

A R T Y K U Ł Y I R O Z P R A W Y

MICHAEL D. KENNEDY
Brown University

NATIONAL CULTURES AND RACIAL FORMATIONS:
ARTICULATING THE KNOWLEDGE CULTURES OF KŁOSKOWSKA
AND DU BOIS*

INTRODUCTION

Antonina Kłoskowska (1919–2001) and W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963) are not obvious interlocutors, but they should be. By considering them together, we not only enrich dialogue between sociology in the USA and in Poland, but we also can consider more critically how subjectivities vary within and across nations, how exemplars inform struggles for justice, and how conceptions of nation and race in a globalizing world frame constraints and possibilities.

This kind of juxtaposition is of course not without precedent. Korhonen (2019), for example, contrasts articulations of empire among leading European legal scholars, Finnish political leaders, and German socialists around the start of the 20th century. Hammer (2017) contrasts

Correspondence address: michael_kennedy@brown.edu; ORCID: 0000-0001-6768-4134

* This text was prepared on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of Professor Antonina Kłoskowska.

Thanks to Jose Itzigsohn, Aldon Morris, Amanda Ball, Ricarda Hammer, and Tomasz Zarycki for their comments. I appreciate what they offered, and the paper's deficits remain mine. I do hope, however, that this stimulates a more extensive Du Boisian—Polish Sociological conversation.

Franz Fanon and Stuart Hall to illuminate how living lives as colonial subjects enables the development of an “anticolonial imaginary” which itself depended on epistemic ruptures and conjunctural changes in meaning formations. Go (2016) focuses on Fanon, Cabral, Césaire, Du Bois and others to construct a “postcolonial social theory” grounded in a critique of the culture of empire so that new articulations of knowledge, representation, and history could be elaborated. Kennedy (1999) sought to embed Polish sociologies of the nation into a similarly critical tradition. Aldon Morris (2019), with his early transnational work taking him to Brazil, has recently reconsidered how Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, another scholar denied, might be understood in Du Boisian terms.

The preceding comparative and historical sociologies of knowledge cultures around nation, race, and empire thus anticipate this essay’s consideration, but given their more proximate birthdates, the engagement between W.E.B. Du Bois and Max Weber is a more obvious starting point.

DU BOISIAN AND POLISH SOCIOLOGIES

They were extensively engaged with each other, and Morris (2015: 149–167) documents their mutual transformations. As a young scholar, Weber wrote extensively about Polish–German relations in agrarian labor relations, as Du Bois addressed between white and Black people in the USA. Weber and Du Bois worked in parallel, and enjoyed some of the same German mentors. They met in 1904 in St. Louis, Missouri, and developed extensive correspondence, if from different vantage points. Weber, from the German empire’s knowledgeable class, worked to figure how to manage the “Polish problem” in the German east. “In contrast to Weber, who inherited class and national privileges, Du Bois inherited the pain and shared fate of a racially oppressed minority” (Morris 2015: 153, see too Zimmerman 2012). Despite their differences, Weber appreciated what Du Bois wrote, published him, and learned from him. It’s not clear to me how prominent Du Bois has been in subsequent Polish sociology. The post-colonial is, however, becoming more prominent in Polish historical studies.

Most recently, for instance, Valerio (2019) explains how Polish–German relations were constructed historically in the Prussian borderlands in the second half of the 19th century, notably around disease and accounts of its explanation and management. She moves later to contrast how the German empire sought to manage its “Polish problem” in its European east, and its African colonies, and then how Poles accounted for African social transformations within their own imaginaries, reflecting

their own travels as emissaries of European empires. Poles also migrated to Brazil where they sought to establish their own Polish settler-colonialism. These colonial experiences, on both sides of the political, and racial, divides, lead Poles into a complex global location, making the articulation of Kłoskowska and Du Bois quite promising. It can only be theoretical, however.

Kłoskowska and Du Bois don't refer to each other in their scholarship. That is not surprising. Du Bois was born long before Kłoskowska, but that does not explain his absence from her reference. Unfortunately, that is not unusual. Du Bois has also been a scholar denied by the official American sociological establishment (Morris 2015). That fact is changing dramatically.

Evidence of this growing influence of Du Bois can be found in numerous special issues of journals and associations, including one in which I have myself been invested,¹ and the American Sociological Association itself. Its 2019 Annual Meeting, alongside the address by its president, Mary Romero, enjoyed substantial Du Boisian influence (Romero forthcoming). The subsequent election of Aldon Morris, the author of *The Scholar Denied: WEB Du Bois and the Origins of American Sociology* (2015) to the presidency of the American Sociological Association, reinforces that ascendance. With this essay, I hope to facilitate more Polish engagement with Du Bois in order to extend that effect. But I also wish to extend US sociology's recognition of Polish distinction with the juxtaposition.

Of course Polish sociology has drawn significantly on studies of race and ethnicity in the USA. Here I think of the work decades ago by Aleksander Hertz (1961/1988) in particular, who was especially influenced by Myrdal's *American Dilemma*.² Of course there is much more, but much of that work has been principally in the tradition that took dominant white culture as the point of reference. Questions of assimilation, rather than oppression and resistance, defined the terms of inquiry. Opportunities for and obstacles to integration defined problematics. That is the antithesis of Du Boisian sociology.

While those beyond the Black community (e.g. Bayoumi 2009) in the USA have sampled Du Bois (1903) with the question, "How does it feel

¹ Du Boisian Scholar Network (<https://www.duboisiannetwork.com>).

