

“DUBOIS AND DAMNATION” ENGAGING THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW:
REJECTING THE DIALECTIC OF RACE AND GENDER

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ABSTRACT

“DuBois and Damnation” Engaging the African Worldview: Rejecting the Dialectic of Race and Gender

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Using DuBoisian Phenomenology, a holistic methodological approach, this thesis examines race and gender in the context of DuBois’ seminal essay “The Damnation of Women”. “The Damnation of Women” demarks the emergence of a new dialectic and practical approach to the liberation of humanity. To that end, this study is heavily undergirded by DuBoisian scholarship. Inevitably, this research shows the connections between race, gender, the dialectic and the African Worldview to reveal the common through line of DuBoisian philosophy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am overwhelmed with joy and gratitude to have arrived at this day! I didn't think I was going to make to *this* day. In the writing process, I thought I'd be ABT—all but thesis. I had quit within myself several times. I didn't want to do 'the work' and I didn't do *all* the work because there is more left to do. Thus in that vein, we understand that we are all scholars on a long continuum of scholarship. I am but one piece to a larger puzzle of which we all hold a piece. Nonetheless, on this circumspective journey to getting to this moment, I ended writing in the same spirit of which I started and for that I am grateful and honored to be able to present to you something has been entrusted with me in terms of timely and relevant research.

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¹ "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Job 10:8-11

I trust you will be blessed for your endurance. Believing the things that God will do in your life has blessed me beyond imagination. Thank you for always speaking well of me and speaking life into me. I speak life to you Momma that you may always be blessed with the desires of your heart for you love Him. Momma and Daddy, your 26 years of marriage stands as the testament of my belief in love and marriage. It unequivocally grounds my belief in the reciprocity of the black man and the black woman. I love you and God bless you both.

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PREFACE

“...it was all I had, but bein alive & bein a woman & bein colored is a metaphysical dilemma; I haven't conquered yet; Do you see the point, My spirit is too ancient to understand the separation of soul and gender...”

~Ntozake Shange, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide
When the Rainbow Is Enuf*

This quote has resonated with me since the day I heard it. One way I can explain it is that as a Southern African American Woman there are things that make sense and then there are things that just don't make sense. Through DuBois' research in the South, he came to believe that Southern people were an authentic representation of what it meant to be African.

I don't understand the separation between soul and gender. My spirit is too ancient and connected to something deeper to make sense of that idea. When I read “The Damnation of Women” its statement resonated with me, too, and allowed me to unpack why it was that Shange's quote spoke to me the way it did. The essay gave understanding to why my mind couldn't understand separation. Accordingly, it was in Dr. Montiero's course on DuBois that my curiosities and senses were awakened to what it was that made up the essence of DuBoisian scholarship, which explores the totality of existence and phenomena. Furthermore, I found my academic voice.

While reading his work, I began to notice DuBois' passion for the truth. More to my fascination was his use of capitalizing Truth in text causing “Truth” to become a proper noun. It struck my curiosity. It led me to believe the “Truth” had a deeper meaning—one that was definitive and absolute. “DuBois and Damnation' Engaging the African

Worldview: Rejecting the Dialectic of Race and Gender” is a reflection of my commitment to the truth being vested in African people—African people being inclusive of those of the Diaspora—the African man and the African woman. Our connected and onerous thought process is powerful. Our spirits motivate our passion and purpose; in other words, we are called to a purpose. My calling affects humanity and its realization of the Truth. Truth has to be discovered through both sober ration and moral imperative. Innately, I’ve always felt that way and the assertions made in “The Damnation of Women” concerning the Truth further cement my belief in African people and the sustainability of our Worldview.

Anyone that knows me knows I am ideal. And so, yes, I believe in the ideal of the African Worldview. Where my realism comes in is in the respect that reality can change the practicum but it does not have to change the ideal—in intention and in purpose. In all things, we are striving towards an ideal and the hope is not to compromise our expectation of the ideal in that actualization.

It is of great importance to me to produce a pivotal piece of scholarly work that is a reflection of my commitment to humanity and my time here at Temple. In challenging our minds to think beyond convention as it pertains to DuBois, I have written in the same spirit, purpose and heart of him to lift out more than what has been previously seen in his scholarship. I truly believe in the work I have begun and look forward to the research ahead.

Gala P. Goodwin
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
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CHAPTER 1

The uplift of women is, next to the problem of the color line and the peace movement, our greatest modern cause. When, now, two of these movements—women and color—combine in one, the combination has deep meaning.”²

PURPOSE AND PERTINENCE OF THE STUDY

W.E.B. DuBois’ pivotal essay “The Damnation of Women” (“Damnation”) puts race and gender in context in a dynamic; yet, traditional way. As can be speculated in the epigraph, there is a deep meaning in the combination of women and color. What does it mean to embody womanhood and nationalism, or more specifically black womanhood? What is DuBois speaking of as it relates to their combination and its potency?

Engaging DuBoisian philosophy and historiography raises many contemporary questions apropos to race and gender. What could the history of a phenomenon reveal about how it is taking shape in African³ realities? How have the concepts of gender and race changed the dynamics of the African Worldview and the dynamics of African peoples intra/interpersonal relationships? The perception of modern concepts such as race and gender were foreign to the traditional African and the Diasporic African’s ethos, also known as the African Worldview.

“Damnation” is an important essay of study because it reconfigures how scholars perceive race and gender. Re-examining this essay reveals the centrality of humanity is interlocked in black humanity. Indubitably, race and gender are a means to

² W.E.B. DuBois, “Damnation of Women,” *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Incorporated, 1999), 105.

³ Synonymous terms in this context are: African, African Americans and Africans’ of the Diaspora.

compartmentalize humanity. This research explores the implications of race and gender as dialectical, their historical constitution and the contention that the African Worldview does not draw separation based on either race or gender. Hence, with an understanding of the worldview, DuBois lends to the world an action-based praxis to this way of perceiving the world through Pan-Africanism.

In continuing to establish the importance of this research, it is important to denote as a scholar DuBois is most widely known for his seminal text, *The Souls of Black Folk (Souls)*.⁴ However, “The Damnation of Women” holds significant weight and relevance because it represents a change and an evolution in DuBois’ thought process towards liberation. It is a seminal essay because it distinguishes the change between DuBois’ liberal democratic views and his radical democratic views and it introduces a new dialectic. Therefore, to solely elevate this text within Africana Studies is a disservice to the perpetual foundations of the discipline in philosophy, gender studies, methodology and the practicum component of Africana Studies (social responsibility, volunteerism and activism).

“Damnation” was published in 1920 and is found in DuBois’ text, *Darkwater: Voices From Within the Veil (Darkwater)*. *Darkwater* is a compilation of ten essays coupled with a companion literary piece—a litany, a poem, or a short story. DuBois’ decision to incorporate his literary work in tandem with his critical assessment is reflective of his approach to scholarship but is also reflective of the place both humanities and social science have in the discourse of eradicating oppression. Nevertheless, it is, also, reflective of DuBois’ stance that the academy and the pursuit of education have a place in revolution.

⁴ In *The Souls of Black Folk (Souls)*, DuBois introduces the idea of the Veil and the color line. He shares, “the problem of the 20th Century will be the problem of the color line”—the separation of races. He argues that the Veil is what separates African Americans and European Americans.

Again, it is in his radical democracy phase when DuBois writes, “The Damnation of Women” that we see the dialectical engagement of the Truth:⁵ the rejection of race and gender. In many respects “Damnation”, critiques the European (Western) Worldview juxtapose the African Worldview. Overarching themes such as gender, race, slavery, capitalism, patriarchy, matriarchy, feminism, whiteness, the European Worldview and the African Worldview are all collectively engaged in this one essay to reveal a common through line for DuBoisian philosophy—a belief in Black women and the African Worldview. The assertions in “Damnation” authoritatively situate DuBois in the African Worldview discussion and attach him to a long history of African scholarship. Though seldom read or mentioned as a pinnacle piece in the body of DuBoisian scholarship, this thesis presents an approach to understanding to “The Damnation of Women”.

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The work of W.E.B. DuBois spans a myriad of thought, historical testimony, personal commitment, modern theory and thorough methodology. Tracing DuBoisian thought through his own personal convictions from Liberal Democracy, Radical Democracy, Marxism, Communism, Socialism and ultimately, to Pan-Africanism, navigates contemporary scholars through a space and time of decisions that have already been made as a blue print towards liberation for peoples of color. In his text, *The Negro*, DuBois asserts: “Most men in this world are colored. A belief in humanity means a belief in colored men. The future world will, in all reasonable probability, be what colored men make it.”⁶ It is incumbent of contemporary scholars to have a full contextual understanding of the

⁵ Here the “Truth” is DuBois’ indictment of the implications of race and gender and a proposal for arriving beyond it through the African Worldview.

⁶ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Negro* (Randolph: Wilder, 2008), 116.

decisions, strategies, successes, failures and etcetera to ensure in one's collective and individual pursuits towards liberation a more clear navigation precedes the scholarship. Who better to engage than a man who made so many pioneering decisions in his commitment to the liberation of black⁷ people? Hence, the corpus of DuBois' work still finds significant relevance today. To that end, the works, transformation and philosophy of DuBois will be utilized to undergird the assertions made in "Damnation".

DuBoisian Scholarship and Ideology

The chronology of DuBois' literary works archives his ideological periods. These periods will also serve as a contextual framework throughout the research. For instance, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade*, *The Philadelphia Negro* and *The Souls of Black Folk* are reflective of DuBois' liberal democratic views.⁸ *The Negro* marks a period of DuBois' disillusionment in America's commit to its self-pronounced ideals;⁹ it is a reflection of DuBois' transition into radical democracy, which Manning Marable characterizes as linked with Pan-Africanism.¹⁰ Written in 1915, *The Negro* sought clarify mooted points and "quiet the controversialist who mistakes present personal desire for scientific proof."¹¹ *The Negro* is a short and succinct history book—arguably the beginnings of the larger project.¹² Nevertheless, it is in examining DuBoisian thought through his own trajectory that scholars

⁷ Throughout this essay, the terms Black, African, Diasporic African and African American are used interchangeably.

⁸ For example of his views during this period, in *Souls* he declares, "Work, culture, liberty—all these we need, not singly but together, not successively but together, each growing and aiding each, and all striving toward that vaster ideal that swims before the Negro people, the ideal of human brotherhood, gained through the unifying ideal of Race; the ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to or contempt for the other races, but rather in large conformity to the greater ideals of the American Republic." W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Fine Creative Media, 2003), 14.

⁹ This assertion will be detailed in the latter body of this research.

¹⁰ "For DuBois himself the pursuit of the Pan-Africanist ideal was linked directly to his vision of radical democracy, or perhaps more accurately, multicultural democracy. Africa and peoples of African diaspora could not be free so long as democracy existed only for the few." Manning Marable, "The Pan-Africanism of W.E.B. DuBois" in *W.E.B. DuBois On Race and Culture*, eds. Bernard Bell, Emily Grosholz and James Stewart (New York: Routledge, 1996), 213.

Also worth noting, *Darkwater*, too, denotes a DuBois' transition into radical democracy.

¹¹ DuBois, *The Negro*, Preface.

¹² *The Negro* is the first history of Africa written by DuBois. It is evident *The Negro* is the beginning work of a larger text perhaps the Encyclopedia that DuBois began compiling once in Ghana.

are afforded a more holistic understanding of his assertions and are able to keep them in the correct context.

Namely highlighted in this thesis is DuBois' transformation from a liberal democratic view to a radical democratic view. Liberal democracy is a bourgeoisie democracy, which serves the free market system, capitalism. Conversely, the radical democratic movement attempts to limit the capitalist market. In the years between 1897 and approximately 1914, DuBois wrote from an optimism of pursuing a liberal democratic society. Following that period, during the years of 1915 to approximately 1945, DuBois asserted a radical democratic view. During this period, DuBois engaged Pan-Africanism as the practical envision of, arguably, the African Worldview and radical democracy. More narrowly defined, these works were explored in this study to support the assertions in "Damnation": *"The Conservation of Race," The Souls of Black Folk, The Negro, Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil, Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880, Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept, The World and Africa, The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois: A Soliloquy On Viewing My Life From the Last Decade of It's First Century, Against Racism: Unpublished, Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887-1961*. Although, this collection of works does represent a DuBoisian trajectory of before and after "Damnation", it does pose a delimitation of the study. This research is not reflective of the entire continuum of DuBoisian thought.

