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W.E.B. Du Bois's UnAmerican End

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The treatment of the Negro is America's greatest and most conspicuous scandal. For the colored peoples all over the world, whose rising influence is axiomatic, this scandal is salt in their wounds. . . . [However,] the American Negro is thoroughly American in his culture and whole outlook on the world. He is loyal to America, and there is no danger that he will betray it. . . . America, for its international prestige, power, and future security, needs to demonstrate to the world that American Negroes can be satisfactorily integrated into its democracy. —Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944)

I believe in communism. I mean by communism a planned way of life in the production of wealth and work. . . . Who now am I to have come to these conclusions? . . . This is the excuse for this writing which I call a Soliloquy. —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* (written 1958-1960, first international publication 1964, first US publication 1968)

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During and after World War II, as liberation struggles and the costs of war undermined the system of territorial colonialism employed by European powers, US neocolonialism emerged as the ascendant form of international hegemony, one that superseded colonial methods of direct rule with political and economic domination and a preponderance of military strength. As postcolonial countries achieved a negotiated independence, they found themselves facing the effective control of the United States, which sought to manage global decolonization through a discourse of anti-communism and a transnational capitalist system that included the unprecedented penetration of US capital and goods into formerly restricted economies. The presence and power of the Soviet Union, however, meant that the subordination of formerly colonized states to US hegemony remained contingent to a degree. The Soviet Union sought to undermine consent for US influence in Asia and Africa by publicizing acts of racial violence and segregation in the United States, claiming these acts as evidence that white supremacist doctrine suffused the world-ordering ambitions of the US and the social relations of international capitalism. Central to the postwar rise of US neocolonialism, therefore, was the necessity to manage the racial contradictions that gave rise both to decolonization in formerly colonized states and to anti-racist movements in the US.

Because it proved capable of managing such contradictions, racial liberalism emerged as a central political ideology and mode of social organization in post-war US society. In contrast to white supremacy, racial liberalism acknowledged racial inequality to be a problem and secured a liberal symbolic framework for resolving racial antagonisms centered in legal equality, African

American attainment of possessive individualism, and inclusive civic nationalism. The watershed document of racial liberalism, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy* (1944), a social scientific study of US race relations spearheaded by Swedish social scientist Gunnar Myrdal, dominated the rationality and politics of race in the United States until the mid-1960s.¹

In the first epigraph above, *An American Dilemma* calls for a liberal nationalist anti-racism that was to become a tenet of Cold War ideological battles: "The treatment of the Negro is America's greatest and most conspicuous scandal. For the colored peoples all over the world, whose rising influence is axiomatic, this scandal is salt in their wounds. . . . America, for its international prestige, power, and future security, needs to demonstrate to the world that American Negroes can be successfully integrated into its democracy" (Myrdal 1021). Although the study takes it to be self-evident that decolonization and the ascendancy of the United States have elevated race to a global symbol and that the visibility of racial inequality compromises US dominance, this situation does not invalidate US claims to global leadership. Instead, the "Negro Problem" becomes an opportunity, the grounds for a new American exceptionalist narrative. Linking domestic race reform to the moral legitimization of US global power, *An American Dilemma* defines a nationalist imperative for liberal race reform: the key to the nation's achievement of its international manifest destiny was to be the visible integration of African Americans into American democracy. As Mary Dudziak has demonstrated, this narrative was to become a governing statement for civil rights activism and State Department propaganda during the early Cold War (47-79).

In the first part of this essay, I investigate how liberal nationalist anti-racist discourse, in positioning the "American Negro" as "America's witness," elevated control over narratives

of African American lives to an ideological imperative. I consider how the narrative was policed by the generative and repressive force of the postwar nation-state and through the agency of racial liberal intellectuals, social scientists, and culture workers. To witness for America, African American existence had to demonstrate identity with a liberal nationalist rendering of white American patriotism, cultural values, and normativity. Folded into the context of the Cold War, *An American Dilemma's* conclusion that the "American Negro" is "loyal to America, and there is no danger he will betray it" became an anchor for disciplinary violence. Black people in the United States were enjoined to prioritize an identification with America above all other identifications, racial, anti-racist, internationalist, or diasporic. Those who refused to subordinate such alternate identifications faced repression as "UnAmerican subversives." Such was the case with Paul Robeson, W. Alphaeus Hunton, C. L. R. James, Claudia Jones, Richard Wright, Benjamin Davis, and W. E. B. Du Bois.

In the second part of the essay, I reconsider Du Bois's neglected final autobiography, *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century*. I suggest that reconstructing the political centrality of the narrative of the "American Negro" as "America's witness" lets us read the *Autobiography* as an important intervention into the global politics of race in the period, one that strove against the grain of liberal representations to re-narrativize the story of the "American Negro" as a witness against US neocolonialism. In the second epigraph above, Du Bois's refusal to witness for America could not be clearer: "I believe in communism. I mean by communism a planned way of life in the production of wealth and work. . . . Who now am I to have come to these conclusions? . . . This is the excuse for this writing which I call a soliloquy" (*Autobiography* 57-58).

Rather than reading here a dogmatic pledge of allegiance to the Soviet Union, I contend that if we situate these lines within the geopolitics of blackness as a global symbol during the era of decolonization, then we can read them to be a rhetorically, politically, and theoretically sophisticated attempt by Du Bois to re-fashion his life story as a counter-symbol that might rupture American exceptionalist representations of African American racial formation as a symbol for the probity of US-led global capitalism. Du Bois locates his life story in the history of the international development of capitalism and imperialism to call for an ethico-economic revolution in human relations more robust than liberal nationalism. In so doing, he reconceives the black witness as a means to orchestrate desire for an anti-racism responsive to the history and present of racial capitalism.² Du Bois's witness becomes all the more poignant when viewed against the context of the struggle between liberalism and radicalism in Du Bois's own career. By the early 1940s, Du Bois had renounced his earlier understanding of a "Talented Tenth" and distanced himself from his formulation of double consciousness in *The Souls of Black Folk*, concepts allied with the liberalism of his co-leaders at the NAACP and eventually incorporated into mid-century racial liberalism. Ironically, Du Bois wrote the *Autobiography* from a position of radical opposition to a liberal nationalist integrationism that had mainstreamed his prescient liberal thinking.³

In reconsidering the *Autobiography*, I hope to contribute to the on-going scholarly effort to recover suppressed African American critiques of Cold War civil rights thinking from the time of its emergence. In recent scholarship by Kate Baldwin, Brent Edwards, Roderick Ferguson, Nikhil Singh, and Penny Von Eschen, we find a restoration of the importance of black intellectual work rendered marginal by Cold War historiography.⁴ Importantly, such scholarship illuminates the signif-

icance of a persistent and diverse African American critique of forms of liberal anti-racism that incorporate and disavow the continuation of structural racism. We see the importance of recognizing such a tradition of critique for discussions of an effective anti-racism when we recognize that the struggle between liberalism and radicalism at mid-century was not merely one between white liberals and black radicals, but between black liberals, such as Walter White and other leaders of the NAACP, and such black radicals as Paul Robeson and Du Bois in later life.

