Part I

Setting the Agenda: Du Bois, Weber, and Park

INTRODUCTION TO PART I

At the beginning of the twentieth century W. E. B. Du Bois prophetically announced that the color line would be the major problem of the century. One of the great ironies of our era is the reality that the color line remains one of the major problems confronting us as we move into the twenty-first century. The pervasiveness of the color line and its correlation with status, power, inequality and domination, provides us with an opportunity for a reappraisal of the theoretical contributions of Du Bois, and other sociologists of race, and of the practical uses of these theories of race and ethnic relations. In Part I, papers are presented on the racial and ethnic theories of W. E. B. Du Bois, Max Weber, and Robert E. Park, of whom it would not be an overstatement to call "founding fathers" of the sociology of race and ethnicity.

Rutledge Dennis's examination of Du Bois's concept of double consciousness raises questions regarding the alleged unreconciled nature of the term in its most popularized version which he labels Theme One. Dennis also probes the early sociological writings of Du Bois to note the degree to which he continued to view double consciousness as a central problem for oppressed groups. As Dennis asserts, the concept of double consciousness remains one of the most popular terms by Du Bois which continues to have relevance in contemporary sociology. The question must be asked: Why did Du Bois elevate the idea of double consciousness as one of the first major themes in his *Souls of Black Folk* and then, without an apparent second thought, simply abandon the concept? Additionally, we might ask whether Du Bois's foray into the psychological realm of consciousness was simply a sociological aberration in as much as his approach to prejudice and racial inequality had, heretofore, been structural rather than individual. Finally, to answer the degree to which contemporary scholars have wrestled with and sought to re-shape the concept of double consciousness, Dennis explores a few of the more prominent re-statements of the concept. Dennis questions the sociological merits of Heinze's overly idealistic and psychological use of the term which, in his view, takes us back to an almost nineteenth-century formulation. Gilroy's use of the term is questioned from many angles. First, his approach in largely idealistic connotations is challenged as being in opposition to the gist of Du Bois's sociological writings. Secondly, Dennis raises questions relative to Gilroy's assertion of double consciousness as the genesis for the emergence and evolution of ideas crucial to transcending nationalism, culture, and race.

John Stone's paper on Weber analyzes the theoretical contributions Weber made to racial and ethnic issues. As Stone asserts, Weber did not produce a systematic study of a racial or ethnic group per se. Despite this fact, however, he was to link his contemporary observations of racial and religious groups, for example, Jews, African Americans and Native Americans, to some existing ideas in his theoretical arsenal, especially ideas of social closure and its relationship to domination, power, and authority. As outlined by Stone, sociology is indebted to Weber for the

keen insights he proferred to issues such as group formation, group mobilization, caste relations, color and caste, and especially, his use of the term "pariah" to describe an excluded and oppressed group. Since the bulk of Weber's works remained untranslated until the 1930s, Americans probably first saw the word "pariah" in Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk*. It is almost certain that Du Bois came across the concept while studying in Berlin where he met Weber. One of Weber's great contributions to sociology, according to Stone, was his ability to tackle the materialist–idealist issue by focusing on the subjective elements in human behavior and interaction as well as those in the realm of the structural and material. By doing so he was able to analyze the values, attitudes, and other individual features of ethnic relations as these are played out against the structural background of exclusion, domination, conflict, and power.

The final paper, by Barbara Ballis Lal, focuses on the ideas of another pioneer in the sociology of race and ethnicity. Lal highlights many of the contributions by Park in the area of racial and ethnic theory and relations: his critique of status groups and conflict, his views on the instruments of social control, his models for social change, and his use of subjective factors such as attitudes, motives and meanings to assess the core of inter-group and intra-group relations. Park, like Weber, highlighted the role of the subjective in group relations. Of the three sociologists Du Bois was least inclined to draw heavily upon the subjective elements. Lal outlines some of the merits in Park's use of subjective factors, though she criticizes Park's inability or unwillingness to include structural explanations as key factors of his analysis. Lal sees this as a major deficit in Park's sociology and this deficiency is revealed most clearly in Park's discussion of race and ethnic relations. For not only does he ignore important issues related to racial and ethnic conflict and domination which are central to the sociologies of Du Bois and Weber, but also, unlike these two, he appeared to neglect crucial elements of the world around him as he developed his sociology of race and ethnicity.

