

# The Patronage Dilemma: Allison Davis's Odyssey from Fellow to Faculty

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*This article analyzes the role of the Julius Rosenwald Fund in shaping the career of W. Allison Davis, a distinguished anthropologist who became the first African American appointed to the faculty of a mostly white university. From 1928 to 1948, the Rosenwald Fund ran an expansive fellowship program for African American intellectuals, which, despite its significance, remains largely unexamined in the scholarly literature. Davis tied his academic aspirations to Rosenwald Fund support, including for his early research and the terms of his faculty appointment. His experiences illustrate the dynamics inclusion and exclusion of African Americans in the academy; paternalistic promotion and strategic denial functioned as two sides of the same coin. Spotlighting Davis's negotiations, this article establishes how presumptions of racial inferiority guided Rosenwald patronage and demonstrates the extent to which the principles of meritocracy and expertise remained secondary concerns for those interested in cultivating African American intellectuals.*

**Keywords:** African American intellectual history, social science, Julius Rosenwald Fund, W. Allison Davis, fellowships, faculty desegregation

W. Allison Davis was the first African American hired to the faculty of a historically white university, the University of Chicago in 1942. Even before his appointment, he had gained scholarly recognition. As a graduate student, Davis and his mentor W. Lloyd Warner devised a framework for understanding the relationship between race and class that directly shaped a generation of social science research, and he published two groundbreaking monographs prior to completing his PhD.<sup>1</sup> These early junctures of Davis's career—his graduate training,

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<sup>1</sup>James D. Anderson, "Race, Meritocracy, and the American Academy during the Immediate Post-World War II Era," *History of Education Quarterly* 33, no. 2

his first monographs, and ultimately his faculty appointment—were made possible by the financial support of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. As with all foundations, the Rosenwald Fund's ideological agenda guided its grant-making decisions, which, at times, stood in tension with Davis's research program. This article highlights Davis's experiences negotiating fund patronage and examines the ways in which the Rosenwald Fund's support shaped Davis's career. In so doing, I establish how presumptions of racial inferiority inflected Rosenwald Fund tutelage and demonstrate the extent to which the abstract principles of meritocracy, expertise, and academic freedom remained secondary concerns for those interested in cultivating African American intellectuals.

In the first half of the twentieth century, a rising generation of Black intellectuals understood the potential power of social science scholarship to counter conventional understandings of racial inferiority that pervaded the academy and beyond, but opportunities for training were extremely limited until the late 1920s. Most Black universities were not equipped to train graduate students. When African Americans could gain admission to prestigious research centers such as Harvard and Chicago, they had, at best, paltry scholarship options. The landscape of opportunity changed dramatically when the Rosenwald Fund developed a fellowship program to cultivate exceptional African American intellectuals, as other major foundations had done to support white scholars.<sup>2</sup> For the duration of the fellowship program from 1928 to 1948, the Rosenwald Fund expended almost \$1.7 million on fellowships, awarding 999 fellowships to African Americans and sparking a proliferation of Black PhDs. So prolific

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(Summer 1993), 154; Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941); and Allison Davis and John Dollard, *Children of Bondage: The Personality Development of Negro Youth in the Urban South* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1940). For examples of work influenced by the caste-and-class school, see John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1937); Hortense Powdermaker, *After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South* (New York: Viking Press, 1939); and Gunnar Myrdal's classic study of race relations, *An American Dilemma* (New Brunswick, NJ: Harper & Brothers, 1944).

<sup>2</sup>On the barriers aspiring Black scholars faced, see Jonathan Scott Holloway and Ben Keppel, *Black Scholars on the Line: Race, Social Science, and American Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007); and John H. Stanfield, "The Cracked Back Door: Foundations and Black Social Scientists between the World Wars," *American Sociologist* 17, no. 4 (Nov. 1982), 193–204. On foundation fellowships for white scholars, see Donald Fisher, "The Role of Philanthropic Foundations in the Reproduction and Production of Hegemony: Rockefeller Foundations and the Social Sciences," *Sociology* 17, no. 2 (May 1983), 206–33.

was this moment of Black scholarly production that historians refer to it as the “golden age” of African American social science.<sup>3</sup> Fellowships went to a variety of individuals—artists, writers, teachers, religious leaders—but from the program’s onset the Rosenwald Fund took a special interest in social scientists. The lengthy, impressive list of Black social scientists who received Rosenwald Fund support includes Ralph Bunche, John Hope Franklin, Zora Neale Hurston, Katherine Dunham, Mamie and Kenneth Clark, Merze Tate, Horace Cayton, and many other extraordinary individuals.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Rosenwald Fund facilitated an unprecedented expansion of Black scholarship, at times it also had a heavy hand in limiting the parameters of acceptable Black social scientific work. The fellowship program was mostly the purview of Rosenwald Fund president Edwin Embree, in conjunction with a rotating fellowship director and, in later years, a formal fellowship committee. Embree believed, along with other officials in the philanthropic world and at white social science research centers, that Black scholars were too attached to the subject of race and therefore required guidance. Black social scientists were expected to embrace the objectivism central to contemporary definitions of social science, but they were also expected to dedicate their careers to improving the Black condition, the area in which their objectivity was consistently questioned. An often unspoken corollary was that the perspective of white scholars was inherently neutral.<sup>5</sup> For the Black scholars under his tutelage,

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<sup>3</sup>The total number of Black fellows is fewer than 999 because some recipients received more than one fellowship. The Rosenwald Fund also awarded 538 fellowships to white recipients, but the roster of white recipients is less distinguished than that of the Black fellows. Edwin Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1949), 152. On the proliferation of Black PhDs, see W. E. B. Du Bois, “Race Relations in the United States 1917-1947,” *Phylon* 9, no. 3 (Sept. 1948), 241. On the “golden age” of Black social science, see Alice O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Holloway and Keppel, *Black Scholars on the Line*, 7-9; and Robert E. Washington and Donald Cunnigen, eds., *Confronting the American Dilemma of Race: The Second Generation of Black American Sociologists* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002).

<sup>4</sup>Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People*, 160-61. It is notable that the Rosenwald Fund granted fellowships to many Black women at a time when women were being increasingly excluded from higher education. Patricia Albjerg Graham, “Expansion and Exclusion: A History of Women in American Higher Education,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 3, no. 4 (July 1978), 759-73.

<sup>5</sup>Jonathan Scott Holloway, *Confronting the Veil: Abram Harris Jr., E. Franklin Frazier, and Ralph Bunche, 1919-1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and John P. Jackson, “The Historical Context of the African American Social Scientist,” *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development* 71, no. 1 (April 2006), 218-23.

Embree devised a two-pronged definition of professionalization that entailed methodological training in the social sciences and guardianship over the acceptable parameters of their research. For example, Embree encouraged Davis to revise his research agenda from studying comparative racial formations in the US and the Caribbean to researching race in the US context using the methods of social psychology. Embree also played an active role in deciding which senior white social scientists Davis would work under.

While scholars acknowledge that foundations played a significant role in the development of American social thought, they still have a long way to go in understanding the process by which asymmetrical power relations between scholars, especially Black scholars, and foundations have shaped the academy.<sup>6</sup> Sociologist Aldon Morris offers a framework for approaching this problem in *The Scholar Denied*. Morris demonstrates that arguably the most consequential Black scholar and intellectual of the twentieth century, W. E. B. Du Bois, was persistently, deliberately, and forcefully thwarted throughout his career. A key takeaway from his work is that Black scholarship was not merely ignored, it was systematically denied.<sup>7</sup> This article extends Morris's insights by uncovering the ways in which paternalistic promotion and strategic denial functioned as two sides of the same coin for the Rosenwald Fund, with lasting consequences. While Davis's close relationship with Embree is not generalizable to the entire cohort of Rosenwald Fellows, his experiences offer a magnified view of the dynamics that defined the fellowship program. Embree's brand of patronage was characteristic enough that he earned a reputation among African American intellectuals for his paternalistic practices.

Despite the Rosenwald Fellowship program's significance, no study has yet evaluated its procedures, dynamics, and consequences. Without such analysis, discussions of the Rosenwald Fund in the existing literature tend to be limited to questions of how many African Americans the fund assisted, and to what extent its assistance mattered.<sup>8</sup> This dearth of analysis has implications for how we understand

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<sup>6</sup>Important exceptions include Leah N. Gordon, *From Power to Prejudice: The Rise of Racial Individualism in Midcentury America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); and Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

<sup>7</sup>Aldon Morris, *The Scholar Denied: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).