Witnesses for Freedom

"A American Negroes are becoming American. But what then is America to become?" (qtd. in Von Eschen, *Race* 87). Voiced in the late 1950s, Du Bois's question short-circuits the causal logic of race liberal narratives: He remarks on the successful invention of a racially inclusive American nationality, but refuses to see this nationality as a guarantee that United States global power will become more benign. Instead, he hints grimly that the sublation of the contradiction between "American" and "Negro" opens the door for the United States to exert its force with greater impunity. How is it that for 1950's liberal discourse, the skepticism in Du Bois's question could not be entertained? I briefly examine nodal points in liberal discourse during the early Cold War that demonstrate how the "Americanness" of African American lives became increasingly important for ideologies of US nationalism and international manifest destiny. One example: I take the heading for this section from Rebecca Chalmers Barton's widely read study of African American autobiography *Witnesses for Freedom* (1948). In an unironic act of rhetorical transference, Barton claimed that African American life narratives

featuring personal battles for “freedom” from American racism counted for the Cold War as witnesses for the superiority of American “freedom” over Soviet communism.

I open with a close consideration of Myrdal’s *An American Dilemma* and its project of remaking white racial identity to align with

a more racially inclusive liberal nationalism. Incorporating anti-racism into postwar Americanism, *An American Dilemma* portrayed white Americans as moral heroes who, in ridding themselves of racial prejudice, would prove the American

nation to be a model for universal human aspiration. Anchoring the narrative of a universal nation redeemed by confronting racism was a regulative narrative that ideologically fixed African Americans as passive witnesses to, rather than agents of, white America’s redemptive transformation. We see the extreme irony of the representation of black passivity when we recognize that *An American Dilemma* popularized a racial liberalism that some black Americans had spent more than 30 years trying to promote through political activism (such as that of the NAACP and the National Urban League) and intellectual activism, including the work of prominent thinkers such as E. Franklin Frazier, Ralph Bunche, and Du Bois himself, whose original research and analysis Myrdal appropriates and reframes in *An American Dilemma*.

An American Dilemma begins with two propositions: that “the Negro Problem is a moral issue which has its existence in the [white] American mind” and that white racial prejudice

is in fatal contradiction with the “American Creed,” a presumed national social ethos whose “main norms . . . as usually pronounced are centered in the belief in equality and in the rights to liberty” (Myrdal lxxix, 8). According to the study, racial prejudice occurs because white Americans are constant-

ly forced to recognize a contradiction between their identification with the American Creed and their participation in the material and social practices of racial inequality. To compensate for this contradiction, white Americans indulge in racial prejudice,

invent racist doctrine, and develop a skewed sense of reality. The solution the study proposes is a comprehensive national program of education to result, ideally, in the conversion of prejudiced white Americans into liberal white Americans who would apply the American Creed in their attitudes and actions towards African Americans. At the same time, the full substantialization of the American Creed in American life would enable the US to fulfill its international manifest destiny:

If America should follow its own deepest convictions, its well-being at home would be increased directly. At same time America’s prestige and power abroad would rise immensely. The century old dream of American patriots, that America could give the entire world its own freedoms and its own faith, would become true. . . . America saving itself becomes savior of the world. (1022)

Thus the study interweaves race reform with the ubiquitous evangelical strand of US nationalism portraying America as the world’s best hope for

Du Bois reconstructs the political centrality of the narrative of the “American Negro” as “America’s witness” by intervening in the global politics of race in mid-twentieth century; his *Autobiography* resists liberal representations by renarrativizing the story of the “American Negro” as a witness against US neocolonialism.

advancement, linking America's salvation from its racial dilemma to the salvation of the world. Instead of rhetorically disconnecting US liberal democracy from white privilege, however, *An American Dilemma* continually coordinates the meaning of US nationalism, troped as universal human aspiration, with the meaning of liberal whiteness, metaphorized as the unmarked "American" subject. Even as the goal of antiracism is inserted into a conventional narrative of American manifest destiny, "America" maintains its exclusive associations with whiteness.

While *An American Dilemma* grants white Americans the agency to transform themselves and rejuvenate the country for international leadership, it fixes African Americans as objects of certain knowledge. The study's project of white public enlightenment depends, in the first place, on knowing the "truth" of African American racial formation. Because its goal is ultimately to argue that African Americans are part of the social community to which the American Creed applies, it is not surprising that the "truth" of African American existence and consciousness is its national character. In the quote below, Myrdal construes African American culture to be the same as (white) national culture in most respects and as much as possible under conditions of racial inequality: "In his allegiances the Negro is characteristically an American. He believes in the American Creed and in other ideals held by most Americans, such as getting ahead in the world, individualism, the importance of education and wealth. He imitates the dominant culture as he sees it and in so far as he can adopt it under the conditions of his life" (928). Where the study does not "nationalize" African American culture—that is to say, where it *does* recognize cultural difference—it pathologizes it. Rather than evaluating cultural forms that are distinctly black to indicate the existence of a separate epistemology or a distinct culture, Myrdal judges that "[i]n practically all its diver-

gences, American Negro culture is not something independent of general American culture. It is a distorted development, or a pathological condition, of the general American culture" (928). In other words, where black American culture is not "thoroughly American," *An American Dilemma* concludes that racial oppression has distorted it.

Ultimately, the positing of the "American Negro" as "America's witness" to the world depends on this binary taxonomy of African American culture as either just like "the general American culture" or "a pathological condition" of it. This taxonomy becomes the basis of a progress narrative: Because all differences from the "general American culture" are seen to be the "pathological" results of racial inequality, the more American that black Americans (are allowed to) become, the more proof that white Americans are shedding themselves of racist beliefs and that the US is ready to fulfill its messianic mission of giving "its own freedoms and own faith" to the world (Myrdal 1022).