1 W. E. B. Du Bois's Concept of Double Consciousness

Rutledge Dennis

During his long life, W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963) almost single-handedly created and shaped a revolutionary discourse on race and ethnic relations in the United States. His insights and pronouncements on race and racial matters, and his poignant and prophetic remark that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line" (Du Bois 1903 [1961], p. 10) helped forge a radical paradigm shift in the area of race and race relations. He viewed such a shift as vital in the transformation of the racial discourse from the subjective to the objective domain; from racial explanations rooted in theology and "folk knowledge" to those based on reason, logic, and the use of scientific methodology. History and sociology were to be anchor disciplines providing a framework within which racial theories and problems were to be explicated and understood.

In his book *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903 [1961]), Du Bois introduces the concept of "double consciousness." The concept, along with his theory of "the Talented Tenth" ("leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people") became one of the pillars of his sociology of race, for it represented a very personal attempt to rechart the history and sociology of a people: to use the past in order to both structure and explain the present.

The recent spate of books applying the idea of double consciousness (Early 1993; Gilroy 1993; Heinze 1993) to a variety of contemporary issues, invites us to take yet another look, perhaps an even sharper and more critical look, at the concept itself. This paper focuses on Du Bois's use of double consciousness to describe the racial identity dilemma and to assess racial, status, and power relations between blacks and whites. First, the paper examines the idea of double consciousness as it emerges out of the psychological theories and literary traditions of the nineteenth century. Second, we analyze Du Bois's definition(s) of double consciousness and some possible consequences for marginal groups. Finally, recent studies by Heinze and Gilroy, which focus on double consciousness from diverse perspectives, are examined. Here, we are interested in whether these authors adhere to Du Bois's earlier definition(s) of the term or whether they modify the term to make it more consistent with their disciplines or their theoretical positions.

Historical Perspectives on Double Consciousness

It is important to place the origins of double consciousness in historical context. When the term was first used by Du Bois, Southerners and Northerners (particularly the former) had already experienced and were continuing to live through a

series of events, some of which occurred in rapid succession or simultaneously. The Civil War had been fought; reconstruction was attempted and had failed; the Ku Klux Klan and other terrorist groups had emerged; millions of African Americans had been freed from slavery without provisions for land or money and the political economy of the recently defeated Southern states moved quickly into neo-slavery and Jim Crowism.

Hundreds of thousands of Southerners began to migrate to the North and Midwest and encountered treatment not very different from the social relations they had experienced in the South; millions of European immigrants flocked to the large urban centers of the North and Midwest and quickly became "very" American by adopting the prevailing racial attitudes of their new country. Turner, Singleton, and Musick (1984) have provided an excellent socio-historical evaluation of these issues and events.

Du Bois analyzed these events and issues and framed his intra-group and inter-group analysis around the idea of what it meant to be a minority group within a majority culture with these unique socio-historical experiences and, secondarily, what might be the long-lasting consequences of this experience. It is this latter feature that concerns us in this paper, for, according to Du Bois, one of the most obvious predicaments of this particular situation is the condition he called double consciousness. The vividness and sharpness of the metaphors used in conceptualizing the term make it imperative for those seeking clarification of the idea to do several things: to present a critique of the double conscious; to understand the concept in conjunction with the ideas and situations of that era; to analyze Du Bois's empirical works in order to ascertain whether he presents and discusses concrete sociological situations that suggest the existence of a double consciousness, and, finally, to review some recent works by scholars who have used the concept in order to ascertain whether these scholars have moved beyond Du Bois's initial definition of the term.

It is appropriate to begin the analysis by presenting the passage on double consciousness in its entirety (Du Bois 1903 [1961], pp. 16–17):

> 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. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The famous passage, which I shall refer to as Theme One, is often cited to represent Du Bois's position on the double conscious. But there is a second theme in the very next paragraph that is less cited and less dramatic and which appears, on the surface, to contradict key aspects of the first (Du Bois 1903 [1961], p. 17):

> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife – this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this

merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face.

Arnold Rampersad (1976, p. 74) informs us that the idea of double consciousness was undoubtedly developed by Du Bois from the works of the two leading psychologists of the nineteenth century, William James and Oswald Kulpe. James refers to the binary structure of the brain in which "one system give[s] rise to one consciousness, and those of another system to another *simultaneously* existing consciousness." Kulpe is more specific regarding the process of recognizing double consciousness itself, depicting it as "the phenomenon of double consciousness or the divided self [is] characterized by the existence of a more or less complete separation of two aggregates of conscious process…oftentimes of entirely opposite character." But there is yet another source of Du Bois's doubleness theme: that of literature.

Claire Rosenfield (1967) traces the emergence of the double theme in ninteenth-century Western literature, especially as represented in the works of Melville, Goethe, Dostoevsky, Poe, and Conrad. According to her, the idea of the double in literature relates to those conscious and unconscious features that influence and control individual behavior; moreover, it assumes the existence of a relatively high level of cohesiveness and uniformity in the original and "natural" personality of the individual; it alleges finally, that the idea of the double is intricately linked to "the loss of a sense of identity and continuity in time." This idea of a loss of identity, is crucial to Du Bois's explanation of double consciousness as developed in his second theme.

