



William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (February 23, 1868 - August 27, 1963). W. E. B. Du Bois, Niagara delegate meeting, Boston, 1907. W. E. B.

Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

□ W. E. B. Du Bois, a new voice in Egyptology's disciplinary history*

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The nature of history is deceptive. Although history announces that it is merely looking backwards to the past, its capacity to uplift or degrade derives from its inevitable reflection of the present. History can be written either « liberation [or] enslavement. »¹ Those who are powerful in the present see themselves as heirs to the great cultures of antiquity, owners of those legacies. Those who are hopeless, adrift, or oppressed in the present use that same legacy to inspire a conception of the self at odds with hopelessness and oppression. A particular history reflects the interests and focuses of the author-historian, as well as that author's conscious and unconscious views, perspectives, and opinions. John Henrik Clarke perceived that « *Europeans and white people in general* » use history as a tool of control.² More recently, Maghan Keita wrote about control of a historical narrative in terms of academic gatekeeping, or as he put it, « *who has the right, who is privileged, to participate in the construction of both history and knowledge.* »³ By manipulating history — deciding what stories are told and what stories are not told — the historian influences people's perceptions of themselves and one another. The way to neutralize the bias of the author-historian is to bring multiple perspectives into a history, to make a central part of the narrative voices that have traditionally been marginalized, trivialized, and pushed to the periphery, to make that history more inclusive.

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (February 23, 1868 - August 27, 1963) knew the power of history and its potential to bias. He wrote more inclusive histories to uplift people. Du Bois was a great American humanist, or « *radical humanist* » as Reiland Rabaka referred to him, someone who worked to achieve « *racial, gender, economic, and social justice* » for all people.⁴ Du Bois saw the terrible social and economic conditions that

¹ Toure, Ahati N. N., *John Henrik Clarke and the Power of Africana History: Africological Quest for Decolonization and Sovereignty*. Africa World Press, 2009, p. 136.

² Toure, Ahati N. N., *John Henrik Clarke and the Power of Africana History: Africological Quest for Decolonization and Sovereignty*. Africa World Press, 2009, p. 136.

³ Keita, Maghan, «The Politics of Criticism: *Not Out of Africa* and «*Black Athena*» Revisited.» *Journal of World History* 11(2000):337–345, p. 337. Keita also pointed out that much of what Martin Bernal wrote in his famous *Black Athena* (1987), Du Bois had argued decades before. « *The pity is that Bernal could not do Du Bois, his predecessor, and his predecessor's peers more justice than three pages in a multivolume work;* » Keita, Maghan, *Race and the Writing of History: Riddling the Sphinx*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 76.

⁴ Rabaka, Reiland, *Against Epistemic Apartheid: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Disciplinary Decadence of Sociology*. Lanham, NY: Lexington Books, 2010, p. 109, 123, 135, 173, n. 13; Rabaka, Reiland, *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-first Century: An Essay on Africana Critical Theory*. Lanham, NY: Lexington Books, 2007, p. 37, 93.

people of African descent in the United States endured in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He turned to the history of Africa to show Americans that African heritage was much more than the slavery and oppression that people of African descent in America faced. Du Bois's work on African history was psychologically empowering and also intellectually subversive. Not only was African history not widely known in America at that time, but some authors even asserted that Africa had no history. The wiping away of the history of an entire continent's people was not simple ignorance but was calculated to contribute to the dehumanization of people of color.

Du Bois sought to restore humanity to people of African descent by educating Americans about the history of Africa and the present conditions that people of African descent lived in America with the aim of changing the future. People of African descent would forge new futures for themselves aided by an understanding of their past and the psychological uplift that was communicated through it. He tied awareness of the past with a sense of self-worth in the present. Americans' lack of knowledge of African history was, he thought, the reason for the lack of « *hope in the past for present aspiration, or any apparent justification in demanding equal rights and opportunity for Negroes as average human beings.* »⁵

In his analysis of the construction of ancient Egyptian history, Du Bois, as Cheikh Anta Diop, Theophile Obenga, St. Clair Drake, and many others would later do, recognized the particular biases held by many Egyptologists of the early and mid-twentieth century, and he engaged with their work.⁶ St. Clair Drake noted that its « *interpretation is always carried out from some socially conditioned perspective. The basic data have been gathered by professional Egyptologists, and their ethnic and racial biases are often evident in the presentation and analysis of results.* »⁷ The same charge levied against the writing of ancient history can be applied to the writing of the disciplinary history of Egyptology. The history of Egyptology, as it is currently written, completely ignores the voices of people of African descent. To put it in Du Boisian terms, Egyptology has a color line problem.

