"GOTHIC" ONTOLOGY AND VITAL AFFECT IN *THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK*

Austin Bailey
The CUNY Graduate Center

ABSTRACT

This article examines the affective and vitalist aspects of Du Bois's famous work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, by turning to William James's essay "A World of Pure Experience" as a methodological framework for understanding *Souls*. While most readings of *Souls* emphasize the unfolding of Black consciousness, or the mind, this essay brings the body into critical focus, specifically in tracing the ways in which Du Bois appeals to the environmental plasticity of bodies—their ability to affect and to be affected—as a creative textual means of addressing and redressing racial strife and crisis. *Souls* both diagnoses what I am calling a 'gothic' ontology of racial division (after James's use of the metaphor in characterizing his radical empiricist weltanschauung) and appeals to moments of vital affect which overspill and thus critically contest the postbellum United States's racially policed boundaries. Reading *Souls* in this fashion suggests the fragility of interracial and intraracial connection, which is always already threatened by continued fragmentation within the racially striated nexus of white supremacist modernity.

Keywords: James; Du Bois; ontology; affect; racism; radical empiricism.

INTRODUCTION: THE SHRUNKEN HEADS OF BORNEO

First published in *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* in 1904, William James's essay, "A World of Pure Experience," sketches the broader outlines of his life's work: "For many years past my mind has been growing into a certain type of *Weltanschauung*. Rightly or wrongly, I have got to the point where I can hardly see things in any other pattern" (James 1987, 1159). Identifying his weltanschauung as "radical empiricism" (a label famously affixed in agonal opposition to neo-Hegelian philosophies of the Absolute circulating in James's time), he offers the following arresting analogy:

> *Prima facie*, if you should liken the universe of absolute idealism to an aquarium, a crystal globe in which goldfish are swimming, you would have to compare the [radical] empiricist universe to something more like one of those dried human heads with which the Dyaks of Borneo deck their lodges. The skull forms a solid nucleus; but innumerable feathers, leaves, strings, beads, and loose appendices

> of every description float and dangle from it, and save that they terminate in it, seem to have nothing to do with one another. Even so my experiences and yours float and dangle, terminating, it is true, in a nucleus of common perception, but for the most part out of sight and irrelevant and unimaginable to one another. (1162)

Here James outlines a pluralistic ontology in which being is neither wholly connected nor disconnected but reticulated with imperfect degrees of "intimacy" ranging from, as James phrases it, a bare "withness" (in which the terms of experience are more or less external to one another) to an intimate commonality in which being terminates in shared objects of perception and sympathy (1161-62).

James's shrunken head analogy complements his claim in *A Pluralistic Universe* that radical empiricism is a "gothic" ontology, one that is metaphysically as well as ethically opposed to philosophies of the Absolute: "As compared with all these rationalizing pictures, the pluralistic empiricism which I profess offers but a sorry appearance. It is a turbid, muddled, *gothic* sort of an affair, without a sweeping outline and with little pictorial nobility" (650; emphasis added). Unlike rationalism and classical empiricism, radical empiricism "is fair to both the unity and the disconnection," for it sees neither as metaphysically subordinate to the other (1162). James's philosophical system is "gothic" in the sense that it emphasizes disconnection as much as connection and refuses to imagine away the tragic facts of modern life: "Whether materialistically or spiritualistically minded, philosophers have always aimed at cleaning up the litter with which the world apparently is filled" (650).

As many readers are aware, radical empiricism marks James's late-career turn to speculative ontology. Whereas James first posits a phenomenological account of connective and conjunctive relations in works like *The Principles of Psychology* (i.e., a phenomenology in which transitions between nominatives and substantives require no "trans-empirical" support but are instead given immediately in the "concatenated or continuous structure" of experience) his radical empiricism extends this account to reality itself (826). For James, the real is comprised of fluctuating degrees of conjunction and disjunction (much like the contours of the shrunken heads of Borneo), and, importantly, is constituted by *flows and intensities of affective becoming*.

Indeed, it is this latter point that has gone largely unnoticed in critical commentaries on James. One exception is Alexander Livingston (2012), who asserts that in "A World of Pure Experience," James lays bare "empiricism's affective connection of self and world": "The assemblage of threads and lines 'with' the skull represents for James the ways that personality and impersonality lie as two extremes along a singular line of experience. Individual consciousness is connected to something impersonal but is not reducible to it" (Livingston). For James, concrete reality—which is neither decidedly subjective nor objective in its first appearance—overflows the conceptual and linguistic categories we use to anchor and navigate it. There is always something "more" to experience that reaches beyond the discursive-symbolic pathways we have carved out to hold it in place. For if what James calls "transitions" are immanent parts of nondualist experience, then being itself, as it becomes, is also vague and multiple. While indispensable, concepts (when exchanged for the complex multiplicity of reality itself) obscure being's affective flows and particulars: the multiple ways in which being-as-becoming leaks through the boundaries we designate for it. As James concludes: "Life is in the transitions as much as in the terms connected; often, indeed, it seems to be there more emphatically" (1181).

In what follows, I want to sound key terms and concepts from James's essay "A World of Pure Experience," using it as a methodological framework for reading W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, and tracing what I refer to as *Souls*'s gothic ontology.[1] I intend my use of the term "gothic" as a gesture both toward the intense social fragmentations of postemancipation America (a truly gothic affair in terms of the horrors of white supremacist terrorism, social depredation, and imposed segregation) as well as what I identify as Du Bois's attempt in *Souls* to navigate an inner and outer ontological landscape typified largely by disunity and disjunction yet palpated with the possibility for greater unity and connection.

[1] My use of the term 'ontology' refers to a vital and nonessentialist, rather than essentialist, conception of being.

Souls, I contend, not only lays bare such gothic contours of social fragmentation but sketches moments in which the vitality of affect overspills such fragmentations' ontological boundaries and rigidly policed borders. Indeed, *Souls* is unique among Du Bois's writing for its use of what we might call "somatic narration": a mode of (often autobiographical) narrative which prioritizes the body's spatiotemporal porousness: its ability to act as both receiver and transmitter of ontological difference. While most readings of *Souls* emphasize the unfolding of black consciousness, or the mind, this essay instead brings the body into critical focus by plumbing the ways Du Bois appeals to the environmental plasticity of bodies—their ability to affect and to be affected—as a creative textual means of addressing and redressing racial strife and crisis at the dawn of the twentieth century.[2]

As Ryan Schneider (2010) observes, "critics have shown minimal interest in the conceptualization and thematization of emotion in [Du Bois's] writings and are far more apt to focus (often exclusively) on his intellectual influences and achievements" (3). Exploring the neglected terrain of sentimental rhetorics in *Souls*, Melvin Rogers (2018) has similarly pointed to Du Bois's politics of democratic contestation, which appeals to and is grounded in his readers' "cognitive-affective dimension of judgment" (5). In league with such readings, yet different from them, I examine how *Souls* turns to flows of affect to transmit the strivings of black folk to its readers, as well as reveal how divisions—sometimes between selves and others; sometimes between the past and present—can be ruptured and transgressed, even as they also persist as part of modernity's enduring structure.