This inference constructs a *passive* witness around the figure of "the American Negro." According to its terms, black Americans do not have to testify that US racist state practices have ended. Instead, a certain set of conditions and behaviors supposedly exhibited in African American lives count as evidence of US legitimacy in and of themselves. The passivity of the witness constructed around the figure of the "Negro" becomes particularly obvious at the end of *An American Dilemma* in a section entitled "America at the Crossroads":

If America in actual practice could show the world a progressive trend by which the Negro finally became integrated into modern democracy, all mankind would be given faith again . . . and America would have gained a spiritual power many times stronger than all her financial and military resources. . . . *America is free to choose whether the Negro shall remain her liability or become her opportunity.* (1022; original emphasis)

According to the witness constructed here, "America," meaning "white Americans," are the active agents "free to choose" whether or not to bring about the conditions for progress against racial inequality. That is, white Americans are "free to choose whether the Negro shall remain [America's] liability or become her opportunity." "The Negro," on the other hand, although established as the witness for America, actually witnesses only passively, like the weathervane that shows which way the wind is blowing or the mercury that indicates a rise in temperature.

While racial liberalism incorporated the idea of the "American Negro" as "America's witness" into consciousness-raising projects designed to produce a racially inclusive liberal nationalism, the Truman and Eisenhower State Departments deployed the narrative as propaganda for American global hegemony, plain and simple. As Dudziak reconstructs in *Cold War Civil Rights*, the Cultural Affairs, Psychological Warfare and Propaganda Division of the US Department of State took the lead in shaping international perceptions of African Americans in the early Cold War (79-115). The United States Information Agency and the Voice of America kept its posts busy throughout Asia, Europe, and especially Sub-Saharan Africa creating and disseminating radio broadcasts, films, newspaper articles, and pamphlets to explain to an attentive world how to understand American race relations through liberal paradigms.

As Dudziak establishes, *The Negro in American Life*, a widely distributed USIA pamphlet written in 1950 or 1951, was the best-developed government position on race (49-55). It obscured racial contradictions in the United States through a developmental life narrative that, in a temporizing move, depicted the steady maturation of "the Negro" from childhood to adulthood as an index of the health of American democracy. Representing an entire

social group as a single individual ("the Negro"), the pamphlet naturalized racial inequality as the inequality of a child, contending that access to education would eventually enable "the Negro" to mature gradually into a "man" and citizen, able to persuade his white fellow citizens of his equal status and rights through reasoned argumentation.

To reinforce propaganda about the anonymous "Negro in American life," the USIA distributed more particularized life narratives publicizing the success of famous black Americans in newspapers throughout the non-western world. A few of these published in West African newspapers in the 1950s include "Working for World Peace: Dr. Bunche in History," "Harry Belafonte's Crusade for Americanism," and "Negro Hurdler is determined to win Olympic event" (Von Eschen, "Who's the Real Ambassador" 117). For the State Department, the prominence of famous black individuals in America was to verify that "the Negro" as a whole would one day achieve the elevated status predicted for him in generalized narratives such as *The Negro in American Life*. To this end, Ralph Ellison was vigorously promoted as a "Great American Novelist" and Jackie Robinson as America's sportsman-ambassador to the world.⁵

In addition to publicizing the lives and achievements of accomplished black Americans, State Department speaking tours brought African Americans who embodied middle class professional status to Africa and Asia to verify the black witness that Cold War propaganda constructed. For example, as Dudziak relates, the USIA was particularly pleased with the speaking tour of Max Yergan, the founder and executive secretary of the Council of African Affairs. On a USIA-sponsored trip to Lagos, Nigeria, in 1952, Yergan witnessed that he enjoyed "ever-expanding rights and privileges which his grandfather, a Negro slave, could only dream of" (qtd. in Dudziak 56). To the same degree that the State

Department promoted and facilitated the travel of individuals like Yergan, it worked to discredit and to restrain the movements of African Americans opposed to Cold War foreign policy, such as Du Bois, Robeson, and Josephine Baker.⁶

With the narrative of the "American Negro" as "America's witness," racial liberalism achieved political centrality in the US and as an ideology of US expansionism during the early Cold War. For US national culture, the narrative worked to change the dominant reference points of national identity by powerfully inserting a narrative of the "Negro" as fully "American" into an earlier story of US manifest destiny, portraying the "American Negro" as an instrument for bringing US-style freedoms to the world. It revamped nationalist narratives of American history to include black American progress against racism as a chapter in the story of the progressive development of American democracy. At the same time, the narrative of the "American Negro" as "America's witness" censored an earlier anti-imperialist global political economic critique of race and racism, which as Von Eschen establishes, was an important component of the black public sphere in the US in the 1930s and 1940s (*Race* 7-21). Cold War liberals ostracized Du Bois precisely because he continued to advocate for this earlier understanding.

Soliloquy against US-Led Neocolonial Capitalism

As Kate Baldwin persuasively argues, the United States ultimately turned the Soviet Union's criticism of racial violence and Jim Crow to its advantage: it set the conditions for the US to disseminate a narrative of a promised resolution to racial strife that rhetorically validated US global leadership and distracted attention away

from the ambitions of US-based capital and goods seeking investment and markets in the decolonizing world (177). Precisely because African American life narratives played such a critical role in the American exceptionalist racial drama orchestrated by the United States, successive US administrations made concerted efforts to silence African Americans who allied themselves with the social and economic goals of the Soviet Union or who continued to approach racism as part of a nexus of imperialism and capitalism, such as Du Bois, Robeson, Hunton, among others. Du Bois, for example, was tried in 1951 in federal court as an agent of a foreign principle for his work with the Stockholm-based Peace Information Center. Although he won an acquittal, the impression remained that he was guilty of treasonous conduct. He was informally criminalized and his passport revoked, cutting him off from advocates and audiences outside the US.⁷

In response to his silencing and to its failure, to the new global context of expanding American hegemony and the role of African American life stories in its ideological management, Du Bois, I argue, invents an oppositional practice of autobiography in *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of its First Century*. Rupturing the liberal narrative of the "American Negro" as "America's witness," Du Bois re-appropriates the African American life story as a witness against the expansion of US-led neocolonial capitalism. From the period of the publication of *An American Dilemma* (1944) to the time of the writing of the *Autobiography* (1958-59), the left and progressives in the United States were decimated by McCarthyite red-baiting and disunified in the face of revelations of Stalinist violence. In contrast, racial liberalism, once part of a left-of-center agenda, was incorporated into the mainstream of Cold War politics and achieved prominence in American national culture and identity.

ty. In light of this development, we can perceive the urgency of the efforts of the *Autobiography* to keep alive a leftist agenda *expressly* in the name of racial justice, as well as the degree to which it threatened and undid Cold War racial political meanings and thus was consigned to illegibility within them. That the *Autobiography* was first published in the USSR, China, and the German Democratic Republic in 1964-1965, with its first US publication not appearing until 1968, testifies to the text's global ambitions, its strategic use by communist bloc countries, and its invisibility to US conversations (Aptheker 561). The neglect of the *Autobiography* has been largely reproduced in Du Bois scholarship, with the exception of studies by Baldwin, William Cain, and Keith Byerman, as well as Du Bois biographers Gerald Horne, Manning Marable, and David Levering Lewis.