The problem of the color line, which Du Bois stated is the problem of the twentieth century, affects both people of African and non-African descent who are disadvantaged by missing out on opportunities for collaboration, cooperation, and friendship.⁸ The detriment to all parties is evident in human interactions and in writing human histories. A history that claims to be broad cannot adhere to the color line, which would necessitate the exclusion of whole swaths of the population. Such a history would clearly be one-sided because it would be forced to omit or neglect the perspectives and insights of those marginalized groups.

In 1996, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art published a companion volume for a museum exhibit by the same name: *The American Discovery of Ancient Egypt*.⁹ American engagement with ancient Egypt, as in so many parts of the world, has been incredibly rich. Such a book might be expected to cover a wide range of topics, from mural art in Oakland, California, that uses Egyptianizing elements, to a sculpture made from 800 pounds of butter

⁵ Du Bois, W. E. B., *Black Folk, Then and Now*. The Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois, vol. 7, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1939] 2016, p. xxxii.

⁶ Du Bois provides a long list of Egyptologists whose work he engaged with, such as, Gaston Maspero, James Henry Breasted, David Randall-Maclver, E. A. Wallis Budge, George Reisner, and F. L. Griffith; Du Bois, W. E. B., *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part Which Africa Has Played In World History*. The Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1947] 2007, p. xxxiii.

⁷ Drake, St. Clair, *Black Folk Here and There: An Essay in History and Anthropology*, vol. 1. Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, 1987, 1990, p. 143.

⁸ *The Souls of Black Folk*, p. 13, 184.

⁹ Thomas, Nancy, ed., *The American Discovery of Ancient Egypt: Essays*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1996.

depicting Tutankhamun's coffin and Anubis, which was displayed at the State Fair of Texas, to advertisements that draw on elements of pharaonic imagery, such as Palmolive soap did in the early 1920s, to countless movies, television shows, music videos, and books that treat the ancient culture in various contexts, such as *Numidian Force*, an Afrofuturistic comic book, to jewelry and t-shirts that announce interest in and connections with the ancient culture, to any number of Egyptianizing architectural elements found in buildings all across America. All of those items and many, many more could be contained in a book entitled *The American Discovery of Ancient Egypt*. The table of contents of that volume, however, lists data about ancient Egypt in the way that it is typically organized the Western academic world. Ten chapters treat chronological periods from prehistoric Egypt and the Old Kingdom to Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, with two chapters about Nubia tacked on at the end. There is a whole world of American Discoveries of Ancient Egypt that are not represented in that chapter list. The book's facts are not erroneous. But its title works from an unspoken assumption that the dynamic relationship between those living in America and the Egyptian past can be accounted for solely by the traditional, largely white Euro-American discipline of Egyptology. It cannot.

A three-volume series declares itself « *A History of Egyptology* » and is advertised as « *the story of the people, famous and obscure, who constructed the picture of ancient Egypt that we have today.* »¹⁰ But the book series largely limits its treatment of Westerners to white people. Outside of the few Egyptian Egyptologists who are named, there is no mention of scholars of African descent engaging with the emerging discipline of Egyptology. As presented in that set of histories, no people of African descent in the Western hemisphere are actors who contributed to the establishment of the academic discipline of Egyptology.

Du Bois figures in one of the three volumes, but he is relegated to the sidelines, mentioned only in a passing comment about George Gliddon and Samuel Morton's racist work on the origins of Egyptian culture. Du Bois countered their faulty conclusions about the founders of Egyptian culture by pointing out that the discipline of Egyptology developed alongside the African slave trade. « *Few scholars during the period dared to associate the Negro race with humanity, much less with civilization.* »¹¹

As a first step toward providing fuller context for the emergence of Egyptology as a university discipline, I set out to find lost chapters in Egyptology's history. Narratives about intellectuals of African descent in the Western hemisphere who contributed to the discipline's early history must become part of the stories we tell about the formation of Egyptology's disciplinary history. My project revises our history, offers readers a different perspective on Egyptology, and focuses on people of African descent as actors on the historical stage.

An example of one of the intellectual conversations of that era is a correspondence unknown to all but a few Egyptologists.¹² In the early twentieth century, W. E. B. Du Bois, intellectual, author, editor, contributor to the modern discipline of sociology, and leader in

¹⁰ Thompson, Jason, *Wonderful Things: A History of Egyptology*. 3 vols. The American University in Cairo Press, 2015–2018.

