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Of Blindness, Blood, and Second Sight

Transpersonal Journeys from Brazil to Ethiopia

> The Peoples of the Sea proliferate incessantly while differentiating themselves from one another, traveling together toward the infinite.
>
> Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island*

As evolutionary ideas progressed from Darwin's encounters with indigenous peoples around the globe to the living rooms and lecture halls of Europe and the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century, they hastened the emergence as well as the dissolution of many strands of scientific and philosophical thought. William James was a young student at the recently established Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard University in Cambridge as Darwin's ideas crossed the ocean after the publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. He had a prime seat, in September 1861, for debates that ensued between faculty members like Louis Agassiz and Asa Gray, who argued on opposite sides of the evolution question.[1]

The eldest son of a prominent theologian but an early proponent of Darwin's theory, James found himself both riveted and vexed by the scientific and social changes proposed by evolutionism, and he worked throughout his own long career at the interstices of scientific and religious thought.[2] From medicine and physiology to psychology and philosophy, from pragmatism to spiritualism, the professional trajectory of William James from 1861 to 1910 serves as a prolific example of the undisciplined, permeable, and overlapping nature of intellectual and scientific discourse in this period.

James prioritized experience over observation as a preferred mode of scientific and philosophical inquiry, eventually situating his ideas within the theory of pragmatism, a branch of American intellectual thought that traced its roots to these same young Harvard scholars whose ideas had percolated together on campus. This group, the Metaphysical Club, included James himself, along with logician and mathematician Charles Sanders Peirce, and lawyer and eventual Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., among others. It represented only one of several philosophy clubs that had sprouted in this era, as scholars and thinkers tried to absorb the vast intellectual conflicts wrought by sweeping social and scientific changes. They met informally from 1871 to 1879, and it was here that early conversations about pragmatism first took place. However, the term was not formally introduced into public discourse until 1878, when Charles Peirce published a pair of articles collectively titled *Illustrations of the Logic of Science*.[3]

Pragmatism, in Peirce's definition (though he would later call it "pragmaticism" to separate his original formulation from others), is a consequentialist theory: the truth or validity of an object or concept is determined by its practical application or effects. An object is hard, heavy, or strong if it proves itself, in practice, to be so. Likewise, a concept is true if inquiry confirms it, albeit with an essential recognition of the potential fallibility and partiality of any truth claim. William James took these ideas a step further, offering pragmatism as a method of inquiry that might help intervene in seemingly "interminable" metaphysical disputes between science and religion. James looked to pragmatism as "a mediating philosophy" that could reconcile "the scientific loyalty of facts" with "the old confidence in human values and the resultant spontaneity, whether of the religious or of the romantic type."[4] My interest in James rests on the application of this romantic "spontaneity" of human values and behaviors to scientific and political thought. For it is through an examination of these often unquantifiable, untraceable excesses of the human—lineage, memory, consciousness—that we can begin to understand how science makes a space for the performance of a raced personhood that is both unclassifiable yet vital and visible.

In an 1898 lecture, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," James cites a passage from Robert Louis Stevenson's essay "The Lantern-Bearers" (1888) to illustrate his own shared ideas about the limits of observation and narration, and the primacy of experience:[5]

> The observer (poor soul, with his documents!) is all abroad. For to look at the man is but to court deception. We shall seek the trunk from which he draws his nourishment; but he himself is above and abroad in the green dome of foliage, hummed through by winds and nested in by nightingales. And the true realism were that of the poets, to climb after him like a squirrel, and catch some glimpse of the heaven in which he lives. And the true realism, always and everywhere, is that of the poets: to find out where joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing.[6]

The detached observer in Stevenson's example, like a scientist with his scribbled-in notebook, "his documents," cannot truly *see* "the man." These young lantern-bearers on the links might appear "to the eye of the observer," as "wet and cold and drearily surrounded; but ask themselves, and they are in the heaven of a recondite pleasure, the ground of which is an ill-smelling lantern."[7]

To "catch some glimpse of the heaven in which he lives," writes Stevenson, we must rely on the poets and writers to "climb after him" and give a voice to this experience.[8] James spends nearly the entire lecture ventriloquizing the work of writers and travelers, those who have experienced "other" worlds, from poets like William Wordsworth and Walt Whitman to naturalists and travelers like William Henry Hudson, who reveal to "us," the intellectual elites who idealize "indoor academic ways of life," our own blindness to worlds and lives and "forms of existence other than our own."[9] Through their writings and travels, we learn about the "savages and children of nature," writes James, "to whom we deem ourselves so much superior," but who "certainly are alive when we are often dead." The result of these considerations and quotations, he implores at the conclusion of his essay, is a command "to tolerate, respect, and indulge those whom we see harmlessly interested and happy in their own ways, however unintelligible these may be to us. Hands off: neither the whole of truth nor the whole of good is revealed to any single observer, although each observer gains a partial superiority of insight from the peculiar position in which he stands."[10] As an active member of the New England Anti-Imperialist League, James used this lecture, among others, to condemn U.S. intervention in the Philippines and elsewhere. In a later delivery at the Cambridge Conference in March 1899, for example, James adds a blunt moral to the end of this lecture, stating, "That this is not altogether without its bearing on our supposed national duty of instructing the Philippine Islanders in life's absolute values need hardly be pointed out."[11]

"On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" is a lecture thus caught somewhere between burgeoning cultural relativist ideals and laissez-faire politics. James is hardly advocating the kind of tolerance and engagement that could be considered inclusive, humanitarian, or even fully cognizant of the increasing interdependence of global cultures and economies. His own anecdotes throughout the piece are also riddled with language that fetishizes and infantilizes the alleged simplicity of other cultures. The larger, yet more simplistic, blindness at work in this piece is one that the anti-imperialists and pragmatists might agree upon: the hypocritical blindness of a nation allegedly founded on the lofty ideals of freedom and self-government, now imposing its imperial will on global others. The nation's long-standing hypocrisies with regard to "freedom" and "empire" were neither novel nor surprising for its own domestic "others." But for at least a few members of the white elite of Cambridge, the hypocrisy, it seemed, had finally hit home.

James's rhetorical strategy is, nevertheless, to point this blindness outward, as a disease of passive spectatorship, not of willed erasure. In asking his audience to consider "the blindness with which we all are afflicted in regard to the feelings of creatures and people different from ourselves,"[12] James does not demand collective reckoning with the nation's historical and contemporary treatment of racial others at home (though he does share an anecdote about his own initial blindness to the simple but rich cultural life of mountain dwellers in North Carolina). Rather, by stringing together a series of artistic and cultural examples to illustrate how cultural blindness operates, James, in fact, invites his audience to take a more calculated, scientific look at the distance between ontology and spectatorship in general. Although his advocacy of a "hands-off" approach to respect and tolerance does nothing to remedy past wrongs or to encourage future alliances, his litany of examples that sutures scientific looking to artistic expression and everyday life opens the door to professionalizing long-standing questions about the study and experience of consciousness and raced personhood. These questions would take scientific center stage at the turn of the century and would have a profound impact on the scholarly and creative work of scientists, artists, and philosophers like James himself.

For James's theories about cultural blindness and the importance in understanding the profound gulf between "the subject judged" and "judging spectator" were literalized some thirty years prior to the penning of this lecture, when he found himself—as Darwin did thirty years prior to

that—aboard the steamship *Colorado* as a young collector, accompanying his professor and mentor Louis Agassiz on his 1865 Thayer Expedition to Brazil and the Amazon. In a journey best and shamefully remembered for the clandestine photographic experiments conducted by Agassiz in a failed attempt to prove the degenerating effects of racial "hybridity," James's experience stands as an interesting counterexample of a burgeoning intellectual vision of cultural continuities, and the impact of journey on consciousness and conceptions of selfhood. Despite its dubious scientific aims, the Thayer Expedition did play a pivotal role in marking the professional dénouement of Agassiz and the professional rise of William James, bringing together the decline of a nineteenth-century way of looking at personhood as a classifiable category of fixed traits, and a twentieth-century way of looking at it as an unquantifiable, shifting register of action and change. For the twenty-three-year-old James, this realization was especially personal, as his own understandings of selfhood and the value of experience changed throughout the journey, in large part due to his warm interactions with local people but also because of a bout with smallpox in the early part of the trip that rendered him temporarily blind, nearly threatening to end his journey before it truly began, and subsequently changing his perspective on the trip as a whole.