<sup>8</sup>Alfred Perkins, "Welcome Consequences and Fulfilled Promise: Julius Rosenwald Fellows and *Brown v. Board of Education*," *Journal of Negro Education* 72, no. 3 (Summer 2003), 344-56; Jayne R. Beilke, "The Changing Emphasis of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, 1928-1948," *Journal of Negro Education* 66, no. 1 (Winter 1997), 3-15; and Daniel Schulman, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum,

the experiences of Black scholars as well as for higher education history. A rigorous, comprehensive intellectual biography of Davis exists, and, in general, the biographies of important Rosenwald Fellows tend to acknowledge the significance of the Rosenwald Fund. Much of this literature, however, accepts a teleological understanding of the fellowship program's purpose by assuming that the program was intended to challenge segregation.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the literature on faculty desegregation before the Civil Rights Movement is sparse, with the exception of some work on Davis's appointment. Narratives of Davis's appointment tend to accept the rationale that the Rosenwald Fund sponsored him in response to the University of Chicago's financial constraints, as opposed to the university's unwillingness to invest in a non-white scholar.<sup>10</sup> These interpretations render invisible the structures that reproduced, and in many ways continue to generate, white supremacy within the academy and make it difficult for historians to decipher the major factors that shaped Black social scientists and their work. In recovering the perspective of one of the fund's fellows, this article highlights a collection of manifestations, on an interpersonal level, of the racial politics of knowledge production and demonstrates that such analysis is crucial for understanding the work of this generation of Black scholars.

In this three-part article, I begin with a discussion of Embree and Davis before either became involved with the Rosenwald Fund to highlight the historical contingency of their relationship. It was not a given that the Rosenwald Fund would develop a fellowship program for Black intellectuals, that Davis would ally with a white patron like Embree, or that Embree would have any interest in supporting Davis's larger objectives of undermining the Jim Crow racial order. Next, I focus on Davis's negotiations of Rosenwald Fund support while emphasizing the ways in which Davis was able to leverage his academic work as a form of resistance against his patrons' ideological agenda. Finally, I examine the terms of Davis's appointment to the University of Chicago's faculty and, in so doing, consider the role of foundation support in creating, unintentionally, a mechanism by

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Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (Chicago: Spertus Museum, Northwestern University Press, 2009). For an exception, see John H. Stanfield, *Philanthropy and Jim Crow in American Social Science* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 97-118.

<sup>9</sup>For example, see David Varel, *The Lost Black Scholar: Resurrecting Allison Davis in American Social Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 66; and Alfred Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, Foundation Philanthropy, and American Race Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

<sup>10</sup>For example, see Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree*, 210.

which universities could defer their affirmative commitment to hiring non-white scholars.

## Part I: Unlikely Allies

*Allison Davis, A New Negro*

Born into a relatively well-off family in Washington, DC, in 1902, William Allison Davis attended Dunbar High School, an elite Black high school known for its exceptional faculty. Like his father, Davis graduated valedictorian. For that achievement, he was able to attend Williams College, which granted one scholarship per year to Dunbar's top graduate. Following the path of other notable Dunbar graduates, including Charles Hamilton Houston, Sterling Allen Brown, and Carter G. Woodson, Davis pursued a graduate degree from Harvard, earning an MA in English in 1925.<sup>11</sup>

After receiving his degree, Davis joined Hampton Institute's faculty as an English instructor. Hampton embraced the philosophy of manual labor, extolling the belief that the "dignity of labor" was necessary for African American racial progress.<sup>12</sup> This educational philosophy eased the anxieties of white southerners, allowing Hampton to grow the largest endowment of any Black school in the country. By the second decade of the twentieth century, however, Hampton became a cradle of conflict, drawing the fire of Black leaders, especially Du Bois, for its paternalistic policies and dearth of Black leadership. In 1927, tensions erupted into Black student protests that rocked Hampton's campus. During the protests, Davis was one of the few faculty members whom the students could come to for advice.<sup>13</sup>

A new cultural awareness among Black intellectuals, dubbed the New Negro movement, contributed to the tension evident on Hampton's campus. The New Negro movement was a product of the cultural clashes resulting from the Great Migration and frustrations over US failure to meet its supposed standard of democracy at

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<sup>11</sup>Holloway, *Confronting the Veil*, 39-41; Alison Stewart, *First Class: The Legacy of Dunbar, America's First Black Public High School* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013); and Thomas Sowell, "The Education of Minority Children," in *Education in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Edward P. Lazear and Robert J. Barro (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 79-92.

<sup>12</sup>James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 34.

<sup>13</sup>Raymond Wolters, *The New Negro on Campus: Black College Rebellions of the 1920s* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 230-75; and George Clement Bond, "A Social Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake: An American Anthropologist," *American Ethnologist* 15, no. 4 (Nov. 1988), 765.

home after World War I.<sup>14</sup> As Alain Locke explains in his introduction to the seminal anthology *The New Negro*, the movement was a cultural battle for recognition of the Black intellectual as “collaborator and participant in American civilization,” which he saw as the first step toward achieving the political goals of freedom and equality.<sup>15</sup> During his time at Hampton, Davis wrote and published poems and essays in Black periodicals such as the NAACP’s *Crisis* and the Urban League’s *Opportunity*, most of which speak directly to the New Negro movement. The recurring themes in his writings included the bonds between Black Americans resulting from a common history of bondage, a disdain for intellectuals and professionals who bent to the expectations of white patrons, and a strong sense of obligation to improve Black life in America.<sup>16</sup>

This period of cultural production dovetailed with the maturation of Black scholarship. Over a decade before Franz Boas’s seminal 1911 *The Mind of Primitive Man*, Du Bois was establishing the first school of scientific sociology in the US at the historically Black Atlanta University. When Du Bois left his position at Atlanta to become editor of the NAACP’s *Crisis*, other Black university centers showed great promise. Howard University in Washington, DC, appointed its first Black president, Mordecai Johnson, in 1926, and he led efforts to transform Howard into a first-rate university.<sup>17</sup> Around the same time, Charles S. Johnson, a student of Robert Park and the Chicago School of Sociology, moved to Fisk University, where he began to build a formidable social science graduate program. But none of these centers had near the resources available at Hampton or similar institutions.<sup>18</sup>

The financial resources and job security of Hampton were not enough to keep Davis. Hampton principal James Edgar Gregg gave the faculty members an ultimatum: either the teachers expressed loyalty to the administration or they should leave Hampton. Continuing Hampton’s tradition of high Black faculty turnover, many of the Black faculty chose to move away from the “state of hypocrisy, racial prejudice and backwardness into which Hampton has fallen,” as Louise

<sup>14</sup>Mary Rolinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>15</sup>Alain Locke, *The New Negro* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 15.

<sup>16</sup>Allison Davis, “Our Negro ‘Intellectuals,’” *Crisis* 35, no. 8 (Aug. 1928), 268-269. See also Allison Davis, “To Those Dead and Gone,” *Crisis* 34, no. 9 (Nov. 1927), 303; Allison Davis, “Second Generation,” *Crisis* 35, no. 3 (March 1928), 87; and Allison Davis, “The Negro Deserts His People,” *Plain Talk* 4, no. 1 (Jan. 1929), 49-54.

<sup>17</sup>Holloway, *Confronting the Veil*, 37.

<sup>18</sup>Holloway and Keppel, *Black Scholars on the Line*, 7-8.

A. Thompson, another Black English teacher, described.<sup>19</sup> Motivated by the race pride of the New Negro movement, inspired by the exciting developments in social science, and disillusioned by the Hampton administration's severe backlash against its demonstrating students, Davis resolved to leave Hampton in 1931 to pursue graduate work in anthropology.<sup>20</sup>

*Edwin Embree, Philanthropoid*

Davis's career change was made possible by the arrival of the Rosenwald Fellowship program in 1928, but fellowships were not the first major endeavor of the Rosenwald Fund. In the early twentieth century, Julius Rosenwald, CEO of Sears, Roebuck and Co., amassed a vast fortune through the distribution of the Sears mail-order catalogs. With that fortune, Rosenwald partnered with Hampton Institute's most famous graduate, Booker T. Washington, to build school buildings for African American children in the rural South on a cost-sharing basis.<sup>21</sup> After decades of managing the school building project, the aging Rosenwald reorganized his small, family-run foundation into a professionalized corporation in 1927. Rosenwald recruited a high-ranking official from the Rockefeller Foundation, Edwin Embree, to run the newly reorganized foundation, and Embree served as president for the entirety of the fund's operations. Meanwhile, a new movement for school consolidation swept across the South, and the one-room Rosenwald schoolhouses already appeared out of date.<sup>22</sup> Charged with expanding and refocusing the Rosenwald Fund's activities, Embree immediately began phasing out the school building program.

