The Possible Form of an Interlocution

W. E. B. Du Bois and Max Weber in Correspondence

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DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS *Durham & London* 2025

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞
Project Editor: Livia Tenzer
Cover designed by A. Mattson Gallagher
Typeset in Garamond Premier Pro and Trade Gothic
by Westchester Publishing Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Chandler, Nahum Dimitri, author. | Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868–1963. Correspondence. Selections. | Weber, Max, 1864–1920. Correspondence. Selections.
Title: The possible form of an interlocution : W. E. B. Du Bois and Max Weber in correspondence / Nahum Dimitri Chandler.
Other titles: W. E. B. Du Bois and Max Weber in correspondence
Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2025. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2025009450 (print)
LCCN 2025009451 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478032489 (paperback)
ISBN 9781478029144 (hardcover)
ISBN 9781478061366 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478094517 (ebook/other)
Subjects: LCSH: Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868–1963—Correspondence. | Weber, Max, 1864–1920—Correspondence. | African Americans—Social conditions—To 1964. | United States—Race relations. | LCGFT: Personal correspondence.
Classification: LCC PS3507.U147 A4 2025 (print) | LCC PS3507.U147 (ebook)
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2025009450
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2025009451

Cover art: W. E. B. Du Bois, 1907. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Robert S. Cox Special Collections and University Archives Research Center, UMass Amherst Libraries.

This book is freely available in an open access edition thanks to the generous support of the University of California Libraries.

Duke University Press gratefully acknowledges the Humanities Commons of the School of Humanities at the University of California, Irvine, which provided funds toward the publication of this book.

for
Eugene Lunn
am memoriam
and
Joseph Fracchia
for living well

I am quite sure to come back to your country as soon as possible and especially to the South, because I am absolutely convinced that the "color-line" problem will be the paramount problem of the time to come, here and everywhere in the world.

—MAX WEBER to W. E. B. Du Bois (1904)

And above all consider one thing: the day of the colored races dawns. It is insanity to delay this development; it is wisdom to promote what it promises us in light and hope for the future.

—W. E. B. DU BOIS, "Die Negerfrage in den Vereinigten Staaten" (1906)

CONTENTS

NOTE ON CITATIONS

FOR WORKS BY W. E. B. DU BOIS

1

The essay "Die Negerfrage in den Vereinigten Staaten" ("The Negro Question in the United States") by W. E. B. Du Bois, our primary concern in this study, is usually cited herein by abbreviated title as reference to the English translation by Joseph Fracchia from the 1906 German-language publication of the text. That translation of the text is included as an appendix in this study, as noted on the contents page. That translation is also included in *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Essential Early Essays*, published in 2015 (Du Bois 2015f), for the appendix is a republication of the version in that volume. That collection is now widely available online as part of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Humanities Ebook Collection, at https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.33779. The paragraph enumeration given in the translation included in the collection of essays just cited is determined according to and follows (as precisely as possible) the original publication in German (Du Bois 1906a). Hence, readers with the 2015 English-language collection or the 1906 German text at hand should easily find any section- or paragraph-level citation to that essay, "Die Negerfrage," that is given in this study. The texts included in the 2015 collection are complete versions of the essays as originally published or as extant in Du Bois's unpublished papers, edited and annotated, according to contemporary scholarship.

2

While I have taken scholastic reference to the original publication or to the unpublished manuscript of texts by W. E. B. Du Bois in every case of his writings engaged in this study, with citations noted within the text where possible or appropriate, I have also, without exception, also consulted

the versions of all published texts included in the thirty-seven volumes of the Complete Published Works of W. E. B. Du Bois, published from 1973 to 1986 by the Kraus-Thomson Organization and edited and introduced by Herbert Aptheker, as well as the six volumes of Du Bois's texts published from 1973 to 1985 by the University of Massachusetts Press, also edited and introduced by Aptheker, which include three volumes of selected correspondence and three of selections of other texts, including previously unpublished texts and documents. The bibliographical details of those texts edited by Aptheker, if cited here, are listed in the references section at the end of this volume.