James's experiences in Brazil are best contextualized through a broader understanding of the project of scientific study and travel in the mid-nineteenth century onward, and of Agassiz's own goals for the expedition. As discussed in chapter 1, burgeoning scientific interests throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries all emerged from and worked in favor of empire and nation, from their very arguments to the contrary to their very methods of investigation. The collection and classification of species, the study of disease transmission, and, of course, the tracking of racial differences were each dependent, in various degrees, on the act of *capture*. These "anti-conquerors," whether on a private voyage or a royal commission, branded nature in an attempt to bring or restore European order to the untamed, chaotic splendor of the wild and to protect Empire from its taint. As historian of science Nancy Stepan explains: "By contrasting the scenery, animals, plants, and people at hand with those far away, naturalists instructed and confirmed their readers' sense of European superiority even as they appeared to extol the merits of the foreign. Tropical nature was, in this sense, part of the formation of Europe's identity as a place of temperateness, control, hard work and thriftiness as opposed to the

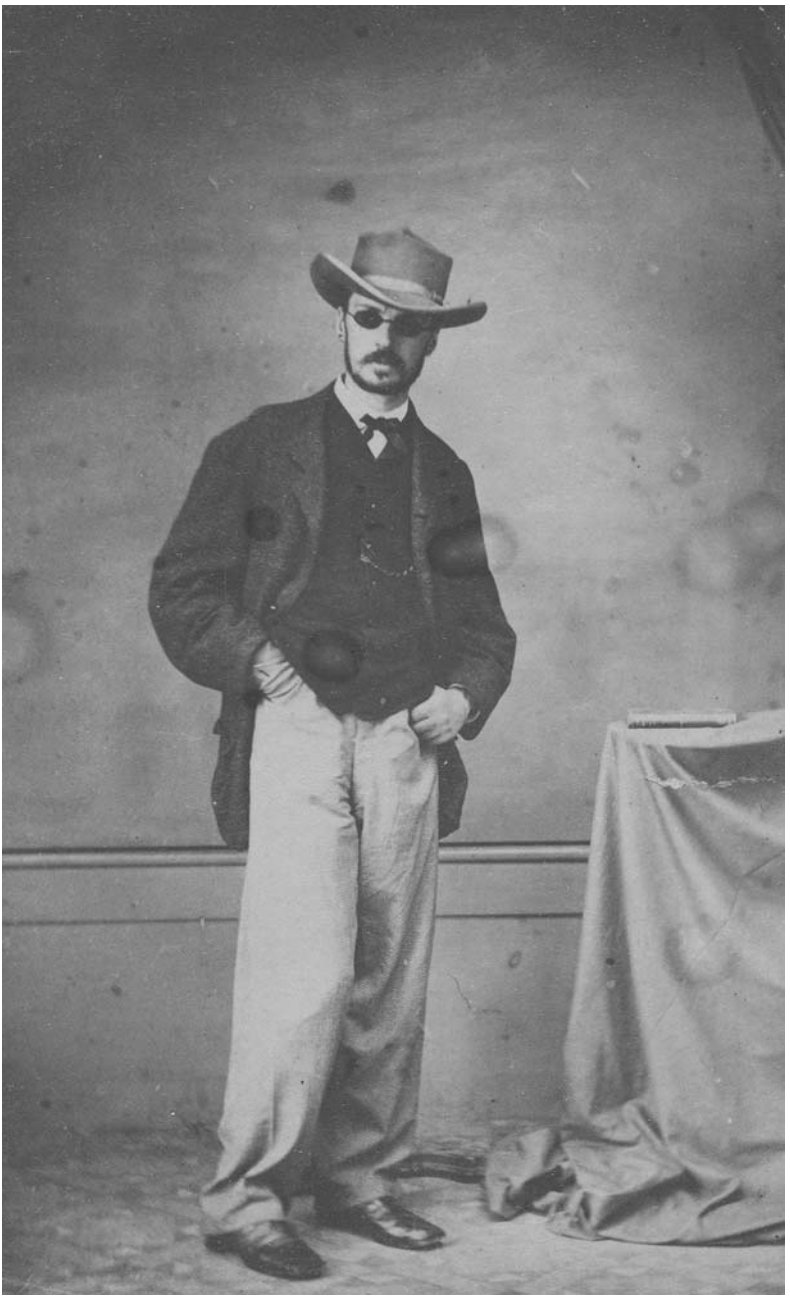

Figure 2.1. William James in Brazil, 1865. Reproduced with permission from the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

humidity, heat, extravagance and superfluity of the Torrid Zone."[13] The tropics had become, by the mid-nineteenth century, an active European laboratory for ethnological thought.

It was here, in the racially diverse Torrid Zone of 1865 Brazil, that Swiss-American naturalist Louis Agassiz—leading opponent of Darwin's theory in the States—set up an *actual* laboratory in Manaus, the Bureau d'Anthropologie. The bureau's main purpose was to record gradations of difference between "pure" races (which had been photographed in Rio de Janeiro) and "mixed" racial types in Manaus, in order to undo the evolutionary model of common descent and variation. Agassiz hoped to reveal, instead, the true "fixity" of race as a permanent category. He was convinced that continued interracial crossings over successive generations would inevitably degenerate and dilute the "pure" Anglo-Saxon race to the point of extinction and was thus determined to prove his hypothesis.[14]

Agassiz did not begin his scientific career with any particular interest in the study of human races. His primary research had begun in glacial research and ichthyological classification—studying Brazilian and European species of fish, in fact. Agassiz came to the United States in 1846 to study the geology of North America and to give a series of lectures on his research at the Lowell Institute. Sufficiently impressed by the scientific and economic advantages that a research life in the States could offer, he decided to stay, leaving his estranged, ailing wife, Cecile, and young children, Alexander, Ida, and Pauline, behind in Switzerland. (After his wife succumbed to tuberculosis in 1850, Agassiz did call his children to the States and eventually remarried into a wealthy Boston family.) As he toured the United States, Agassiz grew increasingly interested in the "race problem." After his first encounter with black waiters in Philadelphia, he wrote to his mother of his disgust, explaining how he kept his eyes fixed on them "in order to tell them to keep their distance. And when they put their hideous hand on my plate in order to serve me, I wished I were able to distance myself in order to eat my morsel of bread elsewhere."[15]

This visceral fear of contagion fueled Agassiz's pseudoscientific, nativist project. Agassiz also happened to arrive in Cambridge at the height of U.S. "scientific" interest in theories of racial degeneration. Racial theorists Josiah Nott and George Gliddon, following the work of Samuel George Morton, were at work on their landmark *Types of Mankind* (1854), which supported the polygenist theory that different races belonged to different species. Finding an audience for his own theories, based on their sponsorship and introductions, Agassiz went on lecture tours among slaveholders

in the South, emphasizing his belief in the biological distinction between white and black races. Through the encouragement of Nott, Gliddon, and his audiences, Agassiz strengthened his own beliefs in creationism and the separate species of mankind, eventually using this logic of racial separation to forward a pro-abolition platform.[16]

But as Darwin's theory crossed over to the States, on the heels of Agassiz's arrival, the scientific tide began to turn away from the charismatic charm of Agassiz's lectures and increasingly unsustainable theories. By midcentury, on the brink of a postevolutionary, post-Emancipation era, Atlantic world science shifted course, both in its objects of inquiry as well as the kinds of authoritative voices it privileged. The entrepreneurial spirit that had led the sciences in the early part of the century, and that had often privileged lay individuals with a curious penchant for innovation and invention, was replaced with a more unified, professionalized, and nationalist vision of science. In fact, a small subset of scientists (including Agassiz) who had self-deprecatingly dubbed themselves the "Scientific Lazzaroni," after the Neapolitan panhandlers and peddlers of the same name, had sought government recognition and institutional support for nearly a decade before the 1863 formation of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) by President Lincoln. They advocated for the promotion of a professionalized science practiced by highly trained, university-educated practitioners and researchers.[17]

The founding of the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard in 1847, where James had trained, was an earlier, private realization of the kinds of public institutions and programs the Lazzaroni hoped to foster and promote on a wider national scale. Lincoln's mandate for the newly minted NAS worked alongside this ideal, binding the goals of scientific endeavor with larger national goals of intellectual advancement, stating that the group "shall, whenever called upon by any department of the Government, examine, experiment, and report upon any subject of science or art."[18] The formation of the National Academy of Sciences thus reaffirmed the conjoined projects of science and nation at a time fraught with racial and cultural anxiety, as evolution, emancipation, anthropology, and immigration all came together in a particularly vexed way in the postbellum United States. The movement of ideas and people through the second half of the nineteenth century would clearly have lasting and profound consequences on national policy and scientific endeavor.

