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The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England
CHAPTER 5

Birth of an Empire

In a scene from *Citizen Kane* celebrating the success of the owner's newspaper, Kane twice poses a rhetorical question to his journalists: "Well gentlemen, are we going to declare war on Spain?" His friend Leland wryly responds: "The Inquirer already has," to which Kane retorts: "you long-faced, overdressed anarchist." During this repartee, Kane as the host welcomes in the evening entertainment: a chorus line of women spottily clad in stars and stripes and toting toy rifles, led by a marching band of black musicians. The shooting script of the film originally called for a longer debate between Leland and Kane about the impending U.S. intervention in Cuba.¹ Kane proposes sending Leland to Cuba as special correspondent to compete with Richard Harding Davis, but Leland rejects the offer and challenges the paper's commitment to warmongering. This debate was cut from the final version of the film when the setting was changed from a brothel to a banquet hall to pass the production code. In the final screen version, traces of war talk and illicit sexuality from the shooting script linger on the costumed female bodies of the chorus line.

This reference to conflict about the Spanish-American War links Orson Welles's landmark film of 1941 to the earliest history of cinema in the late 1890s. That war was one of the first to be shot on film, at a moment when the "moving picture" first emerged as a novel form of entertainment. Despite its participation in the birth of U.S. cinema, the war then disappeared as a subject from later films. No major films have chronicled the three-month-long war in Cuba or the subsequent three-year-long war in the Philippines, although films have been made about virtually every other war in U.S. history.² This chapter is about that duality, about the formative presence and telling absence of this pivotal war in the history of U.S. cinema. Moving pictures about the war in Cuba and the Philippines were central to the organization of movie-making as a viable business and to the capacity of films to tell stories in the first decade of the twentieth century. If the Spanish-American War then disappeared from the screen, its evocation of an American empire continued to inform the genealogy of American cinema. Veiled allusions to the war inform D. W. Griffith's landmark film, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), and Oscar Micheaux's response, *Within Our Gates* (1920). The war is mentioned several times in *Citizen Kane* (1941), which was based on the career of William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper magnate who built his career on his incitement of war hysteria in the yellow press. References to the Spanish-American War, I argue, appeared both at moments of cinematic innovation and at threshold periods of international crisis, when the question of American involvement in European wars was under intense debate and the global role of the United States was hanging in the balance. *Birth of a Nation* came out at the beginning of World War I and *Citizen Kane* during World War II, as debates were raging about entering each war. If "race movies," as Michael Rogin argues, "provide the scaffolding for American film history,"³ imperial films, I contend, provide the submerged foundation on international terrain for a history that charts not only the internal bonds of national unity but also the changing relations between the domestic and the foreign.

**Imperial Mobility**

As we have seen in the last two chapters, popular enthusiasm for the war against Spain has long been linked to the rise of the mass media in the United States and its power to mobilize public opinion, particularly to the yellow journalism of William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer. The newfound popularity of "moving pictures" also played a significant, if less well known role in rousing support for the war and for the project of imperial expansion. During the Cuban War for Independence, before the U.S. declaration of war against Spain, cameramen for Edison and Biograph made their way to Florida where troops
were amassing, and they joined Hearst’s journalists on the yacht he dispatched from Key West to the Caribbean. In urban theaters and traveling exhibitions throughout the country in 1898 and 1899, crowds flocked to see the novelty of war scenes shot in Florida and Cuba. These brief films, less than a minute each, showed battleships at sea, the wreck of the Maine and the funeral of its victims, panoramas of Havana Harbor, troops in marching formation, soldiers embarking on trains and ships, the Rough Riders riding, generals in conference, and triumphant victory parades leaving Havana and welcoming Admiral Dewey home to New York and Washington. The films also captured the more informal moments of war—soldiers washing dishes, lounging in camps, digging paths, and loading their gear on trains and mules. There were views of battleships with laundry hanging from the decks, of troops disembarking offshore at Daiquiri, tossing their mules overboard to sink or swim, and digging roads through the brush. Because of the weight and size of the cameras, “actuality” shots of battles were almost impossible to take, though some cameramen did try to cart their equipment to the battlefields of Cuba. Filmmakers compensated by staging famous battles in the New Jersey countryside and shooting naval conflicts that were fought in the harbors of Manila and Havana in bathtubs with toy ships and cigarette smoke. As soon as the war began between Americans and Filipinos, a repertoire of battles in the Philippines was enacted as well, though no American cameramen were present there.

Audiences were, for the most part, not troubled by the combination of “real” and “reenacted” films, a distinction we would make today, since both equally provided the thrill of immediacy in viewing the otherwise remote experience of war. The exhibition of war films provided public occasions for the expressions of nationalist sentiment, as viewers hissed the Spanish crown, cheered Dewey’s victory, sang patriotic songs, and saluted the oft-repeated raising of the American flag against the painted scenery of Morro Castle in Havana Harbor. At the height of the war, these films were so popular that they were repeated every hour around the clock in urban theaters, where the spectacle of war was not contained on the screen but suffused every aspect of attending the theater. The projection machines, an early attraction in themselves, such as Edison’s Kinesepe, were renamed War-Graph, or Warscope. The Eden Musee was remodeled as the interior of an arse-

nal battleship for the celebration of Admiral Dewey’s return in September. Soldiers disembarking in New York harbor would go to that theater both to watch themselves on screen and be hailed by spectators.5

These early war films seem to fulfill J. A. Hobson’s observation (see Chapter 3) that “jingoism is the lust of the spectator,” wherein the desire to observe the spectacle of war with the immediacy of a sporting event overtakes any interest in the political context or narrative.6 This notion of jingoism as spectatorial lust dovetails interestingly with Thomas Gunning’s analysis of early film as a “cinema of attractions.” Early films, he argues, exhibited their power as spectacle to surprise, shock, and delight the curious spectators, with no attempt to subordinate the spectacle to a coherent narrative.7 These audiences had more in common with crowds at a fair or carnival than with the later voyeuristic spectator of classical film.8 The war films indeed highlighted the experience of spectatorship, by placing the viewers in the position of the crowds watching parades of soldiers and waving to them as they embarked on ships, or in the position of mourners and curiosity seekers as the coffins of the Maine victims rolled by on carts. In battle scenes, the audience watched Rough Riders rushing at them or soldiers shooting toward them, as the actors faced the camera head on, or the audience was positioned behind the American soldiers following the flag and marching directly into enemy fire. In an Edison catalogue for exhibitors entitled “War Extra,” the “magnificent spectacle” of a warship was enhanced by the sense that “her death-dealing guns seem to point directly at our camera.”9 Some theaters heightened the immediacy of war with the accompanying sound of guns and filling the theater with smoke. As on the pages of the historical romances and newspaper reports, the charged visual relation on screen appeared to be primarily not that between U.S. troops and their enemies or their allies, but one that took place between the spectacle of American troops abroad and their domestic audience at home. As Paul Virilio notes about the intimate connection between war and cinema, “War can never break free from the magical spectacle because its very purpose is to produce that spectacle.”10

One of the major attractions of these war films lay in the exhibition of American mobility itself, rather than in the rarely visible display of foreign lands and peoples. A majority of films showed Americans in
motion: marching, riding, sailing, embarking on ships, and returning home. Anchored warships could even be made to appear in motion, as the camera mounted on a smaller vessel circled the larger ship for a panoramic view. Whether the movement is of men, horses, vehicles, or ships, the act of moving matters more than either the point of departure or arrival. Scholars have associated the development of early cinema with modern transformations of the experience of motion through space and time, and have thus linked the rise of film to railroad travel and to the experience of walking through the modern metropolis. Ella Shohat has suggested that early film also developed hand in hand with imperial expansion around the globe. The spectacle of the battleship, rather than the railroad, may best represent this imperial mobility. If shots of trains dramatized the cinema’s mastery of continental travel, the pictures of ships at sea enacted global mobility. The year before the war broke out, cameramen for Edison embarked on a Pacific journey through the routes of American political and commercial interests: Mexico, Japan, Hong Kong, Hawaii, and Manila. Traveling on warships and merchant vessels, and underwritten financially by American transportation companies, the cameramen contributed to opening the world to the export of American commerce and military might.

Moving pictures helped make the world accessible to American power abroad and to the gaze of audiences at home by exhibiting the reach of the camera itself. The films both enacted and celebrated the capacity of military power and the ability of the camera to encompass the globe. As U.S. militarism and commerce subjected new arenas to imperial intervention, film had a complementary goal as a force that opened the world to the survey of the American gaze. The mobility of film was a fitting accomplice to the disembodied discourse of American imperialism, in which territories abroad were viewed as stepping stones to further expansion divorced from bounded spaces, rather than as desirable ends in themselves (see Chapter 3). As foreign sites became more accessible to the camera’s eye and thus visible to the audience at home, these sites became paradoxically blurred and unreal; mere interchangeable settings for the exercise of American power.

If, as Virilio claims, “weapons are tools not just of destruction but also of perception,” then the reverse may also be true, that cameras are not just tools of perception but also of destruction. There was an intimate connection between arms and cameras, one which Virilio dates to World War I, but that can be seen in the origins of film in the 1890s: “the history of battle is primarily the history of radically changing fields of perception.” The emergence of film as a new field of perception went hand in hand with the most extensive period of European and American expansion in what has been called the Age of Empire. Films about the Spanish-American War can be seen as part of the arsenal of the new American empire. The association of the moving picture with the mobility of men and weapons, however, was by no means a uniquely American phenomenon. In fact, the early film industry was international in scope, in its production and marketing. Before 1898, U.S. audiences would have likely seen the Lumière films, which portrayed tourist scenes from around the world, as well as shots of military troops from different countries marching, charging, and enacting battles. Americans were also not the only ones to make films about the Spanish-American War: Georges Méliès made several films of the explosion of the battleship Maine, along with other imperial themes. Also popular among U.S. audiences were films about the Boer War and the Boxer Rebellion in China.

Well before the U.S. declaration of war against Spain, films advertised the power of the medium to mobilize men and images. Edison’s War Correspondents, for example, displayed newspaper correspondents in Key West racing to the telegraph office. The film dramatized the speed with which journalists could transport the news but also implied that the new medium of film could compete with and supersede the newspaper in terms of verisimilitude. To advertise a panoramic view of Morro Castle/Havana Harbor, the War Extra from the Edison Company’s catalog noted that “in view of probable bombardment, when the old fashioned masonry will melt away like butter under the fire of 13-inch guns, the view is of historic value.” “Historic” because the filming anticipates and almost precipitates the destruction that the actual bombardment would wreak. Shooting film here precedes shooting guns and thereby creates “historic value.”

The mobility of American men was also enhanced by the contrast with immobilizing shots of Cubans and Spaniards. Several films show Cubans standing or squatting passively in line waiting for rations from the American army, a common stereotype of Cuban dependency and lack of self-reliance. One popular reenactment, Shooting Captured In-
surgents, shows blindfolded Cubans standing to be shot by a firing squad, and in Cuban Ambush, the Cubans remain hidden while attention is drawn to the heroic death of a Spanish soldier.8 Depiction of Cuban inertia echoes the depiction of African American boys and men standing by idly and watching white soldiers march and work. A War Extra describes Cruiser Marblehead as a "busy scene" on the docked ship, which had bombarded San Juan, Puerto Rico: "coal passers, stewards, sailors and officers all seem imbued with a spirit of hustle. All except the coons on the wharf, watching the work. One of them slowly gets up, strecthes and yawns."19 This juxtaposition implicitly associates American mobility with whiteness, in contrast to both Cubans abroad and African Americans at home. In one of the few films of black soldiers, Colored Troops Disembarking, the War Extra glosses: "it is laughable to see the extreme caution displayed by the soldiers clambering down. The commanding officer struts on the wharf urging them to hurry."20 Shots of white soldiers disembarking just as slowly appear in many films with no comment. The textual cues here seem necessary to distinguish the movement of black troops as missteps—"clambering" or "strutting," a racialized distinction not clearly visible on the screen.

While these examples suggest how films may have boosted the war effort, film historians have also shown that the war played a crucial role in boosting the business of film. The popularity of the war films financially revived a fledgling industry whose initial novelty was beginning to fade. In addition, the serious appeal of the content helped to make films more palatable to religious and genteel middle-class groups throughout the country who were suspicious of film as a lower-class form of amusement.21 As an early reporter on film wrote, "An elaborate argument could be based on the premise that the only important contribution of the Spanish-American War to the history of the United States lay in the impetus it gave to the work of Smith and Blackton in placing the foundation blocks for the motion picture industry."22 As in accounts of yellow journalism, acknowledging the importance of the media downplays the importance of their ideological content and the political context of the war. While recent film historians would not agree with this exaggerated assessment, they have implicitly followed a similar line of argument. Many historians routinely refer to the Spanish-American "war film craze" as the main attraction of the pre-nickelodeon era and as a key catalyst in the development of early cinema: "no genre of programming could be developed to match the consistent drawing power of the images of the Spanish-American War."23 Yet most scholars take the patriotic attraction of these films for granted and treat them as a catalyst for other cinematic developments, without fully exploring how the films worked to produce patriotism in a particular historical context.

Charles Musser has argued that the exhibition of war films played a pivotal role in the development of narrative in film. Before the war, moving pictures were for the most part displayed in a vaudeville format of disparate subjects interspersed with other entertainment acts, with little attempt at thematic unity or narrative continuity. While exhibitors also included Spanish-American War films in this format, accompanied by songs, slides, and lectures, now for the first time they organized the films around a unifying theme and followed the chronological narrative of the progress of the war. They might start, for example, with the staged explosion of the Maine, go on to divers in the wreck, to the on-site funeral for its victims, and then move on to scenes of troops embarking for Cuba, a staged battle for the American flag, a victorious bombardment of Havana Harbor, and end with the raising of the American flag. Or they might have a segment solely on the battles at sea in the Pacific, culminating with Dewey’s homecoming parade. This singular focus was advertised outside the theater or traveling exhibition as "War Show." Such thematic and chronological coherence, suggests Musser, contributed to the development of the story film, which would become the dominant mode of classic Hollywood cinema.24

Thus the capacity of films to tell stories arose as much from a political desire to project national narratives of imperial conquest and geographic mobility as from technological or aesthetic innovation. To understand this connection between story films and war, it is not enough to assume that the exhibitors and spectators could draw on a straightforward military teleology of combat, victory, defeat, treaty-signing, and the ceding of territory. These linear narratives were constructed out of fields of contention, subject to conflicting interpretations, as were the meanings of the multiple wars of 1898 and their political results in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. The celebration of Dewey's uncontested victory over the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, for example, and the official closure his homecoming gave to the war, de-
tracted public attention from the beginning of a vicious American ground war against the Filipinos’ struggle for national independence. If the changing scope of imperial warfare did not fit a closed narrative structure, neither did patriotism or jingoism provide automatic sources of affective cohesion. Jingoism does not simply express a pre-existing unity, just as visual images are not transparently legible references. Both forge moments of public unity by mobilizing multiple and often conflicted fantasies and anxieties. Narrative construction of the war’s meaning as well as of the new experience of viewing films had to be exerted through an abundance of interpretive materials that accompanied the films, such as catalogs, lectures, advertising, and newspaper notices. Together, these schooled an audience in how to see imperial warfare in foreign arenas newly visible on screen.

How then do spectacles of foreign wars and imperial mobility on film become stories with recognizable plots? How at this early moment of cinematic history did film start to narrate imperial warfare, and how did war provide an opportunity for film to tell stories? Spectacles of foreign warfare became stories in relation to the domestic sphere and to the creation of a “home front.” Films framed the foreign war in relation to domestic space to make American viewers feel at home abroad. By “domestic” I refer to the double meaning of the term as the mutually defining spheres of the household and the nation (see Chapter 1). These early films of men marching and fighting abroad were not only about wars overseas but also about redrawing the boundaries between home and abroad, between the domestic and the foreign, boundaries that were both threatened and reconstructed by imperial expansion.