3

The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches is cited here from the first edition of its original publication (Du Bois 1903f). A full-text version of the second edition, with no major changes from the first edition, is available online through open access from the University of North Carolina's Documenting the American South project (Du Bois 1903g; see https://docsouth.unc.edu/church/duboissouls/dubois.html). I consider that presentation of the book, in its second edition from June 1903, an accurate and reliable work of scholarship. The pagination is the same in the first and second editions. In-text citations are given later in parentheses with the relevant page number(s), the chapter number, and the paragraph number(s) within the chapter. For example, the in-text cite Du Bois 1903f, 213, chap. 11, para. 13 indicates page 213, chapter 11, paragraph 13, based on the first and second editions of the book, each issued in 1903.

4

When quoting from or referencing *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899), published under the authorship of Du Bois with an additional text by Isabel Eaton (the report of a study on African American women domestic workers), I cite the first published edition (Du Bois and Eaton 1899). It is the first edition that is the decisive basis of my references, because subsequent editions of *The Philadelphia Negro* may be abridged and thus not yield a reliable match with that first published edition. Several of those later editions notably also leave aside Du Bois's own original and important preface.

5

When referencing *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*, originally published in 1940, I cite the version published as part of the Complete Published Works of W. E. B. Du Bois series (Du Bois 1975b). While the 1975 edition is not a facsimile of the 1940 edition, the pagination follows exactly that of the first edition. Thus, the reader should easily be able to determine the in-text context of my citation according to the first edition of Du Bois's original published text as a whole.

6

I occasionally refer to material found only among the W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312 as part of series 3, subseries C) at the Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Libraries, housed in the W. E. B. Du Bois Library or in the microfilmed version of those papers (Du Bois 1980f). These papers have been digitized and are open access material in the libraries' online repository Credo (https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums312). Additional bibliographic detail for specific notable citations from among these papers is found in the endnotes or in the reference section at the end of this volume. The original papers were compiled and edited by Herbert Aptheker, whereas the microfilm edition was supervised by Robert C. McDonnell.

FOR WORKS BY MAX WEBER

For the principal work by Max Weber engaged in this study, "Die Protestantische Ethik und der 'Geist' des Kapitalismus," I refer to the two-part essay in which Weber first presented his idea (Weber 1905a, 1905b). I have consulted the English-language translation of those essays issued in 2002 in *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism and Other Writings*, edited and translated by Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells (Weber 2002d). Likewise, I have taken reference to the relatively recent publication of those original essays as part of *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus/Die Protestantischen Sekten und der Geist des Kapitalismus: Schriften 1904–1920*, edited by Wolfgang Schluchter, with assistance from Ursula Bube, as part of the *Max Weber–Gesamtausgabe* (Complete works of Max Weber), volume 1/18, first released in 2016; notably, it is cited here as issued in a *Studienausgabe*

(study edition) in 2021 as volume 1/18, supplemented with texts from volume 1/9 of the *Max Weber–Gesamtausgabe* (Weber 2021). As can be noted throughout the text and the reference list, I have consulted and cited as relevant other texts from the collected works by Max Weber as they have been issued as part of the *Max Weber–Gesamtausgabe*, edited by multiple scholars over the decades, and published since 1984 by J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) in Tübingen, Germany (Weber 1984a).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Eugene Lunn (1941–1990), a scholar of intellectual history, was a pivotal teacher for me, and for many, many others at the University of California (UC), Davis, during my undergraduate study there. Lunn's yearlong course in European intellectual history was famous among some two decades of students at UC Davis as the trial by fire through which one had to pass if one were to be taken seriously. Only in this course, as we began by reading Kant, Goethe, Hegel, and Marx, then moved on to Nietzsche and Freud, did I suddenly feel that, finally, here in college was an address that broached questions as seriously and profoundly as the discussion that had long come to me through my father's teaching in our daily family morning devotions and as the pastor of our church. Professor Lunn also would no doubt appreciate that my father was, and remained, the first example of a teacher for me. From there, it was only a matter of time before I would connect the curve of my trajectory that was marked out in the year of courses with Professor Lunn back to an orientation that had its incipit somewhere near the very beginning: the one announced by the figure of W. E. B. Du Bois. Years later, long after I had left UC Davis as a student—and, indeed, had left the academy—Professor Lunn would play a key role in supporting my efforts to return to the university context for doctoral study.