Agassiz did believe, along with his peers-turned-professional rivals like Asa Gray and Charles Darwin, in the work of science as "a collective

enterprise." But as Christoph Irmscher has pointed out in his measured portrait of Agassiz's life, work, and ideals, this enterprise was, for Agassiz, "a struggle for the *right* reading of nature." He emphasized the paramount role of scientific inquiry as the central disciplinary and epistemological force of his era: "It cannot be too soon understood," he insisted, "that science is one, and whether we investigate philosophy, theology, history, or physics, we are dealing with the same problem, culminating in the knowledge of ourselves."[19] Yet Agassiz's continued insistence on polygenic theories of racial evolution, in the wake of Darwin's increasingly accepted theories to the contrary, and in the midst of an increasingly professionalized route for science, slowly began to widen the gulf between his beliefs and the new direction of scientific inquiry. Although Agassiz's investment in proving his creationist theories through the degenerative implications of race mixture in Brazil was undoubtedly led by his continued (and increasingly solitary) "struggle" to offer "the right reading of nature," it may have also been part of a parallel desire to assimilate into a legacy of American frontiersmanship, as well as a larger global narrative of scientific travel and adventure. This shared frontierist mentality seems to be the key point of convergence that initially brought the young William James and his elder mentor together as they embarked on their journey. (The rest of their travels together, however, were spent intellectually splintering—albeit, respectfully—from one another.)

Young American men of the elite classes were encouraged to "go west" and make their destinies somewhere along the vast, uncharted frontier, just as European naturalists had embraced an "anti-conquest" model that encouraged adventure and discovery amid nature's infinite splendor. So James and Agassiz, too, wished to join this lineage of naturalists and frontiersmen, to secure their place in a long line of influential travelers.[20] For Agassiz, this rite of passage would have the dual benefit of solidifying his assimilation into an American cultural narrative and linking his own fact-finding journey to the exploratory wanderings of Darwin and Humboldt. In fact, while his Brazilian expedition remains the journey for which Agassiz is notoriously (and nefariously) remembered, it is worth noting that he did also complete, toward the end of his life, a deep-sea dredging expedition through South America aboard the *Hassler* in 1871–72, sailing from Boston to Barbados, then down along the South American coast, anchoring in the Straits of Magellan before heading west to San Francisco by way of the Galapagos Islands. It is "oddly fitting," confirms Irmscher, "that the final grand act" of Agassiz's professional life "should be framed

as a recasting of the first act of Charles Darwin's career."[21] While that final journey may have marked the culmination of this desire in Agassiz, it was nevertheless first realized by this earlier expedition.

This initial journey, for both Agassiz and James, offered thus a kind of redemption, fulfilling in each a military or scientific *manqué*—a desire to replicate the risks, depredations, and separation endured by soldiers (and in James's case, his younger brothers) in the Civil War; a professional goal to join the proud lineage of explorers and naturalists, from Magellan to Humboldt, who had crossed the ocean, basked in the tropics, had tamed and named the uncharted "wilderness," and returned home to write and retire in infamous glory. The reality of illness and faulty research did not exactly cohere with the grand utopian romance imagined by both men as they embarked on their journey on April 1, 1865, but it certainly changed them both and does still exemplify, in important ways, the limits and possibilities of both scientific investigation and self-knowledge—even if in large part as a cautionary tale.[22]

Thus in 1865, funded by Boston entrepreneur Nathaniel Thayer II, Agassiz assembled a team of fellow naturalists from the Museum of Comparative Zoology to form the Thayer Expedition. His young student collector, William James, also signed on to the journey, eager to learn from his mentor despite their difference of opinion on the evolution question.

The primary aim of the Thayer Expedition was to study the effect of glacial action in South America; its secondary (and independent) aim, to study the effects of race mixture. In addition to these scientific and anthropological experiments, Agassiz also went to advance some of the political and commercial interests of his adoptive country. As historian Maria H. P. T. Machado outlines: "First, the expedition coincided with US pressures on the Brazilian imperial government to open the Amazon to free navigation; second, it took place at a time when some American diplomats and entrepreneurs entertained the idea of resettling recently freed slaves as colonists or apprentices in the Amazon." Aware of Agassiz's friendly epistolary exchanges with Brazilian emperor Pedro II, the U.S. government gave the Thayer Expedition its official support in the hope that Agassiz might use his friendship as leverage to advance U.S. interests. With the help of this official support, along with Agassiz's well-known charisma and his friendship with Dom Pedro II, he was able to persuade the Brazilian government to open the Amazon to foreign navigation.[23]

Agassiz was, of course, less successful in his aims of resettling African Americans along the Amazon. But one of the main purposes of setting

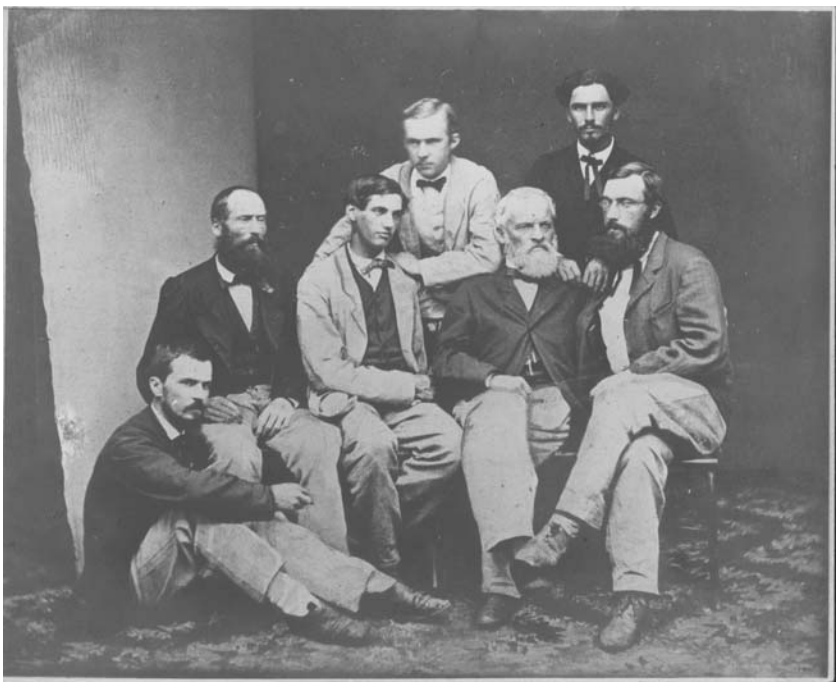

Figure 2.2. Members of Thayer Expedition, 1865. *Sitting on floor, bottom left*: William James; *on chairs, left to right*: D. Bourget, Walter Hunnewell, Jacques Burkhardt, Newton Dexter; *standing, left to right*: Stephen van Rensselaer Thayer, João Martins da Silva Coutinho. Copyright Ernst Mayr Library of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University. Reproduced with permission.

up a sustained racial study in the tropics, as the Bureau d'Anthropologie sought to do, was to try to prove that African races were best suited for tropical zones, perhaps thereby strengthening the case for their repatriation in the Amazon region.