The new medium of film contributed to the cultural process of negotiating these boundaries, to make distant lands both accessible and “foreign in a domestic sense.” Just as film brought the world into the domestic space of the theater, representations of American mobility abroad were intimately involved in reconfiguring the nation as home.25

One early story film set during the war in the Philippines suggests how film mobilized the trope of domesticity to generate a narrative of imperial conquest. Billy Bitzer made The American Soldier in Love and War in the Biograph studio, and it was released in 1903 (the same year as Edwin Porter’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin and The Great Train Robbery).26 According to the Biograph Bulletin, the film was set in the Philippines at a time when American colonial rule was being established there, at the end of a brutal three-year war of conquest. The brutality of American troops at the time was openly debated in congressional investigations, testimony of soldiers, and the pages of newspapers, which even printed images of massacred Filipinos. The American Soldier conveyed a very different view of the war. While the title refers to separate female and male spheres of the home and the battlefield, the film does more than send the soldier away from his love at home to fight a foreign war. It further enlists the female sphere of domesticity to project a colonial regime overseas and to tell the story of empire.

The Biograph Company marketed this three-scene film, along with two other war films in its catalog, with a clear concern about creating a narrative out of disparate footage:

These three scenes are to be used in connection with war views, to make a complete story in one film for projection. The first scene shows the young American officer parting with his sweetheart and starting for the Philippines. The second shows the regiment leaving its post to embark on a transport—then comes a fight in the brush, then the wounding of the young officer; his capture and rescue by a Filipino girl, and finally his meeting the sweetheart and her father in the Filipino hut, where he has been nursed back to life.27

Rather than simply describe the film, the bulletin instructs the exhibitor how to display the disparate scenes as a continuous and coherent story. This narrative weaves together four heterogeneous spatial registers: moving from a three-dimensional theatrical bourgeois interior to actual footage of real soldiers, to a reenacted battle scene (both filmed outdoors), and to two patently unreal two-dimensional exotic backdrops. These juxtapositions implicitly contrast the home as real and the foreign as artificial and unreal spaces, bridged by the presence of the American soldier and by the experience of the viewer.28 The Bulletin relates a narrative that would be familiar to its audience and was soon to become dominant in early story films—the tale of a rescue. The film enacts the popular narrative of the war as a rescue mission, at the hands of a virile American man, of Cubans from decadent Spaniards, and Filipinos from their own barbarism. Yet this film, like the contemporary historical romances, suggests a counter-narrative that turns imperial adventure into the rescue of American masculinity.
Scene one opens with a white, well-dressed woman seated in a threedimensional set of a middle-class drawing room. A soldier enters and embraces the woman in a repeated tearful farewell. The realistic bourgeois interior represents the domestic sphere of female sentiment that correlates with the subjectivity of the crying woman, who is comforted by the soldier. Although war enters the home as a disruption of domestic relations, the domestic sphere also appears as the site from which the war is launched. In a film made by Edison in 1899, *Love and War*, the family in a similar interior is reading the newspaper and following the course of the war. This film ends with Red Cross nurses rushing into a field hospital to tend to the wounded son of the family. The home in both films thus appears analogous to the theater as the site for watching the spectacle of foreign wars, and the battlefield hospital appears as a venue for woman’s sphere abroad.

According to the *Bulletin*, the next scene is an “actuality,” that is, the real footage of men embarking for war. In fact this film was recycled from a shot of men embarking for Cuba from Governor’s Island four years earlier, which makes the sites of empire interchangeable. The soldiers could presumably be marching anywhere in the world. The scene following that one is a reenacted practice battle, also in an unspecified location.

Scene two is set in the proscenium of a stage against a painted two-dimensional “jungle” scene. The American soldier enters, falls to the ground, and is immediately assaulted by a generic “native” in blackface and black leotard. Just as the enemy is about to beat the soldier to death, a native woman appears, to grab the club and plead on her knees for the soldier’s life.

This scene is interesting for its portrayal of race and masculinity. Advocates of empire saw the annexation of the Philippines as a crucible for restoring primal vigor to an enervated white masculinity by subduing primitive men (see Chapter 3). Yet in this scene the American soldier falls immediately, with no visible prior struggle; only then does this caricature of a primitive man with a club prepare to kill him. The native demonstrates cowardliness by attacking an already fallen man. The native woman then proves herself more civilized than her male counterpart by rescuing the American in a gesture evocative of Pocahontas rescuing Captain John Smith (a popular figure in the 1890s). Her appearance splits the colonized subject into a feminized nurtur-
ing accepter of colonial rule, and a cowardly, brutish, aggressive male
resister.

Scene three takes place against a painted backdrop of an unspecified
tropical island. The soldier, with a bandage around his head, is sit-
ting outside the hut, while the woman who saved him fans him, and a
younger woman offers him a bowl of food. The white woman of the
first film arrives with an older man sporting a pith helmet and white
beard. She embraces the soldier and then gives her necklace to the
native woman, while the old man shakes hands all around.

We return here from war to love, to a domestic frame, the exterior
of a primitive hut, which contrasts with the opening bourgeois inter-
ior. Instead of the soldier returning home from war, the domesticity
associated with the white woman goes abroad to rescue the white man
from the proliferation of native women, who, in a harem-like setting,
nurture and feed him. The second woman replaces the native man;
the aggressor gives way to this twin image of the colonized as the fe-
nale nurturer and server—the mammy figure—and the orientalized
and eroticized younger woman. Like Pocahontas and the heroines of
the historical romances, these female figures represent the desire to
serve as the desire for subjugation. “The very thing they yearn for is
what of all others our Government desires to give them,” wrote the
1899 Commission on the Philippines in similarly eroticized language
(see Chapter 3). This domestic frame, with a wounded soldier at its
center, effaces any trace of the bloody conflict or conquest which
brought the American soldier to the Philippines. He—rather than the
Filipinos—is the wounded victim. Yet this portrayal of the soldier also
conveys a destabilized and more vulnerable image of masculinity, as he
never stands erect in the film but falls immediately and remains either
prone or seated. The catalogue says that the soldier is “captured and
rescued by the Filipino girl.” The implicit threat may be one of the
American soldier “going native” by taking a local concubine, both a re-
ality and fear of colonial administrations. If Roosevelt found men of
different races intermingling in the imperial battlefield, this film raises
the fearful or enticing potential for miscegenation with native women.
The symbolic threat carries through the logic of expansion: that is, the
expansion of borders may undo the men sent abroad and ultimately
challenge the racial coherence of national unity.

If the native woman rescues the American soldier from the native
man, in the final scene the white sweetheart arrives to rescue the
American soldier from a surfeit of native women. The family romance
represents the restoration of order that is at once domestic and imper-
ial, with the white couple reunited on foreign terrain. As the soldier
remains immobilized, the white woman gives beads to the Filipina as a
sign of gratitude but also bondage. Then what is the old man doing
there? The catalogue says he is the white woman’s father, accompanying
her as a chaperone. He would also be recognized from political
cartoons as Uncle Sam. If the white woman rescues her man under the
aegis of Uncle Sam, she may then leave the old man with the native
women. In the coupling at the end, the ambiguous familial figure of
“Uncle” replaces the native man among the native women. The film
thus evokes, settles, but then revives the threat of imperial expansion
as miscegenation: the incorporation of racial foreigners within the
domestic nation.

The American Soldier in Love and War frames a foreign war in part
through gender and racial anxieties at home. In a context in which
Roosevelt advocated imperial conquest as the expansion of separate
gendered spheres to global dimensions, that is, of women tending the
home while men take up the white man’s burden abroad, this film
shows how those spheres become intertwined. Imperial conquest ap-
ppears as the restoration of white American domesticity on foreign ter-
rain. Biograph marketed the film along with other films about adul-
tery, divorce, and women who kill their adulterous husbands. This film
might be viewed as an instrument for putting the white New Woman
under control by showing her the model of willing submissive native
women and by leashing her new mobility to an imperial order.

The demarcation of the separate spaces of home and war is a gen-
dered one. Feminist film historians, building on the work of Miriam
Hansen, have shown that early cinema offered women access outside
the home into an alternative public sphere, “a space where women
were free to enjoy the pleasures of voyeurism and active spectatorship
otherwise denied them.” Contemporaries were surprised that women
made up a large portion of the audience for the popular moving pic-
ture of the Corbett-Fitzsimmons boxing match in 1897. These same
venues welcomed women spectators to war films. One theater, for ex-
ample, courted a female audience by offering souvenir pictures of the
battleship Maine, specifically to the “ladies.” My point here can only
be speculative—that women viewers, like women readers of romance novels, were welcomed into this public sphere of spectatorship, where the desire for freedom from domestic restraints could be satisfied and channeled through the routes of empire abroad. Viewing war films offered a release from domesticity and a reconfiguration of the domestic sphere into what Josiah Strong called an “audience room for the world.” If the spectacle of war provided a safe way for women to enter a public sphere of global mobility, in turn the oppositional potential of this public sphere might have been harnessed and disciplined by the activity of watching war films.

In the portrayal of Filipino characters as generically “black” and primitive, we can also see how early imperial films mobilized marks of racial difference in an international arena. Although these figures would not be recognized ethnographically as Filipino, they would be identifiable from popular contemporary political cartoons that conflated Filipinos, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Hawaiians as stereotypically black. Blackness on the screen was a mobile signifier, transferable to a variety of different colonized groups. While film was put to use early on for ethnic documentation—to make primitive peoples more real and particular to the Western viewer—it also had the effect of making them generically interchangeable and thus unreal. In a trade journal’s anecdote about shooting the famous battle of San Juan Hill, for example, African Americans were hired to play the Spanish soldiers:

A photographer for a moving picture machine had hard luck at Orange NJ, recently in his attempt to depict an engagement on San Juan Hill. He engaged eighteen Negroes to represent Spaniards . . . and costumed them appropriately. He paid the Negroes 75 cents each in advance, gave them some beer, in order that they might be in fighting trim, and then adjusted his photographic apparatus. When ready the Vitascope man found that the “Spaniards” had disappeared, taking with them 200 rounds of blank cartridges. The police found a number of the pseudo Spaniards later engaged in a game of craps, but as they fled no arrests were made.37

Here the threat of armed black men—some of whom actually fought on San Juan Hill—is evoked and ridiculed by costuming them as Spaniards. Their comic mutiny is associated with Spanish cowardice and
decadence: both refuse to act like “real” men. But ultimately the photographer becomes the butt of the joke, when the black actors escape and he loses his vision behind the very apparatus meant to control this representation.

The Birth of a Nation at Home and Abroad

The first major war film in the history of American cinema is of course not about the Spanish-American War, but about the American Civil War: D. W. Griffith’s landmark epic from 1915, The Birth of a Nation. In a movie about the Civil War and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1860s, the war of 1898 obviously cannot appear directly. But this absence, I argue, is symptomatic one, as the film is informed by the Spanish-American War from at least two sources: the prior history of war on film, and the Thomas Dixon novels on which Griffith based his film, The Clansman (1905) and The Leopard’s Spots (1902).

Scholars have suggested that Griffith’s famous shots of the Civil War battlefields reproduced Mathew Brady’s photographs. I would suggest that they were also shaped by the more recent mode of representing warfare on film. Billy Bitzer, Griffith’s cameraman for Birth of a Nation, earlier had traveled on Hearst’s yacht to shoot films of troops in Cuba. It was Bitzer too who made The American Soldier in Love and War. In The Birth of a Nation, views of the climactic ride of the Klan echo on a grander scale films made of the Rough Riders on their way to rescue Cuba. In addition, the shots of trench warfare in that film are staged quite similarly to the reenactments of battles in the Philippines (as well as those of another colonial war extensively filmed, the Boer War). In The Birth of a Nation the most striking scenes of visual menace on the screen are those of black soldiers in Federal uniforms exerting their authority as an occupying force. It was the Spanish-American War that most recently brought this threat to the visual foreground, in films, photographs, and stories of black soldiers in national uniforms (see Chapter 4).

This is not to say that Griffith and Bitzer directly copied or were influenced only by the Spanish-American War films. Yet when they came to stage and shoot historical battles from the Civil War, the representative field most immediately available to them and their audience would have included not only Brady’s photos and European epic films,
but also the only American war extensively and recently shot on film. Furthermore, the Spanish-American War was interpreted as a political and symbolic resolution to the domestic disunity of the Civil War, a solution which Griffith offered in the rise of the Klan. If Griffith claimed that the Klan gave birth to the "real nation [that] has only existed in the last 15 or twenty years," he placed its birth in the 1890s, in the era of Progressivism and its related movement of imperialism abroad.

This connection between the domestic and foreign, the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, is explicitly drawn in a novel we have examined above, *The Leopard's Spots*, one of Dixon's novels on which Griffith based his film. In this novel, a black man's alleged rape of a white girl has the same unifying effect on a Southern community that the Spanish-American War has on the entire nation. Both events, the domestic and the foreign, cause "the white race" to "fuse into a homogeneous mass" out of different regions, classes, and religions. Griffith portrayed this white fusion of the nation in the Klan in response to an imagined rape, hence a domestic tale, rather than in response to the overseas war. In fact, in revising Dixon's novels of Reconstruction, Griffith excises the war of 1898 and replaces it with the Civil War.

Yet imperialism is not absent from *The Birth of a Nation*, where Griffith, like Dixon, narrates the history of Reconstruction as a Northern occupation of the South. Silas Lynch, the Northern mulatto, tells the white woman he wants to marry, "I will build an empire and you will be my queen." The ride of the Klan, known as the "invisible empire," makes the men look like an insurging force riding in rebellion against an African empire. The first shot in the film figures slavery as an invasion by blacks, an original threat to the proto-national unity of white Puritan settlers. The original version of the film ends with Lincoln's vision of sending all blacks to Africa, and the final version ends with a Christian God of peace defeating a god of war, who looks like an African icon. The Christian god thus purges the white nation of black soldiers, who have been collapsed into the figure of the black rapist.

Thus *The Birth of a Nation* takes place on a broader international terrain than the focus on the internal domestic conflict of the Civil War and racial violence overtly suggests. Viewers at the time understood part of this international implication: at the beginning of the war in Europe, the Klan riding to the rescue at the climax of the film offered a potential figure for the white American nation riding to the rescue of the world. Not surprisingly, Griffith was the only civilian invited to the battlefields of the Great War to make a propaganda film urging U.S. entry. As Billy Bitzer explained, "the world's foremost director was the one man who could tell a story that all-Americans especially—would understand."

One filmmaker did understand the relation of *The Birth of a Nation* to the Spanish-American War and to World War I: African American filmmaker Oscar Micheaux, whose 1920 melodrama, *Within Our Gates*, has been seen as a direct critique of the earlier film. Whereas in Griffith's film black men in uniform represent anarchy and the Klan order, in *Within Our Gates* the flashback to the lynching of the heroine's foster family shows a spectacle of chaos and personal trauma. This powerful lynching scene, in which a family is hanged and a bonfire built to burn them, cuts back and forth to the scene directly echoing the black man's threat to white women in the cabin of *The Birth of a Nation*. In Micheaux's film, though, a white man is trying to rape the black heroine, until he discovers through a mark on her body that he is her father.

The resolution of these threatened rapes is telling. The powerful flashback to the lynching is contained by cutting to the final scene of courtship of the heroine by a Northern mulatto doctor. In the intertitle, his first words in response to her visibly sad memories are not "marry me," but "We should never forget what our people did in Cuba under Roosevelt's command." He goes on to remind her of black participation on the battlefields of Mexico and World War I, and finally: "We were never immigrants. Be proud of our country always.—And you, Sylvia, have been thinking deeply about this, but your thoughts have been warped. In spite of your misfortunes, you will always be a patriot and a tender wife."