² This is a good example of why this dialogue is long overdue. Without white support, Du Bois's planned project around a Black encyclopedia was derailed, and the Carnegie Foundation went to Gunnar Myrdal instead. Morris (2015: 205–217) outlines the ways in which Du Bois's work contributed to that project nonetheless. However, the founding assumptions, with Myrdal's faith in an American creed ultimately open to integration, spelled a very different conclusion than what Du Bois would have offered.

to be a problem?” it’s hard for Poles, with their implication in global articulations of race, to articulate such an issue, even if that Polish citizen belongs to a minoritized or marginalized community. One of the most cosmopolitan of 20th century Polish intellectuals exemplifies. Ryszard Kapuściński (2001: 40) wrote, on being challenged as a white man complicit in colonialism,

“Slavery, colonialism, five hundred years of injustice—after all, it’s the white man’s doing. The white men’s. Therefore mine. Mine? I was not able to conjure within myself that cleansing, liberating emotion—guilt; to show contrition; to apologize. On the contrary! From the start, I tried to counteract: ‘You were colonized? We, Poles, were also! For one hundred and thirty years we were the colony of three foreign powers. White ones too.’ They laughed, tapped their foreheads, walked away. I angered them, because they thought I wanted to deceive them.”³

The articulation of Du Boisian — Kłoskowskan knowledge cultures might help us to address such a hermeneutic challenge in fusing horizons, rather than simply subordinating one to the other. And let me begin with introducing Du Bois for Polish sociology.

DU BOIS FOR POLISH SOCIOLOGY

I doubt they ever met, or were even in the same room, even if they were in Poland at the same time. Du Bois was as much a global scholar as any US-based sociologist in his lifetime (he wrote his dissertation on the international slave trade); he even traveled to Poland already in 1893. Despite his founding German infatuations (while at Fisk University he wrote an undergraduate thesis on Bismarck), he recognized Germans’ antipathy to Jews (Barkin 2005; Zaborowska 2015). In *Dusk of Dawn*, Du Bois (1940/2007: 24) he also referenced learning “of the race problems of the Poles” from a fellow student, Stanislaus von Estreicher, whose father was the head of a Polish library in Krakow. He wrote that his fellow student “died in a German concentration camp, after he had refused to become one of Germany’s puppet rulers of Poland”.

After World War II, Du Bois came to Warsaw and reflected on the fate of the Warsaw Ghetto (Rothberg 2001). In his subsequent “Tribute to the Warsaw Ghetto Fighters” delivered in New York City, Du Bois (1952) spoke at greater length about his engagement with Poland. It deserves extensive quotation.

³ I learned this from Valerio 2019: 116.

“I have been to Poland three times. The first time was 59 years ago, when I was a student at the University of Berlin. I had been talking to my schoolmate, Stanislaus Ritter von Estreicher.⁴ I had been telling him of the race problem in America, which seemed to me at the time the only race problem and the greatest social problem of the world. He brushed it aside. He said, ‘You know nothing, really, about real race problems.’ Then he began to tell me about the problem of the Poles and particularly of that part of them who were included in the German empire; of their limited education; of the refusal to let them speak in their own language; of the few careers that they were allowed to follow; of the continued insult to their culture and family life. I was astonished...”

Du Bois clearly learned of the Polish question during his first time in Poland; this encounter with von Estreicher not only recurred in his memoirs, but it stuck with him. In this same speech, he also recalled how he felt on arriving in Warsaw after the war.

“I have seen something of human upheaval in this world; the scream and shots of a race riot in Atlanta; the marching of the Kul Klux Klan... but nothing in my wildest imagination was equal to what I saw in Warsaw in 1949. I would have said before seeing it that it was impossible for a civilized nation with deep religious convictions and outstanding religious institutions; with literature and art; to treat fellow human beings as Warsaw had been treated. There had been complete, planned and utter destruction. Some streets had been so obliterated that only by using photographs of the past could they tell where the street was. And on one mentioned the total of the dead, the sum of destruction, the story of crippled and insane, the widows and orphans. The astonishing thing, of course, was the way that in the midst of all these memories of war and destruction the people were rebuilding the city with an enthusiasm that was simply unbelievable. A city and a nation was literally rising from the dead.”

This recollection of Warsaw’s destruction is typical for the time, but what distinguishes it from most American commentaries was its comparison to racial oppression in the USA.

Du Bois did not say more about Poles as such, but took the occasion, given the purpose of the assembly, to talk more about how he came to understand the meaning of the Jewish question in Germany and in Poland. Recalling a trip in 1923 with a German student who remarked that German villagers might take him for Jewish, and treat him therefore poorly, Du Bois recalled this: “I was astonished. It had never occurred to me until

⁴ Du Boisian studies would be improved by learning more about this man, and what Du Bois might have understood from their encounters.

then that any exhibition of race prejudice could be anything but color prejudice. I knew that this young man was pure German, yet his dark hair and handsome face made our friends suspicious.” He observed the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising to be a “deliberate sacrifice in life for a great ideal in the face of the fact that the sacrifice might be completely in vain”. But with that experience he came to understand something different.

“The result of these three visits, and particularly of my view of the Warsaw ghetto, was not so much clearer understanding of the Jewish problem in the world as it was a real and more complete understanding of the Negro problem. In the first place, the problem of slavery, emancipation, and caste in the United States was no longer in my mind a separate and unique thing as I had so long conceived it. It was not even solely a matter of color and physical and racial characteristics, which was particularly a hard thing for me to learn, since for a lifetime the color line had been a real and efficient cause of misery. It was not merely a matter of religion... No, the race problem in which I was interested cut across lines of color and physique and belief and status and was a matter of cultural patterns, perverted teaching and human hate and prejudice, which reached all sorts of people and caused endless evil to all men. So that the ghetto of Warsaw helped me to emerge from a certain social provincialism into a broader conception of what the fight against race segregation, religious discrimination and the oppression by wealth had to become if civilization was going to triumph and broaden in this world.”