This project was a kind of philanthropic addendum to the tenets of racial homogeneity, containment, and nationalism that shaped the Free Soil movement of the 1840s and 1850s. Gaining momentum shortly after Agassiz arrived in the United States in 1846 (and supported initially and primarily by northerners, who did not rely on African slave labor for their economic livelihood), members of the Free Soil Party defended abolition on the grounds that a strong nation was dependent on racial purity. As a result they advocated either the containment of African Americans to

the southern United States, or the (second) forced resettlement of African Americans to the tropical countries of South America.[24]

Of course, the idea of "repatriation" had accompanied nativist ideals for the better part of the century (and longer), but as the Civil War brought the reality of a freed, ex-slave population home to racist northerners and southerners alike, the transfer of African Americans to the tropics—primarily to Brazil—became a ready solution to "the race problem," although it had to be presented under the guise of philanthropy and science. Scientists like Agassiz thus argued that the darker races were constitutionally, biologically suited for tropical areas and would thrive there, whereas the lighter races could survive only in temperate regions. The Thayer Expedition and its Bureau d'Anthropologie set out, in part, to provide material evidence to strengthen this claim, and to return with a scientific argument for racial segregation and containment.[25]

Agassiz did this by capitalizing on the emerging technology of photography: He sought to bring home a visual archive of racial degeneration. Instead, what emerges in these photographs is a fascinating representative sample of Brazil's racially diverse population. As scholars like Nicole Fleetwood and Nicholas Mirzoeff have argued, "the photographic 'indexicality of race' grew in importance after the abolition of slavery," as technologies like photography developed alongside a modernizing and expanding visual culture in the late nineteenth century, one that also highlighted racial difference through public events like World's Fairs, museum exhibits, and freak shows. All of these became important tools for capturing and cataloguing difference. This mobile, visual archive of difference took center stage just as Darwin's theories of organic continuity forced readers, scientists, and citizens to rethink boundaries of kinship and community.[26]

Agassiz had a local photographer, German-Brazilian Augusto Stahl, take pictures of the "pure" Africans living in Rio, and then later enlisted Walter Hunnewell, a member of his own Thayer Expedition, to take the photos of the "hybrid" Amazonians in Manaus for comparison. These photos—especially those taken by Stahl, who was renowned throughout Brazil for his experimental and empathetic style—leave viewers wondering whether the photographer's vision is at odds with that of Agassiz. For example, the photo below, of a woman referred to as *Mina Tapa* from the "pure race" series, reveals a woman with a powerful stare and a heavily scarred face and chest. She also wears on her shoulder a *pano da costa* shawl, which had special significance in Afro-Brazilian culture as marking the spiritual leaders of slave communities.[27] The woman's hair is also

Figure 2.3. Tapa Mina, phrenological portrait by Augusto Stahl, glass plate collodion, Rio de Janeiro, ca. 1865. Louis Agassiz Photographic Collection, Pure Race Series. Reproduced with permission from the Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnography, Harvard University.

covered by a silk African turban, or *torço*. This hardly reads as a scientific daguerreotype. Even if that was its photographic purpose, its narrative function does something else: full of ethnic particularity and an expressive gaze that speaks *back* to the viewer, this artifact rejects Agassiz's fantasy of scientific inferiority or even "racial purity." We do not know by what terms this subject has been deemed "pure" African, or how she might self-identify. But she bears the marks, on her clothing and on her skin, of a diasporic, transnational narrative that speaks beyond the photographic frame.[28]

In the Hunnewell series, we see even more clearly the attention to sartorial detail and adornment in both the men and women. Sometimes dressed and sometimes stripped to the waist but for beautiful necklaces, headdresses, or formal slips that remain, the shame is compounded for viewer, sitter, and photographer alike, as the very indignity of the request to disrobe is very much alive in what remains *on* in the photograph.

As Nancy Stepan has shown in her detailed explication of the Manaus photographs, "it is clear from the context, and from the images themselves, that all of these photographs are of *cabaclos*—that is, acculturated men and women from Manaus. . . . They were hardly forest Amerindians, but rather people who ordinarily wore clothes and were now being asked to take them off."[29] Agassiz was obviously unable to prove his radical and scientifically unfounded theory of racial degeneration through these photographs. Other than a memoir, *A Journey in Brazil,* written primarily by his second wife, Elizabeth Agassiz, his ethnological research did not reach a wider audience in its time, instead further splintering Agassiz from the new, evolutionist direction of his scientific community.

Elizabeth, who served as Agassiz's chief scribe on this journey as well as the subsequent *Hassler* expedition, in fact may have—intentionally or not—toned down the potential embarrassment of her husband's "findings" by highlighting the performative nature of his overall enterprise, interspersing her own narrative observations and tidy descriptions of the scenery and people alongside ventriloquized statements by her husband about soil and rock formations, and specimens collected from various sites. As James himself noted in his diary, Mrs. Agassiz "seems to fancy that we are mere figures walking about in strange costume on a stage with appropriate scenery."[30] Like Darwin's playful imagining of himself as "a grand barbarian" (as discussed in chapter 1), and like Franz Boas's unintentional pose of village doctor (as discussed in chapter 3), Elizabeth

Figure 2.4. Portrait of a racial type, unidentified woman, Walter Hunnewell, Manaus, 1865–66. Louis Agassiz Photographic Collection, Mixed Race Series. Reproduced with permission from the Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnography, Harvard University.

Figure 2.5. Portrait of a racial type, unidentified woman, Walter Hunnewell, Manaus, 1865–66. Louis Agassiz Photographic Collection, Mixed Race Series. Reproduced with permission from the Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnography, Harvard University.

Agassiz also performed, through her narrative complement to this photographic archive, the collective and the constructed nature of all scientific endeavor, in which professional and amateur acts of observation and encounter are necessarily intertwined, blurring the very idea of the disciplining, authoritative gaze.

There is yet a broader racial lesson to emerge from this radical photographic experiment—one that also reveals, like Elizabeth Agassiz's prose, the impossibility of fixed order beyond the orchestration of narrative. These photos not only illustrate how rampant and utterly unquantifiable the study of race mixture was in Brazil but also hint at the comparative lack of surveillance and legislation of such manufactured difference, unlike the draconian practices of detecting, policing, and segregating different races in the United States. In a country where slavery still flourished, race mixture was not just an accepted consequence of interracial contact but a fusion increasingly encouraged and touted by the Brazilian elite as one of the country's most original features—the convergence of the African, the AmerIndian, the European, and the Asian in a single and uniquely New World stock. Racial amalgamation was not considered degenerative but foundational to the prosperity of the Brazilian nation.[31]

The roots of Brazil's celebratory narrative, however, were of course embedded in similar fears of blackness and rampant racism among the Brazilians themselves. Its national resolution lay not in segregation or in expatriation but in the highly problematic idea of erasure through reproduction. Rio's French ambassador, the controversial racialist Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau, had convinced Dom Pedro II to bring in more Italians and Germans to work Brazilian plantations in an attempt to dissolve the black race from its population. However, toward the end of the nineteenth century and beyond, Brazilian elites continued to emphasize the importance of *all* races to the national-racial character. In such a projection, lauded by other turn-of-the-century Brazilian writers and theorists like Silvio Romero, Brazil's black citizens would play a vital role in the future of a strong and representative Brazil—a model of geographic diversity, a literal embodiment of the strengths of the New World.[32]

Instead of a country in decline, and despite its continued practice of slavery that would extend well toward the end of the century, the Brazil that Agassiz encountered was not the Brazil of earlier European travelers like Humboldt.[33] It was, as scholar Cannon Schmitt has described, "at once 'new' and 'old,' open to exploration but already traveled."[34] No longer in search for the beginnings of civilization and humanity, Louis Agassiz

came to this same place to unearth the only mystery he felt was left to be unraveled—the end of civilization and humanity. Instead, what he found was a nation on the brink of modernity, suffused with the same racial tensions as those in *his* new world of North America, but supplanting that tension not with theories of degeneration but of regeneration.

The difference at the heart of these two nationalist visions is hardly congratulatory for either country. The propagation of Brazil's own myth as a melting pot of racial fusion is unconvincing for a nation that did not abolish slavery until 1888.[35] But the significance of this kind of rhetoric and promotion of race mixture, especially in such a scientifically and politically fraught moment, stands as an important example of how narratives of racial performance began to supplant narratives of racial order. Unlike traditional narratives of descent, which are concerned with tracing, discovering, and distinguishing past origins in order to situate the present organic structure, the model of diasporic personhood performed and recognized in Brazil (with all its attendant problems and contradictions) reveals itself to be uncontainable and resistant to classification. It thus destabilizes and extends our understanding of ontology as both deeply rooted in the body and also untethered from the category of individual subject, representing an indissoluble collectivity—an accumulating discourse of and beyond the body that is always moving, becoming, and unbecoming.

William James began his Thayer Expedition journey with all the attendant expectations of a young man who had read many a romantic and orientalist adventure tale. Although his time in Brazil exists primarily as an epistolary record, along with a few sketches and journal entries, a closer examination of these scattered glimpses provides not only a different point of entry into Agassiz's mission but also reveals the impact of these early travels on the eventual career and influence of William James on a new era of scientific and cultural thought.

