One of the intriguing things about phenomenology is the manner in which its species of philosophical description tends primarily to disclose for us what is already before us in a new and sometimes deeper light. In that spirit, my intention here is to assemble some familiar notions about Black experience in such a way as to disclose a principle posture of being-Black. Assuming success in that endeavor, I might suggest here that the "posture" considered could well be as fundamental a feature of things as that primal peculiarity of New World Blackness, first enunciated by W.E.B. Du Bois: "double-consciousness."

Reflecting upon Du Bois' formulation in behalf of our own considerations, one wonders what Du Bois might have meant by the "dogged strength" of "one dark body," as he announced double-consciousness:

"After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is 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 twoness,—an American, a Negro; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."

Clearly, Du Bois is articulating a profound predicament. Thus in what follows we run the risk of fostering distorting simplifications of the situation. But with that in mind, it can be noted that among the facets of my body's "dogged strength" is the basic fact that I am me: however many "warring ideals" there may be, I have but one life to live, and as long as I live, I live my body.

* The first draft of this paper was presented as a workshop contribution to the Annual Meeting of the Society for Phenomenological and Existential Philosophy, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., October 31 - November 2, 1974.
THOMAS F. SLAUGHTER JR.

Yet, if my being Black therefore has this suggested unity of a lived-body, how then does the duality of double-consciousness come about and persist in its existential prominence? The multiplexity occasioned by double-consciousness is not an existential dimension distinct from a unity constituted by my lived-body. In fact the stubborn primacy of my lived-body is the precondition of double-consciousness. It poses the impossibility of my succumbing totally to that thorough denigration (!) of Blackness, apparently intended by the society. Consequently, double-consciousness is precisely the expression of the contradiction posed by this immovable immediacy of my lived-body on the one hand, and the society's apparently irresistible compulsion, on the other, to fashion my physiognomic degradation. My duality of consciousness is the psycho-physical dynamic spanning the socio-physical gap between my own sense of me and the culturally contrived ignominy surrounding my body. This spanning of the social gap is achieved by internalizing that contradiction and suffering it as an integral structure of my own character. Obviously, I exist by now both only through my particular body, but also, only in this peculiar society. And the case is both that my-body-in-this-society induces double-consciousness, and that by now, double-consciousness is my relation through this society to my own body, as this latter crucially is the public, first fact of my existence.²

Put differently: my double-consciousness is due in part to the fact that through routine subjective conditioning, I am impregnated with the values and mores of my environing society. But this social environment and my routine internalization of it are not only hostile to my individualizing ego; they are so constituted as to be explicitly antithetical to the very being I am to the world through my body. Between me and the surrounding world there exists a split of which by lopsided social contract, my body is the symbol. Blackness embodies the ostracised. Under the duress of racial domination, I undergo the now familiar two-pronged process of externally imposed inferiorization and subsequent internalization of that inferiority. It is thus probable that in my routine state, I carry White hatred of me within me as my own property. Double-consciousness expresses the fact that the essence of my subjugation, as concerns the one aspect of colonized consciousness, is precisely the simultaneous entertainment of two mutually antagonistic basins of self-valuation. Regardless, in the end, a condition, the "inferiority" of Blackness, which in fact is the result of a process of domination comes to be perceived as a cause of my subjugation. And, this latter