Du Bois transforms the idea of double consciousness from its nineteenth-century psychological and literary contexts and applies it to what he perceives to be the persistent duality of African-American life in the United States. The remaining sections of this paper will analyze the degree to which Du Bois was successful in this venture. We can note precisely two double consciousness themes presented by Du Bois: one, emphasizing the irreconcilable nature of the two opposing forces (one African, the other European) locked in an eternal battle the outcome of which cannot yet be known; the other theme offers the possibility of a synthesis of the two opposing forces suggesting that unity may yet emerge from great disunity, that a largely fragmented reality may give rise to a heretofore unthinkable coherence.

I will argue that Theme One represents a strand of Du Bois's thought that remained nationalistic and race-specific; the other represented a Du Bois who was universalistic and a race-generalist.

Both themes center on the then young Du Bois's adherence to a racial group theory which was quite popular during the latter part of the nineteenth century: the germ theory of races. This theory holds that in the grand scheme of things, races, not individuals, are the significant carriers of values. Moreover, the theory proffers the view that social values are primarily racial, hence, biological, and can be traced from the earliest origins of a group. S. P. Fullinwider (1969), Elliot

Rudwick (1982), and David Lewis (1993) have extensively examined the impact of this racial theory on the thoughts and ideas of the young Du Bois.

Even as he supports a theory of race that gives credence to certain psychic and psychological attributes, Du Bois's early empirical studies and essays present a picture of the dual social life and reality of blacks and whites – that American society consists of tightly controlled and separate racial worlds within which exists power differentials between groups in economics, politics, education, and social status. A close reading of Du Bois's critique of the American social structure leads to the conclusion that contrary to all of his discussions of the germ theory of races, there is a linear relationship between a group's position in the social structure and the nature and degree of its consciousness. In other words, blacks and whites represent and manifest different types of psychological consciousness because they inhabit different social worlds; it is, therefore, the group's social existence, ultimately, which is more significant in determining consciousness. This Du Boisian logic is one of the underlying themes in both *The Souls of Black Folk* and *The Philadelphia Negro*.

This perspective explains why he viewed the white position as representative of a system of exploitation, privilege, and domination. Such a position, according to Du Bois, results in a consciousness of the oppressor. This may be contrasted to a consciousness of the oppressed. Moreover, Du Bois's logic tells us, a consciousness of the oppressor results in a consciousness that is motivated around that group's self-interest.

The psychological and literary perspectives on double consciousness center on the psychic split within the individual. Du Bois's Theme One view of the concept does entail an interpretation suggestive of a psychic split framework. Beginning with Du Bois's brief introduction of the concept, the idea of a psychic split within the black population would not resurface again until the 1950s and 1960s with the publication of four very controversial psychological studies: *The Mark of Oppression* (Kardiner and Ovesey 1951); *Black Rage* (Grier and Cobbs 1968); *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Memmi 1965), and *Black Skin, White Masks* (Fanon 1967).

What is striking in Du Bois's use of the term conscious and consciousness is that his conceptualization appears to reflect a static and generally surface understanding of the concept. His view also represents an antiquated psychological approach that was rapidly receding under the onslaughter of a new and revolutionary Freudian perspective on consciousness and the unconscious.

Du Bois's Empirical Studies

In this section we analyze whether the double conscious, and any of its behavioral manifestations, are clearly demarcated and delineated in Du Bois's major works. To guide us in this analysis we have extracted what we view to be the major assertions of the double conscious:

a.   that the American world "yields" to blacks no true self-consciousness;
b.   that blacks always see themselves through the eyes of others;

c. that there exists an eternal and unreconciled two-ness (two thoughts, two souls, two warring ideals) within the collective black population.

A probe in this direction is crucial: either we view the concept as theoretically fruitful with the potential to explain some variant of the empirical world or we see it merely as a provocative theme useful only as an ideological weapon in inter-racial and intra-racial struggles. If the double conscious idea is indeed important because it negatively predisposes a population to experience, under Du Bois's first theme, severe identity crises in which there are seemingly irreconcilable emotional, psychological, philosophical, and ideological splits within individuals and groups, it, therefore, describes a society fragmented beyond repair, hence a disintegrating society. However, if we look at Theme Two we approach a dialectical stretch in which those excluded, Weber's pariahs (Bendix 1960), have had to create as well as maintain their own special sociocultural world while simultaneously assaulting as well as participating in the larger society to the extent made possible by the political, economic, and legal restrictions of the majority culture. In such a scheme, the identity question is not a mutually exclusive issue, per se, and there is no inherent contradiction between being both American and black.