In 2002, I was privileged to serve for a term as a visiting professor in the comparative literature program at my alma mater. (The invitation had come with no knowledge on their part that I was an alumnus.) Donna Reed, Professor Lunn's widow and companion of the heart during those years, was my office neighbor—a quiet, unexpected, profound gift. I acknowledge and thank Harriett Murav, then the chair of UC Davis's comparative literature program; the late Marc Blanchard and Gail Finney, faculty in the program; and David Luis Brown, my co-visitor. I also thank several doctoral students in my seminar, especially Mary Christine Evans, Yvonne Cardenas, and Proshot Kalami, for their collective and individual hospitality and, especially, for their careful, considered, rich interlocution in seminar.

Then there was Joseph Fracchia, now a beloved professor emeritus at the University of Oregon, where more than two generations of students at Clark Honors College had the benefit of his remarkable intellect and generosity. He was almost as famous as Professor Lunn had been on the UC Davis campus those three generations ago and had, in fact, served as the quintessential doctoral assistant in Lunn's European intellectual history course. Professor Fracchia's scrupulous approach to teaching meant that UC Davis students got almost two for the price of one—except that he was in Europe during the year I took the course. By chance, through mutual friends connected to that course, we were later introduced and became lifelong friends. While he certainly remains, for me, the most outstanding example of Professor Lunn's many superb students, he is on his own terms truly one of the most gifted, dedicated, and accomplished teachers I have come to know. Perhaps my endless address to him in the form of *the question* has been an effort to make up for his missing presence during my year in the course at UC Davis. It was Professor Fracchia's initiative that led to the translation of Du Bois's "Die Negerfrage in den Vereinigten Staaten" that would provide the spark for this study. As I can now hold his monumental two-volume study on historicity and human corporeal organization (Fracchia 2022) in my hands, I am sometimes led to imagine that his engagement in translating "Die Negerfrage," itself an early expression of an indefatigable scholar's lifelong commitment to the recognition within the discourses of knowledge of the world-historical importance in the modern era of the labor of "Black folk" (to maintain Du Bois's turn-of-the-twentieth-century metaphor), helped sustain Professor Fracchia in the realization of his master work.

And here I must turn and recall, also, what only a scholar would care to remember: a moment when William W. Hagen, perhaps Professor Lunn's closest colleague, to whom I had been referred for guidance on a bibliography pertaining to Eastern Europe, sat down and thoughtfully typed out references as they came to his mind while pulling softly on his pipe. He doubtless would not recall this moment. This apparently small gesture—normal for him, I am sure—remains emblematic for me of how a scholar can also be a teacher. As can be seen from this volume's reference list, Professor Hagen's own work proved an essential reference and guidance in my eventual development of this study (see Hagen 1980, 2002, 2012, 2018).

Finally, Professor Lunn's first major scholarly work was on the intellectual history of the early Weimar period in Germany. It should be remarked that, although the figure on whom he focused, Gustav Landauer, took an

approach to that moment that was very different from that of Max Weber, Professor Lunn placed two quotations from Weber at the head of his study of Landauer (Lunn 1973). He had a deep paradoxical respect and persisting fascination with Weber. But perhaps especially, he would have followed keenly the possibility of seeing the figure of Du Bois brought into a different, and perhaps new, kind of intellectual relief by the articulation of his figure in this intellectual topography that Professor Lunn knew so well. I also imagine that had a certain Du Bois been rendered legible for his generation, Professor Lunn would have found his deep experience of the arts and, above all, music a passion in common (Lunn 1982). As a simple mark of my deep and abiding respect and affection for his work as a teacher and a scholar, and for his sense of appreciation for his wife as a companion, as well as his way in music—and then, too, that his family ancestry was Jewish on both sides from Kiev, Ukraine, and Poland, respectively—this text is dedicated to the memory of Eugene Lunn.