DuBoisian Methodology, Historiography and Philosophy

As a historian and sociologist, DuBois used a method called phenomenology. Most known through the work of George F. Hegel, DuBois redefined the methodology. According to DuBois, the lived experience informs the approach, specifically the Black-lived

experience.¹³ Hence, the DuBoisian conception of phenomenology nullified objectivity and included the engagement of subject and subject¹⁴—meaning researcher and phenomenon being studied.¹⁵

In DuBois' scholarship and activism, he became preoccupied with the Truth and the moral imperative or 'praxis-promoting theory'.¹⁶ The Truth came out of the marrying of science/epistemology and the Black-lived experience. Investigating the premise of the Black-lived experience required an acknowledgment of the evolution of history. The re-conceptualization of phenomenology and the primacy of history shape DuBois' perspective throughout this analysis. Through his work, one begins to gain an understanding of why there is a shift in DuBois' thought process and one begins to see the evolution of his philosophy.

Defining the Terms

In order to provide clarity and a congruent synthesis of DuBoisian philosophy, it is imperative to operationalize several key terms, theories and concepts.

- *Dialectic*: the process of arriving at the truth by stating a thesis, developing a contradictory antithesis and combining and resolving them into a coherent synthesis.
- *Phenomenology*: the study of phenomena or a philosophical investigation of experience.
- *Worldview*: the way in which a people make sense of their surroundings; make sense of life and of the universe.
- *African Worldview*: a result or product of African culture, history and philosophy.

¹³ "[DuBois] reasoned that by establishing means to study Africans he would eventually lay conditions for a study of humanity." Anthony Montiero, "W.E.B. Du Bois and the Study of Black Humanity: A Rediscovery," *Journal of Black Studies* 38, no. 4 (2008): 601.

¹⁴ Anthony Montiero, "Research and Writings W.E.B. DuBois" (lecture, Temple University, April, 2009).

¹⁵ "DuBoisian construal is an active process whereby the researcher, scientist, or practitioner actively engages the object of knowledge. Hence, an unbreakable dialectical relationship emerges." Ibid., *DuBois Study Humanity*, 603

¹⁶ Termed coined by Reiland Rabaka in *Du Bois's Dialectics: Black Radical Politics and the Reconstruction of Social Critical Theory*.

African's way of making sense of their surroundings, life and of the universe.

- *Truth*: the marrying of science/epistemology and the Black-lived experience.
- *Spirit*: the guiding entity through space and time. A person's being once the truth is actualized. The Spirit is the creative force, which unites all phenomena.¹⁷

The *dialectic* loosely defined is unity born out the struggle of opposites. More implicitly, it is the process of arriving at the truth by stating a thesis, developing a contradictory antithesis then combining and resolving them into a coherent synthesis.¹⁸ It is important to note that the dialectical process is one that happens within one's self. It is a fight amongst ideas, ideals and ideology. Who I am becomes informed by who I think I am; moreover, who I think I am contradicts who I am.¹⁹

Phenomenology is a method to study phenomena or a philosophical investigation of experience. Hegel's *phenomenology* is anchored in the dialectical process informed by history.²⁰ Where his definition becomes problematic is in his unequivocal negation of African history—African humanity, African spirit or philosophy. DuBoisian Phenomenology reasserts all these realities in his analysis and methodology. Making history a unit of analysis forces one to start at the beginning of history therefore offering a holistic approach for examination. Accordingly, although DuBois had contemporaries in Kant and Hegel, he is the first to stop ignoring the African and Africa as the originating land for all these notions, which yielded him a true reality and a holistic understanding of phenomenon and its interconnectivity. *DuBoisian Phenomenology* situates the study of phenomena in experience; hence, *DuBoisian Phenomenology* is the study of phenomena

¹⁷ Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1995), xxvii.

¹⁸ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4d ed., s.v. "dialectic".

¹⁹ Michael Hoffman, "The Curse of the Hegelian Heritage: "Dialectic," "Contradiction," and "Dialectical Logic" in Activity Theory." (Working paper 9, School of Public Policy, Ivan Allen College, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA 2005).

²⁰ See *Phenomenology of the Mind* and *Phenomenology of the Spirit*.

informed by history, the Black-lived experience, science and epistemology.²¹

Worldview is the way in which a people make sense of their surroundings; make sense of life and of the universe. More specifically, the *African Worldview* is defined as the result or product of African culture, history and philosophy. Informed by an African's lived experience, it is the way of making sense of surroundings, life and of the universe.²²

Ironically, this comprehensive characterization of the African Worldview sounds closely related to DuBoisian Phenomenology.

For example, Daudi Azibo's assertion: "The African Worldview is a product of the African's history, culture, and philosophy".²³ In addition, DuBoisian Phenomenology is, again, defined as the study of phenomena informed by history, the Black-lived experience, science and epistemology. Hence, equally, what is apparent as the research blossoms are the tenants of similarity between DuBoisian Phenomenology and the concept we now term as the African Worldview.

Within the construct of the African Worldview and phenomenology are notions of the Truth and Spirit. DuBois is wedded to seeking the *Truth*, which again can be defined as the marrying of science/epistemology and the Black-lived experience. Hegel insists that the truth is only reached through the *Spirit*, which is both the guiding entity through space and time as well as a person's being once the truth is actualized. The Truth and Spirit are terms and concepts that will be further engaged in the latter body of this research. Moving throughout this research and historiography will reveal how the Black-lived experience shapes and morphs the African Worldview as Truth is actualized.

²¹ Montiero, "Research and Writings," lecture.

²² This definition is derived from the collective work of Dona Richards, Mack Jones and Daudi Azibo.

²³ Daudi Ajani ya Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction Between Black Studies and the Study of Blacks: The Fundamental Role of Culture and the African-Centered Worldview," in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 528.

PROGRESSION OF CHAPTERS

This research is organized into five chapters. After this chapter is Chapter Two. Chapter Two is entitled “Connecting DuBois to the African Worldview: Establishing DuBoisian Phenomenology”. It is this chapter’s role to show DuBois’ alignment to the African Worldview, to show the African Worldview as phenomenological and show the divergence between the African Worldview and the European Worldview. Chapter Three, which is entitled “DuBois’ argument in “Damnation”: Looking At and Beyond the Text,” begins the literal analysis of “The Damnation of Women”. Also, here, the research begins to demonstrate the implications of race and gender. Ultimately, this chapter unravels the emergence of a new dialectic found within DuBois’ philosophy. “An Emerging New Dialectic: Engaging the African Worldview” is Chapter Four. In this vein, we fully explicate the new dialectic and the proclivity it has in sustaining the African Worldview through space and time. Finally, within this chapter, we are able to delve into the complexities of the Truth and Spirit, as well as DuBois’ passion with the pursuit of the Truth. The revelation of Truth, inevitably, leads DuBois to a praxis-promoting theory and moral imperative. Lastly, Chapter Five: “Concluding on DuBois and “Damnation””. Chapter Five serves as a final abridgement to the complexities explored in this research and succinctly reveals the common through line of DuBoisian scholarship. It also suggests implications for further study.

CHAPTER 2

CONNECTING DUBOIS TO THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW: ESTABLISHING DUBOISIAN PHENOMENOLOGY

Ultimately within “Damnation”, DuBois reveals the implications of race and gender as a result of, in many respects, the differences between the nature and intent of the African Worldview contrast the European Worldview. Furthermore, as stated in the previous chapter, examining the African Worldview reveals similar tenants of engaging DuBoisian Phenomenology. It is this chapter’s role to piece together DuBois’ connection to the African Worldview, DuBoisian Phenomenology’s connection to the African Worldview and show the divergence between the African Worldview and the European Worldview.

There are three particular definitions of the African Worldview, which illuminate DuBois’ understanding of the Worldview or rather alignment with the African Worldview. In reading DuBois’ 1897 essay, “Conservation of Races”, DuBois explicates a similar notion of the African Worldview, as defined by Azibo and his contemporaries:

“While race differences have followed mainly physical racial lines, yet no mere physical distinctions would really define or explain the deeper differences—the cohesiveness and continuity of these groups. The deeper differences are spiritual, psychical, differences—undoubtedly based on the physical, but infinitely transcending them. The forces that bind... [are] race identity and common blood; secondly, and more

important, common history, common laws and religion, similar habits of thought and a conscious striving together for certain ideals of life.²⁴

Latter chapters will further assert that DuBois argued there was no scientific definition of race; however, what he did notice were deeper differences between races—these were differences in which we now define as components of the African Worldview—not limited or exclusive to—common history, blood, law, religion and similar habits of thought. It is also fair to say that DuBois engaged those differences and operated out of the acknowledgement of those differences. Consequently, DuBois' summation is align with the African Worldview.

In the trajectory of defining the African Worldview, the association between DuBois' understanding of the African Worldview and Azibo's definition of African Worldview become apparent. In "Articulating the Distinction Between Black Studies and the Study of Blacks: The Fundamental Role of Culture and the African-Centered Worldview", Azibo defines the African Worldview as a product of the African's history, culture, and philosophy.²⁵ Again, both note the congruence in thought, blood, history and aims of African people. In the same vein of Azibo, scholar Dona Richards characterizes the Worldview as:

...when a group of people share a common heritage, a common set of experiences and a common culture, an emotional bond is created between them. The fact that a people's experiences and historical

²⁴ W.E.B. DuBois, "The Conservation of Race," *The American Negro Academy Occasional Papers, No. 2* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University 2006), 7.

²⁵ Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction", 528.

circumstances are shared over long periods of time in the setting of the culture makes them one, and their oneness creates a common *spirit*.²⁶

DuBois and Richards are speaking to the same continuum and cohesiveness in respect to a shared history and a shared cultural experience. What Richards adds to the discussion of defining the African Worldview is that in this shared experience over time, a oneness creates the same spirit. Hence, defiantly, African Americans share the same spirit of Africans through our common heritage, experiences and history.²⁷

In her discussion, Richards uses several concepts to thread together the intricacies of African Worldview. The 'emotional' substance referred to above collectively refers to the by-product of the ethos: "Ethos, like culture, is understood to refer to shared reaction and response."²⁸ How is it that ethos and worldview are related? Most poignantly and succinctly illustrated by Richards:

Ethos and worldview are intimately related; both are byproducts of culture, and both help to create culture. One of the things that culture does for its members is to present them with a systematic way of ordering their experiences, these experiences together making up their phenomenal world, [their African Worldview].

This idea is easy to understand because in his definition, Azibo makes a similar assertion about the nature of the African Worldview. Remembering his definition, Azibo affirms Worldview is a result or product of African culture, history and philosophy. Furthermore, African thought is derived from a shared cultural experience. Hence, culture is centric to

²⁶ Dona Richards, "Implications of African-American Spirituality," in *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity*, eds. Molefi Kete Asante and Kariamuwelsh Asante (Trenton: African World Press, 1990), 208.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

worldview.²⁹ The nature of the African Worldview is explicit. Cybernetic relationships define the intricacies of the Worldview.³⁰ Cultural factors inform cultural aspects and, equally, cultural aspects beget cultural factors. Literally, each component of the Worldview grows out of itself.³¹

Another scholar's work helps to further understand DuBois' 'deeper differences' as the African Worldview; Mack Jones asserts, "people have a worldview that is a product of their lived experience and that constitutes the lens through which the world of sense perceptions is reduced to described fact."³² Jones adds to the conversation the importance of one's lived experience, namely the African experience informs the perception. DuBois, too, has stressed the importance of the Black-lived experience in pursuing the Truth and in his phenomenology. For instance, when referencing the African Worldview, the African experience informs the perception. Similarly, DuBois proclaims in his 1915 text, *The Negro*: "Negroes differ from whites in their inherent genius and stage of development. Their development must not, therefore, be sought along European lines, but along their own native lines."³³ In this DuBois is saying the Black-lived experience must dictate

²⁹ As proclaimed by Azibo, there are two levels of culture: cultural deep structure and surface level structure. The cultural deep structure is broken down into two levels. The primary level is consisted of cultural factors namely ontology, axiology, and cosmology (cultural factors). The secondary level consists of cultural aspects namely worldview, ethos and ideology (cultural aspects). The second level of culture is the surface level, which is the behavioral component of culture. These are the attributes of culture that are noticeable, practices, or experiences. For instance, language, values, symbols are within the surface structure of culture. Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction", 528.

³⁰ Here cybernetic means that each component of culture, one being worldview, has a circular causal effect on one another. For illustration, within the cultural deep structure, the cultural factors and aspects affect one another. In other words, cultural factors and cultural aspects change and morph in response to themselves. Consequently, one's surface culture emerges from its reaction to a person's values and symbols. In turn, the surface culture (practices and experiences) change and alter worldview. This ultimately illustrates the dynamism of the African Worldview. Ibid.

