ask, were mulattos the beneficiaries of the slave system? Hardly in the eyes of slaves, who not infrequently viewed them with contempt and made them the subject of tales.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Frederick Douglass, himself a mulatto, never indicated that he benefited from slavery.

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No better indication of Lewis's fascination with sex is needed than his holding out the possibility that Du Bois, at fifteen, was seduced by one or more church-going black women in his hometown Zion Sewing Society. In Lewis's mind, the women were not only capable of exciting sexual desire in an adolescent who "found relations with girls of both races problematic," but of actually offering certain "compensations." He expands: "Whether or not those compensations were ever sexual (introducing a brittle young male to forbidden delights among sultry AME Zion wives and widows) is unknown, though unlikely"—but possible, in Lewis's mind, it should be noted. In addition, it should be noted that he provides no explanation whatsoever for describing these women as "sultry." He just sees them that way, apparently, without having seen them.<sup>29</sup>

His Sewing Society formulation should be kept in mind when considering his treatment of Du Bois's relationship, three or four years later, with the mother of a favorite student while teaching in the country. In a moving chapter of *Souls*, "Of the Meaning of Progress," we encounter the student, Josie, and her family. But Lewis, after imagining that "sultry" grown church women might have seduced an adolescent, ridicules Du Bois's contention that he was "literally raped" by Josie's mother, Du Bois's landlady, described by Du Bois as an "unhappy wife."<sup>30</sup>

Commenting on that encounter, Lewis projects: "Innocent victim, henceforth he would go roaring into sexual conquests convinced that he was never the initiator because he always saw himself on his back in a dark bedroom, his 'unhappy landlady' flexing and groaning on top of him."<sup>31</sup> We are being asked to hear what Lewis apparently hears, and to see what he apparently sees, more than a century after the incident. We are being asked to engage in the impossible.

Evidence of Du Bois's alleged furious involvement with women comes sixty pages later with a reference to what Lewis considers a list Du Bois made of "sexual conquests." It is not surprising that there is not the faintest suggestion from Du Bois that physical love was a factor in these relationships. Lewis assumed sexual intimacy based on a passage that Du Bois wrote when, on his twenty-fifth birthday, he paused to reflect on his life and his goals. In it, he refers to women he had loved up to his twenty-fifth year but offers nothing so crude as a list of women he had known sexually.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, to equate love with sex would not be valid in late Victorian times, when a lock of hair could be the measure of one's love.

Lewis's treatment of Du Bois's experiences in Germany as a Harvard-trained graduate student adds little to what we know about the subject. Though not a scholar of German history, he should have been aware of an aspect of Du Bois's being at Berlin, studying under Adolf Wagner and Gustav Schmoller, that made a lasting imprint on Du Bois. They were leaders of the state socialist party and were very critical of laissez faire capitalism, advocating state-sponsored medical insurance for workers and a progressive income tax, both of which were established shortly before Du Bois arrived in Berlin. And just as they believed that capitalism threatened the stability of the young German nation, they thought radicalism resulted from the greed of private entrepreneurs. Moreover, when Du Bois went to socialist party meetings, he heard a left-wing critique of laissez faire capitalism as well, which must have driven home the reality that Germany was more conservative politically than the United States, though more advanced in dealing with social problems resulting from industrial capitalism. Surely it did not escape Du Bois's notice that about 10 percent of the representatives in the legislature were Marxian social-



ists committed to revolution. All of this must have had a major impact on the young American from Harvard.

Carrying out the pursuit of hybridization on land and sea, Lewis focuses on what Du Bois thought about passengers of color as he sailed back to America from Europe. "Commenting on the African-Americans aboard, the posthumously edited *Autobiography* reads: 'There are five Negroes aboard. We do not go together.' In the original text, Du Bois had written: 'There are two full-blooded Negroes aboard and (including myself) 3 half [crossed-out] mulattos.'" <sup>33</sup> Lewis concludes that Herbert Aptheker, the distinguished historian of slave resistance and the executor of the Du Bois papers, entrusted to him by Du Bois, made the "textual revisions." Asked about the charge, which he denies, Aptheker responded: "Lewis never took this up with me, although in visits to my office and my home we had extended conversations and I gave him information he required and some manuscripts. The visits were prolonged. But he never mentioned this." <sup>34</sup>