And for the gift of a lifetime's worth of friendship, this text is also dedicated to Joseph Fracchia, the Babo.

During the summer of 1997, through the kind suggestion of Leslie Allen Adelson, I was privileged to participate in a seminar on the future of German studies funded by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service), hosted by the Institute for German Cultural Studies at Cornell University, and led by Peter Uwe Hohendahl. While my relation to the humanities was an initial basis for my participation, it was the question of the relation of German studies and African American studies that became definitive in my experience of the sessions. While it is appearing here in book form two-and-a-half decades after that summer, this study remains the most legible public trace of that indelible experience. I thank both Professor Hohendahl and Professor Adelson for their interest and generosity, which made that experience possible.

In the autumn of 2006, I served as a visiting professor at the Institute for Research in African American Studies at Columbia University while completing the principal work on this study. I thank, first and especially, Nuri Richards for her untiring hospitality, without which this work could not have been sustained during my time there. I also thank Sharon Harris and Shawn Mendoza for their consideration, and the students of my seminars for their generous and ongoing engagement. Most especially I am grateful to the late Manning Marable. He and the late Leith Mullings, his wife and the companion of his heart, provided me with a most considerate welcome and an office, along with the invitation to lecture for the

Center for Contemporary Black History in October 2007. This became a signal occasion for me. And more, they shared with me an evening repast at the time of my lecture, even as Professor Marable was in the midst of a sabbatical year.

Over the course of all the stages of my work on this study, the thoughtful consideration of Danielle Kovacs, then lead curator of the W. E. B. Du Bois Collection in the Special Collections Department at the W. E. B Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts, Amherst—and now head curator of all collections—proved indispensable. I salute her careful and precise assistance.

At Duke University Press: I am thankful that the text was brought to final form under the exact yet generous care and guidance of Livia Tenzer, with support from Susan Deeks and Stephanie Attia; likewise I am thankful for the bold, careful line given in the design work of A. Mattson Gallagher. Yet, most especially it is always such a high-level pleasure to work with Ryan Kendall, for which I remain simply grateful, and so too for this volume. Then it must be said: It was Ken Wissoker as editor who just over a dozen years ago affirmed the integrity of the statement now proposed in this book and has stood firm to see it realized. The pleasure has been all mine.

AN OPENING OCCASION

In late October or early November 1904, just after concluding a whirlwind train tour of the eastern half of the United States—a circuit that included, on the outgoing leg from New York City, stops in Buffalo, Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans, as well as excursions to Niagara Falls, to a community of the Cherokee in Oklahoma, and to the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, and a visit to relatives in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina and, on the return leg, a hurried passage through the East Coast cities of Washington, DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston, before landing back in New York City—Max Weber, traveling with his wife, Marianne, wrote in his own hand on stationery from the Holland House in Manhattan (located at Fifth Avenue and 30th Street) to W. E. B. Du Bois, in Atlanta. At that time, Du Bois lived in Georgia (his home already for more than seven years) and worked as a professor at Atlanta University, residing on its campus situated among the slight red hills overlooking the center of the city of Atlanta from the southwest.

The letter contained an apology and a request.

An account of the provenance of that letter and the correspondence that followed it may, in turn, make it possible to begin to render legible the terms of address that organized an interlocution between W. E. B. Du Bois and Max Weber in late 1904 and early 1905. Likewise, such an account may well provide initial lexical and discursive references such that we can begin to elaborate some of the epistemological and theoretical terms of such an interlocution—the terms of a historical condition that was at once social and theoretical, epistemological, and actual (if you will) and virtual—of a certain form of commonness, as problems of understanding with regard to matters of difference among human groups. The force and implications of this preceded the epistolary conversation of these two figures and may persist in its virtual sense, not only beyond their time. It is a problematization of social life across the centuries of the modern era and throughout the world—in general and, as such, throughout the planet as a whole—that may not only persist as the questions at stake

for them then but also remain so for us now, in our present. So, too, perhaps, this fundamental problematization—a matter of our epistemological conditions and our theoretical commitments for our understanding of matters of supposed categorical difference among human groups—this question, such as it was at stake then and is decisive for us now, may well remain intractable for critical social thought well beyond our own time.

