Stony Brook University

Race, Sex, and Interracial Intimacy in American Literature

A Dissertation Presented

by

KANGYL KO

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Stony Brook University

August 2015

Stony Brook University

The Graduate School

KANGYL KO

We, the dissertation committee for the above candidate for the

Doctor of Philosophy degree, hereby recommend

acceptance of this dissertation.

Dr. Jeffrey Santa Ana – Dissertation Advisor
Associate Professor, Department of English

Dr. Andrew Newman - Chairperson of Defense
Associate Professor, Department of English

Dr. Tracey Walters – Committee Member
Associate Professor, Department of Africana Studies

Dr. Nerissa Balce
Associate Professor, Department of Asian and Asian American Studies

This dissertation is accepted by the Graduate School

Charles Taber
Dean of the Graduate School

Abstract of the Dissertation

Race, Sex, and Interracial Intimacy in American Literature

by

KANGYL KO

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Stony Brook University

2015

In this dissertation, I analyze interracial sexual relationships represented in modern American literature, focusing mainly on ethnic texts written in the first half of the twentieth century. My work explores the ways in which these texts examine the intersectionality of race, gender, sexuality, and class in their discussions of "miscegenation." This dissertation does not assume that literature written by people of color is always oppositional and resistant. Rather than reproducing that conventional and simplistic logic, my study investigates how ethnic literary texts bear and interrogate the traces of white values (or violence) and of white rhetorical strategies. In this way, I read American ethnic texts as cultural spaces in which U.S. racial discourse and modernity can be questioned and challenged or articulated and endorsed.

The first two chapters examine W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* and *Darkwater* respectively. I argue that the discussion of interracial heterosexual exchange is central to both books, which present the normalization of interracial heterosexual desire as integral to black manhood and racial justice. I also address the ways in which Du Bois stigmatizes black women's interracial heterosexual desire while normalizing black men's interracial heterosexuality. The third chapter explores the dominant discourse of a mixed-race man's sexuality under Jim Crow and its counter-discourse by examining James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. The fourth chapter discusses Nella Larsen's *Passing* to illustrate the pervasiveness of lynching in contemporary narratives about race and sexuality. The fifth chapter turns to a foundational novel within Filipino American literature, Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*, and analyzes the representation of interracial relations between white women and Filipino men in the novel. In the epilogue, I offer a brief meditation on Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*, written in the late twentieth century, by exploring the novel's narration of mixed-race Filipinos in order to trace a particular trajectory in which modern racist discourses have articulated and adapted themselves to maintain and facilitate U.S. imperialism on a global scale in a postmodern era.

For HYEWON, of course

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to my dissertation committee, chaired by Jeffrey Santa Ana, with Andrew Newman, Tracy Walters, and Nerissa Balce as readers. I am especially grateful to Jeffrey for his professional guidance and enthusiastic support, and I am extremely fortunate to have him as my advisor and mentor at Stony Brook. I also want to thank other Stony Brook faculty who offered me intellectual encouragement, in particular Izabela Kalinowska-Blackwood, Helen Choi and Peter Manning.

I am grateful for the friendship and support of many colleagues in the English Department, especially Kimberly Cox, Nathaniel Doherty, Derek McGrath, Francisco Delgado, Burcu Kuheylan, Brandi So, Matthew Kremer, Sungmin Han, and Anthony Choo. These relationships have sustained me throughout my years at Stony Brook. I also owe thanks to my Korean friends, Huck Hur, Donghyuk Ki, Soyun Kim, Heenam Lim, Sungyup Kim, and Kangjin Kim. They have been like family to me, for which I will always be grateful.

This dissertation is dedicated to HYEWON, my wife. She has given me love, purpose and motivation. Life is tough, but going through it with her makes every day a joy. I owe her everything. Including this dissertation.

Introduction

> To BE AMERICAN is to be both black and white. Yet to be a modern American has also meant to deny this mixing, our deep biracial genesis.
> — Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness*

> Thinking métissage [miscegenation], I argue, requires accepting a genealogy and a heritage. In other words, the recognition of a past of rape, violence, slavery, and the recognition of our own complicity with the wicked ways of the world.
> — Françoise Vergés, *Monsters and Revolutionaries*

Modernity, Race, and Twentieth-Century American Ethnic Literature

The creation of American modernity was a highly racialized project. White mainstream society's efforts to build and maintain a "modern" America and a "modern" American subject determined by race were diverse, tenacious, and pernicious. The legal, extralegal and discursive devices that white supremacists invoked in order to police racial boundaries are easily enumerated: lynching, the miscegenation taboo, anti-miscegenation laws, anti-immigration laws, the one-drop rule, the disenfranchisement of black people, segregated schools, segregated military, and so on. The 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case was one of the most iconic events in defining the modern American nation by establishing a binary racial division between white and non-white (Somerville 1). Indeed, in modern America, race is, as "a principle signifier of social difference," deployed as a means of "assigning differential political rights and capital and social privilege, in distinguishing between citizens presumed to have equal rights and privileges and inherently unequal, subordinated subjects" (R. Lee 6-7). The dogmatic ideology of racial purity persisted through such public activities as the U.S. Census, which, until the year 2000, permitted individuals to choose only one racial category to identify themselves (Bergner xxvii). As W.E.B.

Du Bois so simply but so aptly put it, “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line” (*The Souls* of *Black Folk* 45).

In her brilliant and original study of whiteness in American literature, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992), Toni Morrison asserts that American literature provides commentary to concepts of racial difference (65). More specifically, she contends that modern American national literature is a discursive response to “a dark, abiding, signing Africanist presence” (5). Through her groundbreaking analysis of white writers — Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, Willa Cather, and Ernest Hemingway — Morrison demonstrates that the presence of black people in their literary consciousness works as the vehicle by which “the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; not repulsive, but desirable; not helpless, but licensed and powerful; not history-less, but historical; not damned, but innocent; not a blind accident of evolution, but a progressive fulfillment of destiny” (52). Morrison concludes that the presence of the black population as “the projection of the not-me” has served American modern literature in its ideological project of constructing the American as “a new white man” (39).

While *Playing in the Dark* offers a perceptive view of American literature by “avert[ing] the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject” (Morrison 90), *Race, Sex, and Interracial Intimacy in American Literature* consciously returns the critical focus to “the racial object” in order to examine the racialized American modernity from the perspectives of racial minority authors. By focusing on American ethnic literature written in the first half of the twentieth century, this dissertation explores the intersectionality of race, gender, and class in American modern history. In particular, *Race, Sex, and Interracial Intimacy in American Literature* explores how ethnic literature interrogates the issue of American modernity in terms

of interracial heterosexual relationships. Given that formations of American modernity and nation-statehood were articulated through the trope of sexuality (Chang 113), this study considers the discussion of interracial heterosexual intimacy as the crucial vehicle with which to investigate the modern history of the United States.

As Robyn Wiegman explains, under slavery, white racist culture often envisioned black men as the feminized docile figure of Uncle Tom (96). Even abolitionist literature presented the slave as the "erotic sign of servitude" that white male planters could rape and torture with impunity (Baker 13). Yet once emancipated, a black man was predominantly portrayed as the figure of the black rapist who preys on white women. In this way, in modern U.S. culture, the discourse of black men's sexual difference, "from feminized docility to hypermasculinized phallicity," played a crucial role in defining a desirable white manhood and modern nationhood (Wiegman 96). To put it differently, the pathologized black men's interracial sexuality provided the discursive ground for the elaboration of quintessential white American manhood and identity.

Daniel Kim's observations about the usage of the term "yellow" epitomize how Asian American males had been sexualized in American modern culture. According to Kim, "yellow" is the color that has most often been used in American racial discourses to refer to "'Orientals' (at least to those of East Asian descent)" (31). It is also a term that resonates with meaning in U.S. discourses of masculinity, referring to "men who exhibit a glaring absence of qualities of courage […] essential to traditional conceptions of manhood" (30).[1] In the American racial imaginary, the yellow men, Asian men, were perceived lacking "the qualities of conventional manhood" (31). They were thus feminized or homosexualized.[2] In his compelling reading of

[1] Given the major concern and the scope of this dissertation, I would like to only focus on the historical experience of African and Asian American people. However, other minority groups such as Latinos and Native Americans were also racialized in terms of their interracial sexuality in modern American culture.

David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988), David Eng also maintains that the emasculated figure of the Asian male had served to guarantee the white male's claim to normative heterosexuality (151). By placing himself between the excessively masculinized black man and the less masculinized Asian man, the white man could stabilize his masculinity, normalize his heterosexual relations with the white woman, and pathologize her relations with the man of color.

Thus, *normative* heterosexuality (or masculinity) was considered the ultimate sign of white modernity. In American society, where racial privilege was highly signified by "male access to the bodies of [white] women historically" (Parreñas 123), white supremacists stigmatized the sexuality of men of color as a means of reinforcing the idea that dominant modern nationhood must be white to be normative, natural, and often masculine. *Race, Sex, and Interracial Intimacy in American Literature* reads modern American ethnic literature as a literary response to the dominant racial discourse. To this end, the present study focuses on how ethnic literature portrays the intersectionality of race, sex, sexuality, class, nationalism, and imperialism in its representation of interracial heterosexual relationships, particularly between men of color and white women. How we understand this complexity — how we might approach the interdependence between racist narratives about interracial sexuality of people of color and the counter discourses of ethnic writers — provides the locus around which this dissertation is organized and makes possible a constructive debate of the fascinating relations of race, gender, and class in U.S. culture. In the following section, I will briefly review American modern history that sought to regulate interracial intimacy, which will help familiarize us with the historical context on which the literary works explored in my dissertation are based.

[2] Arguably, the feminization and homosexualization of Asian males in American culture are inseparable from their enforced bachelorhood. Laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 forced Asian American males to form bachelor communities such as Chinatown.

Regulating Miscegenation

One of the most common terms used to refer to interracial heterosexual relationships in the United States during the early twentieth century was "miscegenation." In this dissertation, I use "miscegenation" interchangeably with interracial heterosexual intercourse. The term was coined in 1863 by two Irish immigrant anti-abolitionists, D.G. Croly and George Wakeman. In their mock abolitionist pamphlet *Miscegenation*: *The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro*, the two Democrats created the word "miscegenation" by combining the Latin words *miscere*, "to mix," and *genus*, "race." At the time of their anonymous publication of the sensational pamphlet, anti-abolitionists accused abolitionists of approving of and encouraging interracial marriage, an idea that offended most contemporary white people, including those who opposed slavery. Croly and Wakeman thus anonymously composed the pamphlet as a hoax, posing as "pro-Republican abolitionists" who supported intermarriage. They hoped that their hoax would be used to embarrass the Republicans in the upcoming elections (*The Wages of Whiteness* 155-56).

After emancipation and the betrayal of Reconstruction, miscegenation, understood as black people's claim for "social equality," was still prohibited. The term "social equality" was used only in the negative (Painter 55). In 1890, Alabama senator and former Confederate general John T. Morgan succinctly expressed white supremacists' revulsion over the prospect of miscegenation: "the snows will fall from heaven in sooty blackness, sooner than the white women of the United States will consent to the maternity of negro families" (qtd. in Hodes 179). White proponents of black equality shared the public objections to interracial intercourse, as abolitionists had done before emancipation (A. Davis 188). The tenacious miscegenation taboo suggested that "races would remain separate and distinct" even after the abolition of slavery

(Moran 26). In the history of the United States, the miscegenation taboo dictated that black women could be exchanged by and among white men, while black men must be denied access to white women (Bergner xxv- xxvi). A mixed-race child inherited his black mother's social status, and this matrilineal rule impeded the mixed-race offspring from access to white racial and economic privilege.[3] Furthermore, since the 1850s, the legal definition of black throughout the United States had been officially based on the "one-drop rule." Under that rule, "one is white if *all* one's ancestors are white; one is black if *any* of one's ancestors are black" (Kawash 132; emphasis in original).

Throughout American modern history, anti-miscegenation and immigration laws had served to establish and reinforce white nationhood (*Sexual Naturalization* 3). The earliest U.S. anti-miscegenation law, enacted in Maryland in 1661, enslaved white women who married black men (*Sexual Naturalization* 4). In the 1881 case, *Pace and Cox v. State*, the Alabama Supreme Court allowed the state "to punish interracial fornication and adultery more severely than intra-racial fornication and adultery" (Moran 79). In 1882, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Alabama court's decision, legalizing a "'separate but equal' principle in sexual and marital regulation" (Moran 80). After *Pace*, bolstered by the Court's approval, twenty states and territories reinforced legal bans on interracial marriage and sex between 1880 and 1920 (Moran 80). Such decisions extended to interracial relationships other than those between black men and white women. For example, in 1901, white-Chinese intermarriage was criminalized in California (*Sexual Naturalization* 7). The 1922 Cable Act stripped white women of their citizenship if they

[3] The seventeenth-century British colonists initially followed "English custom" by proclaiming that children of miscegenation inherited the status of their fathers. But in 1662 the Virginia assembly passed legislation which declared that the offspring inherited the social status of the mother, invoking "Roman custom" to protect their property interests. Since Maryland abandoned the "Roman custom" in 1712, the matrilineal rule, namely, "Roman custom," had been one of the ways to manage white men's "thorny problems" that miscegenation caused (Clinton 203).

married Asian men (*Sexual Naturalization* 7). It was not until the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Loving v. Virginia* decision in 1967 that intermarriage across racial borders became legally protected (*Sexual Naturalization* 4).

Interracial Intimacy in American Modern Literature

As I noted earlier, the hostility that white people expressed toward miscegenation between men of color and white women prevailed in the early twentieth-century United States. "[T]he idea of the American and the idea of the melting pot" were becoming mutually exclusive (Michaels 61). In a solid majority of the United States, interracial marriage was legally prohibited. In this era of "racial nationalism," many writers, whether white or not, exploited the narrative of interracial heterosexual intimacy to elucidate racialized American nationhood and modernity (*Sexual Naturalization* 20). Let us first explore how this narrative is used as one of the thematic grounds for white writers by examining Walter Michaels's studies of American white modernists of the 1920s, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (1995).

In his book, Michaels contends that commitment to cultural pluralism was, for white modernist writers of that period, the most effective means of expressing and endorsing their Anglo-American national identity. Their version of cultural pluralism was supposed to deny a common scale of intercultural measurement. It presupposed fundamental differences among cultures, which contradicts the ethos of the melting pot. In that cultural discourse, being American transforms from a matter of political citizenship to that of essentialized cultural identity. In the 1920s, Michaels asserts, "racial identity was disconnected from political citizenship and connected instead to culture" under the strong influence of cultural pluralism (11). Michaels maintains that the race discourse of that period was based on Anglo-Saxonism rather

than on "whiteness." Indeed, while Progressive period writers such as Thomas Dixon praised the Jews as fellow revolutionaries who "had always been with the oppressed people of the South" (qtd. in Michaels 47), Lothrop Stoddard in 1927 portrayed Jewish immigrants as the great threat to America (Michaels 24).

According to Michaels, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) illustrates the thematic centrality of interracial intimacy in American modernist literature. In the novel, Jay Gatsby's frustrated romance with Daisy Buchanan mirrors the cultural hegemony of Anglo-Saxonism of the 1920s. Gatsby fails to gain respect from his neighbors and to marry Daisy, although he tries to racially *pass* by changing his name from Gatz to Gatsby, by affecting an English accent, and by making up his new personal history (Michaels 25). Daisy's husband, Tom Buchanan, as Michaels explains, explicitly invokes nativist racial discourse, echoing the anxiety over "race suicide" that Stoddard voiced: "Civilization's going to pieces […] I've gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read 'The Rise of the Colored Empires' by this man Goddard? [...] The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be – will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved" (12-13).[4] His response to Gatsby's affair with Daisy overtly reveals his view of race and Anglo-Saxonism: "Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions, and next they'll throw everything overboard and have *intermarriage* between black and white" (130; emphasis added). Tom does not think of and will not acknowledge Gatsby as white. For Tom, "Gatsby (né Gatz, with his Wolfsheim [sic] 'gonnegtion') isn't quite white" (Michaels 25). He thinks of the affair between Gatsby and Daisy as "miscegenation" (Michaels 7). Daisy temporarily forgets that Gatsby is actually Jimmy Gatz because of the confusion of World War I (Michaels 27). After all, *The Great Gatsby*

[4] The book Tom is mentioning is actually Stoddard's racial jeremiad about immigration, *The Rising Tide of Colors Against White-World Supremacy* published in 1920 (Michaels 23).

demonstrates the cultural hegemony of American nativism through its portrayal of Gatsby's problematic *interracial* romance with Daisy.

Willa Cather's *My Ántonia* (1918) is another modernist text about interracial romance. The novel belongs to the American tradition of "high modernism," which is an "Anglo-American blend of opposition to modernity expressed in aesthetically modernist forms" (Sollors, *Ethnic Modernism* 64). The novel thematically endorses the simple and hardworking ethics of the nineteenth-century frontier, and formally displays modernist rhetorical strategies such as the sparseness and clarity of sentences (64). In her text, Cather depicts her immigrant characters with a deep respect for what they have endured and accomplished. She offers a sympathetic portrait of the linguistic and cultural hardships that immigrants went through. Ántonia Shimerda, Cather's Bohemian immigrant heroine, has been said to embody heroic womanhood by feminist critics. Cather does not hesitate to praise the strong womanhood of immigrant girls like Ántonia: "To-day the best that a harassed Black Hawk merchant can hope for is to sell provisions and farm machinery and automobiles to the rich farms where that first crop of stalwart Bohemian and Scandinavian girls are now the mistresses" (151). We should note, however, that this novel ultimately denies the ethos of the melting pot. In this American high modernism novel, Ántonia's "interracial" engagement to Larry Donovan, an Anglo-Saxon man, ends tragically: she is abandoned by Donovan and has to conceal an unexpected pregnancy.[5] In contrast, Lena Lingard, a Norwegian immigrant girl, makes no attempt to continue her interracial romance with Jim, and opens her own dressmaker's shop. After listening to the story of Ántonia's abortive marriage to Donovan, Jim compares her choices with those of Lena: "I tried to shut Ántonia out of my mind.

[5] In his book, *Our America* (1995), analyzing Cather's *A Lost Lady* (1923*), The Professor's House* (1925), and *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927), Walter Benn Michaels demonstrates that the novels embrace the discourse of nativist modernism. Although he does not mention *My Ántonia* in his discussion of Cather's nativism, I argue that the novel also endorses the ideology of nativism.

I was bitterly disappointed in her. I could not forgive her for becoming an object of pity, while Lena Lingard, for whom people had always foretold trouble, was now the leading dressmaker of Lincoln, much respected in Black Hawk" (221). It is only after marrying another Bohemian immigrant (Cuzak) that Ántonia reclaims her happiness and becomes again "a rich mine of life" (259). Cather implicitly endorses the ethos of nativism in her modernist novel.[6]

Michael's exploration of 1920s modernist texts in terms of American nativism sheds light on white modernist writers' obsession with the issue of miscegenation, which leads us to question the way that ethnic writers respond to the same issue. In fact, like Cather and Fitzgerald, ethnic writers, including African American writers, have discussed the problem of racialized American modernity in their narratives of interracial romance. For example, Jean Toomer examines American modernity in terms of miscegenation in his Harlem Renaissance masterpiece, *Cane* (1923). *Cane* includes several stories of failed miscegenation that mirror the racial nativism of that period. For example, in the story "Becky," the titular white female protagonist is ostracized by both black and white people after giving birth to two black children. Her children grow up to be town bullies, and one day, Becky is found under the wreckage of her house. At the beginning and end of the story, a poem highlights the tragic result of Becky's miscegenation: "Becky was the white woman who had two Negro sons. / She's dead; they've gone away" (lines 1-2, 8). In the short story "Fern," a girl of black and Jewish roots is depicted as being sexually attractive yet unable to reproduce her own race. A lot of men get "no joy" from her and "[s]omething inside of her got tired of them" (22-23). Her sterility is depicted as an inevitable product of race mixing. In "Blood-Burning Moon," the interracial relationship between Louisa and Bob Stone results in murder and lynching. Another short story, "Bona and Paul," describes

[6] One might say that Cather had a surprisingly narrow view of Anglo-Saxonism that would exclude a Bohemian and a Scandinavian.

the abortive romance between a white woman and a mulatto.

Taken as a whole, *Cane* might be read as a mere reflection *of* the age of nativism in the 1920s. However, if we consider this text as a critical reflection *on* the age of nativist racism, Toomer's work requires a radically different reading, resulting in *Cane*'s becoming an ethnic modernist text for the transcendence of racial segregation. As Werner Sollors's perceptive interpretation shows, Toomer's use of visual imagery and his avoidance of racial and ethnic labels are attempts to seek "wholeness" in a contemporary America that "was fragmented, black and white, male and female, southern and northern, rural and urban" (*Ethnic Modernism* 109). For instance, Toomer describes Louisa's skin color without resorting to racial labels: "Her skin color was the color of oak leaves on young trees in fall" (39).[7] Such "aesthetic modernism" from Toomer can be considered "an attack on false perceptions, prejudices, a priori assumptions, and stereotypes" (*Ethnic Modernism* 109). In *Cane*'s last short story, "Kabnis," the escape of the mixed-race titular protagonist from a repair shop, the place of black men in the South, exemplifies the book's quest for racial wholeness. In Robert F. Reid-Pharr's words, Toomer's text expresses his desire for "the production of a new race, an American race, one that would replace both the African and the European in the new world landscape" (54). In short, *Cane* illustrates how an ethnic modernist text both bears and transcends the traces of white supremacism through its portrayal of interracial romance.

As briefly shown, the issue of interracial intimacy has served as one of the thematic grounds for American modern literature. *Race, Sex, and Interracial Intimacy in American Literature* continues the discussion that I have laid out above by focusing mainly on ethnic texts published in the first half of the twentieth century. Here, I would like to discuss Du Bois's 1926

[7] In a similar vein, Toomer chose to publish *Cane* under "the enigmatically androgynous first name 'Jean,'" instead of his baptismal first names "Nathan Eugene" (*Ethnic Modernism* 109). For a detailed reading of *Cane* as an ethnic modernist text, see Sollors's *Ethnic Modernism* 101-11.

article “Criteria of Negro Art” to highlight again how critical and important the problem of interracial intimacy is to non-white authors’ vision of racial justice and integration. In his article, asserting that black writers “can see America in a way that white Americans can not” (324), Du Bois encourages African American writers to create “Negro Art,” which, according to him, can provide “not only certain distaste for the tawdry and flamboyant but a vision of what the world could be if it were really a beautiful world” (325). In doing so, Du Bois offers two specific examples of subjects that black writers can explore for their “Negro Art”:

> I once knew a man and [a] woman. They have two children, a daughter who was white and a daughter who was brown; the daughter who was white married a white man; and when her wedding was preparing the daughter who was brown prepared to go and celebrate. But the mother said, “No!” and the brown daughter went into her room and turned on the gas and died […].
>
> Or again, here is a little Southern Town and you are in the public square. On one side of the square is the office of a colored lawyer and on all the other sides are men who do not like colored lawyers. A white woman goes into the black man’s office and points to the white-filled square and says, “I want five hundred dollars now and if I do not get it I am going to scream.” (326)

Both stories that Du Bois offers are linked to interracial intimacy, which was fiercely regulated and tabooed in modern America. The first story, which describes hidden miscegenation predicated on a mixed-raced daughter’s passing as white, illustrates the pervasive and overwhelming impact of the cultural miscegenation taboo and legally established one drop-rule on the black (mixed-race) subject. As I noted earlier, the social regulation of interracial heterosexual intimacy was based on such cultural and legal practices as the one drop-rule and miscegenation taboo. Even if the married daughter is white enough to marry a white man, her black ancestry cannot be denied; she is always already interpellated as black. The black sister’s attendance of the wedding ceremony threatens her light-skinned sister’s marriage. The bride’s biracial birth is a stigma, regardless of her actual skin color. Du Bois’s first story encapsulates the

cultural logic of Jim Crow in the form of interracial romance. The second story exemplifies "the entire sexualized drama of American racism in an age of Jim Crow" (Weinbaum, "Interracial Romance" 99). It shows the tragedy of modern American history in which any suggestion of a black man's interracial heterosexual desire was seen as pathology and a crime punishable by lynching's violence. A black man, even if he is a lawyer, could be easily lynched with impunity. To use Weinbaum's phrase again, in that vignette, lynching is presented as "the white nation's routine response to the specter of black equality" ("Interracial Romance" 99). As many scholars demonstrate, in the United States of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, lynching served as the chief mechanism for establishing white supremacist power. Lynching could occur anytime and anywhere. Du Bois's story demonstrates *normalized* racial violence, which is far from the ideal of American liberalism and democracy.

To sum up, in his article that encourages black writers to create their own "Negro Art" as "propaganda" for racial justice, Du Bois suggests that the story of interracial heterosexual intimacy is an effective framework to investigate racial problems in the United States (328). His use of the two stories implies that the issue of race is always already imbricated with the issue of sex, which, Du Bois argues, can provide ethnic authors with the thematic ground for their writing. Building on Du Bois's claim, my project offers close readings of literary works written by ethnic writers with an emphasis on their exploration of interracial heterosexual relationships. As Susan Koshy remarks, the discussion of miscegenation offers "a rich field of study for understanding the constructedness of categories of race, gender, and nationality" (*Sexual Naturalization* 1).

The first two chapters of *Race, Sex, and Interracial Intimacy in American Literature* examine Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1902) and *Darkwater* (1920) respectively. In the first chapter, "Interracial Heterosexual Desire in *The Souls of Black Folk*," I argue that Du Bois's

text is thematically organized around the discussion of interracial sexual desire. I point out that most scholars have overlooked that *The Souls of Black Folk* strongly endorses interracial heterosexual union as a necessity for the normalization of black manhood and racial justice. Among them is Hazel Carby, who claims that *Souls* presents intellectualism "as an alternative route to [black] manhood, as a way to avoid gendered and racialized subordination, deformation, and degradation" ("The Souls of Black Men" 256). She asserts that under the strong influence of early twentieth-century dominant racial discourse**,** in which black masculinity oscillates between a hyper-feminized image like Uncle Tom and a hyper-masculinized image like a black rapist, Du Bois offers intellectualism as "a socially acceptable style of manhood" ("The Souls of Black Men" 256). However, I contend that the discussion of interracial heterosexual exchange is central to *Souls*, which presents the normalization of interracial heterosexual desire, rather than other forms of manhood like intellectualism, as integral to black manhood and racial justice. "Interracial Heterosexual Desire in *The Souls of Black Folk*" also offers a critique of the notion of Du Boisian manhood. In that chapter, I demonstrate that Du Bois's text marginalizes black women's sexuality and naturalizes black men's control over black women's reproductive bodies, while excoriating white men's sexual exploitation of black men and women. My first chapter concludes that Du Bois's masculine self-identification and endorsement of heteronormative ideology undermines his progressive racial politics in *Souls*.

In my second chapter, "Sustaining the Impossible: Interracial Homosocial Bonds and Interracial Heterosexual Romance in *Darkwater*," I continue to examine Du Bois's rhetorical strategy in his second multi-genre book, *Darkwater*, in which he asserts that social acceptance of black men's interracial heterosexual desire is essential to racial desegregation and justice. Many critics have generally regarded the exploration of interracial sexual desire as central to Du Bois's

argument for U.S. democracy in *Darkwater*. Yet they miss that such apparent expressions of sexual desire in the fantastical, romantic fictional stories in the book are closely related to accounts of racial violence in his non-fictional pieces in the same book. By examining Du Bois's sociological writings on contemporary white male workers' violence enacted against black male workers in *Darkwater*, my second chapter probes his assertion that black working-class men become marginalized through the imbrication of racial, class, and sexual discourse. In his examination of white working-class people's hostility to black working-class people in the early twentieth-century United States, Du Bois demonstrates how the alliance of the state power and capital exploited racist ideology to maximize their common interests and profits. Ultimately, "Sustaining the Impossible: Interracial Homosocial Bonds and Interracial Heterosexual Romance in *Darkwater*" suggests that in the book, the failed class consciousness on the part of white workers forces Du Bois to rely on mythological discursive spaces as the only locale in which his interracial heterosexual desire can be expressed.

My third chapter, "Performing a White Man's Mulatto Body: Miscegenation, Homosexuality, and the Mixed-Race Body in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*" interrogates the dominant discourse of a mixed-race man's sexuality under Jim Crow and its counter-discourse by exploring James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (1912). Recent scholarship on the novel presents Johnson's text as a somewhat *conservative* text in which the protagonist's alleged deviation from normative racial identity and heterosexuality prefigures his tragic fate. Against those critical assessments of Johnson's novel as a *male* version of the tragic mulatta narrative, my chapter argues that *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* challenges the cultural politics of segregation that racializes a mixed-race man's sexuality. In doing so, I examine Johnson's rhetorical strategy through which his narrative

complicates the racist fantasy that pathologizes the protagonist's biracial origin and homosexuality. Specifically, I explore Johnson's appropriation of racist stereotypes in his depiction of a mixed-race man, arguing that Johnson's *use* of racist discourses actually challenges rather than endorses the conservative politics that critics generally identify in his novel.

My fourth chapter, "The Shadow of Lynching in *Passing*," addresses Nella Larsen's Harlem Renaissance novel *Passing* (1929) to show the ubiquity and pervasiveness of lynching's violence in contemporary narratives about racial relations between black and white people. In fact, most scholars have addressed how Larsen's representation of the black female characters in the novel informs and is informed by public discourses about black (or mixed-race) female sexuality. As a result, the influence of lynching on the novel, one of Larsen's rhetorical and thematic threads that runs through *Passing*, has been underexplored. The fourth chapter demonstrates that *Passing* shows the way that the lynching narrative, as a white racist discourse, informs a black female subject's self-consciousness of her own body as well as her perception of black male bodies. Furthermore, my chapter examines Larsen's critique of the Du Boisian counter-lynching discourse. Against the dominant white lynching narrative that stigmatizes and dehumanizes black masculinity, contemporary black male intellectuals created a counter-lynching narrative for which Du Bois's black martyr tale "Of the Coming of John" in *Souls* is emblematic. In "The Shadow of Lynching in *Passing*," I note Larsen's appropriation of the Du Boisian narrative and examine her critique of black women's sexual oppression within black communities, arguing that not only the white lynching discourse but also the Du Boisian counter-lynching discourse reifies masculine heteronormativity and marginalizes black women's sexual autonomy and agency.

My fifth chapter, "The White Woman's Burden: Imperial Femininity and Benevolent Assimilation in *America Is in the Heart*" turns to a foundational novel within Filipino American literature, Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart* (1943). Filipino Americans are a unique group among Asian American groups in terms of interracial heterosexual relationships. White Americans saw Filipinos through stereotypes about black men as "hypersexual predators of white women" (Santa Ana 84). Due to the influence of the United States' colonialism, Filipino subjects were not hampered by "the linguistic and cultural isolation" that doomed other Asian groups like Chinese or Japanese American men to "perennial bachelorhood" (Moran 41).[8] By receiving Americanized education in their native land, Filipinos learned to speak English, had a sense of democratic entitlement, and were relatively familiar with American culture even before setting foot on the soil of their mother country in the early twentieth century. This historical context of colonialism ironically led Filipino migrant workers to have a "confrontational approach to restrictions on sexual and marital freedom" (Moran 41). Filipino migrant male workers' attitudes toward interracial sexual intimacy provoked white supremacists' anxiety over the former's interracial sexuality; white supremacists denied the "American-ness" of Filipinos by ascribing to them attributes that derived from racial stereotypes of African Americans, especially those that depicted African American men as "sexually aggressive" (M. Ngai 110). With this in mind, my fifth chapter focuses on the representation of interracial relations between white women and Filipino men in *America Is in the Heart*. In doing so, my chapter offers an examination of white women's role as vital agents of American imperial ideology, namely, the benevolent assimilation discourse. The scholars who address Bulosan's portrayal of white women presume that his female characters are just consumed and appropriated to serve his male-

[8] Scholars like E. San Juan, Jr. regard the inclusion of Filipino Americans within the category "Asian American" as a form of semiotic violence inflicted on Filipino Americans (Volpp 831-32).

centered proletarian or race-centered politics.[9] They do not explore how these white women, who are allegedly idealized by Bulosan, participate in the enactment of American imperialism's violence. Furthermore, by analyzing romantic relationships between the novel's Filipino migrant protagonist and white female characters, my chapter traces textual moments in which the colonial interpellation of the Filipino male subject into the "proper" colonial subject is undone and frustrated. "The White Woman's Burden: Imperial Femininity and Benevolent Assimilation in *America Is in the Heart*" notes the moments in which white women's interracial heterosexual desire is exposed, and argues that such exposure of their forbidden desire suggests not only the difficulty of regulating white women's sexuality during the Depression but also the collapse of the benevolent assimilation narrative in which "respectable" white women's consensual interracial heterosexuality is unimaginable.

In the epilogue, I offer a brief meditation on Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* (1990), written in the late twentieth century, in order to trace a particular trajectory in which modern American racist discourses have articulated and adapted themselves to maintain and reinforce U.S. imperial domination on a global scale in a postmodern era. By focusing on the novel's representation of mixed-race Filipinos, this brief discussion of *Dogeaters* helps us to see both the ongoing influence of U.S. racial discourse on its former colony and a contemporary Filipino American writer's discursive response to such cultural imperialism.

[9] See, for example, Susan Koshy's *Sexual Naturalization* 130, Rachel Lee 33.

Chapter One

Interracial Heterosexual Desire in *The Souls of Black Folk*

> Even to-day the masses of the Negroes see all too clearly the anomalies of their position and the moral crookedness of yours. You may marshal strong indictments against them, but their counter-cries, lacking though they be in formal logic, have burning truths within them which you may not wholly ignore, O Southern Gentleman! If you deplore their presence here, they ask, Who brought us? When you cry, Deliver us from the vision of intermarriage, they answer that legal marriage is infinitely better than systematic concubinage and prostitution.
> — W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

Sexual, Not Just Intellectual: "Inciting Rape"[10]

The "counter-cries" of black folk against Southern white men's vehement opposition to "intermarriage" are provocative and complex. The black folk that Du Bois refers to in the above epigraph assert that legalized miscegenation, more accurately, the legalized marriage of a black man and a white woman is "infinitely better than systematic concubinage and prostitution" (100). A premise underlying their assertion is that the interracial heterosexual union of a white man and a black woman results in the latter's prostitution or her sexual exploitation by the former, including rape. Both concubinage and prostitution are considered morally wrong and sexually pathological. Behind such condemnation is the anxiety that interracial heterosexual unions that exclude the black man undermine his patriarchal authority within black communities. Conversely, these same voices suggest that the sexual union of black men and white women, who are not subject to the indictment of miscegenation that black women endure ("prostitution"), is morally

[10] In 1904, a white reviewer for the *Houston Chronicle* accused *The Souls of Black Folk* of "inciting rape" (qtd. in Lewis 293).

right and sexually healthy, unlike the heterosexual union of black women and white men. Ultimately, what the African American masses disapprove of is the sexual union of the white man and the black woman. What they approve of is the sexual union of the white woman and the black man. At this point, it becomes apparent that "the masses of the Negroes" Du Bois refers to is actually a mass of black *men*. Du Bois's commentaries on black men's "counter-cries" are quite interesting as well: "I will not say such arguments are wholly justified, — I will not insist that there is no other side to the shield; but I do say that of the nine millions of Negroes in this nation, there is scarcely one out of the cradle to whom these arguments do not daily present themselves in the guise of *terrible truth*" (100; emphasis added). Du Bois might concede that the "counter-cries" against the anti-miscegenation sentiment are controversial, but he makes clear that this counter-argument by black men is a kind of "terrible truth." Indeed, right before introducing black men's "counter-cries," Du Bois asserts that they have "burning truths" (100). This chapter addresses Du Bois's exploration of these "burning truths" in *Souls*.

Drawing on Robert Young's insistence that "hybridity as a cultural description will always carry with it an implicit politics of [interracial] heterosexuality" (25), this chapter explores how *Souls* addresses the African American's interracial heterosexuality in the book's affirmation of America's biracial genealogy and its critique of racial segregation. In his book, Du Bois suggests that it is the racialization of black American interracial heterosexuality that forces the African American subject to experience such an existential crisis as a schizoid self divided between "Negro" and "American." More specifically, his text critiques the way the dominant racial discourse pathologically sexualizes the black *male* subject in relation to the white *female* subject. Du Bois begins *Souls* by reflecting on an incident from his New England childhood when a white girl rejects his offer of a greeting card. At this moment, for the first time, he

experiences himself as a racialized subject and awakens to the existence of the veil.

> It is in the early days of rollicking boyhood that the revelation first bursts upon one, all in a day, as it were. I remember well when the shadow swept across me. I was a little thing, away up in the hills of New England […]. In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting-cards — ten cents a package —and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card, — refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. (37-38)

This episode illustrates the way an African American male subject was historically racialized in United States culture. The white girl's racial rejection with "a glance" is informed by an American cultural context in which black manhood is pathologized, whether it is the figure of a de-sexualized Uncle Tom, or the figure of a hyper-sexualized black rapist.[11] This Du Boisian "primal scene" shows that in the dominant white discourse about the black man, racialization is always already intertwined with sexualization. The implication of the visiting card scene, the beginning of Du Bois's gendered racial awareness, is crucial for the development of his self-consciousness. As Shawn Michelle Smith argues, this primal incident marks "the disavowal of his gender privilege as a black man in a white patriarchal world" ("Second Sight" 373). The white girl's rejection denies the black male entry into the dominant realm of *normative* heterosexual masculinity.

Feminist scholars have been very attentive to the intersectionality of race and gender faced by black male subjects in the United States. Such feminist studies include Hazel Carby's

[11] David Marriott forcefully illustrates representations of a black male in North American culture: "Representations which invite us to imagine an imitative perversion of human kind, a being incapable of inhibition, morals or ideas; a being whose supernatural indulgence of pleasure and continued satisfaction cannot deal with the contrary of denial or pain; a being whose violent, sexual criminality is incapable of any lasting, or real relationships, only counterfeit, or trickery; a being who remains a perpetual child, rather than a father. The black man, is in other words, everything that the wishful-shameful fantasies of culture want him to be, an enigma of inversion and of hate – and this is our existence as men, as black men" (x).

influential essay, "The Souls of Black Men" (2007), in which she elaborates on the ontological dilemma of a black male subject that *Souls* presents. Carby writes that in *Souls* "[i]ntegral to the 'problem' of simultaneously being black and being American is coming into manhood, and it is the latter that is most vulnerable to attack" (254). She adds that the black man within a racist culture is reduced "to a mere parody of masculinity, a parody which results in [his] being denied a full role in the patriarchal social and political order" (254). According to Carby, in *Souls*, women serve as "the mediators through which the nation-state oppress[es] black men" (255).[12] Referring to, not only the visiting card scene, but also the "betrayal of black women," whose sexual relationships with white men result in their "illicit sexuality," Carby asserts that in Du Bois's view most black men "suffer from a deformation in their process of becoming gendered beings" (255). Interestingly, Carby's essay focuses on Du Bois's exploration of the "betrayal of black women," rather than the white girl's racial rejection. She maintains that *Souls* suggests that black "female sexual complicity" with white men leads black men to fail "to come into the full flowering of black manhood" (255). In Du Bois's gendered racial dynamic, interracial sex between white men and black women implies that black men "could not control the sexual reproduction of black women," according to Carby (255). She thus concludes that "[f]or Du Bois the figure of the black woman, whether prostitute or mother, has a surplus symbolic value upon which he liberally draws in his illustrations of the denigration of the black man" (255).[13]

This chapter continues Carby's discussion by further exploring the way Du Bois deals

[12] Although Carby does not mention Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume I* (1976), her articulation of American women as "the mediator through which the nation-state oppress[es] black men" seems to be informed by the book's thesis that sexuality is a great conduit of power. See Foucault, 103, 146, 152.

[13] Vilashini Cooppan also notes that "[s]cenes of coerced, illicit, or otherwise black female sexuality" punctuate the text of *Souls* (44). According to Cooppan, in *Souls*, Du Bois associates "social destruction" and "sexual license" and suggests that a black woman, in her relationship with a white man, is both the "agent" and "victim" of the history of slavery and racism (45). Cooppan thus agrees with Carby in arguing that in *Souls* the black women are "betrayers" of race in their sexual relationships with white men (46).

with the crisis of black manhood in *Souls*. More specifically, this chapter examines the way in which Du Bois establishes the naturalization of black men's interracial heterosexuality as foundational to racial justice. According to Carby, "the process of becoming an intellectual" is "an alternative route to manhood, as a way to avoid gendered and racialized subordination, deformation, and degradation" that Du Bois offers in his book (256). To paraphrase Carby's argument in terms of psychoanalysis, Du Bois places phallus and penis in antithetical terms, and sacrifices the latter to accede to the former. I, however, distance my reading of Du Boisian black manhood from Carby's Freudian explanation that figures "becoming an intellectual" as "the only sure route to […] a socially acceptable style of manhood" in *Souls* (256). In this chapter, I argue that Du Bois's book renders interracial sexual relationships central to racial integration and equality. Specifically, this chapter claims that *Souls* suggests that heterosexual relationships between black men and white women are integral to the racially integrated America that Du Bois was formulating in the first decade of the 1900s. Carby's argument that intellectualism is "the only sure route" to Du Boisian manhood does not explain why *Souls* provoked intense anxiety and anger on the topic of sexuality from contemporary Southern white newspapers. One year after the publication of *Souls*, the *Nashville American* claimed that *Souls* "is indeed dangerous for the negro to read" and a reviewer for the *Houston Chronicle* blamed Du Bois's book for "inciting rape" (qtd. in Lewis 293). The white readers' rape complex demonstrates that the black masculinity that Du Bois formulates in his book has elements that caused white supremacists to worry about the very prospect of interracial heterosexual unions between white women and black men. Before we examine Du Bois's exploration of interracial heterosexual relationships in *Souls*, I will dwell for a moment on the historical context surrounding the issue of interracial sex and Du Bois's view of that controversial subject in his essays and fictions beyond *Souls*. This

discussion supports and expands my argument that interracial heterosexual desire is the thematic and rhetorical ground for *Souls*.

Du Bois and "Social Equality"

After the Civil War, most Reconstruction efforts centered on political equality. Many Reconstruction officials tried to provide emancipated African Americans with the right to hold office and sit on juries, but "social equality," "typed by race-mixing" was still tabooed (Moran 26, 77). The intermarriage taboo that had existed for centuries persisted even after Reconstruction. As Nell Irvin Painter points out, in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century United States, "[t]o be for 'social equality' was to favor race mixing, which no one could support" (54). The taboo about interracial sex "made clear that races would remain separate and distinct" (Moran 26). Du Bois's multiple essays show that he also clearly recognized what miscegenation meant to "social equality." For example, in his 1922 essay, "Social Equality and Racial Intermarriage," Du Bois states that "[t]here is no doubt but that at the bottom of the race problem in the United States is the question of 'Social Equality': and the kernel of the 'Social Equality' question is the question of intermarriage" (372). In his 1910 essay, "The Marrying of Black Folk," Du Bois suggests that white men's repulsion toward "social equality" is cross-sectional by referring to letters he received from a white Southern man and a white Northern man:

> A white man of the South writes me:
>
> "If some Southern white men seem to deny to the Negro those rights which are called civil and political, it is because they fear the exercise of them by the Negro will lead to race amalgamation.
>
> The Southern white man is not moved, I think, by hatred of the Negro; he is moved by the fear of amalgamation."
>
> A Northern white man writes concerning me:
>
> "Is he asking for social equality in the sense that the races shall freely

intermarry?" (287)[14]

In response to the anxiety expressed by the two white men, Du Bois asserts that "I believe that a grown man of sound body and mind has a right to marry any sane, healthy woman of marriageable age who wishes to marry him" (288). He adds that "all so-called 'laws against intermarriage' are simply wicked devices to make the seduction of women easy and without penalty, and should be forthwith repealed. […] Jim Crow legislation is an open bribe to amalgamation" (290). Such comments by Du Bois encapsulate the nature of the miscegenation taboo. As I mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, in the history of slavery and racism in the United States, the miscegenation taboo dictated that black women be exchanged by and among white men, while black men be denied access to white women (Bergner xxv- xxvi). A mixed-race child inherited his black mother's social status, not that of his white father. This matrilineal rule denied the offspring from mixed-race unions access to white economic and social privilege. Indeed, such legal and cultural practices, which Du Bois dubbed "an open bribe to amalgamation," facilitated interracial sex between white men and black women, minimizing sexual intercourse between white women and black men; white men could sexually exploit black women with impunity, whereas black men suspected of having sex with white women could be murdered anytime and anywhere.[15]

Given his unequivocal comments on interracial marriage, it is evident that Du Bois considers interracial sexual relationships, when mutually agreed upon, necessary to the

[14] In her examination of testimony transcribed during Congress's inquiry into Ku Klux Klan violence in 1871, Martha Hodes demonstrates how the allegation that black men's civil rights activities would lead to interracial marriage was exploited to justify Klan's racial assaults (qtd. in Goldsby 327-8). Political and sexual agency became linked in the white supremacist group's racial terrorism.