Yet Lewis holds fast to his interpretation, offering it as evidence that "The subtext of proud hybridization is so prevalent in Du Bois's sense of himself that the failure to notice it in the literature about him is as remarkable as the complex itself." <sup>35</sup> Though one would not know it from Lewis's representation, Du Bois left an important body of thought on the mulatto question. His finest statement on the subject appears in *Darkwater*, and it relates directly to what one finds on the subject in the Lewis biography. "All the way back in these dim distances it is mothers and mothers of mothers who seem to count," Du Bois writes, "while fathers are shadowy memories." We learn that "upon this African mother-idea, the westward slave trade and American slavery struck like doom." For those women to attempt to "save from the

past the shreds and vestiges of self-respect has been a terrible task," Du Bois thought, and he doubted whether any other women "could have brought its fineness up through so devilish a fire." <sup>36</sup>

The mothers in the family of John Hope, Du Bois's friend and colleague at Atlanta University, might have been among the mothers Du Bois had in mind. But Lewis writes that "Hope's life story was fabulous, so much so that it became the subject of a fine biography, *The Story of John Hope*, Ridgely Torrence's forgotten masterpiece." Lewis considers Torrence's biography of John Hope a masterpiece despite its patriarchal approach to race and gender, and despite its romanticization of slavery. It is from this source that Lewis, borrowing selectively, attempts to sum up the "fabulous" Hope life story. Hope's mother, Fanny, he writes, "was the slave mistress of an Augusta, Georgia, businessman, just as Alethea, her own mother, had been of an Augusta planter." <sup>37</sup> Here, then, is the source of Hope's "fabulous" story—the blood of powerful white men flowing through Hope's veins, the prior abuse of his mother and grandmother (another female member of the family is not mentioned by Lewis) having made that possible. And Lewis spares us the sordid details, which is unusual considering his taste for the salacious and his interest in mulattos. Unusual, too, considering the presence of such details in the Torrence volume, though Torrence seems to find nothing at all sordid about them.

Lewis does not tell us that Fanny, a free teenager of color, was seduced by a wealthy slaveholder acting as her guardian. Nor does he tell us that the teenager's slave mother, Alethea, had given birth to Fanny after a planter on a neighboring plantation, having noticed her youthful beauty, found that he could not restrain himself. And Lewis does not tell us, as Torrence does, that Fanny's grandmother, the great-grandmother of John

Hope, was cruelly exploited at age fifteen. Without commenting, Torrence writes that when she

was a young girl, her beauty had attracted the attention of a guest in the Taylor home to such a degree that he communicated his admiration to her master. The subject was politely dropped, but the hospitality of the house tacitly extended somewhat further; and that night, when the guest retired to his chamber, the girl was sent in to him. She was afterwards married to one of the house servants, who stood as the nominal parent of Alethea in place of her white father.<sup>38</sup>

That is the only point at which a slave man enters the picture in the recounting of sexual depredations against women in the Hope family. There is no mention of them in relation to white men and black women in Lewis's treatment of mulattos, though the literature is not silent on the subject. What is certain, judging from slave tales and slave narratives, is that a slave, with rare exceptions, did not express interest in a slave woman on whom a white man had fixed his gaze. If he did, he could be mercilessly persecuted, if not killed.

The suggestion that the history of miscegenation in Hope's family was part of a "fabulous" life story is clearly Lewis's own. Moreover, Du Bois provides a strong challenge to Lewis's assertion that he felt a sense of "proud hybridization":

I shall forgive the white South much in its final judgment day: I shall forgive its slavery, for slavery is a world-old habit; I shall forgive its fighting for a well-lost cause, and for remembering that struggle with tender tears; I shall forgive its so-called "pride of race," the passion of its hot blood, and even its dear, old, laughable strutting and posing; but one

thing I shall never forgive, neither in this world nor the world to come: its wanton and continued and persistent insulting of the black womanhood which it sought and seeks to prostitute to its lust.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, judging from Du Bois's scholarship on mulattos in slavery—and no one has written more powerfully—there is also another dimension of the subject that should have caught the eye of the biographer of Du Bois, yet it is never discussed. Du Bois has written, "Southerners who had suckled food from black breasts vied with each other in fornication with black women, and even in beastly incest. They took the name of their fathers in vain to seduce their own sisters. Nothing that black folk did or said or thought or sang was sacred."<sup>40</sup> Lewis's failure to address this aspect of Du Bois's scholarship is unfortunate, for it would have enabled him, at some point, to have placed the issue of mulattos in the wider setting that his preoccupation with the subject would seem to require.

