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In The Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America. By Robert Gooding-Williams. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

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Book Reviews

Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World. By Nancy Fraser. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

Over the past decade, Nancy Fraser has been concerned to elaborate a critical theory of justice in which justice and democracy are fundamentally entwined through the principle of *parity of participation*; a reflexive criterion through which what counts as justice is to be worked out democratically by peers who can participate on an equal footing in democratic fora and where what counts as parity of participation is itself contestable within democratic fora that meet standards of minimal justice or, put another way, of ‘good enough’ conditions of democratic deliberation. For any such view, two fundamental questions arise: ‘who’ is to count as a subject of justice and ‘how’ is who counts as a subject of justice to be determined. The fundamental quest of *Scales of Justice* is to provide compelling responses to these two questions by setting out a theory of *reflexive* justice.

Who?

For Fraser, the ‘who’ question arises in the dual context of a Westphalian division of political space that frames the ‘who’ of justice in terms of national citizenries and a reaction to this condition which adopts a stance predicated on moral personhood and frames the ‘who’ of justice in terms of a one-size-fits-all frame of global humanity. The former is both a default inheritance of most post-war liberal theorizing on social justice and the reflective choice of some prominent theorists including, on varied grounds, John Rawls, Michael Walzer, Thomas Nagel and David Miller. The latter has become the default position of liberal cosmopolitanism and is, perhaps, best exemplified by the work of Thomas Pogge and Simon Caney. Neither stance on Fraser’s account get to grips with the phenomenon that she refers to as *misframing*. To bring this distinctive form of injustice into view, recall that Fraser has previously distinguished two forms of injustice, maldistribution and misrecognition, which are taken to correspond to economic and cultural injustice. In this book, she introduces a third type of injustice – misrepresentation – which she denotes as political injustice and which refers to the injustice of being denied equal standing within democratic deliberation in virtue of the political boundaries or decision rules that structure the formation of political community. Fraser then distinguishes two forms of political injustice: *ordinary-political misrepresentation*, which focuses on the effects of decision-rules such as electoral systems (for example, do rules blind to forms of class, gender or race inequality deny parity of participation to workers, women and blacks?), and *misframing*, which denies membership of relevant deliberative community to some who should be included within it in virtue of the organisation of political space. It is this latter issue which she takes to be most fundamentally raised in a globalizing world.

What is needed, then, is a principle of justice that addresses the issue of framing. Fraser fairly rapidly rejects both the *membership principle*, in which shared citizenship or nationality is taken as the appropriate ground for determining the ‘who’ of justice on the basis that it has an inbuilt *status quo* bias, and the *principle of humanism*, which appeals to criteria of personhood on the basis of its obliviousness to sociological realities and foreclosure of “the possibility that different issues require different frames or scales of justice”(64). Precisely because Fraser is concerned to articulate a critical theory of reflexive justice, she not unreasonably takes the view that an adequate principle must be able to relate to the sociological realities of injustice in its diverse forms (this is, after all, what motivates her previous work on recognition and redistribution). There are two main candidates for such a principle of *transnational* justice: the all affected principle and the all subjected principle – and *Scales of Justice* is, in part, also the story of Fraser’s shift

from the former to the latter (compare chapters 2 and 4). Fraser offers the following specification of these principles:

The *all-affected principle*: “what turns a collection of people into fellow-members of a public is not shared citizenship, but their objective co-imbrication in a web of causal relationships” (64).

The *all-subjected principle*: “what turns a collection of people into fellow members of a public is not their shared citizenship, or co-imbrication in a causal matrix, but rather their joint subjection to a structure of governance that set[s] the ground rules for their interaction” (96).

Fraser’s objection to the former runs thus:

Aiming to conceptualise transnational justice, proponents of the *all-affected principle* propose to resolve debates about the ‘who’ by appealing to social relations of interdependence. For them, accordingly, what makes a group of people fellow subjects of justice is their objective co-imbrication in a web of causal relationship. This approach has the merit of providing a critical check on self-serving notions of membership, while also taking cognizance of social relations. Yet by conceiving relations objectivistically, in terms of causality, it effectively relegates the choice of the ‘who’ to mainstream social science. In addition, the all-affected principle falls prey to the *reductio ad absurdum* of the butterfly effect, which holds that everyone is affected by everything. Unable to identify *morally relevant* social relations, it has trouble resisting the one-size-fits-all globalism it sought to avoid (64).