[15] Du Bois's critique of anti-miscegenation laws echoes Ida B. Wells's 1882 anti-lynching pamphlet, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*. In her book, Wells remarks: "The miscegenation laws of the South only operate against the legitimate union of the races; they leave the white man free to seduce all the colored girls he can, but it is death to the colored man who yields to the force and advances of a similar attraction in white women" (19).

realization of his vision of racial justice. It is worth noting that for him the agent of intermarriage on the part of African Americans is only the black man. In "The Marrying of Black Folk," Du Bois denies any sexual autonomy to women, including black women, in their interracial heterosexual relationships. Indeed, he concludes the essay by arguing that "if we […] allow *men* to mingle naturally, […] racial intermarriage, becoming thus a matter of intelligent individual judgement, will for many years, […] maintain in the world the *integrity* […] of the three great divisions of man [white, black, and yellow], […] for the highest upbuilding of all peoples in the great ideal of human *brotherhood*" (291; emphasis added). Here, Du Bois clarifies that granting a black male a right to marry whoever he wants is crucial to his "integrity." To be more specific, Du Bois contends that recognizing a black man's right to "racial intermarriage" is integral to his masculine ego. Also, Du Bois suggests, women, regardless of their race, serve as intermediaries to cement the interracial fraternity, and their own bodily and sexual autonomy is denied. Similarly, in his February 1913 article in *The Crisis*, "Intermarriage," Du Bois asserts that the agent of intermarriage on the part of blacks is only black men. In the article, written against the laws and cultural taboos prohibiting miscegenation, he states that such legal and cultural practices risk giving the wrong impression that "black blood is a physical taint — a thing that no *decent, self-respecting black man* can be asked to admit" (180; emphasis added). Using a gender and class specific term ("decent, self-respecting black man") for his counter-argument against the miscegenation taboo, Du Bois reduces this racial degradation, which antimiscegenation sentiment and laws might cause, to an issue only for the educated black male intellectuals. He addresses the issue of black male interracial heterosexuality in raced, gendered, and classed terms. In the same article, he writes that "such laws leave the colored girl absolutely helpless before the lust of white men" (181). If we recall Carby's argument that black women are

"betrayers" of race in their sexual relationships with white men in *Souls*, we might add that for Du Bois, black women are racial traitors at worst, or noble sufferers at best. At any rate, he does not approve of black women's sexual agency; he forecloses the possibility that a black woman can have a consensual sexual relationship with a white man.

Even in his fiction, Du Bois genders interracial relations. In his 1919 short story, "The Gospel According to Mary Brown," and his 1920 short story, "Pontius Pilate," he offers the figure of a black Christ, who pursues "social equality." In the former, the son of a black Mary is lynched after attesting to the importance of and right to "social equality" ("The Gospel" 145). In the latter, another black Christ figure is lynched because a white mob believe that he practices the "equality of all men" by "talking, sleeping, [and] kissing" white women ("Pontius Pilate" 158). Again, in Du Bois's literary imagination, the black agents of interracial heterosexual relations are only men. We can thus infer that the interracial heterosexual union that Du Bois formulates consists of a black man and a white woman. To articulate the Du Boisian interracial heterosexual union for this chapter's discussion of *Souls*, we might conclude that for him the racist denial of the black man's patriarchal privilege, figured as the pathologization of his interracial heterosexuality, poses the major obstacle to the realization of racial integration and justice. In other words, Du Bois suggests that "America" will have fulfilled its promise of democracy and freedom only when the interracial heterosexuality of black men is socially acceptable and legally protected. It is in this context that we can better understand Du Bois's statement that the history of the black American's strife is the history of "attain[ing] self-conscious manhood" (*Souls* 39). In the following, I explore the way that such interracial unions serve as the book's rhetorical and discursive center.

Counter-Productive vs. Productive Interracial Heterosexual Union

One of Du Bois's rhetorical strategies in *Souls* is to contrast the desirability and productivity of his proposed interracial heterosexual union with the counter-productivity of the sexual union of a black woman and a white man. In his book's second chapter, Du Bois presents his readers with a picture of the Reconstruction era, in which he figures the adverse legacy of slavery into the interracial heterosexual union of a black woman and a white man:

> Amid it all, two figures ever stand to typify that day to coming ages,—the one, a gray-haired gentleman, whose fathers had quit themselves like men, whose sons lay in nameless graves; who bowed to the evil of slavery because its abolition threatened untold ill to all; who stood at last, in the evening of life, a blighted, ruined form, with hate in his eyes;—and the other, a form hovering dark and mother-like, her awful face black with the mists of centuries, had aforetime quailed at that white master's command, had bent in love over the cradles of his sons and daughters, and closed in death the sunken eyes of his wife,—aye, too, at his behest had laid herself low to his lust, and borne a tawny man-child to the world, only to see her dark boy's limbs scattered to the winds by midnight marauders riding after "cursed Niggers." These were the saddest sights of that woeful day; and no man clasped the hands of these two passing figures of the present-past; but, hating, they went to their long home, and, hating, their children's children live to-day. (54-55)

Analyzing this scene, both Carby and Cooppan argue that Du Bois accords guilt to the black woman, who gives birth to a child after having sex with the white man. In Carby's view, her birth of the "tawny manchild" is "an act of betrayal which compromises the black man's masculinity because it does not recognize his control over her sexual being" ("The Souls of Black Men" 260). According to Cooppan, Du Bois uses the "curiously culpable phrase" ("at his behest had laid herself low to his lust") and so suggests that the black woman is not only "victim," but also the agent of the interracial sexual intercourse, therefore undermining the black man's patriarchal

privilege (45).[16] To these arguments, I want to add that the interracial heterosexual relationship in the above episode proves to be counter-productive literally and figuratively in that their son — the product of their interracial union — is killed; the union of the white man and the black woman, which excludes the black man, embodies a kind of sterility. Meanwhile, consider the visiting card episode. After the white girl rejects his offer of the card, Du Bois writes that he begins to "see himself through the revelation of the other world" (38). Du Bois highlights the "double-consciousness," forged by this sexual rejection, as the "gifted" "second-sight" because the card incident motivates him to "strife, — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood" (38-39). Du Bois expands the ideological benefit of "double- consciousness" by arguing that the newly won political consciousness could equip black men with ethical insight into the social problems of his time. In the historical context of the post-Reconstruction era, Du Bois contends that the African American man with the "second sight" is "the sole oasis of simple faith and reverence in a dusty desert of dollars and smartness" (43). The black man's "second sight," forged by the experience of racism, has the possibility to serve as an ideological vehicle to resist racialized capitalist commercialism, which "regard[s] human beings [black workers] as among the material resources" (93).[17] In other words, despite the racial trauma that is fraught with

[16] Catherine Clinton's comment on the sexual exploitation of black men and women by their white owners under slavery can be read as a feminist critique of Du Bois's resentment over the wounded black manhood: "To argue that the master's failure to honor a slave marriage —his sexual aggression—was equally painful to the husband who was being humiliated and to the wife who was being violated is sexist and irresponsible. Denial of sex to male slaves cannot be equated with the force of sex to which female slaves were subjected. The notion that slavery 'equalized' men and women, if only negatively, is limited and fallacious" (201).

[17] Du Bois's articulation of double consciousness as a vehicle for a powerful social critique of Jim Crow America reminds us of György Lukács's argument that only the proletariat has the capability to get over "reification," which is, in Leszek Kołakowski's words, "the mystified consciousness of capitalist society" (1006). Indeed, Du Bois argues that his concept of "double consciousness" can work as an ideological vehicle to resist contemporary U.S. capitalism, which was maintained and fostered by a racially stratified labor force. A number of scholars have discussed the epistemological privilege of double consciousness. For example, see Gilroy, 13, 39; Thomas C. Holt, 303-306; Dickson D. Bruce Jr., 240; S. Smith, *Photography* 32-35. In fact, Du Bois and other contemporary black writers posited that the Jim Crow regime was so powerful "in its capacity to change its citizens into soulless automatons that, paradoxically, its most obvious victims turn out to hold within themselves the only hope for its

ontological agony and a trace of psychic castration, Du Bois's exchange with the white girl possesses philosophical and existential angst, and ultimately cultivates Du Boisian double-consciousness as the means of achieving critical insight into the racially segregated American society. On the other hand, in the above passage, the interracial couple that excludes the black man brings about nothing but the mutilated body of their "dark boy." The black woman and white man's sexual encounter works as the catalyst for the graphic physical violence that their son suffers as he is lynched. More importantly, the interracial mingling serves as the axis of interracial hate and violence that are exponential across time. The destructive effect of this type of interracial union is enormous and long-lasting, based on the accumulation of interracial hostility across generations ("no man clasped the hands of these two passing figures of the present-past; but, hating, they went to their long home, and, hating, their children's children live to-day"). In sum, the sexual union of the above episode begets interracial hostility and segregation, whereas the Du Boisian sexual interaction facilitates racial integration.

It is noteworthy that Du Bois's gendered rendering of interracial heterosexual relationships has structural and ideological similarity to the discourse of the tragic mulatta. As many scholars have pointed out, "the tragic mulatta" is a stock figure in American literature from the nineteenth through the early twentieth century.[18] In order to sustain the fantasy of racial difference, the tragic mulatta discourse racialized and sexualized the mixed-race female figure. In that narrative, the mixed-race woman is described as having an extreme femininity, illicit

---

redemption" (Warren 19). Although she does not use the term, "double consciousness," Anne Anlin Cheng also points out that racial others can have unique insight into a racist society. In her discussion of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), she argues that the black narrator, as "both a melancholic object and a melancholic subject," engages with "a web of negotiation that expresses agency as well as abjection." Internalizing "discipline" and "rejection," the racial other shows "his perspicacity and his paranoia" about his ontological status in a racist society (17). This "racial melancholia," Cheng argues, "has always existed for raced subjects both as a *sign* of rejection and as a psychic *strategy* in response to that rejection" (20; emphasis in original).

[18] In my dissertation, I use the term, "mulatta" to differentiate the mixed-race female figure from that of the mixed-race male "mulatto."

sexuality, and sometimes even sterility.[19] She is "too refined to live among the black population to which law and custom relegate her, but too inescapably identified as having some African ancestry to be accepted among the white society for which she is most properly suited" (Harper 104). Such negative traits are supposed to lead her to a tragic fate.

If the conventional discourse suppresses interracial heterosexual relationships by asserting the degeneracy and inevitable tragic fate of the mulatta figure, Du Bois's negative depiction of the interracial couple of a black woman and a white man serves to reinforce this view by virtually sterilizing the culpable black woman. By comparing the sterile and adverse effect that the union of the black woman and white man would beget with the productive outcome that a black man would deliver in his sexual engagement with a white woman, Du Bois not only asserts a level of control over black women's sexual agency, but also claims black men's male privilege over sexual relationships with white women.

Chapter Seven of *Souls*, "Of the Black Belt," also provides an example of the way Du Bois figures the union of a black woman and a white man. In his chapter, Du Bois narrates his journey into Jim Crow Atlanta. He mentions that Atlanta was "the land of the Cherokees" and the place where "Sam Hose was crucified" (103).[20] Du Bois continues to indicate that the history of

[19] The term mulatto was coined to refer to the "sterile hybridity of the mule," the progeny of a mating between two species, a horse and a donkey (Kawash 5).

[20] Accused of murdering his white employer and sexually assaulting his white wife, the African American man, Sam Hose, was murdered by white lynch mobs in Newnan, Georgia in 1899. More than 6,000 white Georgians witnessed the murder, and 2,000 of them travelled to the small town from Atlanta on special excursion trains reserved for the event (*Photography* 113). Later investigations revealed that the accusations of rape in the case were utterly groundless and that Hose had acted against his employer in self-defense (*Photography* 114).The lynching of Hose provoked Du Bois to lead an anti-lynching movement. In his autobiography, *Dusk of Dawn* (1940), Du Bois recollects the impact of Hose's lynching on his work as a sociologist in academia: "Two considerations thereafter broke in upon my work and eventually disrupted it: first, one could not be a calm, cool, and detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered, and starved; and secondly, there was no such definite demand for scientific work of the sort that I was doing, as I had confidently assumed would be easily forthcoming. I regarded it as axiomatic that the world wanted to learn the truth and if the truth was 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" (603).

Southern locations like Atlanta is interspersed with interracial violence: "the Delegai riots," the removal of the Creek Indians (104), the mass murder by a white planter, "Joe Fields" (106), "the wail of the motherless, and the muttered curse of the wretched" in the cotton fields (110). After portraying Atlanta's tragic and violent history, Du Bois describes white men's exploitation of black labor in the cotton fields in gendered terms: during slavery, a Southern master "rape[d]" the land to maximize his profits (111), and after emancipation, a Northern white, "the Capitalist" "rushed down […] to woo this coy dark soil" (109). Du Bois describes the destructive results of this figurative interracial heterosexual union, which is quite similar to his account in his book's second chapter of the interracial couple that we already discussed: "They are not happy, these black men whom we meet throughout this region. […] At best, the natural good-nature is edged with complaint. […] And now and then it blazes forth in veiled but hot anger. I remembered one big red-eyed black we met by this roadside. Forty-five years had labored on this farm, beginning with nothing and still have nothing" (113). Like the interracial couple that only ends up with their son's death and antagonism, the figurative union of the Northern white (man) and the Southern black (woman) only begets "anger" and "nothing." Here, we see again the Du Boisian rhetorical pattern in which the union of a black woman and a white man, whether literal or metaphorical, proves to be ultimately counter-productive, if not overtly destructive.

Black Leadership and Amalgamation

In the third chapter of *Souls*, "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," Du Bois offers his historical assessment of black American politics, in which he again privileges the interracial union of a black man and a white woman, and pathologizes the union of a black woman and a white man. He presents three types of black leadership, each of which signifies a different

approach to white supremacy: "a feeling of revolt and revenge; an attempt to adjust all thought and action to the will of the greater group; or finally, a determined effort at self-realization and self-development despite environing opinion" (65).

The first and second approaches are not the Du Boisian options. The first approach is Manichean and opposes any hybrid racial and political vision. The "attitude of revolt and revenge" suggests that "the Negro's only hope lies in emigration beyond the borders of the United States" (68). Du Bois explicitly expresses his opinion on this type of black leadership in his essay, "Marcus Garvey" (1923). A brief examination of that essay helps us better understand his view of the "attitude of revolt and revenge." In his critique of Marcus Garvey, who presents racial separation as a solution to racism and epitomizes the militant approach to racism with "a feeling of revolt and revenge," Du Bois states that Garvey's separation doctrine and its "back to Africa" project are a sort of reversed racism: "he sought […] to oppose white supremacy and the white ideal by a crude and equally brutal black ideal" ("Marcus Garvey" 268). In the same essay, Du Bois asserts that Garvey's "mistake did not lie in the utter impossibility of this program, […] but rather in its spiritual bankruptcy and futility" (268-69). Du Bois could not embrace the intellectual sterility produced by the group that favored black separation. In *Souls*, Du Bois recognizes the merits of white culture and maintains that "America has too much to teach the world and Africa" (39). He declares that for the black man, "the end of his striving" is "to be a co-worker [with the white man] in the kingdom of culture" (39). For Du Bois who advocated racial integration and cultural hybridity, racial separation and cultural nationalism of militant black radicals was both unethical and intellectually destitute.[21]

[21] It is telling that Garvey had a friendly relationship with the Ku Klux Klan. As Matthew Prat Guterl points out, Garvey and Earnest Sevier Cox, a leading figure of the white supremacist organization in the 1920s, communicated with each other with "overtures of friendship" and shared "a thirst for 'race purity'" (343). "Race purity and a general disparagement for the idea of the mulatto" were at the heart of the relationship between Cox and Garvey

The second option is encapsulated in Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" (1895). Du Bois writes that "Booker T. Washington arose as essentially the leader not of one race but of two — a compromiser between the South, the North and the Negro" (67). Du Bois here describes Washington as an agent for an interracial union. For Du Bois, however, the Washingtonian interracial union does not guarantee a black man the patriarchal privilege that a white man exclusively enjoys. According to Du Bois, Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" ultimately compromises the black man's prerogatives in that it substitutes industrial education and economic benefits for black liberal education and political rights, which is "bound to sap the manhood" (68). At the turn of the twentieth century, "electoral politics had been viewed as part of the male sphere, as an exclusively male bailiwick" (Bederman 13). Also, since Frederick Douglass published his memoir, *A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), African American male intellectuals had associated enlightenment with "manhood" (V. Smith 23). In this historical context, Du Bois contends that "voting is *necessary* to modern manhood […] and that black boys need education as well as white boys" (70; emphasis added). As I have explained, for Du Bois, education and intellectual growth alone were not enough to assure "social equality"; true black male legitimacy was bound up with the right to enjoy interracial heterosexual relations without being deemed asexual Uncle Toms or rapists. In this regard, the rights to vote and be educated are "necessary" but not "sufficient" for black manhood. Ultimately, Washington's doctrine of the "Atlanta Compromise" does not meet the "necessary," let alone the "sufficient" conditions for true black manhood. The Atlanta Compromise "between the South, the North and the Negro" that Washington arbitrated is not the interracial union that promises to restore black male privilege and manhood along with it. Rather, the interracial union

(343). Du Bois recognized their "unholy alliance" and called them "birds of a feather" for their argument for "segregation" against "interracial peace" ("Marcus Garvey" 274). Du Bois enjoyed quoting Jay Bryce's statement "All the great people of the world are the results of a mixture of races" (qtd. in "Second Sight" 359).

that Washington proposes would "emasculate" black men (*Souls* 72).

Chapter Five of *Souls*, "Of the Wings of Atlanta" implicitly illustrates the way in which Du Bois critiques Washingtonian commercialism and economic gradualism. In this chapter, a sociological study of Atlanta, the place where Washington proclaimed his "compromise" doctrine, Du Bois states that "the temptation of Hippomenes penetrate[s]" the "black young Atlanta" (85). The black virgin, who had been protected by "the [black] Preacher and Teacher," now surrenders to the temptation of "cash and a lust for gold" of "thoughtless Hippomenes" (85). Here, Du Bois appropriates the language of the conventional colonial discourse, which associates the conquest of women with the conquest of colonies;[22] Du Bois translates the Northern white industrialist's advancement into the South (Atlanta) into figurative sex between a white man and a black woman. As I have already discussed, *Souls* offers only a reductive figuration of black female sexuality through interracial heterosexual union: the black woman is either a sellout, if not a whore, or a helpless victim of white rape. Du Bois's figuration of Atlanta as a black woman belongs to the former. Just as the sexual agency of the feminized black Atlanta is quite predictable, so the outcome of her sexual union with the masculinized white Northern industrialist is surely foreseeable: it is "singleness of vision and thorough oneness" that Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" presents (63). The crude and simplistic Washingtonian vision is almost identical to the Garvean "spiritual bankruptcy and futility" ("Marcus Garvey" 269). The intellectual and philosophical sterility that both accommodationist and separationist approach beget stands in a stark contrast to the "second sight" of Du Boisian racial and cultural

[22] According to Mary Ann Doane, European colonial discourse associates "the exotic" with "the erotic," stressing the alleged excessive sexuality of the African woman. The culpable image was later "invoked to blame black women for the victimization inflicted upon them by white males" (213). The myth of the "black Jezebel" similarly worked in the United States, serving to justify sexual violence enacted upon black women by white men.

hybridism.[23]

In addition to the figurative portrayal of an un-Du Boisian interracial heterosexual union, "Of the Wings of Atlanta" elucidates why the Du Boisian racial integration rather than the Washingtonian compromise in the face of racial segregation is more socially desirable, even to Southern white people; the former could prevent racial unrest, whereas the latter could provoke it. In "Of the Wings of Atlanta," Du Bois reminds white readers that since emancipation, black people "have fought a failing fight for life in the tainted air of *social unrest and commercial selfishness*" (88; emphasis added). Du Bois here insinuates that capitalist self-interest is inextricably connected with the issue of racial "social unrest" by connecting the two issues. Speaking to the anxiety of Southern white men over newly emancipated black slaves, he suggests that radical commercialization caused by the failure of liberal education might exacerbate "social unrest" such as race riots. To the progeny of the "Southern gentleman," Du Bois appeals that liberal education would restore the progeny of "the faithful, courteous slave of other days with his incorruptible honesty and dignified humility" (85). What is striking about Du Bois's rhetoric is that he compares the romanticized "Old South" with a contemporary South, which he believes is dominated by naked materialism:

> The South laments to-day the slow, steady disappearance of a certain type of Negro, — the faithful, courteous slave of other days, with his incorruptible honesty and dignified humility. He is passing away just as surely as the old type of Southern gentleman is passing, and from *not dissimilar causes*, — the sudden transformation of a fair far-off ideal of freedom into the hard reality of bread-winning and the consequent deification of Bread. (85; emphasis added)

Before this passage, Du Bois writes that "the old ideal of the Southern gentleman" is "grace and

[23] At the time of Du Bois's writing of *Souls,* African American intellectuals were somewhere between Washingtonian accommodationist and Garveyite separationist doctrines. Du Bois's philosophical and political trajectory mined the middle ground (Hale 30).

courtliness of patrician, knight, and noble" (84). In this regard, we can extrapolate that the "not dissimilar causes" are the Victorian values, which were supposed to be shared by white master and black slave in the narrative of the "Old South." At this point, we need to consider that the figure of the "Old South" provided white people, especially Southerners, during and after Reconstruction, with a discursive space with which to absolve themselves from moral responsibility for newly emancipated black people and to reassert their collective white ego across divisions of class, gender, and region (Hale 44). Reproducing and adapting the narrative of the "Old South" in which white masters and black slaves enjoy the perfect racial harmony, white people across the nation countered black people's demand for civil rights; the romanticized "Old South" justified racial violence against African Americans who desired more than "white love" (Hale 60).[24] Against such a reactive cultural discourse, African American writers like Charles W. Chesnutt represented the "Old South" as "not a lost pastoral utopia but the cold truth of human bondage" (Hale 49). Then, Du Bois's portrayal of the "Old South" seems to be disturbing. Eugene Wolfenstein is right to problematize Du Bois's idealization of the Southern plantation, which "perpetuated and benefited from that grim traffic in human flesh" (69). Yet we also need to remember Du Bois's claim that Washington's commercialism is the very root of racism (Rowe 201). Du Bois states that the "recent [commercialized] educational movements" that Washington's Tuskegee University leads are inseparable from the "tendency […] to regard human beings as among the material resources" (*Souls* 93).[25] Du Bois is thus willing to pit the

[24] In 1927, North Carolina's white people erected a monument to Uncle Tom, "whose northern abolitionist origins were forgotten in praise of the 'old Negro's loyalty, patient suffering, and love'" (Hale 61).

[25] The interrelation of commercialism and racism that Du Bois mentions is most graphically demonstrated in lynching. Hale's following portrayal of lynchings that happened in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century deserves quotation at length: "In spectacle lynchings, blacks themselves became consumer items; the sites of their murders became new spaces of consumption. After the lynchings of Smith, Hose, and Washington, markets in the gruesome souvenirs sprang up within minutes of the victim's death, and professional and amateur photographers alike rushed eagerly to the scene to capture the lynchers posing with the body. In other cases, stereographs of

image of the "Old South" against that of the "black young Atlanta," invoking Washington's commercialism, which becomes quite vulnerable to the influence of black radicalism as well.[26]

Thus for Du Bois, only the third option, "self-realization and self-development" remains. Du Bois declares his affinity for this option, what Robert Gooding-Williams terms "the politics of self-realization" (Gooding-Williams 25). *Souls* offers a genealogy of these politics:

> By 1830 slavery seemed hopelessly fastened on the South, and the slaves thoroughly cowed into submission. The free Negroes of the North, inspired by the *mulatto* immigrants from the West Indies, began to change the basis of their demands; they […] sought assimilation and *amalgamation* with the nation on the same terms with *other men*. […] The trend of the times, however, refused them recognition […]. Schemes of migration and colonization arose among them; but these they refused to entertain, and they eventually turned to the Abolition movement as a final refuge.
>
> Here, led by Remond, Nell, Wells-Brown, and Douglass, a new period of *self-assertion and self-development* dawned. To be sure, ultimate freedom and assimilation was the ideal before the leaders, but the assertion of the *manhood* rights of the Negro by himself was the main reliance […]. After the war and emancipation, the great form of Frederick Douglass, the greatest of American Negro leaders, still led the host. (66; emphasis added)

In this genealogy of "the politics of self-realization," Du Bois states that this politics was inspired by "the mulatto immigrants from the West Indies" (65). He clarifies that he prefers "self-realization and self-development" over either "a feeling of revolt and revenge," or "an attempt to adjust all thought and action to the will of the greater group" (65). He suggests that the doctrine

---

lynched black men were made and sold for three-dimensional viewing. Spectators occasionally even broke into black-owned general stores and passed out soda, cake, and crackers as refreshments" (229). As Hale aptly puts it, "lynchings reversed the decommodification of black bodies begun with emancipation" (229).

[26] According to Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, the fall of "planter paternalism" and the rise of "industrialization" played a significant role in racializing and intensifying lynching's violence. She writes that "[a]s the remnants of planter paternalism gave way to competition, a reinforcing system of debt peonage, disfranchisement, physical segregation, and terrorism replaced the 'distant intimacy' and condescending tolerance of an earlier era" (*Revolt Against Chivalry* 133). With the radical industrialization, landless white workers were forced to wander across "a once fixed agrarian landscape" and they began to see a new generation of blacks born in freedom as a "dangerous animal," rather than an "inferior child" (133). In this context, lynching's violence served as an extralegal device to maintain racial hierarchy for the white working class (133). If we follow Hall's argument, Du Bois's invocation of the romanticized Southern plantation might be read as a discursive response to the interracial violence that American industrialization might have brought about.

of "self-assertion and self-development" is fostered by the mixed-race immigrants. It is telling that the Du Boisian "politics of self-realization," which endorses racial integration, is imbued and encouraged by the symbolic incarnation of racial integration, namely, "the mulatto immigrants from the West Indies." Even more, Du Bois notes a political history in which the black people inspired by the mulatto immigrants demanded the right for interracial sexual contact that only white men enjoyed. He makes clear that those who achieve "self-realization and self-development" pursue not only "assimilation," but also "amalgamation" "on the same terms with other [white] men."[27] This statement that directly advocates interracial heterosexual relationships is arguably Du Bois's most provocative claim in *Souls*.

Du Bois completes his genealogy of black politics of "self-assertion" by highlighting that black leaders like Frederick Douglass, "the greatest of American Negro leaders," conceived "the assertion of the manhood rights of the Negro" integral to "ultimate freedom and assimilation" (66). To enumerate the history of black politics of "self-assertion and self-development" that Du Bois offers, mulatto immigrants from the West Indies inspired the "self-realization and self-development" movement, and the black people who were part of that movement demanded the right of amalgamation. Lastly, the following new generation saw the assertion of black manhood as critical to racial justice. Interestingly enough, Du Bois uses the word "manhood," discussing the leadership of Frederick Douglass, while he avoids employing it when addressing more militant black males like Toussaint L'Ouverture and Nat Turner who "represent the attitude of revolt and revenge" (68). Those militant black men, who "hate the white South blindly and

[27] As mentioned in my introduction, the neologism "miscegenation" was coined in 1863 by white supremacists. Du Bois here replaces the word with the more neutral term "amalgamation." The term "miscegenation" succeeded in invoking "the 'mongrelization' of the United States as a political issue" and replaced the older and neutral term, "amalgamation" (*The Wages of Whiteness* 156). The entry of "miscegenation" into the lexicon of race caused the word "amalgamation" to indicate "marriage relations among different ethnic groups deemed white" (R. Lee 76). If we consider the linguistic history, Du Bois's diction is significant: he resists the denigration of black-white sexual relations. For the detailed etymology of "amalgamation," see Leslie M. Harris, 191.

distrust the white race generally" and so oppose *racial hybridity*, do not represent Du Boisian manhood and racial justice. Thus, we might question Carby's claim that these figures are included in Du Bois's genealogy of "genuine leaders of black men" as we might question her assertion that Du Bois's argument favors intellectual growth rather than sexual equality ("The Souls of Black Men" 262). Just as the Washingtonian acceptance of racial segregation, even if it is strategic, is "bound to sap the manhood," so the radical group's "all-black" doctrine is detrimental to Du Boisian manhood. It is telling that neither group actively pursued racial integration, which inevitably included interracial marriage.

Chapters Ten and Eleven rearticulate the Du Boisian understanding of black manhood, indicating that it is virtually identical to "double consciousness," which, Du Bois suggests, is integral to his version of interracial heterosexual union. In Chapter Ten, "Of the Faith of Fathers," as in the third chapter, Du Bois expresses his disapproval of "the two extreme types of ethical attitude" towards black manhood (158). While Southern black men, the type described in the Washingtonian compromise, lose "manliness and courage" for "economic opening" (157), Northern black men, whose ethics have "a note of revenge" (154), offer no "means by which a poor and oppressed minority can exist side by side with its masters" (157). The Northern black man's extreme ethics and manhood "must give rise to double worlds and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pretence *or* to revolt, to hypocrisy *or* to radicalism" (156; emphasis added). As I already examined in my discussion of the first chapter of *Souls*, the Du Boisian "double consciousness" of "Negro" and "American" does not work alternately; it must function simultaneously. When Du Bois calls the "double consciousness" "second sight," its ethical imperative is about "how to maintain this doubleness," not "to dissolve his 'double self' into unitary identity" (Posnock 327). Taken together, if Southern compromise and Northern

radicalism do not represent the Du Boisian ideal of black manhood, then, we might conclude that the "double consciousness," the outcome of the black man's sexual engagement with the white woman, is the alternative form of manhood that Du Bois pursues. Although Du Bois is quite critical of black women whose sexual relationships do not stay within their racial boundaries, he maintains that it is acceptable for the black men that comprise the "talented tenth" to cross the color line. In his discussion of the visiting card incident, for example, he suggests that black male intellectuals can interchange with white women for the purpose of racial integration without having their fidelity to their race questioned.[28] Du Bois's "double consciousness" is a privilege only black male intellectuals are capable of achieving.

Let us further examine the concept of the "talented tenth," which may help us better understand the interracial nature of Du Bois's concept of black manhood. In Chapter Six of *Souls*, entitled "Of the Training of Black Men," Du Bois states that "[p]rogress in human affairs is more often a pull than a push, surging forward of the exceptional man, and the lifting of his duller brethren slowly and painfully to his vantage-ground" (94). What is interesting is the way Du Bois presents his notion of the "talented tenth" to his white audiences. He deliberately associates elite education for the "talented tenth" with the problem of social stability, which was one of contemporary white Southerners' urgent issues: "[N]o secure civilization can be built in the South with the Negro as an ignorant, turbulent proletariat. […] [W]ill you not rather transfer their leading from the hands of men taught to think to the hands of untrained demagogues?" (99-100). What then does the "talented tenth" teach to their fellow black folks? They teach

[28] In her discussion of Fanon's contradictory approach to interracial sexual relationships, Rey Chow argues that in *Black Skin, White Masks* "the black man is throughout enhanced with what I will call *the privilege of ambivalence*, a reaction that is defined as his impossible choice between whiteness and blackness" ("The Politics of Admittance" 68; emphasis in original). I believe that Du Bois's notion of "double consciousness," like Fanon's "inferiority complex," might be an expression of the privileged experience of black intellectual men within black communities. Both Du Bois and Fanon, as male intellectuals, could transgress their black identity for the benefit of a higher political goal, because they were able to take their subjectivity for granted on an experiential level in everyday life within black communities.

"character" (97). According to Martin Summers, at the turn of the twentieth century, manhood was supposed to be "dependent upon the cultivation of one's character," which, "[i]n the context of Victorian America […] included honesty, piety, self-control, and a commitment to the producer values of industry, thrift, punctuality, and sobriety" (1). Contemporary liberal universities were expected to stress "character building." As for black liberal education, the discourse of character was highly racialized (Summers 249). For example, in a fundraising letter that was composed during World War I to promote liberal education for black men, the writer states that liberal training at black universities would prevent race riots (Summers 250). At almost the same time, Fayette A. McKenzie, the white president of Fisk also thought that education for black men must have put white Americans at ease (Summers 250). While these two statements were made a decade before the publication of *Souls*, they offer examples of how black elite education was perceived in the United States during the early twentieth century. Du Bois recognizes this perception, and in *Souls*, by invoking white anxieties about the "gospel of revolt and revenge" that "untrained [black] demagogues" provoked, effectively appeals to his white audiences to support the liberal education of black men (99-100). At the end of Chapter Six, Du Bois fleshes out the intellectual interracial fraternity he imagines emerging after the abolition of Jim Crow: "I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas […].[29] From out the caves of evening that swing between the strong-limbed earth and tracery of the stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn nor condescension" (102).[30] The intellectual interracial

[29] Alexandre Dumas's grandfather was an African-Haitian. Du Bois's inclusion of Dumas within the communities of the great intellectuals is quite intentional for highlighting that the great European cultural heritage has always been shaped by interracial influences (Rowe 207-209). Also, for contemporary African Americans, Dumas was the symbol of black talent honored by France. They would pay him tribute when they visited France (Fabre 1).

[30] Analyzing Thomas Dixon's *The Leopard's Spots* (1902), Sandra Gunning claims that in Dixon's novel, a "homosocial union of black and white" is rendered impossible because of the black male's "inevitable" lust for a

male-bond excludes both Washingtonian black men and the "untrained [black] demagogues" (98). If Washingtonian philosophy exposes its "singleness of vision and thorough oneness" in its conceptualization of the ideal black man, then the "untrained demagogues" that Du Bois identifies similarly lack "larger vision" and "deeper sensibilities" (98). Black radicals only utter the "most unceasing condemnation" towards white people (100). Such radicals do not represent Du Boisian manhood and so they cannot join the Du Boisian interracial utopian fraternity. In Du Bois's formulation, the "talented tenth" is comprised of the black men who possess "double consciousness," which is forged by their interchange with white women. This sexualized and racialized political consciousness qualifies black male intellectuals enough to forge their utopian interracial bond with white men. In Du Bois's view, it is only through "sympathetic touch" with a white woman that the "longing to attain self-conscious manhood" can be realized (97). Du Boisian manhood is an interracial concept, or more accurately, an interracial heterosexual concept.

Plantation Pastoral, Interracial Homosocial Bond, and Interracial Heterosexuality

Chapter Nine of *Souls*, "Of the Sons of Master and Man," once again emphasizes that interracial exchange, including that of a sexual nature, is crucial not only for the ideal of racial justice, but also for the prevention of interracial violence. In this chapter, Du Bois deliberately juxtaposes the discussion of interracial violence, such as rape and lynching, with the landscape of a romanticized Southern plantation. First, Du Bois argues that racial segregation lays the foundation for the increase of interracial crime and violence. He points out that "indiscriminate mingling of men and women and children" within black communities forces some to interact

white woman (36). If we accept Gunning's premise, then, Du Bois's normalization of black men's interracial heterosexual desire can be read as a response to the racist narrative that Dixon's novel implies. Normalizing the tabooed desire, Du Bois establishes the basis for the homosocial union of black and white males.

socially and frequently with black criminals like "chain-gangs" and thus eventually renders them vulnerable to the seduction of "crime and debauchery" (142). Meanwhile, white Americans, influenced by "deep-seated prejudice," view black Americans as potential criminals, evidenced by their bigoted views about and behaviors towards black members of society (142). Such a vicious circle, having been fostered and sustained by the absence of interracial interchange and understanding, serves to "stir up all the latent savagery of both races" (142). Du Bois argues for racial integration as a means of preventing interracial crime and violence in that regard. More specifically, he suggests that social interaction and exchange between "talented" black and white male intellectuals can help facilitate racial justice and social stability, which I will elaborate on below.

In that same chapter, after deploring an incident in which "a black man and a white woman were arrested for talking together in Atlanta," Du Bois offers a problematic view of the Southern plantation (144): "Before and directly after the war, when all the best of the Negroes were domestic servants in the best of the white families, there were bonds of *intimacy*, *affection*, and sometimes *blood relationships*, between the races" (144; emphasis added). His sympathetic account of interracial sexual intercourse on the plantation seems contradictory if we recall Du Bois's scathing indictment of such sexual unions on the very same plantation in Chapter Six: "The wrong which your gentlemen have done against helpless black women in defiance of our own laws is written on the foreheads of two millions of mulattoes, and written in ineffaceable blood" (100). He urges his readers to face the reality of the Southern planation. Yet as I have already examined earlier in this chapter, the narrative of the "Old South" was strategically exploited by Du Bois for his discussion of the color line. First, Du Bois associates the "racial harmony" that the white Southern planation discourse retrospectively endorses with interracial

heterosexual interchange that he proposes as the pathway for racial justice and integration. In her reading of Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus* (1881), Grace Hale points out the ambiguity of Harris's celebration of the "Old South": "Occasionally, plantation 'integration' reached an extreme within which black and whites become almost interchangeable" (57). Drawing on Hale's observation of Harris's problematic nostalgia, I suggest that Du Bois's celebration of the "Old South" as the place for racial "integration" is intended to naturalize interracial heterosexual exchange. By appropriating the white discourse of the planation pastoral, Du Bois points to the necessity and naturalness of the tabooed relation.

Also, the predicament we face as readers might be resolved if we note that in the Du Boisian idealized picture of plantation life, only "the best of the white families" intermix with "all the best of the Negroes" (144). When he condemns white men's sexual exploitation of black women, he presumes that those white men do not belong to "the best of white families." Du Bois points out "the deadening and disastrous effect of a color-prejudice that classes Phillis Wheatley and Sam Hose in the same despised class" (147). For him, then, an interracial heterosexual relationship is only desirable if the best class of both races is involved. In other words, only "the sons of master and man" — those "talented" black and white intellectuals — are entitled to lead the interracial mingling, as the title of the ninth chapter suggests.[31]

If we associate Du Bois's invocation of the plantation as a space for "intimacy, affection, and sometimes blood relationships, between the races" with his counter-intuitive claim that interracial heterosexual coupling can prevent racial crime and violence, we might infer that his problematic portrayal of the plantation is a rhetorical strategy deliberately designed to endorse

[31] Du Bois's elitism and classism concerning interracialism in *Souls* are echoed in Alain Locke's essay, "The New Negro" (1925). In this piece articulating the meaning of the Harlem Renaissance, Locke highlights the importance of interracial cooperation to establish "a new democracy in American culture" by urging "contacts of the enlightened minorities of both race groups" (9). Yet Locke's interracialism does not touch the issue of interracial sexual relationships.

his goal of "social equality." In other words, Du Bois implies that if we can justify white men's sexual engagements with black women under mutual affection, then we can also endorse black men's sexual relationships with white women on the same basis. Or, building on Gwen Bergner's observation that in American culture, the circulation of women, whether black or white, represents "the most basic mechanism for defining white men, in contradictions to women and *black men*, as the producers and representatives of the social world" (Bergner xxvi; emphasis added), one might say that Du Bois's argument for interracial heterosexual relationships is an expression of his desire to be a legitimate member of the patriarchal society of his time. Also, to adapt Gayle Rubin's notion of the "traffic of women" for our discussion, we could conclude that Du Bois's endorsement of the sexual union of black men and white women is supposed to reestablish black patriarchy by relegating black and white women to conduits of exchange between men, black and white. In this reading, *Souls* only partially critiques the intersecting regime of racism and sexism; in his book, Du Bois, by leaving the latter intact, suggests that it is white and black women that function as the exchange objects over which white and black men can form a homosocial bond. In doing so, he attempts to restore the "birthright" to black men who are "emasculated" by slavery and racism (*Souls* 50). Although the Du Boisian interracial brotherhood repudiates the domination of white men, it seeks to preserve the subordination of women.

Black John, the New Martyr: "Of the Coming of John"

Chapter Thirteen, titled, "Of the Coming of John," is the only fictional narrative in *Souls*. It illustrates Du Bois's desired version of interracial sexual union and does so through his rhetorical appropriation of a Western opera. First, we need to understand that "Of the Coming of

John" is a story about lynching and is seen as "Du Bois's first martyr tale" (Kuhl 169). Understanding the history of martyrdom discourse and its relationship to racism is necessary for our discussion of Du Bois's rhetorical strategy in this fictional piece. Michelle Kuhl establishes a link between the discourse of martyrdom and the abolitionist movement:

> In America, during the antebellum period, abolitionists considered their suffering for the cause of antislavery to be a form of martyrdom. Those who died for their adherence to freedom, such as the abolitionist printer Elijah Lovejoy, the militant abolitionist John Brown, and even the Union president Abraham Lincoln, were often called martyrs. The best example of martyred suffering in Victorian culture occurs in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The title character is a Christ-figure who turns the other cheek to his tormenters and is beaten to death. Yet, the reader is meant to understand that his suffering is not in vain, — God is watching and will ultimately reward Tom in heaven. (167)

After the Civil War, lynching became "a concrete measure to punish black violations of racial etiquette, a constant threat that encouraged African Americans to police their own behavior" (Kuhl 161).[32] Widely popular lynching stories always included "a lust-crazed black criminal, a ruined white maiden, and a righteous white mob that unmanned the criminal and put him in his place by torture, castration, and death" (161-62). As many scholars have pointed out, lynching is a symptom that reveals white working-class anxieties about economic competition with black men that emancipation brought about. To put it in Robyn Wiegman's words, the dominant lynching narrative, casting "the white man as the defender of white female sexuality," "translated the economic crisis wrought by the transformation from slavery to freedom into sexual and gendered terms" (14). The martyrdom narrative of abolitionists thus offered contemporary black writers a discursive strategy to "transform a symbol of defeat into a symbol of triumph" (Kuhl 162). The counter-lynching narrative offered black intellectuals a rhetorical frame to reassert

[32] For a detailed survey of the history of lynching in its American context, see Trudier Harris, 1-24.

black manhood. In his martyr tales including "Of the Coming of John," Du Bois also appropriates the white lynching narrative, recasting the lynch victim as the martyr, and the white mob as "the villains who crucify him" (Kuhl 162). In so doing, he "resurrect[s] the lost manhood" of the lynched victim by "redefining black manhood as suffering for a cause" (162). Indeed, in Chapter Seven of *Souls*, Du Bois writes of an African American man, Sam Hose, who was accused of murdering his white employer and attempting to rape his wife. Hose was lynched in 1899 by white mobs in Georgia, prompting Du Bois to write that "Sam Hose was *crucified*" (103; emphasis added). Likewise, "Of the Coming of John," featuring a black and a white character, each named John, functions as a martyr tale that is designed to work as a counter narrative that contrasts with the dominant lynching scenario. At the end of the story, the black John kills the white John, who tried to rape his black sister, Jennie, and the black John stands about to be lynched by a white mob led by the white John's father. Combining the figure of the crucified Christ and the figure of the avenger, "Of the Coming of John" articulates black manhood, as both morally upright and physically strong. As he appropriates the plantation pastoral in former chapters, here Du Bois adapts another discursive framework, drawing on martyr tales for the only piece of fiction in *Souls*.

It is noteworthy that "Of the Coming of John" implicitly formulates the Du Boisian ideal of interracial sexual union that we have discussed thus far. Scholars have overlooked that this story has two interracial heterosexual relationships: That between white John and black John's sister, Jennie, in Jim Crow Georgia, and that between black John and white John's white female companion to an opera in New York. Scholars have yet to adequately address the latter. It is, however, important to note Du Bois's unambiguously different opinions about the two interracial plots. Through the first interracial heterosexual relationship between a white man and a black

woman, Du Bois once again emphasizes that any interracial couple that excludes the black man brings about dire consequences. Let us for a moment look at Du Bois's portrayal of this first interracial sexual engagement. Critics have not yet addressed white John's motive in his sexual violence against Jennie. White John's interest in Jennie is a direct response to his anger over the perceived affront that he believes black John made to his white female companion. In New York, black John is forced to leave an opera performance of Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* (1850) because white John complains about his presence, and knows that black John is upsetting his white female companion. After coming back to the South, white John recalls the event as follows: "'it's the darky that tried to force himself into a seat beside the lady I was escorting'" (182). White John's anger over black John's alleged lecherous desires towards his date suggests that white John's later harassment of Jennie, black John's sister, can be read as his sexual revenge on black John. If, in the white lynching scenario, the white mob avenges the black man's indiscretion with a white woman by physically punishing the black man, then in "Of the Coming of John," white John avenges the sexual threat his namesake poses by claiming his sexual right to the black girl, Jennie: "'Hello, Jennie! Why, you have n't kissed me since I came home'" (182-83). Ultimately, the interracial couple that excludes the black man proves to be destructive — the *undesirable* union requires the sacrifice of the two Johns, both black and white.

In the second sexual engagement, Du Bois depicts a desirable interracial union by referencing Western classical music. As I noted, in New York, black John is forced to leave the opera house because white John worries that the presence of a black man will displease his companion. Indeed, she is not happy with black John's presence, either. Wholly fascinated by Wagner's opera, black John "touch[es] unwittingly the lady's arm. And the lady drew away" (177). At this point, as R.A. Berman points out, Du Bois deliberately inserts *Lohengrin* into his

story. The opera is about "love between different sorts of creatures" (Berman 128). The male protagonist, Lohengrin, commands his lover Elsa not to inquire into his identity. His request suggests "a hope that Elsa's love for him would pertain to his absolute specificity as a human and not to the secondary attributes of rank or race" (Berman 129). In spite of this request, Elsa asks him his "name and race" and threatens "the precondition of equality, the possibility of a genuine human relation" (Berman 129). Berman convincingly encapsulates the meaning of the opera scene: "When the white woman in the New York opera house recoils from the touch of the black man, it is the music of *Lohengrin* that holds out an alternative model of human relations in which she would not be asking about his rank or race at all" (130). Read in Berman's terms, then, "Of the Coming of John" foregrounds the unnaturalness of the miscegenation taboo under racism, which stands in a stark contrast to the hope of the heroic Lohengrin. Of course, the cultural taboo that Du Bois deliberately contrasts with Lohengrin's noble desire is the sexual relationship between a black man and a white woman. The inclusion of the black man is indispensable to the Du Boisian ideal of interracial heterosexual relationships.