Du Bois concludes this lecture by citing, approvingly, one Gabriel D’Arboussier, an African, who recalled Warsaw’s mausoleum to the Red Army and the “Polish people’s will to peace and its attachment to the Soviet Union”. Du Bois was unlikely to articulate problems with the Soviet occupation of Poland here, just as he did not celebrate, alongside the Ghetto Uprising, the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. That, too, deserves further reflection in the articulation of Du Boisian and Polish sociological knowledge cultures, but it should be kept in mind that his address and publication was associated with a Jewish group with communist ties (Joselit 2018).

There is, then, more engagement by Du Bois of the Polish and especially Jewish question than we might otherwise expect. And it deserves more extensive commentary, but its significance has not been sufficiently articulated in the Du Boisian revival. It might. And it might go even further if Kłoskowska, given her work on national communities and minoritized groups within them, had engaged Du Bois.

I don’t know of any citations, but Kłoskowska could have engaged his scholarship in less official ways. I put this out there: did she ever consider his iconic work, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Du Bois 1903), in her own intellec-

tual world? If so, that could be an invaluable addition to the Du Boisian revival underway in the USA, and globally. More broadly, his range and volume of scholarship seems ideally poised for a Kłoskowskan analysis, on the one hand. On the other, his scholarship seems ideally situated to make the conditions of Kłoskowska's own work more evident.

I don't know how much Du Bois has shaped Polish sociology. To be sure, his work has not been as central to US sociology as it ought given the range of his contributions. Aldon Morris (2015) has documented some of Du Bois's most significant work, alongside the practices that led to its erasure. Itzigsohn and Brown (forthcoming) complement that effort by authoring their own account, and interpretation, of what a Du Boisian sociology would look like for an American and global sociology. Their articulation of a Du Boisian sociology structures my own accounting in what follows; their book is then an invitation for Polish sociologists to engage.

First, while *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) is his best known work, perhaps following *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), it is far from his final word. Having lived such a long time and being such a prolific writer, it's wrong to summarize Du Bois with a few lines. There are many Du Boisian themes, and he did not hesitate to admit his mistakes, even if he was recurrently deficient along lines we would consider deeply problematic today, notably around gender and sexuality.

Second, Du Bois worked across levels of sociology. He had his own phenomenology as well as a global and transnational sociology that was profoundly comparative and historical in reference. On the one hand, he would elaborate what it meant to have "double consciousness", one of his most important concepts, but then he would also develop accounts for how class and racial alliances thwarted the deepening of democracy after the Civil War in the USA. He was profoundly "empirical" in the sense that survey researchers and census analysts might recognize, but also quite philosophical in figuring the limits of the questionnaire. The range of his conceptual repertoire was not always so apparent in each project, of course, but we are fortunate that subsequent scholars are now doing the work to present his ideas more generally, much as the contributors to this volume do such for Kłoskowska.

Third, Du Bois approaches race and racism in ways that both differ and resemble Kłoskowska's own approach to the nation. It's challenging to offer any singular definition, however, as his own sense of race changed dramatically over time. Itzigsohn and Brown (forthcoming) mark his own evolution in thinking and break with an exclusively scientific approach to

its definition, and rather preserve its irreducibly political quality. In his autobiography, Du Bois (1968: 137) writes

“Thus it is easy to see that scientific definition of race is impossible; it is easy to prove that physical characteristics are not so inherited as to make it possible to divide the world into races... all this has nothing to do with the plain fact that throughout the world today organized groups of men by monopoly of economic and physical power, legal enactment and intellectual training are limiting with determination and unflagging zeal the development of other groups.”

When we approach the nation, I wonder if Kłoskowska’s own work to keep her values at bay might be rethought as a more engaged scholarship in the Du Boisian spirit comes to define our disciplinary practice. What, for instance, did it mean to practice engaged scholarship in the communist period? In the post-communist? I would like to understand better how she struggled to analyze a nation to which she was so deeply committed, and how that varied across the communist and post-communist periods. After all, for a dialogue to work, it’s critical for Du Boisians to recognize her spirit and disposition. I am not sufficiently expert, but I can begin that introduction given my familiarity with both Du Boisian and Polish sociological knowledge cultures.

KŁOSKOWSKA FOR DU BOISIANS

Antonina Kłoskowska was one of the leading sociologists of culture during communist rule in Poland, and for more than a decade following. As many Polish sociologists, her principal object of reflection was the nation as a cultural category. This is not surprising, of course, given that the Polish nation could not be taken for granted, as it has been in the USA.

Poland’s national culture survived the loss of its imperial state in the end of the 18th century only to regain statehood in the wake of World War I. That resumption of state power was, however, in the midst of nationalism’s intensification, where previously multinational empires were being changed by more ethnic conceptions of power; minority communities, notably Jews, Roma, Ukrainians, and BelaRussians, within the Polish state faced increasingly extreme repression and violence in that interwar period. This would not compare to what happened subsequently under Nazi rule to many, notably to Jews and Roma, where German authorities, sometime with Polish complicity, exterminated populations and enslaved others. Polish suffering in this period is also notable with its magnitude,

and when compared to other peoples, a continuing object of cultural political contest defining nations anew.

Allied victory in World War II did not liberate Poland; a substantial part of its population was forced into exile, with great numbers of Poles associated with the London-based government and its Home Army suffering both execution and imprisonment by a new dictatorship of Soviet-supported Polish communists. Nevertheless, in those conditions a vital Polish sociology not only developed, but thrived. Whether the Hungarians, Yugoslavs or Poles developed the most compelling sociology under communist rule is a good question, but it is certainly in these three national sociologies that we can find terrific inspiration.