In turning to James's "A World of Pure Experience" to illuminate key moments and themes in *Souls*, I do not intend to subordinate Du Bois's thinking to James's. Rather, my aim is to open up interpretive resonances and pathways not otherwise accessible to both authors. James's analogical use of the Dyaks's shrunken head as a figure for his philosophical system is problematically pedagogical, particularly in its

[2] For a reading that traces the influence of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* on Du Boisian double consciousness, see Shamoon Zamir's *Dark Voices*; in particular, his chapter "Double Consciousness: Locating the Self."

casual appropriations of indigenous cultures and practices. James's purpose in mobilizing such an image is in part rhetorical. That is, he wants to position himself in a self-deprecating manner to gain sympathy with his audience: "the pluralistic empiricism which I profess offers but a sorry appearance" (650). Yet James's analogy is also consistent with his broader philosophical efforts to counter Western philosophy's hegemonic tendencies: its attempts to contain and restrict the heterogeneous and the multiple within its symbolic borders. James instead wants to reclaim the novel incompleteness of being: the ways in which being is underwritten by becoming. It is important to recognize, however, that for Du Bois, the gothic landscape of race relations during Reconstruction has very different stakes and implications. As Du Bois himself asserts (recalling his time at Harvard): "My attention from the first was focused on…the problem of the admission of my people into the freedom of democracy. This my school training touched but obliquely" (574).[3] For Du Bois, then, philosophy is not merely a theoretical inquiry into the nature of reality but rather a profound laboring to realize the freedoms of Black people amidst a socio-historical, material, and philosophical terrain of terror and profound unease.

Despite such differences, however, both rejected a view of being as either wholly disunited or wholly interrelated; and both understood the quintessentially fragile ontologies of connection at the turn of the century, where withness is never guaranteed to be synonymous with togetherness and often threatens further disjunction. It is this ontology James elaborates and Du Bois strives to inhabit from the point of view of the color line.[4] While my focus in this essay is primarily on Du Bois and James, I will occasionally make reference to related philosophers whom I see as relevant to the conversation—philosophers like Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze, as well as Ralph Waldo Emerson (who occupies a certain pride of place for both James and Du Bois). I

[3] While influenced by James, Du Bois, as Cornel West (1989) notes, "took a turn toward history and the social sciences"; borrowing a phrase from Fanon, West notes how Du Bois aligns himself, morally and intellectually, with "the wretched of the earth" (138-40).

[4] While James sees his pluralism as a desirable alternative to philosophies of the Absolute, Du Bois recognizes the naivety of such philosophies in the historical context of race relations.

reference these thinkers in my discussion both to enrich my analysis and to recontextualize Du Bois and James within what I take to be a broader radical empiricist way of thinking—an ontological orientation stretching beyond James (despite his invention of the term).

James and Du Bois are a familiar pairing in scholarship, primarily through the latter's adoption and reworking of the former's pragmatism.[5] Ross Posnock (1998), for instance, in *Color and Culture*, argues that much like James and John Dewey, Du Bois couples "historicist thinking" with "linguistic skepticism" (57-8). Similarly, Cornel West (1989) places Du Bois in pragmatism's genealogical pantheon for his having sidestepped "the Cartesian epistemological puzzles of modern philosophy" (140). While certainly influenced by pragmatism's epistemological orientations (i.e., its view of truth-as-transaction and the antifoundational nature of belief), the Du Bois of *Souls* is also engaged with and prioritizes vital modes of ontology, both in his investigations into the nature of race as a multiple and changing expression of being as becoming, and in his somatic perspectives on the body and its encircling fields of perception.[6]

Like James, Du Bois understood the importance of turning to the body—often the autobiographical body—to perform social analysis. As Richard Shusterman (2006) remarks (noting James's career-long emphasis on the somatic grounding of thought): "James not only deploys somatic introspection but argues that philosophers have been blind to the body's presence in thought and feeling because they have been

[5] Critics' identification of Du Bois with James's pragmatism is partly accounted for by the overwhelming tendency on the part of pragmatist historians, philosophers, and literary theorists to view James's radical empiricism as a subset of his pragmatism, rather than the other way around. James, however, indicates that pragmatism is merely a subset of his radical empiricism in numerous places, such as, for instance, in the preface to *The Meaning of Truth*. There, James asserts that pragmatism is an important step in realizing his larger philosophical system: "I am interested in another doctrine in philosophy to which I give the name of radical empiricism, and it seems to me that the establishment of the pragmatist theory of truth is a step of first-rate importance in making radical empiricism prevail" (826).

[6] While James's *Essays in Radical Empiricism* was not published until 1912, its contents were not wholly new to his thinking but rather stood as the culmination of his weltanschauung, which James had begun to construct as early as *The Principles of Psychology* (1890). It is not a leap to assert that the ideas comprising radical empiricism in its embryonic stage were the exact same ones James had shared with his students at the time in which Du Bois became one of his closest mentees. Yet as I have tried to suggest in this introduction, Du Bois does not so much repeat James's ideas as transfigure them. It might be more compelling to observe, then, that both thinkers operated in a similar intellectual environment and took up convergent perspectives, though for different purposes and toward different ends.

insufficiently skilled or attentive in somatic introspection" (9). In his 1904 review of *Souls*, Du Bois refers to the "subjective note that runs in each essay," as well as the "penumbra of vagueness" of the text's meaning ("Souls"). The latter phraseology is lifted directly from James and refers to the elusive residue of undeciphered meaning that accompanies immediate perception.[7] Du Bois here appropriates Jamesian terminology to signal *Souls*'s grounding in modes of affect. This fact about its narratological approach is what accounts for both the text's vagueness of meaning, as well as its profundities of revelation, which deliberately challenge (and necessarily encounter) the limits of the articulable. In this sense, *Souls*'s turn to affect—primarily through its grounding in somatic autobiographical narrative—works to excavate the ways in which, as Donovan Schaefer (2015) articulates, "private, local, or individual actions have ramifications for broader regimes of power" (8).

WORLDS OF BARE WITHNESS

The Souls of Black Folk is nothing if not a text that first and foremost responds to and captures a deep social crisis predicated on the failures of sympathetic knowing and cooperative cultural work, both within and between n races. As Du Bois (1986) asserts in "Of Our Spiritual Strivings": "This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture" (365). Set in the context of the missed opportunities, racial tragedies, and the collapsing democratic ideals of the postemancipation United States, it is a text in which—analogous to the world of pure experience depicted in James's essay—individuals as well as communities exist in relations of bare *withness* to one another. Such withnesses are sometimes the products of white supremacy's policing in the broadest sense (its carving out of civic space), while others have more to do with the cultural, intellectual, and imaginative inability to intimately know the other despite

[7] In "The Stream of Thought" from *The Principles of Psychology* (clearly Du Bois's source) James writes: "Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. With it goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, and the dying echo of whence it came to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead. The significance, the value, of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it" (246).

shared or intersecting lifeworlds. The tragedy of the age, as Du Bois writes in "Of Alexander Crummell," is that "men know so little of men" (520).