To appreciate the oppositional practice of autobiography we find in *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, it is important to remember the loaded genealogy of African American autobiography, a genre in which the literary and the political have always been inseparable from one another. Emerging as slave narrative, African American autobiography began with the paradoxical project of arguing for black humanity. This condition placed a founding constraint upon the genre: that "the parameters of what could be said [were] always attenuated by the less lenient powers of what could be believed" (Baldwin 160). By the mid-twentieth century, as argued above, African American autobiography had to cope with the determining condition that, in the United States, the meaning of black humanity had become inseparable discursively from the ideological legitimization of US global leadership. Along with this condition came the injunction that African American autobiography serve as evidence and therefore it could be interpreted along positivist and explanatory lines. This injunction effected the reading not only

of autobiography, but also of novels written by African American authors, which were interpreted as "autobiographical" even when it was rationally difficult to do so.⁸ To offer "proof" of the progressive development of American democracy, the narrativity of African American life stories had to be suppressed.

In contrast to Cold War liberalism's treatment of African American life stories as evidence and explanation, Du Bois in *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* underscores the narrativity and the literariness of his own intervention, as the subtitle *A Soliloquy* implies. "Soliloquy," which we can define as nondialogic discourse from the self to the self, seems to signal a deliberate withdrawal on Du Bois's part from the constructed political community of liberal nationalism. A second meaning of "soliloquy" is a literary or dramatic mode of performance, where a character speaks in the presence of others (the audience or other characters), performing deliberately crafted "truth," a species of metanarrative, as if it were intimate self-revelation. Considered in the context of the *Autobiography* as "*A Soliloquy*," this second definition of "soliloquy" as crafted "truth" seems to indicate a deliberate move to free the genre of African American autobiography from the positivism racial liberalism ascribed to it. By practicing autobiography as "to soliloquize," Du Bois foregrounds narrative technique to nurture a critical imagination about the meaning of black lives in the United States. The goal, in the first place, is to help readers resist the story of capitalism that Cold War liberal narratives were telling through insinuation and elision as they worked to restrict racial meanings to a story of US freedom. Du Bois inscribes as real an African American life story that memorializes the history of race in the development of modern capitalism to arrange desire for an alternative to US neocolonialism. To do so, he breaks sharply with liberal

nationalist protocols for the telling of African American lives.⁹

As the Library of America anthology of Du Bois's writings reports, the *Autobiography* is made up to a large degree of previously published material, with some 200 pages adopted from *Dusk of Dawn* (1940) and substantial text taken from *In Battle for Peace* (1952), *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), and work published in the *National Guardian* during the early 1950s (*Writings* 1308). The amount of text that Du Bois recirculates from *Dusk of Dawn* is interesting, for it demonstrates the proactiveness of Du Bois's thinking, that is, the degree to which he anticipated the link between liberalism, capitalism, and US global power that became the central themes of race relations in the early Cold War. Byerman has interpreted Du Bois's recirculation of work in the *Autobiography* as an attempt by the author to control his self-representation and to self-anthologize work that received too limited an audience ("Recovering the Self" 66 and *Seizing the Word* 223). Building on Byerman's insight with an eye toward Du Bois's later positions against US neocolonialism, I suggest that Du Bois in the *Autobiography* positions his earlier work as steps on an intellectual journey to develop a critical consciousness about race that drives him to witness for an ideal of communism against actually existing US capitalist democracy. The fact that *Dusk of Dawn* predates Myrdal's study and the Cold War yet comes to many of the same conclusions about the destructive links between race and capitalism strengthens the pro-socialist and anti-neocolonial witness of the *Autobiography*.

The *Autobiography* opens by flouting the Cold War liberal injunction that stories of African American lives articulate themselves with the story of the nation; it begins on the day of Du Bois's long-awaited escape from US territory, August 5, 1958, after hav-

ing been denied a passport for eight years on the grounds that it was "against the country's best interests" for him to go abroad (11). Part One of the *Autobiography* is a 50-page travelogue of his journey, which Du Bois narrates as moving providentially eastward, from the declining metropolises of Western Europe to the new world of socialism emerging in the Baltics, the Soviet Union, and what for Du Bois was a colored People's Republic of China.

The opening travelogue serves to extract Du Bois's life story and the motif of the African American life story in general from the context of Cold War imaginings of the international as the space where American freedom fights Soviet communism. Instead, they are placed within a context of the international where anticolonial socialism struggles against neocolonial capitalism. Making the recontextualization obvious, Du Bois declares the need to rethink his life story in light of the world conflict that his journey from the parasitical West to the striving East revealed to him: "I mention the trip in some detail because it . . . had wide influence on my thought. To explain this influence, my Soliloquy becomes an autobiography. . . . Who and what is this I, which in the last year, looked on a torn world and tried to judge it?" (12).