While Polish sociology engaged many questions that derived from Soviet-type development, it also was obliged to figure the place of the Polish nation and its others within the nation. Antonina Kłoskowska was key to that exploration. Although her scholarship ranged widely, her 2001 English language publication (published in Polish in 1996) is notable for its comprehensiveness and potential engagement with Du Boisian themes. Its English language availability makes it the right starting point for a more global conversation too.

In this volume, Kłoskowska acknowledges the various macrosociological conditions of the nation, but is especially innovative with her approach to the experiences of individuals within the nation, both those of the dominant but especially of minoritized communities. She draws on biographies, interviews, and other documents to explain how subjectivities are shaped by intersubjective conditions and the symbols organizing life. She graciously acknowledges other sociologists—her forbearers, her contemporaries, and those her junior—who have informed and extend the work she is concerned to elaborate.

With both a telescope and microscope, Kłoskowska explains the reproduction of national life despite its variations over time, especially in what she calls “borderline situations”, across national borders and within nations by its minorities. She also considers these borderlines to exist within the psyche of individuals themselves. In this particular work, she does not engage Polish Jews and those of Jewish origins, even if that condition, and the substantial work undertaken by Polish scholars of Jewish origin, might be analogous to the question of Blackness and double consciousness in Du Bois’s work. Assimilation was, however, much more possible for Jews in Poland in the nineteenth century than for Black people in the USA.

Kłoskowska begins her volume with substantial attention to what the nation is, its relationship to ethnicity, civil society and state, and how it

varies in both practice and theory, over time and even into the postmodern era. From that she (2001: 12) moves to consider the meaning of minority, following Rogers Brubaker to emphasize its “dynamic political attitude”. The nation is, in the end for Kłoskowska, a cultural fact, even if, in a world where cultural encounters define the modern, it is not an entirely culturally distinct imagined community. In contrast to those a-sociological ideologues, she certainly acknowledges any nation’s mutability. The degree to which that nation relies on ethnic, as opposed to civic, definitions of distinction most certainly varies over time, and across actors. The very historical formation of the Polish nation invites exploration of that mutability.

The Polish nation enjoyed its golden age from the end of the 14th century through the end of the 15th, or perhaps to the middle of the 16th, when it was the center of a different kind of empire. The historic expansion of Polish nobility into other lands to their east was done mostly on Polish terms. It was, however, also a case of “cultural polymorphism”, where peasants and an occasional noble gravitated toward Ruthene or Ukrainian identifications (Kłoskowska 2001: 51–52). This capacity for boundary crossing and conversion is critical for Kłoskowska’s perspective, and cases. This is not something so central to Du Boisian sociology, a theme to which I return. Stereotypes also occupy a different place in each sociology.

Kłoskowska (2001: 83–85) finds them, in the social psychological sense, commonplace if not also necessary. Even Polish sociology has contributed to a positive national stereotype of its nation. She takes pains to distinguish that from the meaning of national identity. She writes,

“The national identity of a nation is its collective self-knowledge, its self-identification, the creation of its own picture and the entire contents of self-knowledge, but it is not a picture of the character of a nation constructed from the outside. When the nation is taken as the subject of its own self-knowledge, the question arises as to what the subject of this consciousness is... The nation is not a psychic entity to which cognitive, social and judgmental functions can be ascribed as a whole. It is a question of the common sensorium...” (Kłoskowska 2001: 87–88)

That sensorium⁵ is composed of a terrific heterogeneity of expressions that is more or less understood by its members. But of course it’s variously understood by individuals, as individuals appropriate different elements of that national culture, and other cultural expressions too, in the making

⁵ Genevieve Zubrzycki (2011) uses similar reference, but with different methodological take.

of their own subjectivity. I found especially charming this observation, one that would be familiar to most Poles:

“...Mickiewicz, who placed the center of the Polish fatherland, or Polishness, in a small nobleman’s manor located in ethnographic Lithuania—more precisely in Belarus. Polish national customs and Polish patriotism, are cultivated in this manor. Its real location is not important for those whose private small fatherland was actually in another region of Poland. For them, it is only a symbol and a part of the symbolic national universe.” (Kłoskowska 2001: 40)

Here begins the challenge for those who don’t find Polish history and culture familiar. To understand the qualities of the Polish nation, really of any nation, requires a degree of familiarity with its arts, its traumas, its golden age, and other elements. For an educated Pole, reading Kłoskowska’s references to different exemplars of Polish culture can inform sociological sensibilities. For those without such familiarities, even the challenge of reading a name could alienate. That then suggests a method for reading Kłoskowska once she moves beyond the reviews of literature on the nation and beyond the schematics organizing her interpretations.

One of the distinctions of Kłoskowska’s sociology, indeed of Polish sociology more broadly, is its work in analyzing biographies and auto-biographies, what has also been called Memoir Sociology. Its use to elaborate the subjectivities of a wide range of Polish actors—from the most educated to the crudely literate peasant — has been extensive, and would be instructive for the growing interest in biography and society in the USA. Kłoskowska’s approach is also of terrific use for American sociology here.

Drawing on the familiar American term of “socialization”, Kłoskowska encourages us to think about “culturization”. It sounds better in Polish, but it’s exceptionally useful for thinking about how we learn both within, and beyond, the nation as such. She draws on Schütz to discuss knowledge of acquaintance, and knowledge about the other, to mark the difference (Kłoskowska 2001: 99). In particular, this approach helps us to recognize the relationship between national identity and individual subjectivity. And here we can find a great way to invite Du Boisians into Kłoskowska’s sociology.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND IDENTIFICATIONS

In this volume, Kłoskowska analyzes the transformation of Adalbert von Winkler (Albert Winkler in her volume) into Wojciech Kętrzyński, with an eye toward understanding “the motivations for a change of na-

tional identity, and its role in the entirety of the life experiences and value system of the individual” (Kłoskowska 2001: 137).⁶ She is careful to go beyond emic (his own) expressions, to triangulate sources to explain what “actually” happens to a person changing national identifications.