As we analyze Du Bois's empirical works it might be important to distinguish two types of "anguish." In one type of anguish we must delineate the anguish of a group due to Theme One of the double conscious – that of the "two warring souls" in one body and to questions of identity *vis-à-vis* another group; this anguish must be distinguished from the second type of anguish which is linked to the unequal power, domination, deprivations, and exclusionary policies inflicted upon one group by a more powerful group.

Du Bois's initial empirical studies, "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study" (1898), and his magnum opus *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899 [1967]) were conceived as a research unit: the study of social life in a Southern community and in a Northern city and the intra-racial and interracial dynamics in each locale. Since the Philadelphia study is grander in scope and encompasses a more comprehensive world of blacks, if themes related to double consciousness were to emerge, they might do so in such a study. Unfortunately, there in not even a hint of this dilemma in the book. Hence, Theme One is not validated.

Theme Two appears to be validated only in the sense that Du Bois paints a picture of a highly regulated and relatively unified racial community that has created, under great obstacles, its specific institutions and organizations. It is the world of a people anchored in their churches, secret, beneficial, and insurance societies, labor unions, various political clubs, and many cooperative associations. There were many who rebelled against this special world and sought to penetrate the larger world of the more dominant group; their rebellion did not necessarily relate to their dislike of their self-created world as much as it represented a dislike of being excluded as a pariah group from the larger social body.

The only expression of anguish occurs when Du Bois writes of the impact of "color prejudice": "In the Negro's mind, color prejudice in Philadelphia is that widespread feeling of dislike for his blood, which keeps him and his children out of decent employment, from certain public conveniences and amusements, from hiring houses in many sections, and in general, from being recognized as a man.

Negroes regard this prejudice as the chief cause of their present unfortunate condition" (1967, p. 322).

When Du Bois discusses the behavior of the black middle class in Philadelphia, one gets the impression that he might indeed link this behavior to some idea of double consciousness, however, he does not, at least in the formal sense in which we define the term. He writes of the frustrations of this class (pp. 177–8): its inability to live where its income would permit; the problems of status inconsistency and cognitive dissonance *vis-à-vis* members of the white middle class and the vast majority of the black poor; the criticisms directed toward it by the lower classes, and its unwillingness to organize and spearhead race-specific organization, fearing that doing so would harden these institutions into permanent segregation units, thus delaying the possibility of their own entry into the larger society. (But one must seriously question Du Bois's assertion on that latter point, especially after his analysis of the many race-based institutions and organizations in Philadelphia. Without a doubt, the bulk of these institutions and organizations were created and sustained by members of the middle class.) The central point here is that the frustration of the middle class as described by Du Bois was not one necessarily of identity, whether to be an American or a Negro, or two warring souls. Rather it was the frustration from an inability to live like middle-class citizens.

The Farmville study utilized methodological approaches similar to the Philadelphia project; Du Bois concluded that beyond the great differences in size between the two communities, they have many things in common: the intricate organizational and institutional network and the dynamics of intra-racial and interracial relations. One major difference, of course, is that Farmville is located in Virginia about fifty miles from Richmond, the former capital of the Southern Confederacy. Like the assertions made in the Philadelphia study, Du Bois concludes that blacks and whites were separated in all their relations save that of economics. The surprising feature of Du Bois's analysis of Farmville, quite unlike the Philadelphia study, is his claim that rather than "the complete dependence of blacks upon whites," there is an "adjusted economic interdependence of the two races, which promises much in the way of mutual forbearance and understanding" (p. 34). However, again there is no discussion that in any way suggests the existence of double consciousness. In fact, Du Bois discusses Farmville in such an idyllic manner, very much unlike the specific examples outlined in his Philadelphia study, that we are hard pressed to find clear examples of racial conflict and strife in this Southern community.

Next, we present Du Bois's study *The Black North in 1901* (1901 [1969]), a brief analysis of the black communities in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Again, there is ample discussion of the inner world of blacks and the degree to which "the veil" has been drawn around that world by whites. In a very insightful analysis Du Bois draws out what he views to be an ongoing conflict between free blacks born in the North and the immigrant blacks who moved north from the South. His discussion *is* germane to the issue of identity when he states that "From the earliest times the attitude of the free negroes has been opposed to any organization or segregation of negroes as such. *Men like Fortune, McCune, Smith, and Remond insisted that they were American citizens, not negroes, and should act accordingly*" (p. 41, emphasis added).