Du Bois further distances his telling of the African American life story from liberal nationalism. He denationalizes and internationalizes African American racial formation by reconstructing it within the racial history of colonial capitalism. As he travels through Western Europe, Du Bois travels through time as well as space, excavating the social and economic histories shaping the present. He finds a red, white, and blue thread, the prehistory of present US neocolonialism, woven into the fabric of European colonialism. Visiting Holland, for example, Du Bois locates his own family history and the genesis of US racial capitalism within the history of British

and Dutch slave-trading and Dutch empire in Southeast Asia:

It was a Dutchman who in the early 18th century kidnapped my great grand-grandfather on the coast of West Africa and sold him into slavery in the valley of the Hudson. This was the century in which the Dutch began to take part in the stealing of labor in Africa. . . . The British in the 18th century succeeded in displacing them as the world's greatest slave traders and established slavery in their American colonies. This commercial rivalry between the Dutch and the British resulted in a system of Dutch colonies which covered Southeast Asia. (17)

Telling the story of his progenitor's entry into the future space of the United States as Dutch slave property, Du Bois articulates his transnational family history to illuminate the role of racialization in the global development of colonialism and capitalism. At the same time, he traces the origin of US racial capitalism back before US statehood, back to the stem where it becomes indistinguishable from European empire.¹⁰

Centering African American racial formation within the history of racial capitalism, Du Bois claims an identification with a socialism responsive to this context. The *Autobiography* narrates this socialism to be emerging most forcefully in China. It dramatizes a powerful, imaginative identification for African Americans with China, based on nonidentical yet shared experiences of the culture of racial capitalism as dehumanizing. It then depicts this identification to generate the possibility for an affirmative cultural style to support a new kind of transnational belonging. In particular, Du Bois depicts "American Negroes" and "China" to share a contiguous culture animated by a habit of self-sacrifice formed in reaction to separate yet overlapping historical experiences of oppression. Du Bois first relates "American Negroes" to "China" in a passage that asserts China's greater suffering:

I used to weep for American Negroes, as I saw what indignities and repressions and cruelties they had passed; but . . . I know that no depths of Negro slavery in America have plumbed such abysses as the Chinese have seen for 2,000 years and more. They have seen starvation and murder; rape and prostitution; . . . oppression and contempt . . . from Tartars, Mongolians, British, French, Germans, and Americans [and] from the Chinese themselves. (50)

Praising China's ability to survive and to be transformed by suffering, Du Bois next personifies "China" as a black singer of spirituals, crooning the song "*O, Mourner, get up off your knees*" (52). While the collapsed signification appears at first to be a strange elision of cultural difference, Du Bois here seems to use literary devices to entice the reader to accept an existing cultural continuity between "African Americans" and "China." He asks the reader to imagine the major producer of "culture" (understood broadly as that which gives one a sense of self in the world) not to be religion or language but historical experience, specifically, the historical experience of oppression organized through regimes of racial capitalism (coolie-ization, segregation, colonialism). This common experience, Du Bois suggests, generates shared alternative cultural norms to the culture of US-European capitalism.

The *Autobiography* has been criticized for its blindness to the abuses and the imperialism of the PRC and the Soviet Union.¹¹ In consideration of this critique, it is important to recognize that Du Bois was highly motivated to see China and the Soviet Union—and communism in general—in a favorable light. In the first place, we might assert that Du Bois narrates a story of China as a nonwhite socialist utopia, the better to oppose liberal narratives of the United States as a post racist white utopia.¹² Importantly, for Du Bois, there was no capitalism that was not always already racial capitalism, and communism served as a kind of placeholder for an alternative ethico-eco-

conomic relation where racial and economic democracy (a term Du Bois sometimes preferred to socialism) would flourish together. We might describe Du Bois's total project in the *Autobiography* as the construction of an anti-racist argument in favor of communism through the telling of an emblematic African American life story (Du Bois's own) that memorializes the negative history of race in the development of capitalism.

In a section entitled "Interlude" inserted between the opening travelogue and the re-telling of his life story, we find the *Autobiography's* most important declarative statement, in which Du Bois formally declares a belief in communism:

I have studied socialism and communism long and carefully in lands where they are practiced and in conversation with their adherents, and with wide reading. I now state my conclusion frankly and clearly: I believe in communism. I mean by communism, a planned way of life in the production of wealth and work designed for building a state whose object is the highest welfare of its people and not merely the profit of a part. . . . Once I thought these ends could be attained under capitalism. . . . After earnest observation, I now believe that capital and free enterprise are leading the world to disaster. . . . Democratic government in the United States has almost ceased to function. . . . We are ruled by those who control wealth and who by that power buy or coerce public opinion.

Who now am I to have come to these conclusions? And what if any significance are my deductions? What has been my life work and of what meaning to mankind? . . . This is the excuse for this writing which I call a Soliloquy. (57, 58)

In these passages, employing italics to mimic the sense of a spoken pledge, Du Bois turns the Cold War loyalty oath on its head. Rather than witness for the United States, Du Bois witnesses against the existence of democracy in the US, avowing that "[d]emocratic government in the United States has almost ceased to function." In the last lines of the passages above, Du Bois reverses Cold War orchestrations of the "American Negro" as "America's Witness." He frames the telling of his

life story as a means to account for how he came to believe in communism (defined in ideal terms as planned production and redistribution within a state) over and above liberal nationalism. In doing so, the *Autobiography* counters the narrative in *An American Dilemma* of the conversion of white Americans into liberal anti-racists with a narrative of an African American conversion to communism.¹³ In providing a black witness against US neo-colonialism to counter liberal nationalist stories of a black witness for America, Du Bois's declaration of belief in communism comes across as something other than a dogmatic show of support for the Soviet Union.

In contrast to Cold War liberal discourse, which anchored the witness it extracted from African American life stories in the presumed truth of African American being, Du Bois bases his oppositional witness on what he learned to think: the point of his life story is the formation of a critical consciousness about race in the development of capitalism. Following the "Interlude," telling of the life in the *Autobiography* proceeds chronologically, as is conventional, but its narrative focuses on the author's intellectual development, on what he has to learn to be able to perceive "race" as a consolidation of hermeneutics and social forces inseparable from the genealogy of global capitalism. This break, then, becomes an interpretative optic that gives meaning to Du Bois's life and work and arranges a desire in the author for an ameliorative and revitalizing socialism.

Du Bois begins rethinking his intellectual formation with his youth in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and then moves on to his student years at Fisk and Harvard universities and the University of Berlin. In particular, the narrative investigates how Du Bois's formal education prevented him from grasping economic organization at all,

completely obscuring the primary entanglement of modern capitalist social relations with racialist ideologies. At Fisk, his lessons "on the whole avoided economics," teaching, for example, "the moral aspects of slavery, not the economic" (126). At Harvard, Du Bois finds the environment poisonous to lessons that contradicted the interests of the institution, now a "defender of wealth and capital, already half ashamed of Charles Sumner and Wendell Philip" (189).