Coda: Du Boisian Ethics of Sex

In her essay, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" (1982), Gayle Rubin offers a "hierarchical system of sexual value" that exists in modern Western societies:

> Marital, reproductive heterosexuals are alone at the top of the erotic pyramid. Clamoring below are unmarried monogamous heterosexuals in couples, followed by *most other heterosexuals*. Solitary sex floats ambiguously. The powerful nineteenth-century stigma on masturbation lingers in less potent, modified forms, such as the idea that solitary pleasures are inferior substitutes for partnered encounters. Stable, long-term lesbian and gay male couples are verging on respectability, but bar dykes and promiscuous gay men are hovering just above

> the groups at the very bottom of the pyramid. The most despised sexual castes currently include transsexuals, transvestites, fetishists, sadomasochists, sex workers such as prostitutes and porn models, and the lowliest of all, those whose eroticism transgresses generational boundaries. (149; emphasis added)

In Rubin's portrayal of sexual hierarchy, miscegenation seems to belong to "most other heterosexuals," occupying a higher position than homosexual intercourse. Yet, as Young points out, in Western history, interracial sexuality and homosexuality tended to become identified with each other, as emblems of "degeneration" (26). Specifically, in America, "there has always been a strong cross-cultural homosexual attraction less restrained by social barriers than its heterosexual counterpart," in that the former has posed no threat of producing mixed-race descendants, according to Dennis Altman (qtd. in Dollimore 333). Siobhan B. Somerville also notices that the eugenics discourse in the early twentieth-century United States associated the mixed-race figure with the homosexual figure (80). She maintains that both interracial and homosexual desires were seen as deviant and pathological desires in contemporary American cultural imagination (34).[33]

If we keep in mind the observations of Young, Altman, and Somerville, Rubin's lack of attention to the issue of miscegenation, or her inadvertent inclusion of miscegenation in the category of "other heterosexuals" needs to be critically reconsidered. As I have discussed throughout this chapter, Du Bois, in contrast to Rubin, shows quite intensive interest in the issue, excoriating the miscegenation taboo. He indicts the cultural taboo by illustrating numerous sacrifices of black men who are subjected to physical, legal, and symbolic violence for their sexual desire. One of the ethical imperatives that Du Bois seeks most forcefully in *Souls* is the decriminalization and destigmatization of interracial heterosexuality. His formulation of black

[33] I consider Somerville's examination of the discursive intersection between homosexual and interracial sexual desires further in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

men's sexuality can thus be fully grasped as an impassioned response to the phobically charged stereotype of the oversexed and violent African American men.

Yet Du Boisian sexual ethics proves to be limited as well, given his exclusive discursive identification with the male party. If white supremacists stigmatized black men's and white women's interracial heterosexual desires, Du Bois merely reversed the racist logic through the abjectification and pathologization of black women's and white men's interracial heterosexual desires. His rhetorical inversion, which depicts the destructive effects of living under Jim Crow through a symbolic vocabulary of hyper-sexualization or emasculation, displaces the specificity of black female sexual desires. He also reifies the ideology of compulsory heterosexuality upon which the discourse of lynching and the black rapist myth are predicated. Identifying masculinity with patriarchal heterosexuality, Du Bois's otherwise powerful critique of racism does not fundamentally question how racism itself works in tandem with misogyny and normalized heterosexuality. Furthermore, Du Bois's vision of post-Jim Crow America turns out to be disputable as well. For example, in the last chapter of *Souls*, "The Sorrow Songs," Du Bois concludes his book by writing, "Actively we have woven ourselves with the very warp and woof of this nation, — we fought their battles, shared their sorrow, *mingled our blood with theirs*, and generation after generation have pleaded with a headstrong, careless people to despise not Justice, Mercy, and Truth, lest the nation be smitten with a curse" (193; emphasis added). Du Bois asserts that American modernity is a cultural and racial hybrid, and that ignorance of such historical "Truth" is a "headstrong" and "careless" act. He declares that to be modern American is to be both black and white. What makes Du Bois's alternative conception of America's biracial genesis problematic is that it is envisioned as an interracial *fraternity*: "Our song, our toil, our cheer, and warning have been given to this nation in blood-*brotherhood*" (193; emphasis

added). For him, the major obstacle to the realization of interracial brotherhood, to be sure, is the pathologization of the black man's interracial heterosexual desire by white supremacism. In the "drear day when human brotherhood is mockery and a snare" (195), Du Bois's book seeks to rebuild white and black fraternity by normalizing, or privileging, the black man's interracial heterosexual desire, while stigmatizing the black woman's sexual desire.[34]

[34] As Robyn Wiegman explains, the end of slavery brought about "the dissolution of a particular kind of patriarchal order, for while the slave system ensured a propertied relation between laborer and master, and discursively and legally bound the African (-American) to the white father through the surname, emancipation represents the literal and symbolic loss of the security of the white patronym and an attendant displacement of the primacy of the white male" (29). Then, *Souls* can be said to instantiate a paradigm shift from a nation-state imagined as patriarchal order to a nation-state imagined as a fraternal order. Yet we need to remember Carole Pateman's observation: "the motive for brother's collective act is not merely to claim their natural liberty and right of self-government but to *gain access to women*. […] The parricide eliminates the father's political right, and also his *exclusive* sexual right. The brothers inherit his patriarchal, masculine right and share the women among themselves" (43; emphasis in original).

Chapter Two

Sustaining the Impossible: Interracial Homosocial Bonds and Interracial Heterosexual Romance in *Darkwater*

As discussed in the first chapter, W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* asserts the supreme importance of interracial heterosexuality to the formation of black male subjectivity during the historical period in the United States that ranges from slavery to the Civil War and post-Reconstruction years. On the first page of *Darkwater* (1920), Du Bois suggests that his book will explore the problem further in a transnational context:

> I have been in the world, but not of it. I have seen the human drama from a veiled corner, where all the outer tragedy and comedy have reproduced themselves in microcosm within. From this inner torment of souls the human scene without has interpreted itself to me in unusual and even illuminating ways. For this reason, and this alone, I venture to write again on themes on which great souls have already said greater words, in the hope that I may strike here and there a half-tone, newer even if slighter, up from the heart of my problem and the problems of my people. (483)

In the opening pages of *Souls*, Du Bois writes that the black man is "gifted with second-sight in this *American* world" (38; emphasis added). He makes clear that the African American male's angst and political consciousness are cultivated in American modern history. In contrast, from the first page of his second multi-genre book, which was published soon after World War I, Du Bois clarifies that *Darkwater* elaborates on U.S. racial conflicts and their impact on African American subjectivity through an international framework ("the world") instead of a national one ("this American world"). Unfortunately, just as the "American world" in *Souls* imposes on Du Bois the existential dilemma between "Negro" and "American," in *Darkwater*, Du Bois states

that he is not yet accepted as a full member of "the [global] world" (he is "not of it"). He is still "veiled" with the "inner torment of souls" (483). Yet, this ontological crisis, as in the case of the "second sight" he identified in *Souls*, gives him the capability to see "the human scene […] in unusual and even illuminating ways" (483). As other scholars have already established, it is not wrong to claim that *Darkwater* is a transnational revision of *Souls* (Kaplan 183; Sundquist 591; Weinbaum, "Interracial Romance" 97).

This paradoxical doubling — double consciousness as simultaneously disempowering and empowering — is not the only point that *Souls* and *Darkwater* share. In addition to its stylistic similarity with *Souls,*[35] *Darkwater* also illustrates the Du Boisian gauge of racial justice or injustice in American society: the degree to which it is willing to embrace a black man's heterosexual engagement with a white woman. Indeed, Du Boisian resentment — the psyche of the black male subject, whose interracial heterosexual desire is socially tabooed in Jim Crow America — is on display throughout the narrative of *Darkwater.* In the autobiographical first chapter of the book, Du Bois recounts his boyhood in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Recollecting his experience of racism, Du Bois states that "Very *gradually*, — I cannot now distinguish the steps, though here and there I remember a jump or a jolt — but very *gradually* I found myself assuming quite *placidly* that I was different from other children" (489; emphasis added). In contrast to his depiction of the visiting card episode in *Souls* that I discussed in the previous chapter, here Du Bois represents his acquisition of a racial identity in a less dramatic manner. Du Bois describes the moment of the discovery of his racial identity, not by localizing it as a singular traumatic event, but by emphasizing the *gradual* cultural process of racialization.

While he assumes his difference "quite placidly," his calm recognition and acceptance of

[35] Both *Souls* and *Darkwater* consist of seemingly disparate genres such as autobiography, essay, allegory, and fiction. The Du Boisian black modernism inaugurated in *Souls* is again displayed in *Darkwater*. It "repeat[s] the strategy of *The Souls of Black Folk* now on a global scale" (Sundquist 591).

his racial difference do not extend to sexual prejudices levied at *men* of his race. In fact, Du Bois does not embrace the denigrating attitudes of white girls "placidly." He experiences their denigration as a trauma that he is unable to register either "gradually" or "placidly": "It was […] when the oldest girls grew up that my sharp senses noted little hesitancies in public and searchings for possible opinion. Then I *flamed*! I lifted my chin and strode off to the mountains, where I viewed the world at my feet and strained my eyes across the shadow of the hills" (489; emphasis added). In describing his "gradual" discovery of racial difference, Du Bois confesses that "there were some days of secret tears" (489). As for his experience of the "little hesitancies" that white girls showed to him, however, Du Bois responds, "I flamed!" When expressing his frustration with his relationships with white girls, the author deliberately tries to convey his anger and resentment. Only five paragraphs later, Du Bois recounts:

> The Age of Miracles began with Fisk and ended with Germany. I was bursting with the joy of living. I seemed to ride in conquering might. I was captain of my soul and master of fate! I *willed* to do! It was done. I *wished*! The wish came true.
>
> Now and then out of the void flashes the great sword of hate to remind me of the battle. I remember once, in Nashville, brushing by accident against a white woman on the street. Politely and eagerly I raised my hat to apologize. That was thirty-five years ago. From that day to this I have never knowingly raised my hat to a Southern white woman. (490)

How can we understand the level of intensity Du Bois invests in this memory of an accidental interaction? How can we comprehend his feelings toward "a Southern white woman," which have been almost changeless for thirty-five years? The intensity with which he remembers what we can assume was the Southern white woman's rejection comes from the fact that, for Du Bois, a white woman's acceptance of his manhood is integral to his being "captain of [his] soul" and experiencing racial justice (490). The "sword of hate" he feels swell after the encounter with the white woman reminds him of "the battle" over the subjectivity of his "soul" and "fate," while

also invoking, for the reader, a phallic object that seeks to reclaim a lost masculinity (490). If we keep in mind Sianne Ngai's observation that thinkers from Aristotle to Audre Lorde have emphasized "anger's centrality to the pursuit of social justice" (35), Du Bois's expression of anger at this point is not a mere expression of his personal frustration. It is rather an expression of his resentment at his experience of being emasculated by racial injustice.[36] To put it differently, it suggests that for Du Bois, social acceptance of a black man as a legitimate sexual subject in a relationship with a white woman is the very barometer by which we can measure the level of racial equality and integration in a society.

In this chapter, I continue to discuss Du Bois's rhetorical strategy in *Darkwater* in which he highlights that social acceptance of black men's interracial heterosexual desire is central to racial desegregation and justice. Alys Eve Weinbaum, along with a few other feminist scholars, has demonstrated that the figuration of interracial heterosexual desire is integral to *Darkwater*'s vision and pursuit of racial integration. In her essay, "Interracial Romance and Black Internationalism," Weinbaum asserts that two interracial romance stories in *Darkwater*, "Comet" and "The Princess of Hither Isle," suggest interracial heterosexual union as a solution to global racist imperialism (103). Noting the traits of romance as a literary genre, Weinbaum argues that the two romance stories in *Darkwater* demonstrate the Du Boisian discursive practice that seeks to dissolve racial antagonism through "the idiom of heterosexual union and interracial reproduction" (105). Drawing on Doris Summer's notion that romance combines erotics with

[36] Du Bois's anger and resentment over being emasculated by a white woman is more vividly expressed in his unpublished essay, "The American Girl" (1891). In the essay he wrote as a Harvard undergraduate, Du Bois recollects the white girl's rejection of his visiting card that he portrays in *Souls* in a quite bitter and indignant tone: "When I wish to meet the American Hog in its native simplicity; when I wish to realize the world-pervading presence of the Fool; *when I wish to be reminded that whatever rights some have I have none*; when I wish, by a course of systematic vulgarity, to be made to forget whatever little courtesy I have […] when I wish any of these things I seek the company of the American girl" ("The American Girl" 19; emphasis added). The white girl's rejection of his visiting card reminds Du Bois of the right deprived of him, which ought to have been his in a racially equal society.

politics, Weinbaum notes that romance as a literary genre has "capacity to depict and resolve social, historical, and political conflict through resolution of narrative tensions" (100). She adds that Du Bois's romantic stories employ "erotics of politics in which naturalized heterosexual love can be used to express, and often diffuse, tensions among antagonistic forces" (100).[37] This chapter expands on Weinbaum's argument, not only by considering interracial heterosexual desire as a central element of Du Bois's argument in favor of U.S. democracy in *Darkwater*, but also by contending that such evident and apparent expression of interracial heterosexual desire in the book's romantic stories closely relates to the accounts of white workers' violence against black workers in its *non*-fictional pieces. The destruction of interracial working-class male bonds has significance for Du Bois. The breaking of these bonds, which was materialized through interracial, intra-class violence in early twentieth-century America, ultimately forced Du Bois to rely on fantastical and mythological discursive spaces, manifested in *Darkwater*'s unrealistic romances.

My chapter addresses how Du Bois's text investigates the historical process in which black male workers are marginalized by white male workers. In doing so, this chapter examines Du Bois's assertion that black working-class men become othered through the imbrication of racial, class, and sexual discourse, as well as his discursive response to such racist symbolic violence. Ultimately, this chapter captures Du Bois's anxiety-ridden negotiation of white racial discourses as a *black man* who simultaneously occupies disempowered racial and empowered gendered positions.

[37] Susan Koshy suggests that romance can be useful as a literary genre to formulate U.S. modern nationalism: "[R]omance offered a formula for naturalizing the narrative of nationhood in a land of immigrants where nationhood, lacking the weighty genealogical tropes of 'tradition,' language, or cultural antiquity, was in constant need of legitimating discourses that could transform the political abstraction of the nation into a deeply felt affective state" (*Sexual Naturalization* 21).

"Credo"

In "Credo," which precedes the ten chapters of *Darkwater*, Du Bois writes that "I believe […] in pride of race so chivalrous as neither to offer bastardy to the weak nor beg wedlock of the strong, knowing that men may be brothers in Christ, even though they be not brothers-in-law" (485). The racial triangle Du Bois depicts consists of a black man, a white man and a black woman. The white man is blamed for his illegitimate interracial sex ("bastardy") and the black woman is chastened for her pathological desire for whiteness and resultant traitorous interracial sex ("beg wedlock of the strong"). The black man is excluded from the interracial sexual relationship but does not lose his "chivalrous" racial pride. As Amy Kaplan points out, post-Reconstruction white supremacists made efforts to circulate a racist narrative in which "chivalric Southern heroes rescue their white heroines" from freed black rapists (121). Depicted in the film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), racist discourse that positioned black men as rapists had a significant impact on the contemporary public imagination.[38] Du Bois's use of chivalric imagery in "Credo" is quite suggestive in that regard. He consciously parodies the image of the chivalrous white hero and rearticulates the myth of black rapists as a narrative of white rapists, a discursive strategy similar to that which he employed in *Souls*'s "Of the Coming of John," discussed in the previous chapter.[39] Even more interesting, condemning the union of a black woman and a white man, Du Bois proposes cross-racial fraternity: "men may be brothers in Christ, even though they be not brothers-in-law." Notably, as he does throughout the chapters of *Souls*, in the introductory section of *Darkwater*, Du Bois disapproves of the heterosexual union that excludes a black man

[38] During its eleven-month run, the movie was seen by five million Americans. With its opening in Atlanta, the Ku Klux Klan was reorganized in the twentieth century (Gunning 29). After watching the film at the White House, President Woodrow Wilson said: "It is like writing history with lighting. And my only regret is that it is all so terribly true" (qtd. in Gunning 29).

[39] In "Criteria of Negro Art" (1926), Du Bois represents the NAACP through chivalric imagery: "a fighting organization which has come up out of the blood and dust of battle, struggling for the right of black men to be ordinary human beings" (324).

while simultaneously endorsing an interracial male bond. When Du Bois observes that "I have been […] not of it [the world]," he means that he has been excluded from the area of *normative* heterosexuality, in which he should have been allowed to establish a public, socially accepted romantic, relationship with a white woman.

It is important to note Du Bois's unusual brief statement about the interracial male bond. Clearly he states the ideological and ethical significance of white and black fraternity, but his argument is delivered in a fleeting sentence with a tone of uncertainty ("men may be brothers in Christ"). Furthermore, in contrast to *Souls*, in which cross-racial fraternity is figured into actual historical settings such as the Southern plantation or the intellectual community of historical figures like Shakespeare and Aristotle, the vision of the interracial male bond in "Credo" is staged in the otherworldly and religious realm ("in Christ"). In the following section, I discuss Du Bois's skepticism about an interracial homosocial bond, which is fully illustrated in his essays on interracial, intra-class conflicts in *Darkwater*. This discussion helps us understand the ideological and historical implications of the unrealistic setting of the book's interracial heterosexual romantic stories.

The Broken Dream of Interracial Male Bonding

In the first part of *Darkwater*'s second chapter, "The Souls of White Folk," Du Bois sees the interracial conflict and violence among working-class people in the early twentieth-century United States reflecting a failure of class consciousness on the part of white working-class people. In this piece, he traces the historical process in which non-Anglo-Saxon white workers assimilated the culture of Jim Crow, and how such expanded and reinforced white supremacy led to, not only domestic race riots, but also global imperialism. "The Souls of White Folk"

concludes that global white supremacy, originating from the Jim Crow United States, is a *modern* phenomenon, which sets the tone for its author's pessimistic view of interracial working-class fraternity in the 1920s United States that permeates *Darkwater*.

Before exploring "The Souls of White Folk" in detail, it will be useful to have a sense of Du Bois's general notion of race in the 1920s. According to Matthew Pratt Guterl, soon after the Great War, American racial discourse was transformed into "a simplistic, color-coded system" (312). In that representative system of American "soft imperialism," what Guterl calls "the four colors of a new American map of the world" ("white, brown, yellow, and black"), racial dynamics changed as non-Anglo European immigrants, such as those of Italian and Polish descent, began to be identified with Anglo-Saxon whites. For economic reasons, and with the support of modern American imperialistic capitalism that benefited from the color-coded stratification of the labor force, race relations shifted in favor of incorporating a broader set of European immigrants into the racial categories of whiteness while still denying entry of those of African American descent (Guterl 312).

Du Bois, aware of the fluid nature of whiteness, argues that African Americans can be both allies and enemies of the non-Anglo-European Americans, that is, the "new immigrants."[40] In "Americanization," his August 1922 *Crisis* opinion piece, Du Bois excoriates "a renewal of the Anglo-Saxon cult: the worship of the Nordic totem, the disfranchisement of Negro, Jew, Irishman, Italian, Hungarian, Asiatic and South Sea Islander—the world rule of Nordic white through brute force" (154). He goes on to propose an intra-class and interracial working class alliance: "The great alliance then between the darker people […] between disadvantaged groups like the Irish and the Jew and the working class everywhere is the alliance that is going to keep

[40] "New immigrants" refer to immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe that overtook the streams from Northern and Western Europe as the century turned and furnished the great majority of the more than 14 million newcomers, who came to the United States in the first two decades of the twentieth century (*Working* 4).

down privilege as represented by New England and Old England" ("Americanization" 154). Yet, in his 1925 article, "The Negro Mind Reaches Out," he offers the opposite scenario in which black workers are marginalized by the pan-white working class alliance, which includes not only Anglo-Saxon workers but also the "new immigrants": "As long as the northern lords of industries of the white land could import cheap white labor from Europe, they could encourage the color line in industry" ("The Negro Mind Reaches Out" 412). As David Roediger aptly puts it, Du Bois was aware of the fact that "aliens became white over the bodies of black Americans," according to the needs of U.S. capitalism, which was being sustained by the racially stratified labor force (*Working* 95). That whiteness was an unstable and permeable identity is well illustrated in "The Souls of White Folk":

> [S]he [America] is at times heartily ashamed even of the larger number of "new" white people whom her democracy has admitted to place and power. Against this surging forward of Irish and German, of Russian Jew, Slav and "dago" her social bars have not availed, but against Negroes she can and does take her unflinching and immovable stand, backed by this new public policy of Europe. She trains her immigrants to this despising of "niggers" from the day of their landing, and they carry and send the news back to the submerged classes in the fatherlands. (508-509)

This passage suggests that the "new immigrants" did not assimilate into American society without friction, while asserting that such a transition was made easier in contrast to that of the black working classes because of their lighter skin. Contemporary Americans regarded these "new immigrants" as incompatible with the nature of Anglo-Saxon civilization ("heartily ashamed"). The "she" in the passage does not only include authorities and industrialists, but also Anglo-Saxon workers whose rhetoric and exclusion of the "new immigrants" were "redolent of a belief in racial inferiority" of Southern and Eastern Europeans (*Working* 80-81). The organized labor in the early twentieth century racialized these new immigrants and such racialization

reinforced their "inbetweenness" on the job, in politics, and in unions (*Working* 78). For example, in 1905, Samuel Gompers, a key figure in the American labor movement of the early twentieth century, declared that American white working-class people "are not going to let their standard of living be destroyed by negroes […] or any others" (qtd. in *Working* 87). Of course, the "any others" in Gompers's speech refer to "new immigrants" from Southern and Eastern Europe (Saxton 115). Five years before the publication of *Darkwater*, Du Bois already noted that Anglo-Saxon workers "were flattered by popular appeals to their inherited superiority to 'Dagoes,' 'Chinks, 'Japs,' and 'Niggers'" (*The Negro* 141). Yet, in *Darkwater*, Du Bois clarifies that the "new immigrants," unlike African Americans, can avoid the "social bars" (508). As Roediger maintains, the "new immigrant" was marginalized, "but not in the same way as African Americans or immigrants of color," and so "could claim whiteness via naturalization and naturalization via whiteness" (*Working* 121). Indeed, they had more access to unionized and skilled work than African Americans (*Working* 82). In Susan Koshy's words, "the liminal European groups" became white because of the presence of black bodies ("Morphing" 167-68).[41] To borrow Roediger's words again, "[j]oining in acts of racism against people of color made immigrants white over time" (*Working* 103).

It is noteworthy that *Darkwater* connects "the racial segmentation of the domestic labor force" to its critique of Euro-American imperialism and colonialism (Weinbaum, "Interracial Romance" 102). As quoted earlier, Du Bois asserts that "She [America] trains her immigrants to this despising of 'niggers' from the day of their landing, and they carry and send the news back to the submerged classes in the fatherlands" (*Darkwater* 508-09). The intersection of national

[41] More specifically, Koshy mentions that Asian immigrants and African Americans helped to make the "new immigrants" white ("Morphing" 67-68). To put it in Collen Lye's words, the presence of Asians and blacks served to "reinforce the equation between Americanness and whiteness by shifting the debate about Americanness from the question of nativity to the questions of race" (60).

and transnational racism coalesces in white colonialist endeavors in Africa. In his assessment of the Great War, Du Bois argues that the white middle and working classes collaborated with white capitalists "in the exploitation of darker peoples" (505). He concludes that the "competition for the labor of yellow, brown, and black folks" is the main cause of the Great World War (505). The cross-racial whiteness offers the "chance for exploitation on an immense scale for inordinate profit, not simply to the very rich, but to the middle class and to the laborers" (504-05). Du Bois deplores that "Here [in Africa] are no labor unions or votes or questioning onlookers or inconvenient conscience" (505).

Du Bois's articulation of the global white supremacy as a permeable historical and discursive construct reveals its fundamental fragility. In his remarkable examination of the historical process by which European immigrants assimilated the racist logic of Jim Crow and diffused it globally, Du Bois demonstrates that whiteness and its cultural authority were the byproduct of a complex interracial exchange involving black people. It was only through the physical and symbolic violence against African American people that both Anglo-Saxon and non-Anglo-Saxon European workers could claim their whiteness — a sociopolitical as much as racial state of being. When Du Bois declares that "[t]he discovery of *personal* whiteness among the world's people is a very modern thing," he contends that whiteness as the signifier of a superior race is a quite recent social invention, and thus undermining its universal and ahistorical status (497; emphasis added). When an identity becomes a "personal" issue, or when it becomes the matter of an intersubjective exchange, it loses its ground to claim its universal values. In this regard, racial violence might be seen as an expression of white people's frustration at being forced to confront the fragility of their whiteness: "I am singularly clairvoyant. I see in and through them [white people]. I view them from unusual points of vantage. […] I see these souls

undressed and from the back and side. I see the working of their entrails. I know their thoughts and they know that I know. This knowledge makes them embarrassed, now furious" (497). Racial violence enacted by the white man on the black marks an attempt to reaffirm the stability of whiteness by distinguishing it as superior to and the antithesis of blackness.

If "The Souls of White Folk" is a general view of how race and class intersect in the process of constructing the ideology of racial segregation in the 1920s United States, "On Work and Wealth," the first part of *Darkwater*'s fourth chapter, localizes the race-classed symbolic and physical violence as a specific single historical event: the 1917 race riot in East St. Louis. Du Bois suggests that the riots represent a failure of class consciousness on the part of "new immigrants," who sought to gain white privilege by sacrificing their potential alliance with black workers. In this piece, Du Bois terms these "new immigrants" as "the Unwise Men," in that the division of working class across the color line benefited industrialists by enforcing a segmented labor market and politically disorganized labor movement (525). Due to the U.S. government's new restrictive policy on immigration and its demand for workers during World War I, those "new immigrants" were allowed significant bargaining power and a decent standard of living. As a result, they "saw in their dream the vision of a day when labor, as they knew it, should come into its own" (527). Northern industrialists responded to the rising power of these "new immigrants" by recruiting black workers from the South who would work for less: "Northern employers simply had to offer two and three dollars a day and from one-quarter to one-half a million dark workers arose and poured themselves into the North" (528). Accordingly, the "new immigrant" workers' fear of the "definite death of their rising dreams" complicated the dynamics of race and class relations between themselves and the "dark workers" in the North (528).

Du Bois delineates the etiology of their fears and their attendant hate for black workers in

his discussion of the riot:

> Black men poured in and red anger flamed in the hearts of the white workers. The anger was against the wielders of the thunderbolts [Northern industrialists], but here it was impotent because employers stood with the hand of the government before their faces; it was against entrenched union labor, which had risen on the backs of the unskilled and unintelligent and on the backs of those whom for any reason of race or prejudice or chicane they could beat beyond the bars of competition; and finally the anger of the mass of white workers was turned toward these new black interlopers, who seemed to come to spoil their last dream of a great monopoly of common labor. (530)

This passage paints a picture of labor dynamics in the early twentieth-century United States. With the massive migration of black Americans into the North, the "monopoly of common labor" that the "new immigrants" enjoyed was broken down. Their anger, which should have been directed at Northern capitalists, was first forcibly redirected towards "entrenched union labor," which mostly consisted of Anglo-Saxon workers, because these "new immigrants" had no organized power to resist the alliance of capital and the state. However, their anger, newly-directed towards the "old labor," had no power for recourse and thus was once again required to be directed elsewhere.[42] As observed in the statement of Samuel Gompers, contemporary labor unions excluded "not-yet white" groups. Due to the racialized practices of unions, the "new immigrants" experienced hiring and wage discrimination. As a result, they finally turned their frustration and anger toward the "new black interlopers." It is the "blackness" that the "Unwise Men" held accountable for their economic hardships.

Instead of critiquing capitalism's alliance of the state and the industrialists, the "Unwise Men" translated socio-economic relations into physiological forms, a prejudice materialized in

[42] For a detailed historical survey of the dynamic between "old labor" and "new immigrants," see Gwendolyn Mink's *Old Labor and New Immigrants in American Political Development* (1986).

the 1917 race riot.[43] Their failed critique of capitalism results in their racialization of black workers, which Du Bois terms "the modern economic paradox" and suggests is figured in the race riot in East St. Louis (528): "It was here that they entered the Shadow of Hell, where suddenly from a fight for wage and protection against industrial oppression East St. Louis became the center of the oldest and nastiest form of human oppression, race hatred" (530). The race riot in East St. Louis demonstrates "how a class-conscious social vision can work in complicity with white primacy," to echo Wiegman's words (93).

Also, one of the most interesting cases for the racialization of contemporary black workers was their figuration as "scabs." Du Bois points out that the black workers were racialized as "scabs" in the discourse of the white workers (*Darkwater* 529). According to Roediger, in the history of the U.S. mainstream labor movement, "scabbing" was equated with "turning nigger" (*Working* 92). Union leaders warned their workers against "slavelike" behavior, and instructed new workers in the ways that race and slavery were implicated in "*unmanned* servility" (*Working* 92; emphasis added). White workers racialized black workers by *feminizing* them. If conventional homosocial bonding occurs over the bodies of women, then white male working-class bonding occurs over the *feminized* bodies of black male workers.

Du Bois highlights this point and explores it further in the first part of *Darkwater*'s fifth chapter, "The Servant in the House." This essay begins with a story of a white woman who, after listening to Du Bois's speech on the disfranchisement of blacks, asks him, "'Do you know where I can get a good colored cook?'" She complains, "'Why – won't Negroes – work! […] I had given money for years to Hampton and Tuskegee and yet I can't get decent servants. […] They

[43] In her brilliant study of racialization of Asian American workers represented in American naturalist literature, Collen Lye contends that "American naturalism represents a failed critique of capitalism, but that the evidence of this lies in its tendency toward racialization, or the reification of social relations into physiological forms, or types" (8). Both Du Bois's and Lye's critiques illustrate the intersections between race and class formation in the United States.

all want to be lawyers and doctors'" (538). Blaming black Americans for not taking racialized jobs befitting them ("Why – won't Negroes – work!"), the white woman's complaint quickly slips from race to labor and then gender. She equates blackness with specific jobs, that is, domestic labor, outraged that black men might aspire to higher social positions in law or medicine. What needs to be emphasized is Du Bois's gendered understanding of such racialized labor; instead of criticizing the white woman's prejudice, he assumes that domestic work undermines black manhood. His gendered view of labor is demonstrated even in the description of his family history: "I speak and speak bitterly as a servant and a servant's son, for my mother spent five or more years of her life as a menial; my father's family escaped, although grandfather as a boat steward had to fight hard to be a *man* and not a lackey. He fought and won" (538; emphasis added). Du Bois's "bitterness" is caused by his being "a servant and a servant's son." His grandfather, meanwhile, struggled "to be a man" and "won." As the Washingtonian industrial education is "bound to sap the manhood," so the "servant" and "lackey" are positions that emasculate black men. Du Bois further clarifies the imbrication of labor, race and gender in a recollection of his experiences with work in his youth:

> The surrounding Irish had two chances, the factory and the kitchen, and most of them took the factory, with all its dirt and noise and low wage. The factory was closed to us. […] Slowly they [black children] dribbled off, — a waiter here, a cook there, help for a few weeks in Mrs. Blank's kitchen when she had summer boarders.
>
> Instinctively I hated such work from my birth. I loathed it and shrank from it. Why? I could not have said. Had I been born in Carolina instead of Massachusetts I should hardly have escaped the taint of "service." Its temptations in wage and comfort would soon have answered my scruples; and yet I am sure I would have fought long even in Carolina, for I knew in my heart that thither lay Hell.
>
> I mowed lawns on contract, did "chores" that left me my own man, sold papers, and peddled tea – anything to escape the shadow of the awful thing that lurked to grip my soul. (538)

Black labor is good in "wage and comfort," but the good "wage" and "comfort" are "temptations" that sap black manhood. These emasculating "temptations" sharply contrast with the manly working conditions of the Irish. While black men give way to the "temptations" of "wage and comfort" by working "in the kitchen," Irish men choose "the factory" for "all its dirt and noise and low wage." By inserting gender as an intermediary, Du Bois explores the way that labor is divided along the color line. The conflation of raced and gendered labor renders African Americans the Others of organized labor: "[t]he labor movement turned their backs on those black men […]. Negroes are servants; servants are Negroes. They shut the door of escape to factory" (541). Unlike the Irish, black men had not the option of masculine factory labor; black men had only the kitchen. "[G]uard[ing] against any likeness between artisan and servant" is one of the "rules of the labor union" (543).

In addition to examination of the feminization of black male labor, *Darkwater* also addresses the feminization of the black male body itself through racial violence. In his poem, entitled "The Prayers of God," the second part of *Darkwater*'s ninth chapter, Du Bois imagines a conversation between God and a member of a white lynch mob. Speaking of his experience of lynching a black man, the white man says: "For this, too, once, in Thy Name, / I lynched a Nigger — / (He raved and writhed, / I heard him cry, / I felt the life-light leap and lie, / I saw him crackle there, on high, / I watched him wither!)" (lines 12-16, 610). This poem offers a somewhat different image of the black man from the one depicted in a traditional lynching scenario in which a hyper-virile black man rapes a white woman and the brave white man heroically intercedes; in Du Bois's poem, the black man is rendered utterly helpless before the physical violence of the white man who takes sadistic pleasure in his dominance.[44] The racial

[44] Frantz Fanon asserts that the "Negrophobia" is a phobia of sexual anxiety related to the image of the oversexed black male. Contending that "the Negrophobic man is a repressed homosexual," Fanon detects white men's sexual

violence serves as an essential component of the white man's masculinity.

However, immediately following the lines quoted above, Du Bois invokes the image of a black Christ: "Thou? / Thee? / I lynched thee? / Awake me God! I sleep! / What was that awful word Thou sadist? That black and riven thing — was it Thee? / That gasp — was it Thine? / This pain — is it Thine? / Are, then, these bullets piercing Thee?" (lines 17-25, 610). Noting these lines, scholars have argued that Du Bois restores black masculinity to the lynched man by equating the black victim with Christ. To put it in Kuhl's words, "The Prayers of God" transforms "a symbol of defeat into a symbol of triumph" (162). Yet I urge readers to pay more attention to the way that the poem presents the exchange between Christ and the white man; Christ assumes the position of the black man whom the white man "pierces" with "bullets." The white man "heard," "felt," "saw," and "watched" the black man's suffering — his body "crackle[s]" and "wither[s]" — during the lynching. The black man's pain and his body are graphically portrayed and he is feminized through his victimization. Described as a vulnerable and passive body, the black man becomes the object of the white masculine voyeuristic gaze that pervades the white mob's description. Building on Laura Mulvey's observation that from the vantage point of classic psychoanalysis, the "to-be-looked-at-ness" is a defining characteristic of normative feminine subjectivity, I would argue that the black man in Du Bois's poem is feminized by the white mob's masculine voyeuristic gaze. In fact, under slavery and Jim Crow, a black man's eye contact with a white woman could evoke the fury of a lynch mob (*Photography* 197). The right of the gaze was "a highly regulated racial privilege" (*Photography* 197). African

---

fear and anxiety beneath their sadistic violence against black men: "[W]hen a white man hates black men, is he not yielding to a feeling of impotence or of sexual inferiority? Since his ideal is an infinite virility, is there not a phenomenon of diminution in relation to the Negro, who is viewed as a penis symbol? Is the lynching of the Negro not a sexual revenge?" (156, 159). If we follow Fanon's articulation of Negrophobia, it could be said that lynching's violence is the result of the "white man's disavowed identification" with the black man's masculinity (D. Kim 8). Or to put it in Marriott's words, "white phobic anxiety about black men takes the form of a fetishistic investment in their sexuality" (12).

American people were denied their right to gaze (hooks 115). After all, "The Prayers of God" reflects the history of the racialized right of gaze. Although the black man in the lynching scenario as described by dominant racist culture is supposed to be hyper-virile, dangerously so, Du Bois's poem shows that the discourse of lynching can also feminize black men.

Lynching during and after the Reconstruction years was almost always treated as "a form of amusement," often attended by thousands of onlookers including white women, as Du Bois points out in his 1925 essay, "Georgia, Invisible Empire State" (qtd. in Hale 199). Sometimes, even white children came from miles away to participate in the spectacle with "picnic supplies." They might be given the day off from school to attend (Hodes 327). Analyzing "The Prayers of God," Kuhl confirms that lynching was considered a spectacular visual event, explaining that "[t]he contortions of the dying victim are detailed with the vicarious thrill of a sporting or entertainment spectacle" (172). Given the disturbing history of lynching, it can be said that within the dominant lynching discourse, the black man oscillates between a dehumanized sexual threat and a helpless feminized object. In either case, the black man is figured as a deviant from *normative* expressions of manhood that are respected in the patriarchal society of Du Bois's time. In his poem, the scar of white violence enacted on the black man's body is not dismissed, nor does it disappear even after the victim symbolically turns out to be Christ. Rather, the Black Christ receives that same scar of white violence; he does not make the pain disappear but rather himself experiences it.

Du Bois's exploration of how white racist discourse functions to feminize black male bodies and black male labor is problematic in that he internalizes the white patriarchal discourse of body and labor even as he critiques it. In spite of that, however, his essays on contemporary U.S. labor in *Darkwater* do insightfully reveal the permeability of race as a category of identity:

"There are no races" (*Darkwater* 532).[45] Furthermore, we need to remember the question that he raises, after addressing the race riot in East St. Louis: "How far may men fight for the beginning of comfort, out beyond the horrid shadow of poverty, at the cost of starving other and what the world calls lesser men?" (*Darkwater* 529). He deplores the fact that the Manichean racial logic of Jim Crow was powerful enough to disperse the shared class-interests of black and white male workers. Still, his gendered understanding of labor invites us to ask whether or not his lamentation emerges from his frustration over black men's expulsion from the interracial *male bond*, rather than from their expulsion from the progressive class-consciousness against the alliance of the state and capital.

As I have examined so far, one of the traits that most starkly differentiates *Darkwater* from *Souls* is the former's wholesale pessimism about the prospects for interracial male solidarity.[46] In *Souls,* Du Bois does not hesitate to offer his utopian vision in which black male intellectuals pursue the truth with white intellectuals like Shakespeare and Aristotle in a racially desegregated society. He is willing to romanticize the life of the Southern plantation in which a "noble" Negro and a white gentleman engage in intellectual exchange. Such an optimistic vision of the ideal interracial male bond allows Du Bois a discursive space in which to express his interracial heterosexual desire in *Souls*. In contrast, *Darkwater*, published in 1920 when African American people were still haunted by the traumatic memories of massive interracial violence such as the 1919 "Red Summer," does not present readers with any sanguine vision of cross-racial fraternity save the single-sentence statement in "Credo," which I addressed earlier. Black men's exclusion from the interracial homosocial bond led Du Bois to seek an alternative

[45] According to Roediger, "no body of thought rivals of W.E.B. Du Bois for an understanding of the dynamics, indeed dialectics, of race and class in the US" (*The Wages* 11-12).

[46] As discussed in the previous chapter, *Souls* pursues a homosocial bond between white and black male elites. In *Darkwater*, Du Bois rearticulates the desirable male bond as interracial working-class solidarity.

rhetorical platform that was free from the brutality of interracial violence. The interracial romances in *Darkwate*r, are thus portrayed in mythical spaces, namely, a legendary kingdom in "The Princess of the Hither Isles" and a version of New York City destroyed by the impact of a comet in "The Comet." In the following, I offer my reading of these two romances in conjunction with the other nonfiction essays in *Darkwater*, which aims to elucidate the way Du Bois reinforces the black man's patriarchal authority within black communities and normalizes his interracial heterosexuality.

White Women's Sexual Agency and Black Women's Political Agency

One of the ways Du Bois asserts the black man's right to control the black woman's sexuality, and through it her reproductive body, while simultaneously normalizing the black man's interracial heterosexuality in *Darkwater*, is to assign different agencies to the black woman and the white woman; while he allows the white woman both sexual agency and political agency, he allows the black woman only political agency. More specifically, Du Bois forecloses the possibility that the black woman can have a consensual sexual relationship with a white man, asserting her denial as a form of political agency that allies her with the black man; in contrast, Du Bois endows the white woman with political agency as well as sexual agency that she might exercise against white male supremacists. "The Princess of the Hither Isles," a romantic fable, illustrates this type of figuration as a strategy that ultimately legitimates black male interracial sexuality. The story also demonstrates how Du Bois displaces his vision of an interracial male bond onto an interracial heterosexual union in a mythical space to achieve his ends.

In this fable, the white king of "Yonder Kingdom," reveals his contempt for "Niggers and dagoes" who work in his gold mine (521). Here, Du Bois consciously couples these two

racial minorities. According to Roediger, in the early twentieth-century United States, Italian Americans were often associated with African Americans (*Working* 46). For instance, in some Southern educational systems, Italian immigrants were assigned for a time to African American schools. Louisiana's Italian American sugar workers were called "niggers" by their employers (*Working* 47). In his full-fledged novel, *Dark Princess* (1928), Du Bois shows his keen awareness of the cross-racialization of these two groups. Describing the experience of Matthew, the black protagonist of *Dark Princess*, with scullions, the author writes, "It was to Matthew an amazing situation — one he could not for the life of him comprehend. These men were at the bottom of life — scullions. They had no pride of work. Who could have pride in such work! But they despised themselves. God was in the first cabin, overeating, guzzling, gambling, sleeping. They despised what He despised. He despised Negroes. He despised Italians" (38). Black Americans and Italian Americans are described as occupying the lowest position in the social hierarchy. They are even discriminated against by other working classes like "scullions," who are able to form a homosocial bond with other white men, thus whitening themselves, by forsaking those darker bodies.

Interestingly enough, in "The Princess of the Hither Isles," the black beggar is still allowed an alternative partner with whom he can affiliate. Instead of presenting the alliance between "brown" and "darker" beggars that the white king "especially" "hate," Du Bois offers a provocative affiliation between the "black" male beggar and the white princess. The white princess resists the king's sexual advance and chooses an alliance with a black beggar by offering him her heart: "[S]he bared the white flowers of her breast and snatching forth her own red heart held it with one hand aloft while with the other she gathered close her robe and poised herself. The king of Yonder Kingdom looked upward quickly, curiously […] and saw the offer

of her bleeding heart" (523). This scene is the most erotic and politically radical one in *Darkwater*. First, the princess's "offer of her bleeding heart" is unequivocally sexual. The "red heart" she takes from "the white flowers of her breast" suggests her virginity, an offer that is accompanied by "bleeding," also commonly associated with lost virginity. This striking symbolism is further intensified because the white princess *initiates* this symbolic interracial sex. After witnessing the "blasphemy," that is, the white princess's symbolic sex with the black man, the furious king cuts off her "little, white, heart-holding hand" (523). In this regard, "The Princess of the Hither Isles" parodies the dominant lynching narrative. While in the normative lynching story, the righteous white men punish (in many cases castrate) a black rapist, in this fable the white king punishes the white woman for her consensual interracial (symbolic) sex with the black beggar. The myth of the black rapist, that is, the racist trope of the obsessive lust of the black man for the white woman, is thereby replaced by a story of a consensual interracial romance, which, the fable suggests, powerful white men fear the most. Also, the interracial heterosexual alliance reflects the history of the broken male bond between black workers and "new immigrants." By figuring the cross-gender affiliation rather than that between the "black" and "brown" beggars, Du Bois implicitly critiques the failed class consciousness on the part of "new immigrants," which was expressed in the 1917 race riot in East St. Louis.

In her anti-lynching polemic, *Southern Horrors* (1892), Ida B. Wells refutes the typical lynching scenario, but she does so by describing the white woman as a seductress who provokes the black man to have consensual sex with her. Through her extensive research on alleged rape cases, Wells discovered that white families frequently covered up consensual sexual relationships between black men and white women "with the rhetoric of rape" (*Photography* 130). Her reconfiguration of the lynching narrative had a strong influence on black writers,

including Du Bois.[47] Yet Du Bois's strategy to debunk the white lynching discourse in "The Princess of The Hither Isles" differs from that of Wells; the former offers the figure of a martyr and the latter presents the figure of a femme fatale, although both female figures willingly engage in sexual intercourse with black men. Just as he deconstructs the white lynching narrative through the black Christ discourse in *Souls*' "Of the Coming of John," so in "The Princess of The Hither Isles," Du Bois does undeniably explode the myth of the black rapist along with that of white seductress by affording the white princess sexual autonomy that marks her political allegiance. To put it another way, it is her acceptance of the black man as her sexual partner that sanctifies her status as a martyr. The white princess's sexual agency is also closely associated with her political agency. As Eric Sundquist points out, the white king is modeled on the notorious King Leopold of Belgium (59). Many contemporary readers thus read the story as an allegory of interracial political affiliation in which a black man and a white woman are united in front of a white male imperialist, rather than functioning simply as an example of heterosexual romance. In any case, it is evident that the white princess is endowed with both political agency and sexual agency. Yet it is also clear that Du Bois hails the white women in order to applaud the interracial romance that she embodies, rather than to critique her circumscription by white patriarchy. How, then, does Du Bois choose to present a black woman's political and sexual agency?

Chapter Seven of *Darkwater*, "The Damnation of Women," shows the way Du Bois gives the black woman political and sexual agency. In this piece, he deliberately distinguishes her political agency from her sexual agency, and attempts to foreclose the possibility that the black woman might have a positive, productive, and romantic relationship with a white man. In order to examine Du Bois's figuration of black women's agency, it is necessary to address his critique

[47] For the influence of Wells on Du Bois, see Joy James, 80-87.

of two dominant stereotypes of black women. Here is Du Bois's citation of Alexander Crummell's recollection of his sister:

> "In her girlhood all the delicate tenderness of her sex had been rudely outraged. In the field, in the rude cabin, in the press-room, in the factory she was thrown into the companionship of coarse and ignorant men. No chance was given her for delicate reserve or tender modesty. From her childhood she was the doomed victim of the grossest passion. All the virtues of her sex were utterly ignored. If the instinct of chastity asserted itself, then she had to fight like a tiger for the ownership and possession of her own person and ofttimes had to suffer pain and lacerations for the virtuous self-assertion. When she reached maturity, all the tender instincts of her womanhood were ruthlessly violated. At the age of marriage, — always prematurely anticipated under slavery — she was mated as the stock of the plantation were mated, not to be the companion of a loved and chosen husband, but to be the breeder of human cattle for the field or the auction block." (qtd. in *Darkwater* 568-569)[48]

The life of Crummell's sister epitomizes for Du Bois the way racism imposes its physical and discursive violence on the body of the black woman. Since her girlhood, Crummell's sister has been the victim of white men's sexual violence. In every area of life, her sexuality is exploited, and her "virtuous self-assertion" requires her "fight[ing] like a tiger" and "suffer[ing] pain and lacerations." Without any legal and discursive rights over her body, she is forced to marry for the purpose of maximizing the benefits of white slave owners. The hyper-exploitation of the female body, whether sexual or not, interacts with the racist discourses about the racialized black body.