¹¹ Thompson, Jason, *Wonderful Things: A History of Egyptology*, vol. 2. The American University in Cairo Press, 2016, p. 205. For the original, see W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Folk Then and Now*. The Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois, vol. 7, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1939] 2016, p. 18.

¹² Gemma Romain of the UCL Equiano Centre and Debbie Challis of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology co-curated in 2014 *A Fusion of Worlds*, an exhibition that showed ancient Egypt in conversation with modernist African art. In conjunction with the exhibition, in May 2014, Debbie Challis and Caroline Bressy held a public talk on two of the letters between Du Bois and Petrie.

the fight for racial justice in the United States, corresponded with William Matthew Flinders Petrie (June 3, 1853 – July 28, 1942), the man credited with turning archaeological work at ancient Egyptian sites from haphazard treasure seeking to a methodical scientific pursuit. Both men are giants in their respective fields. Their correspondence with one another enriches our understanding of both scholars and provides another insight into the theoretical underpinnings of those who engaged with Egyptological discourse in the early twentieth century.

Like Du Bois, Petrie also saw history, specifically archaeology, as having an impact in the lives of the living although in ways different than Du Bois did. Because of Petrie's dedication to archaeology as a scientific endeavor, he changed the way that work was done. After Petrie, excavations were no longer hunts for « great works » but academic pursuits. When describing his scientific methodology, Petrie described the archaeologist as « *saving lives*, » going into « *some senseless mound of earth, some hidden cemetery*, » and bringing out « *portions of the lives* » of the artists, scribes, and craftspeople who made the objects « *to make them live again*. »¹³ He advocated for a study and appreciation of not only precious objects, art objects, and written texts, but every single artifact that « *must be studied and made to tell all it can*. »¹⁴

According to Petrie, archaeologists and historians were able to make the dead live again.¹⁵ For Du Bois, archaeologists and historians made the living live better. As Wilson Jeremiah Moses put it, Du Bois's interest in ancient Egypt stemmed from his recognition that the ancient culture was one of « *power and authority*. »¹⁶ By telling the story of the powerful and authoritative African culture of Egypt, Du Bois could inspire people of African descent to accept themselves as sharing in that power and authority.

In 1909, Du Bois and Petrie joined forces on an intellectual endeavor. Du Bois was overseeing the compilation of a massive reference work, an *Encyclopedia Africana* that would provide information about Africa past and present and that would serve as a companion and counterpoint to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He assembled an advisory board « of eminent white scholars » to assist him in carrying out his vision and an editorial board of scholars of African descent who would do « *the real work* » of reviewing the encyclopedia articles.¹⁷ On the project's letterhead, listed second among the fifteen members of the « (incomplete) Board of Advisers » was Flinders Petrie, who was named alongside intellectuals from Europe and the US, and one from Africa.¹⁸

In the last week of July 1911, Du Bois attended the Universal Races Congress at the University of London. The Universal Races Congress was intended to encourage understanding, friendship, and cooperation between people of the East and the West, defined by the organizers as « *so-called white and so-called coloured peoples*. »¹⁹ Congress

¹³ Petrie, W. M. Flinders, *Methods and Aims in Archaeology*. New York: Macmillan, 1904, p. 174–177 [hereafter *Methods and Aims*].

¹⁴ Petrie, *Methods and Aims*, 1904, p. 177.

¹⁵ Petrie, *Methods and Aims*, 1904, p. 189, 192–193.

¹⁶ Moses, Wilson Jeremiah, *Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History*. Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 167.

¹⁷ For the work characterized in this way, see Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868–1963. Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Edward W. Blyden, April 5, 1909. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

¹⁸ For the letterhead, see Notes on *Encyclopedia Africana* letterhead, ca. 1909. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

¹⁹ Spiller, Gustave, ed. *Inter-racial Problems communicated to the First Universal Races Congress held at the University of London, July 26–29, 1911*. London: [no publisher listed] 1911, p. v.

participants planned to marshal the resources of science and education to combat social practices that were detrimental to the progress of humankind. For example, with regard to anti-miscegenation, the organizers wrote, « *No conclusion can appear sounder to the unprejudiced mind than that no connecting link exists between colour of skin and mentality, and none between the obvious figures and features of the chief races of mankind and their intellect and morals.*»²⁰ The ultimate aim of Congress organizers in combating such issues was to encourage world peace.