One of the starker examples in *Souls* of such fragmentation is "Of the Coming of John." Its only fictional chapter, "Of the Coming of John" traces multiple failures of sympathetic knowing, denuding Southern white supremacy's brutally gothic segmentations: its violent policing of social, civic, intellectual, and aesthetic space. Themes concerning the bare withness of social relations between and among races anchors the narrative at its outset: "the black folk thought of one John, and he was black; and the white folk thought of another John, and he was white. And neither world thought the other world's thought, save with a vague unrest" (523). As critics have noted, "Of the Coming of John" is primarily occupied with the perils, pitfalls, and ultimate limitations of talented tenth leadership, as it seems to reflexively revise Du Bois's previously articulated "positivistic faith in the progressive amelioration of racial conflicts," by suggesting instead that "such a form of leadership might well-nigh be impossible to fulfill" (Lemke 2008, 37, 45).

The chapter explores such snares and contradictions through the character of John Jones, a would-be black intellectual and community activist. John experiences profound alienation upon his return to Altahama, Georgia after having been educated in the North. As Adalaine Holton observes (2010), "Though John returns with the desire to achieve positive change in his community, ironically, he finds upon his arrival that his new insights and perspectives have effectively distanced him from the very people he returns to help" (34). Despite the double tragedy of John's social alienation and his brutal lynching at the end of the story, the narrative gestures toward a subversive challenge to such ontological diremptions through the fugitivity of affect. In a moment of fragile connectivity, John's sister, Jennie, is deeply impressed and affected by the becoming intensity of John's melancholy: "She watched the flickering lights upon the sea, and said thoughtfully, 'I wish I was unhappy,—and—and,' putting both arms about his neck, 'I think I am, a little, John'" (530-31). Thus, despite John's inability to communicate "across differences in class, education, and experience" (Holton 2010, 33), his existential despair is also a site of animate productivity—a vital affect rendering

Jennie (who will most likely carry John's memory forward) radically porous to ontological difference.

I begin with this chapter from *Souls* to highlight and foreground the text's recursive themes of gothic fragmentation coupled with the vitality of affects, which often subvert, complicate, and overflow such fragmentations, even as those fragmentations and striations persist as part of modernity's enduring structure. This same theme permeates *Souls*'s introduction of its key tropes of the veil and double consciousness. In his 1897 address to the American Negro Academy, "The Conservation of Races," Du Bois poses what might be considered a greener iteration of double consciousness, specifically as it relates to the "warring" ideals of African and European identity: "What, after all, am I? Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and be an American?" (821). Interestingly, however, when we turn to an examination of double consciousness as Du Bois revises and re-presents it in "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," we see that the ontological question grounding double consciousness ("What, after all, am I?") posed in "The Conservation of Races" has its origins in the radical permeability of the self.

In one of the most memorable autobiographical scenes in *Souls*, Du Bois recalls his first encounter with the veil as a child passing "rollicking boyhood" within the idyllic spaces of New England:

> I remember well when the shadow swept across me…In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting cards—ten cents a package—and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card,—refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. (364)

Within the veil's onto-phenomenological presencing, the young Du Bois encounters a larger world, or matrix, of social-affective forces—forces that surge and circulate through bodies, decomposing and recomposing identities. In such a moment, the boundedness of the self is acutely affronted, since the affective powers constituting racial difference cut transversally across bodies, stratifying identities and social castes

(including, for that matter, the racialized identity of the tall newcomer). Du Bois's characterization of the veil recalls and critically revises Ralph Waldo Emerson's autobiographical account of transparent revelation. Just as Emerson (1983) depicts a permeable self affectively open to "the currents of Universal Being" (10), so too does Du Bois experience the immanent permeability of the self vis-à-vis the revelation of the white world beyond the veil and its vast recesses.

Shamoon Zamir has argued (along with others) that the primary intellectual antecedent for Du Boisian double consciousness is Hegel.[8] The drawing of the veil in *Souls*, according to Zamir, inaugurates double consciousness's postlapsarian fall into the world of race-based self-consciousness by giving rise to a historically mediated subjectivity analogous to what Hegel calls the "unhappy consciousness" (i.e., the self that strives to know itself in and through its contestations with the Other): "The Hegelian master-slave struggle is here refigured in terms of the operation of power within the subjecting gaze" (Zamir 1995, 139). What is typically elided in Hegelian readings of double consciousness, however, is the extent to which *Souls* roots double consciousness in the spatiotemporally plastic body. That is, Du Bois in *Souls* narrates double consciousness as the resulting formation of impersonally affective material forces that encircle, assemble, and thrust the subject into a nexus of shifting identity formations constitutive of racialized modernity, which manifests as an ongoing—as well as ever-productive—problematic. From this perspective, double consciousness has no clear dialectical solution but rather opens up a virtual field of imperfect solutions. As Todd May (2005) puts it in his discussion of Deleuze: "Problems become an open field in which a variety of solutions may take place. It is the problems rather than the solutions that are primary" (84).

[8] Hegelian readings of Du Bois are fairly commonplace in scholarship. See Joel Williamson's *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation*. See also "W. E. B. Du Bois, Hegel, and the Staging of Alterity" by Winfried Siemerling from *Callaloo* 24 (1). More recently, Stephanie J. Shaw's *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Souls of Black Folk* (2013), reinterprets *Souls* as work that extends Hegel's world-historical teleology of Spirit to the Black diaspora.

Du Bois's revision of double consciousness in *Souls* (i.e., his reframing it in terms of a first-person phenomenological and autobiographical account) constitutes Du Bois's attempt not only to re-present double consciousness in terms more accessible to a wider readership but also to foreground a vitalist account of the self, one which more vividly specifies how racialized subjectivity is fundamentally underwritten by the self's plasticity within modernity's dynamically unstable and shifting matrix of relations.[9] In "Affect, Relationality and the 'Problem of Personality,'" Lisa Blackman (2008) considers why "William James's formulation of 'the problem of personality' is an important yet forgotten historical antecedent of contemporary work across social and cultural theory that is being described as 'vitalist'" (23). Pointing to the recent trend of "vitalist conceptions of life" emerging across multiple disciplines, Blackman identifies James as an important forerunner to a way of thinking about experience and subjectivity that is "marked by a dissolution of the boundaries between self and other" (23-4).