As he searched for new avenues in which to invest Rosenwald resources, a suggestion from James Weldon Johnson to establish a broadly defined fellowship program caught Embree's attention. A prolific writer, university professor, lawyer, and the first Black secretary of the NAACP, Johnson's artistic talents, as well as his ability to build both interracial coalitions and networks among African Americans,

<sup>19</sup>Louise A. Thompson to W. E. B. Du Bois, Oct. 17, 1927, quoted in Wolters, *The New Negro on Campus*, 271-72.

<sup>20</sup>For a detailed discussion of Davis's decision to study anthropology, see Varel, *Lost Black Scholar*, 62-64.

<sup>21</sup>For opposing interpretations of the Rosenwald school-building program, see Stephanie Deutsch, *You Need a Schoolhouse: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald, and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011); and Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 152-184.

<sup>22</sup>Joan Malczewski, *Building a New Educational State: Foundations, Schools, and the American South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 57.



were unparalleled. Johnson recognized the reorganization of the Rosenwald Fund as an opportunity to devise a dependable source of support for the generation of artists, scholars, and other intellectuals coming out of the New Negro movement.<sup>23</sup> Instead of leaving young talent at the mercy of publishers and white patrons for isolated projects, a fellowship program run through the Rosenwald Fund would create an institutionalized source of support for promising individuals who could contribute as part of an African American intellectual class.

Embree was already familiar with the vocationally focused General Education Board (GEB) Fellowship program for African Americans through his work with the Rockefeller Foundation, and he likely intended to establish a similar fellowship program to support professionals in the fund's fields of interests, such as teachers, librarians, and other kinds of educators.<sup>24</sup> Johnson pushed Embree beyond this narrow conception to think more broadly about supporting exceptional African American intellectuals:

Artistic effort and creative achievement among Negroes are just beginning, and so it is not so much a matter of the needs and opportunities of the present moment as it is the fostering and development of these potential powers of the Negro in the five, ten, fifteen, or twenty years to come.<sup>25</sup>

Embree adopted Johnson's suggestion by including in the new program both fellowships for professional training and for any exceptional individual whom the Rosenwald Fund officers recognized as deserving support, including academics, artists, musicians, writers, and other intellectuals in the beginning stages of their careers. Other foundation fellowships for meritorious individuals—such as the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Fellowships and the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowships—went almost exclusively to established, white scholars and intellectuals. The program proceeded cautiously at first, until Embree and his colleagues realized its immense potential.

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<sup>23</sup>James Weldon Johnson is one of "The Six" figures whom David Levering Lewis considers to be the most responsible for precipitating the Harlem Renaissance. See David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (New York: Knopf, 1980), 120–21.

<sup>24</sup>Unlike the future Rosenwald Fund Fellowships, the GEB Fellowships were granted to cultivate personnel who could carry out programs for the GEB and its affiliate institutions. See, for example, Carlos Kevin Blanton, *George Sánchez: The Long Fight for Mexican American Integration* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 31–33.

<sup>25</sup>James W. Johnson to Edwin Embree, April 27, 1929, folder 414, box 17, James Weldon Johnson Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

By the early 1930s, the search was on to find talented Black individuals on whom to bestow the title “Rosenwald Fellow.”

Embree had no experience working in American race relations when running the fund became his career-defining occupation. Embree’s grandfather, John Gregg Fee, was a radical abolitionist who helped charter Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, a fully integrated institution until the onset of Jim Crow laws in that state.<sup>26</sup> Above all, he felt his family history primed him for this new role despite his lack of knowledge regarding the problems African Americans faced. Embree took pride in his family’s abolitionist past, but he was also committed to the field of physical anthropology, an academic discipline dedicated to determining and explaining human differences through theories of race. Embree was one of many professional philanthropists under the influence of the Galton Society, a professional organization of physical anthropologists named for the founder eugenics.<sup>27</sup> As director of the Division of Research of the Rockefeller Foundation, Embree attempted to develop a Galton Society research proposal to study natural selection among Aborigines in Australia, which, they argued, had not been disrupted by modern medicine. Struck by the stakes of the project—the future of the “civilized races”—Embree spent the next year attempting to turn the Division of Research into an engine for research in “human biology.” The proposal ultimately failed, and the Rockefeller Foundation disbanded Embree’s division in 1926. The experience alienated Embree, who believed that his colleagues did not appreciate the brilliance of his research program.<sup>28</sup> He left the organization soon after to become president of the reorganized Rosenwald Fund.

<sup>26</sup>Edwin R. Embree, *Brown America: The Story of a New Race* (New York: Viking, 1931), 69–88.

<sup>27</sup>Robert W. Sussman, *The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 176–77. See also, Lee D. Baker, *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896–1954* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>28</sup>Edwin R. Embree, “The Business of Giving Away Money,” *Harper’s Magazine* 161 (Aug. 1930), 320–29; Edwin R. Embree, “Timid Billions: Are Foundations Doing Their Job?,” *Harper’s Magazine* 198 (March 1949), 28–37; and Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree*, 50–57. For more on the Rockefeller Foundation’s role in the international eugenics movement, including supporting social hygiene research in Germany, see Stefan Kuhl, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 20–21; and Paul Weindling, “From Philanthropy to International Science Policy: The Rockefeller Funding of Biomedical Sciences in Germany 1920–1940,” in *Science, Politics and the Public Good: Essays in Honour of Margaret Gowing*, ed. Nicolaas A. Rupke (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1988), 119–40.

During his early years at the fund, Embree remained intrigued by eugenics, and his background in human biology inflected his interpretation of the problems African Americans faced.<sup>29</sup> Although he seriously doubted whether scientific evidence conclusively demonstrated that any race was innately superior or inferior, Embree still ascribed great analytical value to racial difference as an explanation for the past, present, and future of distinct groups. He believed members of different races had immutable characteristics that stemmed from their racial makeup, and he doubted the abilities of the masses of any race. Under the influence of the prevailing social scientific paradigms regarding race in the early twentieth century, Embree accepted that when members of different races came into contact, there was the potential for serious conflict.<sup>30</sup> Devising strategies to reduce this conflict by cultivating the best members of each race became central to his vision for the fund. Embree initially advocated for accomplishing this through whatever scientific tools were available, including eugenics.<sup>31</sup>

Embree was therefore an unlikely ally for Davis, but when the two men crossed paths, it was the beginning of a relationship that would prove formative for both individuals.

## Part II: “Or the Devil Himself”: Navigating Paternalism, Producing Scholarship

### *Becoming a Rosenwald Fellow*

In 1931, Davis returned to Harvard to study anthropology with fellowship support from the SSRC, indirectly financed by the Rosenwald Fund. Two years earlier, around the time that Embree established the fellowship program, the Rosenwald Fund also granted \$50,000 to the Rockefeller-backed SSRC to support a new fellowship program targeting southern graduate students in the social sciences. The fund intended the fellowships to “attract a higher quality of scientifically

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<sup>29</sup> For example, “Students of man have a number of traits by which they measure physical differences and classify races: body height, relative to length of legs, length and width of head, skin color, width of nostrils, thickness of lips. . . . Studies and measurements of sample Negro groups in various parts of the country show that the American Negroes today are as uniform as any typical race of mixed ancestry, such for instance as the Japanese or the Anglo-Saxon,” Embree, *Brown America*, 10.

<sup>30</sup> The idea that racial contact inevitably resulted in conflict had deep roots in the American social sciences. James B. McKee, *Sociology and the Race Problem: The Failure of a Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 103–44, 158–65; and Morris, *The Scholar Denied*, 112–18.