That these men choose to view themselves as Americans rather than Negroes is the point to be observed here. However, Du Bois does not state this contradiction in a manner suggesting the anguish which is crucial to Theme One. He makes it clear that these men did indeed have reservations and ambivalences regarding what might have have described as the American/Negro dilemma. The paradox here is these same men were in the forefront of race-based organizations and institutions within their communities! Hence, there may have been theoretical or philosophical resistance to "being a negro," yet in their practical relations to others in their community, these men were just as much a part of what Du Bois called the "inner world" of blacks as others. Even if they did not want to belong to that black world, white resentment and segregation tied them tightly to that world.

Last, we look again at the book from whence the concept of double consciousness emergences, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903 [1961]). Beyond the quotations and inferences from Chapter One of *Souls* (pp. 1–9), there is no other reference to the concept in any of the subsequent chapters. Du Bois does write of the legal, political, and economic restrictions blacks encounter, but the entire book is a masterful account of how blacks have been able to build and create an inner world for themselves in spite of efforts by many whites to curtail, intimidate, and destroy.

As our brief survey of Du Bois's works has shown, Du Bois apparently made no effort to validate or support his assumptions of double consciousness. It is imperative, therefore, that we move beyond his generalizations in order to arrive at some specifics: when, how, and in what circumstances did Du Bois believe these generalizations to be true? Without the benefit of history, context, or examples, these generalizations now stand as mere empty conjectures, assertions generations of scholars (Dennis and Henderson 1980; Dennis 1981, 1991) have accepted at face value simply because they had been enunciated by Du Bois. They appear, given Du Bois's descriptions of the concept at the time, to be reasonable and logical assumptions of what might be expected of a people, in Du Bois's terms "living behind the veil." But is it an accurate description of *actual behavior* or is it merely a supposition of *expected behavior*? In lieu of evidence supporting actual behavior, we must opt for the latter.

When we analyze *actual behavior* in the community studies cited by Du Bois, we note an elaborate degree of institution-building and intensive and extensive organizational networks. Thus, we note that racial structural constraints and barriers, as rigid as they were, did not prohibit all forms of institution-building. Or to state it in other terms, the structural constraints and barriers prohibited certain types of institutions but encouraged certain other types. This is Ralph Ellison's point: that the constraints, though powerful, did not, and could not prevent those elementary cultural features, based on the collective and historical experiences of a people from emerging. Du Bois's socio-historical account of race in America is an account of the importance of structure in determining a group's position in the society. However, the structural wall is never impenetrable; it is never sieveless.

One of the consequences of the interface of racial structural barriers and the unique collective experiences of blacks in America is, according to Du Bois (1903 [1961], p. 56), the emergence of racial social consciousness. He thus presents us with a paradox within a paradox: Just how accurate is his account of the double

consciousness of Theme One if, in fact, blacks have been able to develop their own sense of racial and group consciousness, as he is now suggesting, to challenge, refute, and rebuff a prevailing white supremacist racial consciousness?

Recent Works Utilizing Double Consciousness

Two recent studies have applied the theme of double consciouness to an array of ideas and situations. Denise Heinze (1993) offers a critique of the double conscious via a study of the fictional communities of Toni Morrison; Paul Gilroy (1993) focuses on the idea of double consciousness as a substructural entity that lays the foundation for the idea of a transnational, transcultural, and transracial concept called *The Black Atlantic*.

Denise Heinze

Heinze's study lacks some of the most important nuances of Du Bois's approach to double consciousness as depicted in Du Bois's statement presented earlier in this paper. For example, her entire approach (Heinze 1993, p. 5), to double consciousness is simply a "state of affairs in which an individual is both representative of and immersed in two distinct ways of life." For Heinze, Du Bois's double consciousness becomes merely a "social dialectic" in which there are various competing ideas and "competing literary selves" presented in Morrison's novels. For example, Heinze's idea of "proving" the existence of double consciousness is merely to present a list of binary opposites presented in Morrison's works: materialism versus spiritualism; Afro-Centrism versus Euro-Centrism; white beauty versus black beauty; past versus present; good versus bad; nuclear family versus female-headed family; conformity versus rebellion, and community solidarity versus individual ambitions.

When Morrison presents an extended situation with which to demonstrate double consciousness, it turns out to be one-dimensional; it also turns Du Bois's logic on its head. Illustrative of this point is her discussion of Jadine and Son in *Tar Baby* (1981). She describes Jadine as one who chose to accept and live within the confines of the white side of the double conscious: she represented the best of white culture; she was constantly struggling to gain acceptance among whites, and she was addicted to the white world. Conversely, she describes Son as follows: he represented the best of black culture; he struggled to keep aspects of black culture alive, and that he could never become black middle class in as much as becoming that entails accepting Western values and meaning. Finally, Heinze depicts the relationship between Jadine and Son as a "manifestation of the psychic fragmentation of the culture as a whole." Heinze, of course, has a right to extend Du Bois's definition, and frankly, her conceptualization of the dualism so described does attest to the high level of social structural fragmentation.