The material exploitation of the black female body, which produces both "the doomed victim of the grossest passion" and "the breeder of human cattle," draws attention to two seemingly contradictory racist discourses about the black woman. The first one of these racist discourses is that black women are sexually available and promiscuous. This Jezebel myth,

[48] This passage reminds us of Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's brilliant explanation of black women's sexual exploitation under slavery: "the sexual exploitation of black women had been institutionalized under slavery. […] [T]he sexual access of white men to black women was a cornerstone of patriarchal power in the South. It was used as a punishment or demanded in exchange for leniency. […] And it served the practical economic purpose of replenishing the slave labor supply" ("The Mind" 332).

which describes a black woman as "a free-floating libido that threatened white domesticity and white male virtue" (Scruggs 155), is the opposite discourse of the ideal of Victorian womanhood. It erases black women's victimization by white men's "grossest passion" and justifies white sexual violence by suggesting that the promiscuous nature of the black woman desires such violation. Thanks to that racist discourse, white men's culpability was displaced by black women's criminality; the crime of rape was displaced by reciprocal sex at best, or black women's seduction at worst. To use Gunning's words, the black woman could never be raped because she was "the female equivalent of the black rapist" (10).

The second discourse is that black women are masculine workhorses and lack the characteristics of Victorian femininity, which, too, counters the ideal image of contemporary womanhood. Du Bois points out that black women are not women for white men because those men have "the devilish decree that no woman is a woman who is not by present standards a beautiful woman" (575). He adds that dominant white culture explains of black women that "Not being expected to be merely ornamental, they have girded themselves for work, instead of adorning their bodies" (575). As Carby points out, "[s]trength and ability to bear fatigue, argued to be so distasteful a presence in a white woman, were positive features to be emphasized in the promotion and selling of a black female field hand at a slave auction" (*Reconstructing Womanhood* 25). Black women are just "the breeder[s] of human cattle" (*Darkwater* 569). Even if they were forced to serve as heads of their households, the black women were "destined to become labeled black matriarchs" (*Reconstructing Womanhood* 39). Against this myth of Sapphire, Du Bois responds in two ways. First, he explains that black women "are asked to be no more beautiful than God made them, but they are asked to be efficient, to be strong, fertile, muscled, and able to work" (*Darkwater* 575). Racist social structures make it so that black males

cannot support their families because they are scantily paid or forced to move according to white labor demands. Also, black women themselves "covered up all public suggestions of sexuality, even sexual abuse," hoping that "a desexualized persona might provide the protection" to themselves from white men's sexual exploitation (Brown 144).[49] Secondly, by asking "What is beauty?" Du Bois questions the "present standards" of female beauty (575). This question begins his further exploration of black femininity and sexuality in Jim Crow America.

As a challenge to the denigrating stereotypes of African American women, Du Bois's notion of black femininity centers on an idealization of motherhood. He problematically describes racial differences in familial terms: "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" (566). Taking the risk of essentializing and perhaps feminizing Africa, Du Bois idealizes black motherhood, which is understandable, given "[t]he crushing weight of slavery [that] fell on black women" (567). In other words, working against the existent interplay between white sexual exploitation of black women and the negative discourse used to describe these women, he tries to *normalize* black womanhood by offering a positive discourse that comes out of his own very conscious idealization of black motherhood.[50] As a result, the Du Boisian ideal of black motherhood seems to be virtually identical to Victorian womanhood in that it emphasizes domesticity and fealty to patriarchal authority.

Du Bois offers another model of black womanhood, which also mirrors the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow. He mentions the "strong, primitive types of Negro womanhood" (572)

[49] The "desexualization" of black women was not merely a middle-class phenomenon. Many working-class black women resisted white men's sexualization of their bodies and forged their own notions of respectability as well (Brown 144).

[50] bell hooks's statement on the dominant perception of black female sexuality is worth quoting: "Undesirable in the conventional sense, which defines beauty and sexuality as desirable only to the extent that it is idealized and unattainable, the black female body gains attention only when it is synonymous with accessibility, availability, when it is sexually deviant" (65-66).

and suggests that these types are materialized in "Harriet Tubman" (571). He describes Tubman as nearly the figure of a war hero, one of the "two striking figures of war time" (571).[51] Harriet Tubman "was one of the most important agents of the Underground Railroad and a leader of fugitive slaves" (571). When the Civil War broke out, "she hastened to the front […] serving as […] spy. She followed Sherman in his great march to the sea and was with Grant at Petersburg, and always in the camps the Union officers silently saluted her" (571). In short, Du Bois accepts that Tubman was an important agent of the struggle for racial justice and even points out that male officers respected her. It is thus unconvincing to argue that Du Bois does not recognize black women's political agency.[52]

However, Du Bois's representation of the black woman's political agency remains somewhat problematic in that it denies her sexual autonomy, or as in the case of his description of Tubman's heroism, overlooks it altogether. Du Bois excludes any prospect of a positive, romantic, interracial union based on mutual understanding and desire between a white man and a black woman in his discussions of black womanhood. The only possible scenario he recognizes is enforced rape. Otherwise, he mobilizes the figure of the black prostitute for his discussion of black womanhood. Indeed, in "The Damnation of Women" in which he lauds Harriet Tubman's heroic contribution to abolition, Du Bois bifurcates a black female figure into debased prostitute and saintly Madonna when it comes to interracial intimacy: "It [slavery] has birthed the haunting prostitute, the brawler, and the beast of burden; but it has also given the world an efficient womanhood, whose strength lies in its freedom and whose chastity was won in the teeth of

[51] Another heroic figure is Sojourner Truth (571).

[52] For example, in his discussion of "The Damnation of Women," Joy James only focuses on Du Bois's idealization of black motherhood and overlooks his endorsement of Tubman's heroism and political agency (74).

temptation and not in prison and swaddling clothes" (569).[53] Clearly, "the haunting prostitute" does not belong to the type of black womanhood of which Du Bois approves. The "efficient womanhood," which is required to resist "temptation" by white men, is the only desirable choice that Du Bois offers for black women.[54]

Indeed, black men's control of black women's sexuality is central to the Du Boisian ideal of black femininity. His strong condemnation of white men's sexual violence enacted against black women comes from his own frustration over black males' loss of control of black female bodies: "I shall forgive its [the South's] slavery […].; but one thing I shall never forgive, neither in this world nor the world to come: its wanton and continued and persistent insulting of the black womanhood which it sought and seeks to prostitute its lust" (569). Black women's bodies prove the receptacles of white male lust in Du Bois's figuration, and only women strong enough to resist such sexual violence achieve the ideal of black womanhood: the "efficient womanhood." What must not be missed about Du Bois's rage over white men's sexual violence of black women is that Du Bois sees it as an interracial male transaction rather than a crime against women. To use Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's words, Du Bois seems to reduce sexual violence to "a means of communicating defeat to the men of a conquered tribe" ("The Mind" 333).

For Du Bois, the interracial sexual union of black women and white men is more horrible than slavery itself. That union, which he believes marginalizes black men, is the most

[53] Interestingly enough, Du Bois's bifurcation of black women resembles that of Southern planters. According to Catherine Clinton, Southern planters divided women into two classes, namely, ladies and whores. The former is always "white and chaste" and the latter comprises all black women and "white trash" who were said to sexually "associate" with black men (204).

[54] Referring to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Carby argues that Stowe bestowed the values of womanhood in Uncle Tom, a black male, because the dominant notion of black women's sexuality did not allow the white author to imagine a Victorian black femininity. Carby adds that "[m]easured against the sentimental heroines of domestic novels," the black woman failed "the test of true womanhood because she survived her institutionalized rape whereas the true heroine would rather die than be sexually abused" (*Reconstructing Womanhood* 34). Drawing on Carby's contention, I want to suggest that Du Bois's notion of "efficient womanhood" is predicated on the concept of white womanhood because he implicitly blames black women even when they are victims of white men's sexual harassment, as illustrated in *Souls*.

nightmarish scenario. Black female sexuality that evolves in its relation to white men thus needs to be neutralized. In his short story, "The Second Coming,"[55] the second part of *Darkwater*'s fourth chapter, the author fictionalizes the outcome of such undesirable interracial sexual intercourse as a form of "sterility," already glimpsed in *Souls*. In the story, three bishops receive a letter that suggests that Christ will be born soon in Valdosta. They travel to Valdosta, where they are drawn to a stable. There, a mulatto girl, who is the daughter of a white governor of Georgia and his black mistress, has given birth to a black baby. Most scholars argue that the birth of the black baby symbolizes the birth of a black Christ.[56] Yet the conclusion of the story clouds the message of redemption that the birth of the black Christ is supposed to deliver: A white mob comes to lynch the mulatto girl and her baby. Concluding his story, Du Bois deliberately juxtaposes the noise of the white mob's footsteps with the "wedding music" for the governor's other white daughter (537): the birth of a white child is the death of a black child. The descendent of the white man and the black woman, whose union denies the black man's control over the woman's sexual reproduction, is doomed to death.

"The Comet"

As discussed throughout this chapter, in *Darkwater*, we do not see even the slightest possibility of an interracial male bond, whereas we do see the possibility of interracial heterosexual romance that includes a black man in the fantastic space imagined in "The Princess of the Hither Isles." After pointing to the ethical necessity of an interracial homosocial union in "Credo" in a single fleeting sentence, Du Bois avoids addressing the issue and even fails to imagine such a union in "The Princess of the Hither Isles" and his other mythological tales. This

[55] For the connection between the story and a real lynching case in Valdosta, see Kuhl, 174.

[56] For example, see Kuhl, 173-174.

asymmetrical representation of interracial homosocial and heterosexual union is repeated in the last chapter of *Darkwater*, titled "The Comet." This fictional piece continues the typical pattern of *Darkwate*r in which a black man's heterosexual desire can be realized only in unrealistic spaces, and even then, white men deter that interracial romance with brutal violence.

"The Comet" is a science fiction story about the destruction of New York City by the deadly gases from the impact of a comet. In the story, a black man named Jim, survives the natural disaster, because when the comet hits Earth, he is looking for missing documents in the underground vaults of a bank for which he works as a messenger (611). Searching for his family in Harlem afterwards, he discovers Julia, a white woman photographer, who also survived while in her darkroom developing pictures of the comet (614). With "no human sign," she is inclined to depend on him to help search for her own family: "'What can we do?' she cried. It was his turn now to take the lead, and he did it quickly. 'The long distance telephone — the telegraph and the cable — night rockets and then — flight!' She looked at him now with strength and confidence. *He did not look like men*, as she had always pictured men; but *he acted like one* and she was content" (616; emphasis added). In the midst of the natural disaster, the white woman begins to sense and appreciate Jim's manhood. Although Jim's black skin still impedes her from fully accepting his manhood ("He did not look like men"), his proactive behavior gives Julia the sense that even the black man can possess traits associated with traditional masculinity. However, she is not yet wholly prepared to recognize Jim's manhood. For Julia, Jim just "acted like" men. Her hesitance to recognize Jim's manhood through romantic intimacy does not emerge from the feminized figure that pervades "The Prayers of God." Rather, it comes from the racist discourse of the black rapist that she has internalized: "For the first time she seemed to realize that she was alone in the world with a stranger, with something more than a stranger […]. It was awful! She

must escape –she must fly; he must not see her again" (617).

Yet, the more time she spends with Jim, the more she recognizes him as a man, not just an imitator of men. In her father's office in the Metropolitan Tower, she again recognizes Jim's manhood: "She looked at him. 'And your people were not my people,' she said; 'but today —' she paused. He was a man — no more; but he was in some larger sense a gentleman, — sensitive, kindly, chivalrous, everything save his hands and — his face" (619). What we need to note about Julia's newly won perception of Jim is her comment on Jim's skin color ("everything save his hands and — his face"). Recognizing Jim's noble characteristics such as sensitivity, kindness, and chivalry, she also acknowledges that his skin color has been the obstacle preventing him from being recognized as a "gentleman." She displays an epistemological turn to see through the fiction of the racialized view of black men. To echo Marriott's words, Julia's statement is a critique of the racial schema which sustains black men as "excessively overpresent and, at the same time, socially invisible" (ix).

It is noticeable that Julia is the photographer. As Shawn Smith demonstrates, the development of photography technology helped American white supremacists reinforce racial boundaries in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century "in a time when racial categories were largely in flux, when whiteness and blackness were being defined and differentiated in courts," as seen in the 1896 *Plessy* v. Ferguson case (*Photography* 140). In this cultural context, lynching photographs served to fix the fluid racial boundaries by vividly illustrating the allegedly savage black people. The mass media spread the imagery of "rope and faggot" far beyond the region in which each lynching took place ("The Mind" 330). The mass reproduction and mass circulation of lynching photographs functioned as "sites of white

supremacist identification," extending the borders of Southern lynchings (*Photography* 121).[57] Also, the circulation of spectacular violence worked as an effective means of "discipline and punishment" against black people. According to Chow, modern media technology contributes "subjection" of individuals by power: "Rather than punish the body, such subjection specializes in reforming the heart and the mind" (*Primitive Passions* 17). Drawing on Foucault's book, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), Chow asserts that modern technology provided powerful people with a more comprehensive and effective means to control and dominate their subjects. In a similar vein, addressing the destructive psychological effect of lynching photographs on African American people, Marriott describes an imagined black man's response to the spectacular image: "The lesson will stay with you: blackness afflicted, mutilated, a fatal way of being alive. You might end up wishing you were white" (15).[58] After all, lynching was "an instrument of coercion intended to impress not only the immediate victim but all who saw and heard about the event" ("The Mind" 330).

Given the role of photographs in racializing and circulating lynching's violence, Du Bois's portrayal of Julia as a photographer is significant. By endowing his white heroine with the occupation of photography, which played a crucial role in the ritual of the brutal racial violence, Du Bois amplifies the progressive implications of her awakening to Jim's manhood and status as a "gentleman." Indeed, she excoriates racial segregation in a plain manner: "how foolish our human distinctions seem" (619). At this point, Du Bois drapes Jim in the image of the black

[57] For the detailed study of Du Bois as a visual theorist of race and racism, see S. Smith's book, *Photography on the Color Line: W.E. B. Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture* (2004).

[58] The circulation of the spectacular violence in lynching photographs worked for African American people as "catalysts for antiracist action" as well (*Photography* 120-21). Also, just as lynching photographs had disparate impact on black people, so the image of brutal violence had contradictory effects on white people. The brutal images, supposed to reinforce whiteness and black savagery, provoked white people to face "white savagery," with the images of "white people taking pleasure in torturing, mutilating, and burning" (*Photography* 128). In Grace Elizabeth Hale's words, in representations of lynching, "[w]hiteness and blackness merged and civilization became savagery to defeat savages" (230).

Christ, who would redeem the racially segregated America through his sacrifice: "She looked upon the man beside her and forgot all else but his manhood, his strong, vigorous manhood — his sorrow and sacrifice" (619). The white woman sees "his strong, vigorous manhood," as emerging from "his sorrow and sacrifice." If she originally denies him masculinity and thus the privileges that come with it because of the image of the hypervirile black rapist, she now accepts his manhood because of her association of him with martyrdom, the black Christ figure that pervades the Du Boisian martyr tales like "The Prayers of God." In other words, the dominant lynching discourse, which is supposed to deny black manhood, has its own tension and contradictions, which ironically re-constructs legitimate black manhood in religious terms. The white woman's recognition of Jim's sacrifice counters the fear of unrestrained, violent lust that she has internalized, thus allowing her to see Jim as a man who brings with him the promise of salvation, a Christ-like figure who achieves masculinity through his martyrdom. It is also necessary to highlight that Jim's racial equality depends on the white woman's acceptance of him as a *normal* man: "'Yes — I was not — human, yesterday,' he said. She looked at him. 'And your people were not my people,' she said; 'but today—' She paused. He was a man — no more" (619). Again, for Du Bois, one of the most destructive effects of racism is to deny black men the prerogatives that ought to be theirs as male members of a patriarchal community. Thus, in the symbolic story about interracial integration, the white woman's full recognition of Jim as a man — a plausible sexual partner — is required. For Du Bois, the heterosexual union of a black man and a white woman is an ideological yardstick by which to measure racial justice.

However, the alternative type of black manhood codified in the character of Jim is possible only after an overwhelming natural disaster, which destroys Jim Crowed New York City. The interracial couple recognizes the temporary and fragile nature of their romance, initiated by

the woman's acceptance of Jim's manhood: "'Death, the leveler!' he muttered. 'And the revealer,' she whispered gently" (619). Let us here consider Walter Michaels's reading of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925). According to Michaels, in the novel, Jay Gatsby is not quite white in that he is not Anglo-Saxon (25). Yet Daisy Buchanan can temporarily forget that Gatsby is actually Jimmy Gatz, because of the confusion of World War I (27). Unlike the African American in the 1920s, Gatsby can racially pass even in the age of nativism, thanks to the chaos of the war. Du Bois's fictional rendering of the interracial romance in the imaginary space in "The Comet" suggests that even the wartime chaos in history does not allow a black writer enough discursive space to attain the social legitimacy and privilege of the white man; only the fantastical space imagined in literature affords the black writer the opportunity to express his interracial heterosexual desire.

However, "The Comet" suggests that interracial romance cannot be consummated even in the *unrealistic* space; the arrival of other white survivors prevents the consummation of their relationship. When the couple "moved toward each other" for their ultimate consummation, a white crowd including the woman's father, who is a Northern banker, and fiancé find the couple (620). The white crowd automatically regards Jim as a black rapist:

> The crowd poured up and out of the elevators, talking and whispering.
> "Who was it?"
> "Are they alive?"
> "How many?"
> "Two!"
> "Who was saved?"
> "A white girl and a nigger – there she goes."
> "A nigger? Where is he? Let's lynch the damned—"
> "Shut up-he's all right-he saved her."
> "Saved hell! He had no business—"
> "Here he comes."
> Into the glare of the electric lights the colored man moved slowly, with the eyes of those that walk and sleep.

> "Well, what do you think of that?" cried a bystander; "of all New York, just a white girl and a nigger!" (621)

In the conversation that takes place among the white mob, no one considers that the required act of rape—forced sex—is missing. The issue of force vs. consent goes beyond their epistemological boundary. These white people, under the episteme of Jim Crow, meet and perceive Jim through the lens of pre-established narratives such as the black rapist myth in the dominant white lynching discourse; the threat of rape invoked by Jim's very presence is enough that the presence or absence of the act itself ceases to matter.[59] He is "guilty of being black" (530). To borrow Wiegman's words, "the crime of blackness" "precedes and ensures the crime of rape" (104). Another point we need to note about the scene in "The Comet" is that before the alleged black rapist, the white crowd comes to be united across class as the supposed protector of white womanhood. Whiteness in "The Comet" is reasserted through racial violence.[60] Class divisions are erased for the sake of fatally scapegoating a black man. Just as whiteness was "a way to mediate the fragmentation of modernity" in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (Hale 8), so it serves to reestablish its cultural hegemony and authority even in the post-apocalyptic space in "The Comet."

Jim is not the only victim who is subject to lynching's physical and symbolic violence. The conversation between Julia and her white fiancé, Fred, shows that lynching would reassert

[59] The second part of *Darkwater*'s fifth chapter explores a similar issue; this short story, titled, "Jesus Christ in Texas," demonstrates that under the regime of Jim Crow, interracial transactions are predicated on certain pre-established notions such as those tropes of the lynching narrative. In the story, when a white farmer sees a black convict accidently run into his wife, he calls the mob, saying that "He-attacked-my wife" (549). The "attack" that the farmer utters means rape. His gaze, pre-determined by racism, sees the accident as rape. The absence of sex and assault in this scene does not affect the white community's articulation of this interracial encounter.

[60] According to Gunning, soon after Reconstruction, "the stereotype of the black male as sexual beast functioned as an externalized symbol of social chaos against which all whites, regardless of class, could begin to unite for the purpose of national renewal" for white supremacists (6). "The Comet" implies that the white supremacists continued to employ that strategy in the early twentieth century.

white men's control over the white female body:

> "[H]ow have you endured this horror? Are you well? Unharmed?"
> "Unharmed!" she said.
> "And this man here?" he asked, encircling her drooping form with one arm and turning toward the Negro. Suddenly he stiffened and his hand flew to his hip "Why!" he snarled. "It's —a—nigger—Julia! Has he—has he dared—"
> She lifted her head and looked at her late companion curiously and then dropped her eyes with a sigh.
> "He has dared—all, to rescue me," she said quietly, "and I—thank him—much." But she did not look at him again. (621)

Fred's tone in asking how Julia could survive the deadly impact of the comet is unambiguously accusatory. Rather than being relieved by Julia's survival, the white man is enraged at the fact that the "nigger" has been with his fiancé. Fred's anger demonstrates that the dominant lynching narrative stems from white men's wish to bear witness to white women's vehement rejection of romantic (sexual) advances from black men**;** his anger is a reflection of his frustration over the collapse of the white male fantasy, that is, "the comforting fiction that at least in relation to black men, white women were always objects and never agents of sexual desire," in Hall's words ("The Mind" 337).[61] That figuration made "sex between a black man and a white woman by definition rape" (Hodes 202).[62] Consequently, the white male fantasy is in part "a response to the idea of white female lust, especially with regard to miscegenation" (Gunning 27). Meanwhile, Julia's answer to Fred's question is unequivocally defensive. Even the white woman's attempt to verbalize her gratitude for the black man's heroism is repressed, as seen in her hesitant attitude ("'He has dared—all, to rescue me,' she said quietly, 'and I—thank him—much'"). Julia's dread

[61] Robyn Wiegman brilliantly explains the role of the black rapist narrative for white male supremacists: "the mythology of the black male rapist simultaneously engineered race and gender hierarchies, masking the white male's own historical participation in 'miscegenating' sexual activities, while ensuring his disciplinary control over potential sexual – and one might add, political – liaisons between black men and white women" (97).

[62] In the lynching discourse, rape could be defined broadly; "an insult," "a grimace," "an unwanted glance," "an accidental touch," "proposing marriage," and "writing a letter" all could count as rape (Hodes 203).

stems from what she knows would be the more violent reaction of his fiancé if her interracial liaison with Jim is suspected. Indeed, following the arrival of the white mob, Julia "did not look at him [Jim] again" (621). The white woman, who had been with the black man, was supposed to be ruined in the racialized imagination of the white men including his fiancé. To use Hall's words, the ruined white woman "would pay with a lifetime to subjugation to the men who gathered in her behalf" ("The Mind" 335). Lynching not only terrorized black men, but it also subordinated white women (Hodes 200; "The Mind" 336).

White women's voluntary engagement in interracial sexual relationships — an act of both sexual and political agency — proves crucial to the narrative of *Darkwater*. By engaging in such relationships voluntarily, such women might distinguish themselves from white men who have expelled black men from their communities by denying them homosocial interracial bonds. However, in the concluding chapter of *Darkwater*, Du Bois could not sustain that desire anymore for a successful and productive interracial heterosexual union. In the cultural and ideological soil of the 1920 United States, which witnessed ongoing massive brutal interracial violence and hostility victimizing not only black men but also white women, Du Bois's literary imagination is limited by cultural reality even in imaginary spaces such as post-apocalyptic New York destroyed by a natural disaster.

Chapter Three

Performing a White Man's Mulatto Body: Miscegenation, Homosexuality, and the Mixed-Race Body in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*

Recent scholarship on James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (1912) has focused on the representation of its protagonist's sexuality. Cheryl Clarke asserts that the novel is a pioneer of black modernism for its exploration of "modernist concepts of sexuality" (85). Highlighting the novel's portrayal of the transgression of white supremacist heteronormative codes, she explores how this work of black modernism engages in contemporary cultural discourses in which the mulatto subject is registered in terms of gender inversion and sexual perversity (93). Especially, Clarke pays attention to how Ex-Coloured Man's homosexual relationships provide him with agency and subjectivity (86). Yet Clarke concludes that the subversive ideological implications of Ex-Coloured Man's non-heteronormativity are ultimately constrained by the cultural logic of Jim Crow, evidenced in the novel's plot in which all of Ex-Coloured Man's homoerotic romances and desire are disrupted and aborted (86). The reading that I will offer of Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* in this chapter seeks to trouble Clarke's assertion as well as those of other critics who assert that Johnson's text uncritically makes use of traditional racist discourse, thus endorsing rather than disrupting it.

Scholars who focus on the racist discourse inherent in Johnson's novel begin with an analysis of the figure of the mulatto. Siobhan B. Somerville notes that with the influx of large populations of immigrants in the early twentieth-century United States, the eugenics movement

offered white nativists a scientific basis for their racist ideology, which often took the form of anti-miscegenation sentiment (30). The figure of the "mulatto," according to Somerville, was one of the main subjects on which eugenist efforts focused, deploying this figure as a means of buttressing anti-miscegenation sentiment and furthering such ideology (31). Somerville contends that in eugenics discourse, the mulatto figure was often seen as analogous to a sexual pervert, namely, a homosexual figure (80). She goes on to argue that the two tabooed desires — interracial and homosexual — were pathologized through the model of "'abnormal' sexual object choice" (34). Somerville in that regard reads *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* as a literary reflection of eugenics discourse, suggesting that homoerotic relationships between the mixed-race protagonist and other white male characters in the novel are depicted and treated by the text as a pathology. According to Somerville's interpretation, Johnson's novel conforms to the logic of dominant white discourse in which homosexual and interracial sexuality are tabooed and stigmatized. Somerville thus asserts that *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* "participated in constructing homosexuality, along with interracial sexuality, as deviant sexual object choice and the 'hybrid' mulatto as a figure of gender inversion" (125).

Similarly to Somerville, Phillip Brian Harper maintains that in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, Johnson draws on the convention of the tragic mulatta — a female of mixed-race origins — in characterizing its protagonist's racial and gender identity. According to Harper, in fictions of the mulatta figure, "mixed-race identity," "femininity," "illicit sexuality", and "tragic fate" are closely interrelated (108). Highlighting the mulatta protagonist's stereotypical femininity, he claims that in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* the "feminized orientation itself potentially constitutes the protagonist's personal tragedy, indicating a gender identity that is anything but properly masculine, and verging dangerously on a sexual identity

that is anything but hetero" (110). Harper concludes that the novel mirrors "a *conservative* gender politics" wherein the mixed-race body, more precisely, the mixed-race male subject, is feminized and thus pathologized as both a racial and sexual deviant (112-13; emphasis added).

Taken together, all three critics by and large imply that *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* serves to reinforce or to re-inscribe the dominant cultural ideology of Jim Crow. Harper and Somerville contend that Johnson's portrayal of his mulatto protagonist as a homosexual subject reflects a racial ideology in which a biracial subject was regarded as a sexual pervert. Building on Harper's and Somerville's contentions, H. Jordan Landry maintains that Johnson "images the unnamed narrator as modeling himself after his mother [a light-skinned concubine] and replicating her choices" (30). In other words, Landry argues, Johnson "blames" his narrator's homosexuality on his mulatta mother's "love of whiteness coded as sexual prostitution" (30). Landry goes on to assert that Johnson "connects the mulatto character's sexual deviance with race betrayal and, further, with the devolution or complete annihilation of black male masculinity" (30). In this reading, Johnson reifies the Du Boisian sexual politics that stigmatizes black women's interracial heterosexuality, which I examined in the previous chapters. Although Clarke admits that the plot of homosexual eroticism in Johnson's novel contradicts white racist patriarchal and heterosexual codes, she concludes that such a subversive narrative is ultimately disrupted by racist and patriarchal violence like lynching. Whether intentionally or not, Clarke, Somerville, and Harper read *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* as a somewhat "conservative" text in which the protagonist's deviation from normative racial identity or heterosexuality prefigures his tragic fate.

Against those critical assessments of Johnson's novel as a *male* version of the tragic mulatta narrative, this chapter argues that *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* challenges

the cultural politics of racial segregation that racializes and sexualizes a light-skinned black male subject. In doing so, I examine Johnson's rhetorical strategy through which, I suggest, his narrative actually troubles the racist fantasy that pathologizes the protagonist's biracial origins and sexuality. Specifically, I explore Johnson's appropriation and strategic deployment of racist stereotypes associated with a mixed-race man, arguing that Johnson's use of racist discourses criticizes rather than reifies the "conservative" politics that critics generally identify in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. Before offering my reading of the novel, I will first explore Johnson's perspective on racist stereotypes and on interracial heterosexuality, expressed in his essays, and his autobiography, *Along This Way* (1933). This discussion lays the foundation for my argument that Johnson's novel actually disrupts the conventional race-gender politics wherein homosexual and interracial sexuality are portrayed as deviant and pathological desires.

Johnson on Racial Stereotypes and "Deviant" Desires

Johnson's interest in racist stereotypes remained constant and intense throughout his life. In his 1928 essay, "Dilemma of the Negro Author," Johnson expresses his anxiety over white stereotypes of black people. As "a segregated and antagonized minority," according to Johnson, the "faults and failings" of African Americans are exploited to produce "exaggerated effects" by white supremacists and negative images of black people are (re)produced and circulated in Jim Crow America (749). In another 1928 essay, "Race Prejudice and the Negro Art," Johnson states that "the great majority of Americans have not thought about the Negro at all, except in a vague sort of way and in the form of traditional and erroneous stereotypes" (764). He declares that the task of black artists is to challenge such an "immemorial stereotype" (764) and "the Nordic superiority complex" (765). As the scholar Eugene Levy indicates, even as a songwriter, Johnson

sought to avoid the obnoxious racial stereotypes of the coon song. He wanted to bring black music into conformity with conventional white musical standards (93).[63]

Johnson's major political and literary concerns centered on the stereotypes associated with black males, which were directly related to one of the most urgent issues for his black contemporaries: lynching. As Jacqueline Goldsby notes, "the most striking feature" about Johnson's literary works is "how frequently lynching occurs, almost as if Johnson could not write without depicting or at least mentioning the violence" (167). Johnson himself barely escaped lynching by a squad of National Guardsmen in Jacksonville in 1901, because he was observed meeting a light-skinned black woman, who was assumed white by his white aggressors.[64] He led the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's anti-lynching campaign for fifteen years and struggled to outlaw lynching by organizing support for the anti-lynching bill introduced by Congressman L.C. Dyer in 1918.[65] With the political efforts he put forth as the leading member of the NAACP's anti-lynching campaign, Johnson made discursive efforts to dismantle the black rapist myth. In his autobiography, immediately after giving the account of his personal experience with lynching in 1901, Johnson writes,

> Through it all I discerned one clear and certain truth: in the core of the heart of the American race problem the sex factor is rooted; rooted so deeply that it is not always recognized when it shows at the surface. […] [T]he race situation will continue to be acute as long as the sex factor persists. Taken alone, it furnishes a sufficient mainspring for the rationalization of all the complexes of white racial superiority. […] I do know that it is strong and bitter; and its strength and bitterness are magnified and intensified by the white man's perception, more or less, of the Negro complex of sexual superiority. (*Along This Way* 318)

[63] For a detailed account of Johnson's critical perspective on the coon song, see Levy 81-94.

[64] For Johnson's account of the accident, see *Along This Way* 313-18.

[65] For Johnson's anti-lynching activities, see *Along This Way* 481-515 and 535-51.

Three points immediately come to the fore. First, Johnson recognizes that race and sex are imbricated in racial discourses of the early twentieth-century United States. By mentioning that "the core of the heart" of racism is "the sex factor," he makes clear that discussion of black sexuality is crucial to elucidate the issue of racial segregation. Second, he contends that white supremacy is predicated upon the presumed incivility of black *male* sexuality. As I noted in Chapter One, in contemporary lynching discourse and the black rapist myth, a white man represents manly civilization whereas a black man embodies unmanly savagery. The black male body represents unbridled eroticism and illicit sexuality in that racist narrative. In this sexualized and racialized narrative that fabricates charges of rape, the white man establishes his racial superiority over the black man, which Johnson addresses above. Third, Johnson suggests that white men's discursive strategy to demonize the black male sexuality reflects their very anxiety over black men's masculinity and sexuality. As Gail Bederman argues, in the popular imagination of the early twentieth-century United States, the black male body is not only feared, but also desired, because, in the midst of radical modernization, the primitive masculinity associated with the black body was sometimes considered a desirable masculine trait (49).[66] Johnson notes this point and argues that the stereotype of the black rapist stems from the white man's ambivalent attitude toward the black man's masculinity, specifically apparent in his reaction to black male sexuality. Put it differently, Johnson detects the subtext of the white man's anxiety and frustration over the black man's body in the dominant lynching discourse. In this way, Johnson's above passage questions the black rapist myth and excoriates racial violence enacted on black men.

When scholars like Robert B. Stepto call *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* "a

[66] In a similar vein, Hazel Carby points out that the black body was regarded as "tropes of utopian possibility" (*Race Man* 47).

modern Afro-American novel," they assume that the novel breaks from nineteenth-century African American literary traditions. Johnson's use of the first-person narrator, of nuanced descriptions to relate the narrator-protagonist's psychology, and of irony to allow the unreliable narrator to reveal more than he intends, set it apart from other nineteenth-century African American literature. Those literary traits also distinguish Johnson's text from its contemporaries that relied on the conventions of plantation pastoral, depicting black people in the guise of such archetypes as "Zip Coon, Sambo, Uncle Tom, Jim Crow, and Mammy Jane" (Morgan 213).

Thomas Morgan's discussion of "urban blackness" is instructive in understanding the modernist nature of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. Exploring Southern pastoral representations of black Americans by post-Reconstruction authors, Morgan states that black people in the popular imaginations of the late nineteenth-century were presented "as out of place in any location apart from their rural country homes, unable to deal with the complexities of normal [urban] life and requiring the help of their former masters to survive" (213). In contrast, in his reading of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, Morgan examines how Ex-Coloured Man's racial self-fashioning and complicated psychology are connected to the Northern urban environment (222). Morgan asserts that the city in Johnson's fiction serves as an alternative space for "theorizing black [modern] subjectivity" (214), adding that Ex-Coloured Man's subject formation in the city "is predicated upon the narrator's ability to pass" (222). In Morgan's view, the anonymity of the city provides Ex-Coloured Man with an ontological space to establish his subjectivity.[67] It is the "urban blackness" that provides Johnson's protagonist with a modern subjectivity.

Morgan's point is that the urban setting of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*

[67] Werner Sollors points out that urban anonymity permitted mixed-race people in the early twentieth-century United States to resort to "imaginative role-playing in their self-representation" (*Neither Black nor White yet Both* 248).

affords Johnson's mulatto protagonist a modern subjectivity and that such characterization distinguishes the novel from other plantation stories. Yet Johnson voices his critical view of the role of modernity in (re)producing and propagating racial stereotypes as well: he offers an insight into how urbanization and modern technology can exacerbate, rather than ameliorate, racist stereotypes. In his recollection of teaching black people as an Atlanta University freshman in "the backwoods of Georgia," Johnson states,[68]

> To Negroes themselves, before whom "white" ideals have so long been held up, the recognition of the beauty of Negro women is so often a remote idea. Being shut up in the backwoods of Georgia forced a comparison upon me, and a realization that there, at least, the Negro woman, with her rich coloring, her gayety, her laughter and song, her alluring, undulating movements — a heritage from the African jungle — was a more beautiful creature than her sallow, songless, lipless, hipless, tired-looking, tired-moving white sister. (*Along This Way* 268)

Johnson remarks that his experience in the rural area helps him to get over his sexual preference for white women; Johnson's renewed interest in black women contrasts with that of his urban black brethren for whom "the beauty of Negro women is so often a remote idea." It is, of course undeniable that, emphasizing his new recognition of a black woman's beauty, Johnson reveals his own stereotypical view of the urban white woman. What I want to stress here is Johnson's insight into the relationship between urban culture (modernity) and racial stereotypes: he holds that urban culture is responsible for black men's prejudice against black women as sexually desirable subjects because modern mass media culture universalizes white beauty as the standard.[69]

---

[68] Johnson thought that his birthplace, Jacksonville, "had a metropolitan air" (*Along This Way* 250). He always deemed himself cosmopolite and urban.

[69] More than four decades later, Charles Hebert Stember makes a similar point in his now classic, *Sexual Racism* (1976), arguing that urbanization, modernized mass media, and the invention of movies facilitated the universalization of white female beauty (121). Contemporary feminist scholars continue to investigate the now globalization of this white idea. See, for example, Jemima Pierre's "'I Like Your Color!' Skin Bleaching and

Johnson's critique of modernity concerning racial stereotypes is further illustrated in his examination of modernized print technology and its contribution to promulgating white stereotypes of black people. For example, when the Stanton School in Jacksonville for which he served as principal burned down in 1901, he attempted to persuade a group of black people not to pose for some white photographers, who were taking fake pictures of looting, because he worried that the pictures might be taken for use in periodicals throughout the country (*Along This Way 313*). In such a chaotic situation, he still worried that images of African Americans would be distorted and circulated by the white media. Also, in his essay, "Dilemma of the Negro Author" (1928), Johnson remarks that African Americans would be willing to listen to "criticism of themselves," if those criticisms were not for the "printed page" (749). Johnson here suggests that black people's anxiety over intra-racial criticisms stems from the prospect that their stereotypes might be (re)produced and spread quickly by print technology.[70] He had a keen interest in the way modernity exacerbated white stereotypes of black people.[71]

The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man explores the theme of passing (whether racial or sexual) that occurs in metropolitan cities like New York and Paris. Harper and Somerville criticize Johnson for his *stereotypical* portrayal of the mulatto subject's sexuality; however, Johnson offers in his own autobiography and essays the powerful critique of white people's racialized perceptions of black male sexuality and their exacerbation of these racial stereotypes through their deployment in modern popular media. Thus, I assert in contrast to Harper and Somerville that we need to reconsider whether or not Johnson's problematic

---

Geographies of Race in Urban Ghana" (2008) and "Skin Lightening and Beauty in Four Asian Cultures" (2008) by Eric P.H. Li and Hyun Jeong Min et al.

[70] Rey Chow makes a similar point. She observes that "a process of mechanical reproduction by means of technology" has a strong impact on the way a group of people perceives another group of people (*The Protestant Ethnic* 53).

[71] Johnson thus claimed that black writers could not yet represent their race in negative terms (T. Davis 247).

portrayal of Ex-Coloured Man's sexuality in his novel mirrors or undercuts the "conservative gender politics" that Harper identifies in the novel. I will return to this topic in the last section of this chapter.

Johnson on Interracial Sexuality

As the descendant of a mulatto grandfather,[72] Johnson held that the NAACP should promote interracial cooperation. His political goal was "to use racial solidarity as a means to full integration" (Levy 230). He rejected Marcus Garvey's "back to Africa" project (*Along This Way* 358) and resented Garvey's "effort to drive a wedge between the blacks and the mixed bloods" (*Black Manhattan* 257). His openness to black and white interracialism is well illustrated in his cross-racial identification when he was seventeen with a white physician, Thomas Osmond Summers. Johnson worked as a receptionist for Summers and admired his intellectualism and cosmopolitanism (*Along This Way* 238). The young Johnson recalls Summers as a father figure: "I had made him my model of all that a man and a gentleman should be" (*Along This Way* 241). He does not hesitate to figure the white physician as his ideal model of manhood, which suggests that he was still and had been a solid advocate of interracial bonding since his youth, even before he publicly promoted interracial cooperation within the NAACP.[73]

What, then, is Johnson's stance on interracial *heterosexuality*? First of all, we need to note that in 1923, Johnson was unhesitant to oppose legal regulation of interracial marriage. Against a Kansas Republican senator's attempt to introduce a national marriage bill including a provision to ban interracial marriage, Johnson wired the senator in protest of that provision and

[72] The father of Johnson's grandfather was a white French army officer in Haiti in the 1800s (*Along This Way* 135).

[73] Quite interestingly, Johnson had a negative view of other ethnic groups. His "strain of nativism," according to Levy, was "a useful tool to gain his ends," that is, racial integration of black and white (157).

succeeded in removing it from the bill (Levy 234). Also, in the recollection of his first trip to Paris in 1905, Johnson writes that "[f]rom the day I set foot in France, […] I recaptured for the first time since childhood the sense of being just a human being. […] I was suddenly free […] a multitude of bans and *taboos* […] *free to be merely a man*" (*Along This Way* 361; emphasis added). Just one paragraph after the highly laudatory comments about France, Johnson mentions an episode in which he enjoys a party with four white girls. He recollects that the white girls chatted with him "gayly" and that the interracial gathering became a pattern of life in France: "All the while we were in Paris, we generally ended up each evening at Olympia; and, generally, this same group of girls joined us at our table" (363). Compared to his traumatic experience with lynching in Jacksonville when he was nearly beaten to death because he was spotted meeting with a light-skinned woman, this episode in Paris proves deeply meaningful to Johnson's sense of masculinity. His "free[dom] to be merely a man" is closely related to engaging romantically with white women, an association reminiscent of Du Bois's concept of black manhood.[74]

Johnson's comments on "social equality" remind us of those of Du Bois, which I discussed in Chapter One. In his autobiography, *Along This Way*, Johnson argues that the taboo about "social equality" facilitates white men's sexual exploitation of black women and their control of white women's sexuality: "'Social equality' signifies a series of far-flung barriers against amalgamation of the two races; except so far as it may come about by white men with colored women" (*Along This Way* 477). Here, reminiscent of Du Bois's acrimonious portrayal of the miscegenation taboo as "an open bribe to amalgamation" that I examined in Chapter One, Johnson explicitly blames white men's hypocrisy for black men's lack of "social equality," which

[74] Johnson's reaction to France was typical of African Americans visiting that country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Levy 95). Until the Great War, the myth of racially integrated France and its hospitality to black people prevailed mainly among African American elites (Fabre 2). For further view of the fascination that France and Paris had long held for African American intellectuals, see Michel Fabre's *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840-1980* (1993).

we might also address as sexual access to white women. The cultural taboo about "amalgamation," Johnson adds, mirrors white men's guilt over their miscegenation. In his 1910 private notebook, Johnson notes about how white men "have a well known fondness for dark women, and a luring fear that their daughters and sisters may have a corresponding taste" (qtd. in Levy 140). Johnson's excoriation of white men's sexual fantasy about black women helps us understand the ideological role of the stereotype of the black rapist. As Gunning explains, "the myth of black rape becomes the mirrored image of the literal white rape of black women" (13).[75] Thus, the black rapist myth serves to detract attention from "white men's dual horror and excitement over their own acts of race betrayal," namely, miscegenation (Gunning 27).

Important to note, however, is that, unlike Du Bois, Johnson neither faults nor villainizes the black woman for having sexual engagements with the white man. In the first chapter of this dissertation, I demonstrated that Du Bois stigmatizes the black woman in her sexual relationship with the white man whether the former is the victim of the latter's sexual exploitation or they have consensual and romantic relationship. In contrast, Johnson advocates interracial sexual union when reciprocal, regardless of the race of the parties involved: "There should be nothing in law or public opinion to prohibit persons who find that they have congenial tastes and kindred interests in life from associating with each other, if they mutually desire to do so" (*Along This Way* 476). In concluding his autobiography, he again gives primacy to interracial heterosexual union as the means of achieving "social equality," criticizing rather than promulgating the conservative views associated with the contemporary racial discourse:

> Often I am asked if I think the Negro will remain a racial entity or merge; and if

[75] Johnson here is echoing Nannie Burroughs's mockery of the hypocrisy of white men. In 1905, the civil rights activist remarked: "The same man who will join a mob to lynch a Negro for committing an outage upon a white woman will outrage a black and white woman any time he makes up his mind so to do" (qtd. in Hodes 198).

> I am in favor of amalgamation. I answer that, if I could have my wish, the Negro would retain his racial identity, with unhampered freedom to develop his own qualities — the best of those qualities American civilization is much in need of as a complement to its other qualities […]. But what I may wish […] can have no effect on the elemental forces at work; and it appears to me that the result of those forces will, in time, be the blending of the Negro into the American race of the future. […] [T]he Negro […] will add a tint to America's complexion and put a perceptible permanent wave in America's hair. (595-96)

At first glance, this passage might seem to say that Johnson opposes "amalgamation" and advocates racial purity. Yet he makes it clear that amalgamation is *inevitable*. Deliberately subordinating his personal "wish" that "Negro would retain his racial identity" to natural history composed of interracial "blending" ("the elemental forces at work"), Johnson suggests that "the blending of the Negro into the American race of the future" is the irresistible flow of American modern history. His bold visualization of the mixed-race person's physical figure ("perceptible permanent wave in America's hair") implies that he does not deny interracial heterosexual desire or relations. Rather, he advocates "amalgamation" implicitly, if not explicitly. We thus need to reconsider the idea that *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* mirrors Johnson's internalization of the racial discourse that associates a mixed-raced body with a pathologized homosexual body because of its assumed effeminacy. Before exploring the novel's critique of the conventional mulatto narrative, I will for a moment dwell on Johnson's discussion of black people's strategic appropriation of racist stereotypes, which is illustrated, not only in his non-fictional pieces, but also in his novel. This discussion supports my analysis of the novel's politics of race and sexuality in the last section of this chapter.