<sup>31</sup> In 1932, Embree published a book defending the application of eugenic social science to social problems. Edwin Rogers Embree, *Prospecting for Heaven: Some Conversations about Science and the Good Life* (New York: Viking, 1932).

trained personnel to work on important social problems facing the southern section of our country.”<sup>32</sup> Although not administered by the fund, the fellowship selection committee was composed of some of Embree’s closest associates, many of whom served as Rosenwald Fund officers, including Will W. Alexander, a founding figure of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation; University of North Carolina sociologist Howard Odum; and Charles S. Johnson, the only African American to serve on the Rosenwald Fund executive committee.<sup>33</sup>

That Davis won an SSRC fellowship as an African American is noteworthy. Embree requested that the southern fellowship program prioritize fellowships for white students because he believed that African American scholars could not yet conduct research on par with white social scientists. In a letter exchange between Embree and Robert S. Lynd, a high-ranking official of the SSRC and a well-established academic, Lynd asked Embree to clarify his views on the eligibility of African American social scientists for the fellowship. Lynd reported that he was “struck” by Embree’s “statement at our meeting in Chicago that . . . the standards required of Negroes should actually be higher than those required of other personnel.”<sup>34</sup>

In his response, Embree revealed his doubts about the abilities of African American social scientists to conduct top-notch research: “It would be a disservice to Negro scientists to set lower standards for them in research than for other groups. . . . So far as the social sciences are concerned, such a ruling would exclude from consideration almost every one but Charles Johnson of Fisk.” Thus, he concluded, the SSRC should not grant any fellowships to African American students, as “in the support of research by the great national councils a single standard should be set.”<sup>35</sup> In reality, Black scholars such as Du Bois, E. Franklin Frazier, Zora Neale Hurston, Caroline Day, and Carter G. Woodson

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<sup>32</sup>“Southern Fellowships in the Social Sciences,” n.d., folder 1315, box 218, series 1, record group 1, Social Science Research Council Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY (hereafter cited as SSRC Archives). On the SSRC, see Donald Fisher, *Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences: Rockefeller Philanthropy and the United States Social Science Research Council* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

<sup>33</sup>The full board met twice per year. The majority of decisions were made in the interim by the board’s executive committee. Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree*, 82.

<sup>34</sup>Robert S. Lynd to Edwin R. Embree, April 13, 1929, folder 2, box 346, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives, Special Collections and Archives, John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library, Fisk University, Nashville, TN (hereafter cited as Rosenwald Fund Archives).

<sup>35</sup>Edwin R. Embree to Robert S. Lynd, April 23, 1929, folder 2, box 346, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

had been conducting cutting-edge social science research for decades. But Embree remained convinced that Black scholars' capacity to produce meritorious work was something that could only be realized after further cultivation, a function he imagined the new Rosenwald Fellowships would carry out. However, with Charles S. Johnson on the selection committee, a handful of Black scholars managed to receive SSRC funding, including Davis and sociologist Hylan Lewis. But while Johnson helped extend support to African Americans, he also constructed new limitations on Black scholars by virtue of his role as gatekeeper to African American intellectual life for Embree and other white foundation officials.<sup>36</sup>

At Harvard, Davis took courses in archeology and physical anthropology, as well as courses on Africa and a course on the American family that emphasized Black families. He also studied with W. Lloyd Warner, a rising social anthropologist who was designing a massive study that applied the theory of structural functionalism to a manufacturing town, Newburyport, Massachusetts, in which Davis would later participate. Impressed by Davis, Warner put Davis in touch with Embree, whom Warner knew from his time conducting field research in Australia for the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>37</sup> Davis utilized this new connection to apply for a Rosenwald Fellowship to "study African society and culture" at the London School of Economics (LSE) and the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures in Berlin. As Davis explained in his application, he planned to eventually apply his knowledge of Africa to a study of "folk-Negro communities in the South," a research program inspired by his poor southern Black students at Hampton.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>"Southern Fellowships, 1930-1933," Minutes, March 24, 1932, Committee on Southern Fellowship, folder 1315, box 218, SSRC Archives; see also "Fellowships Granted—Social Science Research Council, 1931-1948," folder 1, box 449, Rosenwald Fund Archives; and Marybeth Gasman, "W. E. B. Du Bois and Charles S. Johnson: Differing Views on the Role of Philanthropy in Higher Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (Winter 2002), 502-503. Isabel Wilkerson argues that the publication of one of Davis's monographs, *Deep South*, was delayed for years because of Johnson. Isabel Wilkerson, "On the Early Front Lines of Caste," in *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2020), 245-56.

<sup>37</sup>Varel, *Lost Black Scholar*, 72. For a summary of structural functionalism and the "Yankee City" project, see H. R. Hays, *From Ape to Angel: An Informal History of Social Anthropology* (New York: Knopf, 1958), 372-76.

<sup>38</sup>Allison W. Davis to Edwin R. Embree, Nov. 30, 1931, folder 5, box 406, Rosenwald Fund Archives. For more on the debate over the influence of African culture on African American life, see E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); and Melville Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941).

Davis assembled an impressive list of recommenders in support of his application. In addition to a glowing recommendation from one of his anthropology professors at Harvard, E. A. Hooton, he secured letters from the presidents of Hampton Institute, Tuskegee Institute, and Williams College. Letters also came from Thomas Jesse Jones, the preeminent figure in the American philanthropic world on the topic of Africa; Alexander, who served on the SSRC selection committee; and Locke, one of the founding figures of the New Negro movement. Renowned social anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski wrote from the LSE to confirm that he wanted to work with Davis, as did Diedrich Westermann of the University of Berlin. Despite this impressive collection, George R. Arthur, the director of the Rosenwald Fellowships, reached out to additional authorities to verify the merits of Davis's research. He wrote to Boas, a preeminent American anthropologist, asking whether the proposed research "will yield as much as Mr. Davis expects of it" and whether "the places named by Mr. Davis are in your opinion the best institutions in which he might secure the training he seeks."<sup>39</sup> For the Rosenwald Fund officers, the fellowships were about both vetting worthy candidates and also evaluating, and if necessary correcting, proposed career trajectories.

Davis won the Rosenwald Fellowship and spent the 1932–1933 school year abroad. With his plans to study in Germany cut short by the rise of the Nazi party, Davis spent the majority of his time at the LSE. Influenced by his course work with Lancelot Hogben, he wrote his first social scientific publication on the global distribution of blood types, in which he critiqued the concept of race by establishing the significance of environmental, as opposed to hereditary, factors in accounting for group similarities.<sup>40</sup> Unable to secure funding to stay in London another year, Davis returned to Harvard to continue his training in anthropology under Warner's guidance.

### *The Caste-and-Class Research*

At Harvard, Davis began researching for Warner's Newburyport study, "Yankee City." The goal of the study was to debunk the myth that America was a classless society, and Warner's team of researchers spent almost a decade collecting data on the community's social

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<sup>39</sup>Boas replied that Davis would probably receive the best training in Berlin. George R. Arthur to Franz Boas, Jan. 12, 1932, and Franz Boas to George R. Arthur, Jan. 15, 1932, folder 5, box 406, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

<sup>40</sup>Allison Davis, "The Distribution of the Blood-Groups and Its Bearing on the Concept of Race," *Sociological Review* 27a, no. 1 (Jan. 1935), 19–34. For more on this work, see Varel, *Lost Black Scholar*, 81.

groupings. Davis was tasked with studying the Black community in Newburyport, but because the Black population was so small, none of his research contributions ended up in the final study. Davis's participation instead inspired Davis and Warner to begin theorizing the relationship between social class and race, and they designed a separate study of a southern community to gather data.<sup>41</sup> In 1933, Davis, his wife Alice Elizabeth Stubbs Davis, and a white couple, Mary and Burleigh Gardner, moved to Natchez, Mississippi, as participant-observers. They were to assimilate into the community and privately record conversations and other observations relevant to the relationship between racial order and social class boundaries in Natchez.

Warner helped secure funding for the Natchez research from the Harvard Business School, but Davis still counted on indirect support from the Rosenwald Fund to make his field research in Natchez possible. When Davis and his wife assimilated into the Black community in Natchez, they found themselves "role-bound" as respectable, upper-class community members, which kept them from accessing lower-class Black informants.<sup>42</sup> The Rosenwald Fund sponsored Davis's former student at Hampton, J. G. St. Clair Drake, one of the ringleaders of the Hampton student protests, to serve as a research assistant for the project. Unlike Davis, Drake was a dark-skinned man with a poor, rural upbringing, and he was dubbed by Embree as "not a top man."<sup>43</sup> Davis recognized Drake's immense potential and used his favored position to extend the umbrella of fund support, despite Embree's reservations. Recommending new fellows was a major way that Rosenwald Fellows like Davis were able to shape the direction of the fellowship program. By the mid-1930s, former fellows served as an essential resource for identifying new talent worth supporting, interviewed candidates, and at times even served on the fellowship committee.

Once in the fold, Drake too navigated the parameters placed on Black scholarship. Drake later remembered that he "would have been a very different kind of anthropologist" had Warner not pushed him to focus his research on issues of race. In a graduate seminar Drake took with Warner, "He steered me away from comparative study of family forms and sexual behavior in the 19th-century American Utopian communities," Drake explained, "reminding me that my career was going to be in Negro schools and in race relations activity."<sup>44</sup> Drake

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<sup>41</sup>The importance of class analysis to Davis's work is omitted here because it is thoroughly discussed in the literature. See Varel, *Lost Black Scholar*, 7-8.