These are not obviously compelling objections. Even if the relations are conceived objectivistically, the questions of what count as salient forms of affectedness, what count as relevant thresholds of affectedness, and how these might be legitimately varied across different contexts cannot be answered by normal social science –indeed they call for deliberative dialogue (and I’ll explore this further in the next section that focuses on the ‘how’ question). This being so, the ‘butterfly effect’ objection can be easily addressed by the democratic provision of criteria of moral discrimination in the application of the all affected principle.

Nor is Fraser’s presentation of the proposed alternative ‘all subjected’ principle without problems. Thus, although Fraser wisely adopts a broad construal of the notion of “subjection to a structure of governance” in which governance include rule-making agencies (ranging from states to the WTO) and ‘subjection’ is not identified only with those officially accredited members of a structure, but any agent subject to its coercive rule, she doesn’t distinguish adequately between two types of subjection that arise in relation to any (non-universal) structure of governance and correspond to the distinction between those who are subject to the norms determining *who is governed* by a structure of governance (which is composed of those included and excluded by these norms) and those subject to norms determining *how the governed are governed* by a structure of governance (which is composed only of those included by the prior norms). An example in relation to states as, in part, territorially defined structures of governance would be the distinction between norms governing the access to the territory of a state (the border regime) to which both those inside and outside those borders are subject and norms governing those within the territory of a state to which only residents are subject (whether or not they are officially accredited members). Thus, when she writes that “sub-Saharan Africans who have been involuntarily disconnected from the global economy as a result of rules imposed by its governance structures count as subjects of justice in relation to it” (66), it is unclear whether she is referring to norms of inclusion/exclusion or norms of internal rule. In relation to any (non-global) structure of governance, there will always be distinct answers to the ‘who’ question depending on which set of norms one is addressing.

This first problem can be easily accommodated by Fraser since it doesn’t itself pose an objection to use of the all subjected principle; it just highlights a distinction between norms governing inclusion and norms governing the included. However, a second objection is less

easily accommodated, namely, how the all subjected principle is meant to deal with cases where what is at issue is the question of ‘who’ is entitled to participate in determining whether or not to construct a new structure of governance. Consider, for example, Iris Young’s late work on political responsibility in relation to the transnational anti-sweatshop movement. The problem here is that there is no transnational regime of governance that can effectively regulate working conditions in the textile industry and Young’s argument is intended both to identify a distinct form of injustice –structural injustice– and to answer the question of who counts as a subject of justice (and hence also of responsibility) in terms of co-imbrication in a social structure, an answer which aligns Young with Fraser’s understanding of the all affected principle. (Notably Young shares Fraser’s scepticism towards nationalist/statist and globalist attempts to identify subjects of justice in terms of nationality/citizenship or personhood.) As Young rightly comments:

Where it can be argued that a group shares responsibility for structural processes that produce injustice, but institutions for regulating those processes don’t exist, we ought to try to create new institutions.¹

Now I cannot see any reasons why Fraser would not want to acknowledge the force of this argument; on the contrary, it speaks directly to concerns that she addresses in chapter 5 “Transnationalizing the Public Sphere.” It does, however, point to a limitation with the all subjected principle. How should Fraser respond?

Given the openly provisional character of Fraser’s argument, there is a response available to her which only strengthens her overall argument in the context of Critical Theory’s fundamental concerns, namely, to endorse the view of Rainer Forst that power is the first question of justice, and the corresponding claim that what grounds being a subject of justice is being subject to power, but then to argue for the importance of distinguishing between different forms of subjection to power which correspond to different ‘who’ questions:

1. Subjection to a social structure (i.e., affected by power relations in virtue of co-imbrication in a causal matrix) –corresponding to the question ‘Who should be included in determining whether to subject a range of social interactions to a structure of governance?’
2. Subjection to norms of inclusion and exclusion that characterised a structure of governance –corresponding to the question ‘Who should be included in determining who is governed by a structure of governance?’
3. Subjection to (internal) governance norms of a structure of governance –corresponding to the question ‘Who should be included in determining the (internal) governmental norms of a structure of governance?’.