It is precisely such dissolution of the boundaries between self and other Du Bois's re-presentation of double consciousness and the presencing of the veil in *Souls* indicates. Subjectivity is thus the result of an affective play of difference. While the intimately related concepts of the veil and double consciousness are sources of profound suffering, fragmentation, and alienation for Du Bois, they are also, however, sources of vital-affective productivity, for both articulate the racially gothicized foundations and structures of postemancipation American life, just as they also produce what Du Bois

[9] I agree with Schneider's assessment that though double consciousness holds particular relevance to the Black intellectual or artisan, it is also "flexible enough to be read as applicable to the affective-cognitive status of all African Americans" (55). A far-reaching discussion of double consciousness is of course beyond the purposes of my discussion of Du Bois here. Yet it is worth mentioning that my reading of double consciousness complements those of critics like Colin Koopman and Alexander Livingston, who in their respective ways deemphasize double consciousness as more or less appropriated and repurposed from Hegel (i.e., double consciousness conceived as a negation of a negation demanding synthesis). Similar to what I'm mentioning here in the context of Deleuze, Koopman argues, for instance, that Du Bois's tragic political vision relies on the "category of the problematic," an analytic that dedialecticizes historical identity. See Koopman's "Contesting Injustice: Why Pragmatist Political Thought Needs Du Bois" from *Pragmatism and Justice*. See also Livingston's analysis of Du Bois in *Damn Great Empires! William James and the Politics of Pragmatism*. Similar to these critics, I tend to view double consciousness more as a site of complex multiplicity, for it articulates both the self's alienation *and* its prophetic/productive powers. It is, in other words, a difference that continues to difference.

calls "second sight": the ability to diagnose as well as imagine alternatives to the striations of white supremacy.

A vitalist conception of the self clears space for this possibility in that it redefines subjectivity according to its multiplicity and potentiality (as much as its internal divisions). Like Emerson, who gains insight into the flowings and becomings of being through the transparency of sympathetic intuition, Du Bois also gains awareness—specifically, insight into the imperialistic hypocrisies of the white world—through his early encounters with the veil—a point he recalls in *Dusk of Dawn:* "Had it not been for the race problem early thrust upon me and enveloping me, I should have probably been an unquestioning worshiper at the shrine of the social order and economic development into which I was born" (573). Double consciousness is thus underwritten by a radically relational subjectivity, even as that subjectivity often "goes unacknowledged" by the other (Schneider 2010, 68).

After the revelations of double consciousness, *Souls* goes on to represent a series of moments in which "personality and impersonality lie as two extremes along a singular line of experience" (Livingston 2012), and, on occasion, pass into one another beyond the boundaries against which they quiver. In recounting the rise and fall of the Freedmen's Bureau, "Of the Dawn of Freedom," for instance, locates a moment of missed opportunity in American history for cooperative action towards democratic ends—a moment wherein the possibility of forging desperately-needed reparative conjunctions amid severe racial disjunctions is squandered. As Stephanie J. Shaw (2013) puts it: "Through military policy, legislative enactments, *and* new government agencies, the federal government made freedpeople 'the ward of the nation.' But in the end, federal officials dismantled the Freedmen's Bureau [and] black people not only remained unfree but also unprotected" (20).

The chapter is bookended with one of Du Bois's most well-known aphorisms: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line" (372). The aphorism's cyclical temporality—its haunting synchrony, which overtakes historically progressive diachrony—suggests that the color line is a zeitgeist-defining problematic with global reach, since in its broadest dimensions the problem of the color line

concerns "the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea" (372). Indeed, as Paul Gilroy (1995) has shown, *Souls* marks "the first place where a diasporic, global perspective on the politics of racism and its overcoming interrupted the smooth flow of African-American exceptionalisms" (120).

Yet despite the budding global perspective threaded throughout *Souls*, "Of the Dawn of Freedom"'s primary focus is the Civil War and the events immediately following de facto emancipation. Specifically, the chapter provides a counter history to emancipation that emphasizes the intractability of the race problem and diagnoses white America's collective repression about the lasting consequences of slavery. The chapter's subversive and critical rewriting of history from the perspective of the emancipated refocuses national attention on how the material realities of race manifested novel sets of problems at the precise moment in which slavery came to an end and the country rushed to embrace more comforting narratives of reconciliation. As Du Bois shows, the majority of whites in the United States immediately eschewed, dismissed, and/or repressed the prospect of interracial cooperation during and after the war. This negligence, moreover, was clothed in the cultural myth (which notably persists today) that the Civil War was not about slavery: "however much they who marched South and North in 1861 may have fixed on the technical points of union and local autonomy as a shibboleth, all nevertheless knew, as we know, that the question of Negro slavery was the real cause of the conflict" (372). Such collective neglect and repression resulted in "half-hearted" attempts and "hasty" pieces of legislation to address the consequences of emancipation (376-77).

Du Bois thus sketches a world in which white and Black populations frequently occupy the same geographic and civic space yet one in which the reflexive attitudes and entrenched structures of white supremacy demand continued ontological disjunction. Yet, as Du Bois (1986) also suggests, such disjunctions are subject to novel flows of becoming that rupture and contest them:

> Three characteristic things one might have seen in Sherman's raid through Georgia, which threw the new situation into shadowy relief: the Conqueror, the

> Conquered, and the Negro. Some see all significance in the grim front of the destroyer, and some in the bitter sufferers of the Lost Cause. But to me neither soldier nor fugitive speaks with so deep a meaning as that dark human cloud that clung like remorse on the rear of those swift columns, swelling at times to half their size, almost engulfing and choking them. In vain were they ordered back, in vain were bridges hewn from beneath their feet; on they trudged and writhed and surged, until they rolled into Savannah, a starved and naked horde of tens of thousands. (376)

Using somatic narrative (i.e., a narrative style that foregrounds the body and its powers and movements), Du Bois's depiction of Sherman's raid suggests that the stratified racial boundaries imposed by white America become impossible to maintain due to a vital and impersonally affective excess which leaks beyond them (in this case, the biopolitical problem of the freedmen); thus, the "deeper question [of what to do with the freedmen] ever forced itself to the surface despite effort and disclaimer" (372). Du Bois's vivid account of Sherman's raid as a linear military regiment set in stark contrast to the vibrantly flowing corporality and fluid mobility of the freedmen, who surround and engulf Sherman like "a dark human cloud," figures both historically as a moment of novel becoming—one which posed unavoidable challenges to America's standing socio-political orders—and prophetically as the ongoing and unstable dynamic between a hegemonic white center and a subversive Black margin.

Tracing what she refers to as Deleuze's "nonorganismic" politics, contradistinct from Hegel's organismic conception of the state, Pheng Cheah (2013) writes that the "power over life [represented by Hegel's image of the ideal state as synonymous with the rationally organized state] discloses an internal limit to itself," that is, "a life that is more powerful than the life of the organism and that is the basis of organic life" (104). In other words, Cheah identifies (vis-à-vis her discussion of Deleuzian vs. Hegelian politics) a vitalism running deeper than and presupposing ideal/rational organization at the state level. The distinction between an organismic and nonorganismic politics is useful here in illuminating Du Bois's rewriting of emancipation in "Of the Dawn of Freedom," for the chapter's economy of imagery gestures toward the ethno-state's own internal limits. The problem of the color line for Du Bois ultimately possesses a vitality—

a productive power (here on display in the form of the swarming of emancipated bodies)—that defies its cultural and organizational statist repression.