³¹ Again to speak to the interdependent nature of all things African, the creation stories also exemplify a cybernetic relationship: "I am... Khepera. I am the one who created all that came into being... I made a place in my own heart by my own will and created the multitudes of things which can into being... of births... even I myself used my clenched hand in an intercourse with my shadow, I poured semen into my own mouth and brought forth Shu." Abu Abarry and Molefi K. Asante eds., "The Heliopolis Creation" *African Intellectual Heritage: A Book of Sources* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 14.

³² Mack Jones, "Political Science and the Black Political Experience: Issues in Epistemology and Relevance," in *Ethnic Politics and Civil Liberties*, ed. Lucius J. Baker (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 30.

³³ DuBois, *The Negro*, 114.

thought, action and practice. Aside, though history reveals Africa and Europe as the originating geographies' of thought,³⁴ the African Worldview is not exclusive to Africans or those of its Diaspora, nor is the European Worldview exclusive to Europeans or those of its Diaspora. For example, an African's lived experience in South Africa may predispose him to the influence of colonial thought, ideals and influence; thus, his operation in the context of the European Worldview. Inherently, understanding that one's worldview is informed by their lived experience, a lived experience that is dialectically changing, we understand then that the African Worldview is not static; it evolves. Undergirded by the scholarship of Jacob Carruthers, Dona Richards and Azibo, the African Worldview is "the universal and timeless characteristic of African people throughout space and time".³⁵ Though it's practice may change in culture from traditional African culture to African American culture, the nature, intent and function of the African Worldview remains constant. For example, in traditional African culture libations are poured to honor the ancestors and seek blessing.³⁶ In African-American culture, similarly, a form of libation also takes place. For instance, African Americans informally pour out libation (namely alcohol) in honor of the dead. In both respects the nature, intent and function of pouring out libation is the same hence symbolizing evidence of a universal and timeless Worldview. As a result, it is particularly central to denote the argument that there is one African Worldview. Namely, Daudi Azibo authoritatively rejects the notion that there is more than one African Worldview.

Following the scholarship of those committed to understanding the African Worldview, a more precise definition evolves—the *African Worldview* is defined as the

³⁴ As defined by Diop's two cradle theory, which dictates that environment differences between the Northern cradle (Europe) and the Southern cradle (Africa) create two distinct worldviews. See *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: The Domains of Matriarchy & Patriarchy in Classical Antiquity* and *The African Origin of Civilization Myth or Reality*.

³⁵ Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction", 527.

³⁶ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy* (Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1989), 25.

result or product of African culture, history and philosophy. Informed by an African's lived experience, it is the way of making sense of surroundings, life and of the universe. The African Worldview reflects a continuum and cohesiveness of African people. Further dissecting African Worldview, African philosophy can be defined as inclusive of African cosmology, epistemology, ontology, and axiology.³⁷

This progression of defining the African Worldview demonstrates its components (history, philosophy and culture), its nature (as cybernetic and dialectical) and its ability to evolve. Moreover, within this concise genealogy of the African Worldview, it is overwhelmingly apparent that in DuBois' 1897 essay, "Conservation of Races", he defined the African Worldview. At that time, DuBois spoke to the commonalities of Azibo, Richards and Jones' definition of the African Worldview. Subsequently, the African Worldview is best described as phenomenological. Both African Worldview and phenomenology are holistic interpretations of reality. Both consider history, the lived experience, science and epistemology.

ARTICULATING THE DIVERGENCE BETWEEN THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW AND THE EUROPEAN WORLDVIEW

Having discussed the components and the nature of the African Worldview, its intention, and purpose are, also, pertinent to discuss juxtapose the European Worldview. Philosophy is the best vehicle to illustrate the differences between the African Worldview and the European Worldview, because philosophy informs both culture and history. This illustration will reveal in every area of thought, philosophy and science, the intent and function of the European Worldview was to stratify, separate and subjugate human reality

³⁷ See Richards, Myers, Nobles, Banks and Azibo.

and phenomena. Conversely, the African Worldview seeks to maintain a holistic perception of reality, never to negate or dismiss parts of phenomena.

For the sake of discussion and the historical context of this research, the African will be oriented with African Worldview and the European with the European Worldview.

Table 2-1. Philosophical differences between the African Worldview and the European Worldview³⁸

	African Worldview	European Worldview
Cosmology	All things in the Universe are connected and interdependent	All things are independent and separate
Epistemology	Object-Measure Cognition	Affect-Symbolic Imagery Cognition
Ontology	All things in existence are a spiritual force manifesting itself on/in the material	Manifestations only occur in the material reality; meaning within the five senses.
Axiology	Communalism and Harmony with Nature	Individualism and Mastery over Nature

Africana economist, Vernon Dixon, black Psychologist, Linda James Myers, Dona Richards, Kobi Kambon, Karanja Keita Carroll and Daudi Azibo, have greatly furthered the understanding the differences between the African Worldview and the European Worldview. For instance, cosmology refers to the structure of the universe. African belief dictates that all things within the universe are connected, which lends to a communal universe where interdependence is prevalent. In contrast, the European Worldview dictates that the universe is not interconnected; rather interrelated areas are separate.³⁹ The concept of ontology references the nature of being or the nature of reality. For one operating within the African Worldview that constitutes the belief that all things in

³⁸ Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction", 528; Karanja Keita Carroll, "Africana Studies and Research Methodology: Revisiting the Centrality of the Afrikan Worldview," *Journal of Pan African Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008): 14; Vernon J. Dixon, "African-oriented and Euro-American-oriented worldviews: Research methodologies and economics," *Review of Black Political Economy*, 7, no. 2 (1971b), 126, 131; T. Owens Moore, "Revisited Affected-Symbolic Imagery," *Journal of Black Psychology*, 22, no. 4 (1996) 443-452.

³⁹ Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction", 529; Carroll, "Africana Studies Research," 14.

existence are a spiritual force manifesting itself on or in the material or immaterial.

Africana Studies scholar Dona Richards asserts: “Both spiritual and material being are necessary in order for there to be meaningful reality. While spiritual being gives force and energy to matter, material beings give form to spirit.”⁴⁰ This idea is highly reflective of the African Worldview—a cybernetic or reciprocal relationship. On the other hand, the European Worldview negates the spirit and all that is in existence must be experienced by the five senses.⁴¹

Delving further in philosophy, axiology encompasses what one values or the nature of one’s values. According to Myers, within the African Worldview, Africans place the highest value in positive interpersonal relationships among people.⁴² There is cooperation and a collective responsibility to one another. Furthermore, African’s axiology is grounded in spiritualism and circularity.⁴³ Conversely, the European Worldview places the highest value in objects or acquisition of objects. This perspective emphasizes independence at the expense of interdependence.⁴⁴ Epistemology refers to the process used to know something or the theory of knowledge. The African Worldview will dictate that one attempts to be apart of the phenomenon he or she is attempting to know; whereas existing from the European World-lens, one would attempt to distance oneself from the phenomenon which he or she is attempting to know. Ultimately, the African Worldview affords one the ability to acknowledge the existence to all phenomena, to be actively engaged in all phenomena

⁴⁰ Richards, “Implications of African-American,” 210.

⁴¹ Carroll, “Africana Studies Research,” 15.

⁴² Linda James Myers, *Understanding as Afrocentric World View: Introduction to an Optimal Psychology* (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1993), 97.

⁴³ Kobi Kambon, “The Africentric Paradigm and African-American Psychological Liberation,” in *African Psychology in Historical Perspective and Related Commentary*, ed. Daudi Ajani Ya Azibo (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1996), 61.

⁴⁴ Myers, *Understanding Afrocentric World View*, 97; *Ibid.*, 61.

and equally appreciate the significance all phenomena.⁴⁵ This notion exemplifies the interdependence and circularity of phenomena from within the African World-lens; yet, the European Worldview limits and confines reality and phenomena leaving some phenomena left unexplained.

Breaking down these contentions about the African and European Worldview help one to better understand human behavior, as well as contextualize human thought. Within Western context, everything exists in polar opposite of one another, like black and white. For instance, the European structure dictates opposing forces; hence, one force must conquer the opposing force.⁴⁶ A more explicit example—nature and people exist as opposites; subsequently, one must prevail over the other. The European Worldview is characterized by individualism, materialism and control.⁴⁷ As a result, it is the nature of Europeans to separate, to create hierarchy, and dominating systems. For instance, in Dona Richards' "The Implications of African–American Spirituality", she asserts the nature of the European is to "create inferior objects so that their self-concepts could function positively within the context of their value system. Functioning positively meant relating as superiors to inferior things."⁴⁸

In complete contrast is the African Worldview, which is characterized as humanistic. Again, Dona Richards adds, "African American's humanism is derived from the humanistic nature of the African Worldview and grows out of the African conception of the human being."⁴⁹ In short, Africans give value to life, and according to the African Worldview, everything has life because it has a spirit, even nature. Religion, morals and community are

⁴⁵ Richards, "Implications of African-American," 211.

⁴⁶ Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction", 528.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Richards, "Implications of African-American," 215.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 229.

inherent to the African and central to the African personality is the understanding of “all work for each, and each works for all”.⁵⁰ Hence, the African Worldview dictates for balance, family and community—all which exemplify wholeness.

DUBOIS’ PHENOMENOLOGICAL WORLD CONTEXTUALIZED IN “DAMNATION”

Through his ideological movements, DuBois came to realize that “[black people] represent[ed] everything African”⁵¹. Using DuBoisian Phenomenology to understand “The Damnation of Women”, DuBois acknowledges the African Worldview, which is grounded in traditional African society. He references the way of life of traditional African women working alongside her headmen—raising the children to implicit obedience of the headman. He says: “...‘the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.’ What a power for good in the native state system...”.⁵² Plainly, DuBois points to Africa as the example of a holistic way of organizing the world. DuBois references the harmonic, judicious, and curvilinear characteristics of the African Worldview; he calls it the native state system. Hence, is how I would, also, like to further operationalize the term ‘African Worldview’ as one that is collaborative and complimentary. Characteristically, “life is primary; the oneness of all things [is imperative] according to African Worldview.”⁵³ Daudi Azibo asserts, “group maintenance, collectiveness [and] sharing,”⁵⁴ characterize the relationship of complementary forces such as ‘God and humanity’ or ‘men and women’. Thusly, it is understood that life cannot exist without the counterbalance of all else:

⁵⁰ P. Esedebe Olisanwuche, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776- 1991* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1980), 50.

⁵¹ W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880* (New York: The Free Press, 1998), 3.

⁵² DuBois, “Damnation of Women,” 97.

⁵³ Azibo, “Articulating the Distinction”, 529.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

...they [knowledge and opinion; objective and subjective; man and woman]⁵⁵ are not contradictory. They are complementary. We [need] both to express the whole *truth*.⁵⁶

Unlike in the European Worldview, both complementary forces like 'God and humanity' or 'men and women' are needed to exemplify life and the Truth. An intricate balance of paradoxically complementary forces is premise and maintains the Worldview. In fact, an 'extraordinary harmony'⁵⁷ exemplifies the African Worldview.

In addendum, James Cone alludes to the concept the 'whole truth' while portraying the African Worldview in the above mentioned quote. DuBois, again, defines the Truth as the marrying of science/epistemology and the Black-lived experience. In "Maat: The Cultural and Intellectual Allegiance of a Concept," Mario H. Beatty shares:

"A major strength of the African world view is its ability to at once distinguish aspects of reality without arguing for separation. African people create rich metaphors and symbols in order to convey 'dramatic presentation of truth seeking and revelation of truth'".⁵⁸

As previously stated, DuBois himself is wedded to seeking the Truth. "African humanism rejects the concept of art for arts sake"⁵⁹ and DuBois did not believe in knowledge for knowledge's sake; an action must ensue. Understanding DuBois' alignment with the African Worldview makes his commitment to the Truth and the moral imperative an essential act of social responsibility.

⁵⁵ "Other opposing pairs, in the European view, are knowledge/opinion, objective/subjective, science/religion, mind/body, male/female, man/boy, white/black, and so forth." Richards, "Implications of African-American," 210.

⁵⁶ James Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), p. 11.

⁵⁷ Jaheinz Jahn, *Muntu* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 96.

⁵⁸ Mario H. Beatty, "Maat: The Cultural and Intellectual Allegiance of a Concept," in *African World History Project The Preliminary Challenge*, eds. Jacob H. Carruthers and Leon C. Harris (Los Angeles: Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, 2002), 212.

⁵⁹ Richards, "Implications of African-American," 229.