In distinguishing between these forms of subjection to power, Fraser can bring much needed nuance to the debate over the ‘who’ of justice without abandoning any of the central tenets of her theory of justice. Such a view accommodates the phenomenon of unequal social power that gives rise to the need for political rule (and which motivates the intuitive appeal of the all affected principle) and the two fundamental dimensions of political rule: inclusion/exclusion and being governed (which motivate the intuitive appeal of the all subjected principle).

How?

Addressing the phenomenon of misframing in such a perspicuous way is already to take a significant step forward for political theory, however, Fraser takes a further and more radical step in turning to address the issue of what she calls “meta-political injustice,” namely, the question of how disputes about (mis)framing are themselves to be decided. Unsurprisingly, Fraser rejects the view that political elites should have the power to decide such disputes and further rejects the claim that normal social science can adjudicate them neutrally; indeed, she regards social movements which contest current framings as correctly challenging both these positions. Rather Fraser

argues for a dialogical and democratized approach to ‘how’ questions in which transnational civil society organisations that advance claims are in ongoing dialogue with “new global democratic institutions where disputes about framing can be aired and resolved” (69).

It will be readily apparent that this democratizing approach immediately raises the question of ‘who’ determines ‘how,’ and Fraser is fully aware of the threat of regress that it generates (44). However, Fraser can block this threat by going global at this point on the reasonable grounds that decisions concerning transnational framing disputes, precisely because they re-articulate the global organisation of political space, are ones to which we are all subject. A more pressing line of objection concerns the circularity that follows from Fraser’s linking of justice and democracy which entails that insofar “as this approach seeks to resolve arguments about the frame democratically, it seems to presuppose as a prior background condition the very outcome it seeks to promote: namely, social arrangements that are sufficiently just to permit all to participate as peers in democratic discussion and decision-making” (45). Fraser’s response is to argue that we can turn “what looks like a vicious circle into a virtuous spiral” by appeal to the idea of “good enough deliberation” and building from there (45). But the following problem remains: ‘who decides what counts as “good enough deliberation”?’ In response to this problem, it seems to me to be reasonable that the global democratic institutions that Fraser sees as dealing with transnational issues by offering democratically binding interpretations of the principles that guide reflection on framing also act as setting minimal standards of legitimacy for deliberative engagement.

Reflexive Justice

In taking up the issue of ‘who’ and ‘how,’ Fraser characterises her position as addressing our current condition of ‘abnormal justice’ in which contestation over ‘who’ and ‘how’ questions is endemic to politics, yet not institutionally resolvable with the current regime of global governance, a characterization which draws a contrast with conditions of ‘normal justice’ in which such questions of framing remain unchallenged (for good or bad reasons) and there are stable decision-making structures. This is a helpful contrast but it is a mark of the depth of Fraser’s originality and capacity for critical reflection that she not only draws the distinction, but then problematizes it in order to argue not for “a new normal” but for *reflexive* justice:

Unlike abnormal discourse, the desired model would have sufficient structuring capacities to stage today’s justice struggles as *arguments*, in which the parties *confront* one another, compelling the attention and *judgment* of those looking on. Unlike normal discourse, however, the hoped-for-model would have sufficient self-problematizing capacities to entertain novel claims about the ‘what,’ the ‘who,’ and the ‘how.’ Combining features of normal and abnormal discourse, the result would be a grammar of justice that incorporates an orientation to closure, necessary for political argument, but that treat every closure as *provisional*—subject to question, possible suspension, and thus to re-opening (72).

This self-conscious effort at reconciling by synthesising insights of deliberative and agonistic approaches to democracy in a concept of reflexive justice is a significant step towards reconciling important aspects of Fraser’s work with the work of agonistic theorists such as the late Iris Young and James Tully, and opens a crucial space for productive engagement between these theoretical positions.

Conclusion

I haven’t touched in this review essay on chapter 6, 7 and 8 of Fraser’s book, which offer reflections on framing and feminism, Foucault and globalisation, and Arendt and current threats to humanity. This is not to dismiss them (all are worth reading), but rather simply to acknowledge that my concerns have been directed at the major conceptual and normative developments in

Fraser's critical theory of justice. Although I have suggested that Fraser's argument may need to be amended or refined in certain respects, it should be clear that *Scales of Justice* is a significant work of political theory, addressing a fundamental issue of contemporary politics with characteristic perspicuity and intellectual honesty; it opens up an important research terrain with clarity and élan.