And so she marries him. While Micheaux here claims that African Americans are more American than foreign immigrants, they can only prove their national identity as imperial citizens by their participation in wars abroad. The story of foreign warfare enters the domestic field as a marriage proposal, as the male suitor displaces the memory of white violence onto the woman's unhealthy obsession with the past. He asks her to forget that domestic violence by another kind of displacement, by remembering military ventures abroad and marrying into imperial citizenship. Cinematically, however, her flashbacks to do-
mestic racial violence remain searing on the screen, overflowing the frame and final promise of a patriotic imperial marriage.  

Thus Micheaux in *Within Our Gates* reveals something disavowed yet implicit in Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation*: that the domestic unity of the nation depends on the violent subordination of blacks at home to forge a whiteness capacious enough to include immigrants; equally, it depends on the violent assertion of U.S. power abroad, a site from which Dixon and Griffith exclude African Americans, and which Micheaux, like black soldiers who fought in foreign wars, turns into an opportunity to achieve both domesticity and citizenship.  

Imperial Citizenship

A quarter of a century after *The Birth of a Nation*, references to the Spanish-American War appear in another landmark American film, Orson Welles’s *Citizen Kane*. Although better known for its cinematic innovation than for its treatment of national identity, the title itself highlights the issue of citizenship, and Welles had thought of naming the film “The American.” An early scene from Kane’s childhood shows him playing at fighting a Civil War battle with snowballs, declaring, “the terms are unconditional surrender . . . The Union forever.”  

As in Griffith’s film, the projection of national identity on the screen took on heightened dimensions from the international crisis of world war, at a time when the question of American entry into a European war had extreme urgency. In both films, allusions to the earlier imperial war of 1898 underscore the reconfiguration of America’s global identity at these threshold moments of international conflict. I am not arguing for a reading of these films as veiled allegories or outright propaganda for foreign policy. Rather, I suggest that they both participate in and comment on the crucial work of film in creating and circulating images of American national identity at home and abroad, and they screen images of the foreign in order to domesticate them. In focusing on the life of William Randolph Hearst, Welles hearkens back to the intertwined histories of American media and American empire building at the turn of the twentieth century.

The name “Hearst” has long been identified with the word “empire.” The film repeats the well-known story of Hearst pushing the United States into an imperial war in Cuba by whipping up public hys-
the opera hall Kane builds for his wife's singing debut and in Xanadu, which he constructs as their home. These are fruits of Kane's empire in the outside world, as they both reproduce and unravel his imperial ambitions. Kane's creation of his wife's career out of nothing parallels his incitement of the Spanish-American War. She provides a mediocre talent; he provides the career. Kane crosses the gap between the male sphere of war and mass media and the female sphere of the home and high culture, for war and opera alike serve as testimonies to his imperial willfulness at home and abroad. In both cases, Leland, Kane's closest friend and colleague, objects to Kane's imperious projects. While in the film their first disagreement about the war is reduced to a brief lighthearted repartee, in the shooting script the argument concludes with Kane offering Leland a regular column to write his dissenting opinions about the war. Kane's empire at first seems capacious enough to contain even its opposition. In the final version, the two men come together to watch the spectacle of the female bodies dressed in the American flag and carrying guns. In the second half of the film, Leland's muted resistance to Kane's political empire emerges fullblown over the spectacle of a woman on stage, just one this time. At one of the turning points of the film, which shows the beginning of Kane's decline, Leland starts to write a negative review of Susan's opera debut, thereby refusing to endorse Kane's imperial ambitions in the domestic sphere. By completing and publishing the review himself, Kane gives Leland the voice of dissent he promised him about the war. Yet he also undermines the basis of his own domestic empire and in firing Leland from the newspaper, Kane weakens his media empire as well.

Kane's imperial project also shows up in his obsessive collecting of statues, art, buildings, and animals, first from Europe and then from "the loot of the world." He imports "the very stones of many other places from every corner of the earth." His voracious appetite for collection removes all objects from their contexts yet never even unpacks them from their crates. In the film we never see Kane abroad (except in the opening newsreel); instead, he mobilizes his power beyond U.S. borders to create the spectacle of global loot brought home. As Kane becomes physically immobilized in the orientalized domestic sphere of Xanadu, he brings fragments of the entire world into his home in a way that makes the home uncannily foreign and gothic. Ultimately the boundaries between private and public, domestic and foreign, collapse in the final scene of the film, as the intimate answer to the mystery of "Rosebud" appears on the pile of burning stuff along with the "loot of the world."

Michael Denning and Laura Mulvey have situated Citizen Kane in the political context of popular front struggles against fascism and New Deal arguments against American isolationism. Both readings acknowledge the international dimensions of a film that appears almost claustrophobically enclosed within the domestic spheres of nation and home, yet both also overlook the complex relation of the film to American imperialism. Mulvey sees the references to the Spanish-American War as evidence merely of Kane's "willingness to play on vulgar jingoism." Denning claims that in going from Heart of Darkness to Citizen Kane, Welles recast the imperial genre of civilization versus the jungle into an antifascist narrative of civilization versus fascism. Yet that formulation preserves an imperial framework by equating fascism with the "uncivilized" colonized world. I suggest that the democratic Citizen Kane is inseparable from the Imperial Kane, as he aggressively pursues his representative American status by building empires in both the public and private spheres with the "loot"—news as well as objects—he appropriates from around the globe. The isolationism Mulvey sees in Kane goes hand in hand with his imperial desires.

As Denning has shown, Welles based Kane in part also on Henry Luce. Luce had built a modern media empire by founding Life, Time, and Fortune magazines and by promoting popular and innovative forms of photojournalism and newsreels, techniques that Welles drew on in his filmmaking. Welles also worked for Luce, and Denning has shown that Welles's progressive Mercury Theater had many ambivalent dealings with the Luce companies. Citizen Kane opens with a newsreel of Kane's life narrated through the rhetoric of empire, in a parody of Luce's popular series, "The March of Time." Welles thus introduces his own cinematic in-depth investigation of Kane's life from multiple perspectives, by defining it against the official images and linear narrative of Luce's newsreels.

Through his control over the media, Luce became an influential ideologue in redefining an imperial global role for the United States, namely, to lead what he famously dubbed "The American Century." He published an essay under that title in Life Magazine several months
before the release of *Citizen Kane*. Exhorting the United States to enter the war in Europe, Luce aimed also to control the terms of its representation, to “give this war its proper name,” and to “bring forth a vision of America as a world power which is authentically American.” Such authenticity meant projecting a global power for the United States that would free it from geographic boundaries. Luce argued that territorial defense could not provide a strong enough rationale for entering the war, nor could appeals “to fight for dear old Danzig or dear old Dong Dang” (20). Equally dissatisfied with abstractions such as “Democracy and Freedom,” he asked: “is there nothing between the absurd sound of distant cities and the brassy trumpeting of majestic words?” (21). His answer defined an “internationalism” that would make American interests synonymous with the “world environment in which she lives” (24) and that would efface the irritating otherness of foreign lands, peoples and cultures with strange names. Throughout the essay, Luce envisioned American world power as anti-imperial and deterritorialized, in direct contrast to the imperial dominions of Rome, the Vatican, Genghis Khan, the Chinese, and most recently the British. “American internationalism,” in contrast, was already taking hold through the circulation of “American jazz, Hollywood movies, American slang, American machines and patented products [which] are in fact the only things that every community in the world, from Zanzibar to Hamburg, recognizes in common” (33). As opposed to the military and political domination by the Old World empires, the United States would use American culture and commerce—backed, of course, by weapons and the state—as the conduits and embodiments of its world power. Luce saw no tension between nationalism and internationalism; instead, American culture and consumer goods provided the only common ground or universal language across the globe. Indeed, his own media empire did much both to foster the omnipresence of American products and values and to bring home to a domestic audience a world stripped of its discomfiting foreignness.

Orson Welles later wrote that “if Luce’s prediction of the American Century will come true, God help us all. It will make Germany's bid for world supremacy look like amateur night.” His theatrical metaphor used the terms of showmanship for the rivalry over global power; the American Century would offer a more professional and thorough performance of world supremacy than the amateurism of fascism. Although *Citizen Kane* was completed just before “The American Century” was published, it is possible to see the Kane character not only as a warning against isolationism and fascism, but also as a grotesque embodiment of Luce’s internationalism—an enactment and a critique of imperial citizenship.

Welles’s aesthetic innovations in *Citizen Kane* have been open to various political interpretations. André Bazin saw his acclaimed use of deep focus and the long take as democratic, in allowing freedom for the viewer to interpret the scene, while Denning has related Welles’s showmanship and magician-like control to his turning of Nazi propaganda techniques against fascism. It would be important to investigate further the relation between Welles’s formal innovations and the imperial themes of his films. Bazin notes, for example, that Welles’s use of low angles and ceilings makes us feel that “Kane’s lust for power crushes us, but is itself crushed by the décor. Through the camera, we are capable in a way of perceiving Kane’s failure at the same time we experience his power.” Might the innovative camera work, with its deep focus and showmanship, have created an imperial gaze for the American Century, in its capacity to penetrate deeply into unknown spaces and at the same time reflect back its own image? Would Welles both deploy and challenge this imperial gaze when he traveled to Brazil under the auspices of the Office of Inter-American Affairs to make *It’s All True*? When he sailed his characters through the Panama Canal in *The Lady of Shanghai*? When he explored the violent imperial relations of the Mexican–United States border in *Touch of Evil*?

Welles’s cinematic innovations combine facets of Luce’s photojournalism with the earliest techniques of filmmaking before Griffith. *Citizen Kane*, in both form and content, hearkens back to the turn of the twentieth century, when the capacity of the new “moving pictures” to tell stories arose in part out of the imperative to narrate the spectacle of U.S. mobility and military power abroad. Griffith further developed this form of storytelling, which, I have argued, relied on enlisting the domestic sphere as a frame for empire building. Micheaux used this frame to reconfigure the relations of race, nationhood, and empire. Welles later challenged the relation between film’s storytelling capacity and imperial narratives, while Henry Luce in “The American Century” was seeking the “proper name” for a partly new, partly old version of this story. The desire to tell this story has surfaced at key
moments in the intersecting development of U.S. cinema and U.S. foreign policy to renegotiate the relation between the domestic and the foreign, between the nation at home and the nation abroad.

Like Luce in his project of internationalism, Kane re-creates the world in his own image, which is at once mobile and elastic, yet claustrophobic and immobilized. As Kane's empire implodes in the home, Welles's film exemplifies the anarchy of empire, the nightmare underlying Luce's dream of Americanization. If America sees reflections of itself everywhere and strives to encompass the globe, then it risks losing the boundaries between the domestic and the foreign that define the nation as home, as unique and separate from the outlying world. As Kane amasses the loot of the world, his own body appears engorged and distended with the objects he has ingested. He tries to turn the entire world into hollow references to his own power, while he becomes impotent and immured in the home he creates as his castle, Xanadu. In the character of Kane, the outward reach of imperialism and the self-enclosure of isolationism are twinned. The film depicts a grotesquely representative American citizen who so identifies himself with the "world environment" that he never has to leave his house, though his last words express nostalgia, the desire, in the etymological sense of nostos, to return home. In accumulating fragments of the outside world into the domestic sphere, Citizen Kane turns the space of his American home into something hauntingly foreign.

In 1915 W. E. B. Du Bois published his magisterial essay, "The African Roots of War." Through a seismic shift of geographic and historical perspectives, Du Bois located in Africa the origins of the war in Europe:

There are those who would write world history and leave out this most marvelous of continents. Particularly today most men assume that Africa lies far afield from our present problem of World War. Yet in a very real sense Africa is the prime cause of this terrible overturning of civilization which we have lived to see; and these words seek to show how in the Dark Continent are hidden the roots, not simply of war today but of the menace of wars tomorrow.¹

The essay moves Africa from geographic periphery and historical backwater into the central vantage point from which to rewrite the history of the present and remap the terrain of the "World War." The essay offers more than the causal economic argument for which it is known. By grounding his inquiry in Africa, Du Bois exposes the way the representations of space and time have been structured by imperial maps and narratives of the world, and from this location he draws alternative maps and writes new historical narratives.

The war did not originate in 1914 in the Balkans, argues Du Bois, but at least thirty years earlier in the violent "scramble" for Africa and the spiraling competition to "possess the materials and men of the darker world." The importance of rewriting this history lies in the fu-
ture. World war can only conclude in a real peace, he predicts, by ending colonialism, for it is "directly in this outer circle of races, and not in the inner European household, that the real causes of the present European fighting are to be found" (103). Du Bois uses domestic language to overturn the divisions of inside and outside, home and abroad, and he offers a critique of nationalism not only as the cause of empire but also as its consequence.

That same year, closer to home, Du Bois was one of the few Americans to condemn the U.S. invasion of Haiti, which was largely eclipsed by news of the European war. On the pages of *The Crisis*, the magazine he edited for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, he refuted the rationale that internal chaos within Haiti warranted outside intervention: "The anarchy in Haiti is no worse than the anarchy in the United States at the time of Civil War, and not as great as the anarchy today in Europe. The lynching and murder in Port-au-Prince is no worse than, if as bad as, the lynching in Georgia. Haiti can and will work out her own destiny, and is more civilized today than is Texas." The repetition of the word "anarchy" relocates Haiti from its status as an island isolated in its own discord onto a global map of imperial violence that extends from Europe and its colonies to the American South. From the perspective of Haiti, Du Bois overturns the conventional boundaries between civilization and barbarism, order and anarchy, the domestic and the foreign.

Alongside reports from Haiti that year in *The Crisis*, Du Bois published a running account of the NAACP protests against D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*. Du Bois lambasted the film for rewriting the history of emancipation and Reconstruction as an "orgy of theft and degradation." Looking back at 1915 in his autobiography, *Dusk of Dawn*, he linked the military invasion of Haiti to the film, which he called an even "more insidious and hurtful attack" because of its global scope. The film's racist spectacle, claimed Du Bois, "made great" the "new technique of the moving picture" and expanded its appeal throughout "America and the world."

Movie theaters in the United States in 1915 may seem as far afield from colonial Africa as does the Caribbean republic of Haiti from the theaters of war in Europe. I argue, however, that Du Bois represented these arenas as inextricably linked by the anarchy of empire. The eruption of World War I exposed the violently shifting grounds on which he could remap the complex interconnections among such remote geographies and renegotiate their intersecting histories. Du Bois saw these sites conjoined not only by economics and military might, but also by struggles over representation. The U.S. invasion of Haiti deployed on an international scale the national script of Griffith's film; they both rendered the struggle for black self-government as anarchic and destructive misrule. "The African Roots of War" offered a counter-narrative of American origins that located the birth of the modern nation in the anarchic dislocations of imperial exploitation.

Building on the insights of "African Roots" at the end of the war, Du Bois brought together these interconnected geographies and histories in a remarkable book, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (1920). Although overlooked by later critics, *Darkwater* is one of Du Bois's most ambitious and formally innovative efforts to represent racial conflicts within the United States through transnational networks of imperial power. My chapter focuses on a reading of *Darkwater* as a linguistic form of imperial cartography that uses language to draw overlapping maps of the emerging postwar world. *Darkwater* expands the meaning of "world war" beyond the battlefields of Europe to encompass and interlink the colonization of Africa and Asia, the struggles of the post-Reconstruction United States, and the overseas propulsion of the U.S. empire. *Darkwater* also looks inward at the domestic spaces of the home, schoolroom, factory, and city, to place these apparently local spaces at the crossroads of movements of vast global change. Mapping social space involves a struggle over representation, to renegotiate the histories inscribed in or erased from conventional maps of the world. As Du Bois's imperial cartography charts the way that the anarchy of empire dissolves the boundaries between the domestic and foreign, he also reimagines forms of transnational collectivity that go beyond the boundaries of colony and empire.