An error by a scholar claiming knowledge of Du Bois, the contention that Du Bois studied at Heidelberg, did not trouble Lewis or cause him to wonder if Roger Lane, the author of *Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia*, knew enough to assess Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro*. On the contrary, Lewis offers as expert evidence Lane's charge that Du Bois, owing to "late Victorian personal, political and sexual morality," was affronted by much of what he saw and heard in Philadelphia's Seventh Ward, "which may explain why he was able to count only fifty-three prostitutes in the whole ward." Furthermore, Lane writes that the police, "just months ahead of Du Bois's arrival in the ward, had flushed out forty-eight one morning, in an area just two blocks long . . ." Du Bois's failing, accord-

ing to Lane, stems "partly out of a sociologist's naive faith in unexamined statistics," which led him to minimize "the relative extent of black crime in the city."<sup>41</sup> But Lane and, apparently, Lewis have overlooked the passage in which Du Bois observes that "the problem of Negro crime in Philadelphia from 1830 to 1850 arose from the fact that less than one-fourteenth of the population was responsible for nearly a third of the serious crimes committed."<sup>42</sup>

Not only does Du Bois write that there were "fifty-three Negro women in the Seventh Ward" known on good authority to be prostitutes, but that this number was probably "not half the real number . . ." Beyond that, he informs us that his count of fifty-three was confined to women working in "bawdy houses," that in "the slums the lowest class of street walkers abound . . ." And, he writes, men could be seen

following them into alleys in broad daylight. They usually have male associates whom they support who join them in "badger" thieving. . . . This fairly characterizes the lowest class of Negroes. According to the inquiry in the Seventh Ward at least 138 families were estimated as belonging to this class out of 2,395 reported, or 5.8 per cent. This would include between five and six hundred individuals. Perhaps this number reaches 1,000 if the facts were known . . .<sup>43</sup>

Echoing Lane, Lewis writes that Du Bois's "social science rigor sometimes faltered before his Victorian values." But that is unlikely given the determination of Du Bois to conduct as rigorous a study of the Philadelphia Negro as possible, a determination that led him personally to visit sixteen houses of prostitution, one or two of which, he writes, "had young and beautiful girls on exhibition." Moreover, he draws attention to their presence in yet another setting, commenting: "In

private houses in the slums, cards, beer and prostitutes can always be found."<sup>44</sup> One smiles at the thought of Lewis urging social science rigor.

Insisting that Du Bois was guided by Victorian restraint in considering prostitution among blacks, and failing to note that he calls attention to prostitutes in a variety of settings in the ward, Lewis repeats Lane's phrasing at nearly every opportunity. He provides the same final count of prostitutes, irrespective of where they were found, and uses the same language in referring to the ward: Lane says "the whole ward," Lewis says "the entire ward"; Lane refers to the police having "flushed out" prostitutes from an alley, Lewis to their having been "flushed" from the alley. The only real difference between them is that Lane refers to the flushing out having occurred "one morning," and Lewis asserts that it occurred "one night."<sup>45</sup> The analysis, it appears, is no more Lewis's than the documentation.

It is certainly of interest that four years before his biography of Du Bois appeared, Lewis dismissed Lane's scholarship on blacks in Philadelphia in a sentence, accusing Lane of "sophisticated victim-blaming."<sup>46</sup> But he has since, without explanation, joined Lane in questioning Du Bois's statistical data and his scholarly objectivity without having read the relevant sections. Thus we find him writing that "barely a single family among the 2,500 households meticulously interviewed was granted a voice in the monograph . . . No statements from pensive mothers, tired fathers, or children not yet dulled inform it. The history and sociology of their condition interested Du Bois, not their individual, bruised-flesh lives."<sup>47</sup>

Du Bois, of course, does exactly what Lewis, guessing, says he does not. He provides a "voice" for bruised children, mothers, and fathers. Regarding the wounding of black children, he asks: "How long can a city teach

its black children that the road to success is to have a white face?" We learn that for more than three decades "Philadelphia has said to its black children: 'Honesty, efficiency and talent have little to do with your success; if you work hard, spend little and are good you may earn your bread and butter at those sorts of work which we frankly confess we despise . . .'" There is the young woman who has "graduated from a Pennsylvania high school and from business college" who is seeking work as a stenographer and is made to understand that no one in the whole city would hire her; the black man who responds to an advertisement for a job in the suburbs and is asked to reflect on what they might want "of a nigger"; the young pharmacist, seeking work, who is told: "I wouldn't have a darky to clean out my stores at any price, much less to stand behind the counter." "Such cases might be multiplied indefinitely," Du Bois asserts, concluding, "But that is not necessary; one has but to note that . . . the Negro is conspicuously absent from all places of honor, trust or from those of respectable grade in commerce and industry."<sup>48</sup> These cases are painstakingly set forth in the chapter immediately following that which contains the discussion of prostitution, and it would seem impossible to miss the discussion—it is sustained over more than twenty pages—if one has read the book in its entirety.<sup>49</sup>