At the Congress, Du Bois gave a talk entitled «*The Negro Race in the United States of America,*» which summarized the history, demographics, and social issues of people of African descent in the U.S. Petrie did not give a talk at the Congress nor was he listed among the supporters of the Congress, which did include a few Egyptologists.²¹ Recounting his time at the Congress decades later in a 1937 letter to a colleague, Du Bois recalled that he had discussed the encyclopedia in 1911 with Petrie and others at the Universal Races Congress in London.²² Since the Congress occurred in London, where Petrie was a professor, and in July, when he would not have been excavating in Egypt, it is plausible that he talked with Du Bois at that time.

In the introduction to *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois explains that his metaphor of « the veil » referred to the dualistic life that people of African descent in America lived (and many would argue still live) in America. The veil is not a self-imposed one designed to hide or protect the subject, but rather is foisted on the subject to exclude the subject from « the white world. »²³ All « *black folk,* » Du Bois wrote, in « *this American world* » *only perceive themselves « through the revelation of the other world...always looking at one's self through the eyes of others. »*²⁴ The result is a « *two-ness...two souls, two thoughts,* » representing a split and also a doubling, the person's inner self as known and experienced by the individual, and the person's self as reflected back to them by a majority white, Western society. The split of twoness divides the individual, making them less whole than the prevailing white society that imposes the split, but it also creates in the individual a « *second sight,* » a sharper, more insightful analytic quality.²⁵ The double edged sword that is Du Bois's twoness is evident in his recounting of how he found his first teaching job, near Watertown, Tennessee. Du Bois and another young teacher bound for the white school went to the local authority's house to secure their positions. Both were welcomed and treated cordially by the commissioner who invited them to dinner. But only one of the young men actually ate with the commissioner. Du Bois was made to eat alone, after the other two had finished.²⁶ The analytical gift of second sight allows the one who experiences things like that curious and purposefully inhospitable moment to see the true character of the actor in stark contrast to the two-sided nature of the self.

²⁰ Universal Races Congress. Outline plan of branch associations, 1911. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

²¹ The Egyptologists listed are James H. Breasted of the University of Chicago and Jean Capart of the University of Liège. Also listed as an Egyptologist was Joseph Halévy of the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, although he is perhaps better known now for his work in Yemen and among Jews in Ethiopia.

²² Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Robert E. Park, March 3, 1937. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. See also where Du Bois reported that he signed on Petrie and two others to the encyclopedia's board of advisors, Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Charles W. Eliot, August 9, 1909. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

²³ Du Bois, W. E. B., *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903, p. viii, 2 [hereafter *The Souls of Black Folk*].

²⁴ *The Souls of Black Folk*, p. 3.

²⁵ *The Souls of Black Folk*, p. 3.

²⁶ *The Souls of Black Folk*, p. 63.

When they met in London in 1911, Du Bois must have told Petrie about, perhaps even given him a copy of, his 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*. That winter, Petrie left England to begin a season of archaeological work in Egypt. Soon after arriving, however, recurring pain led him to undergo a hernia operation, which interrupted his archaeological work.²⁷ The enforced convalescence after his surgery provided him with the time to read Du Bois's book. In January 1912, while still recovering from the surgery, Petrie wrote to Du Bois, initiating a conversation about race and education that would address contemporary life in the United States and in Egypt.

Petrie's letter to Du Bois in January 1912 begins with appreciation for Du Bois's book. Petrie wrote that he had « *long wanted to grasp the Negro problem, and your prudent, balanced statement is very helpful.* »²⁸ Petrie, by that time, had been working in Egypt for over three decades. He then proceeded to explain in his letter to Du Bois his point of view on the subject that Du Bois wrote about in his book.

Petrie picked up the metaphor of the veil that Du Bois employed throughout his book to illustrate his points to Du Bois. He wrote that « *the veil* » between Europeans and Egyptians in Egypt « *is almost as complete as you find it to be [in the United States].* »²⁹ Not only were there no venues for educated Egyptians and educated Europeans to meet socially, but the two groups were quite purposefully separated, English officials being « *required to travel first class to avoid even sitting with natives.* »³⁰ That social segregation occurred despite the lack of the complex social baggage that was found in the U.S., such as the fact that there was no recent history of slavery in Egypt and there was no discrimination there based on skin color, or at least none visible to Petrie. Even lacking those complicating historical factors, social integration was practically non-existent in Egypt among the educated upper classes of Egyptians and Europeans there. Petrie thus posed to Du Bois the question: how could the U.S. achieve an integrated society when a place like Egypt cannot? « *Now this being the case round the Mediterranean, how can you expect any better state of society in U.S.A.? The echo of slavery, the great difference of race and the pressure of the mulatto multitude must naturally make a thicker veil than even that of the Old World.* »³¹ Petrie wrote that he himself was not so inclined, but his conclusion, again borrowing Du Bois's metaphor, was that « *the English race all over the world insists on the veil; and, least of all in U.S.A., can you expect to find a more liberal exception.* »³²