Kętrzyński finished his life as a thoroughly identified Pole, but he did not begin that way. His father was Polish, but was “Germanized” in Prussia in the 19th century. His son, the object of Kłoskowska’s analysis, discovered his Polishness as a young man, and decided to “become” Polish by learning the language, the history, its qualities. By looking at the boy’s own re-introduction to Polishness, through the inspiration of German romantic poets, we begin to appreciate the continuities of national belonging in particular styles of imagination, rather than the categorical difference Polish vs. German implies (Kłoskowska 2001: 142). His German-ness, despite identifying ever more with his Polishness, abided, clarifying the ways in which categorical differences can live in a single body, spirit, as one. Although the non-Polish Du Boisian might struggle with the names and references, Kętrzyński’s biography, and Kłoskowska’s analysis, inspire the sociological imagination.

What enables such an identity transformation? How do we use different sources, beyond the author’s own text, to “explain” it? How might different resources be used to explain that autobiographer’s life? In particular, while we might appreciate profound expressions by that author about their identification, how do we treat others who might denigrate his Polish language skills, or even understand when the author returns to their first language to express the most delicate of feelings, an elegy for his youngest son who died so early (Kłoskowska 2001: 149)?

Kłoskowska uses this, and other, biographies to imagine how different forms and expressions of national identity can be combined. Of course there are some who have only one national identification, and treat its cultural valence in unitary fashion. At the other extreme, we can have people who are cosmopolitans, without a particular affinity for any nation, but whose language abilities and regional familiarities allow them to glide across the world in particularly polyvalent form. And there are many mixes in between based on the number of nations, intensity of identification, and

⁶ This was not an exceptional transformation. Indeed, one of those who sought a Polish presence in the European colonization of Africa at least changed his name from Scholtz to Szolc on reaching adulthood (Valerio 2019: 119). Even more powerfully, Valerio links his transformation into a colonial adventurer to the Polish tradition of organic work (pp. 120–35).

value attributed to them. She characterizes Kętrzyński as someone whose conversion from German to Polish identification nevertheless enjoys a cultural duality throughout his adult life (Kłoskowska 2001: 152).

It might be hard for Americans to appreciate what Kłoskowska does with this case, and others. She struggles against the a-sociological and political sense that there are “true Poles” on the one hand and, on the other, some who are traitors, or at least diluted and insufficient in their representation of the real nation. Part of her struggle is to validate when Poles, and others of different nations, struggle for the freedom to express their identification in ways that fit their lives. She also marks their bi- or even polyvalence and cosmopolitanism as a possible good, one in which she celebrates the possibility for a supraregional integration that generates a “global consciousness of culture” (Kłoskowska 2001: 150).

Kłoskowska’s forms of identification and their valences offer many different kinds of subjectivities to individuals at home in their national cultures. But not everyone is so at home, as Du Bois exemplified, and borderlines are not the same as the color line.

Du Bois’s story about national and racial identifications could be read within Kłoskowska’s own framework. But it’s hard to see where his particular phenomenology of the racialized self might fit. To begin this consideration, I return to Itzigsohn and Brown (forthcoming):

“Du Bois uses his understanding of double consciousness—constituted around the veil, twoness, and second sight—to analyze the self and subjectivity on both sides of the color line. If for Black people the consequence of the veil is double consciousness, for White people the veil leads to blindness, to the dehumanizing of Black people, and to the inability to realize their beliefs of justice and fairness.”

They elaborate with one of the most famous quotes from *The Souls of Black Folk*:

“...a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body” (Du Bois 1903: 2).

For Kłoskowska, differential perceptions are just that — produced through interactions that are, of course, differently empowered. But they are not structured so deeply as Du Bois’s racialized subjectivity.

Du Bois also speaks of twoness, a kind of bivalence in Kłoskowska’s terms. But this twoness is not the result of accomplishment or exposure to multiple communities of belonging but of subjugation and exclusion. In the *Dusk of Dawn*, he describes it this way:

“I lived in an environment which I came to call the White world. I was not an American; I was not a man; I was by long education and continual compulsion and daily reminder, a colored man to a White world; and that White world often existed primarily, so far as I was concerned, to see with sleepless vigilance that I was kept within bounds. All this made me limited in physical movement and provincial in thought and dream. I could not stir, I could not act, I could not live, without taking into careful account the reaction of my White environing world” (Du Bois 1940/2007: 69).

This bivalence is a sign of oppression, not a sign of universalism’s extension. It’s not just a question of what the bivalence is, but also a methodological effect. It is precisely because cultural dispositions, for Du Bois, are relational, not attitudinal. In this, we might ask how Kłoskowska’s work might be differently understood if culture is not something embedded in the mind, or spirit, but relationally and interactively produced. There are such glimmers in her work, but she for the most part reflects a kind of cultural sociology associated with values accessed by individual expressions, rather than dispositions understood to be produced in relational fields and larger systems that articulate class and race together.

Du Bois’s story illustrates something that Kłoskowska does not take up. Are some racial and ethnic divisions more durable, and extensive, than others? It’s possible for some to move among national identifications in Central and Eastern Europe far more readily than others, and in different historical periods. Roma, while putatively the most European of the peoples of Europe—for they belong more to Europe than to any particular nation—are also denied the right to be whom they want far more readily than the likes of Kętrzyński (even while he himself faced resistance by some Poles in recognizing his own Polishness—Kłoskowska 2001: 146).