An early letter to his family conveys James's conventional style of travel narrative, as he writes dramatically yet typically in April 1865, upon the *Colorado*'s approach to the Rio de Janeiro harbor, that "no words of mind, or of any man short of Williams the divine can give any idea of magnificence of this harbor & its approaches. The boldest grandest mountains, far and near, the palms and other trees of such vivid green as I never saw any where else." He continues with further confirmation that all appears as statically blissful as he had imagined: "The town," he writes, "realizes

my idea of an African town in its architecture and effect. Almost everyone is a negro or a negress, which words I perceive we don't know the meaning of with us; a great many of them are native Africans & tattooed. The men have white linen drawers and short shirts. . . . The women wear huge turbans and have a peculiar rolling gait. . . . Their attitudes as they sleep & lie about the streets are picturesque to the last degree."[36] Espousing a typical imperialist vision of tropical splendor, in which a Western-conjured image of otherness is mirrored back for his consumption in a familiar yet inspirational way, James is nonetheless careful to point to the difference between *these* "negros" and those "we don't know the meaning of" back home. Although his wording in this passage is somewhat subtle, his implication suggests an initial acceptance of surface-based notions of racial essence: dress, gait, physical markings are constitutive, at least from afar, of these residents of Rio as *native* Africans, and the "purity" of their Africanness makes them a "picturesque" part of the local scenery, unlike the African Americans at home.

These early musings seem to align most directly with Agassiz's vision of fixed racial traits, and the young James is initially smitten with the charisma of his mentor, as were many in Agassiz's circle. James writes in the same letter home that "Agassiz is one of the most fascinating men personally that I ever saw. I could listen to him talk by the hour." He adds, however, a hint of the shift to come, concluding that "he is so childlike."[37] It takes only a month into the journey for James's professional opinion of the man to sour a bit, even as he remains taken with his personal charms, writing that Agassiz's "charlatanerie is almost as great as his solid worth; and it seems of an unconscious childish kind that you can't condemn him for as you would most people. He wishes to be too omniscient. But his personal fascination is very remarkable."[38] As James's disillusion grows, his depictions of tropical splendor are interspersed, in his letters home, with an expression of his desire to come home. "I think that I shall probably return home after the end of this journey, if I make it without going to the Amazons," writes James to his father in June. "I shall have seen enough on the journey. Since seeing more of Agassiz, my desire to be with him, so as to learn from him has much diminished. He is doubtless a man of some wonderful mental faculties, but such a politician & so self-seeking & illiberal to others that it sadly diminishes one's respect for him."[39]

Perhaps an offshoot of his discomfort with Agassiz's vision for the expedition, and of his clandestine photographic experiments (though James makes no direct mention of these in his letters home), James also

develops an overall disdain for the act of collection and categorization, which was his primary occupation on the journey. Again, in his June letter to his father, Henry Sr., the young man complains that "I find that by staying I shall learn next to nothing of Natural History as I care about learning it. My whole work will be mechanical, finding objects and packing them, and working so hard at that and in travelling that no time at all will be found for studying their structures. The affair reduces itself thus to so many months spent in physical exercise."[40] His frustration leads to an early realization that "I am cut out for a speculative rather than an active life." James distances himself from the great heroes of empire and travel literature, admitting to his father that "on the steamer I began to read Humboldt's *Travels.* Hardly had I opened the book when I seemed to become illuminated. Good Heavens! When such men are provided to do the work of traveling, exploring and observing for humanity, men who gravitate into their works as the air does into our lungs, what need, what *business* have *we* outsiders to pant after them and toilsomely try to serve as their substitutes?"[41]

James's desire for a more contemplative way of studying the natural world is fulfilled in the most unforeseen and unlikely way, just a few months into his journey: through his temporary condition of blindness. Rather than cut his journey short, as he had originally planned, James's recovery and renewed vision instill in him a completely different perspective on his role in the expedition, and his relationship with the people he meets along the way.

Although his bout with blindness is somewhat brief, the worst of it lasting from mid-June to mid-July (though his eyes remained weak for some time after that), the slow return of vision as experience in itself allows James to "feel like a new being" and to participate in his journey in a different way than the standard scientific observer.[42] Although his language is still firmly situated within the tradition of imperial wonder akin to Humboldt, Darwin, Hudson, and other naturalists who also experienced and narrated their journeys of the natural world in the awe-inspired prose of museum-goers staring at a landscape painting of the primordial past, James seems to internalize the space in a very presentist way that alters his narration from a strictly panoramic view-from-the-harbor style of writing often employed by other scientists and ethnographers of his time (and by James himself in his earliest depiction above). James's writing, as his journey progresses, betrays a more impressionistic, if still imperial and fetishistic, quality, as evidenced in a letter he writes to his brother Henry in July, as his sight slowly returns.

Although he begins the missive with a similar expression of inarticulable awe as he did in his earliest letter home, and although he ends with an aerial, imperial glance across the landscape, he also inserts himself more fully into the chaos that is, for the first time, too overwhelming to order and name. As his vision returns, James writes more earnestly from within the realm of experience, not the distant horizon of observation:

> No words, but only savage inarticulate cries can express the gorgeous loveliness of the walk I have been taking. Houp la la! The bewildering profusion & confusion of the vegetation, the inexhaustible variety of its forms & tints (yet they tell us we are in the winter when much of its brilliancy is lost) are *literally* such as you have never dreamt of. The brilliancy of the sky and the clouds, the effect of the atmosphere which gives their proportional distance to the diverse planes of the landscape make you admire the Old Gal nature.[43]

James also writes in August to his mother about "the jumping toothache" he feels in his eyes if he sets his sights too long upon an object, intimating through a language of hunger and consumption that his desire to devour and feast upon this wondrous repast of nature is curbed by a reflexive resistance to prolonged study—a consequence of his physical limits, to be sure, but one that shapes his re-visions of Brazil, in any case. Unlike his elder counterpart, Darwin, on *his* first journey abroad, whose language and observations grew increasingly focused as his journey progressed, James's language and (in)sights grow increasingly undisciplined and wandering, taking in the scenery and the people in a manner that is less imperial and more delighted by acts of unlearning.[44]

As his vision and his health improve, and as "the real enjoyment of the expedition is beginning & I am tasting the sweets of these lovely forests here," James writes to his mother, "I find it impossible," after all, "to tear myself away & this morning I told Prof. that I would see this Amazon trip through at any rate."[45] James's encounters with local people, from boatmen to servants, allow him to see and accept this world on its own terms. By the time he is ready to leave the expedition, James begins to see himself—in a step beyond Darwin's amused sense of his costumed self as "a grand barbarian"—as part of the local culture. By the end of his journey, he sleeps in a hammock, speaks rudimentary Portuguese, and refers teasingly to his baby sister as "the lovely white child" that he, "the red man of the forest" would "like to hug" and hold close.[46]

In his eight-month stint in Brazil, James learned not only that he was more suited for philosophy than science but also, as Darwin did to some degree, some valuable lessons about the cloak of cultural difference. As his tone shifts and matures throughout his journey, James reserves most of his imperial awe for the landscape, discussing people and places through relative comparisons that make them seem more relatable to his reading audience: his family at home in Cambridge. James thwarts the more exotic descriptions in favor of depictions of the Amazon and its inhabitants that are more familiar than foreign. He writes, for example, that the "streets and shops" of Rio "remind you so much of Europe" and that there is a kind of monotony and tedium in tropical nature, as there would be in a stretch of American or British wilderness.[47] He also writes of an Indian woman he meets: "I marveled, as I always do, at the quiet urbane polite tone of the conversation between my friends and the old lady. Is it race or is it circumstance that makes these people so refined and well bred? No gentleman of Europe has better manners and these are peasants."[48] Of course, some of James's letters are also riddled with his share of negative stereotypes about "lazy" and intellectually "barren" Brazilians and Indians, as well as an "amusing" anecdote about the temporary kidnapping of a seemingly willing young Indian boy when labor was needed.[49] But overall, James found far more continuities than differences and felt an increasing sense of shame at his mentor's treatment of the local people at the Bureau d'Anthropologie. Although James never took a public stand against Agassiz, he is perhaps the only expedition member to write anything about the experiments or the local community's reaction to them. In a November 10 diary entry, James writes of his presence at a photographic session where prominent Brazilian politician Tavares Bastos came in and mocked the enterprise:

> On entering the room found Prof. engaged in cajoling 3 moças whom he called pure Indians but who, I thought as afterward appeared, had white blood. They were very nicely dressed in white muslin & jewelry with flowers in their hair & an excellent smell of pripioca. Apparently refined, at all events not sluttish, they consented in the utmost liberties being taken with them and two without much trouble were induced to strip and pose naked. While we were there, Sr. Tavares Bastos came in and asked me mocking if I was attached to the Bureau d'Anthropologie.[50]

James seems to share the politician's tongue-in-cheek sensibility about this pseudoprofessional enterprise, and questions the racial constitution

of the women Agassiz had photographed as "pure"-blooded Indians. It is clear that James did not participate in the "collection" of specimen for this portion of Agassiz's journey, and that his most important revelations came from his own interactions with people in Brazil.