<sup>42</sup>Burleigh Gardner, afterword to Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *Deep South*, 563-65; and Bond, "A Social Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake," 772.

<sup>43</sup>St. Clair Drake Fellowship File, folder 1, box 409, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

<sup>44</sup>Bond, "A Social Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake," 780.

would later become a prominent sociologist, coauthor of the landmark study *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, forefather of Black Studies programs, and prominent Pan-Africanist.<sup>45</sup>

Drake's illustrious career began with his assimilating into the lower-class Black community in Natchez. To accomplish their research goals, Davis advised Drake to resist his impulse to engage in activist organizing, such as with the interracial Southern Tenant Farmers Union that was then spreading across Mississippi. Drake later remembered that Davis instructed him that they were in Natchez to collect the facts. But Davis assured Drake that "after we get the facts, we'll smash that system." Younger and more overtly activist-oriented, Drake would often ask Davis "when we were going to start smashing."<sup>46</sup> Their strict scholarly approach, Davis understood, was essential for not alienating their funders and academic adviser. Davis found ways to express his heterodox views within the boundaries of his scholarship and encouraged Drake to do the same.

Davis and Warner worked out a new framework for interpreting the data, positing that the social system in Natchez was marked by two castes, Black and white, with social stratification along class lines within each caste. They disagreed, however, on some foundational assumptions of this approach. For Warner, caste described a stable, entrenched social order, while class was a more fluid organization that could change over time.<sup>47</sup> Warner hypothesized that if class differentiation within the Black caste continued, society would gradually reorganize so that two parallel castes would exist side by side, neither dominant over the other. This reorganization, he claimed, "is being reflected at the present time in such movements as 'parallelism,' a 'solution to the race problem' expounded by many Negro and white leaders."<sup>48</sup> Advocates of parallelism included prosegregation reformers and white liberals who supported segregation because they believed that challenging segregation head-on would be futile. Both groups united under the general goal of creating a more humane and peaceful segregation, "separate but more equal." Warner further speculated on what would happen to caste relations if the "separate but more equal" trend continued. "Unless further sanctions were

<sup>45</sup> St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1945).

<sup>46</sup> Bond, "A Social Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake," 772.

<sup>47</sup> For a critique of Warner's approach, see Oliver C. Cox, "The Modern Caste School of Race Relations," *Social Forces* 21, no. 2 (Dec. 1942), 218–26. For Davis's reply to Cox's critique of the caste model, see Allison Davis, "Mystical Sociology," *Journal of Negro Education* 17, no. 2 (April 1948), 161–62.

<sup>48</sup> W. Lloyd Warner, introduction to Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *Deep South*, 11.



developed” to maintain restrictions on interracial marriage, “the whole system of separate caste groups might disappear and new social forms develop to take its place.”<sup>49</sup> This gradualist solution lined up neatly, as Warner pointed out, with white liberal organizations such as the Rosenwald Fund, which had no intention of challenging segregation in the early 1930s.

Although the caste-and-class framework is often understood in these terms, Davis disagreed with some of his adviser’s conclusions. For Davis and other aspiring Black anthropologists, social anthropology was an attractive subfield for its potential to undermine the gradualist assumptions that pervaded the American social sciences.<sup>50</sup> It provided a new set of analytical tools that challenged modes of understanding so-called race relations that were based on inherently fixed categories such as genetics or seemingly stable, organically formed folkways. By emphasizing social structures as holistic systems that shape values, as opposed to the view that values manifest in social systems, researchers could test the hypothesis of whether modifying social structures would change social mores, values, and attitudes. In other words, these scholars theorized that reformers need not wait for organic shifts in attitudes and values to effect change. When institutions changed, people’s values would eventually follow. The evidence gathered, then, did not necessarily support reformist programs aimed at improving segregation, as Warner claimed. Instead, the research could support direct challenges to the system of segregation.

Davis furthermore disagreed that caste hierarchy would break down through the economic improvement of Black southerners. Davis made his disagreement clear in his 1945 article “Caste, Economy, and Violence.” He claimed that the rights of private property and the principles of free-market competition were considered “sacred legal rights,” which allowed some Black residents to accumulate a measure of wealth and property despite caste restrictions.<sup>51</sup> However, Davis claimed, “The modification of the caste system in the interests of the profits of the upper and middle economic groups of white people by no means amounts to an abrogation of caste in economic relationships”—a firm departure from Warner’s prediction. “The physical terrorization of colored people,” he explained, “is

<sup>49</sup> Warner, introduction, 12.

<sup>50</sup> The social anthropological caste-and-class framework associated with W. Lloyd Warner offered an alternative to the Chicago School’s view of lower-class culture by emphasizing coherence and stability as opposed to disorganization. O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 64. For more on Robert Park and the Chicago School, see Morris, *The Scholar Denied*, 112–18.

<sup>51</sup> Allison Davis, “Caste, Economy, and Violence,” *American Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 1 (July 1945), 14.

most common in those areas where their general economic status is highest.”<sup>52</sup> Davis offered his own hypothesis in light of this evidence. Economic advancement alone, he predicted, could not challenge the caste system because other checks within the system, such as violence or taboos barring Black people from white-collar jobs, would contain the extent of this kind of advancement. In advocating for parallelism, Davis’s advisers and patrons missed a fundamental insight—that segregation was a system intended to perpetuate subordination, not distance.<sup>53</sup>

In *Deep South*, the published work based on the Natchez research, Davis advanced an implicit argument for social equality within the text that challenged Warner’s assumption that caste was an inherently stable category. The authors explained, “Endogamy is the keystone of the caste system,” meaning that marriage between individuals in different castes was strictly forbidden and these restrictions created, maintained, and perpetuated caste divisions.<sup>54</sup> They devoted a substantial part of the text to discussing the different types of sexual relationships between members of the Black and white castes, the results and consequences of these practices, and the ways that society was structured to prevent and discourage them. Put another way, this text implied that anti-miscegenation laws and customs underpinned the entire caste system in the South. Without them, the racial categories along which caste was organized would break down over time. Davis claimed that this explained the antagonism toward “Negroes of mixed blood” by whites: “Such Negroes are constant evidence that, in spite of the principles of caste endogamy, the informal processes of intermixture are slowly lessening the physical differences between the two groups,” which would erode the physical boundaries used to justify racial subordination.<sup>55</sup>

Although Davis did not explicitly advocate challenging anti-miscegenation laws and practices, the logical conclusion of *Deep South* was that this type of attack was necessary to bring down the caste system. The argument in this book for social equality diverged sharply from the opinions and expectations of the white southern liberals who helped make the research possible. White liberals took great pains to avoid or emphatically deny the relevance of the lightning rod issue

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<sup>52</sup> Warner, introduction, 14, 15.

<sup>53</sup> Despite Davis’s role in devising the caste-and-class framework and the fact that he applied it in a more nuanced way than his mentors and peers, other scholars, such as John Dollard and Hortense Powdermaker, are often cited as the major proponents of the theory instead of Davis.

<sup>54</sup> Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *Deep South*, 44.

<sup>55</sup> Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *Deep South*, 62.

of interracial sex.<sup>56</sup> Davis's critique was successful because he did not make his argument explicit. Instead, he presented the research as empirical data that, when taken together, described an intricate social system. In this way, Davis's early research illustrates another dimension of the effect that his negotiations with patronage had on the direction of his academic career. Cloaked in the language of social anthropology that sought to understand how societies functioned, Davis could speak openly about the Jim Crow system and reveal his thoughts on how to smash it. His scholarship therefore offers a window into his approach to navigating the Jim Crow academy, helping to shed light on his professional choices in addition to elucidating his research agenda.

### *Directing Davis's Career*

Patronage support proved crucial to Davis's budding career. When the research funds ran out, Davis needed time and money to write up the Natchez research that would eventually become *Deep South*. To help Davis sift through the copious field notes collected in Natchez, the Rosenwald Fund renewed its support for his research assistant Drake. Embree also secured a five-year teaching position for Davis at the segregated Dillard University in New Orleans, where he would teach for a living while writing the monograph. The fund, in collaboration with the GEB, recently reorganized Dillard in an attempt to create a Black research center in New Orleans that would match the strength of Black education in Atlanta, Nashville, and Washington, DC. The Rosenwald Fund helped staff the reorganized Dillard with its affiliates, including Rosenwald Fund vice president Will W. Alexander as university president.<sup>57</sup> With the financial crisis of the Depression squeezing the already limited academic job opportunities for Black scholars, the Dillard position was a career-saving intervention.