According to phenomenology, the truth is reached through the Spirit. In tandem, Spirit is also a person's being once the truth is actualized. Scholar John Mbiti professes spirits intermediate between God and man, and human beings approach God through them or seek other help from them—beyond the state of the spirits, men cannot go or develop.⁶⁰ Within the Hegelian or the DuBoisian concept of phenomenology neither would argue the assertion of the Spirit. Richards defines the Spirit [is] the creative force which unites all phenomena... It is the meaningful level of existence.⁶¹ Within "Damnation", the role of the Spirit becomes adherent, and, indeed, the Black-lived experience shapes and morphs the African Worldview as Truth is actualized.

Definitively, in *Damnation*, DuBois reconfigures world order, giving credence and agency to God, Asia, Europe and Africa:

The father and his worship is Asia; Europe is the precocious, self-centered, forward-striving child; but the land of the mother is and was Africa.⁶²

So poignant is the notion DuBois illustrates here—not only does he give the present world power structures credence, but also offers rationale for the intellectual demise of Europe. Europe is the "precocious, self-centered, forward-striving child" of Africa and God. What accounts for the differences between the African Worldview and the European Worldview is the perspective a child versus a mother. In the Bible, writer Paul says:

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual [men], but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and

⁶⁰ Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*, 26.

⁶¹ Ani, *Yurugu*, xxvii

⁶² DuBois, "Damnation of Women," 97.

not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?⁶³

Metaphorically, Europeans are these young ‘babes in Christ’, whom cannot fully conceptualize the nature, intent and functionality of the African Worldview. Europeans are still digesting the meat of the holistic capacity of the African Worldview; hence, aside from European quest of domination and imperialism, is Europe’s need to scientifically define, rationalize, stratify and compartmentalize African existence and humanity. Europe is premature in thought and cannot effusively encircle the implications of race and gender. Race and gender are by-products of the European Worldview. Ultimately, it is my assertion that gender de-unification solely purposes to weaken the larger movement of examining racial injustices. However, in “Damnation”, DuBois [phenomenology] embraces African Worldview and uses the lens to reveal the cause of a compartmentalized world and its effects as well as dispute a gender dialectic within the black race. This is the argument within the “Damnation” is contextualized within the African Worldview.

⁶³ 1 Cor. 3:1-3

CHAPTER 3

DUBOIS' ARGUMENT IN "DAMNATION": LOOKING AT AND BEYOND THE TEXT

"The Damnation of Women" opens with the description of four women in DuBois' sphere of influence. Each woman faces a different woe: what is the meaning of marriage? What is the meaning of motherhood? What is love? What is it to be loved? Why come this disdain towards my existence? As DuBois begins to answer these questions, he historically situates gender and womanhood in the context of the African Worldview:

"From the Zulus to the Waganda, we find the mother the most influential counselor are the court of ferocious sovereigns, like Chaka or Mtesa; sometimes sisters take her place."⁶⁴

The African way of order fell from the lineage of the mother's family bloodline; moreover, the women maintained social order. Traditionally within the framework of the African Worldview, African women, particularly mothers, are sacred and their authority is limitless. This is the affirmation exemplified within "Damnation". African women's 'headship' is evidence of a matrilineal society/matriarchal system and DuBois' constant references to women's leadership, permanence and authority reveal an emerging theme within "Damnation". Throughout "Damnation", DuBois constantly honors and uplifts black mothers in these authoritative and intransigent roles: "all the way back in the dim distances it is mother of mothers who seem to count, while fathers are shadowy memories" and "even in her humble station, she had, when occasion required it, an air of command which conferred a degree of dignity and gave her an ascendancy over those of her rank".⁶⁵

⁶⁴ DuBois, "Damnation of Women," 98.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 98, 101.

DuBois recognizes the power and influence of black women and he grounds it in African culture, and way of life.

In continuing to undress the 'mystery' and 'secrecy'⁶⁶ of womanhood, DuBois describes black women's commitment to family and the strength that union bears:

A student of the present Gold Coast⁶⁷ life describes the work of the village headman, and adds: 'It is a difficult task that he is set to, but in this matter he has all-powerful helpers in the female members of the family, who will be either the aunts or the sisters or the cousins or the nieces of the headman, and as their interests are identical with his in every particular, the good women spontaneously train up their children to implicit obedience to the headman, whose rule in the family thus becomes a simple and an easy matter. 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.' What a power for good in the native state system would the mothers of the Gold Coast and Ashanti become by judicious training upon native lines!⁶⁸

Forthrightly, he shows how Africans maintained their family in the understood commitment to their equally important roles working towards a common goal.

A perspective of the traditional relationship of African males and females is a reflective microcosm of the African Worldview. The hand that rocks the cradle, indeed, rules the world. In Diop's *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa*, he declares, "Every society of Black Africa is convinced of the idea that the destiny of a child depends solely in its mother and,

⁶⁶ Ibid., 95.

⁶⁷ A reference to Ghana.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 97

in particular, on the labour which the latter will provide in the matrimonial home”.⁶⁹ And as aforesaid, in defining the African Worldview as one that is harmoniously balanced; family represents such balance and has the ability to sustain culture, and consequently sustain the African Worldview.

Though DuBois has these shining examples of women to uplift; it is not without hardship, trial and fire that these women exist. In his pursuit of the Truth, he finds the cause of the damnation of women. For the four aforementioned women in DuBois’ sphere of influence, it is slavery and capitalism that forge itself upon the African Worldview—African way of life. Inevitably, it is race and gender that complicates black women’s understanding of their roles, function and purpose in society. Furthermore, the attack on women is a direct attack on the family and likewise the community. Without this representation of the whole, life and phenomena have no meaning.⁷⁰ Therefore, DuBois describes this attack will be the demise of culture: “it is an unendurable paradox, it must be changed or the bases of culture will totter.”⁷¹

HOW THE EUROPEAN WORLDVIEW IMPOSED ON THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW JUXTAPOSED “DAMNATION”

Upon this mother-idea, the westward slave trade and American slavery struck like doom. In cruel exigencies of the traffic in men and in the sudden, unprepared emancipation... in 1800—when America had but eight or less black women to every ten black men,—all too swiftly... in 1870,—when there were nearly eleven women to ten men in our Negro

⁶⁹ Cheikh Anta Diop, *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: The Domains of Patriarchy and of Matriarchy in Classical Antiquity* (London: Karnak House, 1989), 31.

⁷⁰ Life events, and phenomena derive meaning value and significance through relationship to an organic whole. The family or community is understood as just such a whole.” Richards, “Implications of African-American,” 212.

⁷¹ DuBois, “Damnation of Women,” 96.

population. This was but the outward numerical fact of social dislocation...⁷²

Inexorably, the slave trade caused an unbalance, which ripped the fabric of the African Worldview. The natural inclination of Europeans to divide, to conquer and make inferior changed the dynamics of the family and equally the character of the African Worldview.⁷³ However, before delving into the notion that slavery morphed our worldview it is pertinent to gain an understanding of how the terms capitalism and slavery have come to be synonymous with one another.

Understanding the Coalition of Slavery and Capitalism

Through the process of development and the evolution of economy, it is apparent that development is characterized by working together which forges a social character and a sense of social responsibility to those in the community, as characterized in the African Worldview.⁷⁴ For instance, in traditional African society, individuals had expectations, duties, obligations and rights of which they could demand of one another.⁷⁵ Responsibilities informed work ethic and production. Annual hunts and river fishing were informed by social patterns—by obligation to family. In fact, this was also how labor was enlisted—as a family.⁷⁶ Families worked the land they lived on, which was consequently, the land on which their ancestors lived. Ownership was communal and the land definitively belonged to everyone of that community. As a result, land was tied to productivity and capital.

⁷² DuBois, "Damnation of Women," 98.

⁷³ "The system and circumstance of slavery in New Europe sought to destroy African value, African self images and self concepts." Richards, "Implications of African-American," 215.

⁷⁴ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1981), 4.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 36

Hence, beyond communalism, social relations did not only characterize what constituted further development but also what became the by-product of increased or decreased productivity. For instance, “when communalism broke down it gave way to widespread slavery”.⁷⁷ In an unpublished essay written in 1936, “The Negro and Social Reconstruction,” DuBois says,

There were at least 100,000 and possibly 200,000 fugitives from slavery, representing a loss of at least 25 million dollars of capital invested in slavery and perhaps twice that sum. This was the economic loss that spurred secession.⁷⁸

Case and point, DuBois shows the reciprocity of slavery and capitalism. Inextricably, chattel slavery fueled capitalism vice versa capitalism fueled chattel slavery. In *The Negro*, DuBois briefly speaks of the dynamics of slavery within pre-colonial Africa. During that time, slavery existed as a by-product of war in which opponents were held captive. Small numbers characterized pre-colonial slavery and labor was not hard.⁷⁹ In fact, some ‘slaves’ were eventually regarded as family and accepted given rights, obligations and held expectations of their community.⁸⁰ However, the dynamics of slavery changed with time. It is, also, in *The Negro* that DuBois illustrates the reciprocity of slavery and capitalism.⁸¹ Furthermore, he shows the predisposition of the transatlantic trade to forge the

⁷⁷ Ibid., 37

⁷⁸ W.E.B. DuBois, “The Negro and Social Reconstruction,” in *Against Racism: Unpublished, Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887-1961*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1985), 106.

⁷⁹ DuBois, *The Negro*, 71-72.

⁸⁰ Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 23.

⁸¹ “[In *The Negro*, DuBois] argued that the transatlantic trade in slaves had both built modern industrial capitalism and paved the way for European colonialism of Africa.” Jody A. Benjamin, “DuBois, W.E.B.,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought*, eds. F. Abiola Irele and Biodun Jeyifo (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 324.

development of capitalism causing an African association with inferiority, which speaks to the natural propensity of the European Worldview.⁸²

Inevitably, Walter Rodney details in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* that "... the overall tendency was towards increased production, and at given points of time the increase in the quantity of goods was associated with a change in the quality of character of society".⁸³ Specifically, the dynamics of African slavery did not change with increase of productivity. Contrarily, the dynamics of modern slavery (the Western idea of slavery) did warp the character of social relations and the basis of slavery. Scholar, Micheal Gomez declares,

European *dependency* upon enslaved African labor was the consequence of several factors, including the growth of sugar cane cultivation in the Mediterranean world since the twelfth century; the end of Muslim-Christian conflict in the Black Sea region, and Iberia... and seafaring improvements that allowed Europeans to navigate the Atlantic coast of Africa.⁸⁴

Modern slavery erupted from the dependency and demand for slaves. Slaves became objects and no longer casualties of war.⁸⁵ People were no longer held together by humanity but divided and perceived as property.⁸⁶ Slavery became the way to mobilize labor, not through enlisting a family. Furthermore, money began to purchase labor (human labor), not familial relationship. The same could be said for capitalism in terms of

⁸² Ibid., 324.

⁸³ Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped*, 5.

⁸⁴ Micheal Gomez, "Slavery in the Americas: A Survey of the Scholarship," in *Origins*, eds. Howard Dodson and Colin A. Palmer (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2008), 2.

⁸⁵ DuBois, *The Negro*, 69.

⁸⁶ "...Capitalism was characterized by concentration in a few hands of ownership of the means of producing wealth and by unequal distribution of the products of human labor... their labor thereby became a commodity—something to be bought and sold." Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped*, 10

mobilizing labor and purchasing labor. Slavery and capitalism obliterated communalism and the black family. In “Damnation” no family was untouchable or unaffected by this notion: “Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, are torn asunder and permitted to see each other no more. These acts are daily occurring in the midst of us.” Unequivocally, the Coalition tore family from their land, their way of obtaining labor (which was familial), and gaining capital (which was communal).

Character is key in how society handles its development and subsequently, its technology, wealth and newfound power. The history of the European Worldview reflects European abuse and exploitation of such power:

In the awful cataclysm of World War, where from beating, slandering and murdering is the white world temporarily aside to kill each other, we of the Darker People looked on in mild amaze... here is a civilization that has boasted much. Nether Roman nor Arab, Greek nor Egyptian. Persian nor Mongol ever took himself and his own perfection with such disconcerting seriousness as the modern white man... terrible is the real soul of white culture.⁸⁷

The dehumanization of modern slavery was not the plight of all societies experiencing increased productivity.⁸⁸ Therefore, according to DuBois, the change became an indictment of white character and the European Worldview. Within capitalism, labor became the product, the goods, the article of trade; human beings, specifically in this context, became the something to be bought and sold. The marriage of capitalism and slavery is not a

⁸⁷ W.E.B. DuBois, “The Souls of White Folk,” *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Incorporated, 1999), 20.