As he retells and rethinks his life story, Du Bois subjects his earlier intellectual formation to a reparative autocritique. Specifically, in his rethinking he supplies the political economic critique of race in the history of modern capitalism that he lacked previously. Often Du Bois's reparative autocritique comes across as an awkward exercise in rough historical materialism. He replays his thinking as a student and then juxtaposes his past perception with his new understanding of concurrent international developments in colonialism and racial capitalism. Below, for example, Du Bois subjects to critique his decision to make Bismarck the topic of his Fisk University commencement oration:

I took as my subject "Bismarck." This choice in itself showed the abyss between my education and the truth in the world. Bismarck was my hero. He made a nation out of a mass of bickering peoples. . . . This foreshadowed in my mind the kind of thing that American Negroes must do, marching forth with strength under trained leadership. On the other hand, I did not understand at all, nor had my history course led me to understand, anything of the current European intrigue, of the expansion of European power into Africa, of the industrial revolution built on slave trade and now turning into colonial imperialism; of the fierce rivalry among white nations for controlling the profits from colonial raw material and labor; of all this I had no clear conception. (126)¹⁴

Even as Du Bois remarks on the gap in his knowledge, he begins to fill it in, repairing his education at the same time he recounts its failings. He cor-

rects his earlier miscomprehension of Bismarck as a praiseworthy nationalist leader with a new understanding of Bismarck as a colonial exploiter of Africa.

Du Bois's reparative autocritique provides an opportunity to narrativize a political economic history of race that Cold War anti-communism obfuscated. For example, in the passage below, Du Bois juxtaposes his flawed earlier understanding of the 1887 Queen's Jubilee next to his better, later comprehension of the event:

The Queen's Jubilee in June 1887, while I was still in Fisk, set the pattern of our thinking. The little old woman at Windsor became a magnificent symbol of Empire. Here was England with her flag draped around the world, ruling more black folk than white and leading the colored peoples of the earth to Christian baptism, and as we assumed, to civilization and eventual self-rule. . . . (142)

The Queen's Jubilee, I [now] knew, was not merely a sentimental outburst. It was a triumph of English economic aggression around the world and it aroused the cupidity and fear of Germany who proceeded to double her navy, expand into Asia, and consolidate her European position. Germany challenged France and England at Algieras, a prelude to the World War. Imperialism, despite Cleveland's opposition, spread to America, and the Hawaiian sugar fields were annexed. (207)¹⁵

In his later understanding, Du Bois learns to look beyond the Queen's Jubilee as a convincing symbolic representation of Progress to see it as a dialectical indicator of economic rivalry among US-European imperialists. Thus Du Bois's reparative autocritique constructs a black witness based in an intellectual understanding of the interrelations of capitalism, imperialism, and colonial ideology that, by situating capitalism as interwoven with anti-democratic political forms, clearly conflicts with Myrdal's conception of a black witness for the legitimacy of US-style capitalism and political democracy.

As the *Autobiography* moves forward, the focus changes from what Du Bois was unable to think to what the study of race enabled him to think. By World War I, systematic inquiry into race relations for Du Bois had come to serve as an intellectual lever for thinking outside the matrix of social relations, values, and norms supporting the "economic development into which [he] was born":

Had it not been for the race problem early thrust upon and enveloping me, I should have probably been an unquestioning worshipper at the shrine of the established social order and the economic development into which I was born. But just that part of the order which seemed to most of my fellows nearest perfection seemed to me most inequitable and wrong; and starting from this critique I gradually, as the years went by, found other things to question in my environment. (155)¹⁶

As Du Bois narrates it, the "race problem" becomes a bit of meaning-making for him, a marker of difference and reversal, which he deploys scientifically to reckon against reified common sense. Mapping continuities in condition among "the darker races" of the world and searching for a synthesizing explanation, Du Bois narrates a learning process where he begins to comprehend the instrumentality of racialization for modern capital development. He concludes that robust, international racial equality would mean the end of modern capitalism, reasoning that racism's historically deep saturation with capitalist social relations puts the expansion of capitalism into contradiction with racial justice to the extent that victory over global racial inequality would necessarily have to coincide with the transition from capitalism to socialism. Whereas in *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*, Du Bois offered his life story as an example of how the meaning of race is lived in the world, in *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, he offers his life story as an example of how to relearn the meaning of race to demystify the development of modern

capitalism and hence to see the continuity between territorial colonialism and the tactics of US neocolonialism.

Du Bois narrates a second witness that follows from his hard-won insight into black experience with US racial capitalism: a story of African American racial formation as fit to bear the rationality of socialism. By this I mean that Du Bois finds ripe conditions for critical thinking that cathects to habits and values conducive for socialism in the historical dialectic between the self-consciousness of black people and their contemptible material conditions under regimes of US racial capitalism, an idea of African American experience and epistemology utterly lacking in Myrdal's binary conception of African American formation as either all American or pathological. Du Bois calls this consciousness-in-solution in African American racial formation "an inner Negro cultural ideal" (391).

Although from his terminology, it might sound like Du Bois's "ideal" represents an essence intrinsic to African American being, by 1960 his "inner Negro cultural ideal" is overwhelmingly historical materialist like his thinking about race in general at this time.¹⁷ In the *Autobiography*, he tracks the "inner Negro cultural ideal" through its phenomenology, that is, through structures of experience presenting themselves to consciousness in attitudes, habits, and behaviors.

Du Bois describes the "inner Negro cultural ideal" as a consciousness "developed by memory of slavery and experience of caste" (*Autobiography* 391). Present and continuing in African American racial formation, rather than immanent or inherent within it, Du Bois makes it contingent on cultural memory and material conditions (such as the relative absence of class differentiation) and therefore capable of growing stronger or weaker.¹⁸ In fact, Du Bois portrays the ideal to be growing weaker within African American racial formation throughout the 1950s, diluted by Cold War distortions of black history, weakened cul-

tural memory, and increased socioeconomic mobility for middle class black professionals. As Du Bois recounts, where he once "had faith" that the "inner Negro cultural ideal . . . would drive the Negro group into a spiritual unity that would preclude the development of inner class struggles," by 1960 he determines the contingency has become "improbable" (*Autobiography* 392). Nonetheless, according to the protocol of the *Autobiography*, we must evaluate Du Bois's narrativization of the "inner Negro cultural ideal" to be an attempt to inscribe it as real along the lines of "to soliloquize" and thereby prop it up in the name of a future revitalization.