In one sense Heinze de-psychologizes the double conscious by disallowing its dualistic black and white features from being present in one individual simultaneously. This simultaneous coexistence is, to be sure, the crux of the Du Boisian

perspective: two warring souls in one body. Heinze has discretely removed the Du Boisian vision and has made the double conscious a representation of two separate individuals each residing in two separate and discrete worlds. By structuring her interpretation in this manner Heinze does make Morrison's character more internally consistent and more psychically whole; the price she pays for making this possible, however, is to make the characters more one-dimensional, less complex, and relatively static. Thus, Jadine and Son become, in Heinze's interpretation, "ideal types": representatives of their respective single-sided (white for Jadine and black for Son) consciousness in a society which, according to Heinze, is actually fragmented, and thus manifests a collective double conscious. One misses in this interpretation the anguish, challenge, and protestations that are so much a part of what we have called Theme One of Du Bois's definition, even though we have challenged this interpretation. The Heinze interpretation is no improvement on the Du Boisian version since it does not reflect, as does Du Bois's, the struggles of individuals who are in the process of challenging and calling into question, then refashioning, remolding, and reshaping their identities. Rather than representing individuals in the midst of an ongoing struggle for individual/group definition, her analysis reflects individuals who have concluded such a struggle.

Unlike Du Bois, Morrison, according to Heinze, does not seek a final resolution to the dilemma of duality. Du Bois suggests a synthesis of the opposing collective selves, voicing the hope that a "better self" might emerge out of the conflicting doubleness. Heinze (1993, p. 5) sees in Morrison the maintenance of a value that maintains that any final reconciliation of the opposing ideas and values are premature and next to impossible. In other words, the issues cannot be resolved; the true depiction of society and culture in the United States is the permanancy of a state of accommodation and the degree of connectedness between cultures (p. 10). Hence, the issues and ideas cannot be resolved or merged, but must remain as discrete units. So strangely enough, in the world of Morrison, as described by Heinze, there will not be a final synthesis; nor will there be a total victory for one side or the other in this struggle. No total victory is envisioned because, according to Heinze (p. 150), Morrision is not really interested in a clear victory of one side over the other. Morrision's great feat, according to Heinze, is to utilize issues dealing with double consciousness; but it was not to deal with double consciousness as a resoluable theme but rather as ideas with which to "enrich and expand the limits of human consciousness beyond the either-or mentality that sets people against each other in mutually destructive ways."

Paul Gilroy

Paul Gilroy's book, *The Black Atlantic* (1993), presents the thesis that many of the ideological and philosophical ideals and values of African-American cultural elites have become indelibly interwined with similar ideals and values enunciated by European cultural elites. As a result of this fusion, there has emerged, according to Gilroy, values, ideas, and positions that are transnational, transcultural, and transracial. This racial mutation and hybridity has only been possible, says Gilroy, because of the merger of ideas centered around modernity (ideas related to

citizenship, freedom, and individuality) with that of double consciousness (dual perspectives of African-Americans and Afro-Europeans due to their less powerful position within more powerful American and European societies). Modernity and the double conscious have joined to produce something revolutionary in Western ideological, political, and philosophical thought: the formation of racial mutation and hybridity.

Gilroy does not ground the double conscious in the status and power inequities, contradictions, and ambiguities of the African-American experience in the United States. Instead, he views the European travel experience of African-Americans as a key link in the emergence of the black Atlantic which is the antecedent to double consciousness. Or as he states it: "the black Atlantic politics of location frames the doorway of double consciousness." A fuller explanation of the relationship between Du Bois, black Atlantic politics, and double consciousness is explored by Gilroy (p. 19):

> Du Bois's travel experiences raise in the sharpest possible form a question common to the lives of almost all these figures who begin as African-American or Caribbean people and are then changed into something else which evades those specific labels and with them all fixed notions of nationality and national identity. Whether their experience of exile is enforced or chosen temporary or permanent, these intellectuals and activists, writers, speakers, poets, and artists repeatedly articulate a desire to escape the restrictive bonds of ethnicity, national identification, and sometimes even 'race' itself. . . . The specificity of the modern political and cultural formation I want to call the black Atlantic can be defined, on one level, through this desire to transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity.