To illustrate for Du Bois the presence of the veil in Egypt, Petrie explained in his letter what he called « *the Englishman's objections to the native* » to show Du Bois « *what over here gives substance to this veil.* »³³ What follows in Petrie's letter sounds like an apology for the social segregation that he had just outlined. He stereotyped Egyptians as dishonest cheats, noted that it was rare to meet a self-respecting person, and bemoaned the tendency of the «native» to turn « *any kindness or consideration...into solid benefits, without the least notion that his doing so destroys the bond.* »³⁴ Petrie informed Du Bois that because of those perceived personality defects, the only way that he could obtain the « respect and popularity » that he desired was to adopt a strict disciplinarian attitude towards his workers

²⁷ Drower, Margaret S. *Flinders Petrie: A Life in Archaeology*. London: Gollancz, 1995, p. 318

²⁸ Du Bois, W. E. B. and W. M. Flinders Petrie, "Self-Righteous Europe and the World: Correspondence with W. M. Flinders Petrie, D. C. L., Litt. D., LL. D., F. R. S, Professor of Egyptology in the University of London" *The Crisis* 4,1 (May 1912): p. 34 [hereafter "Self-Righteous Europe and the World,"].

²⁹ "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 34.

³⁰ "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 34.

³¹ "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 34

³² "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 34

³³ "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 34

³⁴ "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 34–35.

at work and then to be more affable to them only outside of work.³⁵

When Du Bois responded to the letter, written eight weeks after Petrie's letter, he took issue with Petrie's « *stern driving of men,* » as he characterized it in his response. Du Bois informed Petrie that such a misguided way of dealing with people does not make one respected or popular but in fact « *engenders hatred...[and] leads to caste and disaster.* »³⁶ Furthermore, he stated that Petrie's complaints about « the native » were not in any way a marker unique to the Egyptians with whom Petrie worked but simply reflected a universal dislike for « *cheating and ignorance and lack of self-respect,* » an objection that is « *worldwide and age old.* »³⁷

The central core of the disagreement between Petrie and Du Bois was not Petrie's attitude towards Egyptians, as distasteful as that certainly was to Du Bois, but Petrie's brazen declaration that education should be denied them. Petrie stated that education was more likely to cause damage to Egyptians, particularly Muslim Egyptians, than to benefit them. Petrie wrote, « *Education of book and memory sort is an injury in most cases. It depends on ancestry; the Arab is generally spoiled by it, the Copt, with a hundred generations of literary ancestors, is generally benefited. I should say that some technical and trade teaching and hygiene would benefit all. Not more than 5 per cent would be the better for reading and writing, just to supply the minor official staff, but no useless subjects should be taught. Not more than one in 1,000 would really benefit by higher education. To give more only produces a moral deterioration.* »³⁸ Toward the end of the letter, Petrie restated his position that « *Education in the formal lines will no more clear the Negro problem [in the U. S.] than freedom or voting.* »³⁹

The attitude that Petrie expressed in his letter was anathema to Du Bois. Du Bois began his working career as a teacher. He was a fierce advocate of education for all people, white and black. Du Bois saw education as the basis for solving the difficult social problems surrounding the issue of race in America, and through education, people of African descent in America would be lifted up socially, to take their rightful places alongside others in society.⁴⁰ The very power of education, according to Du Bois, was made evident in the widespread belief in the southern United States following the Civil War that a person of African descent who was educated would be « *dangerous...for education among all kinds of men always has had, and always will have, an element of danger and revolution, of dissatisfaction and discontent.* »⁴¹

The arrogance of the European class that Petrie represented is evident in the fact that the danger he perceived in education was not directed at himself or at other members of the educated European elite present in Egypt. In his formulation, people of an upper European class were not at risk of ruin from education. Rather, the hapless « *native* » of Petrie's was the one who in danger because the « *native* » was incapable of handling the moral responsibility of being a thinking, educated person.

³⁵ "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 35.

³⁶ "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 35.