⁸⁸ Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped*, 5

surprise, but rather it became inevitable.⁸⁹ Slavery was being driven by a morally bankrupt culture within a faulty vehicle—capitalism.

THE CREATION OF RACE AND GENDER JUXTAPOSE “DAMNATION”

Consequently, the coalition of slavery and equally capitalism was the force that distorted the African Worldview; as a result, created the anomalies: gender and race.⁹⁰ Eloquently said by author, Eric Williams, “every age rewrites history, particularly ours, which has been forced by events to re-evaluate our conceptions of history and economic and political development”. This was the consequence of capitalism and slavery—a rewriting of history. Metaphorically speaking of boxing, if slavery was the ‘one’; then capitalism was the ‘two punch’. After slavery, the pursuit of happiness was ‘the big set up’. Freed African Americans equated capitalism with their freedom, their independence and ability to thrive in the United States. They were disillusioned in finding that capitalism—the pursuit of privatized entrepreneurship—was unattainable.⁹¹ Capitalism, for the African American, only served to keep them in a perpetual state of dependence namely because they were detached from their land.⁹² For this reason, DuBois proposed: “...a democracy of economy that allowed peoples to benefit from the resources of their lands”⁹³ but unlike in their traditional societies, African Americans possessed neither land nor family. Whites

⁸⁹ “These characteristics are not fortuitous; they correspond strictly to the nature of the capitalist system in full expansion...” Ibid., 3

⁹⁰ “Capitalism created its own irrationalities such as a vicious white racism... such as that of the United States.” Ibid.,10.

⁹¹ “Their political power could only have been permanently sustained by economic security—ownership of land, control of some capital and education... but the power of the Southern land owners and capitalists hindered this and these efforts were reinforced by Northern capital; this economic combination ruined the political as well as the economic hopes of the Negroes.” DuBois, “Negro and Social,” 108.

⁹² Walter Rodney truly helps to illustrate this point and the mentality of capitalism: “The landowners, seeing their estates going to ruin, decided that it would be best to grant the legal freedom for which slaves were clamoring, and to keep exploiting the labor of these free serfs by insuring that they had no land to plow other than those of the landlords.” Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped*, 8

⁹³ Benjamin, “DuBois, W.E.B.,” 324

obliterated the African family and owned the land.⁹⁴ More to the point, “the westward slave trade and American slavery struck like doom... [Firmly] the crushing weight of slavery fell on black women. Under it there was no legal marriage, no legal family, no legal control over children.”⁹⁵

Race as a Concept

The attack of both slavery and capitalism is relentless. While it is destroying traditional realities of the African Worldview, it equally creates ‘whiteness’ and the heavy blow of race further dissects Africans, African American and its Diaspora from humanity.⁹⁶ In *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880*, DuBois is able to poignantly demonstrate the creation of whiteness and white privilege during slavery and capitalism’s implications after Civil War. Plainly, the Coalition fortifies Race as a society problem:

Black labor became the foundation stone not only of the Southern social structure, but of Northern manufacture and commerce, of the English factory system, European commerce, of buying and selling on a world-wide scale; new cities were built on the results of black labor, and new labor problem, involving all white labor, arose both in Europe and America.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ DuBois, p. 98.

⁹⁵ DuBois, “Damnation of Women,” 98.

⁹⁶ “...both whiteness and blackness are social problems produced by the European partitioning of humanity... persons of color... have no existence before their pejorative conceptualization by post-Columbus European. Racialization then becomes a social problem.” Tukulfu Zuberi, “Sociology and the African Diaspora,” in *A Companion to African-American Studies*, eds. Lewis Ricardo Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 259.

⁹⁷ DuBois, *Black Reconstruction*, 5.

Hence, white laborers now see blacks both free and enslaved as a threat and as competition to their economic and political standing.⁹⁸ Aside, this is where DuBois' problem with Booker T. Washington came in, at least one of them, Washington's compromise dealt only with capitalism as an ideal and not the racial caste that it imposed.⁹⁹

Nevertheless, DuBois uses *The Negro*, too, to speak to the creation of race.

Definitively, DuBois makes an assertion against the scientific definition of race:

In fact it is generally recognized to-day that no scientific definition of race is possible. Differences, and striking differences, there are between men and groups of men, but they fade into each other so insensibly that we can only indicate the main divisions of men in broad outlines...¹⁰⁰

In *The Negro*, DuBois frames the text by historical subjects or historical events, which is DuBoisian historiography. Within this construct, DuBois is able to reject or affirm notions based on the phenomena being historically constituted and grounded in traditional societies, namely traditional African culture. With history and science in context, DuBois vehemently rejects the idea of race. DuBois recognizes slavery as a social construct which created race: "[Slavery] was different from that of the past, because more and more it came in time to be founded on racial caste, and this caste was made the foundation of a new industrial system".¹⁰¹ As previously mentioned, slavery existed in Africa, but not how it manifested itself in the United States and abroad. Modern slavery erupted from the greed

⁹⁸ "The white laborers realized that Negroes were part of a group of millions of workers who were slaves by law, and whose competition kept white labor out of work in the South and threatened wages and stability in the North." DuBois, *Black Reconstruction*, 19. However, this point can also be illustrated in *Against Racism: Unpublished* (115).

⁹⁹ DuBois, *Against Racism: Unpublished*, 116. (Aside, it is uncertain DuBois thought Washington fully conceptualized the onslaught of capitalism on black people.)

¹⁰⁰ DuBois, *The Negro*, 13.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

and demand for slaves. Slaves became objects and no longer causalities of war.¹⁰² This understanding puts DuBois' comment in *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880* in context, "slavery was a matter of both race and social condition but the condition was limited and determined by race" again that condition was a state of inferiority.¹⁰³

Consequently, the Coalition drove the compartmentalization of the world. Thus, was the creation of race; Cedric Robinson in *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* most profoundly says: "founding myths were substituted for history providing the appearance of historical narrative to what was in actuality part fact and part class-serving rationales."¹⁰⁴ He further declares compartmentalization's purpose was to set Europe up as the world power.¹⁰⁵ So yet, again this is evidence that speaks to the nature of the European Worldview, it's intention and function. In a later work, *Dusk of Dawn*, DuBois says, "[Race] was rather a matter of segregation of hindrance and inhibitions.... Perhaps it is wrong to speak of it at all as 'a concept' rather than as a group of contradictory forces, facts and tendencies."¹⁰⁶

Nonetheless, the problem of race was not the only consequence of the coalition of slavery and capitalism: "in human society it has always been the case that the expansion of the economy leads eventually to a change in the form of social relations."¹⁰⁷ Neither was the Coalition and race the only European means to compartmentalize humanity. In respect

¹⁰² Ibid., 69.

¹⁰³ DuBois, *Black Reconstruction*, 5.

¹⁰⁴ Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 239.

¹⁰⁵ "...the civilization evolving in the western extremities of the Asian/European continent... passed with few disjunctions... to capitalism as the dominant mode of production." Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 10

¹⁰⁶ W.E.B. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Literary Classics, 1986), 649-651.

¹⁰⁷ Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped*, 6.

to gender relations between black women and men, slavery played its role in misconstruing their relationships as well.

Gender as a Concept

Gender, too, is a 'founding myth'. With the understanding of race as a means to separate humanity, gender is also a means to separate humanity.¹⁰⁸ As with race, slavery and capitalism had an intricate role in creating gender.¹⁰⁹ Traditionally, 'gender' did exist in Africa; however, the modern concept, or the European Worldview derivative of gender did not exist within the continent.¹¹⁰

The European conception of gender recognizes a biological difference but also attaches specific roles to one's gender.¹¹¹ Through the years the connotation between those role distinctions became negative, limiting and created a power struggle within male-female relationships. Nigerian scholar, Oyeronke Oyewumi, discloses several assumptions rooted in Western gender discourse: Gender 1) is timeless and has been present in every society... 2) a fundamental organizing principle in all societies... 3) there is a essential, universal category 'woman' that is characterized by the social uniformity of its members... 4) the subordination of woman is universal... 5) 'woman' is precultural, fixed in historical time and cultural space in the antithesis to another fixed category—'man'.¹¹² Within the Western construct of gender, man and woman are diabolic opposite forces.

¹⁰⁸ "Official and unofficial attempts to blunt the effects of the egalitarian tendencies as between the black man and woman should come as no surprise." Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," in *Turbulent Voyage*, ed. Floyd W. Hayes III (Lanham: Collegiate Press, 2000), 95.

¹⁰⁹ Oyeronke Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), xi.

¹¹⁰ "The women question is a Western-derived issue... it is an imported problem, and it is not indigenous to the Yoruba" *Ibid.*, ix.

¹¹¹ "The cultural logic of Western social categories is based on an ideology of biological determinism: the conception that biology provides the rationale for the organization of the social world. *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*, xi-xii

Conversely, within the African Worldview construct, man is not the antithesis to woman, nor is her subordination universal.¹¹³ As previously mentioned, women are the matriarchs of their society and their power and authority is limitless. Furthermore, men and women are complementary forces to one another. In other words, they are equals and equally important to one another's livelihood. For instance, in *Women in Africa and the African Diaspora*, African feminist Filomina Chioma Steady, recalls:

Men, women and children were cooperatively involved in production in a social, rather than individual, context. Economic activities... were geared toward subsistence so that access to the land... was determined by rules of common property rather than by private ownership.¹¹⁴

Again, familial and communal relationships characterized traditional African families before European influence. Hence in a traditional African context, gender is not defined in the context of individual male-female relationships that ideology is foreign to the African ethos; the family is the only unit recognizable. Assuredly, there is a biological difference between men and women that can constitute gender; but gender otherwise defined is a social construct that did not exist in Africa pre-colonial influence.¹¹⁵

Indifferently, similar to the purpose of constructing race, gender, too, serves to compartmentalize humanity and impose Western imperialism.¹¹⁶ In Angela Davis',

¹¹³ "...women's activities were complementary to those of men and that of women producers and traders were not subordinate to men. Where men and women were engaged in the same productive activity, they produced different items." Niara Sudarkasa, "The 'Status of Women' in Indigenous African Societies," in *Women in Africa and the African Diaspora*, eds. Sharon Harley, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn and Andrea Benton Rushing (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1987), 35.

¹¹⁴ Filomina Chioma Steady, "African Feminism: A Worldwide Perspective," in *Women in Africa and the African Diaspora*, eds. Sharon Harley, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn and Andrea Benton Rushing (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1987), 5.

¹¹⁵ Oyewumi, *The Invention Women*, 31, 78.

¹¹⁶ "Global gender-formation is the as imperialistic progress enabled by Western material and intellectual dominance." Oyewumi, *The Invention Women*, 78.

“Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves”, she recognizes during slavery, “the alleged benefits of the ideology of femininity did not accrue to [black women]. She was not sheltered or protected; she was also there in the fields, alongside the man, toiling under the lash from sunup to sundown.”¹¹⁷ In slavery, black women were not afforded any privileges due to their womanhood; their plight was the same as black men. There was no distinction in their roles as in the Western concept of gender. Conversely, in “Damnation”, DuBois illustrates the role deviation, confinement, in some respects privilege, given to white women: “In partial compensation for this narrowed destiny the white world has lavished its politeness on its womankind,—it chivalry and bows, its uncoverings and courtesies—all the accumulated homage disused for courts and kings and cravings exercise”.¹¹⁸

Hence is where DuBois’ lays his hat against white women’s feminism: “...in 1910 two and a half million women and girls over ten year of age,—over half of the colored female population as against a fifth in the case of white women” were amongst the working population!¹¹⁹ DuBois recognizes black women’s plight is not the same as white women’s. Not only in slavery did black women work with black men for survival and liberation; but also during post-slavery, they have worked alongside men. Moreover, in *“The ‘Status of Women’ in Indigenous African Societies”*, Niara Sudarkasa proclaims: “It is noteworthy that in Africa, unlike Europe, women... were not removed from the world of work”.¹²⁰ There is no unity between white women and black women because race separates the two

¹¹⁷ Davis, “Reflections Black Woman’s,” 87.

¹¹⁸ DuBois, “Damnation of Women,” 105.

¹¹⁹ Idib., 104.

¹²⁰ Sudarkasa, “Status of Women,” 38.

groups.¹²¹ However, black women are inextricably linked to black men through culture, Worldview and oppression. Thusly, the problem with black women working is not a power struggle as it is between white women feminists and white men; it is a repercussion of capitalism.