On the whole, however, I would argue that James's most profound lesson on this journey is an introspective, or transpersonal one. His firsthand experience with actual blindness in a foreign land, coupled with his early disillusion with Agassiz, provide him with a particular insight, or second sight, for the rest of his journey into the limits of truth, self-knowledge, and the knowledge of others. As a result, he learns from his own personal experience how scientific and cultural blindness operate—the limits of what one chooses to see and ignore, both in oneself and others. James expresses this vexed relationship between insight and blindness in his final letter home to his mother, in which he writes of his current inability to envision life as he once knew it in Boston, and how this same feeling will soon apply to the time he has spent in Brazil. His voice shifts back and forth between these two visions and desires: of current satiation and a longing to return home, followed by the worry that he will be estranged from the life that awaits him there, and that his visions of this space will soon fade:

> I am on the whole very glad this thing is winding up—not that I have not enjoyed parts of it intensely and regard it as one of the best spent portions of my life; but enough is as good as a feast; I thoroughly *hate* collecting, and long to be back to books, studies &c after this elementary existence. You have no idea, my dearest Mother, how strange that home life seems to me from the depths of this world buried as it is in mere vegetation and physical needs & enjoyments. I hardly think you will be able to understand me, but the idea of the people swarming about as they do at home, killing themselves with thinking about things that have no connexion with their merely external circumstances, studying themselves into fevers, going mad about religion, philosophy, love & sich [*sic*] . . . seems almost incredible and imaginary, and yet I only left it 8 months ago. . . . I dare say when I get home I shall have for a time many a pang of nostalgia for this placid Arcadia; even now it often suffices for me to see an orange tree or one of these mellow sunsets to make me shrink from the thought of giving them up all together. At one time this was so strong that I could hardly bear to think of not going back to the superb old Rio with the Prof. and revis[it]ing all those places on the coast which I could enjoy so little when we passed them, owing to my eye.[51]

Although James's double vision is still one that conventionally pits society against nature in a typically dangerous dualism, there is yet a seed here of his future research into psychic duality, and the ways in which a person can be at once home and elsewhere, and can have warring desires, memories, and affiliations in a single body. This journey into the Amazon and into himself shaped James's later work on consciousness, work that would have a lasting influence on philosophical and literary articulations of the experience of raced personhood in the new century.

James returned to the United States plagued with continued eye strain and severe depression. Despite his struggles, he completed his medical studies in 1869, though he never became a practicing physician. Instead, he accepted a series of appointments to teach at Harvard that spanned a wide range of interrelated fields across the next decade, starting out first in anatomy and physiology, then moving to psychology, and eventually splitting his time between philosophy and psychology.

It is during this first decade of his career that James first experimented with nitrous oxide. Introduced to it by an eccentric New York philosopher and pamphleteer named Benjamin Paul Blood, James became intrigued by the challenge of "getting behind" the self as a means of plumbing the depths of one's own consciousness and tried (unsuccessfully) to use nitrous oxide to help carry him over.[52]

Although this is a period of James's own career that is often glossed over, since his rambling "findings" while under the influence tend not to be as illuminating as the experience itself (which gets us to the gulf between experience and the language of observation once more), it serves, nonetheless, as an important illustration of how science began to intervene in questions of the self that had, until this point, been left to philosophers and clergymen. The desire to utilize the methods of scientific excavation to evoke the romantic mysteries of the self provided a new angle to a broader nineteenth-century transcendentalism, in which the hand of God revealed itself through Nature's divine beauty. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, science had joined that mission, asserting itself "as a sort of natural theology placed at the service of mankind."[53]
James's work on theories of consciousness continued well past this era, of course. In 1884, he became a founding member of the American chapter of the British Society for Psychical Research, which made "an organized and systematic attempt" to study "that large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as 'mesmeric,' 'psychical,' and 'spiritualistic.'"[54]

James hoped to expand the realm of scientific inquiry into this uncharted territory, in part to skew the dividing line between the material and the spiritual, or what he referred to as the tension between the "scientific-rational" mind and the "feminine-mystical" mind. By opening up scientific inquiry in this way to make space for the unknown and for the consideration of the personality biases that a scientist brings to his own research, James was able to use his new way of looking—simultaneously inward and outward—to level a critique against the positivist era of the omniscient scientist. Whether or not James's theories emerged from his romantic experiences of second sight in Brazil or from his negative experiences with Agassizian positivism in this same space, it is clear that the Thayer Expedition played no small part in the shaping of an oppositional discourse that would have profound political implications for scientists and race scholars working at the boundaries of the scientific and the spiritual in the new century.[55]

In a passage from his 1909 "Confidences of a Psychic Researcher," in which he writes about the transpersonal connections hidden within the self, James illustrates how his brand of rhizomatic thinking about consciousness might easily translate into a broader political vision of the buried, connected histories of the wider Atlantic world:

> Out of my experience . . . one fixed conclusion dogmatically emerges, and that is, that we with our lives are like islands in the sea, or like trees in the forest. The maple and the pine may whisper to each other with their leaves, and Conanicut and Newport hear each other's foghorns. But the trees also commingle their roots in the darkness underground, and the islands also hang together through the ocean's bottom. Just so there is a continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds but accidental fences, and onto which our several minds plunge as into a mother-sea or reservoir. Our "normal" consciousness is circumscribed for adaptation to our external earthly environment, but the fence is weak in spots, and fitful influences from beyond leak in, showing the otherwise unverifiable common connexion.[56]

James provides, once more, a poetic rendering of personhood as a multilayered self, a "continuum of cosmic consciousness" that is protected and hidden away by the "accidental fences" of public persona. The individuality we must present to the world in order to be properly read and translated can only skim the surface of ontology. The inaccessible "truth"

of experience must give way to the very limited and dangerously fallible "truth" of observation. James's exploration into the limits of scientific inquiry, from his earliest realizations in the Bureau d'Anthropologie to his larger explorations into the unconscious and the mystical (that went far beyond these early experiments with psychedelic drugs, of course, to span an illustrious career as a pioneering figure in psychology), did expand the boundaries of scientific study from the conventional field of symptoms and objects to a larger field that encompassed the transpersonal and mystical, as well as the transhistorical and communal.

It is through this transition in late-nineteenth-century thought that we begin to see an avenue for a discourse of racial consciousness and personhood that emerges *through* science, not in spite of it. Just as scholars like James made room for the inclusion of the unconscious and the mystical in scientific discourse, African American scholars used it to critique scientific positivism, conceptualizing "the social scientist as a disunified and subjective observer in contradiction to the confidently unitary ideal self of the Victorian social investigator."[57] African American scholars and scientists like Frederick Douglass and Martin Delany were already at work on ideas of racial consciousness and social and historical continuities in the decades preceding James's rise to scientific notoriety. Martin Delany might have even become a central figure in the life and education of the young James had he been allowed to continue his own education at Harvard Medical School in the 1850s. But the public outcry that erupted over the arrival of Delany and two other students, as the first three African American students admitted, led to their prompt dismissal and to Delany's subsequent career-shaping turn to black nationalism and a desire to repatriate his people to Liberia. It was the advancement of his own ethnological ideas about the superiority of the black race, as outlined in his 1879 *Principia of Ethnology: The Origin of Races and Color*, that serves as a powerful rejoinder to Agassiz, Norton, Gliddon, and the rest and that originally sutured the scientific and the spiritual together, citing "classical and Biblical sources" to situate Africa as the birthplace of intellectual and scientific innovation erroneously attributed to the West.[58]

At the turn of the century, though, it was a young W. E. B. Du Bois who first learned of Jamesian ideas of consciousness as a student at Harvard himself from 1888 to 1892. Du Bois writes that it was James who led him "out of the sterilities of scholastic philosophy to realist pragmatism."[59] By the time Du Bois developed the notion of double consciousness, the term "already had wide currency in the late nineteenth century as a name for

the phenomenon of multiple personality."[60] But both Du Bois and James worked, throughout their careers, to detach the stigma of pathology from the notion of double consciousness. For Du Bois, this had particularly important consequences for questions of race, as he already understood the clinical and pathologizing implications of the term "Negro Problem," thus opening his discussion of *The Souls of Black Folk* with that well-known rhetorical, "How does it feel to be a problem?"[61] The very question itself hints at pathology and the need for an "official" investigation.[62]

Both men worked, instead, at the interstices of science and mysticism, to "make intelligible that which has been relegated to the outside of normative cultural boundaries" and to envision the permeability of the self as a gift, not a pathology. For both men, the solution rested, in large part, on the ownership and direction of one's vision—the harnessing of a "second sight" that allowed one to step outside oneself and maintain both a scientific invisibility and a mystical insight into "unmediated truth." The veil, in Du Bois, then, is not an accidental fence or defense mechanism that represses the self but a protective gift that allows omniscient power and strategic camouflage. Thus the key to activating racial consciousness is to transform what seems to be a curse of repression and blindness into the transpersonal gift of second sight—a double consciousness—which has been in one's possession since birth but must be awakened and harnessed in order to effect real change.