In affirmative response to an invitation from Weber, Du Bois prepared an essay in English on matters of the so-called Negro question in America. The essay was first published in a German translation under the title "Die Negerfrage in den Vereinigten Staaten," translated as "The Negro Question in the United States" (Du Bois 1906a, 2006).

It was published in the January 1906 issue of the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* (Journal of social science and social policy), edited in Heidelberg by Max Weber, Edgar Jaffé, and Werner Sombart. The *Archiv*, which Weber and Jaffé, his former student, took over when Jaffé purchased it in 1903, existed under that name from 1904 to 1933. It became one of the most influential scholarly journals published in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century (Factor 1988).

It was that essay by Du Bois—the text as published in German in 1906, a certain kind of archival document—that set in motion my considerations in this study.

The text of an English-language essay was sent by Du Bois from Atlanta to Weber (and his associates) in Heidelberg in the early spring of 1905. The essay was drawn, in part, from previously written and published texts by Du Bois. Emendations and revisions of those earlier writings were combined with newly drafted text and assembled into a freestanding essay of some fifty pages. Du Bois's English version of the essay as a whole apparently is no longer extant. (I briefly annotate this question later.) And although it was translated and published in German through the initiative of the editors of the *Archiv*, who carried out the translation remains uncertain. As I also annotate later, the main work of translation into German was likely done by Else von Richthofen, based on at least one epistolary reference in the 1905 correspondence between Atlanta and Heidelberg, with some editorial participation by Weber (as the key editor of the *Archiv* for the issue in question) and, perhaps, with some participation by Jaffé (who was also an editor—and the owner—of the *Archiv*, as well as von Richthofen's husband).

The essay as published in German in 1906 was first *published in English translation* as a whole, freestanding essay in 2006 in the journal

CR: The New Centennial Review under the title "Die Negerfrage in den Vereinigten Staaten (The Negro Question in the United States)." It was translated from the published German text of 1906 by Joseph Fracchia, a long-standing scholar of modern European intellectual history. Fracchia's translation was republished in 2015 without any modification or deletion of the translation of text written by Du Bois (for the 1906 German publication) as the closing essay of a newly compiled and edited collection of Du Bois's early essays, including several texts previously unpublished or not easily available in complete or unabridged form. That edited collection was issued under the title *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Essential Early Essays* (Du Bois 2015f). That 2015 fully annotated version of the English translation of the 1906 publication of the essay in German is included in this book as an appendix. I consider it both an integral reference for this book as a whole and the core reference for my thetic discourse in this study. The 2015 republication of the essay's English translation does, however, include additions to the work—namely, my scholastic annotations presented as endnotes, most notably annotations pertaining to other writings by Du Bois from which he drew in the spring of 1905 to produce the freestanding essay published in German in 1906 under the title "Die Negerfrage in den Vereinigten Staaten." As in 2015, in the appendix my editorial annotations to the English translation of Du Bois's essay are presented as endnotes. So it must be highlighted that Du Bois gave only one note for the text published by the *Archiv* in 1906: He appended to the closing paragraph of his 1906 text a set of citations—mainly to his own texts, authored or edited, but also to some works by others—pertaining to matters African American. The bibliographic notations given by Du Bois followed from a specific solicitation to him from Weber in their correspondence, an interest that Weber also noted in his headnote to the *Archiv*'s publication of Du Bois's essay (see the appendix). The full bibliographic information for Du Bois's citations is provided in the volume's reference section.

