Susan Gillman and Alys Eve Weinbaum, eds. *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W.E.B. Du Bois*. University of Minnesota Press, 2007

By Beauty Bragg, Georgia College and State University, USA

1 Editors Susan Gillman and Alys Eve Weinbaum have assembled a collection of remarkable essays which enact a "politics of juxtaposition" defined as "a reading practice that deals with the unspoken, disrupted, or unfinished synergies that emerge among and between parts as often as with manifest content and stated import of the text" (8). This is a concept which they derive from Du Bois's own positioning of the question of gender "next to the color line." They argue that, in framing the two questions as adjacent, Du Bois at once connects them and insists on their discreteness. From this fluid image the authors derive a critical methodology that also informs their organization of the essays. The essays presented herein are clustered by categories of analysis that foster complex perspectives on the man and his work.

2 The first three chapters, Vilashini Cooppan's "Move on Down the Line: Domestic Science, Transnational Politics, and Gendered Allegory in Du Bois," Joy James's "Profeminism and Gender Elites: W.E.B. Du Bois, Anna Julia Cooper and Ida B. Wells-Barnett" and Alys Eve Weinbaum's "Interracial Romance and Black Internationalism," are unified by their use of Du Bois's fiction as a touchstone for examining his political vision. Paying particular attention to the allegorical representations of women in The Souls of Black Folk, Dark Princess and Darkwater, Cooppan argues that Du Bois's interstitial notions of race, nation, theory and politics are all enabled by his fixed notions of gender which provide the ground against which the limitations of any fixed notion of these categories are exposed. That is, the women who people his texts are "persons whose conditions of existence constitute a critique of those systems" which formulate the definitions of racial and national belonging he seeks to explode (53).

3 Taking a rather harder line than Cooppan, James's reprinted essay is concerned with reading his fictionalized depictions of black women against contemporaneous figures like Anna Julia Cooper and Ida B. Wells who do not appear in his works either as actual figures or even as the bases for depictions that move beyond "the icon of black female martyr or noble sufferer" (75). The absence of any direct mention of these or several other politically active women represents a contradictory feminist practice. Ultimately, according to James, these erasures have the effect of normalizing the African-American male as the architects of black liberation, and "diminish[es] his gender progressivism" (70).

4 Finally, Weinbaum's chapter undertakes to reveal a "heretofore unacknowledged rhetorical detail" of Du Bois's work — the degree to which racial propaganda is predicated on interracial romance in his work. Through extended examinations of Darkwater and Dark Princess, Weinbaum demonstrates how Du Bois uses the form and the theme of romance "as a form of propaganda that conjures a black internationalist response to both U.S. racism and Euro-American Imperialism" and how this strategy inadvertently reproduces a kind of racial essentialism and heteronormativity at both national and international levels (101). The value of Du Bois's use of the trope of romance, despite the limitations she identifies, is that his fictional representations allow him to represent the relationship between democracy and the social choices (including interracial marriage) available to citizens, which his non-fiction writing could only hint at.

5 While the next three chapters also engage Du Bois's fiction to a large extent, they are keyed to Du Bois's understanding of history. In "Late Romance" Brent Hayes Edwards traces "The World of Color" from its initial essay form to the novel form that constitutes the last installment of the Black Flame trilogy. He argues that a certain formal dialecticism — expressed in Du Bois' habit of "afterthought" — structures individual works and may be identified in his complete body of works. This dialecticism, according to Hayes, leads Du Bois to privilege the form of the romance in his later works because its "categorical instability" offers a mode of communication well suited to the task of "track[ing] the many-sided connection between capitalism and the modalities of race" (134).

6 Claudia Tate's revised version of "Race and Desire: Dark Princess: A Romance" also charts the relation of form to the expression of Du Bois political vision. She identifies Du Bois's tendency to elide eroticism and racial uplift as a result of his particular "fantasmatic" structure in which the "emotional effect of laboring for racial uplift" is experienced "like the pleasure of libidinal satisfaction" (155). Tate's reading demonstrates how an understanding of his psychological processes helps to relocate the political vision that some critics have deemed lacking in his fiction. Taking *Dark Princess* as example, she argues that the form of the romance, with its emphasis on notions of the providential and (re)unification, provide a mechanism for articulating his belief in historical progress.