³⁷ "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 35.

³⁸ "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 35. For similar views, see Petrie, W. M. Flinders, "Address by W. M. Flinders Petrie, D.C.L., LL.D., President of the Section, Section H. Anthropology, Thursday, September 12." In *Report of the Sixth-fifth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science held at Ipswich in September 1895*, pp. 816–823. London: John Murray, 1895.

³⁹ "Self-Righteous Europe and the World," p. 35

⁴⁰ *The Souls of Black Folk*, p. 108.

⁴¹ *The Souls of Black Folk*, p. 32.

For Du Bois, Petrie's denial of education to Egyptians sounded far too similar to arguments made in the United States about the education of people of African descent. The viewpoints that Petrie described — denying Egyptians an education based on the idea that they somehow could not handle it, that it would cause them more harm than good — that opinion, Du Bois informed him, was used by others to discourage Du Bois's parents from educating him. He wrote, «...if your ideas had been carried out in the United States — and there are many people trying to carry them out — I should not be having the pleasure of communicating with you now. On the contrary, I should probably be the victim of that 'manner' which you use to your underlings in Egypt.»⁴²

Petrie received Du Bois's response to his letter in March 1912 when he had recovered from his hernia operation. Despite being back at work in the field, Petrie felt it important to respond quickly to Du Bois. He wrote that he « hasten[ed] to acknowledge » Du Bois's letter and explained to Du Bois that he did not agree with the European attitude towards other races that he had outlined in his first letter nor was he defending it.⁴³ His intention in his first letter was only to illustrate for Du Bois that Europeans bore ill will towards all other races and were not just, as he put it, « *anti-negro* ». Petrie's ham-fisted attempt at reassurance likely did not assuage the letter's recipient.

At that point in his career, in the early twentieth century, Petrie was a proponent of the now-discredited theory of eugenics that correlated physical characteristics and mental capacity. Petrie measured various physical aspects of ancient Egyptian bodies and drew from those measurements faulty conclusions about intellect. He identified in Egyptian art what he referred to as « *racial types*.» The conception of race that Petrie subscribed to is a modern creation that divided the ancient population in a way that the ancient population did not divide itself. Petrie's use of race to separate population groups based on physical appearance is very much in line with a modern definition of racism by Barbara J. Fields, who underscores the divisive nature of racism that then obscures the action of the subject (the one who divides) by directing attention to an attribute of the object (the ones separated out for denigration).⁴⁴

In his second letter to Du Bois, Petrie backtracked on his claim that most Egyptians should not be educated. In rethinking his original statement, he clarified that the education should be appropriate to the individual and should not only entail classroom learning. He wrote Du Bois that he did not want to deny people an education, but he thought that the education provided should be « *useful to those who need it, and fairly divided between hard work and book work.* »⁴⁵ His statement set up a hierarchy, where some person or some organization would decide what is « useful to those who need it. » That is apparently not a determination that he felt individuals could or should make for themselves. Petrie's distinction between hard work, by which he meant work involving physical labor, and book work, reveals that he evidently did not consider scholarly work to be difficult. His conclusion, designed to again placate Du Bois on the subject of education, is that his opinions applied to contemporary England, but he would not claim that they applied to the United States.

⁴² «Self-Righteous Europe and the World,» p. 37

⁴³ Letter from W. M. Flinders Petrie to W. E. B. Du Bois, March 20, 1912. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

⁴⁴ Fields, Barbara J., "Whiteness, Racism and Identity." *International Labor and Working Class History* 60 (Fall 2001): 48–56. On page 48, she defines racism « *the assignment of people to an inferior category and the determination of their social, economic, civic, and human standing on that basis....Racism thus unseats both identity and agency [insofar as] the targets of racism do not 'make' racism, nor are they free to 'negotiate' it.*»

⁴⁵ Letter from W. M. Flinders Petrie to W. E. B. Du Bois, March 20, 1912. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

The educational backgrounds of Petrie and Du Bois are quite different from one another. Although people had apparently tried to dissuade Du Bois's parents from educating him, that ill-informed advice did not hamper his formal education. Du Bois was steeped in a Euro-American culture of learning. His liberal arts education at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and at Harvard University exposed him to a variety of disciplinary approaches to asking and solving questions. His graduate work in Germany, from 1892 to 1894, gave him the opportunity to step outside of the American cultural experience. The roots of his research methodology are found in Germany, where he was influenced by the scientific research of his professors.⁴⁶ With that new environment came new insight into the vagaries of culture. He wrote of his experiences as a person of African descent in a completely different milieu, without the racial prejudices and discriminations he had become accustomed to in the United States.⁴⁷

