

**EI ARAKAWA ASKS MALIK GAINES AND LEARNS ABOUT W.E.B. DU BOIS, THE AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, AND THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN PH.D RECIPIENT FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY IN 1895.**

BELOW IS A PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE EXHIBITION THAT MALIK IS PREPARING FOR 2011 PHILADELPHIA. THIS INTERVIEW IS A PREVIEW OF WHAT MIGHT COME IN THE FUTURE.

“QUADRUPLE-CONSCIOUSNESS IS A HYPERBOLIC TERM DRAWING ON W.E.B. DU BOIS’ FAMOUS FORMULATION OF DOUBLE-CONSCIOUSNESS, AND MULTIPLYING IT THROUGH PERFORMANCES OF COMPLEX SUBJECTIVITY. THIS ALIENATED SITUATION, DEFINED BY THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE OF MODERNITY, IS A VANGUARD OF A BROADER POST-MODERN EXPERIENCE. ARTISTS WHO PLAY IN AND AMONG PROVISIONAL SUBJECT POSITIONS CAN MARSHAL THE POSSIBILITIES OF QUADRUPLE-CONSCIOUSNESS, IMAGINING WAYS OF BEING THAT EXCEED AND TRANSGRESS THE FALSE UNITIES OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE. THROUGH FICTITIOUS PORTRAITS, PLAY-ACTING, AND REPRESENTATIONS OF ALTERNATE HISTORIES, THESE ARTISTS PROPOSE A PROVISIONAL FREEDOM WITHIN THE UNCERTAINTY OF IRRECONCILABLE IDENTITIES.”

MG (MALIK GAINES): WOW THAT’S DEEP.

EA (EI ARAKAWA): WHEN DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA OF “QUADRUPLE-CONSCIOUSNESS”? WAS THIS BECAUSE DU BOIS DID SOME FIELD RESEARCH IN PHILADELPHIA? (*THE PHILADELPHIA NEGRO* IN 1899)

MG: I DIDN’T KNOW ABOUT HIS CONNECTION TO PHILADELPHIA, BUT HE’S BASICALLY A FOUNDER OF MODERN SOCIAL SCIENCES, HE WAS BORN IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY. HE STUDIED AND TAUGHT IN MAJOR UNIVERSITIES IN THE USA IN THE EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, WORKED IN BLACK COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH, AND HAD A BROAD SET OF EXPERIENCES. HE BELIEVED SOCIAL SCIENCE COULD PROVE THAT RACIST SYSTEMS ARE ILLOGICAL AND UNFAIR. HE BELIEVED THIS FOR A LONG TIME. HE MADE STUDIES OF BLACK AMERICAN LIFE IN AN EFFORT TO CHANGE THE DISCOURSE. HE DEVELOPED AN APPARATUS OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AND ON BEHALF OF BLACK AMERICANS. HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE. MAYBE IT DID, BUT HE SEEMED UNSATISFIED AT THE END OF HIS LIFE.

EA: I’D LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT *BLACK RECONSTRUCTION* (1935) ABOUT HOW BLACK PEOPLE TOOK MAJOR ROLES IN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS AND RECONSTRUCTION ERA. ANYWAY, YOU KNOW ABOUT HIM FOR A LONG TIME? COMING FROM JAPAN, I AM EMBARRASSED I DIDN’T KNOW HIS NAME.

MG: HE IS A WELL-KNOWN FIGURE IN THE UNITED STATES. WE HAVE A STATE-AUTHORIZED BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN FEBRUARY, AND YOU LEARN ABOUT HISTORICAL BLACK PEOPLE IN EXTRA LESSONS AT SCHOOL. DU BOIS EPITOMIZES THE KIND OF FIGURE CELEBRATED IN THAT CONTEXT. AN EARLY, IMPORTANT, INFLUENTIAL, INTELLIGENT, SIGNIFICANT BLACK FIGURE. ALSO IN THAT CONTEXT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE SOMEONE WHO DOES IMPORTANT THINGS FOR THE FIRST TIME LIKE, FOR INSTANCE, GOING TO HARVARD, WHICH DU BOIS DID. UNIVERSITIES ARE LOOKING AT DU BOIS A LOT ACROSS THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES THESE DAYS, PROBABLY BECAUSE HE WAS SO PROGRESSIVE, AND BECAUSE RACE IS STILL AN INFLUENCE ON OUR LIVES.

EA: ARE YOU AMERICAN? OR SOMEHOW IMMIGRATED?