So, here, we begin to see the implications of gender as a concept imposed on African realities. Definitively after slavery, black men and women were pitted against each other in a wage war.¹²² DuBois hence, states:

These, [black women] then, are a group of workers, fighting for their daily bread like men; independent and approaching economic freedom! They furnished a million farm laborers, 80,000 farmers, 22,000 teachers, 600,000 servants and washerwomen, and 50,000 in trades and merchandizing.¹²³

This represented an unbalance, where black women could earn slightly higher wages, black men could not and where black women could get a job, black men could not. It is not meant for African people to struggle against one another; there is a greater cause at stake.¹²⁴ The black men and women's roles became a derivative of gender/gender separation that was contradictory to the African Worldview.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Frances Smith Foster and Charles P. Henry, "Black Women's Studies: Threat or Challenge," in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 174.

¹²² "The Negroes are put in a peculiarly difficult position, because the wage of the male breadwinner is below standard, while the openings for colored women in certain lines of domestic work, and now in industries, are many." DuBois, *Damnation of Women*, 105.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹²⁴ "African women and men share a mutual problem, a common foe, and joint fate. It is our collective historical record, made in tandem with one another..." Valthia Watkins, "Womanism and Black Feminism: Issues in the Manipulation of African Historiography," in *African World History Project The Preliminary Challenge*, eds. Jacob H. Carruthers and Leon C. Harris (Los Angeles: Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, 2002), 249.

¹²⁵ "The family group, however, which is the ideal of the culture with which these folk have been born is not based on the idea of an economically independence working mother." DuBois, *Damnation of Women*, 104.

Nevertheless, while the world experienced all these changes due to “a dastardly ideological weapon designed to impair our capacity for resistance today by foisting upon us the ideal of male supremacy”, black women did not change.¹²⁶ DuBois illustrates black women’s continual quest towards the African ideal, the African Worldview. Her beauty is characterized by deeds, social responsibility and reverence to God:

Not being expected to be merely ornamental, they have girded themselves for work, instead of adorning their bodies... a woman be clean, healthy, and educated, she is pleasing as God will and far more useful than most of her sisters.¹²⁷

Despite the continual onslaught on black women, the world was still afforded a dynamic symbol of womanhood and perseverance. Scholar, Vivian Gordon, asserts “black liberation represents freedom from racism and sexism, and as such [humanity] should not have to compartmentalize themselves into segments of race versus gender.”¹²⁸ And that pursuit towards liberation encapsulates the African Worldview.

DuBois’ Rejection of Race and Gender

Overtly, although both race and gender are ahistorical and/or asocial, they are not timeless concepts, traditionally and culturally grounded in African societies, particularly the way they have been articulated in context with the European Worldview. They have no anchorage, or derivation in the African Worldview, i.e. African thought, culture or practice. DuBois is calling the world, particularly the black world to reject dialectics and the implications of race and gender in their psyche. In observation in the South, DuBois

¹²⁶ Ibid., 94.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 106.

¹²⁸ Delores P. Aldridge, “Womanist Issues in Black Studies: Towards Integrating Africana Womanism into Africana Studies (1992),” in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 206.

characterizes a tiny community—a world that shows an African American family functioning as they would within the African Worldview:

I have called my tiny community a world, and so its isolation made it; and yet there was among us but a half-awakened common consciousness, sprung from common joy and grief, at burial, birth, or wedding; from a common hardship in poverty, poor land and low wages; and above all, from the sight of the Veil that hung between us and Opportunity.¹²⁹

What existed in this world, in this microcosm of reality DuBois speaks of in “Of the Meaning of Progress” from *The Souls of Black Folk*? There existed man and woman not separated by race or gender, who shared the same joys, and hardships, the same moments of celebration and sorrow, independent roles joined by a striving to a interdependent goal of freedom.¹³⁰ Aforementioned, DuBois speaks of race being the hindrance between him and liberation; race and gender are the rudiments that are making up the DuBoisian concept of the Veil. Race and gender, motivated by the Coalition distorted African perception of reality. Race and gender are in keeping to the continuation of the enslavement of African people in imposing the European Worldview on humanity as well as hindering the world from the actualization of Truth in the dialectic of the Diasporic African. How clearly Africans did see before the Veil, before the compartmentalization of the world.

In *Souls*, DuBois offers a phenomenological approach to eradicating the color line, which involves juxtaposing two ‘forces’ on a ‘dialectic pole’. The dialectic is the unity of opposites born out of struggle. The existence of the color line is the exemplification of the

¹²⁹ DuBois, *Souls Black Folk*, 53.

¹³⁰ In the chapter of *Souls* named “Of the Meaning of Progress” are several examples of men and women who are living exempt of the implications of race and gender within their community; however they are working with one another towards their common war against the effects of both. (I venture to collectively coin race and gender what DuBois coined ‘the Veil’). *Ibid.*, 48-57.

continual struggle between blacks and the American ideology or European Worldview.

Black people and the American¹³¹ are diabolic opposites:

“One ever feels two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unrecognized strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”

DuBois proclaims that the Truth of America lies within the dialectic of the black American.¹³² To the complete contrast is the notion that the Truth lies within a dialectic of black men and black women as they are not representative of a dichotomous thesis and the antithesis, as defined in the context of Westernized gender. The conformity of the European Worldview dictates men and women are opposing forces. However, in the construct of the African Worldview, black men and women are complementary forces. Therefore, there is no truth that can be revealed through a struggle of black men and black women that has not been discovered in the engagement of the African Worldview. Furthermore, that struggle would not yield a solution to the problem of the color line.

Nonetheless, as we follow the timeline and thought process of DuBois, a more clear and well-defined phenomenological approach materializes; we begin to see a new dialectic emerge which is exalted in “Damnation”:

The uplift of women is, next to the problem of the color line and the peace movement, our greatest modern cause. When, now, two of

¹³¹ The term American here represents both Caucasian Americans and an American ideology. This also implies that there is a metaphysical difference between African ideology and American ideology.

¹³² “We were the darker ones come even now not altogether empty-handed: there are to-day no truer exponents of the pure human spirit of the Declaration of Independence than the American Negroes.” Ibid., 15.

these movements—women and color—combine in one, the combination has deep meaning.”¹³³

DuBois’ declaration asserts the thesis of “Damnation”. There are two implications in DuBois’ thesis: one of the dialectic of race and gender and the other of black women and their role in liberation. The Truth begins in an acknowledgment of the women’s role in liberation—not to negate the perpetual reconciliation in the unity of black men and black women. But indeed “women and color—combine in one... [have] deep meaning.”

DuBois avows the damnation of women is a result of the Western desire to worship both the virgin and the mother; consequently in this expectation the world curses them both.¹³⁴ As a resolution DuBois offers that, “Civilization must show... the glory and beauty of creating life and the need and duty of power and intelligence.”¹³⁵ At a very basic level, DuBois is calling for civilization to reject the Western concept of womanhood and acknowledge the beauty of motherhood and the weight that role carries. Beverly John most succinctly summarizes, “the importance of motherhood and the valuation of the childbearing capacity by African women is probably the most fundamental difference between the African woman and her Western counterpart, and this life-giving quality not only endows women with great prestige but also equates them with the life giving force itself”.¹³⁶ The role and responsibility should be honored not cursed.

¹³³ DuBois, “Damnation of Women,” 105.

¹³⁴ “All womanhood is hampered today because the world on which it is emerging is a world that tries to worship both virgins and mothers and in the end despises motherhood and despoils virgins.” Ibid., 96.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Beverly M. John, “The African American Female Ontology: Implications of Academe,” in *Black Women in the Academy: Promises and Peril*, ed. Lois Benjamin (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 58.

In reproof, DuBois characterizes Negro womanhood as human sympathy and sacrifice.¹³⁷ In "Damnation", DuBois honors woman for their sustainability, strength, character, beauty and commitment to universal liberation: "The half-million women of Negro descent who lived at the beginning of the 19th century had become the mothers of two and one-fourth million daughters... Yet to save from the past the shreds and vestiges of self-respect has been a terrible task. I most sincerely doubt if any other race of women could have brought it fineness up through so devilish a fire".¹³⁸ DuBois praises women for their roles and purposes within society.¹³⁹ Inevitably, DuBois is saying follow the lead of black women who have in their dialectical engagement with race, gender and its impositions navigated a way towards liberation without losing the essence of what it is to live within the African Worldview. Black women's answer to the imposing demands of society for her to be an intelligent, working, childrearing example of womanhood is yes. African American Studies scholar, Valetia Watkins says, "African women have been a pivotal force in African history in particular and world history in general."¹⁴⁰ With women as the barometers, the centrality of humanity is interlocked in black humanity; hence, DuBois is clear on the rejection of the dialectic. Ultimately, not only does DuBois point back to the African Worldview, but he also points back to the black woman as its upholder and the example of its survival through space and time. The new dialectic is in black women.

¹³⁷ DuBois, "Damnation of Women," 103.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 99.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 96-97.

¹⁴⁰ Watkins, "Womanism and Black," 253.

CHAPTER 4

AN EMERGING NEW DIALECTIC: ENGAGING THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW

In subtle and mysterious way, despite her [Africa] curious history, her slavery, polygamy, and toil, the spell of the African mother pervades her land. Isis, the mother, is still titular goddess, in thought if not in name, of the dark continent. Nor does this all seem to be solely a survival of the historic matriarchate through which all nations pass,—it appears to be more than this,—as if the great black race in passing up the steps of human culture gave the world, not only the Iron Age, the cultivation of soil, and the domestication of animals, but also, in peculiar emphasis, the Mother-Idea.¹⁴¹

Such potency does DuBois illustrate in this epigraph!! This is the potency and the power of embodying womanhood and nationalism. This is the deep meaning in the combination of being black and a woman. Unmistakably, through all phenomena, which weigh cataclysmic, traumatic and systematically destructive, the African mother stood and walked boldly throughout space and time with a retention that went unscathed of her African perception. Yet, the benefit of her strength transcends her continent, transcends race and through her womb she births the abundance of ALL existence and development. Thus, is the beauty of giving life that DuBois calls for the world to recognize. Furthermore, DuBois' references the 'spell' as the Mother-Idea and the Mother-Idea is the Spirit; the Spirit is the creative force, which unites all phenomena. To recall, it is the guide through space and time to the

¹⁴¹ DuBois, "Damnation of Women," 97.

truth. And the Truth¹⁴² is the ultimate level of consciousness, of awakening, of understanding, which demarks the road to liberation.

Africans and Diasporic Africans have one Spirit—one which is connected to Africa and serves our guide throughout time and space. Women carry the torch of that spirit. DuBois recognizes that black women have stayed connected to the Spirit—the ethos, the common culture and essence of their ancestry, their tradition and Worldview.

Consequently, the Truth is being actualized in black women. Case point, “Damnation” DuBois declares:

So some women are born free, and some amid insult and scarlet letters achieve freedom; but our women in black had freedom thrust contemptuously upon them. With freedom they are buying an untrammelled independence and dear as is the price they pay for it, it will in the end be worth every taunt and groan. Today the dreams of the mothers are coming true. We still have our poverty and degradation, our lewdness and our cruel toil; but we have, too, a vast group of women of Negro blood who for strength of character, cleanness of soul [speaks to the spirit], and unselfish devotion of purpose, is today easily the peer of any group of women in the civilized world. And more than that, in the great rank and file of our five million women we have the up-working of the new revolutionary ideals, which must in time vast influence on the thought and action of this land.¹⁴³

¹⁴² *Truth*: the marrying of science/epistemology and the Black-lived experience.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*,107.

Here DuBois speak to the freedom bought by black women through slavery that rapped them of their chastity, innocence and passion of life and love. Nevertheless, he quickly reminds us that freedom will yield an award for every pain it was garnered in: “it will in the end be worth every taunt and groan”. This is DuBois’ first inference to the revolution that comes from the actualization of the new dialectic. Then DuBois acknowledges that there is still a partition of Negroes whose strength did not withhold through the coalition of slavery and capitalism; however, he remarks “a vast group of women of Negro blood who for strength of character, cleanness of soul [spirit], and unselfish devotion of purpose, is today easily the peer of any group of women in the civilized world”. Here again DuBois attributes the African Worldview’s survival to the strength and spirit of black women, which is unselfish and still striving for community, family and the wholeness of the African Worldview. DuBois’ reference to “any group of women” is a direct call to a remembrance that again black women has seen it all and *lived* victoriously unchanged through it all. There is a lesson in that survival for all those oppressed. Lastly, DuBois alludes to the complete emergence of the new dialectic reconciled in black Women—the emergence of the new African Worldview: “up-working of the new revolutionary ideals, which must in time vast influence on the thought and action of this land”. Black women are the exemplars of and for *humanity*. The world in time must heed and follow the lead of black women who still demand respect of person and being as the mother of civilization. Black women are the regeneration of the African Worldview.