Of course, the freedmen ultimately lost their initial legislative victories. Yet Du Bois's larger point is that despite white America's unwillingness to adequately address the many crises of race, the color line nonetheless persists as a vital (and virtual) problem—one that continually actualizes itself in unpredictable ways, deworlding the routines and mythological fantasies of the colonial white imaginary. To put this same concept in terms taken from James's analogy, the feathers and beads of experience dangling about the Dyak's head are bound to intersect at certain crucial points due to a deeper vitalism that ultimately disregards their temporary divisions.

THE NUCLEUS OF THE BODY

The landscape of race relations at the end of the nineteenth-century was not, in James's words, "an aquarium, or crystal globe in which goldfish are swimming," but rather "a quasi-chaos"—an unforgiving ecosystem of varying belief in which ideas, as James writes in "Hegel and His Method," must "buy off" their "rivals and enemies" by "compromising some part of [their] original pretensions" (670, 1171). Set in the context of intraracial contestation among turn-of-the-century Black leadership—in particular, the stranglehold of Booker T. Washington's political regime and the Tuskegee machine's silencing cultural effects—Du Bois in *Souls* advocates a *via media* of black self-culture, liberal education, and robust reform against accommodationism, on the one hand, and black revolutionary separatism on the other.[10]

Recognizing the turbulence of this ecosystem of belief, particularly in chapters like "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" and "Of the Wings of Atlanta," Du Bois takes up what might convincingly be characterized as a Jamesian pragmatist

10 This middle-path is most obvious in "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others": "One class is spiritually descended from Toussaint the Savior, through Gabriel, Vesey, and Turner, and they represent the attitude of revolt and revenge … And yet, by the irony of fate, nothing has more effectually made this programme seem hopeless than the recent course of the United States toward weaker and darker people in the West Indies, Hawaii, and the Philippines" (400).

epistemology vis-à-vis his repeated implication that the will to believe in Black moral and intellectual ideals, and thus pragmatically act upon such ideals, is a necessary precondition for seeing their ultimate verification as truth. Indeed, one of the governing tropes of *Souls* is its insistence—within the gothic landscape it navigates—that Black ideals are *real*, i.e., that they produce practical differences contingent upon their being believed in and acted upon. Du Bois thus feels that Washington's hyper-materialist program of Black uplift leads ultimately to further gothic fragmentation, just as the displacement of Black spirituality in the face of the new industrial order would stunt the Black community's prophetic powers, forfeiting the gifts of second sight (hence Du Bois's use of an Emersonian perfectionist tone in "Of the Wings of Atlanta"): "What if the Negro people be wooed from a strife for righteousness, from a love of knowing, to regard dollars as the be-all and end-all of life?" (419).

Yet, as I have already suggested, a strictly pragmatist reading of *Souls*, while crucial in charting the text's philosophical influences and orientations, does not adequately or fully account for its investments in ontology—specifically, the body as a productive site registering as well as subverting regimes of power, and the impersonal affective forces of time, space, and place which at turns reinforce as well as subvert those same regimes of power. Zamir (1995) has argued that though Du Bois finds affinity with James's unique grounding of philosophical thought in the somatic, nonetheless, a Jamesian reading of Du Bois's intellectual project is radically insufficient since for Zamir, James problematically turns consciousness "from a creative faculty [into] a passive faculty [by] receiving the world as experience" (157). For Du Bois, however, it is often the taking of the body and its affections as the locus for philosophical thought and radical critique which constitutes one of *Souls*'s primary sources of creative-intellectual agency. The body and its affections, for Du Bois, is radically relational, operating as a means of opening the self to the true complexities and predicaments of the world it inhabits by making, as Sara Ahmed (2006) articulates, those complex forces whirling around it "available within the bodily horizon" (2).

One crucial way *Souls* subverts Washington-style accommodationism is by drawing on the past as a vital, autonomous force. Concerning *Souls*'s historical context,

Kelly Wagers (2008) notes that "at the nineteenth century's close, most American historians were pronouncing…the scientific study of 'progress' as the way to discover universal historical laws and enact national reconciliation" (78). In "*The Souls of Black Folk*: Thought and Afterthought," Zamir (2008) similarly offers the stirring observation that "Du Bois's resistance to a naïve historical progressivism is intimately bound up with his deeply felt sense of the past as a living presence in the here and now" (13). Washington's accommodationist regime reinforced this notion of progress with an appreciable degree of psychical violence and cultural repression, for it demanded the Black community's wholesale embrace of capitalism's gothic fragmentations, specifically, its amputations of the past from the present.

In depicting the perceiving, feeling, and environmentally plastic body as a site for the dynamic reception of the past—the "nucleus of every man's experience," as James writes, being "the sense of his own body" (1171)—"Of the Meaning of Progress" poses ones of *Souls*'s most trenchant critiques of late nineteenth-century America's fetishization of progress, both within white America and the Tuskegee machine. The chapter opens by centering memory, which envelops the nucleus of the affected body-mind, as one of its governing tropes: "Young and happy … I shall not forget that summer, seventeen years ago … A picnic now and then, and a supper, and the rough world was softened by laughter and song. I remember how—But I wander" (405). The em dash after "how" is a subtle and easily overlooked example of what James's calls transitions: the affectively immanent and vaguely multiple parts of nondualist experience. (In this case, the memory and the remembering subject are equally real; neither is privileged over the other.) As the passage suggests, memory possesses a kind of autonomy of excess, for it floods and overwhelms the mind, disclosing the past as an irrepressible force.

While Du Bois recounts the fate of several local folk in the rural hills of Alexandria, Tennessee (where he taught while attending Fisk) the chapter's primary focus is on Josie, "a thin, homely girl of twenty, with a dark-brown face and thick, hard hair" (406). Du Bois pairs the Negro spiritual "My way's cloudy" with an epigraph taken from Fredrich von Schiller's 1801 tragedy *The Maid of Orleans*, a work loosely based on

Joan of Arc, which tells the story of Johanna, a character who, "because of circumstances beyond her control … must undergo a terrible struggle" (Waterman 1952, 231).

A saintly prophet of humble origins who suffers martyrdom, Johanna is Du Bois's literary proxy for Josie. Du Bois implicitly casts Josie as a member of the talented tenth *in nuce*: "First came Josie [into the schoolhouse] and her brothers and sisters. The longing to know, to be student in the great school at Nashville, hovered like a star above this child-woman amid her work and worry, and she studied doggedly" (407). This passage echoes Du Bois's previous assertion in "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" that throughout history, "the powers of single black men flash here and there like falling stars, and die sometimes before the world has rightly gauged their brightness" (365). Like the "living plant" that reaches skyward with its "roots still clinging in the mould," Josie represents the ideals of Goethean and Emersonian self-culture, yet wasted for African Americans due to white supremacy's cultural and material forces (485). We find at the end of the chapter that "Josie shivered and worked on…until [she] crept to her mother like a hurt child, and slept—and sleeps," a grammar of death deliberately blending the past with the present tense, thus evoking the past's ability to perpetually act in and on the present (411).