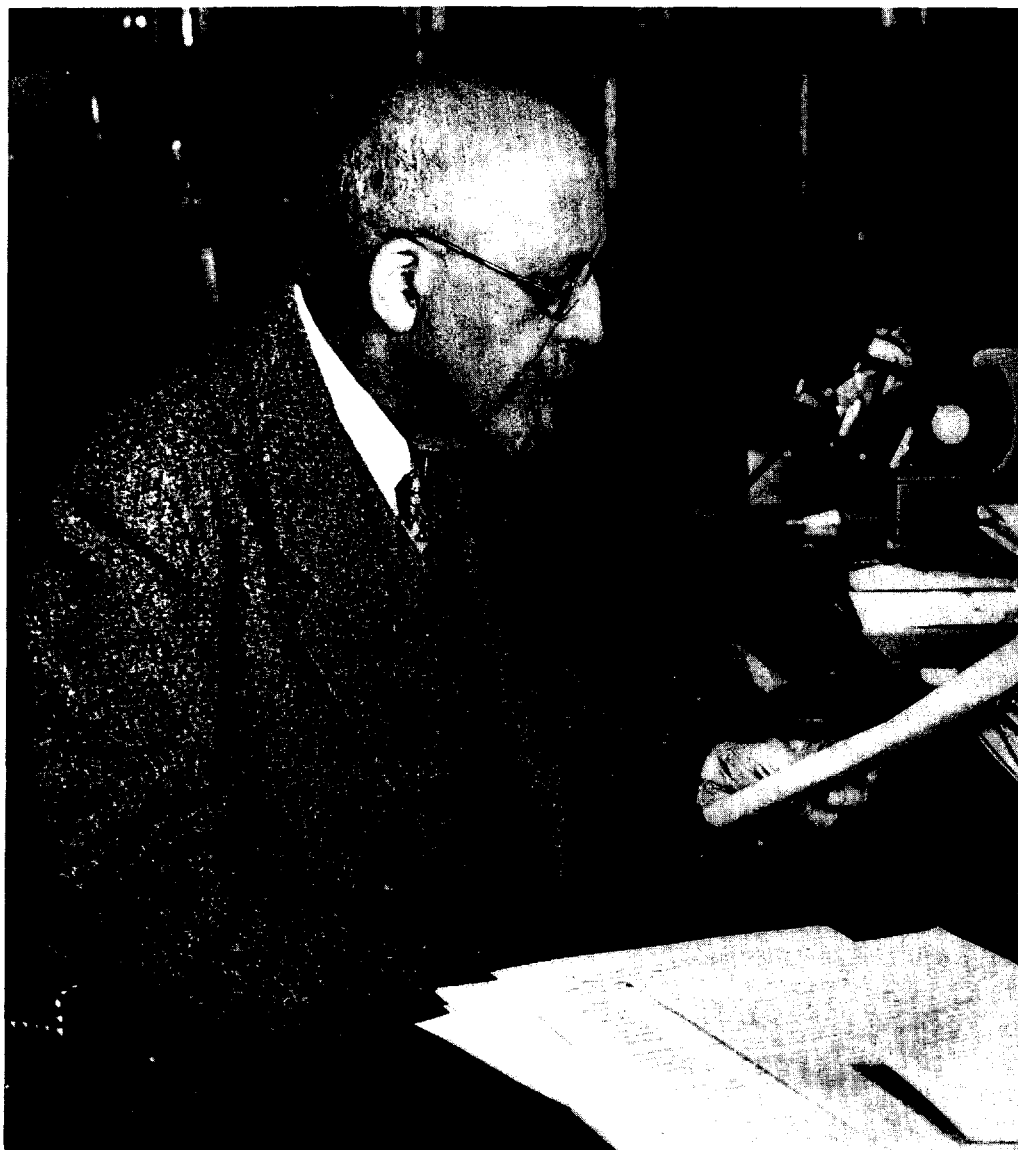
The servant class of porters and waiters took their problems to the church, "the best statement," according to Du Bois, "of the life of this group . . . where their social life centres and where they discuss their situation and prospects." Very much to the point, he writes that "[a] note of disappointment and discouragement is often heard at these discussions . . ." Du Bois asserts that this class, which comprised 56 percent of the population of the families of the Seventh Ward—"perhaps 25,000 of the Negroes of the

city"—had its greatest problem "in finding suitable careers for their growing children."<sup>50</sup>

In an important discussion concerning the small aristocracy of blacks in the city, Du Bois offers a remarkable point of view regarding their responsibility to the mass of blacks. He thought it the obligation of the upper class to serve those below, contending that "aristocracies of all people have been slow in learning this and perhaps the Negro is slower than the rest, but his peculiar situation demands that in his case this lesson be learned sooner."<sup>51</sup> Richly suggestive implications flow from his position. One is that he might not have placed such faith in the talented tenth, a faith he later recognized was betrayed by that class. The other is that the analysis clearly posits the very cleavage in the group as a whole that, later, he said he had not anticipated.