The "Black Man's White Man's Black Man"[76]

[76] This subheading is inspired by Hale's discussion of Booker T. Washington. She dubs Washington as "a master of minstrel performance," and maintains that Washington played "the role of the white folks' black folks as the surest

In his "Introduction" to the 1927 edition of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, Carl Van Vechten remarks that the novel describes "Negro adaptability": "The ability of the Negro to mask his feelings with a joke or a laugh in the presence of the inimical white man is here noted, for the first time in print" ("Introduction" xxxvi). In the early pages of the novel, the protagonist-narrator terms "Negro adaptability" as "minstrel antics," suggesting that black people do not reveal their thoughts to white people under a racist social structure (22). The narrator implies that because of the cultural and legal practices of Jim Crow, black people need to wear the mask of "broad grins and minstrel antics" (22). At this point, it is necessary to have a historical and ideological sense of black minstrel shows. Black face minstrelsy was an established nineteenth-century cultural practice of the urban North, in which white male performers caricatured and mocked African Americans for profit and sport (Lott 3). As a self-conscious form of white entertainment, in black face minstrelsy, white entertainers could render white people's fantasy such as perceived hyper-sexuality and exoticism of black people. The show provided both white performers and audiences the occasion to assert to themselves that they were *not* black dandies or Jim Crow. They could enjoy transgressive pleasure without the risk of the actual change of their racial identity; the minstrelsy served to reassert the racial identity and solidarity of the white performers and audiences. To echo Eric Lott's words, in the minstrel show, white bonding occurred over racialized black bodies (260-61).

In his book, *Black Manhattan* (1930), Johnson also credits white people (planters) with the invention of the minstrel show: "Negro minstrelsy, everyone ought to know, had its origin among the slaves of the old South. Every planation had its talented band that could crack Negro jokes, and sing and dance to the accompaniment of the banjo and the bones […]. When the

route to racial progress" (24). According to Hale, Washington's compromise doctrine must be understood as his strategic inheritance of black slaves' means of survival, "a mask of acquiescence and dissembling in front of whites" in Jim Crow America (25).

wealthy plantation owner wished to entertain and amuse his guests, he needed only to call for his troupe of black minstrels" (*Black Manhattan* 87). Johnson adds that, in the show, a black man is negatively described as "an irresponsible, happy-go-lucky, wide-grinning, loud-laughing, shuffling, banjo-playing, singing, dancing sort of being" (*Black Manhattan* 93). How and why, then, did the "minstrel antics" dictate the post-emancipation interracial relationships? More specially, why did black people themselves continue to perform the "minstrel antics" in their everyday lives, a racialized cultural practice through which they denigrate and mock themselves? Although Johnson gives no clear answer, I submit that Lawrence Levine's concept, "necessary space" will help us explore post-emancipation black people's voluntary engagement with the racialized cultural practice. According to Levine, slave artistic forms like slave music and slave folktales created the "necessary space" between the slaves and the white owners (80). It helped slaves to shape and express their desires in their own vernacular ways, which white masters would not repress.[77] The cultural forms served as a means of preventing "legal slavery" from becoming "spiritual slavery" (Levine 80). They provided black slaves with the discursive and cultural platform in which they could express their own desires in coded terms; they were "instruments of life, of sanity, of health, and of self-respect" (Levine 80).

What is interesting is that, after emancipation, white people filled that "necessary space" by crafting their wishful images of black people such as "simplemindedness and sycophancy, loyalty and laziness" (Hale 16). Black people conformed to these images for "material benefits – more food and movement, less work and control" (16).[78] Although Hale suggests that black

[77] I assume that because white masters saw the black artistic forms as slaves' outlets to release their anger and frustrations in safe ways, they did not have to close the "necessary space."

[78] In *Souls*, as I discussed in Chapter One, Du Bois appropriates the conventions of plantation pastoral to discuss black men's interracial heterosexual desire in a veiled way. Du Bois's exploitation of plantation pastoral suggests that the "necessary space" was a cultural space in which black and white people negotiated their own desires in interracial transactions.

people's self-derogatory performance is a post-slavery cultural practice, Johnson implies in the above passage that, even before their emancipation, black people performed minstrel shows for their benefits; he suggests that minstrelsy under slavery offered black slaves material benefits and security, similar to the type Hale associates with black men's post-emancipation conformation.

One of the significant points that Johnson makes about the nature of black minstrelsy is that the masks that black people put on for the show became crucial to their relationships with white people after emancipation. In his recollection of "the backwoods of Georgia," Johnson recuperates black people's surface-level complacency in such a rural area as an intelligent stratagem of survival:

> We feel that these easy-going traits constitute our chief racial weaknesses and the chief hindrance to faster progress. This impatience on our part is understandable, but […] it involves an underestimation. It takes no account of the *technique for survival* that the masses have evolved through the experience of generations. […] They used the methods available; and those methods were not always aimlessness and dumb servility. For one thing, they learned the white man with whom they had to deal. They learned him through and through; and without ever completely revealing themselves. […] And when they felt it futile to depend upon their own strength, they took advantage of his weaknesses — the blind side of arrogance and the gullibility that always goes with overbearing pride. (*Along This Way* 267; emphasis added)

Johnson suggests that black slaves' assumption of egregious stereotypes like those "easy-going traits" remained a stratagem of "survival" for the black masses under Jim Crow.[79] They needed to perform a racial stereotype in order to secure the "necessary space," to use Levine's words. As Saidiya Hartman points out, "[t]he majority of the violence committed against the freed in the aftermath of slavery was incited by charges of unbecoming conduct, which included one's dress,

[79] In "The New Negro" (1925), the manifesto of the Harlem Renaissance, Alain Locke paraphrases "the technique for survival" as "a sort of protective social mimicry" (3).

demeanor, movement through public space, tone of voice, and companions" (148). Especially, in the South, "[t]alking back to a white man, seeking employment 'out of place,' refusing to obey an order — the transgression of a whole range of nebulous taboos could lead to a verbal rebuke, a beating, or a lynching" (*Revolt Against Chivalry* 141). Johnson also recognized the strained relationships that exacerbated interracial violence and continued to render black people the abject of American culture in the time of his writing of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*: "[A]t the opening of the twentieth century his [Negro] civil state was, in some respects, worse than at the close of the Civil War. […] The general spirit of the race [blacks] was one of hopelessness or acquiescence" (*Black Manhattan* 127-28). In this historical context in which racial essentialism divided the U.S. society into black and white, African American people, lacking material resources and legal protections, exploited white people's desires and fantasies of black culture for their own security and benefits by manipulating their false images strategically. Minstrelsy became "the reality of black existence for most white Americans" (Hale 17).

In *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, Johnson's narrator similarly points out: "It is remarkable, after all, what an adaptable creature the Negro is. I have seen the black West Indian gentleman in London, and he is in speech and manners a perfect Englishman. I have seen natives of Haiti and Martinique in Paris, and they are more Frenchy than a Frenchman" (153). Both the "black West Indian gentleman in London" and "natives of Haiti and Martinique in Paris" are racialized subjects in their former colonial mother countries. Both colonized subjects are constrained to imitate the culture and values that the colonizers offer them. The black colonized, through their "adaptable creature," imitate white values and culture to the extent that they look and sound like "a perfect Englishman" or "more Frenchy than a Frenchman." Johnson's narrator asserts that "the Negro" including the African American, according to its

needs, would "make a good Chinaman, with exception of the pigtail" (152).

African American assimilation of whiteness under racism is always already limited, however: black people are commanded to imitate white people's version of black people. The image that white supremacists dictate black people to impersonate does not only include the "civilized" figure of "a perfect Englishman." In the early twentieth century United States, it also included the abject figure of the mulatto/a. Black people under Jim Crow were constrained to mime *alterity* offered by white supremacists. Without recognizing the cultural context with which to force the racial others to imitate or *perform* white people's blackface perversion of subjectivities for their security and benefits, some white supremacists misunderstood black performance as the natural sign of inferiority. Indeed, Johnson's narrator remarks that white supremacists merely dismiss the black mimicry as a "sort of monkey-like imitation" (80). To put it in Diana Fuss's words, they fail to understand that "the ever-present possibility of slippage—form mimicry into mockery, from performativity into parody—immediately discredits colonialism's authorized versions of otherness" (147). In this regard, I want to revisit criticisms that consider *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* as solely a "conservative" text that merely mirrors Jim Crow racial ideology in which a mulatto subject's biracial origin and sexuality are stereotypically pathologized. Such a reading of Johnson's text does not consider the difference between "a mimicry of subversion and a mimicry of subjugation," to echo Fuss's terms again (147).

As I outlined earlier, recent scholarship has highlighted how *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* examines the mixed-race man's sexuality and its thematic and ideological subordination to the dominant cultural ideology of racial segregation. Yet I suggest that Johnson's critiques of racial stereotypes, interracial heterosexuality, and black people's

appropriation of "minstrel antics" ask his readers to see his portrayal of the protagonist's seemingly pathological sexuality not as a caricature or stereotype, but rather as a political representation. Highlighting the distinction between Johnson's *use of*, rather than assent to, racial stereotypes, I argue that *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* is a counter-narrative of the dominant racist fantasy about a mulatto man's race and sexuality. Through the self-conscious appropriation and strategic deployment of racial stereotypes, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* attempts to debunk the underlying assumptions of the racist rhetoric that it strategically invokes. In the following, I address how the novel critiques the cultural logic of racial segregation, and emphasize that Johnson's rhetorical strategy is a means of critically exploring the cultural representation of a mixed-race man's sexuality.

Refiguring the Mulatto Body

As Vechten writes in his "Introduction" to Johnson's novel, "[m]iscegenation in its slave and also its more modern aspects, both casual and marital, is completely treated" in *The Autobiography of an Ex- Coloured Man* (xxxvi). The novel starts with the birth of the protagonist narrator, the illegitimate son of a black slave mistress and a white Southern gentleman, and ends with the birth of his own mixed-race son (3, 209). A major portion of the novel's plot deals with the protagonist's interracial sexual relationships and his psychological angst as a mixed-race subject. The narrator points out that the existence of people of biracial origins violates the illusion of racial difference. He asserts that "the reference to the 'great gulf' [between white and black] loses force in face of the fact that there are in this country perhaps three or four million people with the blood of both races in their veins" (189). He also offers a recollection of his experience in Jacksonville wherein "prominent" white families "acknowledge" their "coloured

branches" as "blood relatives" (171). Indeed, the presence of mixed-race people posed a threat to the ideology of slavery and Jim Crow. Light-skinned people who were able to pass as white dismantled the visual economy of racial segregation and led white as well as black people to question the nature of race. In particular, since the late nineteenth-century, white people found the presence of light-skinned middle-class people of color threatening. When "[w]hiteness itself was being defined in […] first class cars," the mixed-race middle class began to challenge the "harmony" of race and class with their newly acquired "middle-class markers" of proper clothing and speech (Hale 129).

In his novel, Johnson represents how light-skinned people acquire those "middle-class markers": "My mother and I lived together in a little cottage which seemed to me to be fitted up almost luxuriously; there were horse-hair covered chairs in the parlor, and a little square piano […]. My mother dressed me very neatly, and I developed that pride which well-dressed boys generally have. She was careful about my associates, and I myself was quite particular. As I look back now I can see that I was a perfect little aristocrat" (6-7). Ex-Coloured Man and his light-skinned mother, putting up the middle-class signifiers like proper attire and manners, identify themselves with white people. They pass as "aristocrat[s]" (7). Ex-Coloured Man's white racial identity is attributed to his acculturation as middle class as well as his light-skin. Indeed, people see Ex-Coloured Man as white. He even bullies black boys when one, after being tormented by white boys, hurls a piece of slate at them. He brags about it to his mother: "We ran after them pelting them with stones until they separated in several directions. I was very much wrought up over the affair, and went home and told my mother how one of the 'niggers' has struck a boy with a slate" (15). His choice of diction, namely, "we" and "niggers" signifies his identification with the white "tormentors," and implies that he deems himself white and that others recognize

him as white.

Now, the question remains, how did white supremacists respond to the ontological crisis that the emergence of the light-skinned middle class posed? How did white racists try to reestablish the color line that was being threatened by these biracial bodies? The 1896 U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* was one of the major tenets used to deny the existence of such problematic bodies. Since the decision, U.S. legal systems had reinforced and reestablished the binary distinctions between black and white, claiming that but one drop of black blood was enough to mark one as black (Somerville 1). As Hale points out, the 1896 *Plessy* decision "denied what the African American writer Albert Murray later called the 'incontestably mulatto' nature of American culture and set this lie at the very center of modern society" (23). The "one drop rule" and matrilineal rule, which we addressed in the first chapter of this dissertation, are examples of how a mixed-race person was racialized as black through the logic of the *Plessy* decision. In the first chapter of his novel, Johnson offers a fictional rendering of the legal logic that undergirds this binary practice, showing the way a mulatto body is racially marginalized in Jim Crow America. One day in school, the narrator is singled out as "colored" by his teacher; Ex-Coloured Man is racially *interpellated*. Once his white teacher calls him black, he becomes black. The narrator's racial identity, regardless of his skin color or middle-class status, is reconstructed as black by the one-drop rule and the matrilineal rule. As "the child of this unsanctioned love" of a Southern white gentleman and a black slave mistress, his racial identity, even before his birth, is already marked by the racist cultural and legal understanding of miscegenation (*The Autobiography* 43). Through this episode, Johnson traces, rather than naturalizes, the etiology of the tabooed subject. He shows the performative nature of the racial hierarchy that determines that a mulatto child of a white-skinned father will assume his mother's

racial status in a white supremacist patriarchal society.

When Ex-Coloured Man engages romantically with a white woman in New York, we see again how Johnson uses such a rhetorical strategy to challenge the visual economy of racism. Ex-Coloured Man, after witnessing the lynching of a black man in the South, decides to pass for white and comes to New York. There, under a new white racial identity, he meets and falls in love with the white woman. When playing the piano for her, Ex-Coloured Man confesses to her his mixed parentage:

> One evening […] at her home, we were going over some new songs […] when she asked me, […] to play the Thirteenth Nocturne. When I began, she drew a chair near to my right and sat […] and her eyes reflecting the emotions which the music awoke in her. An impulse which I could not control rushed over me, a wave of exultation […] I said, "I love you, I love you, I love you." […] [W]hen I looked at her, her eyes were glistening with tears. […] Then I told her, in what words I do not know, the truth. I felt her hand grow cold, and when I looked up she was gazing at me with a wild, fixed stare as though I was some object she had never seen. Under the strange light in her eyes I felt that I was growing black and thick-featured and crimp-haired. (203-04)

One cannot miss the dramatic change of the white woman's attitude and gaze after she learns his racial heritage. Listening to his confession of love, she is nearly moved to tears. However, after his other confession, her gaze is *Jim Crowed*; she re-racializes the "Ex-White" man's body. As Martin Jay argues, "what is in fact 'seen' is not a given, constructed as much linguistically as visually" (182). The gaze is constructed according to discourse, the meaning of which takes place within its context. In Jim Crow America, "looking itself is a racial act" (*Photography* 11). Likewise, under the white woman's new "wild, fixed stare," Ex-Coloured Man's body as reflected in her eyes once again is hyper-racialized, embodying the features he believes white people associate with colored people. Johnson deploys racially conventional adjectives such as "black" "thick-featured," and "crimp-haired." Racial difference, in this episode, functions as a

discursive effect. The racist adjectives lose their "real" referents and become instead empty signifiers that can be applied to any black body. As Slavoj Žižek argues, "The moment the subjects take cognizance of the fact that the king's charisma is a performative effect, the effect itself is aborted" (*Looking Awry* 33). To echo Žižek's words, once readers internalize that white supremacy and black inferiority are nothing but performative and discursive effects, the authoritative effect of the white supremacist discourse is aborted.

When a stereotype about black people fails to dissimulate its own discursive nature, the discourse of whiteness also fails to sustain its universality. When Ex-Coloured Man for the first time meets the white woman, he describes her in this way: "When I saw the girl […] she was almost tall and quite slender, with lustrous yellow hair and eyes so blue as to appear almost black. She was white as lily, and she was dressed in white. Indeed she seemed to me the most dazzlingly *white thing*" (119; emphasis added). The white woman's blonde hair, blue eyes, and white skin signify her whiteness. Interestingly, her white body is presented as a collection of fetishized parts, which are then reduced to the "white thing," like the black body of Ex-Colored Man under her gaze. In Johnson's stereotypical representation of the white woman, her whiteness reveals its fetishized materiality and loses its universality. Unable to maintain the position of the invisible and distanced consumer of black images, the white woman suddenly reveals rather than conceals her embodied presence. As Shawn Smith puts it, "[w]hiteness reproduces its power in normative terms by being diffuse, by being invisible, by being everywhere and nowhere, and by making blackness bear the burden of visibility and embodiedness" (*Photography* 138). Relegated to "white thing" by Ex-Coloured Man, the white woman is subject to the black gaze and thus loses her white body's normativity.

Johnson's critique to the dominant ideology of racial segregation is displayed in his

examination of dominant racist fantasies about the effeminate gender and the queer, and sometimes perverse, sexuality associated with bodies of mixed-race descent as well. As seen in criticisms by Clarke, Somerville, and Harper regarding the novel's alleged "conservative politics," interracial and homosexual desires were rendered taboo in the discourse of sexology for their "abnormal" choice in sexual objects; these critics stress that in early twentieth-century United States culture, the protagonist's biracial origin would have been connected to his perceived "deviant" homosexuality and femininity. In this way, a person of mixed-racial heritage was marginalized not only by legal practices such as the "one-drop" rule, but also by the racist cultural fantasy that sexually pathologized the biracial subject. Yet Johnson's novel disrupts this cultural fantasy that associated sexual desire for other race with homosexual desire, and thus deviancy, by ironizing and re-articulating it. While Clarke, Somerville, and Harper all prematurely conclude that Johnson reproduces these conventional representations of the mulatto man's body and his sexuality, as my reading of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* will suggest, they overlook the fact that Johnson himself is a mixed-race man. When racially denigrated subjects stereotype themselves, such representations can complicate, rather than simply reinforce, the racial fantasy.[80] Johnson's self-conscious portrayal of Ex-Coloured Man's racial stereotyping of himself asks us to locate the "truth" behind the racial fantasy, rather than judging rashly the narrative based only on the rhetorical strategies that seem most apparent. Indeed, Johnson's problematic presentation of Ex-Coloured Man's sexual orientation, which might seem to repeat stereotypical representations of a person of mixed-race, is central to his novel's overall project of critiquing the contemporary understanding of racial passing. We need to remember that "the same mimetic act can be disruptive and reversionary at once" (Fuss 148).

[80] My idea here is inspired by Cheng's analysis of *Flower Drum Song* (1961). For her compelling reading of the film, see 31-63 in *The Melancholy of Race*.

Now, let us consider the scene in which the narrator sees his image reflected in a mirror after he is singled out by his school teacher as "colored":

> I rushed up into my own little room, shut the door, and went quickly to where my looking-glass hung on the wall. For an instant I was afraid to look, but when I did I looked long and earnestly. I have often heard people say to my mother, "what a pretty boy you have." I was accustomed to hear remarks about my beauty; but, now, for the first time, I became conscious of it, and recognized it. I noticed the ivory whiteness of my skin, the beauty of my mouth, the size and liquid darkness of my eyes, and how the long black lashes that fringed and shaded them produced an effect that was strangely fascinating even to me. I noticed the softness and glossiness of my dark hair that fell in waves over my temples, making my forehead appear whiter than it really was. How long I stood their gazing at my image I do not know. (17)

Notably, Ex-Coloured Man for the first time recognizes his black characteristics in his white aspect. Contrasted against his "ivory" skin color, he begins to *see* his eyes' "darkness," "long black lashes," and "dark hair." Such terms belong to contemporary rhetorical conventions that were employed by white and black writers alike. The racialized culture of Jim Crow assumes specific "Negroid" physical traits as undeniable visible evidence of racial heritage that are used to police that racial boundary. Yet, again, it is crucial to note that Ex-Coloured Man's blackness visually manifests itself only *after* he is racially interpellated and only he commits those features to language. This scene thus suggests that the supposed physical evidence of racial difference actually functions as a linguistic construct.

This mirror scene also exposes the way in which Ex-Coloured Man sexualizes and genders himself, describing himself as a feminized figure. Those words such as "pretty," "beauty," "ivory," and "softness" lay bare the narrator's feminized perception of his newly colored appearance. Aside from those adjectives, Johnson employs another discursive device to suggest his protagonist's femininity: "feminine desire" — a desire to be desired. Freud translates

this popular fantasy about wanting to be desired in the terms of psychoanalysis: "Women, especially if they grow up with good looks, develop a certain self-contentment. […] [I]t is only themselves that such women love with an intensity comparable to that of man's love for them. Nor does their need lie in the direction of loving, but of being loved" ("On Narcissism" 88-89). According to Harper, Ex-Coloured Man is a typical example of the feminine narcissist fascinated with his own beauty (109). Indeed, in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, the narrator-protagonist unabashedly presents readers with his alleged femininity. Recollecting his boyhood, the narrator writes, "I lived between my music and books, on the whole a rather unwholesome life for a boy to lead. I dwelt in a world of imagination, of dreams and air castles — the kind of atmosphere that sometimes nourishes a genius, more often men unfitted for the practical struggles of life. I never played a game of ball, never went fishing or learned to swim; in fact, the only outdoor exercise in which I took any interest was skating" (46-47). Here, the mulatto protagonist is unambiguously feminized. The light-skinned boy shows no preference for "outdoor exercise" and, in fact, prefers the "unwholesome life for a boy to lead." Johnson self-consciously problematizes his narrator's gender identity by deploying such words as "unwholesome" and "unfitted" in describing his protagonist's boyhood. The author's portrayal of his protagonist's unconventional gender identity is illustrated even more apparently in a description of Ex-Coloured Man's response to piano music:

> Often when playing [the piano] I could not keep the tears which formed in my eyes from rolling down my cheeks. Sometimes at the end or even in the midst of a composition, as big a boy as I was, I would jump from the piano, and throw myself sobbing into my mother's arms. She, by her caresses and often her tears, only encouraged these fits of *sentimental hysteria*. Of course, to counteract this tendency to *temperamental excesses* I should have been out playing ball or in swimming with other boys of my age. (27; emphasis added)

Johnson unambiguously feminizes his narrator once again. The author erases other interpretative possibilities of the protagonist's gender identity by not only visibly depicting him as feminized, as he did in the mirror scene previously discussed, but also noting his effeminate emotional and psychological responses. Johnson makes sure that his readers see his narrator as a feminized figure by characterizing his predominant psychological traits as marked by "sentimental hysteria" and "temperamental excesses." Furthermore, by foregrounding the distinct discrepancy between Ex-Coloured Man's *conscious identification* with maleness and his *unconscious desire* to be female ("Of course, to counteract this tendency to temperamental excesses I should have been out playing ball or in swimming with other boys of my age"), Johnson encourages his readers to recognize his protagonist's problematic gender identification, which stems partially from the racist discourse through which he describes himself.

Then, we need to ask whether or not Johnson's stereotypical representation of the mulatto body assents to *or* dismantles the "conservative gender politics" noted by other critics. Here, Žižek's exploration of the feminine masquerade is helpful to advance our discussion. According to Žižek,

> [*T*]*he allusion to some unfathomable mysterious ingredient behind the mask is constitutive of the feminine seductive masquerade*: the way woman seduces and transfixes the male gaze is precisely by adopting the role of Enigma embodied, as if her whole appearance is a lure, a veil concealing some unspeakable secret. In other words, the very notion of a 'feminine secret,' of some mysterious *jouissance* which eludes the male gaze, is constitutive of the phallic spectacle of seduction. ("Death and Maiden" 214' emphasis in original)

Žižek asserts that references to a feminine secret that remains out of reach of the male gaze only serves to reinforce the phallic economy on which gender difference is predicated (214). A mystery associated with women that allegedly eludes "the male phallic grasp" piques men's

desire, and sustains men's status as the subjects who desire (214). In this formulation, women serve male authority and desire by remaining *exotic* objects that are always hiding some mystery, ensuring the continuation of male interest. Thus, ironically, women can undermine the phallic economy by "renouncing every remnant of the inaccessible 'feminine mystique,'" according to Žižek (214). To put it otherwise, women might subvert the male fantasy of the feminine mystique through an "excessive realization of the [male] fantasy" that forces men to recognize that there is, in fact, no real mystery (214).

Drawing on Žižek's claim, I argue that Johnson's portrayal of the Ex-Coloured Man's racial and sexual identity works to challenge the cultural logic of Jim Crow. In his 1912 preface to *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, Johnson writes, "In these pages it is as though a veil had been drawn aside: the reader is given a view of the inner life of the Negro in America, is initiated into the freemasonry, as it were, of the race" (xl). Promoting his book as an exotic ethnic autobiography, Johnson suggests that the faux autobiography allows white readers to access the mysterious "Negro" life beyond the "veil." He implies that his book gratifies his white readers' taste for the exotic, namely, their fetishism about the "freemasonry" of black people, which includes those of mixed-race descent. Yet what the readers encounter in the novel is an exaggeratedly pathologized representation of a mulatto subject, which proves almost incapable of satisfying white readers' exotic fantasy. Rather, through these overtly stereotypical depictions, the readers are forced to confront their own concocted views of the mulatto body's perverted sexuality and feminized body. In Žižek's words, Johnson's "over-orthodox" realization of the racist fantasy reveals its unnaturalness and constructedness. In this regard, we might question Harper's assertion that such a feminized depiction of the protagonist is informed by and participates in a cultural context in which a mulatto identity is associated with a feminine one

(109).

The relationship between Ex-Coloured Man and his white wealthy patron is central to Johnson's appropriation of racial stereotypes in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. Harper notices in Ex-Coloured Man's view of his patron "an aura of stereotypical homosexual identification" and asserts that their relationship diverges from standard patterns of heterosexual masculinity (110). Emphasizing the similarity between the Ex-Coloured Man's homoerotic union and the heterosexual union of his mother and his white father, Clarke defines the former as "homosexual interracial concubinage" (89). Likewise, Somerville suggests an "implicit analogy" between Ex-Coloured Man's relationship with the white patron and his mother's relationship with his white father. She concludes of Ex-Coloured Man's relationship with his patron that the "interplay of economic power and eroticism" defines their relationship (119).

To be sure, these three critics regard the tragic ending of Ex-Coloured Man's relationship with the white gentleman, that is, the patron's suicide, as the crucial textual evidence of the novel's "conservative gender politics." Arguing that Johnson takes a critical stance toward his narrator's "perversity," Somerville deems the white man's suicide "inevitably tragic" (121). Harper remarks that the white man's sudden death "exorcize[s]" "the threat of homosexuality" from the novel (111). Clarke contends that the tragedy suggests the ideological containment of Ex-Coloured Man's transgressive homosexual desire by "racist, heterosexist, capitalist patriarchy" (86). Taken together, Somerville, Harper, and Clarke conclude that *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, despite its radical subtext of homosexual romance, serves dominant contemporary racial ideology wherein the mulatto body is "perversely" feminized and homosexualized. In their readings, the novel achieves a kind of poetic justice with the death of the white patron, Ex-Coloured Man's interracial homosexual partner.

However, given that Johnson appropriates dominant racist discourses throughout his narrative as a means of criticizing rather than reifying them, we need to reconsider the ideological implications of the white gentleman's suicide. Let me here return to Hale's discussion of white supremacists' fascination with the "Old South." According to Hale, white supremacists (re)created the plantation pastoral in which "loyal" and "happy" slaves serve their white masters as employees even after emancipation (51). In this narrative, the (ex)slaves require their masters' guidance and support to survive in modern society. If we interpret *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* as a mulatto writer's parody of such plantation pastoral, the novel then may be read as the revision of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic. In Hegel's narrative, the master recognizes his dependence on the slave and the slave realizes his independence through his own labor; the slave is the one who achieves a more complex dimension of self. Johnson's description of Ex-Coloured Man and his white patron's farewell, is not that of slave and master in the plantation pastoral, not that of which white supremacists dreamt:

> When my mind was fully made up, I told my friend. He asked me when I intended to start. I replied that I would do so at once. […] He gave me a cheque for five hundred dollars, told me to write to him in care of his Paris bankers if I ever needed his help, wished me good luck, and bade me good-bye. All this he did almost coldly; and I often wondered whether he was in a hurry to get rid of what he considered a fool, or whether he was striving to hide deeper feelings of sorrow. (148)

During his tour to Europe, Ex-Coloured Man decides to become a black composer in the United States, and so informs his patron of his decision to leave Europe. In this passage, his patron fails to persuade Ex-Coloured Man to remain in Europe; Ex-Coloured Man is determined to be a Race Man. Ex-Coloured Man does not show any emotions like sorrow or regret, characteristic of plantation pastorals, about breaking from his patron. In contrast to expectation, in fact, the white

gentleman experiences complicated emotions, among them sorrow. The passage makes it clear that the white patron is more disturbed by their sudden separation than Ex-Coloured Man. His offer of money might appear to suggest that their union is a modern version of slavery, or more specifically, it could also suggest the white man's monetary compensation for the mulatto man's homoerotic labor, reminding readers of the economic support that Ex-Coloured Man's white father provided his family in exchange for his mother's sexual labor. Yet Johnson's protagonist's portrayal of their relationship suggests otherwise:

> He had taken me from a terrible life in New York and, by giving me the opportunity of traveling […] had made me a polished man of the world. On the other hand, I was his chief means of disposing of the thing which seemed to sum up all in life that he dreaded — time. As I remember him now, I can see that time was what he was always endeavoring to escape, to bridge over, to blot out; and it is not strange that some years later he did escape it for ever, by leaping into eternity. (143)

At first glance, Ex-Coloured Man's explanation might seem to confirm Clarke's argument that their relationship is one of "homosexual interracial concubinage" (89). Yet, in contrast to his white patron who has lost his "chief means of disposing" of "time," Ex-Coloured Man continues to pursue his career and independence apart from his patron through his own labor, even if he does depend on racial passing to do so. Ex-Coloured Man sustains his life while his white patron kills himself. Who, then, is really dependent? Their story actually realizes Hegel's master-slave dialectic, parodying the contemporary tragic mulatta myth that associated a biracial subject with sterility and death. In other words, appropriating the racist figure of a mixed-race woman as a sterile figure, Johnson's novel presents the figure of a mixed-race man as a productive working subject, who achieves genuine self-realization and independence through his labor, simultaneously presenting the white man as sterile and helpless.

In the middle of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, the narrator succinctly illustrates the history of black struggle for racial justice: "The battle was first staged over the right of the Negro to be classed as a human being with a soul; later, as to whether he has sufficient intellect to master even the rudiments of learning; and today it is being fought out over his social recognition" (75). The narrator clarifies that an African American's strife of his days is staged over "his social recognition," which suggests that Johnson's novel seeks to establish a black subject's interracial sexuality as normal rather than mark its deviance. That is, the novel asserts "social equality" for the black (mixed-race) subject. As my previous chapters establish, a black man's interracial heterosexual desire was not welcomed in the early twentieth-century United States. An argument for "social equality" was taboo. In this regard, Johnson's parody and appropriation of racist stereotypes associated with a mixed-race man's sexuality needs to be read as a deliberate rhetorical strategy, through which he challenges the racist ideology of his days in veiled ways. Indeed, Ex-Coloured Man justifies his author's rhetorical gymnastics: "his [a black man's] passive resistance is more effective at present than active resistance" (75).

Chapter Four

The Shadow of Lynching in Nella Larsen's *Passing*

Lynching and *Passing*

Since Deborah E. McDowell's groundbreaking essay on the representation of black female sexuality in *Passing* (1929), many scholars have discussed how the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and sexuality unfolds throughout the novel. McDowell maintains that Larsen's text grapples with questions of how to express black female sexuality without offending black female "respectability," an image established by the emergent black middle class under the political rubric of "racial uplift" in an era that "pandered to the stereotype of the primitive exotic" (xvi). In her compelling reading of *Passing*, McDowell also examines the hidden lesbian narratives beneath "the safe and familiar plot of racial passing" on which previous scholars have focused (xxx). McDowell's excavation of the tale of sexual passing within the tale of racial passing has since inspired many scholars to further examine the novel's exploration of black female sexuality, especially in terms of lesbian desire, and its appropriation and negotiation with the literary convention of the "tragic mulatta" — "the safe and familiar plot of racial passing," as McDowell refers to it.

Since McDowell's foundational essay, scholars have sought to bring together the narratives of racial and sexual passing in Larsen's second novel, but still focus on same-sex desire as the novel's central concern. In her rigorous analysis of same-sex desire illustrated in *Passing*, Corinne E. Blackmer critiques McDowell's interpretation, asserting that it "substitutes sexual for racial passing" (54). Blackmer observes that in the novel racial passing works as a

catalyst for the homoerotic relationship of the two mixed-race heroines, Clare Kendry and Irene Redfield, and contends that their lesbian desire is a corollary of the eroticization of interracial sexual contact tabooed in Jim Crow America (54). According to H. Jordan Landry, most critics that address lesbian desire in *Passing* regard whiteness as the "initiator" of homoerotic desire (27). Against such critical trends that assert that the novel's strategy is one that links lesbianism with the desire for whiteness, Landry insists that the two black female protagonists' lesbian desire emerges from "their idealization of the black female body" (28). For both Blackmer and Landry, black female Sapphism is deeply connected with the black female body, whether rejecting or originating from it.

Even scholars that examine the novel's participation in an older racial trope, namely, that of the "tragic mulatta," emphasize that Larsen's deployment of the mixed-race woman figure is closely related to the author's audacious exploration of black female sexuality. Focusing on *Passing*'s strategic deployment of the "tragic mulatta" figure, Cheryl A. Wall claims that Larsen uses the "mulatta" as a rhetorical cover to mask the novel's provocative contemplation of the inextricable nature of racism and sexism that imposes "suffocating restrictions of ladyhood and fantasies of the exotic female Other" (89). With an emphasis on the way that the boundaries between race, gender, and class are challenged by mulatta characters in the novel, Wall demonstrates that *Passing* manifests Larsen's strenuous negotiation between white audience expectations about exotic primitivism and her own class pretensions that caused her to write about chaste mulattas. Yet Wall adds that Clare Kendry's death at the end of the novel is "preordained" by the mulatta character's crossing of race and gender, a crossing that is not acceptable in the 1920s in the United States (131). By contrast, George Hutchinson asserts that Clare trespasses against the "tragic mulatta" convention. He observes that Clare undergoes no

ontological struggle over her blackness and that her crossing of racial and class boundaries is "entirely selfish and epicurean" (299). In this reading, *Passing* becomes a cornerstone book that breaks with the American mysticism about miscegenation and the mixed-race body that came of such sexual unions (Hutchinson 299). Still, both Wall and Hutchinson focus on the figure of the mulatta and her association with black female sexuality and exoticism.

Thus, the continuous trend in scholarship of *Passing*, whether it focuses on lesbian desire and/or the appropriation of the "tragic mulatta" narrative, links discussions of black female sexuality directly with racialized popular discourses about black female bodies in Jim Crow America. As a result, one of Larsen's rhetorical and thematic threads that runs through her second novel has remained underexplored: lynching. Although I assert the significance of the discussion of lynching to the narrative of *Passing*, I do not argue that the virtual absence of the examination of lynching discourse in scholarly examinations of Larsen's novel speaks to those scholars' scant interest in black male characters. In fact, some scholars have addressed Larsen's portrayal of the black male character, Brian, Irene's husband. For example, Landry and David L. Blackmore respectively read Brian as a misogynistic figure and a homosexual figure.[81] Blackmore's interpretation is especially interesting given scholars' asymmetrically ample interest in the two black female characters' lesbianism.[82] Yet, neither Landry nor Blackmore pay attention to how lynching, one of the urgent issues for contemporary African Americans — especially black male intellectuals — at the time of Larsen's writing, is figured into *Passing*.

In this chapter, I follow Hale's formulation of lynching as "cultural form" that "existed as both physical practice and as written and photographic representations" (360). As an iconic

[81] See Landry 36-37, Blackmore 477-78.

[82] Blackmore associates Brian's longing to migrate to Brazil with his homosexual desire by demonstrating that Brazil was seen as a liberal place for sexual orientations such as interracial and homosexuality by contemporary Americans (477).

"cultural form" of Jim Crow America, lynching played a crucial role in defining and shaping interracial relations in the United States, as the previous three chapters of this dissertation elucidate. Within criticism, lynching as a form of physical violence and a discourse has been addressed largely in terms of the black male body alone. However, black women were victims of lynching as well. At least seventy-six black women were lynched between 1882 and 1927 (Brown 112). Unfortunately, the corporeal violence attending black women has been expelled from public view (Wiegman 84). Furthermore, the African woman has been absent from the discussion of the dominant lynching narrative, comprised of the white woman, the white man, and the black man. According to Sandra Gunning, most discussions of lynching have been limited to exploration of "a homosocial, interracial triangle of desire in which the body of the white female victim mediates between the oppositional pairing of the black beast and the white protector" (9). Such a view obscures the issue of black women's sexual exploitation by white men. The "symbolic absence of the black woman" in the lynching discourse, Gunning argues, is balanced by "the symbolic presence of the white, since the primary construction of white femininity as a masculine prize (a construction that enables the ritual of lynching, since she is the 'cause' of the struggle) is predicated on black femininity's sexual and social devaluation" (10). In other words, the black woman's devalued position as the opposite of white womanhood made possible the narrative casting of white women as the ultimate symbol of desirable womanhood and civilization; the black woman thus must be evacuated from the ritual of lynching and her victimhood of sexual violence is ignored. After all, the white lynching narrative not only suppresses white women's sexual agency but also replaces black women's victimhood with their culpability.

In the white lynching scenario, "the heroic interceptor" (the white man) would rescue

"the flower of civilization" (the white woman) from the "mythically endowed rapist" (the black man) (Wiegman 93). The threat of the black rapist, to be sure, is a reflection of and response to white men's anxiety over newly asserted white womanhood. The "advent of the New Woman and its attendant discourse on birth control and female independence" in the early twentieth century "proved the need for greater surveillance of white women, especially in the context of sexual desire" (Gunning 27). Furthermore, some white women regarded interracial sex as "a positive demonstration of modernity," which made white women into bodies in need of policing by white men (Stovall 26). It is no coincidence that the threatening image of the black male rapist flourished when "modern" women began to assert their sexual agency and right over their bodies. The black rapist figure in the white lynching discourse served at once to stigmatize white women's interracial heterosexual desire and to force white women to take "symbolic and reproductively literal role as bearer of the white phallus's meaning" (Wiegman 102). Or, it can be said that the discourse of lynching and its history show how white men, who had lost their ownership over black male bodies, had exploited their control over white women to circumscribe the social advancement of black men. In other words, the discussion of lynching in the United States demonstrates how the structure of gender relations has been employed to facilitate interracial violence and oppression.

As I discussed in Chapters One and Two, black male writers such as W.E.B. Du Bois attempted to undercut the ideological justification of lynching by creating the myth of a black Christ out of the white lynching narrative or by inverting lynching narratives in order to disclose white male anxiety over black masculinity. Unfortunately, the Du Boisian counter-lynching narrative reveals a similar problem as the white lynching narrative. The black lynching narrative, while endowing the white woman with a sexual agency, marginalizes or ignores the black

woman's sexual agency or her victimhood by white sexual violence. The Du Boisian counter-lynching discourse features the lynched black man as the universalized symbol of racial oppression. After all, as in the white lynching narrative, the black lynching narrative places asymmetrical value upon black and white women.[83]

If the white lynching narrative reinforces white male privilege by stigmatizing black men's sexual relationships with white women, the Du Boisian counter-lynching narrative restores black manhood by crafting the black male martyr figure or normalizing black men's interracial heterosexuality. What both black and white lynching discourses do not consider are discussions of black and white women's sexual exploitation. Both male discourses overlook white and black women's sexual oppression and exploitation within their own racial communities. The racist discourse (white lynching narrative) and its counter-discourse (black lynching narrative) reduce racism to the problem between black men and white men, obfuscating intra-racial conflicts, especially provoked by gender differences.

This chapter reads *Passing* as a discursive platform where Larsen adapts, appropriates, and challenges the white and black male lynching narratives. First, this chapter proposes that the novel shows the way the white lynching narrative informs a black female subject's self-conscious perception of her own body as well as her perception of a black male body. Building on Frantz Fanon's discussion of the black male body's epidermalization, I argue that Larsen's portrayal of black bodies, male and female, mirrors the pervasiveness of lynching images embedded in the minds of contemporary African American intellectuals, including black female

[83] In the United States, rape has been framed as a crime against white women from the middle and upper classes. Working-class women and women of color had been of little concern to the courts (A. Davis 172). Both Wiegman and bell hooks argue that the uneven value placed on black and white women is well figured in Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940). Wiegman points out that the raped and murdered body of Bessie Mears, Bigger's black girlfriend, serves as evidence of "Bigger's violent criminality toward white womanhood" (102). Similarly, bell hooks notes that while everybody cares about the fate of Mary Dalton, "the ruling class white female daughter," no one cares about the fate of Bessie (64). "The first and more important murder subsumes the second," according to bell hooks (64).

writers like Larsen. In doing so, I contend that *Passing* registers the process by which the black female middle-class subject internalizes the cultural logic of lynching, and uses it symbolically to sustain her class position against the black working class. I also suggest that in her novel Larsen explores white women's sexual oppression by the white lynching discourse. By analyzing Larsen's representation of interracial heterosexual exchange in Harlem in the 1920s, this chapter implies that the white lynching narrative served to reassert white men's control over white women's sexuality. Furthermore, my chapter addresses Larsen's critique of the Du Boisian counter-lynching discourse. As George Hutchinson points out, Larsen's interest in lynching was intense and constant. For instance, she could remember even the statistics regarding lynching on individual states in the 1920s (326). In 1933, she became a member of The Writers League against Lynching, serving as assistant secretary (Hutchinson 428-29). Remaining active in The Writers League against Lynching until the mid-1930s, Larsen worked to help its anti-lynching campaigns such as organizing an exhibition on lynching and petitioning for the passage of federal legislation against lynching (Hutchinson 438, 429). Given Larsen's political efforts, we can assume that she was well aware of discussions of not only the white lynching narrative but also its counter-lynching narrative for which Du Bois's black martyr tale is emblematic. In this chapter, I note Larsen's appropriation of the Du Boisian narrative and examine her critique of black women's sexual oppression within black communities, arguing that not only the white lynching narrative but also the Du Boisian counter-lynching narrative reifies the "interracial triangle of desire," ignoring black women's sexual marginalization and exploitation. After all, in Larsen's view, both black and white lynching scenarios reduce interracial conflicts to male struggle over bodies of black and white women, thereby engaging only with the problem of establishing male privilege. Lastly, this chapter demonstrates the continual and circular process

by which racial violence is first internalized by oppressed social groups and then externalized by those same groups toward lower-class members by exploring how the black middle class appropriates white and black lynching discourses in Larsen's *Passing* in response to their working-class brethren.

"'That time in Chicago'": Re-Racialization and Corporeal Confinement

Larsen starts her novel with a scene in which Irene is reading a letter from Clare at her house in Harlem. In her letter, Clare expresses the unendurable loneliness she experiences while she passes as a white woman and her "'wild desire'" to meet Irene (145). Recalling their encounter two years ago, Clare suggests that their meeting "'that time in Chicago'" ignites a "terrible" and "wild desire" to see Irene again (145). Irene's reaction to those words, "'that time in Chicago,'" is instant and intense: "Brilliant red patches flamed in Irene Redfield's warm olive cheeks" (145). Larsen articulates what such a sensitive reaction from Irene means: "'That time in Chicago.' The words stood out from among the many paragraphs of other words, bringing with them a clear, sharp remembrance, in which even now, after two years, humiliation, resentment, and rage were mingled" (145). Although "'that time in Chicago'" for Clare indicates their dramatic and joyful encounter after the separation of more than a decade, "'that time in Chicago'" for Irene invokes the racist slur from John Bellew, Clare's white husband, that she endured in front of Clare. Larsen's cutaneous metaphors reserved for Irene — that is, the "brilliant red patches" in her "olive" cheeks — attest to Fanon's contention that racism's psychological effect on a raced subject easily slips into the realm of physical sensations, what he terms "epidermalization" (11).[84] Comparing anti-black racism with anti-Semitism, Fanon

[84] Sianne Ngai discusses Fanon's term, "epidermalization," in her exploration of Larsen's other novel, *Quicksand*, in which "irritation" works as a central emotion that expresses Helga Crane's, — the novel's heroine's — dis-

elaborates on the racial-epidermal schema that threatens black people's ontology: "The Jew is attacked in his religious identity, in his history, in his race […]. But it is in his corporeality that the Negro is attacked. It is as a concrete personality that he is lynched. […] The Jewish menace is replaced by the fear of the sexual potency of the Negro" (162-64). In Carole Sweeney's words, Fanon assigns the black male's "natural external marks a negative phenomenological existence, the racial-epidermal schema that finally destroys the ontology of the black subject" (58).[85] Although Fanon argues that a black *male* subject is relegated to his body itself, Larsen's portrayal of Irene's reaction to the recollection of Bellew's symbolic racial violence suggests that, under Jim Crow, a black female subject is also reduced to her body itself.

In addition to Larsen's conscious portrayal of epidermalization in the very beginning of her novel, we need to note that Irene's experience of racial violence takes place in *Chicago* and that we witness a memory. Whenever Irene remembers or is forced to recall the horrible experience with Bellew, she utters the city name, "Chicago." Reading Clare's letter, to which she has no intention of responding, Irene says to herself: "'that time in Chicago.' Once was enough" (181). She dismisses her husband's suggestion that she meet Clare again by saying, "'I've no intention of being the link between her and her poorer darker brethren. After that scene in Chicago too!'" (185). It is also suggestive that Larsen's depiction of Irene's first encounter with Clare starts with the description of one day in Chicago's scorching summer heat: "This is what Irene Redfield remembered. Chicago. August. A brilliant day, hot, with a brutal staring sun pouring down rays that were like molten rain. A day on which the very outlines of the buildings

---

identification with both the image of the hyper-sexualized black woman and the image of the chaste black middle-class woman. For Ngai's detailed discussion of *Quicksand* in terms of "irritation," see Ngai 174-208.