NOTE

1. Accessed at: <http://dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=504>

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***In The Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America.* By Robert Gooding-Williams. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).**

Robert Gooding-Williams's *In The Shadow of Du Bois: Afro Modern Political Thought In America* offers several contributions to political theory and African American philosophy and politics.¹ His conception of "Afro-Modern Politics" sharpens our understanding of the history and tradition of African American political thought, and his analyses of W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Blacks Folks* and Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom* adds to and challenges various debates about their politics and legacies.² Gooding-Williams applies the insights from his comparative analysis of Du Bois and Douglass to distinguish a conception of politics as rule from a conception of politics as action-in-concert; he defends the latter as an alternative vision of black politics pioneered by radical democrats and feminists.

There is much that is exciting about Gooding-Williams's book, and many of his analyses are tempting objects of reflections or targets of critique. In this review, I focus on three areas: (1) his interpretation of Du Bois as a romantic political expressivist; (2) his reading of Douglass's *Bondage*; and (3) his critique of contemporary theorists who either repeat some of Du Bois's mistakes or who provide failed attempts to "transcend" Du Bois's view of politics as rule. I broadly agree with Gooding-Williams's reading of Du Bois, however, in his search for an alternative to Du Bois he too quickly jumps back to Douglass. Likewise his reading of Douglass is incisive, but his labeling of Douglass as a radical reconstructionist is too enthusiastic: it downplays the extent of Douglass's agreement with contemporaneous views about assimilation and amalgamation. I am sympathetic with Gooding-William's view of a black politics of mutuality and democratic criticism, but, despite my support for his view, I offer some questions that arise regarding his vision of a black politics that avoids all presuppositions about common interests of values.

1

Gooding-Williams provides an account of Du Bois's politics, view of race and the human sciences, his famous idea of double-consciousness, and his critique of his political predecessors (namely, Alexander Crummell and Booker T. Washington) in the introduction and three subsequent chapters of his book. Each chapter is rich in detail and argument and worthy of independent consideration. At the center of Gooding-Williams's analysis is his account of Du Bois's romantic political expressivism, which is a valuable addition to the debate over Du Bois's ideas and political legacy.

As Gooding-Williams explains it, political expressivism is: "the idea . . . that the political order should express the deepest commitments of its members (13)." With romanticism added, the idea is that: "the commitments the political order should express are the shared attachments, purposes, and the idea of the good life that essentially define the self-understanding and distinctive identity

of a people, or *Volk* (ibid.).” For Du Bois then, according to Gooding-Williams, authentic black American leaders should express “the collective, spiritual (folk) identity that antecedently unites black Americans (14).” Black leaders, according to this view, derive their authority—their right to represent their people and shape political and social strategies—from their authentic expression of their people’s commitments. These leaders are elite, of course, because they are men with elite educations and can translate the folk spirit and strivings of their people into world-historical terms.

Although criticism of Du Bois’s elitist view of leadership is not new, Gooding-Williams’s account of him as a romantic political expressivist is, and it is a spirited criticism of Du Bois that is sure to inspire debate. His analysis is a fresh look at Du Bois’s political theory, and, it offers an interpretation of Du Bois that moves beyond the usual discussion of him as a Hegelian, pragmatist, liberal, communitarian, or socialist. His chapter on “Politics, Race, and the Human Sciences” is particularly important for this debate, because it details Du Bois’s appreciation and difference from Bismarck, and his drawing on Carlyle’s notion of the exceptional man to derive a vision of politics that Gooding-Williams, drawing on Weber, terms a rule-based politics. The implications of this claim are profound. There are pragmatists, liberals, and radical democrats who are attached to the Du Bois they imagine as molded in light of their political theories, and would find Gooding-Williams’s critique stunning and disturbing.

Gooding-Williams’s claims, while upsetting, strike true. This is evident in Du Bois’s most fantastic novel, the operatic *Dark Princess*.³ Within its pages Du Bois’s life-long exultation of representative men and the world-culture of the folk are brilliantly apparent. The novel culminates with the world-cultures of the world’s non-white peoples blended into a mighty Afro-Asian pan-culture, and these folks are led by no less than the Afro-Indian child Messiah of its Du Bois-like protagonist (the mother is an Indian Brahmin princess working in an American factory to unite the proletariat, to boot).