One of the richest contexts in which the personal for blacks could be understood is illustrated near the conclusion of Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro*, and it is so important that it must be treated at some length. Writing in the "College Settlement News" in 1897 and quoted in "A Special Report on Domestic Service," appended to *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois informs us:

The Negro Church is not simply an organism for the propagation of religion; it is the centre of social, intellectual and religious life of an organized group of individuals. It provides social intercourse, it provides amusements of various kinds. . . . [It] supplants the theatre, it directs the picnic and excursion, it furnishes the music, it introduces the stranger to the community. . . . To maintain its pre-eminence the Negro church has been forced to compete with the dance-hall, the theatre and the home as an amusement-giving agency. Aided by color proscription in public amusements, aided by the fact men-



*Du Bois Editing*  
*Courtesy of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture*

tioned before—that the church among us is older than the home—the church has been peculiarly successful, so that of the 10,000 Philadelphia Negroes I asked, “Where do you get your amusements?” fully three-quarters could only answer, “From the churches.”<sup>52</sup>

Since slavery, the church has been the most important harbor for the storm-tossed. Considering the superior attraction of the church compared to other black institutions, including the home, it must have been finely attuned to the hurts of blacks to have gained such authority.

Though the Ring Shout was losing strength by the close of the nineteenth century, its possession state was a principal means by which blacks worked out frustrations, all of which Du Bois discovered in the countryside and discusses in "Of the Faith of the Fathers." Du Bois first saw the Shout in the Tennessee backwoods, fifty miles from Nashville. We know from William Wells Brown that the Shout was a force even in some Nashville churches, though it was eclipsed by what Du Bois observed in the countryside.<sup>53</sup>

What he saw brings us to his treatment of the Ring Shout, another instance of his concern for the personal as found in *The Philadelphia Negro*. While doing research and living with his new bride in the slums of Philadelphia, to which there was some migration of blacks from the rural South that he had known as a teenager, he developed renewed interest in the subject. He demonstrated that the Ring Shout, performed there well before emancipation in the South, had survived into the twentieth century, the relative sparseness of the black population notwithstanding. This is of enormous significance, given the importance of the Shout to the development of major African-American art forms—the spirituals, the blues, and jazz—and the persistence of scholars in exaggerating cultural differences between the North and the South during slavery. Even today, most historians rule out any culture of significance among Northern slaves and free blacks.

Du Bois quotes the Reverend Charles Daniels on the Ring Shout in Philadelphia:

The tablet in the gable of this little church bears the date 1837. . . . The whole congregation pressed forward to an open space before the pulpit, and formed a ring. . . . Those forming the ring joined in the clapping of hands and wild and loud singing, frequently *springing into the air*, and shouting loudly. As the devotions proceeded, most of the wor-

shippers took off their coats and vests and hung them on pegs on the wall. This continued for hours, until all were completely exhausted, and some had fainted and been stowed away on benches or the pulpit platform. This was the order of things after sixty years' history.<sup>54</sup>

Du Bois thought Daniels failed to convey the full power of the ritual, observing that he had hardly done "justice to the weird witchery of those hymns sung thus rudely."<sup>55</sup> He recalled his own experience in the backwoods, where

A sort of suppressed terror hung in the air and seemed to seize us . . . The people moaned and fluttered, and then the gaunt-cheeked brown woman beside me suddenly *leaped straight into the air* and shrieked like a lost soul, while round about came wail and groan and outcry, and a scene of human passion such as I had never conceived before.<sup>56</sup>

He perceptively noted that there were "dozens of such little missions in various parts of Philadelphia, led by wandering preachers. They are survivals of the methods of worship in Africa and the West Indies." The first trained scholar to identify the Ring Shout as African in origin, Du Bois demonstrated that its impact was felt in Philadelphia for nearly a century, contributing to identity formation, which was not unrelated to his concept of double consciousness.<sup>57</sup> But double consciousness is treated conventionally by Lewis. It does not seem to have occurred to him to look beyond intellectuals to slave folklore to test the concept. Such an approach is needed in light of Du Bois's disappointment with the talented tenth, whose failing consciousness he had in mind at least as early as the 1940s.<sup>58</sup> Focusing thusly positions the critic to call into question what is perhaps Du Bois's chief theoretical weakness, his too

sweeping thesis that it is "from the top downward that culture filters. The talented tenth pulls all that are worth the saving up to their vantage ground. This is the history of human progress."<sup>59</sup>