It is important to note that this vision is more fluid than syncretic—it is not offered in either Jamesian or Du Boisian philosophy as a compartmentalization of the selves, which could be read as a curative or transcendent ideal. Rather, "the figure of double consciousness" embraces multiplicity in an empowering, self-actualized way and "represents an alternative subject position to that constructed by western science." Like James's own experiences with blindness and Du Bois's own experiences behind the veil, self-knowledge, for both thinkers, comes *through* materiality and kinship. Again, the spiritual and the scientific, in this context, are linked to embodied history and shared experience, not to the passive spectatorship of positivism.[63] James highlights the importance of blurring disciplinary boundaries (and institutions) in order to unleash the complexities of the mind, stating, in 1901, that "the menagerie and the madhouse, the nursery, the prison, and the hospital, have been made to deliver up their material. The world of the mind is shown as something infinitely more complex than was suspected; and whatever beauties it may still possess, it has lost at any rate the beauty of academic neatness."[64]

These abstract concepts of consciousness, vision, and racial performance come to life in the fiction of turn-of-the-century writer Pauline Hopkins, who takes this chapter's concerns with science, race, and transpersonal journeying to a vital space in the history of African American consciousness, especially at the turn of the twentieth century: Ethiopia. Hopkins's vision, as portrayed in her 1902–3 serialized novel *Of One Blood: Or, the Hidden Self*, brings together Delany's own work on Ethiopia as the ancient source of Western modernity and his firm political advocacy of African return, James's scientific investigations into the "unclassified residuum" of the self, and Du Bois's brilliant dictum of an African American double consciousness in which observation and experience, nation and race, come together in a joint call for both introspection and political action. The convergence of these ideas would transform the study of racial lineage and racial consciousness from the realm of cultural curiosity and scientific pathology to a model of political possibility for the new century.

Hopkins's novel propels us forward to the turn of the century, to a post–Reconstruction era U.S. landscape in which the racial paranoia that fueled Agassiz's Brazilian mission was kept alive through the legislated separation of races via *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). The terror of the auction block was replaced with the terror of the lynch mob, and the terms of inclusion or exclusion from the national narrative often depended on the detection of color. The story centers on the character of Reuel Briggs, a mixed-race African American man with a gift/curse of mesmeric power, who is passing as white in order to complete his studies unimpeded at Harvard Medical School.[65] After a series of misadventures, Reuel finds himself on an archaeological expedition to Africa, arranged by his alleged best friend, Aubrey Livingstone. It is here that Reuel discovers—through mesmeric visions—that Aubrey not only arranged this trip as an assassination plot to have Reuel killed abroad and to destroy his (thankfully, unconsummated) marriage to the lovely Dianthe Lusk, but that they are *all* siblings by blood. Born to a slave mother and slave-owning father, the children had been separated at birth, and only Aubrey had been raised as legitimate heir to their white father's fortune. The novel tidily resolves the sins of incest with the death of Aubrey and Dianthe and restores the pride of kinship with Reuel's discovery, during his expedition, that he is heir to the throne of Telassar, a hidden, thriving civilization in Ethiopia, and that he is betrothed to the beautiful African queen Candace, who conveniently bears a striking resemblance to his dear, lost Dianthe.

Reuel is introduced to readers as a studious young man, isolated by the secret of his racial identity and supernatural powers, contemplating suicide while reading *The Unclassified Residuum*, a fictive book attributed to Alfred Binet (whose actual 1890 work, *On Double Consciousness*, along with the work of William James, as discussed, had a striking influence on Du Bois's subsequent formulation of this idea). However, as scholars have noted, the passages excerpted in Hopkins's novel about occult practices of healing, and the "effects of the imagination," come not from Binet but from an essay written by William James, also in 1890, entitled "The Hidden Self" (which is also Hopkins's subtitle for this novel), in which he writes:

> No part of the unclassified residuum [of human experience] has usually been treated with a more contemptuous scientific disregard than the mass of phenomena generally called *mystical*. Physiology will have nothing to do with them. Orthodox psychology turns its back on them. Medicine sweeps them out; or, at most, when in an anecdotal vein, records a few of them as "effects of the imagination"—a phrase of mere dismissal, whose meaning, in this connection, it is impossible to make precise. All the while, however, the phenomena are there, lying broadcast over the surface of history.[66]

The disciplinary rejection of these mystical phenomena from a science that cordons itself off as a "closed and completed system of truth" thus renders them "unclassifiable," explains James.[67] He then carefully and strategically uses this rejection to expose the man-made nature of accepted scientific truths, scolding that "we college-bred gentry" are smug in our "shock" at occasionally "stumbling upon" *other* kinds of journals whose readers are "not only living and ignoring us and all our gods, but actually reading and writing and cogitating without ever a thought of our canons, standards, and authorities." He thus invites his readers to change course and to insist, instead, on the porosity of scientific boundaries, imploring that we must work together to "renovate" science by reconsidering these "wild facts . . . which threaten to break up the system." This "renewed" science, promises James, will and must include "new formulas" that hold "more of the voice of the exceptions in them than of what were supposed to be the rules."[68] By making room for the wild and undisciplined side of science, by revealing its constructedness and porosity, explain Hopkins scholars like Thomas Otten, "James also seems to validate those moments in black letters in which basic assumptions about identity become open to question."[69]

Hopkins's Reuel is introduced as just such an exceptional character, already mired in these conflicts of scientific and cultural duality. Passing as white, hiding his mesmeric gifts, he is trying to find a space in this borderland between the scientific-rational and the feminine-mystical, between America and Africa. Of course, these dualities are never so clearly demarcated in life as they are in fiction, and Reuel's crisis of identity, in an actual case, would have been far too complicated to resolve with the seamless merging of two clearly defined identities, each easily mapped on a separate continent. Yet, he serves as a symbolic example of global racial and scientific pride at an early political moment for the "New Negro" movement, in which the work of racial uplift and solidarity in the new century would emphasize the dual importance of both black internationalism and black activism. As a composite sketch of Delany, Du Bois, and James, Reuel shares some of their biographical details (as a student at Harvard interested in the occult; as a young man who embarks on a scientific expedition that turns into a narrative of African return), but he also represents their intellectual and political legacy, as he is able to use his own gift of second sight to lead his people to a new future that resolves the dualities raised by James and Du Bois through an African return advocated by Delany. Reuel brings these mystical phenomena to the forefront of scientific and political discourse, and literalizes the experience of pan-Africanism by bringing buried memories and histories to the surface in other characters, as well as channeling these in himself. Reuel thus represents a new era in which the scientific and the spiritual might work together to create a new scientific-mystical global, racial consciousness.[70]

There is, of course, an essential biologism at work in Hopkins's vision, even as she constructs a discourse around blood and purity that stands as a response against racialists of previous decades, like Agassiz, who sought to use that same discourse to promote and prove the degeneration of races through blood mixing. Hopkins instead uses "blood" alternatingly to refer to all peoples of the world (citing the biblical and Darwinian refrain repeatedly throughout the novel: "Of one blood have I made all nations of men to dwell upon the whole face of the earth"), or to those of "pure" African ancestry (like Queen Candace). By using blood to point to these contradictory yet connected categories, Hopkins hints at the impossibility of racial classification, since the lines of descent are not always knowable or traceable.[71]

Because Hopkins's story is as much about the history of a family and a people as it is the story of a single man or woman, her interest in the occult also departs from the mere curiosity of scientists like James and Blood, who

used recreational drugs to attempt to "get behind the self." For characters like Reuel and Dianthe, the act of "getting behind the self" is revelatory of a larger history that neither could access without the help of mesmeric intervention that is outside the parameters of conventional scientific discipline.