This book thus has two main parts, a closing coda as a third part, and the appendix. The commentary given as part I of this study addresses, respectively, the correspondence and the essay itself. In the latter case, I also offer a brief outline of the concerns of the essay, along with the question of its place in the thought of Du Bois. All known extant letters from the correspondence between Weber and Du Bois, are given in their entirety, as transcribed from the Du Bois papers. They provide the essential archival reference for my approach in this study, a reconsideration of the relation

of the thought and practice of Du Bois and Weber. This correspondence made legible a direct interlocution of these two thinkers. To account for this interlocution in the sense of its general theoretical and epistemological possibility became the study's guiding problematic. My effort here, thus, is simply an extended annotation of *one aspect* of the terms of emergence of Du Bois's essay as a certain kind of discourse, a work of scholarship and learning on the terms of its solicitation from, and interest for, a major contemporary scholar of his own time.

For a brief account of "Die Negerfrage in den Vereinigten Staaten" itself, one can proceed directly to the second section of this opening part of the study.

In the work at hand, the thetic commitments and interpretive accomplishments of Du Bois's "Die Negerfrage," as well as the basis of those contributions in scholarship and as an understanding of matters of historiography, are not subject to a sustained critical engagement as a distinct line of inquiry. The essay, in fact, gathers references from across the whole of Du Bois's early itinerary (intellectual and political and, certainly, academic) from late 1894 to early 1905. In a proper sense, such an engagement is the work of an additional study. It would most certainly require a careful critical understanding, at once archival and theoretical, of the actual writing and the whole horizon of references to his own work that Du Bois makes in the essay. Such a horizon is indicated in the annotations included in the 2015 publication of the essay (see Du Bois 2015d) and in the presentation of that same annotated version of the English translation included as the appendix. Such engagement would also certainly entail a consideration of "Die Negerfrage" (Du Bois 1906a), most specifically and especially in relation to the work that is gathered in *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Du Bois 1903f, 1903g), some indications of which are also given in the annotations for the appendix. Likewise, reference to Du Bois's own scholastic practice that was committed to the cultivation of a certain understanding of matters African American, which he thought of as a new science of human practice that, by the mid-1890s, he had already begun to call "sociology," is only adumbrated in this study; my brief indication is given in the later sections of part I, leaving a more complete annotation for a separate study devoted to a full reconsideration Du Bois's projection in the human sciences as a whole—that is, social thought in general. In part I, my privileged concern is to provide essential references for understanding the itinerary of Du Bois in relation to his correspondence with Weber in late 1904 and early 1905.

Part II proposes certain terms of thought for our understanding of the possible interlocution of Du Bois and Weber. It opens by questioning a deeply problematic supposition about Du Bois's thought and scholarly practice in relation to the work and itinerary of Weber. It then formulates and outlines the terms of another approach that we might take in understanding the relation of the itineraries in thought and practice of these thinkers.

Certain archival references found among Du Bois's papers, in particular, provide historical and textual footing for the scholastic questioning of a perspective that emerged proximate to the time of World War II; that subsequently became conventional; and that then remained presumptive in discourse about Du Bois, even though, by all appearances, it also often remained obscure to general scholastic discourse. It was an easy, yet profoundly erroneous, understanding that has judged Du Bois's thought on the basis of reductive terms supposedly derived from the itinerary of Weber. This approach not only persisted through the second half of the twentieth century, as Weber's intellectual standing rose, but has remained afoot in the third decade of the twenty-first century.

In addition to published texts by both Weber and Du Bois, there are unpublished texts, documents in general, among Du Bois's papers that allow us to propose a premise for understanding the relation of these two thinkers that both is grounded in scholarship and indexes a horizon of epistemological and political problematization on a world-historical scale of reference that inscribed them in common. This was so even if the precise inhabitation of this problematization remained respective to each thinker. That commonality was how to think about the future of relations among different groups that had come into new forms of relation—group to group—but were strongly marked by supposed hierarchical differences within a worldwide horizon. This entails, of course, direct differences of power and authority. Yet, with regard to an understanding of such forms of difference as expressions of supposed more fundamental difference of kind within or among groups of humans, it also pertains within a new global scenario or worldwide level of reference.

This perspective is to suggest that the respective itineraries and thought of Du Bois and Weber must yet—also—be thought together and in relation.

