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Phil Zuckerman, ed. *Du Bois on Religion.* Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2000. vii + 209 pp. $62.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7425-0421-9.

Reviewed by Yolanda Pierce (Department of English, University of Kentucky)
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Du Bois: A Doubting Thomas?

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In Phil Zuckerman's brief introduction to this collection, he stresses the need for a volume to focus on the religious writings of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963), stating that scholars have "ignored Du Bois' contributions to religion" (p. 2). Indeed, Du Bois is most often known as a great "Race Man," a reflection of his invaluable contributions to social, racial, and economic justice. If, as Zuckerman suggests, Du Bois' writings on religion have been ignored, it is because the body of Du Bois' written work (over twenty books and hundreds of essays and articles) is so vast, and his writings on religion are so completely intertwined with his thoughts on race and class. Zuckerman attempts to compile a series of essays that would secure Du Bois a place as a "founding sociologist of religion" (p. 2).

The strength of this collection is the brief discussion of Du Bois' personal religious identity, with reflections on his childhood upbringing, and his path from devout Christian believer to his subsequent break with organized religion. Zuckerman points out that Du Bois wielded the words of Holy Scripture like a sword, which he did not hesitate to use in either his personal or political writings. For every criticism Du Bois levels at the Black church, "white Christianity," and religious hypocrisy, we have other examples of poetry, creative writings, and political addresses filled with a profound reverence for traditional African-American religious beliefs–beliefs which Du Bois acknowledged as both sustaining and nurturing, as well as oppressive and exploitative. Zuckerman's volume is most concerned with presenting this contradiction: DuBois as religious believer and Du Bois as religious skeptic.

Zuckerman includes reprints of little known essays by Du Bois, including the 1897 essay "The Problem of Amusement" in which Du Bois questions the lack of parishioners' earthly needs being fulfilled by the black church, and the 1907 essay "Religion in the South" from *The Negro in the South* in which Du Bois provides a scathing critique of white racism cloaked under the guise of Christianity. Most essays are drawn from Du Bois' better-known works, including his 1903 book *The Negro Church,* which was the first in-depth study of the sociology of African-American religion. Zuckerman also provides examples of the various genres in which Du Bois wrote, including the poems "Credo" and "The Prayers of God" from *Darkwater* (1920), as well as such short stories as "Jesus Christ in Georgia" (1911) and "The Gospel According to Mary Brown" (1920), both published in *The Crisis.* Zuckerman is also careful to note Du Bois' thoughts on religion in his "classics": *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899) and the 1903 *The Souls of Black Folks.*

What is lacking in this volume is a cohesive core that centers all the essays in the collection. Yes, they all represent Du Bois' writings on religion, but is there nothing more that ties this group of essays together? Why, out of all of Du Bois' writings, were these particular examples chosen and why are they presented in no discernable order? A chronological structure would allow the reader to see the evolution of Du Bois' thoughts on religion. Likewise, a conscious juxtaposition of more reverential writings with the more critical works would allow the reader to consider how Du Bois straddled the line between "believer" and "skeptic." Very little contextual information frames each of the twenty-six excerpts, so unless the reader is very familiar with Du Bois, he or she has little historical or literary framework in which to contrast these particular writings with the rest of the Du Bois canon. An extensive biography at the end of the book would have been helpful, detailing the important dates/events in Du Bois' career, and thus how these events dovetailed with Du Bois' writings on religion. Similarly, the introduction (only eighteen pages, including notes and references) could be significantly expanded, providing the reader with greater glimpses

into the social, political, and historical circumstances that compelled Du Bois to be both critic and champion of the black church tradition and of Christianity, at large.

As a scholar of race and religion, I think Zuckerman's work represents an important first step in recognizing the significant contributions Du Bois made in the study of religion–work equally important as his scholarly advances in the areas of sociology, education, journalism, civil rights, and politics. *Du Bois on Religion* can serve as a companion piece to more thorough collections and biographies of Du Bois. Zuckerman's work could also be helpful in a Religious Studies classroom, a setting in which students are receiving significant information about the role of religion in American and African-American history. Other scholars must take up the banner to provide greater insight into the unanswered questions this text raises not the least of which is how and why Du Bois' writings embody both the sacred and profane.

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