MG: I AM AMERICAN. MY FATHER IS AFRICAN AMERICAN. MY MOTHER’S MOTHER’S FAMILY IMMIGRATED FROM RUSSIA. THEY WERE GERMANS LIVING IN RUSSIA WHO

CAME TO THE USA IN THE EARLY CENTURY. MY DAD'S FAMILY COMES FROM SOUTH CAROLINA.

EA: DID YOU READ SOME OF DU BOIS BIOGRAPHY?

MG: I READ A LOTS OF HIS SPEECHES AND ESSAYS, HIS NOVEL *DARK PRINCESS, THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK* AND THE *GIFT OF BLACK FOLK*, *ODDS AND ENDS*. I'VE TRIED TO PAY ATTENTION TO HIS LATER, MORE COMMUNIST STUFF. I'M INTERESTED IN HIS LATE LIFE WHEN HE MOVED TO AFRICA. HE REJECTED SOCIALISM WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER, BUT GREW MORE LEFTIST THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE. BY THE TIME HE WAS OLD, HE WAS BEING HONORED IN CHINA. THE AMERICANS WOULDN'T RENEW HIS AMERICAN PASSPORT BECAUSE HE WAS THOUGHT TO BE COMMUNIST. HE WAS IN HIS 90S. SO, KWAME NKRUMAH, THE PRESIDENT OF GHANA, INVITED HIM AND HIS WIFE THERE. THEY SETTLED IN ACCRA, WHERE THEY WERE VERY ACTIVE. THERE'S A CENTER THERE WHERE THEIR HOME WAS. HE WAS AN EARLY INNOVATOR IN LIBERATION ORGANIZATIONS THAT EVENTUALLY LED TO AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT. HE WAS THE FOUNDER OF THE IMPORTANT PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE.

EA: HE HAD A POSITIVE VIEW WHEN JAPANESE ARMY, NON-WEST, WON OVER RUSSIA IN EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY. HE ALSO VISITED NAZI GERMANY, AND HAD A MIXED FEELING ABOUT THEM (ESPECIALLY BEING POSITIVE ABOUT THEIR ECONOMY), ALTHOUGH OF COURSE HE WAS DISTURBED BY THEIR TREATMENT OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.

MG: DUBOIS WAS AN EARLY SCHOLAR TO LINK RACISM AND IMPERIALISM AND ALL OF THAT TOGETHER. BUT AS AN EDUCATED, MIDDLE-CLASS GUY, HE ALSO BUYS INTO A LOT OF EUROPEAN STUFF. LIKE THERE'S AN ELITIST CONCEPT EMBEDDED IN HIS EARLIER PHILOSOPHY, THE IDEA OF A TALENTED 10% OF AFRICAN AMERICANS WHO CAN LIFT THE RACE UP BY FULFILLING AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE WITHIN THE AMERICAN SYSTEM. I THINK THAT WAS A PART OF HOW HE UNDERSTOOD WHAT HE WAS DOING, HIS OWN ACHIEVEMENTS.

EA: IS THIS FIRST TIME YOUR CURATORIAL PROJECT RELATES TO "QUADRUPLE-CONSCIOUSNESS", THAT COMES FROM DU BOIS'S DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS? DOES MY BARBARIAN (THE COLLABORATIVE ART GROUP MALIK PARTICIPATES) ALSO LOOK INTO THE IDEA OF MULTIPLE CONSCIOUSNESS?

MG: I HAVE IDEAS ABOUT HOW HIS IDEAS RELATE TO SOME THEATRICAL IDEA. THAT'S WHERE MY SHOW IS COMING FROM. I AM ACTUALLY WRITING A DISSERTATION IN A PH.D. PROGRAM ABOUT PERFORMANCE. IT'S ABOUT PERFORMANCES FROM THE 60S IN DIFFERENT NATIONAL CONTEXTS — GHANA, GERMANY, AND THE U.S. I AM LOOKING AT A CERTAIN KIND OF BLACK POLITICS THAT CIRCULATES IN PERFORMANCES FROM THE 60S. NINA SIMONE, IS ONE EXAMPLE. SHE HAS A FAMOUS SONG CALLED "FOUR WOMEN" WHERE SHE PLAYS FOUR DIFFERENT WOMEN WHO HAVE DESCRIBE THEIR LABOR PRACTICES, SEXUALITY, THE WAY THEY LOOK, THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN. THE PERFORMANCE ACKNOWLEDGES THE WAY THESE PERSONAE CONFORM TO STEREOTYPES THAT FRAME THEM. BUT FOUR WOMEN HAS A VERY THEATRICAL WAY OF MOVING FROM ONE SUBJECTIVITY TO THE NEXT. I WAS THINKING ABOUT DU BOIS' IDEA OF DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS. WHEN HE WROTE ABOUT IT, HE EXPRESSED A STRIVING THAT THESE TWO CONSCIOUSNESSES, PRODUCED BY THE ALIENATION OF BEING RACED, COULD RECONCILE INTO A SINGLE CONSCIOUSNESS, LIKE THE UNIVERSAL, UN-RACED SUBJECT DESCRIBED IN EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY. YOU WOULD HAVE A SINGLE CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE WAY A MAJORITY, DOMINANT, NORMATIVE PERSON EXPERIENCES IT. BUT, I WAS THINKING WHAT IF INSTEAD OF TRYING TO IMPOSE UNITY, WHAT IF YOU DOUBLE THAT DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS, AND YOU ARE FOUR