Though Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*) was not published until roughly ten years after *The Souls of Black Folk*, it is interesting to note that Du Bois narrates an experience that is appreciably Proustian in its understanding of the affective powers of memory. At the end of the chapter, he recounts what could be described as a moment of *memoire involontaire*: "I came by chance once more to the walls of Fisk University, to the halls of the chapel of melody. As I lingered there in the joy and pain of meeting old school-friends, there swept over me a sudden longing to pass again beyond the blue hill…to learn how life had gone with my school-children" (411). A highly recursive text, *Souls* here again uses the same language and imagery as it does when Du Bois describes the presencing of the veil, which "swept" across him in childhood. In this instance, however, it is the past which repeats and intrudes upon the present with an autonomy of vital affect (363).

"Of the Meaning of Progress"'s insistence upon the ontological reality of the past also draws compelling parallels to one of James's contemporaries, Henri Bergson—particularly, Bergson's 1896 work, *Matière et mémoire* (*Matter and Memory*), which, by James's own admission, greatly influenced and prefigured his radical empiricism. Given Bergson's overwhelming popularity in the United States, Du Bois was also very likely familiar with the former's ideas about memory. Keith Ansell-Pearson (2005) notes that in Bergson's conception of memory, "Memory becomes superfluous and devoid of actual interest. But it is precisely because of this lack of interest and suspension of need that it can reveal itself as a disruptive and creative power" (1119). Memory, for Bergson, is not merely the mechanical repetition of past perception but rather a vital and virtual co-presence with present perception. Memory lies dormant in the present due to the present's practical exigencies, yet it can upspring and rush into the present unpredictably. As Deleuze (1991) writes in *Bergsonism*, the profound result of the Bergsonian revolution is its realization that the past "would never be constituted if it did not coexist with the present whose past it is. The past and the present do not denote two successive moments, but two elements which coexist" (59).[11]

Du Bois, in "Of the Meaning of Progress," suggests a similar ontological/virtual co-presencing of past with present, for the chapter both ironizes and displaces what Wagers (2008) astutely dubs "progress' smooth logic" (94). "Of the Meaning of Progress" insists that the question of who remembers and of what is remembered is deeply moral, spiritual, and political. For Du Bois, the gothically fragmenting imperatives of

[11] In the midst of composing this essay, for instance, I took one of my regular walks through Central Park, where I came upon a plaque for Seneca Village. The name rang familiar but as I read the plaque, I suddenly realized that the land I was standing on was formerly a village of homes owned by African Americans during the first decades of the nineteenth century—land seized by the city in 1853 to build Central Park using eminent domain. According to the Central Park Conservancy's website: "Seneca Village allowed residents to live away from the more built-up sections of downtown Manhattan and escape the unhealthy conditions and racial discrimination they faced there." I use this little bit of autobiography (taking a cue from Du Bois) to illustrate that in this instance, the vitality and potency of the past had found itself coiled in the present, waiting to reassert itself. Granted, this is not the individual or subjective memory that Bergson typically refers to, but rather collective memory. Still, such collective memory possesses a vital and virtual co-presence with the present, such that it can autonomously intrude upon it in unexpected ways. In fact, one could say that such instances of memory radically decompose and recompose the individual subject by disclosing planes of meaning not otherwise available when perception is confined to the exigencies of action in the pure present.

nationalism demand traumas of collective forgetting. Yet it is the vitally of affect—specifically, the autonomy of the past as a virtual co-presence with the present—which subverts such forgetting. Du Bois's critique of culturally collective modes of amnesia and historical erasure due to the exigencies of utilitarian and capitalistic progressivism is not a discretely posed one but occurs throughout *Souls* as a trope vivifying the dogged persistence of the past and the importance of maintaining a robust and honest dialogue with it. *Souls* in fact will implicitly and recursively pose the open-ended question closing "Of the Meaning of Progress": "And all this life and love and strife and failure,—is it the twilight of nightfall or the flush of some faint-dawning day?" (414). Despite the chapter's clear skepticism, Du Bois offers no definitive resolution concerning progress. Progress is not a question of teleology or dialectical synthesis, but a locus of vital-affective indeterminacy. The chapter ends with the surrounding silence of the problem, inviting the reader to dwell in its enveloping and becoming intensity: "Thus sadly musing, I rode to Nashville in the Jim Crow car" (414).

"YOUR MEMORIAL HALL AND MINE"

Reaffirming radical empiricism's ontological nondualism—its rejection of transcendental egos, cogitos, or any other such philosophical chimeras—James asserts the following about Berkeleyan idealism:

> For the Berkeleyan school, ideas (the verbal equivalent of what I term experiences) are discontinuous. The content of each is wholly immanent, and there are no transitions with which they are consubstantial and through which their beings may unite. Your Memorial Hall and mine, even when both are percepts, are wholly out of connection with each other. Our lives are a congeries of solipsisms, out of which in strict logic only a God could compose a universe of discourse. No dynamic currents run between my objects and your objects. Never can our minds meet in the *same*. (1176)

Has James chosen Memorial Hall as his illustration of a shared or "conterminous" perception out of convenience merely? Perhaps. Yet he does feel that academic philosophy has by and large covered over something very basic about being: the body. Our worlds of immediate perception and becoming first and foremost surround the

body, comprising its vital affections. In subordinating or erasing the body altogether, philosophy has most traditionally privileged concepts, cognition, and representation. Radical empiricism, however, inverts this paradigm, centering the body and its surrounding fields, showing how consciousness is derived therein.

This is precisely the novel way in which James accounts for the question of how two minds can know one thing (without falling back on appeals to the transcendental subject):

> Why do I postulate your mind? Because I see your body acting in a certain way. Its gestures, facial movements, words and conduct generally, are 'expressive,' so I deem it actuated as my own is, by an inner life like mine…In that perceptual part of my universe which I call your body, your mind and my mind meet and may be called conterminous…For instance, your hand lays hold of one end of a rope and my hand lays hold of the other end. We pull against each other. Can our two hands be mutual objects in this experience, and the rope not be mutual also? (1176-77)

"Know," however, denotes cognition, and it seems that James is after what arrives before and/or in excess of the purely cognitive. James's point, of course, is that we can know the reality of other minds because we sense the living animacy of another's body as it mimics meaning back to ours. Yet James's language has implications beyond its obvious argument. His rope image suggests a multitude of alternating vibrational connections moving molecularly between bodies and selves—selves that leak into other selves: "If you alter an object in your world, put out a candle, for example, when I am present, *my* candle *ipso facto* goes out" (1177).

"Of the Sons of Master and Man" devotes concerted attention to what we might call—modifying James's phrasing slightly—the possibility of how two body-minds can share a common field or plane of becoming, and thus be "conterminous." Wagers (2008) remarks that "critics consider 'Of the Sons of Master and Man' less frequently than other chapters, although it perhaps most completely outlines the method of inconclusive 'contact' over 'wholesale arguments' Du Bois advances as a historiographic strategy" (94). The ambiguities, fragmentations, and incompletions of interracial and intraracial contact is of course one of *Souls*'s biggest subjects, and "Sons" sketches this broader

trope in miniature: "Indeed, the characteristic of our age is the contact of European civilization with the world's undeveloped peoples" (475). Here, Du Bois goes the furthest in outlining the gothic structure of the segregated South, generating a modal taxonomy of racial contact—physical proximity, economic and political relations, intellectual commerce, and sympathetic social contact—that remarkably parallels James's taxonomy of ascending degrees of intimacy within radical empiricism's mosaic ontology.