[85] According to Samira Kawash, the Fanonian understanding of skin color is *modern*. She argues, in a "modern, biologized understanding of race, skin color becomes visible as a basis for determining the order of identities and differences and subsequently penetrates the body to become the truth of the self" (130).

shuddered as if in protest at the heat" (146). As Jennifer DeVere Brody points out, this passage brings to mind the race riots of the "Red Summer" of 1919 (1057).

In the "Red Summer" of 1919, Chicago was one of the major cities in which large-scale and violent clashes between black and white people erupted. Herbert Shapiro describes the tragic summer:

> In Chicago on July 27 the temperature reached ninety-six degrees and the day was a culmination of a series of days with temperatures in the midnineties. […] . For a period of seven days the South Side of Chicago was the scene of active rioting. Blacks fought back, but white rioters had superiority in numbers and firepower and the tacit sympathy of the police […]. White mobs gathered at streetcar transfer points, pulled trolleys from wires, and dragged black passengers to the street where they were kicked and beaten. […] Twenty-three blacks and fifteen whites died, with more than 500 injured and about a thousand persons left homeless." (150-51) [86]

Most African Americans who lived during this time were well aware of the horrible tragedy that occurred on this day. Larsen, as a member of the black intelligentsia of the 1920s, must have been quite conscious of the event. Reflecting on her time with Bellew in Chicago, Irene feels that her hands still "trembl[e]" and that her blood still "pound[s] against her temples" (181). These physical reactions do not just reflect "humiliation, resentment, and rage," which were regarded as *appropriate* emotions that members of the emerging black middle class were required to have against racial oppression. Even after two years, Irene still retains the "sense of fear, of panic" (181). These emotions that Irene has retained since "that time in Chicago" suggest that we need to locate *Passing* in the historical context of the physical racial violence that erupted immediately after World War I, culminating in the "Red Summer" of 1919.

Irene's entrance into a café in Chicago's Drayton Hotel is therefore significant as her experience of racialization is deeply linked with the white supremacist discourse of lynching. In

[86] For detailed historical backgrounds and explanations of the 1919 "Red Summer," see Herbert Shapiro 145-157.

order to escape the scorching heat in Chicago, Irene passes for white and enters the luxurious café. Interestingly enough, Larsen associates Irene's racial passing in the hotel with her class-consciousness. Irene goes to the Drayton to avoid "contact with so many sweating bodies" (147), and once sequestered in the hotel, she "gaz[ed] *down* for some time at the specks of cars and people creeping about in streets, and thinking how silly they looked" (148; emphasis added). Her movement into "another world, pleasant, quiet, and strangely remote from the sizzling one" suggests that she erases racial difference, if not entirely, by her position among the middle class as well as with her light skin; Irene passes among the white middle class because she bears the markers of that class and of that race (147). As Thadious M. Davis points out, since the early twentieth-century, the black middle class had begun distinguishing themselves from their lower-, working-class brethren through their attainment of wealth, education, and professional status (5). Although such class markers did not fully guarantee the black middle class equal status with those of the white middle class, those markers helped middle-class African Americans access privileges that those of the white middle class had once exclusively enjoyed. The emerging black middle class attempted to obfuscate racial difference with class mobility.

Yet Irene's passing in the white-only hotel is threatened by the gaze of a white woman, who later turns out to be Clare:

> Her [Clare's] demeanor was that of one who with utmost singleness of mind and purpose was determined to impress firmly and accurately *each detail of Irene's features* upon her memory for all time, nor showed the slightest trace of disconcertment at having been detected in her *steady scrutiny*.
>
> Instead, it was Irene who was put out. Feeling her *colour heighten under the continued inspection*, she slid her eyes down" (149; emphasis added).

At this point, it is quite instructive to examine Fanon's portrayal of his experience of being subjected to the gaze of racism in order to advance my discussion of Irene:

> "Look, A Negro!" […]
> "Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" […]
> On that day, completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood?" (112)

As Daniel Kim demonstrates, Fanon's passage is imbued with "the legacy of lynching" (4). As a consequence of the white boy's racialized gaze, Fanon's body in his own consciousness is dismembered, invoking the castrating images of "amputation" and "excision," which are drawn from rituals of lynching (D. Kim 4). Fanon likens the gaze of white racism to the practice of lynching.

Likewise, Larsen deploys the images of lynching to describe Irene's psychological panic under Clare's gaze. It is under the white woman's "steady scrutiny" that Irene feels that her body parts — "each detail of Irene's features" — are put on display. The wholeness of her body is collapsed, and its dismemberment and mutilation are implicitly illustrated. Just as Fanon's black male subject is relegated to the amputated corporeality by a white boy's gaze, so too Irene's female subjectivity is reduced to the disassembled body by Clare's gaze. Irene's re-racialization by Clare's gaze is coterminous to the way a black man's body is racialized in the image of lynching. Implied in my previous discussion of Fanon's comparison of anti-black racism and anti-Semitism, Fanon invokes the legacy of lynching when mentioning that a black male's body is reduced by the white man's gaze to corporeality itself. As Mary Ann Doane points out, Fanon's discussion of the black male body and its hyper-sexualized image in a white world was informed by the history of lynching in Jim Crow America (221-22). Thus, to echo Fanon's words, the white discourse of lynching in the United States reduces an African American man to his

body by assuming that his uncontrollable animalistic lust for a white woman is almost preordained because of his corporeality. The black rapist myth predetermines the black man's culpability, namely, his indiscreet sexual harassment of a white woman, because of his *black* body alone; to be visibly black and male is to be, visibly, a sexual threat. This narrative of black male sexuality served to reassert white patriarchy when its one pillar, that is, the ownership of a white woman's body, was challenged, whether the crisis was illusory or actually happening. In other words, when newly asserted black men claimed their "social equality" after emancipation, white male supremacists created and reinforced the discourse of lynching to sustain the necessity for maintaining racial boundaries, based on a racialized visual economy predicated on the alleged visibility of the black male body.

Irene's "heighten[ed]" skin color in the above passage can be explained in a similar way. When she uses her class distinction and light skin to cross the color line, the white woman's (Clare's) gaze deters Irene's passing by hyper-visualizing the passer's body. When Irene undermines another pillar of white patriarchy, namely, economic privilege, a white woman impedes such an attempt by re-racializing the passer; against the mixed-race woman's transgression of a color line, the presumably white woman is aligned with the ideology of white patriarchy. Indeed, lynching was a "routine" response to "black female attempts at education, self- and communal government, suffrage, and other indicators of cultural inclusion" (Wiegman 94).[87] What is further troubling is that despite what Irene believes, Clare is not actually a white woman, who, in Irene's imagination, seeks to re-blacken Irene with her "utmost singleness of mind and purpose" (149). Also, the "inner disturbance" of Irene caused by Clare's gaze is "hatefully familiar" to herself (150). Her familiarity with the self-incorporated vision of her own

[87] Many lynchings did not involve African American men charged with rape, but rather aimed to punish black women and children from any number of "petty 'crimes'" (Gunning 6).

body illustrates the pervasiveness of lynching's images and rituals embedded in contemporary African American female intellectuals.[88] Irene has internalized the external conditions of race and racism in which she has grown. The above scene elucidates that process of internalizing racial violence in which even a black middle-class woman participates: as a result of her racial heritage, Irene assimilates the emotion of self-rejection. In Wiegman's words, Irene's psychological disintegration under Clare's gaze at the Drayton illustrates "the function of lynching as a mode of surveillance by reiterating its performative qualities, carving up the black body in the specular refiguration of slavery's initial, dismembering scene" (91).[89]

Thus, Irene's self-conscious experience of her own body is heavily informed by the discourse of lynching. It is true that in early twentieth-century America, some "modern" women, whether black or white, were able to establish their "modern" subjectivities. For example, as Kathy Peiss points out in her book on U.S. beauty culture, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (1998), contemporary middle-class women managed to achieve significant bodily autonomy by using new commodities such as clothing and cosmetics. Yet Irene's view of her own body "before her [Clare's] very eyes on the roof of the Drayton" shows that black women's bodies in many cases were still locked into the status of a fetish object, failing to achieve subject status (150). Given that Larsen deliberately couples the image of the 1919 massive race riots with the two mixed-race female characters' problematic encounter in Chicago, Irene's epidermalization in the racially segregated Drayton Hotel scene implies her

[88] As Trudier Harris explains, the violence of lynching worked to convey black people that "there was always someone watching over their shoulders ready to punish them for the slightest offense or the least deviation from acceptable lines of action" (19). Between 1882 and 1930, "an African-American was put to death somewhere in the South on the average of every four days," according to Steward E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck (qtd. in Goldsby 329).

[89] According to Cheng, "the psychical condition of measurement and approximation" concerning (white) bodily ego continues to haunt even racial minorities who achieve mainstream social ideals in a racist society (80-81). Rather, the "high achievers" are "most prone to this psychical condition of vigilant comparison and anxiety" (81). Then, to echo Cheng's words, Irene's hypervigilance in the Drayton shows the intensity of assimilative desire that a "Race Woman" in 1920s Harlem was forced to possess.

internalization of discourses of white supremacist patriarchy for which the narrative of lynching was representative; lynching's violence, whether physical or discursive, was the white male supremacist's last resort to re-racialize black bodies. For the remainder of this chapter, I explore further how pervasive the lynching discourse is and how its devastating effects haunt the lives and minds of Irene and other characters, black and white, throughout the pages of *Passing*.

Lynching and the Black Middle-Class Family

Readers encounter the legacy and impact of lynching nearly everywhere in *Passing*. Larsen's characters and plot all bear the mark of lynching's violence. It is instructive to have a sense of the intense racial tension and of black people's reinforced racial consciousness present in post-World War I United States. After the war, large scale and brutal race riots like the "Red Summer" of 1919 hit major cities. The riots were largely caused by white people's anxiety over a newly assertive black population, many of whom were the veterans of World War I. In his article, "Gender, Race, and Miscegenation: African Americans in Jazz Age Paris" (2003), Tyler Stovall explores the issue of interracial sexuality in Jazz Age Paris from the perspective of contemporary African Americans. According to Stovall, World War I created not only a "new black presence in France" but it also "set forth the theme of miscegenation" as one of the city's key characteristics, which provided a sharp contrast between "a tolerant France" and "a racist United States" (22-23). During the war, the American army sent approximately 200,000 black men overseas to fight in Europe. One of the most frightening scenarios imagined by those in command of the U.S. army was the prospect that African American men would interact with European white women. This scenario was not imaginary, as a few black soldiers did engage in sexual congress with white women, which was prohibited by army law. For example, by the beginning of 1919, some black

soldiers had been shot to death by the U.S military police for having sexual relations with French women. "The army's fear of such interracial contacts was," Stovall remarks, "less a concern for the integrity of French womanhood and more a concern that black men would be spoiled by their time in France and attempt to continue such behavior when they returned home to America," crossing racial boundaries that lynching as physical and symbolic violence worked so hard to maintain (23).

The war experience bolstered African Americans' negative perceptions of Jim Crow America. In his 1919 *Crisis* article, "An Essay Toward a History of the Black Men in the Great War," Du Bois points out that the U.S. Army in France officially stigmatized African American soldiers as "rapists" (731). White Commanding Officers ordered white military officers to spy on black soldiers and arrest them if they found them talking with French women (731). A white officer referred to the African American division (the 92nd Division) as the "rapist division" (707). Yet Du Bois states that "the French men and women much preferred the courtesy and bonhomie of the Negroes to the impudence and swagger of many of the whites" (707). Asserting that "[n]o other American division in France has a better record" concerning the military sex crime, Du Bois remarks that "the Negro troops" maintained "close and sympathetic" relationships with French women (732). Du Bois's 1922 *Crisis* article, "Black France," also establishes a sharp contrast between the social treatment of black soldiers in France and in the United States. Addressing the sexual contact between French prostitutes and African American soldiers, he argues that "the use of white French prostitutes for colored soldiers in France" shows a type of "social equality" that is perceived by United States culture as "a menace to the modern Anglo-Saxon world!" (200). Du Bois concludes his essay by asserting that blacks in France are "treated as men" — associating masculine equality with sexual access to white women — and

that France is more democratic than the United States (200).[90] As such, the possibility of engaging in interracial sex in Jazz Age Paris helped African American intellectuals back home to forge their view of racial justice.

In *Passing*, Brian embodies the black population disillusioned by racially segregated American society. After returning from World War I, he shows "an increasing inclination to tear himself and his possessions loose from their proper setting" (193). He calls the United States a "hellish place" and expresses a longing to migrate to the less racially prejudiced Brazil (232). Interestingly, the novel draws attention to his new racial consciousness during a conversation with his family about lynching. Here is the conversation between Brian and one of his sons, Ted:

> 'Dad, why is it that they only lynch coloured people?' Ted asked.
> 'Because they hate'em son.'
> 'Brian!' Irene's voice was a plea and a rebuke.
> Ted said: 'Oh! And why do they hate'em?'
> 'Because they are afraid of them.'
> 'But what makes them afraid of 'em?'
> 'Because –'
> 'Brian!' (231)

Irene's interruption of Brian's answer echoes Bellew's racist slur in Chicago that Irene painfully recalls: "'Always robbing and killing people,' he [Bellew] added darkly, 'worse'" (172). What are, then, the words that Brian and Bellew cannot complete? What do both black and white middle-class males want to say?

The two scenes indicate lynching's ubiquity and urgency in American people's daily lives during the 1920s. The two episodes show that interracial hate and violence center around the issue of lynching. The "worse" crime that Bellew speaks of, to be sure, is black men's "rape" of white women. The white supremacist worries that *spoiled* black men after the war might

[90] It is undeniable that "Black France" exposes Du Boisian black patriarchal ideology in which the ownership of white female bodies is regarded as a measure of racial justice.

transgress racial boundaries by taking white women. As depicted in the film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), which touts the necessity of the Ku Klux Klan after emancipation, the discourse of lynching was a racist narrative that positions black men as rapists and had a significant impact on the contemporary public imagination, especially that of white people. In that narrative, white women need protection from the newly freed black men incapable of controlling their obsessive lust without white oversight. In contrast to Bellew, what Brian, a black intellectual who is well aware of a relatively racially integrated Europe and South America, wanted to say is that white people's anxiety over black masculinity is the real cause of lynching. Although he could not express this troubling fact to his young son, he implicitly suggests that white males' inferiority complex to black males' sexuality leads to that brutal violence.

Let us further examine Brian's conversation with Irene. The reason that Irene interrupts Brian, who was trying to answer his son's question about lynching, is that she wants her two sons to be exempt from brutal realities as long as possible. Brian faults his wife, saying that "'If […] they've got to live in this dammed country, they'd better find out what sort of thing they're up against as soon as possible. The earlier they learn it, the better prepared they'll be'" (231). Here, Michelle Philips' article on Du Bois's writings about black children's education is quite useful to grasp how the terror of lynching permeates the minds and lives of the 1920s black middle-class family. According to Philips, throughout the whole of his work about black children's education, Du Bois insists that black children are not exempt from racism. He argues that black parents should ingrain their children with race consciousness (594). Du Bois also claims that black children kept ignorant of racism are unprepared for the harsh realities of racial prejudice and, as a result, they are likely to be disillusioned (593). Indeed, Du Bois, throughout his body of work on children published in *Crisis* during the 1910s and 1920s, juxtaposes

photographs exemplifying "innocence, beauty, and health of black children" with articles about the lynching of black people (594). In order to prevent future disillusionment, the editor of *Crisis* requests that black parents lead their children through "guided exposure" to racial prejudice and violence (593). Du Bois's opinion of education for black children demonstrates how much contemporary black middle classes were preoccupied with racial violence, for which lynching was emblematic. Indeed, Brian vocalizes Du Bois's view in his conversation with Irene: "'I'd feel I hadn't done my duty by them if I didn't give them some inkling of what's before them. It's the least I can do'" (232).

Brian's disillusionment about sex reflects the troubling effect of lynching on black middle-class psychology as well. In another conversation with Irene, Brian says that sex is a "joke" (189). Insisting that his son needs to learn about sex, he says, "The sooner and the more he learns about sex, the better for him. And most certainly if he learns that it's a grand joke, the greatest in the world. It'll keep him from lots of disappointments later on" (189). Readers might be puzzled by Brian's bitter sarcasm about sex. While McDowell and Blackmore read that passage as a rhetorical device that provokes Irene's lesbianism and as textual evidence to intimate Brian's same sex desire respectively, I propose that such intense disgust toward sex on the part of a black male has something to do with the miscegenation taboo that white lynchers desperately tried to sustain.[91] Brian is one of the black World War I veterans whose racial consciousness and disillusion about racial segregation are buttressed by his experience of the sharp contrast between racially integrated Europe and Jim Crow America. Given his race consciousness and knowledge about racism across Europe, Latin America, and the United States, Brian's remark that *teaching* disillusion about sex might save his son from "lots of disappointments later on" reveals his uncomfortable belief; the black middle-class man suggests

[91] For McDowell's and Blackmore's interpretations of the passage, see McDowell xiii and Blackmore 477.

that the social taboo about interracial heterosexuality will remain prevalent throughout generations, sustained by the physical and discursive violence of lynching.

Black Bodies and American Modernity

In addition to the influence of World War I, the increasing number lynched and the pervasive effect of lynching in early twentieth-century United States were significantly related to American modernity. As opposed to scholars like James McGovern, Joel Williamson, and Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, who argue that lynching symbolizes pre-modernity — society's lack of a "modern" economy, a "modern" white male sexuality, and a "modern" theater — Grace Elizabeth Hale asserts that U.S. radical modernization from the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century on played a crucial role in transforming lynching into "a modern spectacle" (201-2). Here is Hale's picture of the modern landscape of lynching in the early twentieth-century: "Lynchers drove cars, spectators used cameras, out-of-town visitors arrived on specially charted excursion trains, and the towns and countries in which these horrifying events happened had newspapers, telegraph offices, and even radio stations that announced times and locations of these upcoming violent spectacles" (201). Modern transportation, media technology, photography, and cinema had amplified and reproduced the impacts of lynching. Hale concludes that "[r]acial violence was modern" (203).

The modernity of lynching is displayed throughout the narrative of *Passing*. Bellew's bigotry is bolstered by his being informed of lynching by the newspaper. Answering Irene's question about whether or not he knows a single black person, he says: "'Thank the Lord, no! And never expect to! But I know people who've known them, better than they know their black selves. And I read in the papers about them. Always robbing and killing people. And […]

worse'" (172). The modern mass media ("the papers") informs Bellew's view of black men's hyper-sexuality and their alleged lust for white women. His racial hate is influenced by the papers that circulate the lynching narrative, which automatically criminalizes black men and victimizes white women while establishing the necessity of racial violence for maintaining social order. Larsen explores the connection between American modernity and racial violence in other areas of her novel as well.

At the Chicago tea party that Clare hosts for Irene and their former schoolmate Gertrude Martin, another light-skinned black woman, they chat about "Claude Jones," their mutual friend. According to Gertrude, Jones recently converted to Judaism, so he is "no longer a Negro or a Christian but ha[s] become a Jew" (169). He does not eat ham anymore, and he goes to the synagogue on Saturdays. He begins to grow a beard and a moustache. He calls himself "[a] black Jew" (169). To Clare and Gertrude, who mocks his conversion, Irene says that he might have decided to be a Jew not for "gain" but for sincere religious belief (169). Their conversation has important ideological ramifications about racial dynamics in the historical context of the 1920s in the United States. First, the three black women believe that a black man can be "a Jew," sloughing off the epithet of "a Negro" ("he was no longer a Negro or a Christian but had become a Jew"). They say that the black man can abandon his black identity by putting on the cultural markers of Jewishness such as observing religious customs. They also assume that one's racial or cultural identity can be changed for "gain." Given that the three light-skinned women express those thoughts without any awareness of the provocative implications of such statements about race, we can infer that racial identity around the time of Larsen's writing was quite unstable and changeable. Larsen also deliberately puts a limit on the extent to which a black person can transform her or his race. If Clare and Gertrude think that Jones converts to Judaism for "gain,"

they suggest that being "a Jew" is more privileged than remaining "a Negro."[92] Yet we need to remember that in the 1920s United States, under the strong influence of nativism, Jewish people were a group of "not yet white" people, much as the Italian and Irish immigrants discussed in the second chapter of my dissertation. As Walter Benn Michaels demonstrates, race discourse of the 1920s was based on Anglo-Saxonism rather than on "whiteness." However, as Du Bois points out in his 1925 article, "The Negro Mind Reaches Out," ethnic groups like Jewish people could become white over the bodies of black people (412). Non-Anglo-Saxon white people were sandwiched between Anglo-Saxons and African Americans in terms of the predominant racial dynamic of the 1920s. Jones's conversion to Judaism, in this regard, can be read as a reflection of the contemporary racial hierarchy in which black people could enjoy the "wages of whiteness" in quite a limited way.

However, as I examined in Chapter Two, the 1920s United States demonstrated that whiteness became a fluid and transmutable identity category. White nativists' desperate efforts to police racial boundaries paradoxically revealed that a racial identity was no longer fixed or unalterable. When an ultra-racist, Bellew, hysterically remarks that Clare is getting "darker and darker," his comment reflects the fear about "race suicide" that nativists of the 1920s expressed in the midst of both the massive black migration from the South and the influx of immigrants from abroad. In that age, the eugenics movement offered white nativists a scientific basis for their racist ideology (Somerville 30). For example, the contemporary influential eugenicist, Charles Davenport, arguing in favor of immigration restriction, summed up the anti-miscegenation argument thusly: "miscegenation commonly spells disharmony – disharmony of physical, mental and temperamental qualities […]. A hybridized people are a badly put together

[92] Here, I do not deny the historical fact that Jewish people were victims of racism in the United States. Along with African Americans, a few Jews and Catholics were lynched by white male supremacists in the early twentieth century (Tate 153).

people and a dissatisfied, restless, ineffective people" (qtd. in Somerville 30-31). "Voluntary sterilization" was one of the measures that eugenicists strongly recommended the "unfit" race to take (Somerville 31).[93] Larsen figures the history of "voluntary sterilization" into her novel. Expressing her firm resolve not to risk the possibility of another pregnancy and a dark child, Clare says, "'No, I have no boys and I don't think I'll ever have any. I am afraid. I nearly died of terror the whole nine months before Margery was born for fear that she might be dark. Thank goodness, she turned out all right. But I'll never risk it again. Never! The strain is simply too — too hellish" (168). Clare's "voluntary sterilization" demonstrates the overwhelming ideological power of nativism on the racialized minority. As a mixed-race woman living in a racist society that sees her as abnormal, Clare's mind and way of life are conditioned by hypervigilance. What is more important with respect to Clare's vigilant anxiety is that such nativist vigilantism against the influx of immigrants and the prevalence of mixed-race bodies created "a lethal synergy with anti-black mob violence" (Goldsby 24). The social mobility and globalized economy by which U.S. modernity was bolstered led white racists to fear "race suicide," by way of racial mixing; this fear was externalized by the brutal violence of lynching. In other words, lynching as a disciplinary practice (whether as a physical form of violence or a form of white discourse) that sought to legislate black male sexuality, was one of the devices used to manage American modernity and the social upheaval it threatened to bring with it. Managing modern America was inseparable from managing the sexuality of African American men.

What is ironic about the dynamic between lynching and modernity is that white people's disillusionment about the modern industrialized world was coterminous with the sadistic torture of black bodies through the practice of lynching. As Hazel V. Carby demonstrates, blackness had

[93] In the 1920s and 1930s, eugenic thinking was ubiquitous in the United States (English 293). Compulsory sterilization was one of the most common eugenic prescriptions. Interestingly enough, eugenics at that time was a common phenomenon not only in white but also in black communities (English 295).

begun acquiring positive connotations such as the signifier of rejuvenation for a dilapidated America after World War I. In particular, "black masculinity" was regarded as a new fertile site of corporeal plentitude by the postwar generation, who were growing impatient with the increasingly moribund and decrepit modernity of the over-civilized West. In this regard, Carby suggests that lynching can be read as a symbolic attempt to claim "an essence of manhood" that the black male body was believed to retain in the midst of wholesale industrialization (*Race Men* 47). The sadistic satisfaction that the white mob and spectators experienced from the brutal violence was a perverse expression of their fascination with the supposedly untamed and hyper-masculine black body.

Larsen's novel demonstrates for her readers white people's fetishist fascination with black bodies. At a Negro Welfare League benefit dance party, Hugh Wentworth (a character based on Larsen's life-long patron, Carl Van Vechten) mentions that white women are allured by black men. Noticing that a white woman named Bianca enjoys dancing with black men, the white intellectual says: "'S fact, and what happens to all the ladies of my superior race who're lured up here. Look at Bianca. Have I laid eyes on her tonight except in sports, here and there, being twirled about by some Ethiopian? I have not" (205). His rather sarcastic comments on white women's romantic and sexual predilection for black men culminate in his re-articulation of the former's erotic fantasies of the latter: "'They're always raving about the good looks of some Negro, preferably an usually dark one'" (205). Irene responds that white women are attracted to black men because of "'a kind of emotional excitement'" for "'the presence of something strange'" (205). Irene's remark might seem somewhat vapid given the history of intense racial violence that she grew up experiencing. However, if we refigure the two characters' conversation into a discussion between two representative intellectuals in the 1920s, one might extract a

meaningful subtext here. First, Wentworth's observation exposes the falseness of the dominant lynching narrative in which a white woman is always a victim of sexual harassment by a black man in an interracial heterosexual relationship. In that narrative, the idea of consensual sex between a white woman and a black man is unimaginable. In early twentieth-century America, if a white woman had consensual sex, she was socially ostracized and her sexuality was pathologized. Larsen here deliberately positions Wentworth, the white intellectual, as the one who challenges the lynching narrative. Also, the white man's observation reveals that the dominant white lynching discourse is supposed to suppress white women's sexual autonomy. Regulating white women's interracial heterosexual desire, the lynching discourse reasserts white men's male privilege. In this way, white women are another victim of the male discourse. Third, Irene's remark implicitly faults white women who are attracted to black masculinity only insofar as they can view it as exotic; these women find the black male body alluring at the expense of their concern with the violence that would be enacted upon the black body should it step out of line. In Carby's words, such de-politicized aesthetic fascination with the black body shares "the dissecting gaze of the lynch mob" (*Race Man* 68).

Larsen's keen consciousness of the violence — whether physical or psychological — that is visited upon the black body is also implied through her description of Brian's body:

> Brian, she was thinking, was extremely good-looking. Not, of course, pretty or effeminate; the slight irregularity of his nose saved him from the prettiness, and the rather marked heaviness of his chin saved him from the effeminacy. But he was, in a pleasant masculine way, rather handsome. And yet, wouldn't he, perhaps, have been merely ordinarily good-looking but for the richness, the beauty of his skin, which was of an exquisitely fine texture and deep copper colour. (183-84)

As Irene says to Clare and Gertrude in Chicago, Brian's skin color is too dark to "pass," and

therein lies her attraction (168). In the above passage, Larsen complicates Brian's physical features in terms of gender so that she may dismantle the symbolic violence enacted on the black male body, which often results in epidermalization. Fanon remarks that a black male body's identity is preordained by the blackness of his body itself. He goes on to argue that such epidermalization automatically pathologizes and criminalizes the black male's sexuality and thus ultimately threatens his existence in a white supremacist society. In Americanizing the Fanonian concept of epidermalization, white supremacists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, formalized the idea of the black rapist, who is "naturally driven to rape white women" (Gunning 8). Yet Brian's features that Irene describes are far from the conventional figure of the hyper-sexualized black male body. Rather, the black intellectual's body seems to have traces of the feminine. Irene's rhetorical acrobatics that move between the suggestions of Brian's femininity and the instant reaffirmation of Brian's masculinity is one of Larsen's anxiety-ridden discursive strategies that challenges the symbolic violence that has been enacted on black bodies by the white gaze under Jim Crow. It is clear that, under Irene's gaze, Brian's body is free from the Fanonian epidermalization. The complex nature of Irene's response to Brian's physique is a reaction against lynching discourse; she cannot describe him according to the traditional markers of black masculinity alone because she cannot risk invoking the image of the black rapist. In Larsen's fictional rendering, the black male's ontology manages to achieve subjectivity in this complicated way, a way that figures his masculinity "in a pleasant masculine way."

The black male's anxiety over physical and discursive violence that his body is subject to is addressed in Brian's fleeting comments about his taste in female beauty. Answering Irene's question of what he thinks about Clare's beauty, Brain says, "'I s'pose she'd be an unusually good-looking white woman. I like my ladies darker'" (209). We need to remember that Brian

married Irene before participating in World War I. He married a light-skinned woman, who can pass for white whenever she wants. Yet he now says to his wife that he does not like light-skinned women and, in fact, prefers darker women. I want to suggest Brian's inconsistent taste in women has its root in the pervasive influence of lynching's terror and fear embedded in black men in the 1920s. In a society in which a black man who is suspected of having sex with a white woman can be brutally murdered with impunity, any expressions of sexual interest in light-skinned women by black men must be repressed. Brian's contradictory words show that even in a private conversation with his wife, the black man is forced to refrain from expressing any interest in a light-skinned woman's sexuality and physical beauty.

Black Middle Class and the Exotic

If white people's aesthetic fascination with black bodies is another signifier of a more pervasive sense of otherness, Larsen's second novel shows that even the black middle class shares white people's voyeuristic interest in black bodies. By marginalizing black working-class people through fetishization, and thus re-racialization of their bodies, the black middle class seeks to assimilate into dominant white culture and to assert their class distinction within black communities. *Passing* represents the inter-class and intra-racial conflicts and violence in the 1920s black communities in Harlem.

In her first encounter with Clare in the Drayton Hotel, Irene describes Clare's physical traits in a problematic manner: "Ah! Surely! They were Negro eyes! mysterious and concealing. And set in that ivory face under that bright hair, there was about them something exotic" (161). Many scholars have analyzed this scene and argued that Irene simultaneously eroticizes and exoticizes Clare. Noting Irene's use of "colonial vocabulary" ("exotic"), those scholars have

claimed that Irene, as a member of the emerging black bourgeoisie, fetishizes and thus others Clare.[94] In addition to these critics' interpretations, I want to emphasize that it is only *after* Irene identifies Clare's biracial and working class-origin that the former begins to see the latter as an "exotic other." Most scholars overlook this point. It is only *after* Clare's recollection of her unhappy days as a black working-class woman, namely, a "janitor's daughter" (154), that Irene sees "something" "exotic," "mysterious," and "concealing" in her friend's "Negro eyes." We come to read Irene's problematic portrayal of Clare as an "exotic" woman only *after* Irene's recollection that "Clare had never been exactly one of the group" with which she socialized (154). Furthermore, it is *after* Clare's revelation that she married a white man and is passing as a white woman that Irene's eyes begin to recognize the "exotic" attributes of Clare's body. It is *before* Irene identifies Clare's racial heritage and racial passing that Irene feels that her own body is anatomized under the supposed white woman's gaze. In short, their first encounter in Chicago demonstrates the circular process through which a mixed-race woman, after being racialized by an alleged white woman, reasserts her subjectivity and racial pride by recognizing the biracial and working-class origin of the white woman. Also, Irene, the "Race Woman," regards Clare's racial passing as pathology. Irene's counter-racialization of Clare at the Drayton Hotel suggests a similarity between the black middle class's view of the black working class and earlier discourses that tabooed black female interracial sexual desire.

After witnessing Clare's association with white men in hotels prior to her marriage to Bellew, her black girlhood friends assert that she prostitutes herself: "then they would all join in asserting that there could be no mistake about its having been Clare, and that such circumstances could mean only one thing. Working indeed!" (153). Denying the prospect that Clare can have a

[94] For interpretations explicating Irene's fetishization of Clare in the scene, see Landry 41, Brody 1055, Basu 386, Blackmore 476.

consensual interracial sexual relationship for anything less than monetary gain, the black middle-class women foreclose Clare's sexual agency. Here, we see a black middle-class version of the miscegenation taboo that lynching's violence ultimately is supposed to sustain. The basic assumption of lynching is that a white woman is a victim of sexual harassment in her relationship with a black man. If a white woman has consensual sex with a black man, her sexuality is pathologized, as mentioned earlier. No *normalized* sexual agency is given to a white woman in her interracial sexual relationship with a black man. Clare's middle-class friends' response to her romantic engagement with white men draws its logic and rhetoric from such anti-miscegenation discourse; they deprive Clare of her sexual agency by assuming that she prostitutes herself in her relationships with white men. Clare's interracial heterosexual desire is always already pathology for the black middle-class women.

It is useful to have a historical sense of the reception of interracial heterosexuality within black communities in the 1920s. Paranoid by a suspicion of the affair between Clare and Brian, Irene briefly mentions "the Rhinelander case" (228). As Mark J. Madigan points out, Irene's offhand manner in referring to the Rhinelander case assumes a familiarity with it on the part of contemporary readers (524). In 1925, Leonard Kip Rhinelander, the heir of a prominent New York family of Dutch descent, sued his wife, Alice Beatrice Jones, the working-class daughter of a black West Indian father and white English mother, to annul their marriage. He claimed that she deceived him about her racial ancestry to marry him for his affluence (Wacks 162-63).[95] The mainstream newspapers offered detailed reports and editorials of the trial and the case even found its way into Broadway revues (Chinn 66). Even more interesting is the way that the image of Alice was circulated and consumed within black communities. In 1925, black rights activists like Marcus Garvey referred to the case as an example of the moral decay that miscegenation

[95] For a detailed explanation of the case, see Jamie L. Wacks 162-77.

would lead to (Wacks 171). Some African American nationalist activists assumed that Alice was "a race traitor" (172). During that same year, the editorial page of *The Amsterdam News*, New York's leading black newspaper, remarked that she was a symbol of "'Negro womanhood'" (qtd. in Wacks 176). The editorial claimed that Alice was an embodiment of white men's sexual exploitation of black women. What is conspicuously missing from the debate surrounding the Rhinelander trial is a consideration of Alice's sexual autonomy. Whether she was blamed as a race traitor or heralded as a race hero, her claim to her own body was totally ignored. In an almost identical way, Clare's sexual autonomy is denied by her middle-class black friends in *Passing*.

Lynching a Female Black Christ

Irene's re-racialization of Clare as an "exotic other" denotes that racial identities, intersecting with class and gender, are constantly constructed, destructed, and reconstructed. If Bellew polarizes race into black and white, then Irene, as a member of the emerging black bourgeoisie, re-polarizes black into the New Negro and the Old Negro, or the middle-class Negro and the working-class Negro. Irene and her girlhood middle-class friends exploit Clare's racial ambiguity and interracial heterosexuality in order to buttress their class distinction. Yet Larsen also suggests that Clare's biracial family background and her passing for white could be the signifier of a white privilege that Irene unconsciously admires. Clare comes across to Irene as an ambiguous figure who oscillates between an object of repulsion and an object of identification. In the following, I address how Clare, as one who passes for white, re-racializes Irene into the figure of the black "folk." Furthermore, I explore Larsen's rhetorical strategy in which Irene's imaginary attempt to contain Clare's ontological threat draws its rhetoric from the discourse of

lynching.

One of the main reasons why Irene hesitates to invite Clare into her Harlem community is her anxiety over the prospect that Clare's presence would inadvertently place herself in the perilous position of "exotic other," a label that she otherwise manages to drape over Clare's body. In his 1925 Harlem Renaissance manifesto, "The New Negro," Alain Locke dubs the black middle class as "the New Negro" and catalogues their desirable characteristics: "the development of a more positive self-respect and self-reliance; the repudiation of social dependence, and then the gradual recovery from hyper-sensitiveness and 'touchy' nerves, the repudiation of the double standard of judgment with its special philanthropic allowances and then the sturdier desire for objective and scientific appraisal; and finally the rise from social disillusionment to race pride" (11; emphasis added). Announcing that the day of "Uncle Tom" and "Sambo" is gone, Locke asserts the modernity of "the New Negro" and its "race pride" (5). Yet, as Carby argues, the black intellectuals in Harlem were criticized for their imitation of white culture and contempt for the culture of working-class and rural black people (*Reconstructing Womanhood* 171). They possessed "a patronizing sense of superiority to the black working class, an elitist attitude of color snobbery, and a desperate desire to distance themselves from the history and folk culture of slavery" (Hale 22). The emerging black middle class consciously attempted to detach themselves from the image of "what is fundamentally or distinctly African American" (Jenkins 134). The bourgeois equated the term "folk" with stereotypical "primitivism" (134). Just as they tried to define their ideal femininity based on Victorian womanhood, the black middle class attempted to establish their class distinction by modeling themselves after the white middle class.[96]

[96] The black middle class's anxiety over being equated with the figure of "black folk" can be conceptualized by the terms "vigilant worry" or "stereotype threat." According to Cheng, the two terms indicate "the anxiety for the racialized minority of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype" (215).

With this in mind, let us go back to the scene in which Irene expresses her intention to disconnect herself from Clare. Irene here says to Brian, "'Well, Clare can just count me out. I've no intention of being the link between her and her poorer darker brethren'" (185). Irene indicates that she will become a member of the "poorer darker brethren" if Clare visits her in Harlem. Asked by Clare why white people come to a Negro Welfare League benefit dance party, Irene answers, "'Same reason you're here, to see Negroes'" (198). Clare's expression of her excitement to have an occasion to see "Negroes" is similar to white people's voyeuristic and fetishist gaze on "black folk": "It sounds terribly *interesting* and *amusing*" (198; emphasis added). What must not be missed about this scene is that Irene promptly saves herself from being the "exotic other" through her rhetorical gymnastics: to Clare, who is excited about coming to the party, Irene says, "'You mean because so many other white people go?'" (198). Here, Irene consciously disregards Clare's assertion that Clare comes to Harlem to see "Negroes," which might include herself in Clare's eyes. The middle-class woman endeavors not to allow herself to be the object of Clare's voyeuristic gaze and to distinguish herself from those "Negroes" on which Clare comes to gaze. Unfortunately, Clare manifests again her desire to "see Negroes": "'You don't know, you can't realize how I want to see Negroes'" (200).

As in the Drayton, even in Harlem, Irene tries to manufacture Clare's "exoticness" for the purpose of containing Clare's threat to her racial pride as a "Race Woman" by re-stereotyping Clare as a black "folk." In a conversation with Brian, Irene bluntly explains why she does not invite Clare to a party for Hugh Wentworth: "'It just happens that Hugh prefers intelligent women'" (216). She goes on to say that Clare is "intelligent enough in a purely feminine way," suggesting that Clare is always sexually available to men, especially white men (216). Irene concludes that Clare is different from Felise Freeland, another middle-class black woman, who

has a "[r]eal brain that can hold [her] own with anybody" (216). Indeed, Irene's recollection of Clare is quite class-conscious: "Since childhood their lives had never really touched. Actually they were strangers. Strangers in their ways and means of living. Strangers in their desires and ambitions. Strangers even in their racial consciousness" (192). In spite of Irene's conscious efforts to alienate Clare in terms of class, however, Clare's biracial heritage poses a threat to Irene's racial and class ego. Clare, who has white relatives and a wealthy white man to whom she is married, is not reduced to the exotic other. Consciously proud of her black race and unconsciously envious of white culture, Irene envies Clare's whiteness as a signifier of class privilege. Clare, in a sense, is the "embodiment of Irene's bourgeois fantasies" (Brody 1060).

Indeed, Clare is a pernicious and intractable figure that Harlem's black middle class is unable to contain. Brian, the black middle-class intellectual, referring to Clare's wish to visit Harlem, asserts that passing people are never "satisfied" and "always come back" to black communities (185). He suggests that Clare's desire to visit Harlem is inevitable and thus pathologizes passing itself; crossing the color line, or betraying race is doomed to fail. Yet Clare's body does not bear the "mark" of "[p]ain, fear, and grief" that both those of black and white middle classes would impose on passing mixed-race bodies (201-02). As Wall accurately puts it, Clare is never in despair over being uprooted from black communities. Her trips to Harlem involve "more pleasure-seeking than homecoming" (Wall 124). Thus, Irene herself comes to suspect that Clare is just "acting" her desire to return home (182).

Clare's exchanges with black middle-class people in Harlem pose a serious threat to their class distinction. Irene's description of Clare's sexual interchange with Dave Freeland, a preeminent black intellectual, is quite telling:

> Scraps of their conversation, in Clare's husky voice, floated over to her: "…

> always admired you … so much about you long ago … everybody says so … no one but you ….” And more of the same. The man hung rapt on her words, though he was the husband of Felise Freeland, and the author of novels that revealed a man of perception and a devastating irony. And he fell for such pish-posh! And all because Clare had a trick of sliding down ivory lids over astonishing black eyes and then lifting them suddenly and turning on a caressing smile. Men like Dave Freeland fell for it. And Brian. (220-21)

In Irene’s portrayal, Clare is depicted as an exotic and erotic woman, whereas Freeland, the black male intellectual, is described as the figure who fails to resist the female seduction. As I already mentioned, black intellectuals in 1920s Harlem asserted their class distinction by modeling the values and culture of white middle class. They established Victorian “respectability” as a “new marker of blackness,” which was supposed to differentiate themselves from black “folk” (Jenkins 148). Clare’s alleged seduction of Freeland is a threat to their “respectability.” Seducing the respected black male intellectual, Clare threatens to tarnish the ethics of black middle-class respectability. To put it in the terms of Freudian psychoanalysis, she *castrates* the black *phallus*, reducing it to the oversexed black figure, which would reaffirm the stereotype of the alleged hyper-sexuality of African Americans. Clare’s supposed affair with Freeland is miscegenation in terms of class.

Clare’s affair with Brian, whether it actually happens or is merely Irene’s obsessive delusion, also threatens to dismantle the color line between the black middle class and the black “folk,” to whom Irene believes Clare belongs. As the “embodiment of Irene’s bourgeois fantasies” (Brody 1060), Clare renders Irene conscious of her own mixed-race body under her gaze in Chicago. As the “exotic other,” she also miscegenates Brian, the black middle-class man. In this way, Clare’s racial identity proves indefinable. She moves not only between a working-class black woman (the “exotic other”) and a middle-class white woman (the “bourgeois fantas[y]”), but also between a *modern* woman, able to assume many racial masks, and an

"exotic" woman.[97] In Samira Kawash's terms, Clare's racial ambiguity suggests that race is "a *something* that says nothing" (155; emphasis in original).

However, *Passing* ultimately shows that racial identity, despite its emptiness, has ontological weight. Irene begins to fantasize about murdering Clare (188). Faced with the existential crisis posed by Clare, Irene begins to consider physical violence as a possible means of preventing the collapse of the race and class boundaries that Irene finds no longer substantially separating herself from Clare. In the final scene of the novel in which Bellew breaks into a black-only party in Harlem to find Clare, Larsen drapes Clare in the image of the black Christ that anti-lynching writers like Du Bois created: "Clare stood at the window, as composed as if everyone were not staring at her in curiosity and wonder, as if the whole structure of her life were not lying in fragments before her. She seemed unaware of any danger or uncaring. There was even a faint smile on her full, red lips, and in her shining eyes" (238-39). Clare's composure and smile remind readers of the image of the black John, who waits for the white mob in *The Souls of Black Folk*: "He leaned back and smiled toward the sea, whence rose the strange melody, away from the dark shadows where lay the noise of horses galloping, galloping on" (184). After displaying her remarkable composure, Clare drops from the window to her death. Scholars have continuously discussed whether Clare is killed by Irene, or Bellew, or chooses herself to die. Emphasizing the link between Clare's image before her death and the black Christ's image, I suggest, Larsen intends that both Irene and Bellew be considered responsible for Clare's death. Bellew breaks into the black-only party to check Clare's race and re-establish a clear racial boundary. Before the party, Irene fantasizes about murdering Clare in

[97] As Alys Eye Weinbaum points out, in early twentieth-century United States, "modern femininity was produced as a racialized identity, one that could be worn by women like a mask" ("Racial Masquerade" 120). Modern commodities like cosmetics and fashionable clothing allowed "modern women" the "control over processes of racial ascription" (121).

order to police the racial boundary she desires to keep between them. Indeed, Irene herself portrays Clare's death in terms of white lynching by imagining the latter's dead body as a "body mutilated" (240). At the same time, Clare takes on the figure of the black Christ in the martyr tale that anti-lynching writers created. After all, Larsen intimates that Irene and Bellew are complicit in Clare's death. Irene's hysterical defense that Bellew is not culpable substantiates my claim that both the black and white-middle class characters are the perpetrators of Clare's symbolic lynching: "'No, no!'" Irene protests. "'I'm quite certain that he didn't. I was there, too'" (242). Also, the image of lynching simultaneously suggests the intensity of Irene's ontological crisis and the influence of lynching discourse on her psychology.

By way of concluding this chapter, I want to suggest that Larsen's re-figuration of Clare as a martyr image critiques the Du Boisian counter-lynching narrative as well. In the black male version of lynching discourse, the black man's interracial heterosexuality, whether it is expressed explicitly or implicitly, is presented as a necessary or heroic trait for racial justice and integration. In Chapters One and Two, I demonstrated that the Du Boisian martyr narrative sanctifies interracial heterosexuality of black men and white women, while stigmatizing the interracial sexual desire of white men and black women. In that discourse, black women's sexual autonomy and agency are marginalized, and even pathologized when they are involved with white men. Clare, who marries a white man, is the very figure that Du Bois's counter-lynching narrative disgraces. Irene's symbolic lynching of Clare is telling in this regard. As the embodiment of Du Boisian racial respectability (Butler 131), Irene attempts to deter Clare's racial and sexual transgression, which the Du Boisian counter-lynching discourse implicitly suppresses as well. Thus, Larsen's figuration of Clare as a saint figure is a critique of the black male version of the white lynching narrative. While in "Of Coming of John" in *The Souls of Black Folk*, black John

sacrifices himself to normalize black men's sexuality, in *Passing*, Clare does so for the de-stigmatization of black women's sexuality. After all, Larsen's novel is critiquing heteronormative masculinity that both white and black lynching discourses endorse.