Although it allowed Davis to finish *Deep South*, relying on the Rosenwald Fund for research and professional support came at a price. While at Dillard, Davis drafted a sophisticated research agenda in which he proposed conducting a comparative study of "Negro" and "Creole" communities in New Orleans with corresponding communities in the Caribbean and British West Indies. Davis saw comparative

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<sup>56</sup>Rayford Whittingham Logan, ed., *What the Negro Wants* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

<sup>57</sup>Allison Davis Fellowship File, folder 5, box 406, Rosenwald Fund Archives. The fund invested over \$1 million in Dillard University. Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People*, 98-106, 268.

studies of the wider Black Diaspora as necessary to dispel the generalizations scholars made about African-descended peoples based on the African American experience alone. Embree, at the time, did not approve of the research project and refused to grant Rosenwald support. Embree's influence at Dillard ensured that research funds would not come from that institution either.<sup>58</sup> Davis ultimately had to curtail his vision for his future research program.

At Dillard, Davis brushed elbows with other Rosenwald Fellows, with whom he could speak openly about the tradeoffs involved in accepting Embree's support. Horace Mann Bond, the academic dean of Dillard, was an education historian who later served as the first Black president of Lincoln University, organized the historical research for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's efforts in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case, and fathered the notable civil rights activist Julian Bond. Horace Mann Bond also completed his graduate training with support from the Rosenwald Fund and shared Davis's concerns regarding the professional decisions he made at the behest of Embree. Davis wrote Bond explaining that he was concerned over his dependent status.<sup>59</sup> After all, he relied on Embree to help him finance his research, find employment, and secure a publisher for his forthcoming book. Bond had a similar experience, with the Rosenwald Fund financing his degree in education history, convincing him to serve as an administrator at Dillard, and arranging for the publication of his dissertation. Bond even made minor changes to his depiction of the Rosenwald Fund in his 1934 textbook *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* in response to pressure from Embree.<sup>60</sup>

Bond responded by reassuring Davis. "My advice to you . . . is to do as good for yourself as you can, whether through [Charles S.] Johnson, [W. Lloyd] Warner, [Will W.] Alexander, or the Devil himself. I shall think no less of you if you do."<sup>61</sup> Bond was likely referring to Embree as the "Devil himself," as he named two of the three most important Rosenwald Fund officers, Johnson and Alexander, as well as Davis's adviser Warner, in a list of prominent Rosenwald affiliates that, to anyone familiar with the organization, would certainly include

<sup>58</sup> Allison Davis, "A Proposal for a Comparative Study of Negro Societies in New Orleans and the Caribbean Islands," n.d., folder 1, box 53, St. Clair Drake Papers, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Book Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

<sup>59</sup> Allison Davis to Horace M. Bond, May 17, 1935, folder 56, box 10, Horace Mann Bond Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, Amherst, MA (hereafter cited as Bond Papers).

<sup>60</sup> Wayne J. Urban, *Black Scholar: Horace Mann Bond, 1904-1972* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 74.

<sup>61</sup> Horace M. Bond to Allison Davis, July 21, 1935, Bond Papers.

Embree. Not only did Davis continue his relationship with the Rosenwald Fund, as Bond advised, but he also dedicated *Deep South* to Embree, writing that Embree exemplified, "A social engineer with a faith in the sciences of human behavior."<sup>62</sup> Despite his private confession, Davis knew that his relationship with funding sources held the key to his future scholarship.

This was true even when Davis was not dealing directly with the Rosenwald Fund. In 1935, the American Council on Education established the American Youth Commission (AYC) to research the problems of young people, especially in relation to the crisis of the Great Depression.<sup>63</sup> Embree was one of several people who consulted on the planning of a series of studies on Black youths, a project organized by Robert L. Sutherland and chaired by Alexander.<sup>64</sup> Embree worked with both men to involve Davis in the AYC, and together Davis and Sutherland secured funding from the GEB for a series of studies asking, "What effects does their minority racial status have upon the personality development of Negro youth?"<sup>65</sup> Uncoincidentally, the AYC commissioned Davis, along with Yale social psychologist John Dollard, one of the few outstanding white Rosenwald Fellows, to study Black children in the urban South.<sup>66</sup>

Embree was eager for Davis to gain training in social psychology, a field in which Embree had long been interested. Davis and Dollard examined the personality development of Black youths in New Orleans and Natchez. They utilized the conceptual framework of caste and class Davis developed for *Deep South* but focused on how the class statuses of the students' families affected the positive and negative behavioral reinforcements students experienced in the classroom. The researchers found that lower-class students had ineffective supervision at home and often experienced stigmatization in the classroom that led to excessive punishment and fewer rewards compared with other students. The collaboration resulted in the canonical text *Children of Bondage*, already in its fifth printing by 1947. As his turn to social psychology suggests, accepting Rosenwald support meant embracing of Embree's research agenda.

<sup>62</sup>Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *Deep South*, v.

<sup>63</sup>Floyd W. Reeves, "The Program of the American Youth Commission," *High School Journal* 23, no. 3 (March 1940), 101-105.

<sup>64</sup>For more on Alexander and the planning of the AYC studies, see Daryl Scott, *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 66-68.

<sup>65</sup>Quoted in Varel, *Lost Black Scholar*, 112.

<sup>66</sup>The AYC also commissioned W. Lloyd Warner, E. Franklin Frazier, and Charles S. Johnson to conduct studies for the series. Scott, *Contempt and Pity*, 35-36.

After the AYC funding ended in February 1939, Davis appealed to the Rosenwald Fund for another fellowship to complete his PhD under Warner's direction at the University of Chicago, where Warner had recently relocated.<sup>67</sup> In his comments on Davis's application for a renewed fellowship, Embree noted that he supported the application but wanted Davis to work under someone other than Warner, who "has been his too-close Papa for too long."<sup>68</sup> Davis therefore continued his doctorate under the guidance of Robert Redfield in addition to Warner.<sup>69</sup> The following year, the Rosenwald Fund agreed to extend Davis's fellowship for a final year, but Embree used the opportunity to further direct Davis's work toward psychoanalysis. He proposed to the fellowship selection committee an extra \$600 to Davis's fellowship to pay for Davis to both experience psychoanalysis and gain training in that field's techniques.

Embree's colleague on the selection committee, Guggenheim Foundation official Henry Allen Moe, pushed back against the extent to which Embree intervened in Davis's work. "You may recollect," wrote Moe, "that I have warned you in meeting on several occasions that I feared the fund would ruin that excellent man. My fears have increased."<sup>70</sup> He was disturbed that the fund continued to impose its vision on Davis and especially troubled that Embree conducted himself as if he were a research director, despite his lack of formal training. Moe asked Embree what authority he had consulted to confirm the intellectual legitimacy of psychoanalysis. Embree responded that in addition to consulting with experts in that subfield, "I think I am the chief impartial authority upon whose opinion I relied for the Allison Davis analysis."<sup>71</sup> As a longtime consumer of social science research, Embree continued, he felt he was in a position to evaluate trends in the field and direct his fellows accordingly. All fellowship committees were in the business of vetting candidates, but Moe's alarm at the extent of Embree's involvement with his fellows demonstrates the ideological gap between established fellowships intended for mostly white fellows, such as the Guggenheim, and the Rosenwald Fellowships specifically for African Americans.

Although not applied to all Black scholars under his tutelage, Embree used his position to shape the careers of numerous Black

<sup>67</sup> Allison Davis Fellowship File, folder 5, box 406, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

<sup>68</sup> "W. Allison Davis" fellowship notes, n.d., folder 3, box 376, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

<sup>69</sup> For more on Redfield's influence on Davis, see Varel, *Lost Black Scholar*, 138–39.