In defense, however, of the pragmatist-liberal-radical democrat Du Bois, it is worth remembering that just as Gooding-Williams draws a radical reconstructionist narrative from Douglass’s *Bondage*, democratic narratives may be drawn out of Du Bois’s vast oeuvre, such as his *Dark Water: Voices From Within the Veil*.⁴ It is important to be cautious here: *Dark Water* was published in 1921, and *Dark Princess* in 1928; they are near contemporaries, and there is much in *Dark Water* that is elitist and aristocratic. Yet, there are moments in *Dark Water* that are genuinely democratic, especially its critiques of illegitimate power and ideologies of class and racial superiority, that alleviate the excesses of Du Bois’s elitism and romantic political expressivism. Take for instance, the chapters “Of the Ruling of Men” and “The Damnation of Women” in *Dark Water*. Both warn of the danger of attempts to express the “Will of the World” by a group of “doddering ancients;” in the latter chapter these “doddering ancients” are men, black and white. On considering what is best for other and oneself, Du Bois wrote in the former chapter:

In fact no one knows himself but that self’s own soul. The vast and wonderful knowledge of this marvelous universe is locked in the bosoms of its individual souls. To tap this mighty reservoir of experience, knowledge, beauty, love, and deed we must appeal not to the few, not to some souls, but to all. The narrower the appeal, the poorer the culture; the wider the appeal the more magnificent are the possibilities.⁵

Gooding-Williams’s reading of Du Bois’s romantic political expressivism is a brilliant addition to the debate. I am concerned, however, whether Gooding-Williams leaves room for, as Manning Marable put it, “Du Bois the Black Radical Democrat.”⁶

2

Following his analysis of Du Bois, Gooding-Williams offers a reading of Frederick Douglass’s politics in “Douglass’s Declarations of Independence and Practices of Politics.” Gooding-Williams does not attempt to provide a general account of Douglass’s political theory; rather,

he sees in Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom* a counter-model to Du Bois's rule-based conception of politics and his romantic political expressivism.

What Gooding-Williams sees in *Bondage* is a vigorous interrogation of slavery and domination, a model of politics without rule, as well as a model of cooperative action that involves politically motivated race consciousness without political expressivism. Additionally, *Bondage* provides an alternative politics focused on the radical reconstruction of state and society rather than the assimilation and normalization of the black masses into mainstream white society. Gooding-Williams's interpretation of Douglass is brilliant; he reads him in light of civic republicanism and a politics that privileges mutuality and democratic criticism. He brings to life Douglass's political insights and potential role in political theory through close readings of several instances within *Bondage*. For example, Douglass's account of his famous fight with the slave-breaker Covey is read not only as a critique of slavery and domination but also as an account of cooperative action. Likewise, Douglass's encounter with his fellow slave, Sandy, on Covey's farm, who offers him "roots," as a form of magic, that supposedly would, but ultimately fails, to protect him from harm is read as a critique of political expressivism.

All the same, I am troubled by the enthusiasm of Gooding-Williams's view of Douglass as a radical reconstructionist. A long tradition views Douglass as an assimilationist, so Gooding-Williams's placing Douglass at odds with assimilationism is startling. After all, Douglass embraced the ideals of republicanism and Christianity, along with literacy, the Protestant work ethic, and the virtues and benefit of ideal family life. Douglass used these ideals as a club to bash American Republicanism and American Christianity for its blatant, brutal hypocrisy and failure to embody its professed ideals. He believed that blacks should be allowed to assimilate these natural and divinely ordained ideals, and blames the United States society and government for obstructing the course of the manifestation of these ideals in black life and, consequently, for obstructing *manifest destiny*.⁷

To be clear Douglass's view of assimilation is more focused on the condition of the American slave than the so-called "savage" in need of evangelization and civilization; though, his view of American Indians should caution too radical of a reading of Douglass on that score. For Douglass, black men and women, and the black family, in America naturally desired and developed these right and good ideals, but American slavers denied them any possibility of realizing the development of these ideals within their persons and families: slavery, as Douglass so forcefully stated, *brutalized*. Thus, the United States needed and deserved radical reconstruction. This would be a political and social event, but the "shared value premises" and background or ideal norms (if not "mainstream" norms, or norms as hypocritically and immorally practiced) are not reconstructed.⁸