Deep in his manuscript, Lewis offers a formulation regarding Du Bois's priorities, social and intellectual, that twists historical reality inside out. He argues that compromise was tantamount to cowardice for Du Bois, "a moral holiday that might have to be taken in unusual circumstances but never for long," a proposition that Du Bois's three decades of work with the NAACP alone renders dubious. Because of deep-seated racism in America, the power of capitalism, and the colonization of Afro-Asia, compromise was unavoidable. But Lewis states, "The more crucial the idea or cause (and Du Bois saw most ideas and causes that way) the more intransigent he tended to become."<sup>60</sup> To the contrary, one must ask if there was anything more crucial to Du Bois—amounting in fact to a crisis—than the strength of racism? Indeed, we find him writing in *The Crisis*, the magazine he edited:

I carry on the title page . . . of this magazine the Union label, and yet I know, and every one of my Negro readers knows, that the very fact that this label is there is an advertisement that no Negro's hand is engaged in the printing of this magazine, since the International Typographical Union systematically and deliberately excludes every Negro that it dares from membership, no matter what his qualifications.<sup>61</sup>

And again in *The Crisis*: "No matter which solution seems to you wisest, segregation was compulsory, and the only answer to it was internal self-organization; and the answer that was inevitable in 1787, is just as inevitable in 1934."<sup>62</sup>

*Dusk of Dawn*, to which Lewis refers in his biography, offers evidence from Du Bois that flatly contradicts Lewis's assertion that "he was profoundly averse to compromise on anything that mattered intellectually or racially": "I was happy at Harvard, but for unusual reasons. One of these unusual circumstances was my acceptance of racial segregation." As he grew older and had more experience, he had a better understanding of the requirements of time:

"Europe modified profoundly my outlook on life and my thought and feeling toward it . . . I had been before, above all, in a hurry. I wanted a world, hard, smooth and swift, and had no time for rounded corners and ornament, for unhurried thought and slow contemplation. Now at times I sat still."<sup>63</sup>

Because of the forces supporting the segregation of his people and the lack of power by blacks, he reasoned "that in economic lines, just as in lines of literature and religion, segregation should be planned and organized and carefully thought through. This plan did not establish a new segregation; it did not advocate segregation . . . but it did face the facts . . ."<sup>64</sup>

Du Bois could not have been clearer in his support of compromise when working with allies, as we see in "William Monroe Trotter":

But Trotter was not an organization man. He was a free lance; too intense and sturdy to loan himself to that compromise which is the basis of all real organization. . . . He stood unflinchingly for fighting separation and discrimination in church and school, and in professional and business life. . . . The ultimate object of his fighting was absolutely right, but he miscalculated the opposition. He thought that Boston and America would yield to clear reason and determined agita-

tion. They did not. On the contrary, to some extent, the very agitation carried on in these years has solidified opposition. This does not mean that agitation does not pay; but it does mean that you cannot necessarily cash in quickly upon it.<sup>65</sup>

A student of world history, Du Bois understood that progress had not come quickly or certainly, and yet there were definite signs of its having come. "We forget," he wrote in "A Final Word," the last chapter of *The Philadelphia Negro*, "that once French peasants were the 'Niggers' of France, and that German princelings once discussed with doubt the brains and humanity of the *bauer*." Continuing, he stated:

Much of this—or at least some of it—has passed and the world has glided by blood and iron into a wider humanity, a wider respect for simple manhood unadorned by ancestors or privilege. . . . And still this widening of the idea of common Humanity is of slow growth and to-day but dimly realized. . . . The problems are difficult, extremely difficult, but they are such as the world has conquered before and can conquer again.<sup>66</sup>

Contrary to what Lewis asserts, it was classic Du Bois to be prepared for the long haul, and to remind us that he modeled plans for social change out of an understanding of human behavior:

I could see that the scientific task of the twentieth century would be to explore and measure the scope of chance and unreason in human action, which does not yield to argument but changes slowly and with difficulty after long study and careful development. . . . I laid down an ambitious program of a hundred years of study.<sup>67</sup>

Despite the fact that he has so little that is convincing to say about the historical Du Bois, and often has failed to fully assimilate Du Bois's voluminous writings, Lewis's prose is eloquent, a thing unto itself that is rarely marked by infelicities of statement, such as "the race card" having been played generations ago, or someone, ninety years ago, having "not been there" for someone else. But such lapses hardly lead one to deny that he is a master stylist. His formidable eloquence, however, is to be compared to nothing so much as to a fireworks display that occasions ooooohs and aaaaahs, ooooohs and aaaaahs as each new burst of brilliance is as fresh as the one before until it fades to nothing.