Upon this realization, DuBois offers solution to the cataclysmic effects of slavery and capitalism.¹⁴⁴ DuBois points to Africa, and calls for a resurgence of the African Worldview:

“The world must heed these daughters of sorrow, from the primal black All-Mother of men down through the ghostly throng of mighty womanhood, who walked in the mysterious dawn of Asia and Africa from Neith, the primal mother of all, whose feet rest on hell, and whose almighty hands uphold the heavens; all religion, from beauty to beast, lies on her eager breasts, her body bears the stars, while her shoulders are necklaced by the dragon... through dusky Cleopatras, dark Candaces, and darker, fiercer Zinghas to our own day and our own land—in gentle Phillis; Harriet, the crude Moses; the sybil, Sojourner Truth; and the martyr, Louise De Mortie.”

DuBois links present day African women to a rich historical legacy of women whose commitment to the African Worldview, which reflects reverence to God, culture, community and family, thrust the entire continent forward. His illustration reveals African women have not changed. DuBois features the lives and triumphs of several African women relentlessly striving towards African liberation namely Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman.¹⁴⁵ Personifying gender, race and work roles, women contribute to the emergence of all three emancipations! Therefore, women are both important sociological

¹⁴⁴ “For four hundred years, from 1450 to 1850, European civilization carried on a systematic trade in human beings of such tremendous proportions that the physical, economic and moral effects are still plainly to be remarked throughout the world.” DuBois, *The Negro*, 72

¹⁴⁵ A quintessential African woman by the measure of the African worldview: “the whites cannot catch us, for I was born with the charm, and the Lord has given me the power.” DuBois, “Damnation of Women, 102.

cases and the vanguards for society.”¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, an understanding of black women as the vanguard of society does not yield a dissension of black men and black women:

“Only the black women can say ‘when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me.’”¹⁴⁷

For this reason, when black women move, so does the race¹⁴⁸ and arguably, all of humanity. black women are committed to their family and, intractably, committed to black men, their complement. Within the framework of the African Worldview, one’s ascension is predicated by one another’s freedom. This is why DuBois says:

The uplift of women is, next to the problem of the color line and the peace movement, our greatest modern cause. When, now, two of these movements—women and color—combine in one, the combination has deep meaning.”¹⁴⁹

black women are the progenitors of the African Worldview. We carry the torch; and the perpetual reconciliation in the unity of black men and black women is unyielding. Angela Davis declares, “the infinitely onerous nature of this equality should never be overlooked.”¹⁵⁰ DuBois asserts in his conceptualization of the African Worldview that men and women together represent “a conscious striving together for certain ideals of life”.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, “The Margin as the Center of a Theory of History: African-American Women Social Change, and the Sociology of W.E.B DuBois,” in *W.E.B. DuBois On Race and Culture*, eds. Bernard Bell, Emily Grosholz and James Stewart (New York: Routledge, 1996), 114.

¹⁴⁷ DuBois, “Damnation of Women,” 101.

¹⁴⁸ “...to no modern race does its women mean so much as to the Negro nor come so near to the fulfillment of its meaning.” *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁵⁰ Davis, “Reflections Black Woman’s,” 94.

¹⁵¹ DuBois, *Souls Black Folk*, 7.

Of equal importance, Valetia Watkins eloquently asserts, “the gender oppression of African females and African males in America is interlocking and interconnected.”¹⁵²

Ultimately, the critical analysis of “Damnation” reveals that the Mother-idea came out of Africa and that re-construing world structure comes with that acknowledgment. Activist Angela Davis affirms, “The status of black women within the community of slaves was definitely a barometer indicating the overall potential for resistance.”¹⁵³ DuBois asserts, “Civilization must show... the glory and beauty of creating life and the need and duty of power and intelligence [of black womanhood].”¹⁵⁴ More poignantly, he says “their promise, and for their hard past, I honor the women of my race... because I was born to its warm and subtle spell [born through black women’s spirit]; but their worth is *yours* as well as *mine*”. Defiantly, there is an unyielding promise within the dialectic of black women for all of humanity.

DUBOISIAN PHENOMENOLOGY: ACTUALIZING TOWARDS THE TRUTH AND THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT

What is the object of writing history... simply establish the Truth, on which Right in the future may be built. We shall never have a science of history until we have in our colleges men who regard the truth as more than the defense of the white race.¹⁵⁵

For W.E.B. DuBois the pursuit for the Truth has always been personal. As someone connected to a spirit that is uniquely African—as someone, consciously or subconsciously, operating out of the African Worldview, he could not help but to engage himself. The

¹⁵² Watkins, “Womanism and Black,” 271.

¹⁵³ Davis, “Reflections Black Woman’s,” 94.

¹⁵⁴ DuBois, “Damnation of Women,” 96.

¹⁵⁵ DuBois, *Black Reconstruction*, 725.

African Worldview dictates the knower will attempt to be apart of the phenomenon they are attempting to know. Essentially, for DuBois to recognize the Black-lived experience, to recognize his personhood is apart of his nature. That is why DuBoisian Phenomenology represented an epistemic rupture in philosophy and social science. Because DuBois rejected objectivity and reasserted the engagement of subject and subject—meaning researcher and phenomenon being studied. It is personal. That is why when he writes *The Souls of Black Folk* he says “And finally, need I add that I who speak here am bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of them that live within the Veil?” That is why when he speaks of race he says:

“I write then in a field devastated by passion and belief. Naturally, as a Negro, I cannot do this writing without believing in the essential humanity of Negroes... I cannot for a moment subscribe to the bizarre doctrine of race that makes most men inferior to the few.”¹⁵⁶

It is personal. And finally, that is why when he speaks of gender and women he says “I honor the women of my race... because I was born to its warm and subtle spell”. These are all the reasons why the pursuit of the Truth for DuBois was personal—because innately he was operating out of his true nature, the African Worldview.

Yet again, in the essence of the African Worldview, this personalized pursuit is for the liberation of all humanity not just his knowledge thereof. That is why the title of *The Souls of Black Folk* is not singular, Soul.¹⁵⁷ His pursuit is for humanity’s sake. In his relentless quest for the Truth, DuBois actively searched through several modern

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Winfried Siemerling, *The New North American Studies: Culture, Writing and the Politics of Re/cognition* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 7.

ideologies.¹⁵⁸ In his autobiography, he says the truth is “carefully gathered scientific proof that neither color nor race determined the limits of a man's capacity or desert”.¹⁵⁹ DuBois harbored the notion that the Truth will set you free; hence, was DuBois’ phenomenological approach to eradicating the color line, which he first presented in *Souls* in 1903.¹⁶⁰

One ever feels two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unrecognized strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

DuBois proclaimed, then, that the Truth of America lied within the dialectic of the black American.¹⁶¹ However, in engaging American ideology black Americans do indeed kill something within themselves, which is vital to humanity. Thusly, the notion of engaging the dialectic between the Negro and American ideology presents some hesitation that DuBois, too, recognizes:

In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro Soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world.¹⁶²

Remembering the nature of the dialectic—who I am becomes informed by who I think I am; moreover, who I think I am contradicts who I am. Ultimately, in the synthesis of the thesis

¹⁵⁸ Liberal Democracy, Radical Democracy, Marxism, Communism, Socialism and ultimately, Pan-Africanism

¹⁵⁹ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois: A Soliloquy On Viewing My Life From the Last Decade of It's First Century* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 229.

¹⁶⁰ “‘The Truth will set you free’: this plan was directed toward the majority of white Americans and rested on the assumption that once they realized the scientifically attests truth concerning Negroes and race relations, they would take action to correct all wrong.” Reiland Rabaka, *Du Bois's Dialectics: Black Radical Politics and the Reconstruction of Social Critical Theory* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 108.

¹⁶¹ “We were the darker ones come even now not altogether empty-handed: there are to-day no truer exponents of the pure human spirit of the Declaration of Independence than the American Negroes.” DuBois, *Souls Black Folk*, 15.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 9.

and antithesis, the former dies to the actualization of the synthesis. So inevitably, DuBois was concerned about the effects the dialectic would have on the African way of thinking and on the African way in which he sees himself and organizes his realities. Inevitably, morphing our African Worldview. DuBois, also, recalls the intent of the European Worldview and the nature of which American Ideology evolves—to separate, to create inferiority and to devalue.

In retrospect, DuBois' writings in *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois: A Soliloquy On Viewing My Life From the Last Decade of It's First Century* reflect this understanding of the predestinable European Worldview. In his autobiography, he speaks to his cynicism with American hypocrisy. Hence, out of his realization that America and American Ideology was not wedded to the ideals it pronounced nor the Truth it spoke of in its Constitution came his disillusionment in liberal democracy.¹⁶³ In his years of Liberal Democracy, he knew the responsibility slavery had in stripping humanity of its humanity—liberties, political, social and economic rights; however, like his predecessor Frederick Douglass, he believed that America wanted the Truth.¹⁶⁴ Upon realizing the contrary, in the beginning of his radical democracy phase, in *The Negro* DuBois defends:

All these solutions and methods, however, run directly counter to modern philanthropy... This solution says: Negroes differ from whites in their inherent genius and stage of development. Their development must not,

¹⁶³ "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal' versus 'the Land of the Thief and the home of the Slave." DuBois, *Autobiography of W.E.B.*, 247, 251.

¹⁶⁴ "I regarded it as axiomatic that the world wanted to learn the truth and if the truth were sought with even approximate accuracy and painstaking devotion, the world would gladly support the effort. This was, of course, but a young man's idealism, not by any means false, but also never universally true." *Ibid.*, 222.

therefore, be sought along European lines, but along their own native lines.¹⁶⁵

Ultimately, DuBois finds himself ideologically back to the centrality of all civilization in the comforts of the African Worldview by the time he writes “The Damnation of Women”. In “Damnation” the world is afforded an example of survival through prosecution and fire in black women. A new dialectic emerges in the black women’s encounter with slavery, capitalism, race and gender. Black woman are led through space and time by the Spirit, which DuBois connects to Africa—coining it the Mother-Idea.

Recalling the African Worldview as phenomenological, the Spirit is a guide through space and time towards the Truth. It is the oneness of a people’s experiences and historical circumstances shared over long periods of time in the setting of the culture. It is also the force that manifests itself on/in the material and immaterial in the African ontological universe. Therefore, it is important to denote that as defined by the context of DuBoisian Phenomenology, neither the truth nor is the Worldview is static. They are continually being actualized by the Spirit—its guiding force—which materializes in African women. Case and point, in “Damnation”, DuBois paints a picture of an African woman in Africa who works for her family, in harmony with her headman towards one another’s common pursuits.¹⁶⁶ Then, he paints a similar scenario in an African America woman whom equally finds herself working, in harmony with a man to build the foundation of the black church.¹⁶⁷ In illustration, there are two examples of womanhood of pure intention in the common goal to mother the nation. To that end, the Spirit makes the African Worldview a

¹⁶⁵ DuBois, *The Negro*, 114.

¹⁶⁶ DuBois, “Damnation of Women,” 97.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

timeless non-spatial concept. Nevertheless, it is evolving because it is shaped by the Black-lived experience. Inevitably, by the Spirit, the Black-lived experience shapes and morphs the African Worldview as Truth is actualized.

In Jacob H. Carruthers', *Intellectual Warfare*, he addresses that the "African Worldview, modified to account for modern conditions, is the only viable foundation for African liberation. Wherever records still exist the wisdom of the African Worldview as the necessary condition for liberation".¹⁶⁸ As discovered through the continuum of DuBois' pursuit of the Truth, the world is still in need of 'the up-working of the new revolutionary ideals'. Definitively, DuBois believes such as resolution evolves out of the African Worldview:

"I believe it is specifically the mission of African Civilization to restore ethical principles to world civilization. Unless this attempt is made all civilization must come to an end. The African by virtue of his detachment, his direct vision, and his innate kindness, is qualified to bring humanitarianism to the technical and materialistic concepts of the Western World".¹⁶⁹

Indifferently, the return to the African Worldview is imperative; however, as DuBois illustrated in "The Meaning of Progress" the mere acknowledgement of morality and a tireless work ethic is not enough to achieve liberation. The African Worldview must be transcended practically; hence, the call for Pan-Africanism by DuBois.

ENGAGING THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW AND PAN-AFRICANISM

¹⁶⁸ Jacob H. Carruthers, *Intellectual Warfare* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1999), 22.

¹⁶⁹ W.E.B. DuBois, *The World and Africa* (Millwood: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1976), 260.