The version of assimilation that Gooding-Williams contrasts with Douglass's is Du Bois's, as influenced by Gustav Schmoller's social views (191). Gooding-Williams writes that Du Bois's political project involved bringing "African American life into conformity with the norms characteristic of America's basic social arrangements—which for Du Bois means the economic, moral and perhaps aesthetic norms of modernity. In a nutshell, Du Bois holds that African American politics should aim to assimilate and normalize the black masses."⁹

In contrast to this Du Bois-Schmoller view of assimilation, according to Gooding-Williams, Douglass's wanted a radical reconstruction that aimed to "reconstitute practices of citizenship" and "re-found the American nation (192)." Gooding-Williams is correct that Douglass did not focus, as did both Du Bois and Washington, on black deviance. But Douglass is not one to throw away all of the Master's tools or to burn down his house. Recall that Douglass did not march with John Brown, so let's not get carried away. I am afraid that Gooding-Williams's enthusiastic and sharp rendering of Douglass as a radical reconstructionist has this tendency.

Apart from his trenchant criticism of American Republicanism and American Christianity—remember his *scorching irony*—he loved and believed in, to a fault, the background ideals America fell short of. It is important to note here too that the contradiction between form and instance in this case shook Douglass to his core and occasioned existential crises and pushed him to the edge of religious and political apostasy. His famous reflections contrasting his slavery with the freedom

of ships in Chesapeake Bay reflect a life-long anxiety about those ideals and disappointment with the United States.¹⁰ Yet, he does not ever deny those ideals.

Further, Douglass buttressed his assimilationism with overt support for amalgamation, and that indeed may be an important clue about what sort of assimilation or reconstruction Douglass supports: not only does he desire a “reconstruction” or “refounding” of the Republic, he seeks *generation* and not just *regeneration*. What is to be generated is something new, some new Republic. So, how radical was Douglass? What roots did he interrogate with his scorching irony? Certainly the foul and hypocritical American Republicanism and Christianity, but also Sandy’s “roots.” He did not question the roots of Republicanism, Christianity, and English literacy that he discovered in Webster’s, the Bible, and the *Columbian Orator*.

3

Gooding-Williams’s discussion of Douglass is also informed by the attempts of Washington and Du Bois to claim Douglass as a forbearer of their own political views, and thus to situate themselves as the rightful inheritor of Douglass’s legacy. There is a fascinating history here that plays itself out in a drama between the young Du Bois and the established Washington over who would author Douglass’s biography for the series “American Crises Biographies” for the publisher George W. Jacobs & Co. Ultimately, Washington was awarded the contract, and subsequently Du Bois wrote a biography of John Brown that featured large portions discussing Douglass.

Gooding-Williams resists the claims of both Du Bois and Washington over Douglass’s legacy, and correctly regards Douglass’s *Bondage* as providing an example of politics as action-in-concert. In his chapter, “Inheriting Du Bois and Douglass After Jim Crow,” Gooding-Williams takes this model of politics and surveys the three topics of black leadership, black identity, black deviance, and appraises a number of theorists’ contributions on these topics. While judging their works as valuable, he finds them wanting in comparison to Douglass, or to not have entirely escaped the problems of Du Bois’s expressivism. Those interested in the social and political analyses and theories offered, for example, by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Paul Gilroy, Eddie Glaude, Tommie Shelby, and Cornel West should consider Gooding-Williams’s critiques of their works.

For the sake of brevity, however, I consider Gooding-Williams’s discussion of black leadership, and his criticisms of Joy James’s *Transcending the Talented Tenth* and Tommie Shelby’s foundationalism in *We Who Are Dark*.¹¹ In regards to the former, I worry that Gooding-Williams’s criticisms of James, as solid as they are, do not give enough weight to her reliance on historical figures that could provide a counter-model to Du Bois’s romantic political expressivism. As for the later, I am sympathetic to Gooding-Williams’s criticisms of Shelby’s foundationalism; yet, I have some lingering concern about the possibility of a presupposition-less black politics.

Gooding-Williams’s criticisms of Joy James follows his claim that many of the critics of Du Bois’s elitism and vanguardism fail to offer institutional forms that a politics of action-in-concert could take. According to Gooding-Williams, Douglass is more helpful than contemporary critics, such as James, because he advocated the creation of a subaltern black sphere and a black counter-public. Further, James conflates the question “Who should lead?” with the advocacy of mutuality. She favors the leadership of feminists and progressives, and assumes that progressive leadership would logically be more mutual.