Chapter Five

The White Woman's Burden: Imperial Femininity and Benevolent Assimilation in *America Is in the Heart*

Benevolent Assimilation and the Figure of the White Woman

In the early pages of Carlos Bulosan's semi-autobiographical novel, *America Is in the Heart* (1943), Bulosan's alter ego, Carlos, meets for the first time Macario, one of his four elder brothers in his hometown in the Philippines. "[B]eing educated in the American way" (20), Macario wants to cut Carlos's hair to make his younger brother look like "a gentleman" (21). Yet their father says that Carlos needs his long hair to protect him from mosquitoes, flies, and the hot sun (21). This difference of opinion forces Carlos into a predicament that sums up the conflicting impulses of nationalism and assimilation inherent to a Filipino subject under U.S. colonialism: "I could not say anything. I walked silently between them: my brother on my left, my father on my right. They were like two strong walls protecting me from the attack of an unseen enemy" (21).

This scene prefigures one of the threads that runs through *America Is in the Heart*: the exploration of the achievement and frustration of the Filipino subject's assimilative desire that many scholars have examined. This chapter continues the discussion of the subjectivity of a Filipino man under U.S. imperialism by focusing on Carlos's relationship with white female characters throughout the narrative of the novel. As scholars have pointed out, the experience of Filipino Americans differs from that of other Asian groups in that they came to the United States not as immigrants but as "nationals." Many critical studies of *America Is in the Heart* have highlighted how the novel articulates the liminal status of Filipino people, who were considered

neither citizens nor aliens, but "nationals" during the period that Bulosan describes.[98] In particular, a number of critics have addressed the narrator's presentation of white women and the ideological implications of such depictions for Filipino men under U.S. imperial rule.[99]

More than three decades ago, Elaine H. Kim wrote that in *America Is in the Heart*, white women symbolize "the America to which Bulosan's Filipinos want to belong" (51). According to Kim, white female characters in the novel give the Filipino protagonist "the possibility of a stable family life and at least a partial entry into the mainstream of American life" (52). Similarly, demonstrating the protagonist's contradictory presentation of women, namely, the degradation of eroticized nonwhite women and the idealization of de-sexualized white women, Susan Koshy contends that Bulosan features white women as "guarantors" of masculinity and American nationhood, to which the myth of benevolent assimilation subscribes (*Sexual Naturalization* 124-25). Rachel C. Lee also critiques the Filipino author's portrayal of women. She asserts that in *America Is in the Heart*, often claimed as an account of the immigrant working class, women are "the Other of labor" (27). Lee argues that Bulosan generally associates his female characters with "the erotic, the unbrotherly, and the bestial" (27). She adds that even when Bulosan offers approving accounts of white female characters, their activities are limited to the role of "maternal care," to nurture and support the male protagonist's vision for working-class fraternity (28). In Lee's view, Bulosan prioritizes racial issues over gender issues by valuing women, especially white female characters, according to the degree by which they exhibit racial tolerance (33).

[98] In this sense, E. San Juan Jr. proposes that "Filipinos and their practice of cultural production [can] no longer be subsumed under the rubric of 'Asian American'" (89).

[99] As I noted in the introduction of this dissertation, Filipinos were racialized through the stereotype of African Americans as the hypersexual predators of white women. Yet unlike African American men, who could marry with African American women, marital options of Filipino American men, along with other Asian American groups, were severely limited because of the skewed gender ratios brought about by restrictive immigration laws (*Sexual Naturalization* 7-8). Bulosan's intensive and constant exploration of relations with white women throughout his career is a reflection on this disturbing history of Asian Americans.

Martin Joseph Ponce maintains that the de-sexualized relationship between Carlos and the "angelic" white women that inhabit the novel mirrors Bulosan's sensitivity to the anti-miscegenation sentiment pervasive among white working-class men during the years of the Depression (96).[100] According to Ponce, for Bulosan, "America" will have fulfilled its "promise of equality" only when interracial relationships between a Filipino man and a white woman are "legally possible and socially acceptable" (97). Ponce adds that "the ultimate failure" of the interracial heterosexual relationships in *America Is in the Heart* denotes Bulosan's critique of America's failed ideals (97). In her book, *Imagine Otherwise*, Kandice Chuh argues that Carlos's asexualized idealization of white women is one of Bulosan's discursive strategies deployed to articulate "the necessity of overcoming a particular and violent version of masculinity" (39). Chuh interprets the scene in which Carlos is lynched by white vigilantes as the expression of an American version of heteronormative masculinity; she thus claims that the novel illustrates "the possibilities for living in spite of, and in difference to, this version of America" (41). In her reading, *America Is in the Heart* is an account of the Filipino male worker's alternative assimilation, or, to reprise the title of Chuh's book, the novel is a story about assimilating "otherwise." Connecting Carlos's frustrated assimilation into America's mainstream society to his relationships with white women, Allan Puzalan Isaac defines Bulosan's text as a narrative of "frustrated erotics" (146). This erotics denies "physicality," which, according to Issac, is symptomatic of the disavowed status of the Filipino protagonist as a member of the "unincorporated territories" (147). Isaac thus suggests that Carlos's possibility of assimilation is deferred indefinitely because of his disavowed subject as a U.S. national. Viet Thanh Nguyen writes that *America Is in the Heart* enacts "a discourse of revolutionary morality," one that is both sexually chaste and politically conscious (69). In Nguyen's view, the novel offers a

[100] Many scholars note this. For example, see *Sexual Naturalization* 126-27, Chuh 40, and Nguyen 69.

narrative of chastity and political consciousness as a discursive defense against the stereotype of the "hypersexual" Filipino male that circulated during the period of Bulosan's writing (69). Demonstrating Bulosan's bifurcation of his female characters into chaste white women and eroticized non-white women, Nguyen concludes that the idealized white women's sexual unavailability is a "testimony to America's paradoxical qualities" (69). Sheng-Mei Ma asserts that Bulosan's idealization of white women is the very outcome of "the powerful yet invisible interpellation of colonial ideology" (82). Ma claims that in *America Is in the Heart*, Carlos's deification of white women illustrates the extent to which American cultural imperialism pervades the colonized subject's values, including those of aesthetics and sexual preference (83). This reading suggests that the text reveals its author's pathological internalization of white values, which is figured into his protagonist's obsessive idolization of white women.

As such, most of the scholarship outlined above has paid attention to Bulosan's alleged reenactment of patriarchal colonial idioms and traditional gender hierarchy in his vision of cross-racial labor fraternity. These scholars and critics concur that such gender politics undermines the Filipino writer's revolutionary class politics. According to this reading, Bulosan's text reifies patriarchal heteronormative ideology that stigmatizes female sexuality, while exalting the conventional maternal figure.[101] This chapter, however, differs from the continuous trend in scholarship of *America Is in the Heart* by contending that the novel explores white women's role for America's imperial rule of the Philippines. The scholars who critique Bulosan's gendered portrayal of white women presume that the women are merely consumed and appropriated to serve his androcentric cultural critiques or his racial politics. They do not explore how the white women who they claim that Bulosan allegedly idealizes participate in enacting American

[101] The only exception is Chuh's reading. Yet even her argument resembles that of the other critics in that she also assumes that Bulosan idealizes white women and de-sexualizes their relationships with Carlos.

imperialist violence. What remains underexplored within their scholarship is the extent to which white female characters act as vital agents of American imperial ideology.

Bulosan's representation of white women in his novel is an attempt to illustrate the imperial female agency that underscores ideologies of colonial wardship. In her incisive exploration of how the first American white female journalists played an important role in reinforcing American imperialism and racism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Laura Wexler asserts that the "cult of domesticity" was "a crucial framework for American imperialism" (22). Analyzing the photography of U.S. imperial expansion taken by these journalists, Wexler reveals the ideological ties between racialized domestic vision and U.S. imperialism and shows how the white women's photographs served to fortify hierarchies between white people and non-white people or between the United States and its colonies. Her account of the imperial female agency, I suggest, provides a paradigm to explore white women's role in America's imperial policy for the Philippines. As Amy Kaplan explains, the well-known nineteenth-century "cult of domesticity" held that "woman's hallowed place is in the home, the site from which she wields the sentimental power of moral influence" (24). In the process of U.S. imperial expansion in the late nineteenth century, the notion of the "cult of domesticity" reconfigures "the home as a stable haven or feminine counterbalance to the male activity of territorial conquest" (Kaplan 25). Of further interest is that the white woman's "true sphere" was, as Kaplan points out, "a mobile and mobilizing outpost that transformed conquered foreign lands into the domestic sphere of the family and nation" (25). If male imperialists sought to conquer new territories, their female partners tried to reconfigure the newly acquired lands as spaces for the domestic white middle-class model "home." In doing so, the "cult of domesticity" ideology served to "dehumaniz[e]" those "who did not have, could not get, or had been robbed of their

'homes'" (Wexler 101). More specifically, "slaves, Native Americans, Mexicans, and later Eastern European immigrants, Cubans, Filipinos, Hawaiians, and Chinese" were seen "outside the magic circle of nineteenth-century domesticity" (Wexler 67). In Anne McClintock's words, the white middle-class home became "a space for the display of imperial spectacle" (34).

As Kaplan explains, female influence could have "a complementary outward reach from within the domestic sphere" (41). Women could be "more effective imperialists" by "penetrating those interior colonial spaces" inaccessible to male imperialists (41). Furthermore, their "benign" and "sentimental" exertion of imperial power worked to *normalize* and *naturalize* the imperial and racial violence enacted on colonized racial others (Wexler 6).[102] Drawing on Wexler's and Kaplan's articulation of U.S. imperialism as the embodiment of the feminine value of domesticity, this chapter assumes that their notion of imperial femininity is central to the discussion of Bulosan's exploration of white women in *America Is in the Heart*. In this chapter, I first explore how Bulosan's text addresses American women's participation in the enactment of colonial violence. In particular, my chapter examines the Filipino male writer's representation of American female characters as the agent of "benevolent assimilation" not only in the Philippines but also in the United States. In doing so, my study seeks to demonstrate the way *America Is in the Heart* describes white women as "benevolent" participants in the ideological and cultural interpellation of its native and migrant protagonist into a colonized subject.

Additionally, by analyzing Carlos's consensual romantic relationships with white female characters in the novel**,** which undercut traditional racist narratives of assimilation, this chapter traces textual moments in which the colonial attempt to assimilate the Filipino male subject into the "proper" colonial subject is undone and frustrated.[103] Many scholars have argued that the

[102] It is telling that "[e]tymologically the verb domesticate is akin to dominate" (McClintock 35).

supposed platonic nature of Carlos's romantic engagements with white women is a textual defense against the racial hysteria over Filipino man's sexuality, which was pervasive across the United States during the time that Bulosan's novel recounts. Among them is Koshy's contention that although *America Is in the Heart* "repudiates the myth of benevolent white paternity contained in the colonial family romance," the text retains the "figure of redemptive white womanhood central to this fiction" (*Sexual Naturalization* 23). According to Koshy, Françoise Vergés's concept of "colonial family romance" to identify the "images of familiar order that emerged in the process of French colonial domination of Réunion" is applicable in the case of U.S. ideology of "benevolent assimilation" for its domination of the Philippines (*Sexual Naturalization* 117). Employing "models of filiality," the discourse of "benevolent assimilation" naturalized "relations of conquest as relations of affinity" (*Sexual Naturalization* 118). In that narrative, Filipinos were rendered as "little brothers" who were in need of America's tutelage and protection. Koshy contends that Bulosan's novel repudiates the "colonial family romance" by revealing the brutal violence and exploitation of American imperialism against Filipinos (*Sexual Naturalization* 118). However, she adds that Bulosan embraces the colonial myth's "images of familiar order as a utopian model of future equality," especially the idealized *maternal* figures of white women (*Sexual Naturalization 118*). Yet we also need to recall Vergés's contention that "the fable of the colonial romance encountered the reality of "métissage" [miscegenation]" (8). Departing from Koshy, I want to suggest that *America Is in the Heart* is a narrative about the uncomfortable "reality" of miscegenation.

Thus, this chapter notes the moments in which white women's interracial heterosexual

[103] According to Cheng, the myth of the melting pot and racial mixing are mutually exclusive in America: "[W]hile imaginary intermixing across ethnic, religious, or economic lines has been long celebrated by the myth of the melting pot and the rhetoric of assimilation, racial crossing and miscegenation have in fact been scrupulously excluded from those imaginings" (70).

desire is exposed in the novel. Such an exposure of forbidden desire suggests both the difficulty of regulating white women's sexuality during the Depression, as well as the collapse of the benevolent assimilation narrative, in which "respectable" white women's interracial sexual desire is unimaginable. As Hazel Carby points out, the basis assumption of the principles underlying the cult of domesticity in nineteenth-century America was "the necessity for the white female to 'civilize' the baser instincts of man" (*Reconstructing Womanhood* 27). Linking the cult of domesticity with its role in Euro-American imperialism, Vincente Rafael contends that in the Asian tropics in the early twentieth century, "the presence of white women was meant to protect white men from the dangers of racial corruption in the native concubine" ("Colonial Domesticity" 642). By regulating the white men's interracial sexual desire, Rafael argues, these women's "imperial femininity" was believed to contain "the threat of miscegenation" and "the moral degeneracy" it was thought to cause ("Colonial Domesticity" 642). This chapter suggests that Rafael's discussion of "imperial femininity" is useful to explore Bulosan's portrayal of white women, not only in the Philippines, but also in the United States. Both "imperial femininity" and the miscegenation taboo that was applied to Filipinos in the early twentieth century were predicated on the white patriarchal idea that the white woman is the embodiment of the American national spirit. In this regard, the concepts of "imperial femininity" and the miscegenation taboo are interdependent and, at times, even almost identical when discussing the official imperial discourse of the relations between white women and Filipino men.

Thus, my discussion of how white female characters transgress the miscegenation taboo in *America Is in the Heart* interrogates the rupture of American imperial ideology, namely, the benevolent assimilation narrative. Ultimately, this chapter explores the way in which Bulosan's protagonist channels and enacts his assimilative desire through his relationships with white

women, and examines the historical and ideological implications that are suggested by the novel's illustration of their mutual interracial heterosexual desire.

White Women in the Philippines: Domesticating a Native Subject

In his introduction to *America Is in the Heart*, which appears in the University of Washington Press 1973 reprint, Carey Williams states that the novel is "the first and best account in English of just what it was like to be a Filipino in California and its sister states in the period, say, from 1930 to 1941" (xii). Indeed, the semi-autobiographical novel describes a Filipino migrant worker's brutal life on the West Coast during the Depression with "naturalist candor" (San Juan, Jr. 137). However, Bulosan sets aside more than a quarter of his book to describe Carlos's and his family's life in the Philippines in the 1920s. In the section that depicts native people in the Philippines, the United States' only directly governed colony in Asia, the author suggests that Filipinos already engage in the process of Americanization, even before they set foot in their mother country. In the first few pages of his account, Carlos recalls that in the 1920s Philippines, the young generation's admiration for "American ideals and modes of living" was quite intense (5). The assimilation drive among Filipino nationals is the recurrent motif of *America Is in the Heart*. According to Ronald Takaki, after the United States' annexation of the Philippines, Filipino youths learned about Abraham Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence from English textbooks in schools established by Americans (57). A Filipino recalls that he sang "The Star Spangled Banner" and said "the Pledge of Allegiance" to the American flag every morning (Takaki 57). Indeed, Americanized education was a mandate for Filipinos, including peasants who had been denied public education under Spanish rule. The sweeping enthusiasm for Americanized popular education suggests contemporary Filipinos'

impulse to assimilate into American culture and values. According to Carlos, "When the free education that the United States had introduced spread throughout the islands, every family who had a son pooled its resources and sent him to school. My father and mother, who could not read or write were willing to sacrifice anything and everything to put my brother Macario through high school" (14).

In the midst of nationwide modernization, Carlos is, as discussed above, "ashamed" of his unkempt hair in front of Macario, who is "educated in the American way." In order to look like "a gentleman," namely, an American gentleman, the brown Filipino boy must transform his body into a *modern* body, an ethical imperative for Carlos. The protagonist's struggle to assimilate his body and make it appear like that of "a gentleman" is constantly illustrated throughout the narrative of Bulosan's text. In public schools in the Philippines, Carlos is bullied by classmates for his long hair and bare feet (48). Some girls look at his unkempt hair and bare feet with "pitying eyes" (82). Carlos in turn finds his native village's little girls' "naked bodies" "ugly," reproducing the prejudice that he experiences (77). Carlos's obsessive desire to adapt his body is complicated when he proves able to make money by showing his naked body to an American woman tourist in a market in Baguio, one of the most modernized regions in the Philippines: "One day an American lady tourist asked me to undress before her camera, and gave me ten centavos for doing it. I had found a simple way to make a living. Whenever I saw a white person in the market with a camera, I made myself conspicuously ugly, hoping to earn ten centavos" (67). Carlos's conscious performance of the "savage body," a figure commonly associated with colonial voyeurism, suggests Western imperialism's contradictory injunction that Homi Bhabha articulates in his well-known phrase, "almost the same, but not quite."[104] Carlos

[104] According to Nerissa Balce, two tropes of "savagery" and "docility," not *alternately* but *concurrently*, were at work in the American imperial imaginary (92). The two contradictory portrayals of the non-white body served the

is instructed to discipline his body by his schoolmates and brother, Macario, who are educated in Americanized schools. Yet, in the above scene, an American woman tourist asks that Carlos perform the savage body. In spite of his desire to assimilate into the concept of the modern Western body, his economic situation causes him to accede to this voyeurism in order to "make a living."

The protagonist's contradictory behaviors mirror the colonial politico-economic structure that preordains the failure of the Filipino subject's assimilation into American values and ideals. Rey Chow coined the term "ethnicization of labor" to refer to the commodification of the labor of people of color in late twentieth-century global capitalism (*The Protestant Ethnic* 34). Chow argues that ethnicity is being "systematically produced and perpetuated" in metropolitan cities to profit global capitalism (34). By performing ethnicity, or doing certain kinds of work associated with one's ethnicity, a laborer pays for his or her living even while such labor continues to reduce the laborer to the position of "the outsider, the ethnic" (34). Chow refers to Immanuel Wallerstein's discussion of racialized capitalism when she states that the "ethnicization of labor" is specific to "the operations of modern capitalism with its twin objectives of maximizing profits and minimizing production costs" (34). While Chow draws her observation from the economic landscape of the contemporary world, I suggest that her point is applicable to my discussion of U.S. colonization of the Philippines and its manifestation in Carlos's performance of the savage body.[105]

From the perspective of the American woman tourist, the display of Carlos's naked body offers her not only erotic pleasure, but also a clear sense of racial, economic, and national

---

U.S. imperial project of the Philippines (94).

[105] In the United States, Carlos makes his living by working on California farms. Given that Filipinos were viewed by American farmers as suited for "stoop labor" (Takaki 320), Carlos's labor as a field worker is another case of ethnicized labor.

superiority, which comes from the stark contrast she experiences between the naked "savage" body that she perceives and her disciplined body. As Shu-ching Chen points out, Carlos's performance for the white woman facilitates no "emotional exchange" (59). It is structured by the logic of a colonial economy in which the white woman gratifies her desire for both erotic sensation and psychological superiority at minimized cost, both financial and emotional. As Wallerstein posits, the white woman instantiates a colonial economy that maximizes the colonizer's emotional profits and minimizes the production costs of the colonial fantasy. As a result, one might say that Carlos faces the contradictory demands of U.S. imperialism: to adapt his body to look like "a gentleman" (Bulosan 21), and then to re-make his body in the image of a colonized savage, to look "conspicuously ugly" (Bulosan 67). What must not be missed here is that the re-ethnicized body is a form of the docile body. Carlos's performance of a colonized native is *acceptably* disruptive for the white woman—his corporeality is safely fetishized in the marketplace at a distance. That Carlos displays himself as a commodity indicates that his body is already domesticated to pique white tourists' interest with its alleged exoticism. In the long-standing American racial imaginary, native bodies have always already been fetishized, marked, and made to gratify the tastes and desires of the white audiences that consume them.

The white woman's fetishized and voyeuristic gaze on Carlos's naked body enacts a symbolic racial bond of white men and white women before a racial other. According to Wexler, "in a world ordered by racial imbalance," white women could be in alliance with the white male gaze (90). Specifically, in her studies of nineteenth-century white women photographers' work about racial others, Wexler notes that "the pleasurable fantasies of scopic advantage are split and styled in different ways, such that in other roles, certain other women are coded as *not-to-be-looked-at-ness*" (90; emphasis in original). Reconfiguring Laura Mulvey's notion of the woman

as an object "to-be-looked-at," Wexler contends that white women participating in U.S. imperialism shared with white men "spectatorial privilege—that is, permission to discriminate on the basis of visible signs" (90). The white woman tourist's gaze on the Filipino male's body illustrates how a white woman manages to establish racial privilege by allying with the white male gaze; the savage body serves to gratify the racial ego of the white woman, who is a gendered Other in her own land.

While the above scene illustrates what Bulosan perceives as white women's role in the colonial economy, as avid consumers of native male bodies that have adapted themselves to fit the ideal of an *acceptably* savage body, the story of Carlos and another white woman, Mary Strandon, shows how a white woman can act as an agent of colonial politics by instructing a native subject in how to effectively transform himself into an American national. When they first meet, Miss Strandon, an American painter who works in a nearby library, reprimands Carlos for his face's uncleanliness. She commands him to wash his face: "'Wash it off!' she said, giving me a bar of soap. I filled the bucket in the kitchen and the soapsuds tickled my skin. It was the first time I had ever used soap," Carlos recalls (68). Here, McClintock's discussion of the British history of soap advertising during the nineteenth century may help to elucidate the ideological significance of Carlos's first use of soap. McClintock claims that soap, from the outset, "took shape as a technology of social purification, inextricably entwined with the semiotics of imperial racism and class denigration" (212). Examining the ideological role that soap advertisements played in England's imperial expansion during the Victorian age, McClintock points out that the advertisements portray soap as a device with a "civilizing mission," suggesting that the soap could wash away the "stigma of racial […] denigration" (214). Indeed, in 1899, the Pears soap company ran an ad in *McClure's Magazine*, in the wake of Admiral George Dewey's victory at

the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War, portraying the admiral carefully washing his hands aboard his ship. With the carefully designed image, the advertisement announced: "The first step towards lightening THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness" (qtd. in McClintock 32). The advertisement makes clear that the superiority of white America over the brown Philippines was established on the basis of domestic virtue. The Pears' advertisement figures "imperialism as coming into being through domesticity" (McClintock 32). Drawing on McClintock's observation, I argue that Carlos's first use of the soap, which Miss Strandon commands of him, is symptomatic of benevolent assimilation discourse. Like his contemporaries, Carlos is already driven by his desire to fit in, his desire to assimilate into American values and culture. He thus struggles to adapt his body to look like an American "gentleman." For this Filipino man, fraught with that assimilative impulse, the white woman's offer of a bar of soap helps him escape the burdens of, in Frantz Fanon's terms**,** epidermal inscription. To refer to McClintock's discussion again, the American woman facilitates Carlos's efforts to wash away the "stigma of racial […] denigration" (214).[106]

What further domesticates Carlos's body is the required use of the colonizer's language, namely, English. After being hired as Miss Strandon's houseboy, Carlos gets acquainted with Dalmacio, a neighboring Igorot houseboy for a female American teacher. Relatively further steeped in American culture and language, Dalmacio says to Carlos that "English is the best weapon" (69). He even teaches Carlos English: "He put a book in my hand and started reading aloud to me. 'Repeat after me,' he said. 'Don't swallow you words. Blow them out *like the Americans*.' I repeated after him, uttering strange words and thinking of America" (69; emphasis

[106] It is important to note that Miss Strandon's father dies in the Philippine-American War (68). The white woman's family story epitomizes the role that American men and women played for their imperial project. To put it in Kaplan's words, "[w]hile Anglo-Saxon men marched to conquer new lands, female influence had a complementary outward reach from within the domestic sphere" (41).

added). Chow's discussion of "biosemiotics in which *language possession is translated into and receives its value as skin color*" is quite helpful to address the ideological implications of this scene (*Not Like a Native Speaker* 3; emphasis in original). Addressing the first chapter of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), which is devoted to the analysis of the "crucial link between racial objectification and the work of language," Chow agrees with Fanon that language in the colonial context works as an "imposition on the colonized to master the colonizer's language" (2). Like non-white skin color, Chow argues, language serves to draw the color line as a raced subject's "medium and connection to the world" (8). In furthering her argument about language's racializing function, Chow takes an example from the contemporary global economic world. According to Chow, some American companies prefer to outsource services to Filipino agents rather than Indian agents because Filipinos speak American English with less noticeable "accents" than Indian people (9). Drawing on Chow's observation about the relationship between race and language in Fanon's work and the contemporary global economic landscape, I suggest that Carlos's physical struggle to move his tongue "like the Americans" shows not only the intensity of the colonial subject's desire to assimilate, but also the pervasiveness of Foucauldian biopower that U.S. imperialism imposes on its "little brown brothers." However, the native protagonist's striving to look *like* "a gentleman" and sound *like* "the Americans" in the Philippines is a Sisyphean labor, as his native skin color and mother-tongue are "something already deemed defective," to borrow Chow's words regarding the limited possibility for the racial Other to assimilate (*Not Like a Native Speaker 8*). The doomed failure of Carlos's colonial mimicry in the Philippines foreshadows his painful process of social entry to the United States.[107]

[107] The implications of English as a tool of biopower used on Filipino subjects are illustrated throughout *America Is in the Heart*. See 58, 82, 90, 124-25, 172, 180, 229, 235 and 271.

As I discussed, Carlos's assumption of the *acceptably* savage, or docile, body — whether the dirty, exotic savage or the clean native — is instigated by the two *white women*, the American tourist and Miss Strandon. White women's roles as agents of U.S. imperialism are further highlighted by Carlos's anxiety over his masculinity after he serves as Miss Strandon's houseboy.[108] After staying a year in the modern tourist city of Baguio, Carlos leaves her and comes back to his native village, Binalonan. On the day he returns home, Carlos says, "I had come back to manhood, in my native village" (76). Yet we must to note that when he first leaves his native village, Carlos writes that the departure for the modern city is "fleeing into manhood" (64). The narrator also states that his leaving is "good-bye to Binalonan and my childhood" (65). Carlos's self-contradictory memory, then, demonstrates that for him, Miss Strandon is not the protective maternal figure, the emblem of unconditional love, Rachel Lee and Koshy argue (32; 126). Rather, it indicates that Mary Strandon is tantamount to a castrating figure, given that her treatment of Carlos gives him anxiety over his masculinity. For Carlos, she is the authoritative figure who disciplines his masculine body into a docile one. It could be said that the white woman domesticates the Filipino's *inappropriately* savage body by having him clean and tame it.

An episode following Carlos's homecoming reveals the predicament that a Filipino male subject under U.S. colonialism had to face: those conflicting demands between desires of assimilation and the native patriarchal code. Carlos remarks that his cousin and he are "shouting [their] manhood" when they go to a dance party in a nearby village (76). Then, he offers an anxiety-ridden portrayal of the dance party, which is symptomatic of the crisis of the Filipino subject's heterosexual masculinity under U.S. protectorship:

[108] As Rafael demonstrates, most native servants of white people in the Philippine colony were male. They were called by the "infantilizing and desexualizing term, *muchachos* (boys)," regardless of their age ("Colonial Domesticity" 656).

> I saw a girl I liked sitting on the bench near the door […]. I circled the people and stood in front of her. The girl flung herself into my arms, and I was taken by surprise, and for a while I could not move my legs. Then we were holding together each other innocently and dancing the way it should not have been done in the village. I could see the sensual stare of the men and the anger of the women. […]
>
> [W]hen the wild blaring of the trumpet and the savage boom-boom bring you back to reality, you get scared and begin to misstep and falter. […] [Y]ou want to apologize to her but the words are stuck in your throat. Suddenly you become conscious of the staring people around you, appraising you with obscene eyes and lascivious tongues, and slowly you lead the beauteous creature in your arms back to her seat. Then the orchestra becomes a cymbal of crashing noises, meaningless and riotous, and you return to your corner, trembling with cold and sudden fear. (77-78)

The description of this scene is heavily charged with sexual tension and fear. First, in contrast to the time he spends with Miss Strandon, this scene is replete with Carlos's heterosexual desires. As a man, Carlos is entitled to choose a girl he likes and dance the way he likes. Furthermore**,** the woman's choice to throw herself into his arms affirms his masculine desirability. The audience's "obscene eyes and lascivious tongues" implicitly recognize the protagonist's heterosexual desirability, expressing a collective sense of jealousy at this display of his masculinity. What is more remarkable about this scene is, however, Carlos's unambiguous fear. He constantly checks his sexual expression throughout the scene. He recognizes that he dances with the girl the way "it should not have been done in the village" (77). He wants to "apologize" to the girl for the way he dances, even as he enjoys it as a masculine display (77). When the music gets to the end, he begins to be haunted by "cold and sudden fear" (78). Although he adds that the "fear" is attributable to snapping back into hard and dreary "reality" after the dance party, I suggest that the conflicting narrative, which moves between the overt expression of sexual desire and its immediate regulation**,** is symptomatic of the Filipino man's troubled subject position under U.S. imperialism (78). Given that Bulosan's novel is a *retrospective* account produced in light of the

author's exile in America, we can infer that this problematic passage reflects the unconscious trauma the author may have experienced, the physical and symbolic violence that was enacted on Filipino male bodies for their alleged hyper-sexuality in the 1930s United States. In other words, the collective racial trauma retroactively disrupts the heterosexual ecstasy. Bulosan's alter-ego's moment of pleasure is overtly thrust into the racial narrative. In this regard, Carlos's description of his cousin at the dance party is quite suggestive: "He saw a rather good-looking girl in a red dress. He strode across like a *peacock* and stood in front of her" (77; emphasis added). Carlos's portrayal of his cousin as "a peacock" clearly invokes the hysterical comments from the Justice of the Peace, D.W. Rohrback, an active member of the movement to exclude Filipino workers from the United States. In 1930, he denigrated Filipino male workers for "strutting like *peacocks* and endeavoring to attract the eyes of young American and Mexican girls" (qtd. in Volpp 807; emphasis added). *America Is in the Heart* offers no clear textual evidence that Bulosan intended to parody the white supremacist's racist slur, yet I assume that Bulosan was well aware of it, given the author's sensitivity to the stereotypes about Filipino male bodies throughout his novel. Ultimately, because the white female tourist and Miss Strandon discipline Carlos's savage body into a docile body, when he travels back to Binalonan, he tries to reclaim his masculinity by overtly expressing his heterosexual desire at a local dance party. However, the traumatic memories of racial violence enacted in response to Filipino men's supposed hyper-sexuality — whether individual or collective — in the United States, *retroactively* intrude upon this moment in which Carlos recalls his young days in the Philippines. The complicated demands of the patriarchal masculine code and white imperial injunction are intertwined in this scene and lead to the author's tortuous narrative fraught with sexual pleasure and racial trauma.

The white woman's role as a civilizing and disciplining agent is also present on the ship

that carries Carlos and other Filipino workers to the United States. When "the native subject metamorphoses into the migrant subject" (*Sexual Naturalization* 103), Carlos experiences the type of discipline and surveillance that he and the other Filipino workers are about to face in the United States. After having been long confined to the steerage hold of the ship, Carlos and his fellow workers are allowed to come up to the deck and sun themselves. As Carlos lies out in the sun, a white woman in a swim suit recoils in horror at the sight of his and other Filipino men's naked bodies. In contrast to her white male escort, who is sympathetic to these Filipino men's situations as steerage passengers, the young white woman shouts: "*Why don't they ship those monkeys back where they came from*?" (99; emphasis in original) Recollecting the white woman's harsh words, Carlos remarks that "I was to hear that girl's voice in many ways afterward in the United States. It became no longer her voice, but an angry chorus shouting" (99). The woman's racist slur is the voice of injunctive assimilation, demanding that the Filipino workers, in the process of transforming from native subjects to migrant subjects, ceaselessly strive to reshape their bodies to look like "proper**"** gentlemanly bodies; otherwise, as she warns, they should be forced to return to their native land.

White Women in the United States: Domesticating a Migrant Subject

The white woman's role as the facilitator of benevolent assimilation continues even after Carlos arrives in the United States. Following the brutal victimization by lynching that he experiences at the hands of white vigilantes, Carlos enters a house to avoid the white police's scrutiny. The place turns out to be the house of a white prostitute named Marian. She calls Carlos "poor boy" and offers him a meal and allows him to stay at her house to rest (210). After becoming aware of Carlos's hard times in the United States, she says:

> "I'll help you. I'll work for you. You will have no obligations. What I would like is to have someone to care for, and it should be you who are young. I would be happier if I had something to care for, — even if it were only a dog or a cat. But it doesn't really matter which it is: a dog or a cat. What matters is the affection, the relationship, between you and the object. Even a radio becomes almost human, and the voice that comes from it is something close to you, and then there grows a bond between you. For a long time now I've wanted to care for someone. And you are the one. Please don't make me unhappy …." (212)

Rachel Lee claims that Marian represents "feminine 'caring' that manifests itself in self-sacrifice" (28). Associating Marian with Carlos's mother in the Philippines, Lee argues that Carlos lauds such "feminine self-denial that appears 'natural' in mothers" (26). Similarly, Koshy states that Marian is portrayed as the "otherworldly" figure, arguing that the character embodies the "maternal principle" and reminds Carlos of his mother's presence (*Sexual Naturalization* 26). Their readings, however, fail to elucidate the undertone of Marian's desire that is veiled in her feminine self-abnegating gesture. Here, we can see that her caretaking is the feminine version of the paternalist logic through which America's "little brown brothers" are "benevolently" assimilated into the universality of American ideals. In the narrative of benevolent assimilation, Filipinos are portrayed as childlike and feminine, and white people's display of compassion and sympathy is presented as their moral superiority. The paternalist narrative enabled American imperialists to cast themselves as "authoritative heads of house hold" who were responsible for protecting and civilizing Filipinos (Hoganson 155).

Those concepts informed another U.S. imperial discourse, one in which the occupation of the Philippines would offer a testing ground for American manhood. Citing a British imperialist's assertion that "To India we owe in great measure the training of our best manhood. India makes men," Kristin L. Hoganson demonstrates that U.S. imperialists echoed the British imperialist's contention in their imperial project in the Philippines (140). According to Hoganson, U.S.

imperialists "regarded the Philippines as a character-building challenge for upcoming generations of American men" (140). The imperial project to civilize and protect supposedly primitive Filipino subjects was believed to offer American men of the early twentieth century an opportunity to exercise their patriarchal values**,** and thus affirm their manhood. Chuh similarly points out that "U.S. empire building had historically effected the stabilization of an American heteronormative masculinity, defined in terms of physical prowess and virility at 'home'" (48). Indeed, in a 1900 speech urging the United States to annex the Philippines, Senator Albert Jerimiah Beveridge said, "It means opportunity for all the glorious young manhood of the republic — the most virile, ambitious, impatient, militant manhood the world has ever seen" (qtd. in Kaplan 93).

Drawing on Hoganson's and Chuh's observations, I suggest that Marian's act of charity toward Carlos is a feminine manifestation of such paternalist logic; it invokes the colonial fantasy of white male imperialism that depended on the perception that colonial subjects were in need of tutelage because they were too childlike to take care of themselves. Surely, Marian is not overtly a racist imperialist. However, her demand to the Filipino worker — expressed through her statement, "Please don't make me unhappy" — implies that her care of Carlos is not unconditional or "otherworldly," as scholars have claimed. Marian suggests that her altruistic relationship with Carlos serves the enrichment of her own ego, serves her need. Just as the rule of the Asian tropics would reinforce the American man's masculine ego, so the care and nurture of the wounded Filipino worker would serve the ravished prostitute's feminine ego during the Depression. Marian's identification with white paternal authority helps her to erase all signs of class and gender disparity. Her altruism works to affirm the superiority of her *white* sensibilities by gratifying her desire for sentimental mastery. In short, even far away from the Asian tropics,

the working-class white woman reiterates the colonial fantasy of benevolent assimilation, namely, "the exchange of white love for brown affection" ("Colonial Domesticity" 660-61).

Indeed, working as a prostitute, Marian makes enough money to send Carlos to a university: "She was gone for three days. I stayed in my room most of the time. […] I felt helpless and torn. I stayed in my room […] waiting for Marian. When she appeared, singing and laughing, I was disarmed. I could not run away from her. 'Now you can go to the university,' she said, tossing a roll of money on the bed. 'Nearly three hundred dollars. All for you—from Marian.' She laughed" (215). In this scenario that paints Marian in an unconventional gender role, she supports and maintains Carlos through her labor. Her self-satisfaction comes from the prospect that her labor enables the Filipino worker to be educated in an American university; again, this situation harkens back to the imperialist project that sought to provide the Filipino subject with education, but in an Americanized system of education. Marian's ego is enriched by the very prospect that her sacrifice and labor might help enlighten the racial other in an American educational institution. What is further remarkable about this interracial relationship is that the union enacts a mutual fantasy. While Marian, the working-class white woman, buttresses her self-esteem through the fantasy of enlightening the racial other, Carlos masks the trauma that he experiences as an oppressed racial subject by imagining himself as an agent of patriarchal authority in that relationship. Watching Marian sleep in bed, Carlos thinks, "It was a fairy tale. Here I was with a white woman who completely surrendered herself to me" (215). In this manufactured "fairy tale," Carlos becomes an authoritative patriarch. The relationship between Marian and Carlos illustrates the way in which the racialized benevolent assimilation narrative and male fantasy are simultaneously enacted, according to the desires of gendered and racialized others.

Marian's conversation with Carlos before her death demonstrates that imperial female agency through its use of sentimentalism can serve as "a tool for the control of others," in Wexler's words (101). Dying from syphilis, Marian says:

> "I'm dying—didn't the doctor tell you? Look at those trees on the hill! Isn't this land of ours a paradise!" Silence. Then she said, "Promise me something, Carl."
>
> I nodded.
>
> "Promise me not to hate. But love—love everything good and clean. There is something in you that radiates like an inner light, and it affects others. Promise me to let it grow …." (217).

This scene almost literally reenacts Eva's well-known admonition to Topsy, "I wish you would try to be good," or the sanitized coupling of Tom and Eva in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). As Ann Douglass critiques Eva's (Stowe's) sentimentalism by contending that it "in no way hinders the working of that system [slavery]" (qtd. in Wexler 95), Marian's admonition to Carlos — "Promise me not to hate. But love" — serves to normalize and naturalize the unequal power relation with Americans and Filipinos. In Bulosan's novel, we see the "imperial project of sentimentalism" that Wexler identifies in Eva's exchange with Topsy.

Carlos's relationship with another white woman, Eileen, also illustrates how a white woman can serve paternalist aims, facilitating the enlightenment of the Filipino subject. When Carlos is hospitalized for tuberculosis, Eileen often visits him. She gives Carlos food and books that contain Western classics. Writing to Eileen, he develops his English skills:

> When I became restless, I wrote to her. Everyday the words poured out of my pen. I began to cultivate a taste for words, not so much their meanings as their sounds and shapes, so that afterword I tried to depend only on the music of words to express my ideas. This procedure, of course, was destructive to my grammar, but I can say that writing fumbling, vehement letters to Eileen was actually my course in English (235).

This remarkable passage is charged with two different desires: romantic desire for Eileen and assimilative desire to write *like* Americans. Interestingly, Carlos does not register Eileen's feelings for him. What we can infer from his description is that the white woman's presence and offer of Western classics facilitate Carlos's drive for enlightenment: "When I found Eileen I found the god of my youth. I can say that my insatiable hunger for knowledge and human affection were the two vital forces […]. I was beginning to think that if I returned to my native land, I would spread a new enlightenment to my whole village—perhaps throughout the Philippines" (236). Eileen offers Carlos "the two vital forces," that is, "knowledge" and "human affection." Her presence leads Carlos to "annihilat[e] all personal motives" and to decide to bring back the torch of enlightenment to his "native land" (236). Instead of taking root in the United States, Carlos says that he is going to return home with the knowledge and skills he learned from the white woman, spreading American enlightenment amongst his "savage" people. His wish enacts a scenario that white imperialists of the time would consider ideal, which also echoes Topsy's missionary teaching in Africa in Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Or if we consider the historical context, namely, the passage of discriminatory laws such as the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 and California's anti-miscegenation law in 1933, Carlos's wish to return home can be said to reflect the effects of racial fear that those racialized legal practices provoked. As Jeffrey Santa Ana points out, in particular, the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act "transformed Filipinos as 'nationals' within their status as colonial subjects into 'undesirable aliens' as citizens of a Philippine nation" by recognizing the Philippines as a commonwealth and setting a ten-year transition period to full independence (105).[109] The act rendered Filipinos "subject to deportation

[109] The Tydings-McDuffie Act aimed at cutting off the unrestricted flow of Filipino immigration (Lye 146). After the passage of the Act, "[t]he actors in the drama of farm labor in California" transformed from "Spanish speaking and brown-skinned" Filipino workers to "English-speaking" white workers (Starr, qtd. in Lye 146). The Tydings-

for deportable acts committed after May 1 1934" (M. Ngai 120). It put Filipinos "in a precarious and vulnerable position—a consequence of their abrupt change in status from nationals to aliens in America" (Santa Ana105). Given such "a precarious and vulnerable position," it may not be wrong to assume that Bulosan's alter ego, now deprived of his American nationhood, internalizes the racial terror and that the internalized terror is expressed in his wish to undertake the task of enlightening his fellow people in his homeland. Ultimately, Eileen's enlightening of Carlos serves to establish the United States as exclusively white by provoking the Filipino man's desire to return home and to "Americanize" his homeland. Her project to enlighten Carlos cannot be completed until he returns to the Philippines.

The Specter of Consensual Interracial Heterosexuality

America Is in the Heart presents *consensual* heterosexual unions between interracial subjects, namely, Filipino men and white women. The sexual threat by Japanese and Chinese immigrant men was minimized through "images of coerced sexual relations with white women (raping, kidnapping, or bribing or drugging them into submission," according to Koshy (*Sexual Naturalization* 14). While this scenario could leave intact "the bourgeois ideal of the white woman's passionless domesticity," the Filipino man raised the "specter of consensual white-Asian miscegenation," engendering contemporary white men's anxiety over "the dangers of this savage sensuality" (*Sexual Naturalization* 14). Many scholars have addressed the way that the novel's de-sexualized portrayal of white women and Carlos has a great deal to do with white racial hysteria over Filipinos' alleged hyper-sexuality. Among other critics, Koshy reads *America Is in the Heart* as a "strenuous attempt to deconstruct the popular attribution of deviant sexuality to Filipino Americans" (*Sexual Naturalization* 14).

McDuffie Act was "the culmination of anti-Asian legislation" (Palumbo-Liu 33).

Koshy also points out that the racial hysteria about the "sexual threat" that Filipino male workers were supposed to present**,** mirrors white men's anxiety and frustration over "the difficulty of policing women's sexuality" during the social crisis of the Depression (*Sexual Naturalization* 14). Although Koshy raises the issue of "the specter of consensual" white and Filipino heterosexual unions, she does not go on to address how Bulosan's text depicts the very "specter of consensual" interracial heterosexuality. Rather, she reproduces the critical trends that assert Bulosan's endorsement of heteronormative patriarchy, which, she suggests, is evidenced in his asexualized portrayal of white women. In the remainder of this chapter, I will explore the way in which the author portrays white women's interracial heterosexual desire and its sociopolitical and ideological ramifications.

Bulosan presents the pastoral space as one of the few places in which Carlos and other Filipinos can engage in romantic relationships with white women. When hired as farm workers by a white employer, Mr. Malraux, Carlos and his fellow Filipinos go hunting with the white employer's daughters (108). They sing American songs together and do not hesitate to visit each other's homes (108). Carlos's description of one day on the farm is a version of an immigrant pastoral:

> We lost interest in our work. We sat on the lawn of the Malraux's and sang. They [Malraux's daughters] came out of the house and joined us. The moonlight shimmered like a large diamond on the land around the farm. The men in the bunkhouse came with their violins and guitars. Julio [a Filipino worker] grabbed Diane [one of Malraux's three daughters] and started dancing with her; then two younger girls were grabbed by other men. (109-110)

This scene enacts a perfect pastoral moment. There exists no trace of economic hardships and racial oppression. Only the romantic interchange between the Filipino workers and the farm owner's daughters pervades this pastoral space. This union crosses not only the color line, but

also the class line. If we follow Greg Garrard's argument that the American pastoral assumes its "identification with masculine colonial aggression directed against women, indigenes and the land" and that it emphasizes "a working rather than an aesthetic relationship with the land" (54),[110] Bulosan's portrayal is exactly the opposite of the American pastoral. Bulosan's pastoral becomes possible only when the workers "los[e] interest in [their] work" (*America Is in the Heart* 109). Unlike the homosocial space of the American pastoral, Bulosan's pastoral allows women and racial others of different classes to willingly and playfully cross race and class borders once they cease their labor. His pastoral space is free from class and racial conflicts and violence.

However, the interracial heterosexual engagement proves to be provisional. White vigilantes intrude upon this bucolic space; Carlos is forced to escape the farm and the bunkhouse is burned (110). What we must consider is that a class dynamic underlies the white racists' assault on Carlos and his fellow Filipinos. When Carlos stays in Seattle, he sees "brightly dressed white women" and Filipinos enter a building, which turns out to be "MANILA DANCE HALL" (105). In this taxi dance hall, Carlos's countrymen dance with "tall blonde" white women (105). Even though this place is not free of violence, the violence is an intra-racial one between Filipino men over a white woman.[111] Significantly, the taxi dance hall is a place where Filipino male workers can mingle with white women without white male oversight. According to Koshy, such public venues for interracial intimacy made a contribution to the United States economy by "passing on the costs of their [Filipinos'] social and sexual reproduction to their

[110] In the American pastoral, the land itself was feminized in terms of "the virgin land" and "masculine penetration" (*Oriental* 106).