The most important facet of "the Negro cultural ideal" that Du Bois tracks is a reactive ethic of self-sacrifice. Formed in reaction to the long historical experience of the culture of US capitalism as a mode of dehumanization and dispossession, the ethic of self-sacrifice is not a racial property but a habit of relation to others that breaks the rules of possessive individualism and other values conducive to the accumulation of private wealth. The forms of appearance of the ethic of self-sacrifice are multifarious and sometimes subtle. He first introduces the ethic of self-sacrifice in the figure of an uncle who works without wages for a decade to support the unexpectedly impoverished white family that "employs" him. Another early figure is Josie, a young African American woman he meets while teaching summer school in rural Tennessee. Noting the sacrifices she makes in pursuit of an education for herself and her siblings, Du Bois remarks on her "unconscious moral heroism that would willingly give all of life to make life broader, deeper, and fuller for her and hers" (*Autobiography* 116). When he goes south for the first time to attend Fisk University, Du Bois finds self-sacrifice to be characteristic of a "half-awakened common consciousness" among black people there, sprung from shared emotive experiences ("common joy and

grief") and especially from shared material conditions ("a common hardship in poverty, poor land, and low wages") (*Autobiography* 212). He later extols Atlanta University for instilling in future race leaders a determination "to spread with their own hands the Gospel of Sacrifice" and traces the impulse animating the Niagara Movement to "the spirit of willingness to sacrifice" that John Brown exemplified (*Autobiography* 212).¹⁹

For Du Bois, the ethic of self-sacrifice answers the question that all socialist theory must engage: what motivates unselfish behavior? As depicted in the examples above, Du Bois's ethic is open and multiappartitional. It is agential in itself rather than owned and deployed. Some of its forms cluster around the idea of material foregoing that Du Bois opposes to the culture of private wealth accumulation. Others (such as the example of John Brown) lean on the Latin roots of "sacrifice" ("sacer (sacred) + facere (to do)") to prioritize sacred-making behaviors over profit-making ones. All of the examples esteem other-directedness over self-interest. Du Bois asks the reader to imagine the ethic of self-sacrifice to be a present and abiding reflex (although beginning to dissipate) onto which the redistributive logic of socialism might be grafted. The first step is to put the material history that illuminates its formation back into the public record.

While Cold War liberals such as Myrdal employed African American life stories to reconfigure nationalist symbols and to recreate national identity, Du Bois stages an ethic of self-sacrifice as an alternate value around which a constituency for global socialism can coalesce. He depicts it to be present not only in African American formation, but also in the motivations of Chinese communism and the cultural heritage of Pan-Africanism. For example, in his speech for the 1958 All-Africa Conference in Accra, reprinted in the penultimate chapter of the *Autobiography*, Du Bois depicts it to be

a key component of a culture that will sustain Pan-Africanism: "As I have said, this is a call for sacrifice. . . . If Africa unites it will be because each part . . . gives up a part of its heritage for the good of the whole. That is what union means; that is what Pan-Africa means" (404). Du Bois's black witness thus calls for international alliances and affinities radically at odds with Myrdal's conception of a black witness to ratify the US as leader of a "free world" coalition against communism.

Set against Cold War distortions of African American persons and history, Du Bois's life story comes across strongly as a counter-memorialization of the story of race in the development of capitalism that he makes the point of his intellectual formation. We can venture that this counter-memorialization was intended to anchor a process of imagining transnational ties in the name of an alternative geopolitics.²⁰ In the end, Du Bois's "soliloquy" does not so much signal a lonely withdrawal from the constructed political community of the United States as a jeremiad against the historical amnesia on which he saw postwar US neocolonialism situated to thrive, as well as a conjuration of an ethical and radical anti-racism, beyond the scope of liberal political calculation.

From out of the framework of such liberal political calculation comes much of our contemporary dominant thinking about race through a "multicultur-

al" framework. Race politics continues to cohere with ideologies of Americanism and American exceptionalism. It continues to erase the link between economic inequality under global capitalism and race as a procedure for naturalizing this inequality, usually bracketing out economy as a race matter altogether. Conventional anti-racism, rather than illuminating the biopolitics of neoliberalism and the racism of the War on Terror, in fact becomes incorporated into them. We see this erasure in the Bush Administration's use of multicultural language and signifying practices to justify economic liberalization as a multicultural freedom and to depict the Guantánamo Bay prison camp to be a multiculturally sensitive, and therefore, humane, detention center.²¹ Considering this exploitation, African American critiques of the US management of global decolonization take on new import; we can perceive them to be a kind of hermeneutical activism that attempted to unsettle, at its inception, the liberal race paradigm that has come to dominate the period after World War II. No more or less valuable than the work of other black intellectuals in this vein, Du Bois's *Autobiography* seems to me to be important for developing "race" as a referential system to mark the continued unevenness of capitalist development in postcolonial times, as it composes a witness from African American experience that calls for the expansion of democratic accountability to include economic governance.

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1. *An American Dilemma*, a near national bestseller, proclaimed as a masterwork by Harry Truman and W. E. B. Du Bois alike, dominated national discourse on race at all levels in the late 1940s and 1950s, from the academy to government to the kitchen table. While Myrdal was the sole author of the study's two volumes, he relied on research reports compiled for the project by a prestigious, interracial group of social scientists and other scholars (primarily from the University of Chicago schools of

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sociology and anthropology), including Ralph Bunche, Charles Johnson, Louis Wirth, Melville Herskovitz, Arnold Rose, Sterling Brown, Elaine Locke, and W. E. B. Du Bois. For a history of the Carnegie Corporation's initiation and participation in the study, see Lagemann. For a discussion of the importance of *An American Dilemma* as a foundational text of modern social science, see Southern, Scott, Steinberg, and Jackson.

2. I follow Robinson's usage of the term "racial capitalism" to designate the historical agency that ensues from the originary and continuing permeation of capitalist economic and social relations by racialism, a process that shapes the development, organization, and expansion of capitalist societies and social ideologies alike. See Robinson 2-3.

3. I thank my anonymous reader at *African American Review* for suggesting the line of thinking followed at the ends of this paragraph and the following one.