And of course period matters. At the time of Kłoskowska’s composition, the possibilities for Europeanness and Polish revival seemed great, when Poland’s membership in the European Union seemed both a promise and utopia. Today, by contrast, considerable numbers of everyday folks, and political elites, treat the EU and its politics as a threat, rather than complement, to Polish identity. Articulations of Jewishness in Polish cul-

ture, and its complementarity to the best of Polishness, have also varied substantially in public discussion and intersubjective engagements. Indeed, the ways in which Blackness has been celebrated, and vilified, in a white USA, might find powerful comparison.

Are race and nationality then so fundamentally different? At times Du Bois (1952) suggests Polishness, or Jewishness, to be akin to Blackness when it comes to the global color line. But I do think there is also something in the theoretical lens connecting and distinguishing race and nation that might itself be reconstructed. It goes further. When Poles, and their neighbors, construct their nation-nesses, are they doing so without and beyond the veil of global racism? Or are they, themselves, implicated too in this global structure of racism evidenced by an ignorance of Blackness and a focus on whiteness as point of reference? So it would seem in light of Valerio's (2019) articulation of Polishness on the colonial side of things.

The preceding paragraph is something that goes well beyond what Du Bois articulates. What of those places that perceive themselves, and in fact are perceived by the "darker races", as themselves distant from the racialized subjectivities defining the modernity Du Bois articulates? Are Polish lives, though white, on the side of the veil Black folks recognize? Or is Poland beyond Du Bois's full reckoning, much as it was when he visited Krakow in the end of the 19th century, and Warsaw after World War II? Exemplars might help us move the conversation.

EXEMPLARS OF THE PEOPLE/NATION/BLACKNESS

Every nation, and race, has its heroes in its folklore. Du Bois himself pointed to a number of inspirations in his autobiography, and to heroes from across the world for Black people. While many of those heroes could be Black (notably Nkrumah), they were not only. Du Bois (1909) wrote a whole biography of the white John Brown and the failed slave uprising he sought to support. Du Bois even celebrated the ways in which the Japanese, in their own imperial ambitions, challenged white imperialism (Kearney 1995). But Du Bois never developed a scale with which to analyze the exemplary or the inspirational.

Kłosowska helps us by focusing on a particular period — the Nazi occupation of Poland — where truly exemplary expressions of Polishness could be found, as well as its most heinous and traitorous expressions. She draws on the Polish sociologist Jan Strzelecki and his 1974 memoir of that period to find the exemplary, where conditions of existential extremity moved life on the edge to "go through the school of suffering"

to “sacrifice one’s life” to “fight for the people’s happiness.” This fight was understood as a struggle “for human dignity in general, ... in Poland, which was abased and threatened in the extreme” (Kłoskowska 2001: 300–301). These heroes exemplified a most virtuous Polishness, but under the most extreme conditions.

Kłoskowska also reviews Poles in other circumstances—right after communism’s collapse, and those in emigration. Juxtaposing these and others, she proposes that we might think about the valence of national identification in graduated form, with these degrees.

- (1) unreflective immersion in the national culture, especially language;
- (2) reflective knowledge and deep appropriation of customs and folklore;
- (3) elementary knowledge and appropriation of the canon of the representative culture;
- (4) knowledge and appropriation of the culture on a higher level; and
- (5) making a contribution to the national culture, even to its canon.

She combines this with a person’s “active attitude” toward the national interest:

- (1) refraining from harming national interests and values;
- (2) average activity for the national interest;
- (3) readiness to make the greatest sacrifices for the national values, including one’s life (Kłoskowska 2001: 380).

Jan Strzelecki and his comrades were exemplary in all these forms. But they say nothing, *per se*, about their association with universalism and respect for the other, nor which values might be considered exemplary in attitudes toward both those proximate but different, and the Other at a distance.

It doesn’t take a Pole from the 5th level in the first scale to recognize it, but Kłoskowska clearly tries to make space for a notion of Polishness that is polyvalent. She also appreciates that its openness is critical for a Poland inclusive of its minorities. Kłoskowska recognizes, of course, that the dominant culture sets the terms for the dispositions of the minority community; whether Poles are welcoming, or not, to Ukrainians, Belarussians and Silesians creates the possibilities for the valence of these minorities. However, Poles are not, themselves, so sure of their own security.

This, in the end, may be among the greatest of challenges for those, regardless of status within that nation at the center of an empire whose existence is unquestioned, to appreciate in the Polish sociological imagination. Kłoskowska makes that clear with this distinction: the English have little to fear from Welsh speakers, but Poles don’t feel that way when it

comes to German or Russian speakers (Kłoskowska 2001: 282) given their historical experience.

This moves me to recall dear friend Glenda Dickerson's distress when Turks treated her play, *Kitchen Prayers*, as another expression of Orientalism despite its being rooted in African American women's experience (Kennedy 2015: 109–112). Dialogues across very different kinds of oppression demand a kind of relational solidarity that experiences of equivalent oppressions rarely require (Kennedy and Merone forthcoming).

Here, then, I invite fellow Du Boisians from beyond Poland to dispense with residual nationalisms, and appreciate the ways in which existential threats to other nations have been experienced, and how they persist, beyond the most familiar Du Boisian categories. I also wonder, however, whether we might find in Du Bois's own sense of exemplar something that might expand Kłoskowska's articulation.

Du Bois struggles with this question of exemplar too, but from a much more explicitly engaged position than Kłoskowska. She could, indeed had to for the sake of the discipline, occupy something of an "objective" position under communist rule; that was a mode, itself, of resistance for intellectuals—to be, simply, professional and to speak the truth in opposition to the politicized knowledge, propaganda, that dominated official public culture (Kennedy, Suny 1999). Du Bois sought "objective" facts too, but his recurring and systematic exclusion from the professional milieu defined by white supremacy made his scholarship, inevitably, political. The politics of objectivity vary across historical contexts.