On the rhetorical level, "Sons" works to dispel the racist myth that white supremacy is the result of a hierarchy of innate racial characteristics rather than a set of historically contingent cultural-material formations. Du Bois, however, does endorse a revised Darwinian conception of race—revised in the sense that its criterion is not "survival of the fittest" but cultural, intellectual, and moral superiority: "It is, then, the strife of all honorable men of the twentieth century to see that in the future competition of races the survival of the fittest shall mean the triumph of the good, the beautiful, and the true" (475-6). Yet the primary crisis which the chapter addresses—from which others (such as political disenfranchisement and economic exploitation) emanate—is the gothic social organization of Southern segregation: the fact that it is "usually possible to draw in nearly every Southern community a physical color-line on the map, on the one side of which whites dwell and on the other Negroes" (477). "Sons" in many ways captures the paradoxical nature of Du Bois's political thought at this stage of his life, for it is at once radical in its critique of race relations (highlighting, for instance, the fundamentally racist role of policing, and white supremacy's carving up of civic space) and conservative in its romantic idealizations of the antebellum South's social hierarchies: "This is a vast change from the situation in the past, when, through a close contact of master and house-servant in the big house, one found the best of both races in close contact and sympathy" (477).

What I want to suggest, however, is that "Sons" performs much of its subversive textual work when it turns its attention to an examination of the affective currents passing through segregated Southern life—the ways in which body-minds can become conterminous and porous to one another at unexpected moments:

> Indeed, on the question of questions—the Negro problem—he hears so little that there almost seems to be a conspiracy of silence…But if he lingers long enough there comes the awakening…He realizes at last that silently, resistlessly, the world about flows by him in two great streams: they ripple on in the same sunshine, they approach and mingle their waters in seeming carelessness,—then they divide and flow wide apart. It is done quietly; no mistakes are made, or if one occurs, the swift arm of the law and of public opinion swings down for a moment, as when the other day a black man and a white woman were arrested for talking together on Whitehall Street in Atlanta. (488)

Du Bois's passage is compelling in that it sketches, from an embodied perspective, what it feels like to become with the flows and durational becomings of segregation (consistent with *Souls*'s broader style and textual strategy of somatic narration, i.e., Du Bois's emphasis on the body and its perceptual fields). Even more compelling, however, is Du Bois's subtle acknowledgment of the aleatory nature of affects, which ambulate and crystalize both toward racial-social stratification *and* subversive destratification.[12] Thus, it is the decided *unpredictability* of the crosscurrents of affective exchange between races (and genders) that demands ideological state intervention at the carceral level—intervention which enforces the subtler atmospheric strains of what Du Bois calls the "tremendous force of unwritten law" (489).

Du Bois's sketch of stochastic racial contact exemplifies what Deleuze and Guattari, in works like *A Thousand Plateaus*, trace as the distinction between the macropolitical and the micropolitical, or the molar and the molecular. As May (2005) notes, the macropolitical "concerns large political entities or institutions or historical forces" and is the domain of traditional liberal (and even Marxist) thought, whereas the micropolitical, or molecular, is interested in political analysis from the perspective of "the small elements that comprise our political lives" (126-7). As Peter Merriman (2019) puts it, "molar masses or bodies are 'punctual', highly organised, easily represented and expressed" whereas molecular movements "are vital, incessant, and unruly, operating

[12] It is important to stress that affects are not inherently subversive. As well-known affect theorists like Brian Massumi have shown, in many cases affects can work to serve reactionary political agendas (as Massumi discusses in the context of the rise of Ronald Reagon). Because affects have no determinate teleology, they pull us along and circulate through us in multiple, unpredictable ways.

below the threshold of perception and associated with becomings of innumerable kinds" (67). For Du Bois, the molecular flows constitutive of racial contact (or a lack thereof) are felt yet defy clear articulation: "It is, in fine, the atmosphere of the land, the thought and feeling, the thousand and one little actions which go to make up life" (487).

Such "thousand and one little actions" have the potential to unsettle the stratifications of racial identity and caste, just as they also act as so many impersonal forces shoring them up. In the same chapter, Du Bois emphasizes the importance of taking "a man by the hand" and looking "frankly into his eyes" to feel "his heart beating with red blood" (490). Here we might be led to ask if Du Bois problematically places undue faith in notions of universal liberal sympathy as a means of effecting social amelioration (490). Yet it is fairly apparent that Du Bois is aware of sympathetic identification's racial and historical mutability. As Susan Mizruchi (1999) points out, *Souls*'s account of anti-Black racism in "Of the Passing of the First-Born"—on display during Burghardt's funeral procession, when white passerby hurl the N-word at Du Bois and his family—underscores just how sympathy can function "as a means of differentiation and exclusion" (275).[13] Despite his awareness and acknowledgment of the racially gothic segmentations of sympathetic identification, Du Bois also thinks that interracial contact is important in a psychically and socially fragmented landscape. Like James, in his discussion of the conterminous possibilities of body-minds, Du Bois suggests that the porousness of body-minds is capable of transferring affective molecularities through contact that can, at times, leak through the grids of fixed racial differentiation and hierarchy.

[13] Du Bois's infant son, Burghardt, died of diphtheria in 1899. As Henry Louis Gates Jr. notes in his introduction to the Norton Critical Edition of *The Souls of Black Folk*, the child's parents, William and Nina, were "unable, in the child's critical hours, to find either a black physician to attend [their] dying son or a white physician in Atlanta who was willing to treat a black child" (xxx).

SOULS'S VITAL AFTERLIVES

In some sense, "Of the Sons of Master and Man" stands in synecdochal relation to the entirety of *Souls*, for its emphasis on affective molecularity suggests, in miniature, what *Souls* as a whole wishes to accomplish with its readers.[14] Recalling his 1904 review of *Souls*, Du Bois himself notes that by abandoning traditional argument in favor of an "intimate tone of self-revelation," he grants the reader "peculiar warrant in setting his judgment against mine, but at the same time some revelation of how the world looks to me cannot easily escape him" ("The Souls of Black Folk"). Interestingly, though Du Bois would go on in works like *Dusk of Dawn* and *Darkwater* to critique and revise his *Souls*-era views for being insufficiently attentive to the imbrications of racism and Western capitalism, he nonetheless seems to recognize, even at this early stage of his career, the long game he is playing, i.e., that the immediate cultural temperature would be such that his white readers would take a skeptical and/or condescending attitude toward his book while nonetheless retaining the unshakeability of its revelations—revelations that, in short, would hover like an obscure halo of unaddressed feeling and vague impress along the edges of the white intellect's defined nucleus and sharply articulated edges.