<sup>70</sup> Henry Allen Moe to Edwin R. Embree, Nov. 23, 1940, folder 5, box 406, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

<sup>71</sup> Edwin R. Embree to Henry Allen Moe, Dec. 3, 1940, folder 5, box 406, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

scholars. Future Nobel Laureate Ralph Bunche conducted his dissertation research with the support of a Rosenwald Fellowship granted in 1931. The fellowship came with strings. When Bunche originally proposed conducting his research in Brazil, Embree informed his academic adviser at Harvard, Arthur Holcombe, that Bunche might get “dangerous ideas” in Brazil from the more fluid racial order there. In response, Bunche changed his proposal to a comparative study of French colonial administration in Dahomey and Togoland in Africa. About ten years after the fellowship, Bunche mentioned the incident to a friend, who, much to Bunche’s embarrassment, brought it to the attention of Embree. When Embree denied the incident in a personal letter to Bunche, Bunche politely produced the letter from Holcombe directing him to change his project. Embree thanked Bunche for the letter and offered only the explanation, “I still do not understand how I could have said the things I appear to have said.”<sup>72</sup>

Despite Embree’s heavy-handed tendencies, numerous Black intellectuals sought his support. For Embree’s favorite fellows, Embree was the gatekeeper not only to their finishing their degrees but also to their ability to access publishers and even to secure future employment. The stakes were higher than simply a year of fellowship support, especially in the depths of the global financial crisis. Only a handful of African American institutions had departments in the social sciences that offered the prospect of employment. Embree had considerable influence at Fisk and Dillard Universities, among others. He also had relationships with many major presses, such as Viking Press, the University of Chicago Press, the University of North Carolina Press, and Harper & Brothers. In short, Embree’s support granted access to numerous resources—research funds, publication endorsements and even subsidies, academic positions, and professional credibility—that would likely have been denied without his recommendation.

Many Black intellectuals openly condemned Embree for attempting to monopolize control of Black scholarship. Historian Carter G. Woodson, the founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, wrote Embree in 1936, criticizing his approach: “You believe in helping the Negro to do what he is told to do or what you want him to do. I am trying to help the Negro to help himself. The verdict of history is with me and against you. You may live long enough to see the error of your way.”<sup>73</sup> Other high-profile Black intellectuals found similar faults with Embree and the fellowship program. Loren

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<sup>72</sup>Edwin R. Embree to Ralph Bunche, July 9, 1941, folder 5, box 398, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

<sup>73</sup>Carter G. Woodson to Edwin R. Embree, April 8, 1936, folder 8, box 170, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

Miller, the Los Angeles-based lawyer who would successfully argue the pivotal fair housing case *Shelley v. Kraemer*, published an article denouncing the Rosenwald Fellowship program as a “Mail Order Dictatorship,” *mail order* referring to the infamous Sears catalogs.<sup>74</sup> George Schuyler, often referred to as the Black Mencken for his sharp satire, publicly compared the fund’s attempt to control Black intellectual life with the past attempts of slaveholders to control Black bodies.<sup>75</sup>

For Davis, braving the hazards of Rosenwald Fund paternalism was worth the opportunity to produce his scholarship. Davis believed in the transformative power of social science, and indeed his scholarship helped shape and soften Embree’s views on segregation. By 1940, Embree himself was calling for an end to segregation, a firm departure from his stance when he became president of the fund.<sup>76</sup> And the influence of Davis’s work extended far beyond Embree and the Rosenwald Fund. *Deep South* was routinely taught at historically Black colleges and universities, where it contributed to the education of future Black civil rights activists, including Stokely Carmichael and Martin Luther King Jr. “I like to remember that [Davis] could have spent his life working on nineteenth-century English literature. But he didn’t,” Drake later recalled. “I would argue that Davis made a definite commitment and that his commitment has had its value in social change.”<sup>77</sup> Most immediately, though, Davis’s relationship with Embree allowed him to achieve professional success beyond what he imagined was possible when he began his training as an anthropologist in 1931.

### Part III: “Why Pay Cash”: Faculty Desegregation and Its Limits

Around 1940, the Rosenwald Fund began searching for a Black scholar to desegregate the faculty of a historically white university.<sup>78</sup> Davis’s credentials made him the perfect candidate to promote. Although

<sup>74</sup>Loren Miller, “Mail Order Dictatorship,” *New Masses* 95 (April 16, 1935), 10-12.

<sup>75</sup>George Schuyler, “View and Reviews,” *Pittsburgh (PA) Courier*, April 11, 1936, 12.

<sup>76</sup>On how Embree’s thinking regarding race changed over the course of the 1930s, compare editions of *Brown Americans*: Edwin R. Embree, *Brown Americans: The Story of a New Race* (New York: Viking, 1931) and Edwin R. Embree, *Brown Americans: The Story of a Tenth of the Nation* (New York: Viking Press, 1943).

<sup>77</sup>The social science appendix to the plaintiff brief in the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, which Davis signed along with thirty-five other leading social scientists, also utilized data from Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *Deep South*. St. Clair Drake, “In the Mirror of Black Scholarship: W. Allison Davis and Deep South,” in *Education and Black Struggle: Notes from the Colonized World*, ed. Institute of the Black World (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Review, 1974), 53-54.

<sup>78</sup>For more on the changing racial climate precipitated by World War II, see Varel, *Lost Black Scholar*, 135-36.



Davis was technically only finishing his PhD, he had an advanced research agenda and impressive publication record. By the time he finished his degree in 1942, Davis had already coauthored two major publications and contributed research to what would become Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*. Davis's publication record was comparable to that of his mentor Warner, who received his appointment to the University of Chicago faculty without a PhD in 1935.<sup>79</sup> Davis's credentials and respect among the University of Chicago faculty created a unique opportunity for the Rosenwald Fund to promote one of its fellows across the "academic color line."<sup>80</sup> The University of Chicago was a well-suited host institution for the experiment, especially since its president, Robert Hutchins, was a former Rosenwald Fund board member. Not least of all, the university was a frequent beneficiary of fund gifts.<sup>81</sup>

Even with these advantages, Davis's proposed appointment generated conflict. Alfred Stern, a member of the Rosenwald Board of Trustees and Rosenwald's son-in-law, took issue with the appointment, calling it too "radical" of an intervention by the fund. Stern even went as far as to characterize the proposed appointment as reverse discrimination, noting that the fund promoted Davis "not in spite of the fact that he is a Negro but because he is a Negro."<sup>82</sup> At the University of Chicago, prominent sociologist William F. Ogburn also objected to the appointment.<sup>83</sup> To both of these men, the Rosenwald Fund overstepped its prerogative in first suggesting and then directly sponsoring Davis's appointment. The University of Chicago, they insisted, should be left to desegregate its faculty on its desired timeline instead of at the behest of an outside agitator. "If this sort of thing is to come about," Stern protested, "it should come about naturally, and not through money subsidy."<sup>84</sup> This sentiment, Embree pointed out, contradicted the very function of foundations, which established the viability of innovative social

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<sup>79</sup>Although it was becoming increasingly conventional for academics to hold PhDs, it was by no means a standard requirement, even at the most prestigious institutions.

<sup>80</sup>David A. Varel, "Bending the Academic Color Line: Allison Davis, the University of Chicago, and American Race Relations, 1941-1948," *Journal of Negro Education* 84, no. 4 (Fall 2015), 534-46.

<sup>81</sup>Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People*, 278.

<sup>82</sup>Alfred Stern to Edwin R. Embree, Feb. 10, 1942, folder 6, box 182, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

<sup>83</sup>Varel, *Lost Black Scholar*, 140.

<sup>84</sup>Alfred Stern to Edwin R. Embree, Feb. 10, 1942, folder 6, box 182, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

policy and programs that could then be absorbed by more risk-averse institutions.<sup>85</sup>

Meanwhile, President Hutchins supported the idea of hiring Davis, given his impeccable credentials and support from several established faculty members. But Hutchins did not see the move as the regular appointment of a qualified faculty member. Instead, he understood it to be a potentially high-risk test case and source of controversy, a risk from which he was obligated to shield the university. In November 1941, Hutchins wrote a confidential note to Emery Filbey, the head of the Education Department, discussing Davis's potential appointment.<sup>86</sup> He noted, "Don't see how we can undertake any financial commitment." Filbey replied that he agreed because "there is no evidence that Davis is essential except for this special project." Filbey then divulged the real sentiment behind their exchange: not wanting to invest institutional resources in Davis. "Why pay cash for a long term headache?"<sup>87</sup> The Rosenwald Fund, therefore, subsidized Davis's salary. The fund committed to paying his entire salary for three years. After that period, the fund continued paying one-third of his salary for the subsequent three years. After six years of fund support, the university administrators finally viewed Davis as a safe investment. In 1947, Davis became the first tenured Black faculty member at a mostly white university. The total outside investment needed for achieving this "first" was \$25,000, about \$400,000 in present terms.<sup>88</sup>

Despite the reality of the University of Chicago administration's unwillingness to invest in an African American scholar, a myth has pervaded the literature surrounding Davis's appointment: because of the university's budget crisis, it could not afford to hire Davis through

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<sup>85</sup> Edwin R. Embree to Alfred Stern, Feb. 24, 1942, folder 6, box 182, Rosenwald Fund Archives. For more on foundations as engines of change, see Rob Reich, "On the Role of Foundations in Democracies," in *Philanthropy in Democratic Societies: Origins, Institutions, Values*, ed. Rob Reich, Lucy Bernholz, and Chiara Cordelli (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 64-81.