To speak of the exemplar, we might recall Du Bois's articulation of the "talented tenth," a theme from relatively early in his intellectual career. To recognize superior and inferior articulations of Blackness, one need only recall his debates with Booker T. Washington, and the question of whether Black people should accept their subordinated place in a racist society and find an education suitable to that caste-like condition, or whether they should press for a more critical learning leading them to resist that condition. However, it's hard to imagine approaching Black life in the terms Kłoskowska offers when it comes to exemplars.

Black people have been at risk simply for being Black, not for risking their life in the national cause. Black culture is itself rich, but there has not (long?) been any state-sanctioned US canon to which to contribute; indeed, some of the greatest aspects of Black culture developed on the margins of white society, in resistance to it, and recognized within the Black community but denied recognition by the institutions of white su-

premacry itself. Du Bois is, himself, that exemplar, and one that Marcus Anthony Hunter (2019) invokes to advocate for the “intellectual reparations” Black folks are due for the slavery, oppression and denial of dignity suffered in America, in the world.

Indeed, if there is one thing which a Du Boisian comparison to Kłoskowska offers is to be impressed by the clarity about the nation she references. Even if the boundaries are fuzzy, its cultural canons debated, and conversions imaginable, the question of Polish-ness has a grounding in a community that has, at the least, a language denying easy entry while more or less offering ready, and basic, mutual recognition. Whiteness denies Blackness easy escape, and with the former’s imperial spread, allows Blackness to extend far beyond those who are descended from the Atlantic slave trade. The color line that once defined difference in America can extend beyond to articulate difference on a global scale. Blackness is, potentially, global in ways empire and whiteness are not, but it can, indeed must, inform deeper considerations of freedom on a global scale.

Blackness and Polishness thus mark a critical difference. Although Poles have traveled the world in exile and in diaspora, the ease with which they might leave behind their Polishness and become, simply, or mainly, white, is different from the experience of those whose Blackness marks them as, potentially, a problem of which Du Bois (1903) writes. Of course Poles can *become* a problem in their difference, in their status as an Other elsewhere in Europe (e.g. Moriarty et al. 2013; Böröcz, Sarkar 2017) but they can also assimilate far more readily than fellow immigrants from another location on the global color line. That, however, might itself be contingent, as Sosnowska’s (2016) comparison of Poles with other immigrant laborers in New York suggests.

CHALLENGING DIALOGUES

There are particular conflicts and tensions when the nation is a frame. Nationalism presumes that every people can be expressed most fully within their own national culture, and that it is the expression of fulfillment and freedom for each nation to be sovereign. That is its liberal dream. At the same time, while every nation is unique, they are expected to articulate that distinction in a modular form that is recognizable as a nation, in the terms white empires have deemed appropriate. Nations can claim for themselves, whether in manifest destiny or defense from others’ aggression, the right to destroy other nations, or to deny other peoples their human rights. Hence, within that articulation, Kłoskowska struggles for

a kind of Polish nation that is inclusive, enriching, and enriched by the multiple currents of the human experience.

Racism has no such liberal celebration, even if liberals of all stripes have reproduced white supremacy both by design and by thoughtlessness. Racism depends on ignorance and deliberate repression of those who live behind the veil, as well as their ideas and cultures that do not bow before the presumptions of the dominant race. With that, there is no necessary boundary of identification, no need to share a common history, language, or even tradition. With that, Du Bois's quest for greater universalism took him well beyond a bounded people with a common core of understanding. It rather moved him to consider what identifications can be drawn by considering victimization by racism, colonialism, and imperialism to be the basis for identification. And with that, we have a different way of conceiving commonality.

Rather than struggling to identify a core, which the canon of Polish culture provided, alongside variations in its interpretation and composition, Du Bois could imagine a peoplehood articulated by its oppression, and its various expressions of search for emancipation across continents and peoples. Equivalence, not identity, becomes the basis for articulating commonality. Conversion and polyvalence are not the hallmarks, then, for such a critical sociology and practice struggling against racism. Instead, as Itzigsohn and Brown (forthcoming) put it,

“Du Bois was the first sociologist to propose a social constructionist approach to the analysis of race. This approach is rooted in the analysis of historical processes of cultural classifications, labor exploitation, and social exclusions. Race is both category of exclusion—the action of the veil—and a form of group identification. Du Bois struggled all his life to eliminate the first, but also to define and maintain the second.”

For Kłoskowska, there are no boundaries that deserve erasure when it comes to the nation; for Du Bois, the boundaries made by racism deserve elimination. But in both, they struggle to make a form of community that emancipates. And that recognizes dignity. And here's the rub, the challenge.

When Strzelecki and his comrades defined the struggle for the Polish nation during Nazi occupation as a quest for dignity in general, but manifest among Poles, there is nothing that might be faulted. But there is a matter of recognition even there. Whose dignity beyond Poles matters?

One might question whether Poles ought struggle with their relative hostility to Russians and Germans given their historical experience. There is no question that they should move beyond hostility toward Jews, given,

as Kłoskowska calls it, that it is a kind of phantasmagoric threat that deserves critical deconstruction. But what about those beyond proximity? Is there a solidarity that ought to be cultivated between Poles and People of Color, in today's parlance, that engaging Du Bois could foster?

Certain currents of Polonia, notably in the USA, commemorate the ways in which Poles have identified with the struggle against slavery and against racism. Especially with Du Bois's own biography of John Brown, it's worth considering how Polish poet Cyprian Norwid expressed solidarity with this revolutionary white man on the eve of his execution in 1859.