It is well known that Du Bois drew a powerful link between "segregation at home and colonialism abroad," and that he connected these spheres through the common denominator of the color line. This double focus was encapsulated by the double trajectory of Du Bois's career: his national fight against racism in his leadership of the NAACP, and his international struggle against colonialism in his organization of the Pan-African movement. This formulation, however, runs the risk of separating as much as bringing together; it implicitly
upholds a logic of American exceptionalism that projects imperialism as a foreign issue of European colonialism and thereby disavows the domestic reality of U.S. empire-building. By limiting Du Bois’s treatment of empire to the European colonization of Africa, scholars of Du Bois often overlook the international role of the United States in demarcating and policing the global color line, as well as the way global imperial dynamics affect race relations within the United States. An analysis of Du Bois’s complex representation of American imperialism, I contend, can enrich our understanding of how his internationalism deconstructs the bifurcation between racism at home and colonialism abroad.

Numerous scholars have studied Du Bois from multiple international perspectives: his involvement in the Pan-African movement, black nationalism, and international socialism, and, more recently, in the transnational contexts of the African Diaspora or the Black Atlantic. These studies focus on Du Bois’s political opposition to Western colonialism and racism and his transnational reconfiguration of black identities, yet they rarely take account of Du Bois’s relation to American imperialism, especially in the first half of his career: Paul Gilroy posits a useful distinction between the notion of “roots” as an essentialist definition of identity anchored in a homeland, and “routes” as a fluid concept of hybrid identities and affiliations that emerge from travel and change. I am interested in how Du Bois links these two meanings to imperial dynamics across the globe. “Roots” in “The African Roots of War” refers not simply to an organic ancient identity but to the historical crossroads of imperial conflict and violent dislocation.

Like Mark Twain, Du Bois remains one of America’s most outspoken critics of imperialism worldwide. Yet in contrast to Twain, his anti-imperialism has been better known outside the United States and is still most often associated with the period of decolonization after World War I. In addition to Du Bois’s overt condemnations of imperialism, I am interested in the way his writing, like Twain’s, both charted and was embedded in the transnational routes and networks of imperial power. From his earliest writing at the turn of the century, a shifting conception of empire was central to his understanding of race relations within the United States. Du Bois saw U.S. imperialism not as an isolated phenomenon but as part of a broader global system. If he decried the imposition of imperial force on the world, he also saw the United States as a product of imperial relations acted upon by forces beyond its boundaries. For Du Bois, imperialism did more than propel U.S. domination abroad; it also struck at the heart of the domestic nation. Thus rather than just condemn the United States as a center of world power, Du Bois used the framework of empire to decentrize American power and destabilize its national boundaries. Yet at times, as I will show, Du Bois also recentered his own international authority by enlisting the exceptionalist logic of American imperialism. Together, these complex—and often contradictory—views locate U.S. imperialism itself in a broader international framework that goes beyond the limits of national geographies and histories. Darkwater powerfully enacts for readers what World War I brought violently to the foreground for Du Bois: that “the U.S. was living not to itself, but as part of the strain and stress of the world.”

Empire and the Color Line

Before turning to Darkwater, it is useful to have a sense of Du Bois’s representation of U.S. imperialism in his earlier writing. His global mapping of the color line follows the trajectories of empire. In 1906 he wrote that “the tendency of the great nations of the day is territorial, political and economic expansion, but in every case this has brought them in contact with darker people. . . . The policy of expansion then simply means the world problems of the Color Line. The question enters European imperial politics and floods our continents from Alaska to Patagonia.” A chief feature of his approach here is that he does not separate racism at home from colonialism abroad, but views both as part of a broader international dynamic of empire. In his earliest historical writing, Du Bois narrated U.S. history as a product of imperial forces. In his 1897 dissertation, “The Suppression of the African Slave-trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870,” Du Bois recast the story of American origins within the sweeping narrative of European colonialism and the African slave trade. He also recast major events in American national history in a broader hemispheric context, by decentering the national framework in which history is written and retelling that story from the perspective of Haiti:

The role which the great Negro Toussaint, called L’Ouverture played in the history of the United States has seldom been fully appreciated. Representing the age of revolution in America, he rose to the leader-
ship through a bloody terror, which contrived a Negro “problem” for the Western hemisphere, intensified and defined the anti-slavery movement, became one of the causes, and probably the prime one, which led Napoleon to sell Louisiana for a song, and finally through the interworking of all these effects, rendered more certain the final prohibition of the slave-trade by the United States in 1807.10

Key here is not simply the chain of a causal argument; as in “African Roots,” it is the vast shift of geographic perspective that grounds the narrative of “the interworking of all these effects.” Viewed from the vantage point of Haiti, the history of U.S. expansion does not arise from its self-generated compulsion—the “frontier,” the “errand into the wilderness,” or “manifest destiny”—but develops in relation to the anti-imperial and antislavery struggles of the Caribbean revolution. This perspective goes beyond the perimeter of national history to place the United States within a wider imperial network tied to Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean.

The multiple dimensions of empire are central to Du Bois’s earliest articulation of his famous pronouncement: “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line,—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea.” This statement is most often cited from the second chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk*, where it frames Du Bois’s history of the Freedmen’s Bureau during Reconstruction.11 It is often noted that Du Bois first made this statement in a slightly different form at the meeting of the Pan-African Conference of 1900 in London, in his address “To the Nations of the World.”12 These two settings seem to exemplify his double vision of “racism at home and colonialism abroad.” Few scholars note, however, that Du Bois also made this statement earlier that same year in Washington, D.C., in an address to the American Negro Academy, “The Present Outlook for the Dark Races of Mankind.”13 There he set forth his project to “consider with you the problem of the color line not simply as a national and personal question but rather in its larger world aspect in time and space” (73). He claimed that “yet a glance over the world at the dawn of the new century will convince us that this is just the beginning of the problem—that the color line belts the world and that the social problem of the twentieth century is to be the relation of the civilized world to the dark races of mankind” (73). As the essay sweeps worldwide from past to present, its pivotal point, where local and global meet, hinges on American empire-building started in 1898:

But most significant of all at this period is the fact that the colored population of our land is, through the new imperial policy, about to be doubled by our own ownership of Porto [sic] Rico, and Hawaii, our protectorate of Cuba, and conquest of the Philippines. This is for us and for the nation the greatest event since the Civil War and demands attention and action on our part. What is to be our attitude toward these new lands and toward the masses of dark men and women who inhabit them? (77)

Thus in 1900, when Du Bois first articulated the “problem of the twentieth century,” he spoke from two imperial centers, Washington, D.C., and London, and he mapped the global color line in relation to both European and American imperialism. In his answer to the question above, he deploys the discourse of American exceptionalism—empire for freedom, manifest destiny—as a strategy for eradicating the very color line that empire has constructed:

Manifestly it must be an attitude of deepest sympathy and strongest alliance. We must stand ready to guard and guide them with our vote and our earnings. Negro and Filipino, Indian and Porto Rican, Cuban and Hawaiian, all must stand united under the stars and stripes for an America that knows no color line in the freedom of its opportunities. We must remember that the twentieth century will find nearly twenty millions of brown and black people under the protection of the American flag, a third of the nation, and that on the success and efficiency of the nine millions of our own number depends the ultimate destiny of Filipinos, Porto Ricans, Indian and Hawaiians, and that on us too depends in a large degree the attitude of Europe toward the teeming millions of Asia and Africa. (78)

Du Bois’s evocation of 1898 has a double-edged effect. On the one hand, it decenters the U.S. “race question” as part of a global imperial context. On the other hand, it centers “we black men of America” as leaders of the darker world, for which the United States serves as a model. “No nation ever bore a heavier burden than we black men of America” (78). Du Bois turns the white man’s burden into the black
man's burden, and imagines within the American Empire an imperium in imperio as a utopian vision of world change. The question here is not whether Du Bois was for or against American imperialism. He both enlists its discourse and turns it against itself. If in previous chapters we noted racist arguments against imperial expansion, Du Bois here makes an imperial argument against racism: imperial expansion has the potential to break down national borders and racial divisions and to promote multiracial affiliations across the globe.

Du Bois imagined the utopian potential in imperial expansion for unraveling the boundaries of nations and colonies. From the anarchy of empire, he envisioned the rise of new forms of collectivity that overflow those borders. Imperialism in 1898, according to Du Bois, invited African Americans in Washington, D.C., to reimagine their future in relation to other nonwhite subjects of the American empire worldwide. A shared experience of empire brought a "congress of men and women of African blood" into "the metropolis of the modern world" in London in 1900. In Souls Du Bois also mapped this contradictory movement of empire to divide and unite, as he looked backward in time at the "shimmering swirl of waters" where the first slave ships arrived in Jamestown. From there, he envisioned the potential of a "new human unity, pulling the ends of the earth nearer, and all men, black, yellow, and white." When Du Bois came to frame his chapter on Reconstruction in Souls by the proposition that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line," this statement resonated from the imperial capitals where he had first articulated the problematic in 1900. In Souls he thus introduced the uncompleted work of Reconstruction in America by linking it to imperial locations around the globe, as he projected into the immediate future the urgent need for new forms of reconstruction on a global scale.

Paris and Podunk

The eruption of World War I violently pulled "the ends of the earth nearer" by exposing the destructive foundation of European civilization in colonialism and by spurring the emergence of new anticolonial alliances. At the war's end Du Bois traveled to Paris, where the story has often been told of his organization of the Pan-African Congress. The Congress had a wide-ranging symbolic and political impact for years to come, but this meeting in 1919 was politically hampered by its dependence on French colonialism and by the fact that few African representatives attended. While in Paris, Du Bois was equally concerned with another forum, the Peace Conference, where he wished to represent the "Negro world" and link the struggle for civil rights in the United States to the struggle for independence in postwar Africa. He tried futilely, however, to gain a hearing from Woodrow Wilson, and he also faced mounting skepticism from African Americans at home.

In May 1919 Du Bois wrote a letter to The Crisis in which he defended his presence in France in the immediate aftermath of World War I, at a time of escalating violence against African Americans in the United States:

I went to Paris because today the destinies of mankind center there. Make no mistake as to this, my readers.

Podunk may easily persuade itself that only Podunk matters and that nothing is going on in New York. The South Sea Islander may live ignorant and careless of London. Some Americans may think that Europe does not count, and a few Negroes may argue vociferously that the Negro problem is a domestic matter, to be settled in Richmond and New Orleans. But all these careless thinkers are wrong. The destinies of mankind for a hundred years to come are being settled to-day in a small room of the Hotel Crillon by four unobtrusive gentlemen who glance out speculatively now and then to Cleopatra's Needle on the Place de la Concorde.

Du Bois insists on viewing the "domestic matter" of American racism in an international network of imperial relations. He describes the victors of the world war ironically as "unobtrusive gentlemen" ensconced in a deceptively small room. From this enclosed center they wield the power to redive and remap the globe, buttressed, he writes, by their vast control of "armies and navies, the world supply of capital and the press." Du Bois gives a subtle gloss to the view outside their Paris hotel room. When they glance outside their window, their gaze is repeatedly drawn to a monument celebrating the colonial conquest of northern Africa. The towering obelisk in the busy streets of Paris dwarfs and accentuates the enclosure of the hotel room, while exposing it to the outside. Locating the colonial spoils of Africa in the heart of the European
metropolis has the effect of collapsing the very boundaries that the participants in the peace conference were redrawing and reinforcing.

Like the needle of a compass, the obelisk points toward alternative perspectives and directions from which to remap the postwar world. Du Bois’s letter goes on to list an extraordinary array of organizations in attendance representing nations, peoples, races, religions, labor and political groups from all over the world, as though proliferating the potential sites marked by Cleopatra’s Needle. Given the global significance of this international gathering, he resents that “some American Negroes actually asked why I went to help represent the Negro world in Africa and America and the Islands of the sea?” (187). He answers hyperbolically, “if the Negroes of the world could have maintained during the entire sitting of the Peace Conference a central headquarters . . . they could have settled the future of Africa” (187). This rhetorical bravado indicates the importance to Du Bois—and his anxiety—of staking out literal and figurative space from which to map counter-geographies of the postwar world.

Completed after his return from Paris, during the summer of 1919, Darkwater is suffused with the turmoil Du Bois found there, of old empires, nations, and colonies crumbling in the midst of struggles over new configurations of social and political space around the globe. In Darkwater Du Bois appropriates and transforms the cartographic power he found concentrated in the hands of the imperial nations. In contrast to the centralized perspective of the imperial gaze, Darkwater maps the world from multiple decentralized vantage points: not Paris, London, and Washington, but Congo, Port-au-Prince, and East St. Louis. Cartography does not just reflect established boundaries between fixed geopolitical units, but discursively produces new aggregates of social space that can be policed, contested, and transformed. Darkwater focuses on movement around the globe that destabilizes fixed borderlines; cartography is an activity where fantasy and power meet. Darkwater reconfigures the geographical terrain of “world war” beyond the battlefields of Europe, from the colonies of Africa and Asia to Jim Crow America to sites of U.S. intervention abroad. Cartography in Darkwater is inseparable from history and language. It is a strategic device through which Du Bois narrates those pasts that dominant world maps overlay and erase. He redefines the meaning of the word “war” to include conflicts over representations of space and time, and critiques the contemporary definition of peace as he imagines alternative futures. The Paris Peace Conference posed for him the question of how to represent a world that was becoming increasingly interconnected by centralized forms of imperial power. It posed the equally pressing question of defining anticolonial alliances and decentralized emerging collectivities.

If Du Bois’s aspirations for the Peace Conference filled the pages of Darkwater, the work also bore the marks of his controversial endorsement of the U.S. war effort. The war had catapulted Du Bois into one of the most controversial and contradictory periods of his career, where his national and international perspectives clashed and intermingled without resolution. (The controversies resonate in the defensive tone of the letter from Paris.) In a notorious Crisis editorial of July 1918, “Close Ranks,” he advocated that American blacks “forget our special grievances” to join the war effort in a segregated army with segregated training camps for officers. In the tradition of imperial citizenship we have seen during the Spanish-American War and in Micheaux’s film, Du Bois imagined black soldiers “standing shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens” in a militarized national body, ready through the medium of a common enemy abroad to “inaugurate the United States of the World.” In this international context, Du Bois recuperated a vision of the United States as the “hope of mankind and of black mankind” by representing Germany as the embodiment of racial oppression. Only a year earlier he wrote that German colonialism was on a continuum with that of the French and English and with Southern racism in the United States. Despite heated opposition from many African American quarters, Du Bois would never fully relinquish the position of “Close Ranks.” Throughout the war, Du Bois continued to advocate that African Americans pursue overseas what D. L. Lewis has called “citizenship through carnage,” even though his “The African Roots of War” had decried the origins of that carnage in colonial oppression. Yet during his trip to France at the war’s end, Du Bois also documented both the power and dismal limits of imperial citizenship in his research for an uncompleted three-volume history of black troops in the war, which he planned to title “The Wounded World.”

From Paris Du Bois brought these uncompleted and controversial projects into the pages of Darkwater, where he turned the discourse of
war from abroad to back home, as he did in another influential Crisis editorial, “Returning Soldiers.” It concludes:

We return.
We return from fighting.
We return fighting.
Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America or know the reason why.22

The conspicuous absence of the word “home” is supplanted by “fighting” to shatter the distinction between a foreign battlefield and a home front. The imperial discourse of the rescue mission abroad shifts direction into the heart of the undomestic nation. The “return fighting” from Europe and Pan-Africa to an unwelcoming home is one of the major narrative trajectories that inform Darkwater. Du Bois completed it during the “Red Summer” of 1919, a horrific nationwide conflagration of antiblack violence countered by the militancy of returning black soldiers. Darkwater can be read as Du Bois’s contribution to that struggle, both as a weapon of war and a search for peace, which recasts domestic racial violence within a global imperial context.