Although James’s assumptions about the mutuality of progressive leadership are weak, Gooding-Williams, unfortunately, passes over her sources and does not see them as offering clues to a more substantial view of politics as mutuality. James draws on the work and writings of Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Mary Church Terrell, and just as Douglass’s *Bondage* offered institutional terms for mutuality by encouraging the creation of black counter-public spheres, so did these women in word and deed.

Consider, for example, Cooper’s *Voice from the South*. Cooper forcefully argued that there was a pressing need for black leadership to listen to the voices of poor, Southern black women (Du Bois infamously parroted her views and failed to credit her in his chapter “The Damnation of Women” in *Darkwater*).¹² Not only did she think that their voices be heard or interests considered, but that

their interests and condition be the standard by which black progress was measured. For all of her vanguardism, her writings resisted Du Bois's vision of politics-as-rule and political expressivism, and her activism in the Black Women's Club movement and the suffrage movement pushed back against the similar patronizing politics of some leaders in the suffrage movement. Despite her genuflections to the vanguard, in the clubs, churches, and especially schools she effectively generated black counter-publics. Such institutional work provides a model for action-in-concert.

Gooding-Williams's ends his discussion of black leadership with an analysis of dissension among black Americans and the role of black public forums. He draws on Adolph Reed's "The Jug and Its Content," and supports Reed's emphasis on the role of the black public forum.¹³ Dissension goes hand in hand with contemporary black politics and the growing differentiation within the black community.¹⁴ How is a black politics possible in the face of this differentiation? Gooding-Williams answers this question by critically surveying Paul Gilroy's, Tommie Shelby's, and Eddie Glaude's answers to this question; each provided distinct answers to the problem of differentiation that Gooding-Williams respectively labels "neo-expressivist," "foundationalism," and non-foundationalism. Gooding-Williams's critique of Shelby's foundationalism is especially interesting for the future of black politics.

Shelby attempts to theorize a black politics that does not rely on some collective identity theory; rather, he identifies norms of group solidarity and argues for a pragmatic nationalist position. According to Shelby, using a thin account of black identity, we can derive a set of interests and values that will unite a significant portion of the "black plural subject" to engage in trans-institutional solidarity. These interests and values are the content of black solidarity in Shelby's theory.

One of the problems with Shelby's theory, as Gooding-Williams points out, is that Shelby assumes as a foundational principle the idea that the "elimination of racism, ghetto poverty, and [substantive] racial inequality is in the interests of all blacks qua blacks (227)." Gooding-Williams provides a sharp critique of all three parts of this assumption; he questions whether blacks, across the class spectrum, have this interest and whether they are in fact effected by racial stigma in the same ways. Moreover, Gooding-Williams criticizes the view of the distinctiveness of the racism, and racial ideology behind it, from which all blacks suffer. Cross-cutting issues within black groups spring up precisely because other ideologies, and social forces, that target various social identities, such as gender, sexuality, ability, and so on, intersect with racial ideology and deeply effect the expression, experience, and harms of racism. Add to this the standard problems around collective action, and the problems with foundationalism increase in severity.

Gooding-Williams's critique is profound. The question of the nature of anti-black racism, and what features of the types of racism suffered by various segments of black society actually share, and whether there are cross-interests in addressing all these types are great questions for the philosophy of racism: they shake up the simple assumption of the unity of racism and even of the unity of anti-black racism, and pose major problems for social and political theory.

But what sort of politics is possible in the face of this sort of differentiation, and the fracturing of black public spheres? Even Douglass starts from assumptions of common oppression. The answer is that black politics must be worked out through deliberation and action-in-concert. Gooding-Williams's no-foundations approach does not require shared interests, values, or their authentic expression. Further, it advocates the revival of black public spheres, and does not decry differentiation.

The idea of a no-foundations approach is gripping; it directly confronts the fact of pluralism among blacks, which reflects the recognition of the fact of pluralism in liberal political theory. It also holds that while each element of the black public may possess presuppositions about various values and interests, it does not assume that they share these values and interests, nor work towards agreement over them, but it also allows that development of shared values and interests through deliberation is possible.