Do obywatela Johna Brown
 (Z listu pisanego do Ameryki w 1859, listopada)
To Citizen John Brown
(From a letter written to America in November, 1859)

Przez Oceanu ruchome płaszczyzny
 Pieśń Ci, jak mewę, posyłam, o! Janie...
Like a seagull, I send a song to you, O John,
across the ocean's floating plane,
 Ta lecieć długo będzie do ojczyzny
 Wolnych — bo wątpi już: czy ją zastanie?...
 — Czy też, jak promień Twej zacnej siwizny,
 Biała — na puste zleci rusztowanie:
 By kata Twego syn rączką dziecinną
 Kamienie ciskał na mewę gościnną!
Long will be this flight, to the home
of the Free — for there are already doubts: will it arrive?...
— Also whether the beam from thy frosty white
nobility will be assigned to the empty scaffold:
So the childish hands of thy executioner's son
will throw stones at the guest seagull!

Więc, niżli szyję Twoją obnażoną
 Spróbują sznury, jak jest nieugięta;
So they check the ropes and
see that your bare neck is unyielding;
 Więc, niżli ziemi szukać poczniesz pięta,
 By precz odkopnąć planetę spodloną —
 A ziemia spod stóp Twych, jak płaz złęczniony,
 Pierzchnie —
 więc, niżli rzekną: „Powieszony...” —
 Rzekną i pojrzą po sobie, czy kłamią? —
So you'll search for the ground with your heels,
So as to cast off this debased planet —
But the earth takes flight from under thy feet,

like a frightened reptile —

Then they will utter the word: “He’s hanged...” —

They’ll mutter and glance at each other: “is this a lie?” —

Więc, nim kapelusz na twarz Ci załamia,

By Ameryka, odpoznawszy syna,

Nie zakrzykneła na gwiazd swych dwanaście:

„Korony mojej sztuczne ognie zgaście,

Noc idzie — czarna noc z twarzą Murzyna!”

Therefore they crumple his hat down upon his face

Before America can recognize her son

and shout at her twelve stars:

“Extinguish the unnatural fires of my crown;

The night is coming — a black night with the face of a Negro!”

Więc, nim Kościuszki cień i Waszyngtona

Zadrzy — początek pieśni przyjm, o! Janie...

Bo pieśń nim dojrzy, człowiek nieraz skona,

A niżli skona pieśń, naród pierw wstanie.

So, before the ghosts of Kościuszko and Washington

tremble — accept the origin of this song, O John...

For before his song matures, a man will sometimes die,

But that the song survives, a nation will first arise.

<http://markpiekarz.com/1859-a-pre-execution-tribute-to-john-brown-and-a-warning/>

To see John Brown, Norwid invites us to acknowledge Tadeusz Kościuszko. With this Polish revolutionary’s bequest to emancipate and educate those enslaved, something Thomas Jefferson failed to enact, Kościuszko has become a symbol for what America’s slaveowning founding fathers could have bequeathed. Poles have invoked Kościuszko now for centuries to signal how their own struggle for freedom was one more universal than national. Efforts persist to consider how Kościuszko’s legacy ought to be explored, especially when solidarity with African Americans is considered (Hodges 2014).

Even here, however, the challenge of dialogue across national and racial differences can be evident. While Poles might see commonalities to rest in American and Polish struggles for national independence, the articulation of 1776, or 1789, in US culture increasingly fades before 1619 as a year of recognition for those who wish to acknowledge the power of slavery and its legacy in US culture (Hannah-Jones 2019). We should mark when enslaved people were brought to America, not when their owners declared independence from an empire that formally abolished slavery sooner than its former colony.

As we consider exemplars, then, we can also mark their limitations. Imaginations can find inspiration in golden ages, and in exemplars, but they also need to be emancipated from the constraints of horizons antithetical to freedom's extension, rooted deeply in unacknowledged conditions of exploitation, expropriation, and extermination.

CONCLUSIONS

In the end, it is more than a question of recognizing the commonalities and distinctions of national cultures and racial formations, of the struggles by Poles and their minoritized communities and of Black folks within America and across the world. While we can seek out exemplars in variously oppressed communities, those who articulate a sense of belonging whose cultural power demands universalizing recognition and amplification, that effort is not quite the same. Even narratives of national commemoration that promise ever greater diversity and inclusion could find more powerful grounds for comparison and reconstruction when we question the dates and stories organizing starting premises.

While it might begin with other dialogues, I find the articulation of Du Boisian and Kloskowskan knowledge cultures to be a critical contribution to globalizing knowledge with mutual recognition at heart, and justice in mind. In their encounter, we may find little in equivalence, but much potential with new fusions of horizons.

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Abstract

One of the most powerful ways in which we can globalize knowledge, and sociology, is to figure ways in which leading intellectual figures within insufficiently articulated knowledge cultures might inform readings of the other's work. With the recent revivals of Antonina Kłoskowska and W.E.B. Du Bois in Polish and US sociology respectively, it is a propitious time to figure the ways in which their scholarship aligns, contrasts, and can mutually transform. In particular, the two are both concerned for how marginalized communities with their associated subjectivities engage dominant cultures, but Kłoskowska works within a national/regional frame and Du Bois a global and racial one. Too, Du Bois theorizes from within that marginalized community, with political pointedness, not from outside it or with any attempt to refrain from value judgements. Finally, while Du Bois blends Marxist accounts with a culturally rich account of Blackness and its others, Kłoskowska offers a more semiotic and intersubjective hermeneutic view of how various fusions of horizons might also create a more open world. Those who extend Kłoskowska's tradition exemplify that very potential while Du Bois, in his very conditions of existence, made racism's hardest shell manifest. Figuring exemplars of national and racial leadership might, however, invite powerful figurations of the future, but only when their cultural and political constitutions are made explicit.

Key words / słowa kluczowe

Antonina Kłoskowska, W.E.B. Du Bois, sociology of culture / sociologia kultury, dominant culture / kultura dominująca, nation / naród, race / rasa