By 1912, when Petrie and Du Bois corresponded, Petrie was already renowned for establishing the science of archaeology in Egyptology. By that time, he had been a professor at the University of London for almost a decade. Although he attained many scholarly honors and accomplishments, Petrie had virtually no formal schooling. Two serious childhood illnesses meant that he had to be confined indoors in the winter, ending his education outside the home before it had even begun. From that point on, Petrie learned from the materials and people in his family home.⁴⁸ He had some knowledge of Egypt the first time he went there, in 1880, but he was not overly familiar with its ancient or modern cultures. Most of his Egyptological knowledge came from working on site in Egypt, talking to his colleagues, most of whom were European, and reading their publications. He was not proficient in foreign languages, ancient or modern, and so he was somewhat at a disadvantage in comparison with his multilingual colleagues.⁴⁹ Petrie was perhaps defending his own lack of formal education when he wrote that « *engineering* » was more useful for an archaeologist than « *bookwork...alone,* » an attitude that was also reflected in his letters to Du Bois.⁵⁰

Petrie's appointment as professor at the University of London came about because of a bequest that was made by his long-time associate and supporter, Amelia Edwards. Edwards endowed a chair at the University of London in Egyptian archaeology and philology with the express intent that Petrie should be the first person to hold that chair. Thus, he became a professor with no earned degrees.

Du Bois's attitude towards Petrie was complex. Petrie was one of the first members of the Board of Advisors for the Encyclopedia Africana. But Du Bois clearly disagreed with him on a number of issues, not just those reflected in their correspondence with one another but

⁴⁶ In an interview done in 1960, Du Bois states that his scholarly training in Germany taught him to focus on general – we might say « big picture » – issues rather than isolated cases. The interview was about his approach to the Philadelphia project. It is cited in Barkin, Kenneth D. "Berlin Days, 1892–1894: W. E. B. Du Bois and German Political Economy." *boundary 2* 27.3 (2000):79–101. For Du Bois's contributions to the modern discipline of sociology, see Morris, Aldon D. *The Scholar Denied: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015.

⁴⁷ Du Bois, W. E. B., *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*, The Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois, vol. 8, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1968] 2007, p. 23–24.

⁴⁸ Both of Petrie's parents were well educated. His mother had a good library and encouraged her son in his reading. His father attended South African College in Cape Town, King's College London, and University of Frankfurt am Main.

⁴⁹ Virenque, H el ene, "A Swiss Egyptologist on Her Majesty's Service:  douard Naville (1844–1926) on the Delta." In *Every Traveller Needs a Compass: Travel and Collecting in Egypt and the Near East*, edited by Neil Cooke, and Vanessa Daubney, 189–195. Oxford and Philadelphia: ASTENE and Oxbow Books, 2015, p. 193; Drower, Margaret S., *Flinders Petrie: A Life in Archaeology*. London: Gollancz, 1995, pp. 432–433.

⁵⁰ Drower Margaret S., *Flinders Petrie: A Life in Archaeology*. London: Gollancz, 1995, p. 433.

also in some of Petrie's scholarly work. Du Bois's admiration of Petrie was undimmed in 1956 when reflecting on his attempt in the early twentieth century to create the *Encyclopedia Africana*. He recounted that among the advisors for the encyclopedia, he had signed on « *the greatest of Egyptologists, Flinders Petrie.* »⁵¹

When exchanging letters with Petrie in 1912, Du Bois was the editor of *The Crisis*, the magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a civil rights organization that Du Bois had helped found. Du Bois published in the May 1912 issue of *The Crisis* the first two letters that he and Petrie had written to each other and an excerpt of Petrie's second letter to Du Bois. A teaser on the inside cover of the preceding issue reflects Du Bois's esteem for Petrie the scholar. The article that would appear in the next month's issue was advertised as a discussion of « *The Color Line* » by Dr. Flinders Petrie, « *the greatest living authority on Egyptology.* »⁵² That effusive praise of Petrie did not deter Du Bois from writing in the article title as a straightforward summation of Petrie's attitude: « *Self-Righteous Europe and the World, Correspondence with Flinders Petrie.* »

Du Bois published their correspondence without commentary or explanation except for the article title and a string of abbreviations after Petrie's name. The average American reader might not realize that those abbreviations, which appear to be earned degrees, are actually honorary degrees.⁵³ Why did Du Bois list them there? He may have used the degrees to lend more authority to Petrie's voice. Perhaps the degrees were meant to draw attention to the disconnect between the narrow scholarly world that Petrie inhabited, a world focused on titles and honors, and the larger world view that Du Bois espoused, one that focused on humans.