4. In addition to the exceptional work of Aptheker in disseminating and interpreting Du Bois's late body of work, several Du Bois biographers must also be recognized as attentive to its importance: Levering Lewis, Horne, Marable, and Rampersad. Levering Lewis's encompassing second volume of his Du Bois biography has corrected the common misperceptions of Du Bois at the time of the writing of the *Autobiography*, but also to a degree reinforced them. Although Levering Lewis draws a straight line back from Du Bois's late radicalism to his earlier activism and scholarship, he continues to portray Du Bois in later life as alienated and lacking in critical judgment. In *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War 1944-1963*, Horne more forcefully recovers the late Du Bois as an active and engaged radical and intellectual. He also illuminates how common misperceptions of the late Du Bois are byproducts of Cold War historiography as well as government efforts to discredit Du Bois in the 1950s. Unfortunately, Horne's revisionary history has not gotten the attention it deserves (probably because Horne himself is an out-in-the-open radical). Although more compressed than Horne's study, Marable's *W. E. B. Du Bois: Black Radical* puts the late Du Bois back into the mainstream of African American and progressive politics in the 1950s. Marable also offers his own meritorious theory for the tendency of Cold War critics to distort Du Bois's later social thought: "the refusal to draw any correlation between Marxism and democracy" (216). Rampersad's 1976 biography *The Art and Imagination of W. E. B. Du Bois* is exceptional for its attention to the role of Marxism in Du Bois's total intellectual genealogy and its insight into the importance of dialectical materialism for the late work (263-64).

5. It is ironic that despite Ellison's condemnation of *An American Dilemma* for its inability to recognize that "Negroes have made a life upon the horns of the white man's dilemma," Ellison's own image, as crafted by successive State Departments, served as a black witness for America within the parameters Myrdal's study laid out. See Ralph Ellison 316.

6. On the State Department's persecution of Robeson, see James Ellison and also Duberman. On its campaign against Josephine Baker, see Dudziak 67-78, and Baker and Bouillon, *Josephine*. On the federal persecution of Du Bois, see Horne 201-23 and Lewis 496-571.

7. Horne persuasively argues that these attempts to undermine popular support for Du Bois inside and outside of the United States were never as successful as Cold War historiography maintains. He reconstructs how Du Bois in the 1950s was more closely embraced and embracing of working class African American political movements and left progressive movements than ever before. According to Horne, in the eyes of a majority of nonelite black Americans and of leftists battling Cold War repression, Du Bois's resistance to McCarthyism and Cold War national sentiment only augmented the high regard in which they held him. After Ghana won independence in 1957, the State Department could no longer afford the negative publicity of refusing "the Father of Pan-Africa" the right of egress and restored Du Bois's passport. See Horne 133-66.

8. Barton, for example, reads Chester Himes's novel *If He Hollers* as an autobiography (not even "autobiographical fiction") in spite of glaring discrepancies between the novel and Himes's life. (The protagonist of the novel is falsely charged with rape and impressed into the military to avoid a prison term.) In another example, Frederic Wertham determined that Richard Wright was Bigger Thomas in so far as the character's "unconscious determinants" were the emotions and events that Wright had experienced as a 15-year-old boy employed in a white household in the Jim Crow South. See Rhodes 82-106.

9. For an alternative interpretation that reads the *Autobiography* as failing to demonstrate Du Bois's interiority and thus failing as "soliloquy," see Cain, "Autobiography" 307.

10. Throughout the travelogue, Du Bois leans on this intertwined economic history to create a counternarrative to post World War II portrayals of the US as savior of democratic Europe. Instead, he depicts their relationship to be that of old co-conspirators revising the terms of their alliance to reflect the US's new dominance. While Cold War McCarthyism sought to reduce all expressions of disidentification with "America" to attacks on Democracy writ large, Du Bois makes it clear that his

own disidentification cannot be so reduced: it proceeds from remembering race as a technology of western colonialism, which makes visible this new epoch as one of the consolidation of US-led neo-colonial capitalism under the rubric of an international alliance of free and democratic nations. See Du Bois, *Autobiography* 15-43.

11. See for example, Cain, "From Liberalism to Communism."
12. I thank Grace Kyungwon Hong for this observation.
13. I thank Steve Karian for this formulation.
14. The passage is to be found verbatim in *Dusk of Dawn*. See Du Bois, *Dusk* 32.
15. These passages are to be found verbatim in *Dusk of Dawn*. See Du Bois, *Dusk* 41, 52.
16. This passage is to be found verbatim in *Dusk of Dawn*. See Du Bois, *Dusk* 22.
17. The phrase "inner Negro cultural ideal" is dated terminology for Du Bois by 1960. It harkens back to his phrasing in the 1898 pamphlet "The Conservation of Races." Here Du Bois described a "Negro ideal" very much in Hegelian terms as a sort of biologically-rooted *Volksgeist* ("Conservation" 40). Warren describes the 1898 "Negro ideal" as "the epitome and expression of the intellect of black-blooded people in America" that would represent the Negro's unique contribution to civilization. I argue that Du Bois uses the term "inner Negro cultural ideal" in 1960 to describe a consciousness that he associates very much with black experience but that he drops the blood-taint that Warren accentuates. See Warren, 172-89.
18. Du Bois pinpoints the golden age of African American fitness for socialism at just after World War I. At the time, he asserts, African American economic cooperation was viable and might have acted as a catalyst for a larger national reorganization: "I did believe that a people where the differentiation in classes because of wealth had only begun, could be so guided by intelligent leaders that they would develop into a consumer-conscious people, producing for use and not primarily for profit and working into the surrounding industrial organization so as to reinforce the economic revolution bound to develop in the United States and all over Europe and Asia sooner or later" (*Autobiography* 291).
19. We must note that the lack of an active imaginary about gender seems to truncate Du Bois's vision of an ethic of self-sacrifice. James notices this limitation in Du Bois's late political thought in *Transcending the Talented Tenth*. As James remarks, despite Du Bois's ability to unlearn his class privilege and his early rejection of patriarchy, he never discards a masculinist conceptual framework. Ultimately, his privileged, oppositional subject is a male intellectual animated by an ethic of self-sacrifice. See James 35-61.
20. To this end, Du Bois reprints nearly a dozen speeches delivered to audiences around the world: in Peking on his ninety-first birthday, in Chicago on a tour to raise funds for his upcoming trial; in Moscow at a Soviet peace conference; in Accra, Ghana, for the 1958 All-Africa Conference. Translating the speeches from spoken to written performances, Du Bois implicitly figures a collectivity of "listening" audiences, allowing the reader to imagine a collective audience to be responsive to the form of anti-racist, anti-imperialist global politics for which the *Autobiography* ultimately witnesses. See Du Bois, *Autobiography* 396-408.
21. For a depiction of "economic freedom" as a multicultural imperative ("the freedom to pick and choose"), see the Bush Administration's 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*.

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