It is tempting to understand the war as a watershed in Du Bois’s career, when he turned from a nationalist and patriotic support of America’s entry into the war to a more internationalist and anticolonial vision. Yet this narrative does not do justice to the multiple positions at play for Du Bois during the war, when he was simultaneously and contradictorily at his most national and international. These positions were by no means polar opposites with inherent political valences; instead, they were constitutive of one another. Du Bois was not simply choosing sides but engaged in implicit debates and dialogues with varieties of internationalism across the political spectrum: socialist revolution and pacifism, Wilson’s League of Nations, Garvey’s black nationalism, Pan-Africanism, All-Asia movements, anticolonial nationalism, the red scare in the United States that blamed black dissent on Bolshevik infiltration, and white supremacist panic about worldwide race war. This list of course cannot do justice to the range of movements and discourses engaged in remapping the world and in redrawing connections and boundaries between nations, colonies, and what Du Bois called the “inter-nation.”

While Du Bois tried fruitlessly to achieve a meeting with Woodrow Wilson in Paris, others did pay attention. White Supremacist Lothrop Stoddard in The Rising Tide of Color quoted Du Bois’s “African Roots” as dangerous evidence that the nonwhite world, from Japan to America to India, saw the war as an occasion for worldwide uprisings to seize power from the white world. Stoddard too had a cartographic imagination, starting with an atlas of the world in 1914 and including multicolored maps of the world along racial lines, with one next to his quotation of Du Bois, “The Distribution of the Primary Races.”23 While Darkwater does not include actual maps, it performs a similar act of cartography in imaging a globe encircled by “dark waters” of black migrations around the world. Stoddard was not the only one to criticize Du Bois. Marcus Garvey in a speech in 1920 declared, “You cannot advocate ‘close ranks’ today and talk ‘dark water’ tomorrow.”24 But Du Bois did just that in Darkwater. He did not stake out a single international position but put in play multiple maps that collide, merge, and compete with one another in dizzying combinations.

Darkwater

Marketeted as a companion to The Souls of Black Folk and resembling it in form and content, Darkwater was widely reviewed and read as one of Du Bois’s most important books at the time.25 Yet while Souls has achieved a canonical literary status, critics have neglected Darkwater.26 Both are composite multigenre texts that bring together essays, autobiography, poems, and parables, often in elusive combinations. Darkwater moves through an even more jarring juxtaposition of discontinuous spaces, divergent histories, and clashing literary styles. It can be read as an internationalist revision of Souls. The two books share a similar three-part structure, starting with autobiography and moving to the history of war—Civil War in one and World War in the other, then postwar Reconstruction and the question of black leadership. The first four chapters of Darkwater leap breathlessly from Du Bois’s New England birthplace to the battlefields of Europe to the postwar settlement of Africa to industrial East St. Louis. The next four chapters turn to social conditions in the United States, focusing on the home, the status of black women, labor, the franchise, and education. In each case these putatively domestic spheres open up to vast movements of global
change. The third part of the book looks to the future through more lyrical and personal pieces, which are also more global in sweep. The elegy for young black men at the end of Souls is echoed by the chapter "The Immortal Child" about the African-British composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, best known for his operatic version of Hiawatha. The book ends with an apocalyptic science fiction fable in which New York City is destroyed by a comet. Most of the chapters start with an autobiographical fragment, and in place of the double epigraphs of Souls, Du Bois punctuates each chapter with a highly condensed poem or paraphrase drawing on the mythology of Ethiopianism or the figure of a black Christ.

In spite of these formal similarities, Darkwater diverges from Souls significantly in abandoning the latter's well-known national paradigm of double-consciousness—"One ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro." Instead, the transnational scope of Darkwater explores multiple forms of consciousness, not delineated solely by nation and race though informed by both, and routed instead through the dispersed locations and dislocations of empire. While Souls enacts a journey on a North/South axis of the United States, the journey of Darkwater takes place through worldwide networks that encompass Europe, Africa, the industrial United States, and the "colonies that belt the globe." Darkwater collapses far-flung distances into jarring proximity, and bursts open the enclosed space of home and factory to far-ranging global trajectories. Even the lyrical interludes between chapters blur the boundaries between heaven and earth, cosmology and history.

Whereas The Souls of Black Folk has found a major place in the literary canon, Darkwater has remained curiously overlooked by critics of American and African American literature, even though several chapters have been repeatedly anthologized. I think this neglect has two sources: Darkwater does not neatly fit into the narratives of Du Bois's career, nor into dominant literary categories of modernist aesthetics and African American writing. Scholars have often followed Du Bois's own account of his intellectual autobiography in Dusk of Dawn, where he saw himself progressing toward an enlightened international view of empire through a Marxian perspective on labor and capital. The chapter "Science and Empire" traces with irony his own ignorance of imperialism as he lived through it, and he concludes that only in retrospect did "empire" provide a conceptual framework for writing the "history of our day": "That history may be epitomized in one word—Empire; the domination of white Europe over black Africa and yellow Asia, through political power built on the economic control of labor, income and ideas. The echo of this industrial imperialism in America was the expulsion of black men from American democracy, their subjection to caste control and wage slavery." This framework of "Empire" in Dusk of Dawn, however, has its own blind spots. For one, it includes the United States in a world system only by relegating racial oppression at home to an "echo" of the dominant model of European imperialism. Furthermore, throughout Dusk of Dawn, empire appears as a totalizing and monolithic system that ultimately explains everything—a horizon of all social knowledge that remains elusive and static in itself and in the last instance defies definition.

Darkwater, by contrast, offers a multidimensional and multivocal account of what Du Bois calls on its last page "the Anarchy of Empire." In contrast to "Empire" in Dusk, "the Anarchy of Empire" cannot be summarized in one word or categorized as a coherent system or political theory, but instead emerges through experiments with form. The disjunctive qualities of the text in time and space, its vertiginous motion, jarring and fragmented juxtapositions, and cacophonous dialogues, all of which seem to have no rational connections, together chart the anarchic routes and irrational workings of empire.

If Darkwater does not fit neatly into narratives of Du Bois's career, neither does it fit major paradigms of literary modernism. Building on the work of Raymond Williams, Edward Said and Fredric Jameson have argued that the formal elements we associate with European modernism register the severance of the metropolis from its colonies. This rupture materially informs the lived experience of European modernity, for which the production of everyday life takes place in faraway colonies. These critics view the formal innovations of modernism—fragmentation, encyclopedic mapping, primitivism—as aesthetic strategies that embody, cloak, or compensate for this deep fissure and sense of loss and dislocation resulting from the sense that reality is always elsewhere. Darkwater, in contrast, deploys modernist forms of incongruity, fragmentation, and discontinuity for the opposite effect: to collapse distances and overturn the hierarchy between metropolis and periphery. In Darkwater the modernist discontinuities and disjointed textual effects work to map the interconnectedness of
these bifurcated spheres, to show how distant locations collide with one another and enclosed spaces are wrenched apart by the imperial movements of capital, persons, weapons, and ideology. Rather than striving to reconstitute a lost wholeness at the heart of Euro-American modernity, Du Bois in his modernist aesthetics imagines alternative modernities from multiple vantages along the color line that "belts the world."

A guide to the modernist aesthetics of Darkwater can be found in one of the most elusive chapters of the book, "Of Beauty and Death." Du Bois opens with a dialogue between an autobiographical persona and a white friend who claims that Du Bois is too sensitive to racial insults and exaggerates them out of fear. He tries fruitlessly to explain how acts of racial discrimination cannot be quantified in time and place but occur "now and then—now seldom, now, sudden; now after a week, now in a chain of awful minutes; not everywhere, but anywhere—in Boston, in Atlanta. That's the hell of it." For example, at a movie theater showing a Charlie Chaplin film, he is forced to buy a ticket to the smoking gallery. In choosing to protest, he experiences a range of emotions, from militant pride in fighting for the future of "unborn children" to humiliation at elevating a "cheap and tawdry" entertainment into a battleground for rights. In a search for an alternative form of beauty and pleasure, the author then presents a cinematic montage that breathlessly juxtaposes scenes from black participation and discrimination in the war, descriptions of sublime natural beauty (from the Maine coast to a Jamaican sunset to the Grand Canyon), scenes of Jim Crow trains in the South, ships returning from Europe to New York Harbor, and street scenes in Harlem. This montage presents the mobile composition of Darkwater as alternative to the fixed claustrophobia of the movie theater. In Chapter 5 above we saw how the cinematic eye developed out of an imperial gaze that could survey the world and compose it into an imperial narrative. Du Bois may be seen as appropriating the power of cinematic mobility for an alternative aesthetic. In "The African Roots" he notes that "in the minds of yellow, brown, and black men, the brutal truth is clearing: a white man is privileged to go to any land where advantage beckons and behave as he pleases; the black or colored man is being more and more confined to these parts of the world where life for climatic, historical, economic and political reasons is most difficult to live and most easily dominated by Europe." This privilege of white men is the mobility of empire, which Du Bois sees as a question of representation as well. The white man is able to manipulate the camera's gaze and immobilize black men in its frame and also to redirect the black gaze. Du Bois in Darkwater was seeking a counter-mobility—modes of representation that could compete with the mobile containment of film.

Transient Tenants

Like many of Du Bois's books, Darkwater starts with autobiography to legitimate the narrative that follows. Written on his fiftieth birthday, the first chapter, "The Shadow of Years," presents a family epic that sweeps across continents from past to present. It opens with a description of his childhood home in rural Massachusetts. It was a conventional domestic abode: "quaint, with clapboard running up and down, neatly trimmed, and there were five rooms, a tiny porch, a rosy front yard, and unbelievably delicious strawberries in the rear." (485–86). This idyll of domestic stability totters, however, in the next line, where we read that "a South Carolinian, lately come to the Berkshire Hills owned all this," which made the Du Bois family "transient tenants for the time." The trope of "transient tenants" resonates throughout Darkwater; it uproots the organic meaning of home and links it to movement through time and space, exposing its foundation in unequal economic transactions. Du Bois then narrates his family genealogy: it connects generations less through place than through transit, even though he traces his ancestry to this same locale for two hundred years. Du Bois recounts Tom Burghardt's arrival in the region; brought as a slave by his Dutch "captor," he achieved freedom by fighting for the Revolution and had a son who fought in the war of 1812. While Tom's Bantu wife clung to her memories of Africa and "never became reconciled to this strange land" (486), Tom established a lineage of militant manhood that turned servitude into freedom through military service to the nation (a legacy that may reflect Du Bois's choice in World War I). On the other side of his family, he charts the routes of transient tenants from France and the Bahamas to his grandfather's move from Connecticut to Haiti, from there to work on
a passenger boat in New York, and finally to retire in the port of New Bedford. Du Bois even romanticizes his absent father as the "Beloved Vagabond" (487).

He summarizes his family history with a mock epic flourish: "So with some circumstance having finally gotten myself born, with a flood of Negro blood, a strain of French, a bit of Dutch, but, thank God! no 'Anglo-Saxon,' I come to the days of my childhood" (488). Much scholarly debate has taken place about Du Bois's reliance on biological definitions of race. Here his references to blood have a comically ironic effect; the imprecise measurements of "flood," "strain," "bit" parody the scientific and legal discourse of his time in which "one drop of blood" determined racialized identity, as well as the white supremacist hysteria about the "rising tide of color." In contrast, Du Bois narrates a genealogy composed not of bloodlines but of vectors of transnational migrations. This narrative fashions an international self at the confluence of routes that tie the landlocked New England town of his birth to sites in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and the American South; locations or dislocations on the map of what Paul Gilroy has called the Black Atlantic.

In fact, the title Darkwater extends more widely on a global scale beyond the Black Atlantic. "Dark" includes colonized peoples around the world, and water relates to moving, turbulent, and fluid bodies circulating around the globe, what Du Bois calls "the human sea" that beats against and changes the shores of continents, colonies, and nations while it is contained by them. Darkwater also refers to the turbulent movements of empire around the globe. The title implicitly comments on the liquid metaphors of racial mobility employed by white supremacist hysterics, as Du Bois turns on its head the discourse of "the rising tide of color" from the threat of world destruction to a utopian potential for world peace.

In his first chapter, Du Bois proceeds to narrate his education as a form of transient tenancy that challenges the discreet boundaries of town, region, and nation, and the way these localities are traditionally linked to communal and individual identity. When he graduates from high school with the goal of attending Harvard, he finds instead that white town leaders have arranged a scholarship for him at Fisk University. On his journey into the South, he notes the "curious irony by which I was not looked upon as a real citizen of my birthtown with a future and a career, and instead was being sent to a far land among strangers who were regarded as (and in truth were) 'mine own people'" (490). This irony relies on several inversions that divorce citizenship from habitation, as Du Bois becomes foreign to his own birthplace and finds a collective identity with strangers in a foreign place. His overuse of lexicographic marks in this passage to name "mine own people" both underscores this sense of connection and points to the linguistic work necessary to construct a sense of peoplehood, rather than just discover a preordained natural affinity.

This movement away, wherein the domestic becomes foreign and Du Bois finds himself at home abroad, is repeated in his trip to Europe after college. He travels there on a Dutch ship, reversing the route of his ancestor Tom. An ocean away from the United States, he finds another formulation of collective identity that redefines "mine own people" and overturns the geographic contrast of Old World construction and New World boundlessness. At a time when Woodrow Wilson touted "America" as the universal standard of freedom and democracy, Du Bois remapped this space of American "boundlessness" as an enclosed sphere of "narrowness and color prejudice." Europe in contrast becomes an open space, where "Negro" refers not only to a particularized racial identity but also to a "greater, broader sense of humanity and world-fellowship" (491).

Thus the first chapter of Darkwater poses a challenge to the text that follows: to dislodge the fixed borders of local domestic spaces (home, town, region, nation) and to remap them as transient sites traversed by global movements of people, power, and capital. This first chapter links autobiography to cartography, a connection that continues through the autobiographical fragments that frame most of the chapters in the book. These fragments, selected from different arenas of Du Bois's private and public life, do not progress in chronological order to build a coherent representative self. Instead, they construct a porous self in motion that accretes dissonant layers of identity from disparate times and places. Autobiography in Darkwater fashions an international self linked to the trajectories of transient tenants that wind their way across the globe and the text: from Africans struggling for independence, to southern black migrants seeking industrial work in East St. Louis, to an African-British composer seeking inspiration in Negro spirituals and Longfellow's poems, to African American soldiers
seeking U.S. citizenship on the far-flung battlefields of France. The trope of transient tenants does not celebrate mobility and hybridity against fixed identities, but instead charts the struggle to transform both forced movement and confinement into movements for social change.

**America's Belgium**

The eruption of World War dramatically alters the geography of *Darkwater's* opening chapter. From tracing the movement of transient tenants across geopolitical borders, the author registers, in the next three chapters, tectonic upheavals that shift from the European battlefields to the postwar reconstruction of Africa to the race riots of East St. Louis in 1917. In repeating his youthful journey from America to Europe, Du Bois no longer seeks a civilized escape from American racism but instead yokes the continents together in the construction of imperial whiteness. The poem "Litany for Atlanta" bridges his autobiographical introduction to the triptych of war chapters. The poem decries God's silence about lynching as "white terror," and it serves as a segue from America to Europe through the international circuits of racial violence.

In the chapter ironically entitled "The Souls of White Folk," Du Bois transforms the dislocation of transient tenants into multiple vantage points from which to make visible the imperial and racial dimensions of the world war that are omitted from European and American maps. Though whiteness is the ostensible subject of this chapter, it focuses on the international emergence of a black anticolonial gaze, which renders whiteness visible. Emphasizing the act of seeing as much as the object seen, Du Bois explores the construction of race, both black and white, from points of view that are geographically embedded in locations of imperial conflict, what he calls in a 1924 essay an "external vantage ground—or, better, ground of disadvantage."

The chapter opens with the figure of Du Bois in a tower high above the "human sea." From there, he wields a kind of imperial overview that telescopes into an intimate view of "the souls of white folk".

