

SCHOLARSHIP ABOVE THE VEIL

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The thinker must think for truth, not for fame

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903

W. E. B. Du Bois is a figure of legendary stature, with accomplishments that run from the purely academic to the profoundly political. In the *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, we at once memorialize and aim to continuously re-energize one core strand of the great man's life work: namely, Du Bois's legacy as a producer and catalyst for critical scholarship on the global problem of race. As had no other social scientist of his generation when he began, nor any other over his long life course, Du Bois gazed with the most penetrating intensity into what may figuratively be called "the soul" of the problem of race and he saw just how central a role race would play in the future of human affairs far into an unwritten future.

The *Du Bois Review* (henceforth *DBR*) aims to fill what is now a large and increasingly obvious intellectual lacunae: scholars across the social sciences are vigorously examining race but have no common vehicle or site for mutual exchange, colloquy, and cross-fertilization of ideas. From anthropology, economics, history, political science, psychology, and sociology to communications, education, law, public policy, and urban planning, scholars with a serious empirical ethos and distinctive disciplinary approaches and questions are interrogating the social meaning and dynamics of race. We believe that it is imperative to establish a forum where cutting edge work across these many fields and their unique analytical approaches can be brought together. *DBR* will be that forum.

DBR will be an outlet for research and perspectives too often silenced or marginalized in the past. To be sure, the social sciences now embody some major changes from Du Bois's era. But also, we believe, some telling continuities with the past linger still. With regard to positive change, today there are more scholars of African American, Asian American, Native American, and Latino/a heritage than ever before in the academy. Many of these individuals, in fact, now occupy influential statuses

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and positions in what were once exclusively White intellectual enclaves of the most prestigious reaches of the academy. The very existence of this journal and the many distinguished scholars on our international advisory board speak to the profound reach of this change. Yet, and reflective of a continuity with Du Bois's time, minority scholars remain sorely under-represented at leading research institutions and still too often find that the critical analyses and ideas animating their work cannot find receptive audiences at many traditional disciplinary publication outlets. Most sadly, the turmoil of racial conflict, disadvantage, and oppression continue to wreak havoc in our and many other societies.

Our intellectual beginning points, commitments, and presumptions in launching this new journal importantly mirror those of Du Bois. One of the primary goals of *DBR* is to provide a forum that showcases the very best empirical scholarship and thinking on the African American experience while providing for vigorous intellectual exchange. But our interests are by no means exhausted by a concern with the Black experience in the U.S. Because even to understand this experience, as Du Bois insisted again and again, requires engagement with a host of intersecting concerns. Thus, we are just as committed to work taking up issues involving the entire African Diasporic milieu.

Furthermore, our understanding of race and the social dynamics embraced and influenced by it is broad. We fully expect to publish work that addresses issues of ethnicity, immigration, assimilation, and nationalism in whatever context and circumstance these concepts and categories are of utility to serious empirical social researchers. The last twenty years of history in the United States and large areas of the world highlight the need to examine racial conflicts and questions which involve many other racial groups and ethnicities. In the United States the racial terrain has become considerably more complex and necessitates moving beyond a solely Black-White paradigm. We shall strive to make the *DBR* reflect the complexity of the racial terrain found in the world today. As a result, we expect to publish work dealing with topics as varied as the struggles of Mexican American day-laborers in Southern California, the increasing "racialization" of Arab-Americans in the wake of September 11th, the rights of Native Americans and other indigenous peoples around the world, the politics of affirmative action in Brazil, and reactions to new immigration flows in Western Europe. What is more, if the scholarship of the past two to three decades has taught one thing, it is that race cannot be properly understood if de-coupled from an understanding of class and economic dynamics, gender and sexuality issues, or age and generational status.

Each issue of *DBR* opens with remarks from the editors and is then organized in three substantive sections. The brief statement from the editors, aside from setting the context for any given issue of *DBR*, may take up an array of issues in the academy and society at large that impinge upon race and ethno-racial dynamics.

The second section, which we call "State of the Discipline," is where broad gauge essays and provocative think-pieces will appear. Many disciplines now have journals dedicated to these types of essays, such as the *American Psychologist* (from psychology), the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (from economics), *Contexts* (from sociology), and *Perspectives on Politics* (from political science) that to a degree are models of the types of essays we seek to publish here. Because part of our mission is to facilitate interdisciplinary communication and cross-fertilization these "state of the discipline" pieces will sometimes take the form of strong, accessible treatments of major, well established research agendas or paradigms in particular sub-fields.