Throughout the text, Lewis refers to mental problems from which Du Bois allegedly suffered. In addition to his mood running to "euphoria" for twelve years, he is at one stage "out of range of his American demons," at another nearly "delusional," at another haunted by his own "demented" ideas, and at still another the victim of "a tangle of Freudian pathologies."<sup>68</sup> So disturbed was Lewis by what he imagined to be Du Bois's state of mind that he sought the services of a psychiatrist. According to a story in the *Washington Post*, the psychiatrist "allowed him to pretend that he was Du Bois," even though the doctor said, "Professionally, this is pretty daft." Though it is hard to imagine less professional conduct, Lewis states: "I'd arrive, ring the bell and I'd say, 'I'm W.E.B. Du Bois,' . . . And he'd say 'Come over, come to the couch.' And I'd talk as I thought Du Bois would."<sup>69</sup> That is precisely the problem, for throughout the biography Lewis has talked as he thought Du Bois would, relying mainly, when not exclusively, on himself rather than on the methods and materials of scholarship. The best source on Du Bois's first five decades remains his *Autobiography*.



## Notes

1. David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993).
2. David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000).
3. Lewis draws on Lane's *Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia, 1860-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986) throughout chapter 8, "From Philadelphia to Atlanta," pp. 179-210.
4. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 310; Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, in *Autobiographies* (Library of America, [1855] 1996), p. 182.
5. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 122; American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1928-1936).
6. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 254.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 80. Lewis himself recognizes that this was not altogether the case, for he writes that Du Bois joined the Foxcraft Club and the Philosophical Club (p. 80). Du Bois notes, "A few times I attempted to enter student organizations, but was not greatly disappointed when the expected refusals came. My voice, for instance, was better than the average. The glee club listened to it but I was not chosen a member. It posed the later recurring problem of a 'nigger' on the team" (W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* [New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, (1940) 1995], p. 35).
8. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 565.
9. Lewis refers to Du Bois as Willie throughout the work. The first reference (without citation) appears on p. 11. Manning Marable refers to Du Bois as Willie, Will, and Du Bois alternately, depending on age, in *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986). Marable uses Willie and Will on pp. 3-8; references thereafter are almost uniformly to Du Bois. Lewis writes that "Willie was no more" and that his mood "ran to euphoria" on p. 79.
10. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 71.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 60; W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* (International Publishers, [1968] 1975), pp. 102-103. Looking back on this time in his life, Du Bois acknowledged that he had "three perfectly glorious years" at Fisk, but the suffering of his people was ever-present in his memory. He says that he enjoyed that time "in spite of the fact that I was initiated into the land of the color line" (William T. Ingersoll, "The Reminiscences of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois," [Columbia University Oral History Research Office, 1963], p. 35).
12. Du Bois, *Autobiography*, p. 102; Ingersoll, "Reminiscences," p. 8; Du Bois, *Autobiography*, p. 106.
13. Du Bois, *Autobiography*, pp. 105-106.
14. Du Bois, *Autobiography*, p. 107.
15. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, pp. 29-30.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
17. Du Bois, *Autobiography*, p. 114. His decision to teach in the countryside during summer breaks, though advised by friends at the college not to venture into the backwoods, led him to acquire an edge over other scholars of slavery and Reconstruction. In fact, being Negro, he had much closer contact with blacks who experienced slavery than those northern Abolitionists, some of whom produced valuable accounts of slave religion and art, who worked among ex-slaves during the Civil War.
18. W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bantam Books, [1903] 1989), pp. 48, 134.
19. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 55.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
21. Du Bois, *Autobiography*, pp. 120-121; W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Atheneum, [1935] 1992), p. 124.
22. Du Bois's conclusions regarding characteristics of the freedman foreshadow so many found in Willie Lee Rose's *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964) that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that either she knew Du Bois's scholarship exceptionally well, or Du Bois had complete command of the sources on which her celebrated volume, published six decades later, was based.
23. *Ibid.*, 122.
24. Du Bois, *Souls*, p. 135; Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, p. 124.
25. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 66.
26. Ingersoll, "Reminiscences," p. 37; Du Bois, *Souls*, p. 76.
27. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 61.
28. See, for example, "The Yellow Crane," in E.C.L. Adams, *Tales of the Congaree* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), pp. 53-54.
29. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 39. That the sexual focus is Lewis's rather than Du Bois's is suggested by an inexplicable description Lewis provides of a young Du Bois. After quoting a student who, twenty years after the fact, observed that she and her classmates saw "nothing of that formal dignity we knew indoors," when they watched Du Bois play tennis, Lewis closes the paragraph with this chimera: "Will was lightly muscled, with fine buttocks and well-shaped calves that filled tennis whites appealingly" (p. 216).
30. Du Bois, *Autobiography*, p. 280.
31. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, pp. 71-72. Among the definitions of "roar" offered by *The American College Dictionary* are "1. to utter a loud, deep sound, esp. of excitement, distress, or anger. 2. to laugh loudly or boisterously. 3. to make a loud noise in breathing, as a horse. 4. To make a loud noise or din, as thunder, cannon, waves, wind, etc" (C. L. Barnhart, editor in chief [New York: Random House, (1963) 1968], p. 1049).