That is to say, still working on the basis of archival and scholastic references such as those in part I, part II, in both its aspects (critical or questioning and affirmative or propositional), is elaborated on the basis of

further reference to archival resource. On the basis of those scholastic references, in the latter sections of part II, I propose an exemplary theoretical elaboration of a different, somewhat new approach to understanding the relation of the thought and practice of Du Bois and Weber.

The signal proposition of this book is a theoretical elaboration of the bearing of Du Bois's thought on "the problem of the color line" for our understanding of the possible interlocution of Du Bois and Weber in 1904 and 1905 and for contemporary considerations of the thought of Weber. (I initially proposed this line of thought in a two-part journal essay [see Chandler 2006, 2007]; this book emplaces the two parts as a coherent whole and thus allows greater access to the through line that marks out the distinctive contribution of this study.) In likewise manner, this elaboration offers a deep-seated understanding of Du Bois's thought by reinscribing and proposing the value of a contemporary critical theoretical elaboration of his formulation of "the problem of the color line." This phrase may be considered a term of art for Du Bois. This new approach is offered instead of the previous and widely dispersed (even if, at times, rather obscure) conventional accounts that considered this relation as essentially that of a theoretical benefactor (Weber) to a beneficiary (Du Bois), occasionally understood and presented under the guise of a broadly patronizing reference or consideration. The perspective offered here is a reconsideration that not only challenges contemporary scholarship directly about Weber's itinerary and thought but that should also challenge such scholarship to come to a more profound understanding of Du Bois's thought. It likewise thereby also implicates much social thought in general that is contemporary to our time.

For most of the past two decades, the scholarship on the matter of the *relation* of the thought and itinerary of Du Bois and that of Weber has remained remarkably limited in its partiality. At best, the discourse of scholars principally concerned with Du Bois has remained uncertain and imprecise, both in general as to Du Bois's thought and when conceptualizing the relation of his practice (in thought and in social and political itinerary) to the practice of Weber (in a parallel sense of itinerary). At the same time, in a similar yet different manner, the scholarship concerned with Weber has retained profoundly presumptuous and long-outdated premises about his relation to matters of Du Bois and thus has remained misleading in this domain or, worse, has persisted without explicit reflection or consideration of matters that were put directly at stake in their correspondence—their interlocution—of 1904 and 1905. At play in dis-

courses on Weber are presumptions that I addressed directly in the second part of my previous two-part essay (see Chandler 2007), a questioning that I propose again in part II of this book. I had hoped that the annotations on "Die Negerfrage in den Vereinigten Staaten" I had proposed in the two-part essay would enable a more collaborative and complete engagement with a common horizon of problematization that was at stake for these two profound thinkers. In my judgment, contemporary critical engagement with this common problematization that is commensurate with the questions at stake for our time is yet to come in scholarship and theoretical discourse.

In the coda, I provide brief remarks on the scholarship of the past decade and a half and more.

I present this study and annotated translation in book form here as an expression of my hope that future scholarship and theoretical discourse in social thought will find it a sober and informative reference for future efforts in the pursuit of radical and fundamental understanding in self-reflexive, or critical, social thought. Perhaps we can recognize anew our own inscription within the centuries-long problematization at stake in the question that inscribed the practices of Du Bois and Weber.

What they shared in common, as a historical and epistemological problematization of social life on a world-historical scale of reference, inscribed their thinking and their theoretical projection differently. Indeed, this form of a common problematic, this very commonness, was such that it would articulate and devolve for each of them as, respectively, their situation and practice—as if the social and historical production of differences between them could be an expression of a supposed categorical truth or essence for their thought—as well as for their supposed social and historical forms of being.

What matters for thought today is that, across the century and more since their time, this general historical problematization remains at stake in our time. That is, it remains also our problematization, for it is also of our time—this twenty-first century. It is my proposition that we, even if differentially and respectively among ourselves, hold this fundamental historical problematization in common with them. So it may also remain in future historical-epistemological horizons for some generations to come—that is, within our own time yet also, perhaps, beyond our time (e.g., in this century) to which we may be understood to belong in our present.

August 31, 2024