Another virtue of the no-foundations model is that it addresses black politics as it is: fractured but active—different groups with different interests (often class or values based) working together to address important issues (e.g., disparities in housing, education, and the criminal justice system). This fracture, in the light of Gooding-Williams's analysis is not a weakness, it's a

strength; that is, as long as black political actors can overcome internal dissension to work across cross-cutting issues (such as immigration policy or lesbian and gay rights) and institutions. Beyond these challenges, however, there are several problems with this approach; for example, deliberative democratic models of politics have struggled to account for the participation of minority voices (broadly construed), and this applies to the no-foundations model. Some groups and individuals may allow their perspectives to be subordinated in the interests of imagined greater interests, or they may have their voices suppressed. This is clearly a problem for the foundation and neo-expressivist approaches as well, but it would be a mistake to assume that the rejection of foundations avoids this problem. Groups who have their voices subordinated or suppressed may find that their best course is to abandon collective black politics.

This is a possibility that some will find regrettable, but it may be necessary, and it opens up a final insight. Dewey, in *The Public and Its Problems*, famously diagnosed that the problem with the public was that there was too many publics, that it had been eclipsed.¹⁵ In the post-Civil Rights era, the implications of this general trend are now clearly seen in black America. It faces, as Eugene Robinson coyly stated, disintegration. In this era, the no-foundations approach, with its emphases on mutuality, deliberation, and action-in-concert, emerges from the shadow of Du Bois to address the demands of these fractured times with its fractured publics.

NOTES

1. Robert Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

2. W. E. B. Du Bois, David W. Blight, and Robert Gooding-Williams, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Boston: Bedford Books, [1903] 1997), Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies* (New York: Library of America, 1994).

3. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dark Princess, a Romance* (New York: Harcourt, 1928).

4. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* (Millwood: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1975).

5. *Ibid.*, 140.

6. Manning Marable, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat*, New updated ed. (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2005).

7. Frederick Douglass, "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro," in *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings*, ed. Frederick Douglass, Philip Sheldon Foner, and Yuval Taylor (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, [1852] 1999).

8. These criticisms are related to a concern I have about Gooding-Williams's section on "Black politics and Black deviance" (242–256). I am dubious that Douglass is a resource for either Cohen's or Shelby's defenses of deviance. Certainly, Douglass would focus on the United States' failures rather than individual deviant expressions as the locus of our social problems, but I imagine he would see in many instances of deviance (especially those absent of reasonable or rational political intent and that are self-undermining) as sad, regrettable, and tragic. E.g., rejecting basic literacy or familiarity with European or American letters, even as an act of resistance is not something Douglass would support. In the "Address to the People of the United States," a speech delivered to the Convention of Colored Men in 1883, Douglass expressed an unwillingness to reproach blacks for their purported "problems." The problems that blacks suffer are due to the racism they face; on this point Douglass could not be clearer. He also, however, admitted that there were problems with "standards of morals" and crime among some blacks, although these "weeds" sprout best in the "manure pile" of oppressive society: the point here is the Gooding-Williams is correct about Douglass's reluctance to blame blacks, but insofar as he reads Douglass as justifying deviance, rather than understanding it, he is wrong. Frederick Douglass, "Address to the People of the United States," in *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings*, ed. Frederick Douglass, Philip Sheldon Foner, and Yuval Taylor (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1999).

9. Gooding-Williams is right to hesitate about the aesthetic norms. Insofar as those norms involving blackness viewed it as anti-beautiful or anti-sublime (à la Hume, Burke, and Kant), Du Bois imagined and demanded a reconstruction. Consider his Goethe and Wagner inspired plays, poems, and novels that offered visions of blackness that ranged from the beautiful and beneficent to the monumental and sublime. Likewise, consider his constant work promoting and constructively and politically criticizing black arts and letters.

10. See "Frederick Douglass's Political Apostasy" in Ronald R. Sundstrom, *The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008).

11. Joy James, *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals* (New York: Routledge, 1997), Tommie Shelby, *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

12. Anna J. Cooper, Charles C. Lemert, and Esme Bhan, *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper: Including a Voice from the South and Other Important Essays, Papers, and Letters*, Legacies of Social Thought (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 1998). Cooper was a first-class vanguard intellectual, and very much accepting of the elitist conceit that culture and civilization flows from the top down, and the obligation of the best of the race to uplift the masses; however, as with Douglass, Cooper's work offers elements of social and political thought that can aid a conception of politics as action-in-concert.

13. Adolph L. Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

14. Eugene Robinson, *Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2010).

15. John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Denver;: A. Swallow, 1954).

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