In a recent and important article on the publication history and reception of *The Souls of Black Folk*, print culture historian Lucas Dietrich (2017) tracks the text's "widespread review and discussion" (321). In particular, Dietrich seek to revise and complicate reception histories such as Herbert Aptheker's, which "functions on a binary axis of positive and negative reception," examining instead how "Du Bois's emotional appeal was often seen as a central feature of the text" (322). While this emotional appeal (primarily among Northern white readers) was a source of provocation, discussion, and, most often, sympathetic approbation (all of which boosted the text's sales), it was also the source of what Dietrich identifies as racial stereotyping. One example is a review of *Souls* published in *The Nation*, which "commends Du Bois's 'passion'" yet goes on to remark that the "'features of Du Bois's mind are negro features'" (322). Thus, "Du Bois's

[14] Koopman (2017) articulates something similar when he notes that the chapter's detailing of differing modes of social strife is a "signature theme" structuring "the entire book" (184).

efforts to appeal to a benevolent white audience *through* ethnographic writing and religious sympathy," Dietrich concludes, "were interpreted according to racist assumptions and stereotypes" (323).

Dietrich's conclusions seem undeniable and yet when one surveys the reception of *Souls* precisely as Dietrich does, one gains the distinct impression that the text's affective dimensions proliferate a certain contagiousness in spite of its white audience's varying modes of skepticism and/or ethnographically racist praise. Whereas Dietrich points to the failures of sympathy in overturning anti-Black stereotypes among many of *Souls*' white readers (its Black readers in contrast receiving the text by and large with enthusiasm absent of racist stereotyping), the text's historical reception nonetheless registers a vital dissonance between its cognitive and affective levels of meaning that Du Bois himself seemingly anticipates—inducing, that is, a kind of double consciousness in many of his white readers.

In this sense, both the textual work of *Souls*, and Du Bois's own perspective on that textual work, aligns with, and yet goes beyond, James's view on the powers of molecular change, as James hints at in the following 1899 letter sent to Sarah Wyman Whitman (a close friend and local artist):

> As for me, my bed is made: I am against bigness & greatness in all their forms; and with the invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, stealing in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, and yet rending the hardest monuments of man's pride, if you give them time.[15]

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Ahmed, Sara. 2006. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ansell-Pearson, Keith. 2005. "The Reality of the Virtual: Bergson and Deleuze." *MLN* 120 (5): 1112-27.

[15] I am taking this quotation from Livingston's "Excited Subjects" but it can be found in the *The Correspondence of William James*, 8: 546. See Livingston, endnote 90.

Blackman, Lisa. 2008. "Affect, Relationality, and the 'Problem of Personality.'" *Theory, Culture, and Society* 25 (1): 23-47.

Cheah, Pheng. 2013. "Political Bodies Without Organs: On Hegel's Ideal State and Deleuzian Micropolitics." In *Hegel and Deleuze: Together Again for the First Time*, edited by Karen Houle, and Jim Vernon, 97-114. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1991. *Bergsonism*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. New York: Zone Books.

Dietrich, Lucas. 2017. "'At the Dawning of the Twentieth Century': W. E. B. Du Bois, A. C. McClurg & Co., and the Early Circulation of *The Souls of Black Folk*." *Book History* 20: 307-29.

Du Bois, W. E. B. 1904. "The Souls of Black Folk." *The Independent* 57 (2920): 1152.

_____. 1986. W*ritings*. Library of America.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. 1983. *Essays & Lectures*. Library of America.

Gates, Henry Louis Jr. 1999. "Introduction." In *The Souls of Black Folk*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr, and Terri Hume Oliver. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Gilroy, Paul. 1995. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Holton, Adalaine. 2010. "To 'tell again in many ways': Iteration and Translation in *The Souls of Black Folk*." *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory*. 66 (3): 23-43.

James, William. 1987. *Writings 1902-1910*. Library of America.

Koopman, Colin. 2017. "Contesting Injustice: Why Pragmatist Political Thought Needs Du Bois." In *Pragmatism and Justice*, edited by Susan Dieleman, David Rondel, and Christopher Voparil, 179-96. Cambridge: Oxford University Press.

Lemke, Sieglinde. 2008. "Of the Coming of John." In *The Cambridge Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, edited by Shamoon Zamir, 37-47. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Livingston, Alexander. 2012. "Excited Subjects: William James and the Politics of Radical Empiricism." *Theory & Event* 15 (4).

_____. 2016. *Damn Great Empires! William James and the Politics of Pragmatism*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press.

May, Todd. 2005. *Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Merriman, Paul. 2019. "Molar and Molecular Mobilities: The Politics of Perceptible and Imperceptible Movements." *Society and Space* 37 (1): 65-82.

Mizruchi, Susan. 1999. "Neighbors, Strangers, Corpses: Death and Sympathy in the Early Writings of W. E. B. Du Bois." In *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Posnock, Ross. 1998. *Color & Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Black Intellectual*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Rogers, Melvin L. 2018. "The People, Rhetoric, and Affect: On the Political Force of Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*." In *A Political Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, edited by Nick Bromell, 123-58. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Schaefer, Donovan O. 2015. *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Schneider, Ryan. 2010. *The Public Intellectualism of Ralph Waldo Emerson and W. E. B. Du Bois: Emotional Dimensions of Race and Reform*. New York: Palgrave.

Shaw, Stephanie J. 2013. *W. E. B. Du Bois and The Souls of Black Folk*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Shusterman, Richard. 2006. "Aesthetic and Practical Interests and Their Bodily Ground." *William James Studies* 1.

Siemerling, Winfried. 2001. "W. E. B. Du Bois, Hegel, and the Staging of Alterity." *Callaloo* 24 (1): 325-33.

Wagers, Kelly. 2008. "Race, Nation, and Historical (Re)Form in *The Souls of Black Folk*." *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 64 (1): 77-108.

Waterman, John T. 1952. "Die Jungfrau von Orleans in the Light of Schiller's Essays." *The German Quarterly* 25 (4): 230-38.

West, Cornel. 1989. *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Williamson, Joel. 1984. *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zamir, Shamoon. 1995. *Dark Voices: W. E. B. Du Bois and American Thought, 1888-1903*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

_____. 2008. "*The Souls of Black Folk*: Thought and Afterthought." In *The Cambridge Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, edited by Shamoon Zamir, 7-36. Cambridge University Press.

Austin Bailey is a PhD candidate in English at the CUNY Graduate Center, where he is completing a dissertation called "Radical Empiricism Beyond William James." "Radical Empiricism" charts how several prominent nineteenth-century authors in the antebellum and postbellum United States—namely, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Dickinson, Edgar Allan Poe, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman—turn to varying modes of process ontology as a means of engaging socio-political critique and counter-hegemonic resistance. Austin also researches in the area of rhetoric and composition—specifically, alternative assessment practices like ungrading, which foster radical forms of student-centered inclusion and antiracist learning ecologies. Austin teaches American Literature and first-year composition at Hunter College (CUNY), and currently serves as the Writing Across the Curriculum Associate at Lehman College. He lives in New York City with his wife Rebecca and his dog Zola. Email address: abailey2@gradcenter.cuny.edu