CONSCIOUSNESSES, LIKE NINA SIMONE'S SONG FOUR WOMEN. WHAT WAS RADICAL ABOUT THE POLITICS IN THE 60S WAS THAT THERE WERE UNPREDICTABLE MOVES AGAINST THIS NORMATIVE UNIFIED CARTESIAN IDEA OF A CONSCIOUS SUBJECT CITIZEN. BECAUSE AS THE OBJECTS OF EXCLUSION, LIKE BLACKS AND SO MANY OTHERS HAVE BEEN, IF YOU HAVE THESE MULTIPLE SITUATIONS, MULTIPLE CONSCIOUSNESSES, DIFFERENT POSITIONS YOU ARE GOING TO PLAY, THEN THERE MAYBE SOMETHING POWERFUL ABOUT THAT. USE ALL FOUR CONSCIOUSNESSES AT ONE TIME, AND YOU HAVE SOME KIND OF FLEXIBILITY, SOME KIND OF CRITICAL ACUITY.

EA: DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS IS THAT YOU PERFORM IN RELATION TO THE CONTEXT YOU ARE IN, RIGHT? WHEN YOU KNOW TO ACT WHITE, AND WHEN YOU KNOW TO ACT BLACK.

MG: I DON'T THINK THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT HE'S SAYING. IT HAS TO DO THE IDEA ... IF YOU ARE A WHITE MAN IN THIS SITUATION YOU OCCUPY A NEUTRAL POWER POSITION AND DON'T EXPERIENCE RACE AS AN ALIENATING DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS, YOU JUST EXPERIENCE YOUR SELF. IF YOU EXPERIENCE RACE, YOU ARE TREATED DIFFERENTLY AND YOU EXPERIENCE DIFFERENCE ALL THE TIME. DUBOIS WAS THINKING THAT ONE CONSCIOUSNESS IS A "TRUE" SELF, AND THE SECOND CONSCIOUSNESS IS THAT ALIENATED AWARENESS THAT ONE IS DIFFERENT BECAUSE OF ONE IS RACED.

EA: CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT GHANA IN THE 60S? WHAT KIND OF MORE PERFORMANCES YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT IN YOUR DISSERTATIONS?