Of them I am singularly clairvoyant. I see in and through them. I view them from unusual points of vantage. Not as a foreigner do I come, for

I am native, not foreign, bone of their thought and flesh of their language. Mine is not the knowledge of the traveler or the colonial composite of dear memories, words and wonder. Nor yet is my knowledge that which servants have of masters, or mass of class, or capitalist of artisan. Rather 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 now embarrassed, now furious. They deny my right to live and be and call me misbirth! My word is to them mere bitterness and my soul, pessimism. And yet as they preach and strut and shout and threaten, crouching as they clutch at rags of facts and fancies to hide their nakedness they go twisting, flying by my tired eyes and I see them ever stripped,—ugly, human. (497)

In this passage, Du Bois appropriates colonial discourse to dismantle the hierarchy that renders the colonizer as the knowing and all-seeing subject and the colonized as a corporeal object devoid of reflection. A clairvoyant has the gift of seeing the invisible. If whiteness entails the privilege of disembodiment, as current theories hold, the clairvoyant gaze reembodies whiteness to make it hypervisible and grotesque. Du Bois insists that his "unusual points of vantage" cannot be reduced to the binary oppositions of known social hierarchies. In repeating that he is not "foreign" but "native," he challenges the distinction between near and far, home and abroad, and renders whiteness as foreign. "Native" in this context implicitly links the African American claim to citizenship at home to a colonized people’s struggle for independence from a foreign rule. In the allusion to the Garden of Eden, Du Bois offers a counter-myth of origins, as the corporeal black body is aligned with Eve’s. Instead of being created out of Adam’s rib, however, blackness becomes a projection of his “thought and language.” As white souls are cast out of their colonial paradise, they try to cover their exposed bodies with myths of superiority. In a parallel to the colonial trope of conquest as penetration, the clairvoyant gaze does not just passively observe but actively strips souls and pierces the skin to peer into “the working of their entrails.” In his appropriation of colonial discourse, Du Bois turns the act of seeing into a power struggle that takes place in spaces of intimate proximity and also expands across the globe.

As Du Bois descends from his tower, he allies his sole clairvoyant
gaze with a collective international anticolonial gaze. The text moves rapidly from scenes of lynching and racial hatred “right here in America” to the carnage of World War I. As his focus shifts, he changes his use of pronouns significantly. He starts by sharing his vision with racially unmarked Americans: “We have seen, you and I, city after city drunk and furious with ungovernable lust of blood.” He suddenly turns on “you,” who becomes visible as white in this unanswered question: “ask your own soul what it would say if the next census were to report that half of black America was dead and the other half dying” (499). Du Bois then moves beyond the national borders depopulated by this imaginary census. Expanding the meaning of “mine own people” of the first chapter, here he changes the referent of “we” to “the Darker world” and refers to himself for the first time in the book as “I in my blackness”: “In the awful cataclysm of World War, where from beating, slandering and murdering us the white world turned temporarily aside to kill each other, we of the Darker Peoples looked on in mild amaze” (500). They gaze at a scene of vast destruction that echoes Du Bois’s clairvoyant vision of the “entrails” of white souls: “As we saw the dead dimly through rifts of battle-smoke and heard faintly the cursings and accusations of blood brothers, we darker men said: ‘This is not Europe gone mad, this is not aberration or insanity; this is Europe; this seeming Terrible is the real soul of white culture—back of all culture,—stripped and visible today’” (502). The power of the dark gaze to strip the skin of white souls is here magnified on global dimensions to pierce the veneer of European civilization. “The Great War is the lie unveiled,” Du Bois wrote in the Crisis; Darkwater shows how the cataclysm of war opened prospects for anticolonial alliances that could further undo the lie that white culture was the source of civilization. This lie, Du Bois claims further, conceals the foundation of European civilization not only in its colonial violence, but also in the appropriation of earlier, flourishing nonwhite civilizations.

From the vantage of the “darker world that watches” (507), Du Bois argues historically that whiteness is a recent social phenomenon with origins in imperialism: “the discovery of personal whiteness among the world’s peoples is a very modern thing—a nineteenth and twentieth century matter, indeed” (497). Inverting the discourse of colonial exploration, he contends that Europeans did not “discover” ancient darker peoples, but instead invented their own identity as white.

Throughout the chapter, Du Bois repeatedly emphasizes the modernity of whiteness, a temporality that is inseparable from the vast geographic span of empire: “the imperial width of the thing,—the heaven defying audacity—makes its modern newness” (504). He calls whiteness a “new religion” that unites America and Europe in a belief that “whiteness is the ownership of the earth forever and ever, Amen!” (498).

Contemporary studies of whiteness have been heavily influenced by David Roediger’s Wages of Whiteness, a concept taken from Du Bois’s Black Reconstruction (1935). Roediger argues that nineteenth-century working classes in the ante-bellum United States adopted the privileges of whiteness to distinguish them from degraded black labor and thus align themselves with capital. Yet Roediger overlooks the international context in which Du Bois formulated this argument at least twenty years earlier, when he analyzed the racial formation of class in America as part of the global anarchy of empire. Skilled workers in both Europe and the United States, argued Du Bois, embraced the economic, social, and ideological benefits of whiteness, which were made possible only through imperial exploitation at home and abroad: “The white workingman has been asked to share the spoil of exploiting ‘chinks and niggers.’ It is no longer simply the merchant prince, or the aristocratic monopoly, or even the employing class, that is exploiting the world: it is the nation; a new democratic nation composed of united capital and labor.” In this imperial crucible of economics and race, Du Bois found not only the roots of war but also the birth of the modern nation: “such nations is it that rule the modern world. Their national bond is no mere sentimental patriotism, loyalty or ancestor worship.” The same colonial spoils that allow for the formation of the modern nation lead to violent competition over the colonies in world war. The exclusion and exploitation of dark labor worldwide explains the paradox at home: that the advance of democracy goes hand in hand with lynching and violent racism in post-Reconstruction America. This international triangle that unites labor and capital through the bond of whiteness against dark labor at home and abroad connects America to other imperial nations, rather than position it as an exception to them.

In the cartography of Darkwater, the extended lines of this triangle lead in two interrelated directions, represented respectively in the
next two chapters. Chapter three, "The Hands of Ethiopia," focuses on
the postwar settlement of Africa, where Du Bois foresees the ominous
import of new kinds of industrial slavery. The next chapter, "Of Work
and Wealth," moves back to the wartime industrialization of East St.
Louis, where white workers battled against black migrant labor and
thereby aligned themselves with the industrialists against whom they
were striking. For Du Bois, such alliances cast ironic light on the interna-
tionalist claims of the socialist movements in the United States as
well as Germany, whose members, he argues, have been bribed by the
promises of empire: "Were they not lordly whites and should they not
share in the spoils of rape? High wages in the United States and En-

gland might be the skillfully manipulated result of slavery in Africa and
of peonage in Asia" (507). Du Bois contends that the wages of whiteness
are paid from an international economic system that consolidates
the modern nation and conjoins post-Reconstruction America to the
African roots of war.

The international perspective on whiteness in Darkwater is inextrica-
bly tied to its imperial cartography. In remapping global geography
from the "unusual points of vantage" of an emerging anticolonial
gaze, Du Bois also challenges the meaning of language and the writing
of history to show how language perpetuates and reflects the injustices
and oppressions inscribed in the lines of maps. Just as he redefines
the meaning of race and the modern nation from the vantage of the
colonies, geographic shifts throughout Darkwater entail redefining
the available lexicon for describing the international scene, through
such basic words as "world," "war," and "peace." The wages of whiteness
also include the right to own and circumscribe this vocabulary. As
Toni Morrison writes, "definitions belong to the definers—not the de-
defined." We have already seen how Du Bois amply expands the mean-
ing of the "world" in world war. From the vantage of Africa, the "world"
does not stop at the battlefields of Europe, but takes root in a global
struggle to control colonies that "bend the world"—in "Hong Kong and
Anam, in Borneo and Rhodesia, in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, in Pan-
am and Havana" (505–6). This redefinition of the "world" expands
outward to encompass the earth, and inward to include black labor
within the United States.

In charting the perimeters of the world, Du Bois also redefines and
expands the meaning of war. He condemns pacifists for limiting their
protests to battles involving white Europeans. Has war "just become
horrible, in these last days," he asks,

when under essentially equal conditions, equal armaments, and equal
waste of wealth, white men are fighting white men, with surgeons and
nurses hovering near? Think of the wars through which we have lived
in the last decade: in German Africa, in British Nigeria, in French and
Spanish Morocco, in China, in Persia, in the Balkans, in Tripoli, in
Mexico, and in a dozen lesser places—were not these horrible too?

Mind you, there were for most of these wars no Red Cross funds. (502)

Excluded from the nomenclature of "war," brutal military incursions
become invisible from the perspective of Europe and the United
States. In withholding the use of the word "war" from violent colonial
conflicts worldwide, pacifists efface both the agency of colonial com-
batants and the longer history of conquest that, according to Du Bois,
causedit the Great War in Europe.

Darkwater rewrites the past to expose the imperial histories embed-
ded in yet deleted from European and American versions of the world.

This geographic, linguistic, and historical remapping converges in his
repeated references to Belgium. From the vantage of Europe, Belgium
stood at the center of the war; the "rape of Belgium" was a rallying cry
against German invasion of a neutral country. This metaphor ren-
dered Belgium female and put the Allies in the role of chivalric rescuers.
Du Bois turns this rhetoric of rape against Belgium itself, by exam-
inizing it from the vantage of King Leopold's Belgian Congo. He turns
an enclosed national space inside out by undoing the historical amne-
sia about the economic foundation of Belgium's civilization: "Behold
little Belgium and her pitiable plights, but has the world forgotten
Congo? What Belgium now suffers is not half, not even a tenth, of what
she has done to black Congo since Stanley's great dream of 1880" (502).

A target of German aggression when viewed from within Eu-

For Du Bois, extending the boundaries of Belgium beyond the
dyadic relation between Europe and its African colonies, to locate Bel-
gium metaphorically in the cities of the United States:
The threat of a truly worldwide war hovers over the entire text of *Darkwater* and fuels the urgency of its tone. Du Bois oscillates back and forth between drawing the color line to frame the new front of a global race war, and drawing it to delineate a site for the emergence of anticolonial alliances and the potential of “world fellowship.”

**African Routes**

A comprehensive peace for Du Bois could only be negotiated from the vantage of Africa, the prime cause of world war. In the chapter on “The Hands of Ethiopia,” Du Bois offers a plan for the postwar reconstruction of Africa that combines a revision of “African Roots” with proposals from the Pan-African Congress of 1919. This chapter has two uneasily related goals: to dismantle the colonial map of Africa and to avert the threat of a worldwide race war. It thus anxiously strives to contain the potential violence that this crumbling of old maps would unleash. Renarrating the history of the Great War opens urgent questions about the future. Hence Du Bois asks whether the reconstruction of Africa will lead toward independence and autonomy, or like post-Reconstruction America, to reenslavement by unfettered capitalism.

What was Africa to Du Bois at the time of writing *Darkwater*? Scholars have criticized Du Bois for romanticizing the continent in colonial exotized images, both at the Pan-African Congress and on his trip to Liberia three years later.39 Eric Sundquist sees *Darkwater* more positively as an anticolonial critique in which Africa becomes a psychic or spiritual homeland, an embodiment of a Pan-African Soul, or a “racial font of identity.”38 Yet both views overlook the more secular and modern dimension of Africa that serves as a critical leverage in Du Bois’s writing. “Hands of Ethiopia,” like “African Roots,” starts with a quotation from Pliny, “Semper novi quid ex Africa,” cried the Roman consul [Something new always comes from Africa]. The newness of Africa paradoxically lies both in its antiquity, as the source of early civilization, and its modernity in relation to the history of empires: “Nearly every human empire that has arisen in the world, material and spiritual, has found some of its greatest crises on the continent of Africa, from Greece to Great Britain” (511). As this flash point of empire, Africa is where the anarchy of empire implodes and where something
new can emerge. Du Bois thus links the modern crisis of war to Africa's antiquity, though not as a mythic space outside of time but as a geography that is historically embedded in empire and will be its undoing.

If in “Souls of White Folk” Du Bois adopts a global anti-colonial perspective from which to deconstruct whiteness, in “Hands of Ethiopia” he sets the imperial grounds on which to reconstruct postwar Africa. He condemns the ravages of European colonialism and presents a plan for African independence of “a new African World state, a Black Africa” (516). Yet he also maps Africa through a colonial grid as a backward continent in need of enlightened modernization, and he sees African Americans in the civilizing role of “missionaries of culture for their backward brethren in the new Africa” (518). In the rhetoric of colonial paternalism, Africa becomes an infant state in need of guidance and tutelage by the American black elite necessary to lead a program of modernization and to protect the land and populace from capitalism's imposition of industrial slavery on Africa. If the critical vantage of Africa exposes the war as the "lie of civilization," then Du Bois sees an enlightened modernization of Africa as a way to recuperate this same civilization.

Critics have connected Du Bois's Pan-Africanism to the civilizationist discourse of European colonialism. Overlooked, however, is how Du Bois enlists, or is enlisted by, a specific logic of American imperialism. His vision of Pan-Africa uncannily resembles Woodrow Wilson's internationalist cartography in the aftermath of World War I. Wilson advocated an anticolonial imperialism in opposition to European colonialism, but even more vehemently he opposed anticolonial revolutionary movements as anarchic. It was this logic that underwrote his occupation of Haiti. In his internationalism he saw the United States not as a colonial power ruling specific territories, but as the redeemer, lawgiver, and model for a universal global system, the antecedent of Luce's American Century. He concluded his proposals for "Peace without Victory" in his resounding 1917 speech this way: "These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no others. And they are also the principles and policies of forward looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are principles of mankind and must prevail." For Wilson, U.S. nationalism was consonant with internationalism; to him American principles were universal and represented all of humanity.

Du Bois imagined African Americans in a similar representative and redemptive role in relation to Africa. In Darkwater he dismantles the colonialism that led to war, but conceives of peace under the mantle of American exceptionalism as an anticolonial force that can allay the double threat of rampant industrial exploitation and the revolutionary agency of African nationalism. His rhetoric of redemption also echoes Wilson's rhetoric of the redeemer nation. Du Bois figures educated American blacks as an international "talented tenth" working to uplift Africa. Africa thus becomes an inverse image of America—the lowest rather than the most powerful, purged of imperial power and thus capable of uplifting the world.

In his journey to the concept of Pan-Africa, Du Bois appears at his most American. He implicitly reproduces the logic of imperial citizenship, though not as an African American soldier fighting abroad, but in close ranks nonetheless, standing shoulder to shoulder with other Americans to forward a peace plan for Africa. Thus what Africa is to Du Bois at this point of his career is inseparable from the question: what is America to Du Bois? He does not simply romanticize either Africa as homeland or the pomp and circumstance of French colonialism, as Lewis claims. Instead, he implicitly engages in a romance of the American empire. Like the romance heroes we have seen in Chapter 3 of this book, the author of Darkwater can act with more agency and freedom abroad than he can at home, as he seeks to rescue his black brothers from the tyranny of industrial imperialism. His construction of Africa as a critical vantage also has some qualities of the imperial romance, wherein conflicts at home can be resolved more clearly abroad. The discourse of American imperialism as anticolonial redeemer of the world from the shackles of empire underwrites his vision of a redeemed and redeeming Africa as the site for projecting future world peace. Du Bois often represents Africa as passive; it must be freed by others and cannot quite redeem or represent itself. By omitting an autobiographical speaking voice in "Hands of Ethiopia," he adopts a kind of Wilsonian universalism in which America is the unlocatable and omnipresent prototype of world progress.

Du Bois by no means backed Wilson's aim to rebuild the world on "American principles." After throwing his support behind Wilson for the election, he often turned the President's rhetoric against itself. Rather than hold America as a standard bearer for the rest of the
world, Du Bois pointed out that the United States lagged behind the standards of countries it purported to lead: “Russia has abolished the ghetto—shall we restore it? India is overthrowing caste—shall we rebuild it? China is establishing democracy—shall we strengthen our Southern oligarchy? ... No one that loves to lynch niggers can lead the hosts of the Almighty God.” Throughout his writing during the war he undermined the U.S. claims to “make the world safe for democracy”: “Wilson may love the idea of democracy in Poland and Ireland, but for 12 million Negroes silence. Distance from Washington certainly adds enchantment to Democracy.” Overtipping the Wilsonian map of the world—with the United States as a center of democracy emanating outward—Du Bois exposes how America makes democracy foreign at its center and can only fulfill its meaning by projecting it abroad. Like other anticolonial leaders of the time, Du Bois did not simply reject Wilson but wanted to take his rhetoric of self-determination to its logical extreme to expand it beyond the peoples of Europe.