## David Levering Lewis's W.E.B. Du Bois

32. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 130; W.E.B. Du Bois, "Celebrating His Twenty-fifth Birthday," in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *Against Racism: Unpublished Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887-1961* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985), p. 29. Almost 300 pages later, in the continuing search for evidence of Du Bois's reputedly unnatural sexual drive, gossip is the documentation—"their much-gossiped about relationship," Lewis writes of Du Bois and a woman who knew him. The woman, Louie Shivery, was a friend of Nina as well as W.E.B. Du Bois, and was frequently beaten by her husband, leading to Du Bois's interest in her well-being while at the same time sparking the undocumented "gossip" and prompting Lewis to muse that their relationship "may well have crossed the line dividing compassion from adultery at this time" (Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 464).

33. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

34. Letter from Herbert Aptheker to Sterling Stuckey, dated March 2, 1997. Italics Aptheker's.

35. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 148.

36. W.E.B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., [1920] 1999), pp. 98-99.

37. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois Biography of a Race*, p. 253. In fact, Fanny was no one's "slave mistress," as her mother, Alethea, received freedom for herself and her children, a fact documented by the Federal Census of 1860, which lists them as "Free Persons of Color" (Ridgely Torrence, *The Story of John Hope* [New York: Macmillan, 1948], p. 6).

38. Torrence, *John Hope*, pp. 22-31; 5.

39. Du Bois, *Darkwater*, p. 100.

40. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, p. 125.

41. Lane, *Roots of Violence*, p. 148. Italics mine.

42. W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (New York: Schocken Books, [1899] 1967), p. 238.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 314.

44. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 205; Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, pp. 314, 319.

45. To compare Lewis's and Lane's criticism, see Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 205, and Lane, *Roots of Violence*, p. 148.

46. David Levering Lewis, "Radical History: Toward Inclusiveness," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 76, no. 2 (September 1989), p. 473.

47. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 205.

48. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, pp. 351-352, 329.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 327-354.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 316-317.

51. *Ibid.* Furthermore, Du Bois wrote: "Work, continuous and intensive; work, although it be menial and poorly rewarded; work, though done in travail of soul and sweat of brow, must be so impressed upon Negro children as the road to salvation, that a child would feel it

a greater disgrace to be idle than to do the humblest labor" (*Ibid.*, p. 390).

52. Quoted in Isabel Eaton, "A Special Report on Domestic Service," published at the end of Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro*, pp. 469-470.

53. Du Bois, "Faith of the Fathers," in *Souls*, pp. 133-145; William Wells Brown, *My Southern Home* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Gregg Press, [1880] 1968), p. 191.

54. Quoted in Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, pp. 220-221. Italics mine.

55. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, p. 221, n.19.

56. Du Bois, *Souls*, p. 134. Italics mine. Work in the Seventh Ward was greatly eased by prior, successful contact with the most rural of blacks, a background experience that helped prepare him, ironically, for life among troubled blacks in the North. This was an unprecedented range of experience for a scholar of his or our generation in America.

57. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, p. 221. The Ring Shout is not the only crucial African cultural influence that Lewis failed to detect in the Seventh Ward. Without knowing it, he passes over African-style architecture in the ward, referring to "miserable shotgun row houses squeezed together near the south end of Seventh up to South Street" (Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 186). For the significance of the shotgun house, see John Michael Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978).

58. See W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, and *In Battle for Peace* (New York: Masses & Mainstream, 1952).

59. W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," reprinted as "W.E.B. Du Bois Argues for a College-Educated Elite" in August Meier, Elliott Rudwick, and Francis L. Broderick, eds., *Black Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, [1903] 1971), p. 49.

60. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 352.

61. W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Black Man and the Unions," reprinted in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W.E.B. Du Bois: Sections from THE CRISIS* (New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1983), vol. 1, p. 157.

62. W.E.B. Du Bois, "History of Segregation Philosophy," reprinted in Aptheker, ed., *Writings in Periodicals*, vol. 2, p. 739.

63. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, p. 352; Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, pp. 34, 45.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

65. W.E.B. Du Bois, "William Monroe Trotter," reprinted in Aptheker, ed., *Writings in Periodicals*, vol. 2, p. 753.

66. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, pp. 386, 388. "Bauer" means peasant.

67. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, p. 64.

68. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*, pp. 79, 129, 66, 373, 58.

69. Mary Ann French, "Into the Mind of W.E.B. Du Bois," *Washington Post*, December 13, 1993, B8.