[111] In fact, the taxi dance halls "fueled racial hostility that erupted into anti-Filipino riots in several parts of California in the late 1920s and early 1930s (*Sexual Naturalization* 98). But Bulosan's text does not refer to inter-racial violence in taxi dance halls.

households in their homelands" and extracting profits from their reliance on such commercialized intimacies (*Sexual Naturalization* 8). Places like brothels, taxi dance halls, and gambling houses were distinctly ethnic commercial places that the United States set aside for Filipinos (Isaac 132). This commercialized intimacy was a part of the American capitalist economy that profited from the "bachelorhood" of Filipinos. Carlos refers to this point. When responding to a white man's complaint about the presence of Filipino migrants brought about by such nasty places, he states, "[T]he gambling and the prostitution are operated by three of this town's most respectable citizens. As a matter of fact, I can tell you their names —" (163).[112]

Then, one might ask how white supremacists resolved the conflicting demands of the American capitalist economy and the ideology of white domesticity. How could they satisfy simultaneously not only the needs of cheap labor and commercial profits, but also the cultural injunction against the miscegenation taboo? It is helpful to consider taxi dance halls in their historical context as we develop our discussion. The dancers of the taxi dance hall were predominantly working-class and immigrant women from Eastern European countries (M. Ngai 110; Parreñas 122). They usually danced at night to subsidize the small wages they earned in factories during the day (Parreñas 122). What is interesting is that white supremacists, especially upper and middle-class people, distinguished these ethnic working-class women from white women of the same class. This distinction allowed white supremacists to maintain the miscegenation taboo despite the interracial relationships that these working-class women engaged in — Filipinos were sleeping with lower-class Eastern European women, not white middle- or upper-class women. The dominant class dismissed white women's interest in Filipino men as a "'moron' attribute of the lower classes" (Tapia 65). To borrow Rhacel Salazar

[112] Echoing Carlos's protest, Williams also remarks in his introduction to *America Is in the Heart* that "[s]o called Filipino taxi-dance halls, gambling spots, and bordellos acquired a notoriety which they really did not deserve in the sense that many of them were not operated by Filipinos" (x).

Parreñas's words, the interracial mingling in the taxi dance hall is relegated to the meeting of "white trash" and "little brown monkeys" (115).[113] Bulosan renders white racists' discursive strategy visible in his portrayal of a scene in which Carlos and his fellow Filipino, José, are kidnapped and lynched by five white men when they work to facilitate a labor strike: "Then I saw them pouring the tar on José's body. One of them lit a match and burned the delicate hair between his legs. 'Jesus, he's a well-hung son-of-a-bitch!.' 'Yeah!' 'No wonder *whores* stick to them!' 'The other *monkey* ain't so hot!'" (208; emphasis added). One of the white male vigilantes says that only "whores" sexually engage with Filipinos. By saying so, he resolves the anxiety over his masculine authority as a white man. The interchange between "whore" and "monkey" does not amount to the nightmarish scenario of consensual miscegenation that white males fear most.

In light of this scene, the pastoral episode that I have already addressed denotes a rupture in the racist narrative that only allows for the meeting of "white trash" (or "whore") and "monkey." The white women dancing with the Filipino male workers are not "whores." They are the daughters of a farm owner and thus the narrative of "white trash" does not work here as a way for the white males who happen upon the pastoral scene to explain away the interracial romance; only physical violence can stop the disruptive and traumatic event. The members of the mob do not say a word — they are entirely silent. All we know about them is that they are "white," appear from "the dark," have "three or four guns," and "burn" Carlos's "bunkhouse" (110). They are unable to justify their assault on the interracial activities between the farm owner's daughters and the Filipino workers. Their violence, void of discursive complements, is

[113] As I already pointed out, during the institution of slavery, white women who sexually associated with black men were often called "white trash" (Clinton 204). We can see here another example of the cross racialization between African Americans and Filipino Americans. Interestingly, some Filipino men deemed taxi dance hall girls to be their "social inferiors, evincing class bias as well as the belief that they were more Americanized " (M. Ngai 115).

the distorted expression of their trauma that the collapse of the miscegenation taboo brings about. As their racialized male fantasy becomes ideologically untenable, the white vigilantes reassert their domination in the act of raw violence.

Bulosan again addresses interracial heterosexual relationships with the episode of Dora Travers. Dora, the white girlfriend of Carlos's Filipino friend Nick, visits Carlos when he is writing poems in Macario's room in Los Angeles. Bulosan presents Carlos's sexual impulse in the figure of Freudian sublimation: "Dora sat in a corner, her back to the wall. In a while she fell sound sleep. *I felt a slight tug at my heart*. I watched her still face. […] I turned away from her, looking over the city in the night. The next morning, I sat in my brother's room and started to write a poem, remembering Dora Travers and how she slept" (224; emphasis added). Carlos here makes clear that Dora's beauty inspires his artistic creation. He clarifies that Dora is his inspirational muse. Yet we can also read sexual tension in Carlos's account. He confesses that he "felt a slight tug" when he was watching her face. His conscious efforts to "tur[n] away from her" and to "look over the city in the night" suggest that his poem is the intellectual gain that comes at the expense of sexual potential. Carlos's interracial heterosexual desire is not unreciprocated. Leaving Carlos, Dora says that she is going to "the Soviet Union" which is free of "racial oppression," where she can have Nick's child: "'It's Nick's child. I have always wanted a Filipino child. It wouldn't have a chance in America, just as Nick has never had a chance'" (227). She is willing to move to the communist country to have "a Filipino child." Ultimately, just as Carlos's "slight tug at [his] heart" is sublimated in his poem, the Filipino male's tabooed desire will be materialized by the birth of a mixed-race child in a distant land.[114]

[114] During the time of Bulosan's writing, the Soviet Union portrayed itself as "the Affirmative Action Empire" (Martin 25). According to Terry Martin, "[t]he Soviet Union was the first country in world history to establish Affirmative Action Programs for national minorities, and no country has yet approached the vast scale of Soviet Affirmative Action" (18-19). Martin adds that the concept of the Affirmative Action Empire was a strategy designed

Carlos's feelings for Dora are symbolically reciprocated.

In another episode, Carlos experiences a similar sexual tension. After Marian dies of syphilis, he encounters white girls on his way to Seattle. The white girls invite Carlos to their house in Medford for dinner. After dinner, they go to a nearby lake and enjoy swimming. There, Carlos and Lily, a white girl, interact with each other in a scene heavily charged with sexual tension: "Lily suddenly pushed me vigorously and swam away, turning back to see if I would follow her. I dived and swam swiftly under the water. *I caught her and for a moment was tempted to hold her tightly*; but I merely splashed water into her face and swam away" (221; emphasis added). Carlos's emotion is unambiguously eroticized. The word, "for a moment," helps us to understand the intensity of Carlos's feeling of sexual desire; he can vividly recall and articulate his thoughts during the moment he held Lily's body. His use of the adverb, "tightly," is also quite suggestive in that the specific description of this bodily gesture further reveals the intensity of his repressed sexual desire. Carlos's statement, that he repressed the temptation "to hold her tightly," is also indicative of his emotional state; he consciously reveals that he felt the desire "to hold her tightly" as a *problematic* temptation. Ultimately, Carlos suggests that his romantic, or sexual, desire for the white women is not unreciprocated by adding that, after the lake excursion, they dance in his hotel room together (221).

Coda

Bulosan's description of the relationship between Carlos and Alice Odell, a white woman writer, sums up the author's rhetorical and thematic strategy to explore the Filipino man's vexing assimilation and the role that white women play in that torturous process. By way of concluding

---

to avoid the perception of empire (19). But Dora's belief that the Soviet Union has no "racial oppression" suggests that some American people, especially working-class and immigrant groups, perceived the Soviet Union as an ideal place free of race and class oppression.

this chapter, I offer my reading of Alice and Carlos's interracial heterosexual exchange. Carlos and Alice plan to meet at the Los Angeles Public Library, instead of Carlos's place because the landlady does not allow white women to enter the building in which his room is located (229). Bulosan delineates their meeting in the following manner:

> I agreed to meet her at the Los Angeles Public Library. […] I staggered like an old man into the library, leaning against the brick wall when my knee bothered me. It had never mended and it was the unforgettable souvenir of the vigilantes in San Jose, who had tortured me that night in the wood. I sat at a table in the Literature Department and watched the clock. At exactly three o'clock an attractive woman with dark brown hair came to the door and swept the room in one fleeting glance. I knew at once that she was Alice Odell and I was not mistaken. I got up to greet her. But touching her hand, I became self-conscious. […] She was very kind: she thought I was ashamed to talk to her. But I was only afraid she could not understand me, because my accent was still thick and difficult. (229)

This scene encapsulates the issues that I have addressed throughout this chapter. First, the protagonist's body bears the trace of physical violence due to the racial hysteria over Filipino male sexuality; his mobility is physically limited because of the violent lynching by white men. Second, Carlos's mobility is further constrained when he meets a white woman, except in such places as the taxi dance hall, farm, lake, or library.[115] To escape the hostile white gaze, Carlos must drag his ravished body away from his apartment to the library, which is at least free from the prying eyes of white vigilantes. Third, he feels self-conscious of his thick accent when speaking to Alice. He must be "ashamed" if he cannot clearly express himself in his new mother country's language, just as he must be ashamed of his unkempt hair (229). The residue of racial differences, despite Carlos's long and painful "pilgrimage," still haunts him (104). The presence

[115] Throughout the narrative, Carlos displays anxiety over being under surveillance. His anxiety is maximized when he is with white women. When he meets Marian, for example, he does not "want to be seen" (212). He is "afraid to go inside" of a nightclub with her (216). His racial paranoia ultimately takes on somatic manifestations: "My ears became sensitive to sounds and even my sense of smell was sharpened" (144).

of the white woman again reminds him of the bleak fact that his assimilation is not yet finished. The white woman signifies the superego of the Filipino man's assimilative desire. Carlos's shame comes from his self-recognition that his English, the primary medium of communication in America, and his brown body, are not sufficient to sound and look like white Americans. His wounded body and thick accent are all signs that his racial heritage and American racism constantly undermine his assimilation. Lastly, we see the subtle, yet clear sexual tension between Carlos and Alice. "[T]ouching her hand," the Filipino man becomes "self-conscious" (229). His self-consciousness is attributed to his "fear" about meeting with a "middle class" woman (229). Before Alice's first visit to Carlos, they exchange letters. After reading Carlos's poems, she wants to meet with Carlos. He is reluctant to do so because of the "barrier" between her "more privileged life" (229) as a "writer of promise" in Hollywood (228) and his "social position" as a migrant worker (228). Yet Alice is "persistent" about visiting Carlos and Carlos finally agrees to meet with her (229). Following the rather awkward encounter in the library, they come outside and sit side by side on a stone bench. And even there, Carlos still thinks to himself, "How would I approach a *decent* white woman? How was I to begin?" (229; emphasis in original).

I want to argue that Carlos's self-consciousness about Alice's presence is a part of Bulosan's rhetorical strategy to critique the racialized narrative of white women's sexual exchange with Filipino men. As I already discussed, contemporary white upper and middle-class people rendered the problematic sexual interchange as that between "white trash" (immigrant working-class women) and "little brown monkeys." Using classed and raced terms in configuring the tabooed relationship, the dominant white groups managed to maintain the miscegenation taboo and white patriarchy. Yet Bulosan debunks the racialized discourses through Carlos's erotically charged meeting with a "middle-class" woman. Furthermore, later in

the novel, Carlos says that Alice has "disturbing sensuousness," reaffirming her sexuality (234). Bulosan deliberately describes the sexual tension between the Filipino male worker and the middle-class white woman.

Alice's life story is another rhetorical device to challenge the miscegenation taboo. In a conversation with Carlos, Alice says that she once loved a Puerto Rican man and lived with him in a large plantation in Puerto Rico. While she does not offer further details about their life in that country, Carlos amplifies the ideological meaning of Alice's relationship with the Puerto Rican man by saying "she was not like other women who are afraid to break through the walls of prejudice" (231). Here, he makes clear that Alice's romance is an act against the racial prejudice, that is, the miscegenation taboo that Filipinos were subject to.

As Kaplan explains, a series of 1910 U.S. Supreme Court decisions developed the doctrine of "unincorporated territory" when determining the political status of territories such as Guam, Hawai'i, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico (3). As a concept to "bury the contractions between the American Empire and American republic" (Kaplan 5), the notion of "unincorporated territory" managed to satisfy both imperialist and anti-imperialists by positioning people of those regions in "a liminal space both inside and outside the boundaries of the Constitution, both 'belonging to' but 'not a part of' of the United States" (Kaplan 3).[116] While Puerto Ricans were granted citizenship in 1917 and Filipinos remained "noncitizen nationals" (*Sexual Naturalization* 97), their images were often associated with that of African Americans in the American public imagination. In his analysis of a masturbatory scene in Piri Thomas's memoir *Down These Mean Streets* (1967), Isaac remarks that in his imaginative sex with a white woman, Thomas "becomes the stereotype of the oversexed, over-endowed black man who cannot control his sexual urges" (139). Unable to "articulate his own desires outside of race" (Isaac 140), the Puerto Rican man's

[116] For more detailed explanations of the concept of "unincorporated territory," see Kaplan 1-12.

"person and sexuality are reduced to a hypermasculine" figure (Isaac 139). His disturbing fantasy also reminds us of Filipino men's hyper-sexualization, which is demonstrated in *America Is in the Heart*. Isaac's analysis of the memoir suggests that Filipino and Puerto Rican men had to suffer similar racialization in the United States. In this historical context, Bulosan's portrayal of Alice's consensual romance with a Puerto Rican man can be read as a critical response to the miscegenation taboo, which his text challenges throughout its narrative.

Epilogue

Americanized Desire: Imperial Whiteness and Blackness in Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*

The literature explored in this dissertation addresses the ways in which ethnic American writers explore white supremacists' symbolic violence enacted through racial discourses such as the lynching narrative in the age of Jim Crow and the Great Depression. Focusing on ethnic literature published during the first half of the twentieth century, this dissertation has examined how these texts serve as cultural spaces in which U.S. racial discourse and modernity could be questioned and challenged or articulated and endorsed. In this section, I briefly address Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* (1990), written in the late twentieth century, in order to consider how racial discursive strategies examined in my previous chapters have been adapted and applied to global culture in the postmodern era; this brief meditation on *Dogeaters* encourages us to see U.S. racial discourse as ongoing around the globe from the perspective of a racially colonized subject. In particular, my discussion of Hagedorn's novel highlights the way the author figures the intersection of U.S. imperialism with mixed-race experience.

Dogeaters begins with a scene in which Rio and her cousin Pucha watch a Hollywood film, *All That Heaven Allows* in an "English Movies only" theater in Manila in 1956. The narrator of this scene, Rio, says that she and Pucha, who are both middle-class mixed-race Filipinas of American and Spanish ancestry, are impressed by Gloria Talbort's "brash style" in the movie: "Thick penciled eyebrows and blood-red vampire lips; the virginal, pastel-pink cashmere cardigan draped over Gloria Talbort's shoulders. Cousin Pucha and I are impressed by her brash style; we gasp at Gloria's cool indifference, the offhand way she treats her grieving

mother. Her casual arrogance seems inherently *American, modern, and enviable*" (4; emphasis added). Rio's description of the "enviable" femininity of the American actress illustrates the extent American cultural imperialism pervades people's lives in its former colony, including that of affluent middle-class mestiza women grappling with the hegemony which legitimizes the dominance of a particular culture, along with its aesthetics; Rio makes clear that she regards America as representative of desirable femininity and modernity.

Rio's colonial inferiority complex is further demonstrated by her envy of Pucha's more Americanized physical traits. Even though she is also a mixed-race woman of the privileged Spanish and American heritage, Rio admires Pucha's more Americanized "pointy, straight" "mestiza nose," "blond" hair," and "fair-skin" (4). Rio's "mestiza envy" emerges from the colonial history of the Philippines. According to Vicente Rafael, unlike the United States, in which the miscegenation taboo stigmatized mixed-race people, since the nineteenth century, the mestiza/o in the Philippines had maintained "a privileged position associated with economic wealth, political influence, and cultural hegemony" (*White Love* 165).[117] As a somatic manifestation of "a certain proximity to the sources of colonial power," the mixed-race subject had been an object of desire due to the legacy of the cultural imperialism of Spain and the United States (*White Love* 165). In other words, Spanish and American imperialism created the imperative of the whiteness as the original, which instigates the powerful yet invisible interpellation of the (neo) colonial ideology of the middle-class mixed woman's obsession with white femininity and modernity. The first scene of *Dogeaters* shows that in the postcolonial

[117] For a detailed exploration about the different views of the mestiza in the Philippines and the United States, see Melinda L.de Jesús's "Liminality and Mestiza Consciousness in Lynda Barry's 'One Hundred Demons.'"

Philippines, the "mestiza envy," that is, the Philippine version of "white envy," still holds.[118]

What must not missed here is that even the body of Pucha, which Rio admires, exposes the traces of her limited identification with the Americanized ideal ego in that her English, the primary barometer to measure linguistic identification, still has a "thick, singsong accent" (4).[119] According to Rafael, "English as the legacy of U.S. colonialism as well as postwar neo-colonial relations" has served as the signifier of high culture and class in the Philippines (*White Love* 167). The way a subject speaks English has determined his/her class and proximity to the ego ideal. In addition to Rafael's observation, if we consider Fanon's contention that skin-color and language are two poles by which to measure the level of colonial assimilation, which I discussed at length in Chapter Five, we see that mixed-race people's identification with whiteness in 1956 Manila is doomed to fail. Their skin color and native language perpetuate their never-ending assimilation drive for white American culture and their inferiority complex. In the neo-colonial Philippines, "a nation […] united only by […] hunger for glamour and our Hollywood dreams" (*Dogeaters* 101), the postcolonial subject's identification with Americanness, including the mestiza/o, is always already limited**.** To put it in Chow's words, "[c]ondemned to a permanent inferiority complex, the colonized subject must nonetheless try, in envy, to become that from which she has been excluded in an a priori manner" (*The Protestant Ethnic* 104). Then, we might conclude that a Filipino subject's efforts to realize "Hollywood dreams" must be Sisyphean unless they get over their "cultural inferiority complex" (*Dogeaters* 101).

[118] Hagedorn's 2003 novel *Dream Jungle* also addresses the Filipino subject's "white envy." In the novel, Zamora Lopez de Legazpi, the descendent of a Spanish tycoon, refuses to bring his African American girlfriend to the Philippines (97) and feels frustrated over his son's "dark face" (64). By marrying a white woman from Germany, Zamora attempts to reinforce his whiteness. His wife, Ilse, clearly recognizes how her white body is exploited by her husband: "You married me for my race, my blood" (67).

[119] Rafael brilliantly sums up the chain of desires that Rio and Pucha show: "For Rio, then, to envy Pucha's fair skin, blond hair, straight nose, and 'overdeveloped 36B' breasts is equivalent to Pucha's envying of Jane Wyman and Gloria's Talbort's access to Rock Hudson" (*White Love* 165). For the two mixed-race women, "America" works as the Lacanian phallus.

If the story of Rio and Pucha indicates the "cultural inferiority complex" on the part of the Filipino middle class, the story of Joey Sands, a gay prostitute in an urban area of Manila, represents the "cultural inferiority complex" on the part of the Filipino working class. As an illegitimate son of an African American U.S. military officer and a Filipina prostitute, Joey is another somatic manifestation of the Philippines' neo-colonial history. First of all, Joey's biracial heritage suggests the enduring presence of the U.S. military in the neocolonial Philippines (Isaac 158). While the mixed-race bodies in early twentieth-century United States indicate the sexual violence enacted by white men on black women under slavery and Jim Crow, the mixed-race body of Joey renders visible the sexual violence U.S. imperialism enacted on the bodies of Asian women. What is further interesting about Joey as the literal product of American imperialist sexualization of the Philippines is that the perpetrator of U.S. imperialism is a black American military officer, not a white one; the victim of racial violence at home transforms himself into the victimizer, the one who performs imperialist violence abroad (Isaac 159). Joey's farther enacts his colonial fantasy— the sexual encounter of Western male and Eastern female— in the neocolonial Philippines. Ultimately, the story of Joey's birth suggests that U.S. imperialism invites African Americans to be active imperial participants in Asian countries, thus providing African American male subjects with a possible outlet through which they might reinforce their masculinity that has been undermined by the American racial imaginary in their homeland.

According to Nerissa Balce, during the Philippine-American War, journalists for African American newspapers linked "the Filipinos' struggle for independence from the United States with the struggle of black citizens for constitutional rights" ("Filipino Bodies" 54). One of the journalists wrote, "Every colored solider who […] goes out to the Philippine Islands […] is simply fighting to curse the country with color-phobia, jim crow cars, disenfranchisement, and

lynchers and everything that prejudice can do to blight the manhood of the darker races, and as the Filipinos belong to the darker human variety, [it is] the Negro fighting against himself" (qtd. in "Filipino Bodies" 56). By aligning Filipinos with African Americans by the shared experience of white racism, the black journalist suggests a cross-national solidarity between the victimized groups. On the other hand, Joey's father fails to see the connection between American domestic racism and its role in American imperialism in Asian tropics. He reinforces his American-ness by participating in racial violence; the black military officer's interracial heterosexual violence serves as an essential component of his masculinity.

Joey's blackness has a remarkable market value for sex tourism in the neocolonial Philippines. Andres, the drag queen and owner of the club "Coco Rico" where Joey works as a deejay and prostitute for foreign male tourists, says to Joey: "You're lucky you have Negro blood" (34). Joey also understands the market value of his own black skin: "I don't have to work at being sexy. Ha-ha. Maybe its's my Negro blood" (44). Indeed, foreign male tourists visiting "Coco Rico" are attracted to Joey for his black body. For example, Joey's two white johns, an American soldier, Neil, and a German filmmaker, Rainer, are sexually fascinated with the male prostitute's exotic black body. Joey's explanation of why Neil likes his black body substantiates the nature of the two white men's desire: "I could tell he was fascinated, just like all the rest of them. Joey Taboo: my head of tight, kinky curls, my pretty hazel eyes, my sleek brown skin" (72-73). Here, we see the de-historicized re-enactment of the white man's fascination with black bodies, a narrative prevalent in American lynching discourse. Indeed, the two white males from the United States and Germany are obsessed with the hyper-sexualized image of black bodies, and are ignorant of the historical context of how black bodies had been violently eroticized in Euro-American racial imagery. Their fetishist fascination with the black body, to use Carby's

phrase, shares "the dissecting gaze of the lynch mob" (*Race Man* 68).

The trajectory of desire that Joey traces and articulates further illustrates the pervasiveness of American cultural imperialism. As a policy of the Marcos regime to "transform Manila into a haven for the international jet-set," including foreign queer tourists, sex tourism was facilitated by the corrupt Philippine government that the United States sponsored during the Cold War (Tan, qtd. in Sohn 337). Joey's queerness is not immune from the state-sponsored patronage of ethno-sexual industry. As Stephen Hong Sohn argues, Joey is "trapped within the roles prescribed to him because sex work operates as an extension of the postcolonial nation-state's patronage" (336). At issue here is that Joey "doesn't realize how his movement into sex tourism is made possible by the high traffic of bodies moving to Manila" in search of all forms of exotic pleasures (Sohn 337). In this light, Joey's queer sexuality loses its power to subvert or destabilize the heteronormative sexuality of which both first world imperialism and third-world nationalism approve. As quoted earlier, Joey seems to recognize the market value of his black body and manipulate it to his advantage. He even says, "Most sex is charity, on my part" (*Dogeaters* 132). Such a statement might seem to suggest that Joey, as a queer subject, manages to achieve an agency in the neocolonial context; as Sohn points out, however, Joey's queer sexuality is by and large facilitated by the need of Marcos's neocolonial regime. His queer sexuality, manufactured by the Philippine government, is supposed to be consumed by Western tourists. His body is for "display" (131).

Joey does not know his own desire; he only desires the material wealth and social mobility that his Western johns offer. For Joey, "God was definitely a white man, Charlton Heston in robes, with flowing white hair and matching beard" (190). When he tells Rainer, "Let's go somewhere fun. Let's go to Las Vegas" (146), we see that the boundary of Joey's

desire is circumscribed by the colonial history of the Philippines, especially the legacy of American cultural imperialism. His confession after seeing Rainer's body confirms that the Filipino male prostitute is not familiar with being the subject who desires something other than American(ized) commodities and values: "He seems to age even more in the dark, his face drawn and haggard. I have the sudden urge to kiss his dissipated face, just for an instant, surprising myself with the force of my desire. I recoil" (143). Ultimately, *Dogeaters* shows that the "wages of whiteness" and racialized sexual fantasy of the black body prevalent in Jim Crow America have been continually exploited for America's global power and influence even in the postmodern era. Hagedorn's novel illustrates the power and pervasiveness of American imperialism through its depiction of the Americanized desires internalized by characters with mixed-race bodies.

Bibliography

Baker, Jr., Houston A. *Workings of the Spirit: The Poetics of Afro-American Women's Writing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991. Print.

Balce, Nerissa S. "Filipino Bodies, Lynching, and the Language of Lynching." *Positively No Filipino Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse.* Ed. Antonio T. Tiongson, Jr., Edgardo V. Gutierrrez, and Ricardo V. Gutierrez. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2006. Print.

_____. "The Filipina's Breast: Savagery, Docility, and the Erotics of the American Empire." *Social Text 87.24.2* (Summer 2006): 89-110. Print.

Basu, Biman. "Hybrid Embodiment and an Ethics of Masochism: Nella Larsen's *Passing* and Sherley Anne William's *Dessa Rose*." *African American Review* 36.3 (Autumn, 2002): 383-401. Print.

Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995. Print.

Bergner, Gwen. *Taboo Subjects: Race, Sex, and Psychoanalysis*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005. Print.

Berman, Russell. "Du Bois and Wagner: Race, Nation, and Culture between the United States and Germany." *German Quarterly* 70. 2 (Spring 1997):123-135. Print.

Berzon, Judith. *Neither White nor Black: The Mulatto Character in American Fiction*. New York: New York University Press, 1978. Print.

Blackmer, Corinne E. "The Veils of the Law: Race and Sexuality in Nella Larsen's *Passing*." *College Literature* 22. 3 (October, 1995): 50-67. Print.

Blackmore, David L. "'That Unreasonable Restless Feeling': The Homosexual Subtexts of Nella Larsen's *Passing*." *African American Review* 26.3. Fiction Issue. (Autumn, 1992): 475-484. Print.

Brody, Jennifer DeVere. "Clare Kendry's 'True' Colors: Race and Class Conflict in Nella Larsen's *Passing*." *Callaoo*. 15.4 (Autumn, 1992): 1053-1065. Print.

Brown, Elsa Barkley. "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom." *Public Culture 7* (1994):107-146. Print.

Bulosan, Carlos. *America Is in the Heart*. 1946. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973. Print.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter*. 1993. New York: Routledge, 2011. Print.

Bruce Jr., Dickson D. "W. E. B Du Bois and the Idea of Double Consciousness." *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Terri Hume Oliver. New York: Norton, 1999. Print.

Carby, Hazel V. "Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality." *"Race," Writing, and Difference*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985. Print.

_____. *Race Man*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998. Print.

_____. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. Print.

_____. "The Souls of Black Men." *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W.E.B. Du Bois*. Ed. Susan Gilman and Alys Eve Weinbaum. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. Print.

Cather, Willa. *My Ántonia*. 1918. New York: Random House. 1994. Print.

Chang, Juliana. "Melancholic Remains: Domestic and National Secrets in Fae Myenne Ng's *Bone*." *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies* 51.1 (Spring 2005): 110-133. Print.

Chen, Shu-ching. "Affective Journey – National E/motion in Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*." *EURAMERICA* 41.1 (March 2011): 47-86. Print.

Cheng, Anne Anlin. *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Print.

Chinn, Sarah E. *Technology and the Logic of American Racism*. New York: Continuum, 2000. Print.

Chuh, Kandice. *Imagine Otherwise*: *On Asian American Critique*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. Print.

Chow, Rey. *Not Like a Native Speaker*: *On Language as a Postcolonial Experience*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014. Print.

_____. *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. Print.

_____. "The Politics of Admittance." *The Rey Chow Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. Print.

_____. *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

Clarke, Cheryl. "Race, Homosocial Desire, and "Mammon" in *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*." *Professions of Desire*. Ed. George E. Haggetry and Bonnie Zimmerman. New York: MLA, 1995. Print.

Clinton, Catherin. *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South*. New York: Pantheon Book, 1982. Print.

Cooppan, Vilashini. "Move On Down the Line: Domestic Science, Transnational Politics, and Gendered Allegory in Du Bois." *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W.E.B. Du Bois*. Ed. Susan Gilman and Alys Eve Weinbaum. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. Print.

Davis, Angela Y. *Women, Race and Class*. New York: Random House, 1983. Print.

Davis, Thadious M. *Nella Larsen, Novelist of the Harlem Renaissance*: *A Woman's Life Unveiled*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994. Print.

Doane, Mary Ann. *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge, 1991. Print.

Dollimore, Jonathan. *Sexual Dissidence: Augustin to Wilde, Freud to Foucault*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992. Print.

Du Bois, W.E.B. "Americanization." *Crisis* 24. 4. (August 1922): 150-155. Web. 22. January. ‹ http://www.modjourn.org/render.php?id=130702735281250 2&view=mjp_object›.

_____. "An Essay Toward a History of the Black Men in the Great War." *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Reader*. Ed. David Levering Lewis. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995. Print.

_____. "Black France." *Crisis* 23.5 (March 1922): 199-200, Web. 10 Dec. 2014. ‹http://www.modjourn.org/render.php?id=1297795049218752&view=mjp_object›.

_____. "Criteria of Negro Art." *The Oxford W.E.B. Du Bois Reader*. Ed. Eric J. Sundquist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

_____. *Dark Princess: A Romance*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1995. Print.

_____. *Darkwater. The Oxford W.E.B. Du Bois Reader*. Ed. Eric J. Sundquist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

_____. *Dusk of Dawn. W.E.B.Du Bois: Writings*. New York: Library of America, 1996. Print.

_____. "Intermarriage." *Crisis* 5. 4. (February 1913): 180-181. Web. 15. January. ‹http://www.modjourn.org/render.php?id=1305047943906252&view=mjp_object›.

_____. "Marcus Garvey." *The Oxford W.E.B. Du Bois Reader*. Ed. Eric J. Sundquist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

_____. "Pontius Pilate." *Du Bois on Religion*. Ed. Phil Zuckerman. New York: Altamira Press. 2000. Print.

_____. "Social Equality and Racial Intermarriage" *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Reader*. Ed. David Levering Lewis. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995. Print.

_____. "The American Girl." *Against Racism: Unpublished Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887-1961*. Ed. Herbert Aptheker. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985. Print.

_____. *The Gift of Black Folk: The Negroes in the Making of America*. Anderson. New York: Square One, 2009. Print.

_____. "The Gospel According to Mary Brown." *Du Bois on Religion*. Ed. Phil Zuckerman. New York: Altamira Press. 2000. Print.

_____. "The Marrying of Black Folk." *Essays on Race and Empire* by N. Cunard. Ed. Maureen Moynagh. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002. Print.

_____. "The Negro Mind Reaches Out." *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance*. Ed. Alain Locke. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. Print.

_____. *The New Negro*. New York: Dover, 2001. Print.

_____. "The Social Equality of Whites and Blacks." *The Oxford W.E.B. Du Bois Reader*. Ed. Eric J. Sundquist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

_____. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Ed. David W. Blight and Robert Gooding-Williams. New York: Bedford, 1997. Print.

de Jesús, Melinda L. "Liminality and Mestiza Consciousness in Lynda Barry's 'One Hundred Demons.'" *MELUS.* 29.1 (Spring 2004): 219-252. Print.

Eng, David L. *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. Print.

English, Daylanne. "W.E.B. Du Bois's Family Crisis." *American Literature*. 72.2 (June, 2000): 291-319. Print.

Fabre, Michel. *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840-1980*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993. Print.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lam Markham. New York: Grove Press,

1967. Print.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. 1925. New York. Scribner. 2004. Print.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume I.* Trans. Robert Hurley. 1976. New York: Random House, 1990. Print.

Freud, Sigmund. "On Narcissism: An Introduction." *The Completed Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Vol XIV*. Trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1957. Print.

Fuss, Diana. *Identification Papers*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. New York: Routledge, 2012. Print.

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. Print.

Goldsby, Jacqueline. *A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Print.

Gooding-Williams. "Du Bois's Counter-Sublime." *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Terri Hume Oliver. New York: Norton, 1999. Print.

_____. *In the Shadows of Du Bois*: *Afro-Modern Political Thought in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011. Print.

Gunning, Sandra. *Race, Rape, and Lynching: The Red Record of American Literature, 1890-1912*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

Guterl, Matthew Pratt. "The New Race Consciousness: Race, Nation, and Empire in American Culture, 1910-1925." *Journal of World History*. 10.2 (Fall 1999): 307-352. Print.

Hagedorn, Jessica. *Dogeaters*. New York: Penguin, 1990 Print.

_____. *Dream Jungle*. New York: Penguin, 2003. Print.

Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *Making Whiteness*: *The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*. New York: Pantheon Book, 1999. Print.

Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign Against Lynching*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993. Print.

_____. "'The Mind That Burns in Each Body': Woman, Rape, and Racial Violence." *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*. Ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983. Print.

Harper, Phillip Brian. *Are We not Men? Masculine Anxiety and the Problem of African-*

American Identity. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

Harris, Leslie M. "From Abolitionist Amalgamators to 'Rulers of the Five Points': The Discourse of Interracial Sex and Reform in Antebellum New York City." *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History.* Ed. Martha Hodes. New York: New York University Press, 1999. Print.

Harris, Trudier. *Exorcising Blackness: Historical and Literary Lynching and Burning Rituals*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1894. Print.

Hartman, Saidiay V. *Scenes of Subjection*: *Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Print.

Hodes, Martha. *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. Print.

Hoganson, Kristin L. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. Print.

Holt, Thomas C. "The Political Uses of Alienation: W.E.B. Du Bois on Politics, Race, and Culture, 1903-1940." *American Quarterly*. 42.2 (Jun 1990): 301-323. Print.

hooks, bell. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, 1992. Print.

Hutchinson, George. *In Search of Nella Larsen*: *A Biography of the Color Line*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006. Print.

Isaac, Allan Punzalan. *American Tropics: Articulating Filipino America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. Print.

James, Joy. "Profeminism and Gender Elites: W.E.B. Du Bois, Anna Julia Cooper, and Ida B.Wells-Barnett." *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W.E.B. Du Bois*. Ed. Susan Gillman and Alys Eve Weinbaum. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. Print.

Jay, Martin. "In the Empire of the Gaze: Foucault and the Denigration of Vision in Twenties-Century French Thought." *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Ed. David C. Hoy. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986. Print.

Jenkins, Candice M. "Decoding Essentialism: Cultural Authenticity and the Black Bourgeoisie in Nella Larsen's *Passing*." *MELUS*. 30.3 (Fall, 2005): 129-154. Print.

Johnson, James Weldon. *Along This Way, Writings: The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man, Along This Way, Essays and Editorials, Selected Poems.* New York: Library of America, 2004. Print.

_____. *Black Manhattan*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1991. Print.

_____. "Race Prejudice and the Negro Artist." *Writings: The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man, Along This Way, Essays and Editorials, Selected Poems.* New York: Library of America, 2004. Print.

_____. *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. 1912.New York: Random House, 1989. Print

_____. "The Dilemma of the Negro Author." *Writings: The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man, Along This Way, Essays and Editorials, Selected Poems.* New York: Library of America, 2004. Print.

Kaplan, Amy. *The Anarchy of Empire: In the Making of U.S. Culture.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002. Print.

Kawash, Samira. *Dislocating the Color Line*: *Identity, Hybridity, and Singularity in African-American Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. Print.

Kim, Daniel Y. *Writing Manhood in Black and Yellow: Ralph Ellison, Frank Chin and the Literary Politics of Identity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005. Print.

Kim, Elaine H. *Asian American Literature*: *An Introduction to the Writing and Their Social Context*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982. Print.

Kołakowski, Leszek. *Main Currents of Marxism: The Founders, The Golden Age, The Breakdown*. Trans. P.S. Falla. 1978. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005. Print.

Koshy, Susan. "Morphing Race into Ethnicity: Asian Americans and Critical Transformations of Whiteness." *Boundary 2.28*.1 (2001): 153-94. Print.

_____. *Sexual Naturalization: Asian Americans and Miscegenation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004. Print.

Kuhl, Michelle. "Resurrecting Black Manhood in W.E.B. Du Bois's Martyr Tales." *The Souls of W.E.B. Du Bois: New Essays and Reflections*. Ed. Edward Blum and Jason Young. Magon: Mercer University Press, 2009. Print.

Landry, H. Jordan. "Seeing Women Anew through Lesbian Desire in Nella Larsen's *Passing*." *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*. 60.1 (2006): 25-52. Print.

Larsen, Nella. *Quicksand and Passing*. 1929. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006. Print.

Lee, Rachel C. *The Americas of Asian American Literature: Gendered Fictions of Nation and*

Transnation. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. Print.

Lee, Robert G. *Oriental: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999. Print.

Levine, Lawrence W. *Race Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom*. 1977. New York: Oxford University Press. 2007. Print.

Levy, Eugene. *James Weldon Johnson*: *Black Leader, Black Voice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973. Print.

Lewis, David Levering. *W.E.B Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993. Print.

Li, Eric Ping Hung, Hyun Jeong Min, Russell W. Belk, Junko Kimura and Shalini Bahl. "Skin Lightening and Beauty in Four Asian Cultures." *Advances in Consumer Research* 35 (2008): 444-449. Print.

Locke, Alain. "The New Negro." *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance*. Ed. Alain Locke. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992. Print.

Lott, Eric. *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy & the American Working Class*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Print.

Lye, Colleen. *America's Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. Print.

Ma, Sheng-mei. *Immigrant Subjectivities in Asian America and Asian Diaspora Literatures*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998. Print.

Madigan, Mark J. "Miscegenation and 'the Dicta of Race and Class': The Rhinelander Case and Nella Larsen's *Passing*." *MFS*. 36.4 (Winter 1990): 523-529. Print.

Marriott, David. *On Black Men*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000. Print.

Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire*: *Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union*, 1923-1939. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. Print.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather*: *Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.

McDowell, Deborah E. Introduction. *Quicksand and Passing* by Nella Larsen. Ed. Deborah McDowell. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986. Print. ix-xxxv.

McWilliams, Carey. Introduction. *America Is in the Heart* by Carlos Bulosan. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973. Print. vii-xxiv.

Michaels, Walter Benn. *Our America*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2007. Print.

Mink, Gwendolyn. *Old Labor and New Immigrants in American Political Development: Union, Party, and State, 1875-1920*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1986. Print.

Moran, Rachel F. *Interracial Intimacy: The Regulation of Race and Romance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. Print

Morgan, Thomas. "The City as Refuge: Constructing Urban Blackness in Paul Laurence Dunbar's *The Sport of the God* and James Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*." *African American Review*. 38.2 (Summer 2004): 213-237. Print.

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. New York: Random House, 1993. Print.

Ngai, Sianne. *Ugly Feelings*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005. Print.

Nguyen, Viet Thanh. *Race and Resistance*: *Literature and Politics in Asian America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.

Painter, Nell Irvin. "'Social Equality,' Miscegenation, Labor, and Power." *The Evolution of Southern Culture*. Ed. Numan V. Bartley. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988. Print.

Palumbo-Liu, David. *Asian / American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999. Print.

Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar. "'White Trash' Meets the 'Little Brown Monkeys': The Taxi Dance Hall as a Site of Interracial and Gender Alliances between White Working Class Women and Filipino Immigrant Men in the 1920s and 30s." *Amerasia Journal*. 24.2 (1998): 115-134. Print.

Pateman, Carole. *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989. Print.

Peiss, Kathy. *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1998. Print.

Phillips, Michelle H. "The Children of Double Consciousness: From *The Souls of Black Folk* to the *Brownies*' Book." *PMLA*. 128.3 (2013): 590-607.

Pierre, Jemima "'I Like Your Colour!' Skin Bleaching and Geographies of Race in Urban Ghana." *Feminist Review* 90 (2008): 9-19. Print.

Ponce, Martin Joseph. *Beyond the Nation*: *Diasporic Filipino Literature and Queer Reading*.

New York: New York University Press, 2012. Print.

Posnock, Ross. "How It feels to Be a Problem: Du Bois, Fanon, and the 'Impossible Life' of the Black Intellectual." *Critical Inquiry* 23.2 (1997): 323-49. Print.

Rafael, Vicente L. "Colonial Domesticity: White Women and United States Rule in the Philippines. *American Literature*. 67.4 (December, 1995): 639-666. Print.

_____. *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. Print.

Reid-Pharr, Robert F. *Black Gay Man*. New York: New York University Press, 2001. Print.

Roediger, David R. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class.* London: Verso, 2007. Print.

_____. *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Become White.* New York: Basic Books, 2005. Print.

Rowe, John Carlos. *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism: From the Revolution to World War II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.

Rubin, Gayle S. "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." *A Gayle Rubin Reader: Deviations*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011. Print.

San Juan, Epifiano, Jr. *The Philippine Temptation: Dialectics of Philippines—U.S. Literary Relations.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1996. Print.

Santa Ana, Jeffrey. *Racial Feelings: Asian American in a Capitalist Culture of Emotion*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015. Print.

Saxton, Alexander. "Race and the House of Labor." *The Great Fear*: *Race in the Mind of America*. Ed. Gary B. Nash and Richard Weiss. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970. Print.

Scruggs, Charles. "Sexual desire, modernity, and modernism in the fiction of Nella Larsen and Rudolph Fisher." *The Cambridge Companion to the Harlem Renaissance*. Ed. George Hutchinson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Shapiro, Herbert. *White Violence and Black Response*: *From Reconstruction to Montgomery*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998. Print.

Smith, Shawn Michelle. *Photography on the Color Line: W.E.B. Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. Print.

_____. "Second-Sight: Du Bois and the Black Masculine Gaze." *Next to the Color Line:*

Gender, Sexuality, and W.E.B. Du Bois. Ed. Susan Gilman and Alys Eve Weinbaum. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. Print.

Smith, Valerie. *Self-Discovery and Authority in Afro-American Narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987. Print.

Sohn, Stephen Hong. "From Discos to Jungles: Circuitous Queer Patronage and Sex Tourism in Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*." *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies*. 56.2 (Summer 2010): 317-348. Print.

Sollors, Werner. *Ethnic Modernism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008. Print.

_____. *Neither Black nor White yet Both*: *Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. Print.

Somerville, Siobhan B. *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. Print.

Stember, Charles Herbert. *Sexual Racism*: *The Emotional Barrier to an Integrated Society*. New York: Harper & Row, 1976. Print.

Stovall, Tyler. "Gender, Race, and Miscegenation: African Americans in Jazz Age France." *The Modern Woman Revisited: Paris Between the Wars.* Ed. Whitney Chadwick and Tirza True Latimer. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003. Print.

Summers, Martin. *Manliness and its Discontents: The Black Middle Class and the Transformation of Masculinity, 1900-1930*. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Sundquist, Eric J. *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994. Print.

Sweeney, Carole. *From Fetish to Subject: Race, Modernism, and Primitivism, 1919-1935*. London: Praeger, 2004. Print.

Takaki, Ronald T. *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. 1989. Reprint, New York: Penguin, 1990. Print.

Tapia, Ruby C. "'Just Ten Years Removed from a Bolo and a Breech-cloth': *The Sexualization of the Filipino 'Menace.'" Positively No Filipino Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse.* Ed. Antonio T. Tiongson, Jr., Edgardo V. Gutierrrez, and Ricardo V. Gutierrez. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2006. Print.

Tate, Claudia. "Race and Desire: *Dark Princess: A Romance*." *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W.E.B. Du Bois*. Ed. Susan Gilman and Alys Eve Weinbaum. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. Print.

Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. 1923. New York: Norton, 2011. Print.

Vechten, Carl Van. Introduction. *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* by James Weldon Johnson. New York: Random House, 1927. Print. xxxiii-xxxviii

Volpp, Leti. "American Mestizo: Filipinos and Antimiscegenation Laws in California." *U.C. Davis Law Review*. 33.4. (Summer, 2000): 795-835. Print.

Wacks, Jamie L. "Reading Race, Rhetoric, and the Family Body in the *Rhinelander* Case." *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. Ed. Werner Sollors. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.

Wall, Cheryl A. *Women of the Harlem Renaissance*: Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1995. Print.

Warren, Kenneth W. *What Was African American Literature?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011. Print.

Weinbaum, Alys Eve. "Interracial Romance and Black Internationalism." *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W.E.B. Du Bois*. Ed. Susan Gilman and Alys Eve Weinbaum. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. Print.

_____. "Racial Masquerade: Consumption and Contestation of American Modernity." *The Modern Girl Around the World*: *Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization*. Ed. Alys Eve, et al. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008. Print.

Wells-Barnett, Ida B. *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*. *Selected Works of Ida B. Wells-Barnett*. Ed. Trudier Harris. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. Print.

Wexler, Laura. *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. Print.

Wiegman, Robyn. *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1995. Print.

Wolfenstein, Eugene Victor. *A Gift of the Spirit*: *Reading The Souls of Black Folk.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007. Print.

Young, Robert. *Colonial Desire*: *Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Žižek, Slavoj. "Death and the Maiden." *The Žižek Reader*. Ed. Elizabeth Wright and Edmond Wright. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. Print.

_____. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*.

Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1992. Print.