MG: I WAS LOOKING AT A COUPLE OF WOMEN WHO WERE WRITERS IN THE 60S. ONE'S NAME IS EFUA SUTHERLAND AND THE OTHER IS AMA ATA AIDOO, WHO IS MORE INTERNATIONALLY WELL KNOWN. PEOPLE STUDY HER IN POST-COLONIAL LITERATURE CLASSES. IT'S INTERESTING FROM AN AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE, BECAUSE I'M LOOKING AT A LITERATURE OF RACE THAT COMES FROM DU BOIS, COMES FROM AN AFRICAN AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING OF RACE. I WAS INTERESTED IN THE WAY GHANA HAS BEEN A PART OF THAT BECAUSE IT WAS AN INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF BLACK LIBERATION IN THE EARLY 60S. THEY BECAME INDEPENDENT FROM ENGLAND IN 1957, AND BECAME THE FIRST AFRICAN FORMER COLONY TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY. THEY HAD A CHARISMATIC LEADER, KWAME NKRUMA, WHO HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT A LOT, HE HIMSELF WROTE A LOT. HE HAD AN IDEA OF AN AFRICAN PERSONALITY, THROUGH WHICH YOU CREATE AUTHENTIC REAL AFRICAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN PLACE OF COLONIZED CONSCIOUSNESS. IT'S KIND OF A RECONCILED DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS. HIS STATE SUPPORTED ARTS MOVEMENTS, CULTURAL INITIATIVES, INCLUDING THE NATIONAL THEATER MOVEMENT. EFUA SUTHERLAND WAS AN INTELLECTUAL WHO FOUNDED A WRITER'S SOCIETY, AND WAS VERY ACTIVE IN CULTURAL STUFF. SHE KNEW NKRUMAH, SO WAS SORT OF IN THE INNER-CIRCLE. SHE FOUNDED THE GHANA DRAMA STUDIO AND WROTE SOME REALLY INTERESTING PLAYS. I'VE LOOKED INTO SOME OF THOSE IN RELATION TO NKRUMAH'S IDEAS. I THINK WHAT I SEE IN THAT IS A KIND OF, SHALL WE SAY, FEMINIST CRITICALITY THAT GOES ALONG WITH THE LIBERATION IDEAS OF THE TIME, BUT IS SLIGHTLY CRITICAL OF THE AUTHORITY. AT THAT TIME, LOTS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS MOVED THERE, FAMOUS PEOPLE LIKE MALCOLM X VISITED THERE, MARTIN LUTHER KING AND CORETTA SCOTT KING WERE AT THE INDEPENDENCE CEREMONY, THE POET MAYA ANGELOU LIVED THERE. ALSO DU BOIS'S WIDOW LIVED THERE FOR A LONG TIME AFTER HIS DEATH. SHE WAS INVOLVED WITH THE STATE MEDIA. ALL SORTS OF INTERESTING THINGS WERE HAPPENING THERE. THERE'S ONE REALLY WEIRD THING. THERE IS A WOMAN, WHAT'S HER NAME, HANNA REITSCH? SHE WAS THE NAZI PILOT. SHE WAS A CELEBRITY PILOT IN THE NAZI PERIOD. LATER ON IN THE 60S, SHE MOVED TO ACCRA, BECAME GOOD FRIENDS WITH NKRUMAH, THE PRESIDENT. THEY MAYBE HAD AN AFFAIR, THERE'S AT LEAST THE SUGGESTION OF A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP. AND SHE STARTED A

FLYING SCHOOL THERE. IT WAS A STRANGE INTERNATIONAL CENTER. AMERICANS OFTEN RETURN THERE, AND NOW THERE IS A TOURISM INDUSTRY ORIENTED AROUND HISTORIC SLAVERY SITES. CASTLES AND MUSEUMS. IN PERSON, IT'S STUNNING AND SCARY IN THESE SLAVE FORTRESSES, THE CASTLES, ON THE COAST THERE. AMERICANS GO THERE AS A WAY TO TRACE THE HISTORY OF THEIR ANCESTORS WHO SUFFERED, BUT THERE WERE OTHER PEOPLE THERE TOO WHEN I VISITED.

EA: SO MANY THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW ... I SEE FEMINISM AND POST-COLONIALISM ... IS THERE ANY QUEER IDENTITY TAKING PLACE IN YOUR STUDIES?

GA: THE THIRD CHAPTER IS ABOUT FASSBINDER. A FEW FILMS FROM THE EARLY PERIOD, WHEN THEY WERE STILL THE ANTITEATER. AND THE WAY THE ACTOR GÜNTER KAUFMANN FIGURED IN THOSE FILMS. THE WAY HIS RACE POLITICIZES CERTAIN DYNAMICS IN THE FILMS, BUT ALSO I AM LOOKING AT DESIRING EYE OF FASSBINDER. IN THAT CASE, QUEER IDEAS GET COLLAPSED IN THE AMBIGUOUS POST-MARXIST MELODRAMATIC POLITICS. EVERYTHING'S ALL MIXED TOGETHER. MY FINAL CHAPTER IS IN SAN FRANCISCO WITH COCKETTES AND THE SINGER, SYLVESTER, WHO CAME FROM COCKETTES. HE LATER BECAME A DISCO STAR. I COMPARE SYLVESTER'S APPROACH WITH THE HIPPIE-DROPOUT SENSIBILITY, WHICH IS MORE ABOUT ROMANTIC TRANSCENDENCE, MAYBE, VERSUS SYLVESTER'S PERFORMANCE, WHICH WAS MORE ABOUT CITATION AND ADAPTATION AND MOVING THROUGH DIFFERENT KIND OF IDENTITIES. THAT IS MORE QUADRUPLE-CONSCIOUSNESS.

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