For DuBois, there were moral convictions to the pursuit of the Truth; it was an innate calling.¹⁷⁰ Cheryl Gilkes comments, “For DuBois the problem was complex, and first of all demanded respect for the ideas of people of nationalities, all races, and of both men and women.”¹⁷¹ Upon realizing, these other ideologies were not interested in seeking the whole truth, DuBois reasserted himself in the thrust towards liberation:

For DuBois himself the pursuit of the Pan-Africanist ideal was linked directly to his vision of radical democracy, or perhaps more accurately, multicultural democracy. Africa and peoples of African Diaspora could not be free so long as democracy existed only for the few.¹⁷²

By definition, Pan-Africanism had at least three meanings: 1) Pan-Negroism—an idea that Africans at home and abroad share a common destiny in virtue of being a common race. 2) Pan-Humanism—an idea that Pan-Africanism refers to the kinship of the dispossessed and the degraded and that this includes but goes beyond people of African descent. 3) Pan-Continentalism—a view that Pan-Africanism is limited to the idea and movement of African unity and restricted to the continent of Africa is its struggle for emancipation against colonial exploitation.¹⁷³ Of them all, DuBois was most married to Pan-Negroism.¹⁷⁴ Scholar Reiland Rabaka declares most people don’t live under the conviction that the truth yields; hence, race injustice has the propensity to linger and/or

¹⁷⁰ “I began to feel, on the one hand, pressure being put upon me to modify my work; and on the other hand, an inner emotional reaction at the things taking place about me. To note the latter first: as a scientist, I sought the traditional detachment and calm of the seeker for truth. I had deliberately chosen to work in the South, although I knew that there I must face discrimination and insult. But on the other hand I was a normal human being with strong feelings and pronounced likes and dislikes, and a flair for expression; these I could not wholly suppress, nor did I try.” DuBois, *Autobiography of W.E.B.*, 232.

¹⁷¹ Gilkes, “Margin as Center, 119.

¹⁷² Marable, “Pan-Africanism of W.E.B.,” 213.

¹⁷³ Segun Gbadegesin, “Kinship of the Dispossessed,” in *W.E.B. DuBois On Race and Culture*, ed. by Bernard Bell, Emily Grosholz and James Stewart (New York: Routledge, 1996), 225-226.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 226.

increase. He further makes this observation about DuBois' philosophical trajectory: "It is the duty of the black race to maintain its cultural advance, not for itself alone, but for the emancipation of mankind, the realization of democracy, and the progress of civilization". Ronald Judy pronounced that DuBois "conceived of the Negro as an object of analysis that functions as a fundamental metaphor of universal social development."¹⁷⁵ Ultimately, DuBois came to realize the need for the method/ideology to be culturally grounded, specifically in African culture.¹⁷⁶

The African Worldview offered DuBois the Truth because it was a holistic, comprehensive and phenomenological lens: "In DuBois' view psychic liberation [did] not require the eradication of the European elements of the psyche, but rather its subordination to the African core personality."¹⁷⁷ Pan-Africanism is the pragmatic cultural assertion of the Truth and the African Worldview. The African Worldview informs Pan-Africanism:

"what is between us that constitutes a tie that I can feel better than I can explain... the real essence of this kinship is its social heritage of slavery; the discrimination and insult; and this heritage binds together not simply the children of Africa, but extends through yellow Asia and into the South Seas. It is this unity that draws me to Africa."¹⁷⁸

Again, this substance that DuBois feels and Dona Richards later contextualizes as the African Worldview and ethos guide him to the political assertion of Pan-Africanism.

¹⁷⁵ Ronald Judy, "On W.E.B. Du Bois and Hyperbolic Thinking," in *Sociology Hesitant: Thinking with W.E.B. Du Bois*, ed. by Ronald Judy (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 34.

¹⁷⁶ "For the human sciences to be truly human, they must be global, they must be rooted in actual history and begin with the anticolonial and anti-White supremacist liberation struggles. Montiero, *DuBois Study Humanity*, 619.

¹⁷⁷ Leon Caldwell and James Stewart, "Rethinking W.E.B. DuBois' 'Double Consciousness'," in *Retaining African Americans in Higher Education* (Sterling: Stylus Publishing, 2001), 227.

¹⁷⁸ W.E.B. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1940), 117.

DuBois' moral imperative led him to praxis-promoting theory. A belief, conscious or subconscious, in the cultural unity of the African Worldview dictates political and economic implications. In *The World and Africa*, DuBois details, "the new series of Pan-African Congresses would seek common aims of progress for Black Africa (meaning both North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa), including types of political control, economic cooperation, cultural development, universal education and freedom from religious dogma and dictation... and should try to build a socialism founded on old African communal life".¹⁷⁹ Through Pan-Africanism, DuBois ideally achieves the balance and respect of cultural freedom true liberation for humanity requires.

In all of his ideological movements, DuBois was ahead of the thought curve. The world was not ready for his demands, which challenged their own worldview, ideology, ethos and essence. Activist, lecturer and DuBoisian scholar, Dr. Montiero, contends DuBois' scholarship, methodology and ideology represents an epistemic rupture in social science because it forces the world to acknowledge Africa as central.¹⁸⁰ DuBois' engagement of the African Worldview through the ideology of Pan-Africanism forces a return to Africa and African thought, which arguably re-centers humanity. Conclusively, DuBois avows, "Negroes have been among the leaders of civilization in every age of the world's history from ancient Babylon to modern America; that they have contributed wonderful gifts in art, industry, political organization, and religion, and that they are doing the same to-day in all parts of the world."¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ DuBois, *World and Africa*, 296.

¹⁸⁰ Montiero, *DuBois Study Humanity*, 601.

¹⁸¹ DuBois, *The Negro*, 67.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING ON DUBOIS AND DAMNATION

I have always felt like bowing myself before them in all abasement, searching to bring some tribute to these long-suffering victims, these burdened sisters of mine... I have known and seen and lived beside them, but none have I known more sweetly feminine, more unswervingly loyal, more desperately earnest, and more instinctively pure in body and in soul than the daughters of my black mothers. This, then,—a little thing—to their memory and inspiration.

Conclusively, “The Damnation of Women” becomes an ode to black women. DuBois, assertively, declares from antiquity to present day, African women are the progenitors of the African Worldview. In the face of their Damnation—the coalition of slavery and capitalism, the impositions of race and gender—black women withstood the test of time. Black women harbored their African Worldview, their commitment to family and liberation for all of humanity. For black women understood holistically the interdependence of humanity’s freedom being predicated on one another. Through “Damnation” we understand the symbolic oneness to womanhood and nationalism.

It is authoritatively one of the only places where DuBois speaks exclusively of women, their plight and role in society. Furthermore, it is definitively illustrative of male-female interactions and relationships. The essay singlehandedly asserts itself against an argument of a dichotomized relationship between African men and women. The effects of compartmentalizing through race and gender are counterproductive to a True liberation:

“It would appear that the intense levels of resistance historically maintained by black people and this the historical function of the black liberation struggle as harbinger of change throughout the society are due in part to the greater objective equality between the black man and the black woman.”¹⁸²

These advances towards psychological, social, political and economic freedom are not gained through a relational struggle or competitive relationship between African men and women, but rather through the paradoxically, complementary oneness of our nature. It is not meant for African people to struggle against one another; there is a greater cause at stake.¹⁸³ This is apparent in DuBois’ thought process. DuBois is consciously and unconsciously operating out of the African Worldview; this is why he is so entangled with the moral imperative.¹⁸⁴

“Damnation” represents a pivotal turning point in DuBois’ pursuit of the Truth and his understanding of the strength of the Mother-Idea, as known as the Spirit. The assertions in “Damnation” authoritatively situate DuBois in the continuum of the African Worldview discussion and attach him to a long history of African scholarship. “Damnation” connects DuBois to the legacy of black radical thought—beyond race but entering into the realms but perhaps even in establishing the mold of its praxis in his phenomenological approach. This analysis demonstrates grounds for considering DuBois as a thinker beyond his discourse with race and sociology.

¹⁸² Davis, “Reflections Black Woman’s,” 94.

¹⁸³ “African women and men share a mutual problem, a common foe, and joint fate. It is our collective historical record, made in tandem with one another...” Watkins, “Womanism and Black,” 249.

¹⁸⁴ Throughout DuBois’ work he is constantly speaking of African peoples moral character. See *Souls, Dusk of Dawn* and *Darkwater*.

Within the Africana Studies discipline, DuBois has a vital perspective to offer in the discourse of philosophy, gender studies, methodology, and definitively the practicum component of the discipline—social responsibility. Cheikh Anta Diop, Jacob Carruthers, Dona Richards, Vernon Dixon, Linda Myers, Daudi Azibo and many others all labored in the scholarship of defining and explicating the African Worldview after DuBoisian Phenomenology. Many of the aforementioned, reference and mention DuBois' work, namely for his work in establishing a reconstructed African and African American history or in respect to race-consciousness, but have not connected his vision, scholarship and praxis-promoting theory with the African Worldview. This research demonstrates inferences of the African Worldview in DuBoisian scholarship in DuBois' 1869 essay, "Conservation of Races". DuBois is not the sole scholar to show black women as life-givers to humanity or to uplift the potentiality of asserting the African Worldview practically; however, he is one of the first. This research materializes DuBois as a forerunner in the discourse of the African Worldview—defining its cultural commonalities, philosophical underpinning, function, intent and nature. The advancement of DuBoisian scholarship is pivotal to humanity's liberation and intractably connected to black liberation. This thesis facilitates a discursive space to interrogate DuBoisian thought—to rethink, reconfigure and refocus the implications of DuBoisian thought. To that end, in the genealogy of Africana Studies scholarship as well as other disciplines, namely Sociology, Ethnic and Cultural Studies, this work consents a reassertion of DuBoisian scholarship in a much broader context than originally perceived by scholars and activists.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As a Master's student, approaching this subject posed many limitations in research time and resources. Hence, there is still room to further digest the full body of DuBoisian scholarship through the lens presented in this research, namely in the area of examining Pan-Africanism as the pragmatic cultural assertion of the Truth and the African Worldview. For instance, what does the genealogy of contemporary black women or a genealogy of black women's Pan-African movement reveal about the strength of the Spirit and African Worldview? There is also grounds to interrogate DuBois body of work juxtapose African Feminist theory, Black Feminism and/or Africana Womanism.

Furthermore, how would a class analysis affect this argument? In many circles you cannot have conversation about race and gender without class because they, too, are all connected. Whereas DuBois understood all three institutions, using DuBois' "Damnation" does not bring out that argument strongest. To that end, perhaps a closer reading of both *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880*, *The World and Africa* as well as other latter pieces in the corpus of DuBois would better help illuminate the effects of class.

Both of these implications give ample ground for a dissertation, which brings me to my next point in showing the importance of continuing in this vein of study. For instance, other research questions evolve as is relates to contemporary times and the assertion made by DuBois concerns women's ability to garner her intelligence, femininity, culture and ability to rear a child. How have time, phenomenon and detrimental systems, like wage wars and pro-choice legislation effected black women's capability to do is all in tandem—to continue to give life to humanity both in development in childbearing. An ethnographic or

research project to look at this new dialectic from a contemporary perspective would be imperative.

Decisively, this thesis research is a framework and any section of the project could be further dissected or pushed out; however, the purpose here was to show the connections between race, gender, the dialectic and the African Worldview—to reveal a common throughline in DuBois’ trajectory and evolution to elevate the assertions in “Damnation”, which reveals a belief in African peoples viability to the Truth. In conclusion, Valetia Watkins makes a proclamation similar to DuBois’ definition the African Worldview, “striving for our mutual liberation is not an option but a prerequisite for the perpetuation of existence as a people. This is a perspective that views our collective fate and destiny as bound together by blood, culture, and worldview.”¹⁸⁵ Inevitably, we cannot afford to compartmentalize or stratify our struggle it must be a unified fight against racism, which will lead to a changed perspective of other constructed institutions, and constructed injustices.¹⁸⁶ The examination of DuBoisian thought and ideology presents the African Worldview and Pan-Africanism as a perspective and practice to deconstruct these other constructed entities.

This research serves to continue to build on the rejection of the inner race struggle through thorough DuBoisian scholarship. I am not a Black Feminist, nor am I an Africana Womanist. “I belong to this race and when it is down, I belong to a down race and when it is up I belong to a risen race” –Ellen Watkins Harper

¹⁸⁵ Watkins, “Womanism and Black,” 269.

¹⁸⁶ Examples of constructed institutions are race and gender, which lead to constructed injustices racism and gender objectivity. These intuitions are not historical grounded in an African cultural tradition.

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