Gilroy (p. 126) locates the double conscious as an instance in the "special difficulties arising from black internalisation of an American identity." Later in the chapter on Richard Wright, Gilroy (p. 147) highlights Wright's apparent movements "between the claims of racial particularity on one side and the appeal of those modern universals that appear to transcend race on the other arises in the sharpest possible form. Wright's sense of this opposition and the conflicting forms of identity to which it gives rise adds another notch of complexity and bitterness to formulations of double consciousness." It is perhaps in this immediate quote that we see the major difference between Du Bois's and Gilroy's interpretation of the origins of double consciousness.

There are two main problems with Gilroy's assessment of Du Bois's concept: the first is that he frames the logic for a double conscious around the idea that the African-American had to travel to Europe to discover and recognize its existence; the second is that unlike Du Bois, he does not emphasize the emergence of double consciousness from its social structural foundation.

Throughout his many books Du Bois carefully documented the issues and situations that had given rise to polarization and contradictions in American life. That these had been built into the very fabric of American life was evident in the manner Du Bois had described the American society and the role and position of blacks within that society beginning with his study of the African Slave Trade (Du Bois 1896 [1969]). He poses the question of what it means to be a free man in

contrast to what it means to be a slave or a second-class citizen. Furthermore, Du Bois outlines a concise history of the making of black America: the construction of a dual society and all that it entails (the creation of institutions and organizations and the melding together of these into workable networks that were intercommunal in nature).

This need to construct a dual society and the constraints that forced blacks to live, in Du Bois's term, "behind the veil" was indeed conducive to "interpreting" one's realities in doubles, since one was "living" a double or dual existence. Thus, the assertion that Du Bois had to retreat to Europe to discover dualities or doubleness is not logical or reasonable because the very structure and organization of the American society itself represented these attributes. Frederick Douglass, Du Bois, David Walker, and others did not have to go to Europe to discover European political thinkers who, according to Gilroy, would then induce in them a double conscious, because they were already inspired by the American Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the antislavery movement in its religious and political contexts. Each contributed initially toward an emancipation of the mind, later the body. Each also provided an opportunity for blacks to open the doors to political, social, and economic inclusion, in theory though not in reality.

The claim is not being made here that Du Bois, Douglass, and others did not learn from European thinkers or did not utilize some of their ideas. Nor is the claim being made that Du Bois and others did not include other cultures, nations, and struggles in their pronouncements on freedom. Rather, the assertion here is that the American society itself had, and did manifest, all of the elements which would have given African-American thinkers the impetus for double consciousness. Gilroy (p. 159) also appears to believe this when he favorably cites Richard Wright's conversation with C. L. R. James about volumes of Kierkegaard on a shelf:

> 'Look here Nello, you see those books there? Everything that he writes in those books I knew before I had them.' James suggests that Wright's apparently initiative foreknowledge of the issues raised by Kierkegaard was not intuitive at all. It was an elementary product of his historical experiences as a black growing up in the United States between the wars: 'What [Dick] was telling me was that he was a black man in the United States and that gave him an insight into what today is the universal opinion and attitude of the *modern* personality' (emphasis added).

In another paper (Dennis 1979) Du Bois's nationalism and internationalism were briefly analyzed. Though one cannot explain the politics of Du Bois without examining his slow movement, first into socialism, then into formal communism, it can be argued, as this writer has, that Du Bois's understanding of and involvement in both movements were largely situational, very limited in scope, and beyond a few articles, very circumscribed in any semblance of theoretical richness and clarity. Du Bois clearly understood the importance of transcultural, transracial, and transnational values, however, the great impetus for his critiques and analyses always revolve around the particularities of the African-American experience, and the specialness of that experience analyzed in conjunction with the particularities of the experiences of the dominant white society. In the world that he knew existed, he could not and did not discuss one without the other.

The second issue raised against Gilroy is that his analysis of double consciousness is largely a search for identity among African-Americans, but he does not ground the identity search in the specifics of social structure. Rather, he presents the identity issue and double consciousness as givens, as preformed elements and as independent qualities, rather than what they actually are: the result of institutional, organizational, and value contradictions and polarizations. Gilroy proffers the view that the double conscious is a precondition for the sociopolitics of black Atlantic, but he does not adequately analyze the features which become the precondition for the double conscious itself. To be sure, it is in the manner in which he positions the issue of identity within the social structure, in contrast to Gilroy, that we perceive Du Bois's greater sociological depth. Without becoming entangled in any of the side issues of the materialist/idealist debate, we can observe certain tendencies in Du Bois and Gilroy that are germane to the debate: Du Bois believed that the preconditions for identity questions are always tied to the political, economic, class, and racial structure and one's location in that structure.