Despite his direct critiques of Wilson’s hypocritical policies, Du Bois’s Pan-African map shares with Wilson a common framework of nationally sponsored internationalism. Africa, in Du Bois eyes, cannot redeem itself but must rely on higher powers of enlightened blacks, just as the self-determination of new nations relies on following an American model. If Du Bois’s international perspective destabilizes and decenters American borders, at the same time he relies on America as a template for world government, for what he calls “supra-national power.” His map of a reconstructed Africa coincides with an American desire for a borderless world, ruled by U.S. law and example, and supporting a world market. While Du Bois criticized Wilson at home, he continued into the 1920s to support the League of Nations as a forum that could turn his critique into practice; as a tribunal for racial injustice at home and abroad. At a time when many anticolonial leaders derided the League for its hypocrisy in relation to movements for “self-determination” by nonwhite peoples, Du Bois averred that “the worst inter-nation is better than the present anarchy.” Thus, on the one hand, Du Bois decentered Wilson’s vision of America by locating the United States in the pantheon of imperial powers judged by the world’s tribunal. On the other, even when he returned from war most disillusioned by Wilson’s hypocrisy at home and abroad, his idea of the Pan-African leadership resembled Wilson’s projection of the


Home Fronts

In chapter four of Darkwater, “Of Work and Wealth,” Du Bois brings the “return fighting” scenes of world war to the streets of American cities, and calls for social change within the United States as part of the postwar global reconstruction. Fighting on the home front involves ranks of men and women who were not clothed in the uniforms of militant manhood: migrants, workers in factories, teachers and students in schoolrooms, servants in white homes, and black women in their communities. The fear of industrial slavery in postwar Africa erupts on the bloody streets of East St. Louis in 1917, and Du Bois’s proposal to educate millions of Africans boils down to a single lesson in his classroom. The “penetrating” and “all seeing eyes” of his black students force him to question the ways that pedagogy can perpetuate the lies of progress and modernization. Under their gaze, he searches for an alternative to the “scholarly aloofness and academic calm of most white universities” (592). He changes his lesson to the “concrete social problem of which we all were parts” (524) and breaks down the walls of the classroom to relocate it in a global analysis of the violence that shapes the lives of his students.

Du Bois’s alternative pedagogy similarly bursts open the domestic boundaries of an industrial city in the heartland of the United States. He teaches a “concrete social problem” by narrating in epic language a saga of modern industrial violence. Drawing on an earlier article for The Crisis, “The East St. Louis Massacre,” he describes how whites went on a horrific citywide rampage, killing and lynching blacks who had migrated there from the South for jobs in the war-driven factories. The industries employed them at lower wages to break the strikes of white unions, which would not include them. In “Of Work and Wealth” Du Bois recasts the domestic racial strife as an international narrative and remaps East St. Louis as a juncture of far-reaching routes of global economic change. Both wartime Europe and postwar Africa converge in East St. Louis, “where mighty rivers meet,” and Du Bois goes on to
show how these rivers convey human migrations of capital, labor, and racial prejudice across the nation and across the globe. On the streets of East St. Louis he views scenes indistinguishable from the battlefields abroad: "yesterday I rode in this city past flame-swept walls and over gray ashes; in streets almost wet with blood and beside ruins, where the bones of dead men new-bleached peered out at me in sullen wonder" (532). The unblinking gaze of his students is matched by the mocking stare of the dead, which locates East St. Louis as a site in the "Wounded World," Du Bois's incomplete volume about black troops in the war. It is a short distance from fighting in East St. Louis to fighting in Europe: "we rush toward the Battle of Marne and the West, from this dread Battle of the East" (532).

Du Bois's account ties East St. Louis to Africa through many points of confluence; a shared racial identity takes shape through the parallel experience of violent dislocations and exploited labor in the economic and political cauldron of the anarchy of empire. The war in Europe, with its economic origins in Africa, halted immigration from Europe to U.S. factories, while it created the need for labor in a wartime economy. This international circuit spurred the black migration from the South for war work in northern factories. The race riots in East St. Louis cannot be seen only as a legacy of southern history and slavery, but as part of the world history of a global economic system. The violence of East St. Louis stemmed from the effort of white workers to maintain their international wages as part of the deadly birth of modern nations out of the exploitation of dark labor worldwide. When Du Bois retells the story here, he adds a scene of black men heroically fighting back, which did not appear in his earlier journalism. Though the race riot took place in 1917, he rescripts the story of East St. Louis from the vantage of the "return fighting" after the war. Here Du Bois can imagine a black militancy that he could not quite recognize on the part of Africans.

Just as Du Bois imagines the colonial devastation of Africa as an opportunity for future world peace, he projects a similar scenario emerging from the ruins of East St. Louis. After telling his students about this example of globalized racial violence, Du Bois concludes with the surprising lesson that "there are no races" but only global groupings relating to the international division of labor and capital. His students conclude with him that "disinherited darker peoples must either share in future industrial democracy or overturn the world" (534). To circumvent a future world war requires nothing less than the "reorganization of work and redistribution of wealth, not only in America, but in the world" (535). Du Bois and his students thus extend "world war" not only geographically via the color line to the colonies, but also economically to a redistribution of the wealth of the world.

In Darkwater, the battlefields of East St. Louis, Africa, and Europe lead inward to the home and the nation, as the violent upheaval of war leads to an analysis of everyday social issues of work, family, the franchise, and education. In exploring these traditional demarcations between home and factory, family and the ballot box, private and public, Du Bois breaks down these boundaries to map the domestic spaces of the home and the nation as crossroads of international movement and change. In the next chapter he reaches into the intimate recesses of the American home, where he finds an outdated form of domestic labor. "The Servant in the House" opens with the vignette of a white woman who asks Du Bois, after hearing his lecture on the franchise and politics, "Do you know where I can get a good colored cook?" (538). Du Bois counters this by looking into the inner workings of the bourgeois home through the eyes of a servant, in a way that echoes the "unusual vantage points" of the opening of "Souls of White Folk." Thereby he shatters the view of the middle-class home as a haven from the wider world. Instead, as in the earlier chapter, he looks into its entanglements to find white domesticity founded on a "manure theory of social organization" (543). The home is not separate from the marketplace, but it relies on the labor of black women and men excluded from organized labor and forced into the "mudhill" as the "unskilled offal of a millionaire industrial system" (541). This labor undermines the distinction between private and public spheres, for bourgeois life is dependent upon black servitude as much in the most cherished intimacy of child-rearing as in the modern anonymity of Pullman cars. If the discourse of domesticity holds that the home shapes young citizens for democracy, Du Bois turns it around to show that democracy is built on the foundations of exclusion, the relegation of blacks to the realm of servants and noncitizens.

This "manure theory of social organization" implodes the home and links it to the world outside. In the next chapter, "Of the Ruling of Men," Du Bois seems to leap from the private domestic sphere to the
public sphere of political governance to argue for extending the vote to women and blacks. But rather than simply include new members in a narrow definition of the political sphere, he extends this arena to the factories and beyond the border of the nation. Du Bois explains that a more inclusive franchise would not simply add new members to a pre-conceived social whole. Instead, each group would bring new knowledge from its own experience, needs and desires and “new points of view” that would radically reshape the social whole through “disarrangement and confusion to the older equilibrium” (556). Du Bois starts these far-reaching arguments literally close to home. Men, he argues, claim that women do not need the vote because their husbands and fathers can speak for them in the political sphere. He contests the notion that spatial and social proximity breeds knowledge; in fact it breeds distortion and silence, and only women can speak with knowledge of their own experience and interests. He extends this argument to Negroes of the South, who are similarly denied the vote on the grounds of proximate knowledge and paternalism. Proximity in the South does not lead to paternal benevolence: “instead of loving guardianship, we see anarchy and exploitation” (556). Du Bois rejects the domestic model of “benevolent guardianship for women, for the masses, for the Negroes,” and sees it as no different from the colonial rationale in Kipling’s claim that the white man must oversee “lesser breeds without the law” (553). Thus in arguing for an expanded franchise Du Bois does not stop at the borders of home, region, or nation, but covers the entire colonized world: “So, too, with the darker races of the world. No federation of the world, no true inter-nation—can exclude the black and brown and yellow races from its counsels” (556). Rather than see the home as a workable familial model for world governance, he links home, region, nation, and world through the disequilibrium of “new points of view.”

If far-flung spaces around the globe converge in Darkwater through the turbulence of empire and war, domestic spaces are wrenched apart by the intimate upheavals of gender and race. Du Bois notes that “none have more persistently [and] dogmatically insisted upon the inherent inferiority of women than the men with whom they come in closest contact... So, too. it is those people who live in closest contact with black folk who have most unhesitatingly asserted the utter impossibility of living beside Negroes who are not industrial or political

slaves or social pariahs. All this proves that none are so blind as those nearest the thing seen, while, on the other hand, the history of the world is the history of the discovery of the common humanity of human beings among steadily increasing circles of men” (557). "New points of view" from those excluded from the political sphere would counter the blindness supporting intimate systems of domination. Democracy and citizenship must spread beyond the perimeters of geographical proximity—home, town, region, nation. This echoes his opening autobiographical chapter, in which he confides that he was not recognized as a real “citizen of my birthtown” but had to travel far South to find “mine own people” and overseas to find “world fellowship.” If a sense of belonging cannot be found close to home, it must be reconceived from a global perspective that reaches out in time as well as space. In time, “How astounded the future world-citizen will be to know that as late as 1918 great and civilized nations were making desperate endeavor to confine the development of ability and individuality to one sex,—that is, to one-half of the nation; and he will probably learn that similar effort to confine humanity to one race lasted a hundred years longer” (560). This utopian notion of future world citizenship depends on turning domestic spaces of the home and the nation inside out, as inadequate sites of social belonging, and positing the new perspective of an imagined global community.

Black women, claims Du Bois, are at the nexus of these “widening circles of humanity” that he charts from home to nation to “inter-nation,” from women to Southern blacks to the colonized world. In “The Damnation of Women,” black women provide the linchpin for the double movement of democracy beyond the nation, further out into the world and deeper into the home. This chapter poses the question: “What is today the message of these black women to America and to the world? The uplift of women is, next to the problem of the color line and the peace movement, our greatest modern cause. When, now, two of these movements—woman and color—combine in one, the combination has deep meaning” (574). The meaning is fraught and contradictory throughout Darkwater, as it expresses the disequilibrium out of which new viewpoints emerge. Du Bois represents the labor of black women as the inequitable foundation of domesticity, at the same time that their race excludes them from the privileges and fetters of domesticity, from the ideology of true womanhood. This double ex-
clusion, according to Du Bois, gives the black woman a representa-
tional vantage—and advantage. Her labor challenges the boundaries
between home and workplace. The necessity of her working outside
the home gives her access to the modern economic system and facili-
tates a revolutionary stance.

"The Damnation of Women" echoes a poem in Darkwater that links
the history of black women under American slavery to the violent his-
tory of colonization in Africa. "The Riddle of the Sphinx," strategically
placed between the chapters "The Souls of White Folk" and "The
Hands of Ethiopia," was first titled "The Burden of Black Women." A
scathing critique of the "white man's burden," the poem exposes
Kipling's justification of colonial rule as a cover for the rape of black
women: "but the burden of white man bore her back / and the white
world stifled her sighs" (509). Black women play a role in Darkwater
similar to that of Africa. Just as Du Bois turns Africa, conventionally
marginal to world events, into the central point from which to re-
map world geography, he turns the oppression of black women into
the vantage from which to redefine the meaning of home and nation.
Both Africa and black women are represented as the avatars of mod-
ernity and future social change. Yet in both cases Du Bois also expresses
anxiety about their revolutionary agency and a need to control it
through his assertion of militant manhood and by giving voice to their
"stifled sighs." While he shows that black women are violently ex-
cluded from the empire of the mother in the American home, he re-
trieves an empire for them in Africa and Haiti, cultures that he be-
lieved worshipped the figure of the black mother, "based on old Af-
rican tribal ties and beneath it was the mother-idea" (567). He thereby
links black women to an ancient, premodern status where they, like
the continent of Africa, are in need of vigilant black American men to
protect, lead, and uplift them. In contrast, Du Bois also represents
women as soldiers "returning fighting" from the battlefield as they
lead the fight on multiple home fronts.

The Anarchy of Empire

The domestic and international violence that pervades Darkwater
erupts in the last chapter in a science fiction fable, "The Comet,"
which tells the story of the destruction of New York City by the impact
of a comet releasing deadly gases. "The Comet" follows the chapter
"Of Beauty and Death," which incorporates scenes of black soldiers
fighting in the war in Europe and ends with their return to New York
Harbor and Harlem. The light across the sky and the release of nox-
iuous gases conjure images of the battlefields of World War I. External-
ized as a cosmic or natural disaster, the explosion represents the inner
combustion of the social tensions and global conflicts that inform the
anarchy of empire. This apocalyptic violence works as a metaphor that
merges the carnage of European "civilization," the "Red Summer"
across the United States, the militancy of the black soldiers who "re-
turn fighting," and the threat of anticolonial revolts at home and
abroad. The comet brings the war home into the modern metropolis
and into the heart of the black and white families.

The story starts with the chance survival of a black man, Jim, who
works as a messenger at a bank; he escapes the destruction "in the
bowels of the earth, under the world," in the underground vaults of
the bank where he was sent to find missing documents (611). While
driving through the rubble up to Harlem in search of his family, he
finds a wealthy white woman, unnamed, who survived in the shelter of
her darkroom developing pictures of the comet. Assuming everyone
else in the world is dead, they are about to consummate their survival
in a semi-mystical union between "primal woman; mighty mother of
all" and "some mighty Pharaoh lived again" that promises the creation
of a new human race. Suddenly the woman's fiancé and father arrive
in a motor car. When she asks, "is the world gone?" they respond, "only
New York," and then clamor to Lynch the man for violating the white
woman he had rescued (621). As a crowd amasses, Jim's fantasy of him-
self as an ancient king is debunked by the reimposition of Jim Crow re-
ality, "well what do you think of that, of all New York, just a white girl
and a nigger." He then escapes to find his own wife alive, cradling the
corpse of their "dark baby" (622).

In his descent into the bowels of the earth, the black working man
from Harlem evokes the work of colonial laborers and links them to
the financial center of New York. In assuming the lineage of Ethiopian
kings, he represents the darker world as a harbinger of the future. As a
photographer, the white woman has access to culture, the tools of re-
presentation. The return of the father—the white banker—and the
threat of a lynch mob restore Jim Crow order after the war to recon-
struct New York City. In “The Comet” the Northern father and fiancé deploy a familiar Southern narrative that renders and punishes black agency as the rape of white women.

In his investigation of the treatment of black troops during the war, Du Bois documented the way the U.S. army exported this narrative to the battlefields of Europe, at the same time that it was screened as national history in Griffith’s popular The Birth of a Nation (1915). In his report for “The Wounded World,” published in The Crisis, Du Bois singled out one of the most insidious pieces of U.S. propaganda against African American troops. The army published classified circulars warning the French to avoid black soldiers, who were alleged to rape white women; one officer referred to them as “the rapist division.”