Although fields like psychology, philosophy, and even archaeology readily incorporated the occult sciences as part of their investigation of "alternative consciousness," Hopkins understood the more serious implications and opportunities of these cross-disciplinary interventions, making brilliant use of their inherent and increasing overlap.

Through the simultaneous invocation of multiple sciences of "the occult, ethnology, and archaeology, as well as psychology," as critics like Susan Gillman have noted, Hopkins "foregrounds the mobility of nineteenth-century sciences as interracial, transcultural meeting grounds." In so doing, she uses the occult to bring racial consciousness to the fore of scientific investigation in a new and restorative way, not as the locus of repressed degeneracy, but as the hidden archive of a stolen prosperity and greatness. The merging of evolutionary thought and occult practice succeeds in Hopkins's work, then, where her "stubborn biologism" fails. For, while Gillman and others, as discussed above, have rightly criticized Hopkins's dangerous reliance on the same pseudoscientific and conservative notions of *blood* as the basis for racial superiority or bland social harmony that eugenicists and evangelists espoused, it is precisely her investment in the occult that extends and moves her "blood talk" beyond monogenesis, evolution, and the biological, and into the realm of a broader, diasporic historical consciousness that resides "behind the self." Through a deliberate crossing of disciplinary fields, Hopkins restores the incontrovertible truth of a racial unity routed through multiple bodies, histories, and most importantly, a shared consciousness that allows (indeed, insists upon) the participation of "all nations" and all disciplines in the reclamation of Africa's past prosperity, and in the prophetic vision of its future success.[72]

To return, then, to the novel's depiction of such crossings, we find that, when Reuel first sees Dianthe in her trance-like state, conventional physicians have pronounced her dead. But Reuel has already had a vision about her and knows he must use a different method to heal her. "How important the knowledge of whither life tends!" thinks Reuel to himself, as he looks upon Dianthe in her suspended state:

> Here is shown the setting free of a *disciplined* spirit giving up its mortality for immortality—the condition necessary to know God. Death! There is no

> death. Life is everlasting, and from its reality can have no end. Life is real and never changes, but preserves its identity eternally as the angels, and the immortal spirit of man, which are the only realities and continuities in the universe, God being over all, Supreme Ruler and Divine Essence from whom comes all life. Somewhat in this train ran Reuel's thoughts as he stood beside the seeming dead girl, the cynosure of all the medical faculty there assembled.[73]

Reuel's own mesmeric powers are a direct link to James's later work on hypnosis and the unconscious, but his second sight is actually mediated through a more powerful figure who remains in the shadows of the novel, yet is central to all its revelations. This is Mira, the mother of Reuel, Dianthe, and Aubrey, who appears throughout the novel to give prescient advice. She comes and goes as an apparition, visible only to them, to provide clues (and to encourage them, as her name itself commands, to *look*).[74]

Mira is the real visionary of the novel who directs the characters' geographical and even transpersonal movements, and Reuel's second sight seems directed by her in the service of the family. Second sight is a gift passed down through the maternal line and will be used for the noble work of global racial uplift. In this way, Hopkins's use of the occult moves beyond a simple cross-disciplinary desire to merge the scientific and the spiritual, or to pit racial science's blood discourse against itself. Hopkins routes the future of scientific endeavor through a transcontinental family line. We see this not only in the figure of Mira but also in the transparent body of Queen Candace, through which all could see "the blood circulate and from whom life flowed."[75]

Hopkins's vision of a pan-African family is realized not only though the shadowy revelations of Mira but through a larger narrative of mother country and mother guidance that was also a major source of race pride at the turn of the century—Ethiopianism, which was a common element in the rhetoric of many African and African American writers and political leaders in the early part of the twentieth century.[76] Hopkins takes this symbolic affinity with the Ethiopian homeland and resituates it in the body of one of its American sons. The shame of slave descent is replaced with the pride of noble origins, and the dreams of past glory are transformed into a future promise made possible *only* through the transatlantic return. By restoring Reuel in Ethiopia as the rightful leader of a proud race, Hopkins's "Ethiopianist vision explicitly rewrites the evolutionary narrative of reversion to savagery by predicating the prophetic future of the black race directly on its early greatness."[77]

The embrace of Ethiopianism in a novel that brings together science and race allows a re-vision of Africa as a space whose histories also move beyond and outside the practice of slavery. The pride of Ethiopian innovation and strength also revises the racist ethnological vision of scientists and "Egyptologists" like Samuel Morton, Josiah Nott, and George Gliddon of the 1840s and 1850s. The fact that Reuel's own embrace of Ethiopianism occurs on just the kind of naturalist and exploratory journey that was historically undertaken by those who wished to prove the backwardness of Africa is one of the novel's more interesting reversals.

Reuel's expedition first arrives in the panethnic, Arab space of Tripoli before happening upon the isolated, racially "pure" space of Telassar. Represented as both ancient and thriving, Telassar is described as hibernating, waiting for modernity to arrive and guide it into the twentieth century. As much as the novel resists Western stereotypes of Africa as stagnant and backward, Telassar is still presented as a "remnant," a place *out of time*, waiting "behind the protection of our mountains and swamps, secure from the intrusion of a world that has forgotten, for the coming of our king who shall restore to the Ethiopian race its ancient glory."[78] So Telassar lies not in ruin but in a preserved state of anticipation, waiting to be christened (literally) by the bold Western explorer who will claim it as his birthright. But it waits not just for any explorer but for the singular figure of Reuel—the son who holds the birthright of two continents, bearing the best of Africa *and* America in his blood. The fact that Reuel finds his roots *not* on the West African shorelines of the slave trade but in the biblically vital space of Ethiopia is crucial, for not only did the Kushite civilization of Ethiopia precede the rise of European empires, its current Emperor Menelik II and his troops had enjoyed a very recent victory in the 1896 Battle of Adwa, defeating the invading Italians in "the most spectacular setback to European imperialism of its time."[79]

Reuel's expedition might stand as an African American rejoinder to the call that young men should "go west" to find their futures, as discussed earlier. While the American frontier had been deemed generally closed by the start of the new century, it had been unofficially closed to African American men from their arrival on American soil. Yet, the romance of the journey—whether west or abroad, permanent or touristic—still called to all young men of the period. Exposure to the challenges of nature and one's own physical limits was considered, "according to the reigning notion of the masculine ideal," to be vital to the cultivation of character, vigor, and self-reliance, as figures like Theodore Roosevelt proselytized, and scholars

like Anthony Rotundo, Kim Townsend, and Gail Bederman have discussed at length.[80]

Reuel's expedition, however, does not fulfill an empty masculinist quest for individualism and conquest but is rather the culmination of his (unconscious) search for kinship and community, a most dramatically literalized rite of passage into king-dom. In navigating new landscapes and buried cultures, Reuel comes to understand that "he is infused with the racial survivals of ancient Africa." This, coupled with his Western scientific training, "leads him back into a mystical transhistorical dimension where he can assume his rightful place in the lineage of deified Ethiopian kings."[81]

Is it possible to consider Reuel Briggs, or King Ergamenes, *rooted* though he is in ancient and biblical tradition, as symbolizing a new Atlantic future, like a scientific Toussaint for the twentieth century? Someone who reclaims the tropical kingdom from the white imperialists, slavers, and naturalists who sought only to possess, destroy, or study it from a distance? How will kinship work in this new space? Will this Atlantic American Adam be subsumed by African culture, and if so, what happens to that *other* legacy—of kinship borne of dispersal, alliance, and struggle? Is it obliterated, in shame, like the names of those who traveled alongside his noble parents?

The captive travelers of the transatlantic slave trade and their kin—whether deemed so by common experience or language, by blood, geography, or legal assignment—performed, through the slipperiness of that very category, the false totality of any master narrative of singular racial unity. For even Reuel and his progeny will carry European and African blood—the future, as the past, is panracial. But by debunking white Western supremacy through and against the bloodline, writers like Hopkins and Delany, among many others, worked from within the parameters of racial science to extricate narratives of raced personhood from fixed legal and scientific determinations.[82]

Though the body, in science, was long considered a rooted object to be studied, sorted, and ranked, its physical and psychic journeys reveal that its histories and continuities were more accurately understood through a tracing of its routes. The cultural, racial, and even transpersonal crossings and remakings—the consequence of centuries of Atlantic journey and encounter—hailed a shift in nineteenth- and twentieth-century understandings of personhood, from biological and legal determinism, to a mobile and resistant cultural and political act.