Du Bois's position on this issues lies clearly in the materialist camp. Gilroy's demonstration of the transition from double consciousness to the black Atlantic, with minimum attention to social structural matters, places him much more squarely in the idealist camp. That is the problem. When Du Bois wrote of double consciousness he related the concept to a condition affecting the entire black population. When Gilroy describes the concept, there is a degree of ambiguity. Ostensibly, he is primarily concerned with writers and scholars, their European experience, how double consciousness erupts from this interaction, and how and why the black Atlantic is a natural outcome of these co-joining forces. At other times, however, Gilroy (pp. 1–2) writes as if he, like Du Bois, is referring to all blacks, not just the cultural elite:

> Striving to be both European and black requires some specific forms of double consciousness. . . . The contemporary black English, like the Anglo-Africans of earlier generations and perhaps, like all blacks in the West, stand between (at least) two great cultural assemblages, both of which have mutated through the course of the modern world that formed them and assumed new configurations. At present, they remain locked symbiotically in an antagonistic relationship marked out by the symbolism of colours which adds to the conspicuous cultural power of their central Manichean dynamic – black and white.

Gilroy assures us that the black Atlantic is authentic and valid, but the very person who is at the centerpiece of the black Atlantic, Du Bois, may be the individual who most undermines the idea. As is so often the case when analyzing Du Bois, it is a matter of time and location. Gilroy is correct in moving Du Bois from the nationalist to the internationalist, from ethnic specificity to generalized ethnicity, but Du Bois (1968) simply refuses to stay in one corner. Du Bois understands why it is important to live in a world where transcultural and transnational values exist. But this acknowledgment does not mean that he abandoned his focus on black American. A reading of his books reveals the extent to which he, like Richard Wright, another central figure in the Gilroy book, was always a mixture of the divergent possibilities in black life: integrationist–separationist; capitalist–socialist/

communist; the common man–the cultural elite; nationalist–internationalist; the Europeanist–the Pan-Africanist. If Du Bois does represent the black Atlantic he does so by emphasizing the *black* and placing small caps on Atlantic.

There is an idealist strain in Gilroy's development of double consciousness almost similar to the Marxian development of dialectical materialism. To many Marxists, the success of the Proletarian Revolution will signal the end of class conflict and strife. In like manner, Gilroy proposes that the anguish of the double conscious will be assuaged by the emergence of the black Atlantic which will end the double conscious dilemma. A case can be made that Gilroy tries too hard to prove the reality of black Atlantic. He attempts to prove his case for European universalism prior to exhausting historical resources and situations that would have demonstrated an already existing level of universalism in a non-European setting. For example, he is so eager to prove the European origin of so much of Du Bois's thought that he virtually ignored a number of Harvard professors who shaped Du Bois's intellectual landscape before Du Bois travelled to Europe (see Du Bois 1968, p. 148).

While Gilroy takes the double conscious theme into a radically new area, he does not really improve upon Du Bois's sketchy pronouncements, and because his treatment of the concept is largely theoretical and drafted to define a condition of specific individuals (Du Bois, Wright, Douglass, etc.), we do not get an analysis that focuses on the behavior of groups in a particular society. Rather, Gilroy has provided us with acute insights into the psychology of Du Bois and especially Richard Wright and how each related to certain European philosophical themes. The individual psychological dimensions of double consciousness was noted by Ralph Ellison in an interview with William Penn Warren (1966). When asked by Warren to respond to Du Bois's assertion of the existence of double conscious or a psyche split among black Americans, Ellison rejected the claim. He stated that "the idea that the Negro psyche is split is not as viable as it seems – although it might have been true of Dr. Du Bois personally."

The problem with accounts of double consciousness by Heinze and Gilroy is that neither account is sociological though Gilroy's account purports to be. What appears to be true in the world of literary and philosophical thought may not in fact hold true in reality, though the results may be extremely interesting and in-formative as is true of the books cited here. The test of Du Bois's thesis might provide more tangible results if the basis for the inquiry were sociological and if such inquiry occurred in a research setting. This statement is based on the premise that Du Bois's original logic for double consciousness was indeed sociologically grounded.

Conclusion

In a sense Du Bois created the muddle now accompanying the idea of double consciousness. By situating the question as a psychic problem and by suggesting that the problem may be irresolvable, as expressed in Theme One, he ultimately imprisoned the logic and rationale of many thinkers who took his pronouncements of the issue as final rather than as a starting point. We would have been more

advanced in approaching the issue of the duality of black life had Du Bois used a term he later used to describe the same phenomenon: double environment. That term has more of the tenor of, and is more suggestive of, the sociological. The issue here is that Du Bois had a mimimal understanding of psychology beyond his superficial introduction to Jamesian psychology. This limitation does not, however, minimize Du Bois's great psychological insights into the interracial and intra-racial worlds.

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