Cheikh Anta Diop has been described as employing « *disruptive cuts across time* » and discussing side by side cultures far removed in time from one another.⁵⁴ Du Bois's approach of uplifting people of African descent through writing histories of Africans was a sort of first stage. Diop then cut across those histories to demonstrate connections and relationships. Another tactic is to cut through the narratives of our disciplinary history to upend traditional academic stories with the unwritten stories of people and events who contributed to our lives. Tsehloane Keto's Africa-centered paradigm can be applied here. He wrote about a « *disturbing legacy of the hegemonic Europe-centered perspective on African American history,*» which is the way that some history books identify anew the humans trafficked from Africa as slaves. During the process of being shipped to the Western hemisphere, « *enslaved Africans...undergo physical and cultural transformation and disappear without a trace as Africans....When they arrive on the shores of the Americas, they are no longer Africans. And once transformed into slaves, negroes, Negroes and Blacks, they join the narratives about the Americas ready to play their ascribed peripheral roles as social adjuncts to a Europe-centered narrative enterprise.* »⁵⁵ Actors of African descent had an impact on the Western educational system. We must open up our

⁵¹ Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to *Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, inc.*, October 22, 1956. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

⁵² *The Crisis* 3,6 (April 1912): inside cover.

⁵³ Petrie's honorary degrees include a Doctor of Civil Law in 1892 from the University of Oxford, a Doctor of Laws in 1896 from the University of Edinburgh, an honorary Ph.D. from Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität in Strasbourg in 1897, and a Doctor of Letters in 1900 from the University of Cambridge. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Fellow of the British Academy.

⁵⁴ Quirke, Stephen, "Kemet – ancient history, critical history." *ANKH* 25/26/27 (2016–2018): 81–91.

⁵⁵ Keto, C. Tsehloane, *Vision and Time: Historical Perspective of an Africa-Centered Paradigm*. Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 2001, p. 97.

disciplinary histories to those actors. We must push for greater inclusivity in all of our global stories, ancient and modern.

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▪ Books

The Oxford Handbook of Egyptian Epigraphy and Palaeography (co-editor and contributor), Oxford University Press, 2020.

Peace in Ancient Egypt, Harvard Egyptological Series 5, Brill, 2018.

▪ Articles

"Complications in the stylistic analysis of Egyptian art: A look at Medinet Habu," *(Re)productive Traditions in Ancient Egypt*, 203–228, Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2017.

"Observations on antiquities in later contexts," In: *A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo*, 85–91, 154–157, University of Chicago, 2015.

"The treatment of foreigners in Seti's battle reliefs," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 98 (2013): 73–85.

"Hatshepsut's use of Tuthmosis III in her program of legitimation," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 41 (2004): 55–66.

▪ Selected Talks

Feb 2020 "Egyptology's Diverse History: Five Stories"

American Research Center in Egypt lecture, Penn Museum

Feb 2020 "Egyptology's Diverse History: Pauline Hopkins, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Marcus and Amy Jacques Garvey"

American Research Center in Egypt lecture, Alexandria, VA

Oct 2019 "New Chapters in the History of Egyptology: W. E. B. Du Bois and Pauline Hopkins"

American Research Center in Egypt lecture, University of Chicago

Apr 2019 "New Faces in Egyptology's History"

American Research Center in Egypt Annual Meeting, Washington DC

Jan 2019 "Race, Archaeology, and Genetic Science in the Nile River Valley"

Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meeting, San Diego

Mar 2018 "An Untold Story of Black Intellectuals and Egyptology"

Washington and Lee University

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2GgiSnE3BY>

Mar 2017 "An Overlooked Chapter in Egyptology: W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and Pauline Hopkins"

Archaeological Institute of America lecture, Penn Museum

Mar 2017 "Foreign Relations, Funerary Art, and Pharaoh: Visual Play in Ancient Egypt"

Archaeological Institute of America lecture, Montclair State University

Mar 2017 "W. E. B. Du Bois, Education, and Archaeology in Egypt: An Overlooked Chapter in the History of Egyptology"

1-minute clip here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5jkcqWfRg0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAh6cLVds3w>

Harvard Semitic Museum