7 Offering re-readings of key moments and images in *Dark Princess*, Michele Elam and Paul C. Taylor's essay, "Du Bois's Erotics" counters Tate's conclusion that the novel fails to maintain the discursive link between the social and the erotic by asserting that the erotic is political. They arrive at their reading and broader conclusions by situating Du Bois's work in the context of the predominant literary and philosophical theories of his day. Citing the

ascendance of notions of Transcendentalist self-evolution, and Pragmatic 'growth' as factors influencing his political vision (more because of their currency than because of a direct engagement of them by Du Bois), they suggest that Du Bois's contemporaries would have recognized his representations of the erotic as politicized.

8 A concern with illuminating various discursive constructions of Du Bois unifies the next three chapters. Hazel Carby's essay, "The Souls of Black Men" (also reprinted) examines Du Bois' self-construction as a model of progressive black masculinity and his position as the model for black intellectual ascent and its consequences for contemporary intellectual activity. Focusing primarily on *The Souls of Black Folk*, Carby argues that the structure of the text — an initial section grounded in feminized symbols of inoperative approaches to racial advancement, a middle section that moves into the economic world of black men, and finally the last section in which a proscriptive notion of black masculinity (based largely on Du Bois) emerges as the blueprint for black social and political advancement — establishes a very specific gendering of black progressivism. That his work functions as a model for subsequent black intellectual enterprise is linked, for Carby, to the continued marginalization of certain modes of black intellectual activity, such as feminist and queer approaches.

9 Roderick Ferguson's essay, "W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Discourse" extends Carby's vision. Ferguson grounds his analyses of the discursive operation of Du Bois in examinations of 1920's era Fisk University student protests (against curfews, sex segregation, and prohibitions against popular dance forms) and *Dark Princess*. He argues that in each case the attempted critical resistances are folded back into the itineraries of power because they ultimately position normative heterosexuality as the mechanism for expressing a radical political vision.

10 In Mason Stokes, "Father of the Bride" the discourse of heterosexual masculinity symbolized by the New Negro and Du Bois as embodiment of that ideology are brought together to mark a specific historical moment of transition from homosexuality as behavior to homosexuality as identity. Mining historical accounts of the marriage of Du Bois's daughter Yolande and Countee Cullen as well as correspondence between the three which documents the disintegration of the marriage, Stokes situates their various narratives of the marriages failure in the context of larger social and psychoanalytic shifts in the perception of heterosexuality.

11 The last three chapters of the collection centralize material culture in their analyses. The first, Fred Moten's "Uplift and Criminality," argues that Du Bois's formulation of rural black criminal pathology in the *Philadelphia Negro* and *The Souls of Black Folk* fails to

recognize the potential for criminality (defined as rebellion) as an alternative to uplift as the primary means of black re-socialization. Moten characterizes this politicized notion of criminality as "fugitivity," a term which is, in turn, associated with the songs of black women which are seen to represent a history of black resistance.

12 Shawn Michelle Smith's "Second-Sight: Du Bois and the Black Masculine Gaze" offers a gender analysis of the photographic material that comprised portions of the 1900 Paris Exposition's American Negro Exhibit. Presenting the photographs, which are dominated by portraits of "Negroes" who appear white and middle-class families, Smith illuminates the specific and strategic construction of gender ideals as central to the project of presenting visual challenges to the notion of racial differentiation.

13 The final chapter of the collection, Gillman's "Pageantry, Maternity, and World History," reinserts "gender as an analytic" in the historiography of pageantry, suggesting that *Darkwater* manages to achieve what the pageant did not — to give voice to individual women in a way that spoke for both black and female collectives — by quoting (though not attributing) the (auto)biographies of actual women (380). While James' essay reads Du Bois's failure to cite sources as acts of erasure, Gillman makes her own argument convincing by putting his use of women's voices in the context of early twentieth century pageantry's hostility to women as subjects of history.

14 These contributions are a valuable demonstration of Du Bois's twenty — first century relevance. Identifying the limitations of Du Bois's vision of international coalition among people of color or of black middle class leadership, for instance, provide crucial starting points for assessing deepening (inter)national class stratifications in the contemporary political landscape.