This official army policy recast a dominant national narrative as a weapon of international warfare to combat the struggle for black citizenship at home by exporting racism abroad. If black soldiers sought imperial citizenship by fighting foreign wars, the imperial nation opposed them by redrawing the lines of battle abroad. Du Bois explained that the army was responding to new possibilities for international affiliations encountered by black troops in Europe. He praised the warm gratitude of the French people toward black soldiers and the official recognition from their government. In France blacks found themselves standing not “shoulder to shoulder” with white Americans, as he encouraged in “Close Ranks,” but rather alongside French soldiers as well as black Africans fighting in French colonial regiments.

Du Bois deploys a familiar chivalric narrative when he applauds the black troops for rescuing France in their heroic fight against the German invasion at the Marne. The army propaganda attempts to transform black soldiers from agents of rescue to agents of rape. This is precisely what happens to the black man in “The Comet”; the white men immediately assume that he has violated the white woman, who corrects them: “He dared—all, to rescue me” (621). The woman, like the French people who reject this narrative on the basis of their own contact with black soldiers, remains powerless to change it for the national fathers. Like the Klan riding in Birth of a Nation, the white northern banker returns in a motorcar from the suburbs to “rescue” his daughter. Contesting Griffith’s dominant national narrative that renders equal contact between whites and blacks as the threat of rape, Du Bois reimagines the union between a black man and a white woman as the

aborted conception of a new interracial internation. In the parable of “The Comet,” Du Bois implicitly places the national mythology of the black rapist in an international context where the metaphor of rape has contested political uses. Throughout Darkwater he turns the accusation of rape against the accusers: he redirects the battle cry of the “rape of Belgium” to the “rape of Ethiopia” as the central metaphor for the colonization of Africa. He redefines Kipling’s “white man’s burden” as the rape of black women within the United States and across the colonies, and represents the lynched black body as “America’s Belgium.”

Du Bois connects the army’s designation of black soldiers in World War I to the history of black service in the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Spanish-American War. Writing about black troops in Houston in 1917, who violently rebelled against their brutal treatment by white officers, he reminds us that “the nation, also, forgot the deep resentment mixed with the pale ghost of fear which Negro soldiers call up in the breasts of the white South. It is not so much that they fear that the Negro will strike if he gets the chance, but rather that they assume with curious unanimity that he has reason to strike, that any other person in his circumstance or treated as he is would rebel” (602). Du Bois suggests that precisely because of the white South’s implicit acknowledgment of the right to rebel, lynching reconfigures the rational “reason to strike” as the irrational lust for white women.

“The Comet” concludes Darkwater with a question: what new social formations could arise from the destruction of the world? The reassertion of white supremacy through the threat of lynching raises dire questions about the future in the figure of a black child. Jim is joyfully reunited with his silent black wife, but they embrace across their baby’s corpse. Darkwater earlier expresses urgency about the future of black children in “The Immortal Child” (581–93). This elegy for Samuel Coleridge-Taylor celebrates his work and life as a Pan-African artist and links his art to the poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar. But it also mourns a potential lost future in which “there is no place for black children in this world” (585). The dead baby at the end of “The Comet” embodies this fear, as it hearkens back to Du Bois’s elegy for his son in Souls of Black Folk, a figure who represents both despair and hope for change. If the image of the dead baby at the end of “The Comet” looks back toward Souls, it also looks forward to the end of Du
Bois's novel *Dark Princess*. In it a boy is born to a Southeast Asian woman and an African American man, who returns from Chicago to his roots in Virginia to rejoin his mother and his wife and constitute a new family. In a geography based on the cartography of *Darkwater*, Du Bois maps this birthplace at "the edge of a black world. The black belt of the Congo, the Nile, and the Ganges reaches by way of Guinea, Haiti and Jamaica, like a red arrow up into the heart of white America." In *Dark Princess* the boy is born as a messenger to lead the colonized world, continuing the work of the black messenger of "The Comet."

*Darkwater* concludes with a final poem, "A Hymn to the Peoples," which prays for the "union of the World" to overcome the "Anarchy of Empire" (622). Why did Du Bois choose to end *Darkwater* by going back to a poem, based on Kipling's "Recessional," that he first wrote for the First Universal Races Congress of 1911? Du Bois never lost his enthusiasm for this conference and wrote in several autobiographies that this gathering of men and women of all races around the world "would have marked an epoch in the cultural history of the world, if it had not been followed so quickly by the World War." This statement has been ridiculed as an example of Du Bois's arrogance in inflating the importance of his own international endeavors. Yet what meaning does this form of self-quotiation take in 1920? *Darkwater* concludes with a gesture from the prewar past to project into the future an alternative untold story of what might have been and still might be. Du Bois devises an as yet uncharted map of the globe as a site of "world citizenship," for members of collectivities not bound solely by nation-states or colonies nor dislocated by the anarchy of empire.

*Darkwater* connects the problem of global reconstruction after the "awful cataclysm" of World War I to the unfulfilled legacy of Reconstruction in the aftermath of the Civil War. In the earlier period, wrote Du Bois, white opposition to the experiments of a new democratic rule based its objection on the color line, and Reconstruction became in history a great movement for the self-assertion of the white race against the impudent ambition of degraded blacks, instead of the rise of a mass of black and white laborers. The result was the disfranchisement of the blacks of the South and a world-wide attempt to restrict democratic development to white races and to distract them with race hatred against the darker races. This program, however, although it undoubtedly helped raise the scale of white labor, in greater proportion put wealth and power in the hands of the great European Captains of Industry and made modern industrial imperialism possible. (552)

Here Du Bois begins to reconstruct a chapter of national history by placing it in a broader transnational context of the worldwide expansion of empire. In this revision, he imagines counter-histories to the rise of Jim Crow, histories that gesture toward alternative futures of what might have been and might yet be, an epoch of global interracial democracy as opposed to the African roots of war.

Du Bois would take up this challenge to rewrite history in *Black Reconstruction*, which ends with "The Propaganda of History," a scathing critique of historians for writing and teaching history as a means of "inflating our national ego." Misrepresenting Reconstruction as a massive mistake, they based their historiography on the racist belief in black inferiority and refusal to credit black people as active agents in a revolutionary movement for freedom and social change. In Du Bois's view, this distortion of national history also had international repercussions, as his conclusion shifts abruptly from quoting a historian's approval of the triumph of white supremacy in reuniting the nation to the following vision: "Immediately in Africa, a black back runs red with the blood of the lash; in India, a brown girl is raped; in China, a coolie starves; in Alabama, seven darkies are more than lynched; while in London, the white limbs of a prostitute are hung with jewels and silk." This depiction of simultaneity across geographic boundaries is the aesthetic analogue of the anarchy of empire, which cannot be represented in the linear narratives of national history. Du Bois claims here that these narratives perpetuate the intimate domination of empire inflicted on colonized bodies across the globe, and he calls for alternative histories and pedagogies that change the forms of representation as well as their content. His challenge remains with us today to develop the kinds of transnational historiographies and cartographies that can interlink what have traditionally appeared as disparate spaces and histories at the turn of the twentieth century: Black Reconstruction, the colonization of Africa and Asia, and U.S. imperialism in Latin America and the Pacific. Du Bois also challenges us to create new critical vocabularies that can represent current rearticulations of global
power and the emergence of dispersed collectivities that go beyond the limits of the anarchy of empire.

I have been arguing that the anarchy of empire in its convulsive reach across the globe both erects and destabilizes the geopolitical boundaries of nation-states and colonies and the conceptual borders between the domestic and the foreign. Thus to analyze the culture of U.S. imperialism it is necessary to cross these same borders and challenge the interpretive framework of national paradigms, which use history for “inflating our national ego.” Du Bois demonstrates ways of deflating that ego by turning to “unusual points of vantage” from which to map the anarchy of empire, just as Orson Welles turned the camera on Citizen Kane from below to make the viewer simultaneously feel the force of his power and perceive its undoing. In these chapters I have tried to convey this double perspective: to analyze the creative force of empire in the making of a national culture, and to trace the anarchic workings of empire in unraveling the coherence of this culture and opening it to the outside. We have seen how cultural representations of the anarchy of empire can shore up national borders against perceived external threats, or can decenter the nation with the recognition still vital today, “that the United States was living not to itself, but as part of the strain and stress of the world.”
46. On the famous case of black desertion by David Fagen, see Gatewood, *Black Americans*, pp. 288–89; and Stephen Bonsal, "The Negro Soldier in War and Peace," *North American Review* 186 (June 1907): 321–27. Bonsal laments the fact that black soldiers got along well with their "little brown brothers" and learned their native languages. He notes that white soldiers deserted the army out of laziness, whereas black soldiers deserted out of principle, to join the insurgents in sympathy with their struggle against white racist colonial policies.

5. Birth of an Empire

4. This paragraph summarizes my viewing of the collection of Spanish-American War films in the Paper Print Collection of the Library of Congress. Some of these films can now be viewed on the Library of Congress American Memory website.
8. Early motion pictures did not emerge in a vacuum but often borrowed from other media, such as the magic lantern show, theater, political cartoons. The Spanish-American War films share many features with 3-D stereoscopic cards, a medium in which the war was a very popular subject. See William C. Darrah, *The World of Stereographs* (Nashville, Tenn.: Land Yacht Press, 1977), and Jim Zwick, *Stereoscopic Visions of War and Empire*, http://www.boondocks.com.
19. Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures*, p. 418. See also the description of Tenth U.S. Infantry, 2nd Battalion, Leaving Car, where "real soldiers" marching with their equipment are contrasted with a "comical looking nigger dude" watching them (p. 423).
23. Quoted in Castonguay, the section on Film Studies. See n5 above.
27. Kemp R. Niver, ed., *Biograph Bulletins, 1896-1908* (Los Angeles: Locare Research Group, 1971), p. 90, my italics. Three fictional films were made together under the title *The American Soldier in Love and War*, which I will refer to as scenes 1, 2, 3. The *Bulletin* recommended that the exhibitors intersperse them with two “actualities” made previously, one of real soldiers embarking for war and the other of a staged battle scene.
29. *Love and War*, Edison Company, 1899, Paper Print Collection, Library of Congress. Similar to these films is a parallel six-card set of stereoscopic cards, which all take place in the same parlor from which the soldier departs, where his love faints, and to which he returns. The same cards were marketed as the Battle of Manila or of Santiago, with only a slight change of captions. See the cards and commentary on Zwick, [http://www.boondocksnet.com/stereo/victorious3.html](http://www.boondocksnet.com/stereo/victorious3.html).
34. Quoted in Castonguay, the section on The Female Spectator. See n5.
35. Ibid.
39. Thomas Dixon, *The Leopard’s Spots: A Romance of the White Man’s Burden, 1865-1900* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1902), p. 368. *The Birth of a Nation* is most often seen as a film version of Dixon’s *The Clansman* (the film’s name at first and the name of a play version as well), but the second half of the film, which focuses on Reconstruction, draws more from *The Leopard’s Spots*.
44. Micheaux’s differentiation of African Americans from immigrants may also have been a way to claim a place in the world of film, a world identified with immigrants as both producers and consumers. Scholars have shown how the medium of film worked to Americanize immigrants, in part, as Michael Rogin has claimed, by teaching them antiblack racism and thus whitening them as well.
45. I thank Elizabeth Young for calling this scene to my attention and for first suggesting that I write about *Citizen Kane* in the context of empire.
48. Mulvey, Citizen Kane, p. 56.
49. Denning, The Cultural Front, p. 375.
50. Ibid., pp. 388–92.
52. Quoted in Denning, The Cultural Front, p. 394.
53. On Bazin, see Mulvey, Citizen Kane, p. 20; Denning, The Cultural Front, p. 392.

6. The Imperial Cartography of W. E. B. Du Bois


19. Although Du Bois reports in Dusk of Dawn that he has "difficulty in thinking clearly" about his decision over twenty years earlier, he does explain: "I felt that for a moment during the war that I could be without reservation a patriotic American" (252–53). He then reprints parts of "Close Ranks" as well as an editorial responding to his critics only to conclude, "I am less sure now than then of the soundness of this war attitude" (255).


26. The only full-length studies of Darkwater I have found are by Aptheker, Sundquist, Arnold Rampersad, The Art and Imagination of W. E. B. Du Bois (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 170–83, and John Carlos Rowe, Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 197–215. My reading differs from both Rampersad and Sundquist, who emphasize the more spiritual and philosophical aspects of the figure of the Black Christ in Du Bois's Pan-Africanism; they both gloss over the centrality of World War I and his representation of empire that goes beyond the dichotomy between racism at home and colonialism abroad to explore the international dimensions of American race relations. My reading also differs from Rowe, who extracts from Du Bois's writing his changing political views of imperialism; I explore how the framework of empire shapes his textual as well as his political practices.

27. Sundquist suggests that the form and philosophy of Darkwater were influenced by J. E. Casely Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound (1911) in To Wake, pp. 610–12. Casely Hayford, a West African journalist and educator, attacked Du Bois's notion of double-consciousness as a limited and debilitating parochial American paradigm that ran contrary to a Pan-African vision. In drawing on the multigenre form of his book, Du Bois may have also been responding to this critique; J. E. Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation (London: Frank Cass, 1969), pp. 179–82. On the national paradigm that informs Souls, see Hazel Carby, Race Men (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), ch. 1.


33. Much of this debate has responded to Anthony Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race," in Henry Louis

35. David Roediger, _The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class_ (London: Verso, 1991). I am not arguing that Du Bois originated his idea of the wages of whiteness in _Darkwater_ rather than in _Black Reconstruction_, which itself took root in an essay of his in 1916; rather, I believe that there are important international dimensions to this concept used by Roediger and others to analyze the relations between class and race within the United States.


37. Ibid., p. 99.


39. See, for example, Geiss, _The Pan-African Movement_, and Robinson, _Black Marxism_.

40. Sundquist, _To Wake the Nations_, pp. 555–81.

41. See Moses, _The Golden Age_, and Robinson, who focuses on Du Bois’s complicity with American policy in Liberia in “Du Bois and Black Sovereignty.”


44. Du Bois found it difficult to attribute political agency to Africans throughout his work of the 1920s. The novel _Dark Princess_ (1928), for example, which is based on the geography of _Darkwater_, imagines an international anticolonial organization composed of representatives from Asia, Egypt, India, and the Caribbean. Yet there are no black Africans in it, and the council enlists the black American hero for leading the African struggle. In examining Du Bois’s relation to Liberia from 1923 through the 1930s, Robinson has excoriated his blindness to the Liberian imperial posture, supported by the United States, toward its own people. I suggest that this issue be reconsidered not only in relation to Du Bois’s class status and elitism, but also to the components of his internationalism that were consonant with American internationalism and imperialism.


48. There is more evidence of Du Bois’s ambivalence toward the political agency of black women in “The Damnation of Women”: while he pays homage to women of the past whom he names, such as Phillis Wheatley, Mary Still, Harriet Tubman, Mary Shad, and Sojourner Truth, when he quotes at length a contemporary leader, Anna Julia Cooper, he does not name her. It is not clear to me whether he assumed that her statement “when and where I enter” was so well known as to require no name, or whether he subsumed as his own both her words and her claim to represent the race as a woman, “then and there the whole Negro race enters with me” (568–70). Du Bois’s complex representation of black women and his treatment of gender unfortunately goes beyond the scope of this chapter. See Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, “The Margin as the Center of a Theory of History: African-American Women, Social Change, and the Sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois,” in Bell et al., eds., _W. E. B. Du Bois on Race_, pp. 111–39; Joy James, “The Provocative Politics of W. E. B. Du Bois, with Respect to Anna Julia Cooper and Ida B. Wells-Barnett,” in ibid., pp. 141–60.


51. When the woman first realizes that she is alone with a black man, she too expresses a terror of rape that is followed by her realization of Jim’s humanity and their common plight. It is interesting that she experiences this fear when she looks at the mouthpiece of a telephone that gets no response from the outside world: “it was wide, black, pimpled with usage, inert, dead, almost sarcastic in its unfeeling curves” (616). This phallic rendering suggests the importance of technologies of communication in producing racial stereotypes that have the power to shape social relations.


55. Lewis, _Biography_, p. 441.


57. Ibid., p. 728.