We have two exceptionally strong entries in this inaugural issue. Distinguished sociologist and demographer Douglas S. Massey provides a tightly argued specifica-

tion of how racial discrimination in the housing market results in exposure to greater levels of neighborhood disorder and violence. This exposure to disorder and violence, he argues, exacerbates “allostatic load”—the bodily, physiological responses to stress—experienced by African Americans, thereby triggering a series of health and other performance and behavioral problems. This provocative essay, like the piece by noted political scientist and feminist scholar Cathy Cohen, sets the tone for grounded empirical social science that moves to bold reformulations of ideas that we expect for “state of the discipline” articles.

The second section, which we call “State of the Art,” is where new empirical research appears. On the one hand, work in this section should be appropriate for submission to the *American Economic Review*, the *American Political Science Review*, or the *American Sociological Review*, or similar journals. On the other hand, we fully expect to publish articles that many disciplinary-based journals will not, either because of the marginalization of racial research within their fields or due to the multi-disciplinary nature of the research. We should stress that work spanning a number of systematic research methodologies and topical concerns are welcome. Ethnography, participant observation, in-depth interviews, comparative historical work, content and media analyses, as well as systematic laboratory experiments, social survey analyses, and census type analyses are all welcomed. In this inaugural issue of *DBR* we publish four state of the art pieces that strongly underscore a number of the goals we have for the journal. All of the pieces, of course, report original empirical research. Dawson and Popoff explore the politics of reparations using newly designed and collected national sample survey data. Mark Sawyer and his colleagues exemplify the diasporic reach of *DBR* in carrying tests of basic social psychological identity processes using samples from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. Kimberly Torres and Camille Charles provide a richly textured and detailed qualitative examination of how negative racial stereotypes affect life on elite college campuses. And Bobo and Johnson use a series of innovative survey-based experiments to test the limits of punitive thinking and the apparently insatiable “taste for punishment” that characterizes public opinion about criminal justice policy in the U.S.

The third regular section, which we call “State of the Discourse,” is where expansive book reviews, special feature essays, and occasional debates will appear. Again, this inaugural issue highlights key intellectual commitments of this journal. The essays themselves are more detailed, rigorous, and fulsome than the typical scholarly journal book review. The subject matter ranges from interactions between Asian Americans, Jews, and Blacks in major cities (Fox), to global perspectives on the dynamics of race and racism (Bonilla-Silva), to assessment of traditional normal science quantitative research on Black-White relations (Sanders and Hutchings). Future issues will set an even broader topical agenda and aim to stimulate at least as much controversy as does this first strong set of essays. Future issues will include critical examinations of the work of John McWhorter, Abigail and Stephen Thernstrom, and Dinesh D’Souza.

This journal will carry forward three abiding commitments typified by W. E. B. Du Bois. First, *DBR* is fundamentally committed to the publication of new empirical research and innovative theory development that involves direct colloquy with the best empirical research. We share Du Bois’s early conviction that theory detached from systematic and careful research results in “vast generalizations . . . but actual scientific accomplishment lags (Du Bois 1940 [1995], p. 51).”

Second, if there is a value-presumption that the editors of *DBR* should declare at the outset it is that we accept and presume the full humanity of all those who have been trapped in various parts of the world on the wrong side of the color line (or

caste, class, or gender system of inequality). Such a presumption does not dictate any particular conclusion or approach or rule out any field or line of research, but it does immediately problematize and challenge a longstanding bias in the social sciences toward “othering” and “pathologizing” the conditions and attributes of those struggling against systems of inequality and oppression. In this, we echo the position Du Bois declared in the preface to his magisterial work *Black Reconstruction in America*: “I am going to tell this story as though Negroes were ordinary human beings, realizing that this attitude will from the first seriously curtail my audience” (Du Bois 1935, p. xix).

In this regard, *DBR* will not shy away from either controversy or from strong work which presents a normative perspective. Du Bois insisted that his scholarship be both of the highest quality and serve the needs of the disadvantaged of society (Du Bois 1898, 1899). While insisting on the highest intellectual standards, we will also embrace work that in addition seeks to address the burning political, social, and cultural debates on race that roil the nation and indeed the world.

Third, *DBR* insists upon high and rigorous standards of review for scholarship, as rigorous as those applied in any other major social science outlet. Du Bois reminds us that great scholarly accomplishments, minds, and ideas rise above the many impositions of “the veil” of race. As he wrote in *The Souls of Black Folk*:

I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls. From out the caves of evening that swing between the strong-limbed earth and the tracery of the stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they all come graciously with no scorn nor condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the Veil (Du Bois 1903, p. 102).

DBR and the community of social science scholars it serves and represents will develop new knowledge, re-shape ideas, and influence society not by succumbing to one partial set of experiences or perspectives, or by lowering the bar for judging scholarship. Our distinctive contribution to advancing knowledge and improving society will stem from always bringing the best that social science has to offer to fashioning a deeper understanding of when, how, where, and why race matters.

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