<sup>86</sup> For a detailed discussion on the debate over the significance of Davis's appointment in the Department of Education, as opposed to Anthropology, see Varel, *Lost Black Scholar*, 143-44; and Bruce Kuklick, *Black Philosopher, White Academy: The Career of William Fontaine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 34.

<sup>87</sup> Robert Hutchins to Emery Filbey, Nov. 13, 1941; Emery Filbey to Robert Hutchins, reply, n.d., Office of the President, University of Chicago Office of the President, Hutchins Administration Records, folder 1, box 285, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Chicago, IL (hereafter cited as Hutchins Administration Records). This "special project" was likely referring to the work Davis was doing on IQ tests collaboratively with education specialists at the University of Chicago, such as Robert J. Havighurst.

<sup>88</sup> Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People*, 276-77.

standard mechanisms. If the appointment had happened in a different financial context, this interpretation implies, Davis's appointment would have been procedurally normal.<sup>89</sup>

Embree originated this myth, offering it to Hutchins as a way to proceed with the appointment without it generating controversy for the university. Hutchins wrote to Lessing Rosenwald asking the Rosenwald Fund to subsidize Davis's appointment in order "to present the matter squarely to the trustees on its merits, without the possibility of any discussion as to financing or other matters which might be used to avoid the issue." The day before Hutchins sent this letter, Embree wrote a letter to Hutchins suggesting that he use that exact language in presenting the case to the Rosenwald Board of Trustees.<sup>90</sup> Embree's careful wording served to combat dissent both within the university and among his colleagues. He wrote to Stern explaining that because of its financial situation, the University of Chicago was not making any new appointments "except as funds are specially provided. Such special funds have been provided by individuals and by foundations in a number of recent cases."<sup>91</sup> While it was true that the university had cut back on appointments, that all new appointments required outside funds was not strictly true.<sup>92</sup>

Although this assumption certainly predated the Rosenwald Fund, the fellowship program served to entrench the notion that investment in African American scholars could and should come from an interested outside party. The University of Chicago accepted Davis to complete his graduate work, but he had to secure a Rosenwald Fellowship to pay for his degree. It is not surprising, then, that the same university would be willing to hire Davis but not to pay his salary. At the same time that Hutchins and Filbey discussed Davis's appointment, the University of Chicago was embroiled in a series of battles over the racial demographics of the areas surrounding the university. This included helping to finance a defense of restrictive covenants in

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<sup>89</sup> For a scholarly account that makes this claim, see Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree*, 210.

<sup>90</sup> Robert Hutchins to Lessing Rosenwald, Jan. 13, 1942; and Edwin R. Embree to Robert Hutchins, Jan. 12, 1942, folder 6, box 182, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

<sup>91</sup> Edwin R. Embree to Alfred Stern, Feb. 24, 1942, folder 6, box 182, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

<sup>92</sup> A budgetary crisis beginning in the 1930-31 school year led the administration to freeze faculty salaries. There were few new hires to replace attrition of the faculty through the rest of the decade. John W. Boyer, *The University of Chicago: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 289. Despite the depth of this financial crisis, the university still hired eight new ranking faculty members and promoted six others in the 1938-39 school year. "Report on Faculty Appointments and Losses," 1938-1939, folder 10, box 253, Hutchins Administration Records.

an adjacent neighborhood and subsidizing the efforts of local property organizations. Although Hutchins openly endorsed a nondiscrimination policy for student admission, he believed that the university's financial interests took precedence over abstract principles. "For that reason," historian Arnold Hirsch explains, "he advised the separation of the university's academic and real estate policies." Hutchins asserted that they were different, concluding 'but don't ask me why.'<sup>93</sup> The same dilemma influenced the terms of Davis's appointment.

In 1945, the Rosenwald Fund used the Davis precedent to launch a large-scale campaign to desegregate university faculties with former fellows.<sup>94</sup> The campaign resulted in a handful of faculty hires, many of which the Rosenwald Fund subsidized. First and foremost, the fund officers were advertising the prestige of their fellows and, by extension, their own work.<sup>95</sup> In doing so, the fund officials felt that they were running a series of "experiments" to show that hiring African American faculty members could be advantageous in terms of increasing an institution's potential pool of highly qualified and prestigious faculty candidates. University administrators, however, often interpreted those experiments as proof not only that hiring African Americans posed an inherent risk to their institution, but also that it was reasonable to expect an interested third party to absorb part of that financial risk in order to make such appointments possible. Since many of these administrators saw the appointments as outside of their institution's normal operations, it followed that they expected the financial commitment for the appointments to come from outside of the institution's normal operating costs.

In other cases where the Rosenwald Fund successfully placed Black scholars at mostly white institutions, those scholars were brought to white campuses with no financial commitment at all. Most African American scholars hired in the late 1940s at majority white universities held temporary appointments, some only for a single semester or even a single class. A number of scholars held appointments at more than one institution, in essence taking on the burden of being the test case for multiple schools without any commitment or job security in return. This was especially true for Black women, such as Rosenwald scholar and future ambassador Mabel Smythe, who faced

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<sup>93</sup> From 1933 to 1947, the University of Chicago spent \$83,597 defending racially restrictive covenants. Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 144-45, 146.

<sup>94</sup> See Anderson, "Race, Meritocracy, and the American Academy," 155.

<sup>95</sup> "Negro Faculty Members of Northern Universities and Colleges," n.d., folder 2, box 308, Rosenwald Fund Archives; and "Negro Faculty Members of Northern Universities and Colleges (Appointments made from the summer of 1945 to the present)," n.d., folder 2, box 308, Rosenwald Fund Archives.

barriers stemming from both her race and gender in seeking employment at historically Black and majority white institutions. After a string of temporary positions, she eventually left academia.<sup>96</sup>

These appointments developed against the larger trends in academic hiring that marked the immediate postwar years. The rise of temporary appointments corresponded roughly with the spread of academic tenure as either a formal or informal practice across the country.<sup>97</sup> There was also an acute shortage of collegiate instructors resulting from increased enrollment. As historian David Varel explains, college enrollment grew an enormous 529 percent from 1900 to 1940, although the overall population only increased by 73 percent. The temporal span of the Rosenwald desegregation campaign coincided with the GI Bill of 1944, which spurred an even more dramatic increase in higher education enrollment and consequently fueled the need for additional faculty. The Rosenwald campaign therefore emerged at a moment that should have been advantageous for securing commitments from hiring institutions.<sup>98</sup>

The Rosenwald Fund desegregation program was largely unsuccessful because it focused more on promoting select individuals, and thereby the foundation itself, than addressing the barriers to African American employment at historically white institutions. In unintended ways, the Rosenwald strategy of promoting its fellows through direct subsidies and visiting appointments simultaneously promoted and curtailed the fellows' long-term employment prospects. The idea that the money for non-white hires should come from a specifically designated source, and ideally a philanthropic foundation interested in questions of race, or that no financial commitment should be made at all, is an enduring legacy of this early episode and set the terms for future conflicts in the 1960s and 1970s over funding for minority faculty and Black Studies departments.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>On black women in the academy, see Stephanie Y. Evans, *Black Women in the Ivory Tower, 1850-1954: An Intellectual History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007).

<sup>97</sup>Robert P. Ludlum, "Academic Freedom and Tenure: A History," *Antioch Review* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1950), 3-34.

<sup>98</sup>Varel, *Lost Black Scholar*, 137; Paul H. Mattingly et al., "Renegotiating the Historical Narrative: The Case of American Higher Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2004), 577-96.

<sup>99</sup>See, for example, Noliwe M. Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006); and Karen Ferguson, *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

## Conclusion

Fourteen years before the Rosenwald Fund sponsored his faculty appointment, Davis wrote for a general audience condemning Black intellectuals who bent to the will of white patrons. In researching his first monographs, however, Davis came to prioritize his academic work as a means to both maintain patronage support while also resisting the ideological assumptions of his funders. In particular, Davis directly challenged the gradualist assumptions of the Rosenwald Fund and other white liberal organizations pushing for “separate but more equal” reforms. This strategy proved moderately fruitful. Unlike other organizations headed by white liberals, such as the Commission on Interracial Cooperation or the Southern Regional Council, African Americans had some leverage in defining the direction of the Rosenwald Fund. The social science scholarship Davis and other fellows produced shaped the fund’s future direction, including toward embracing faculty desegregation as a programmatic goal. Davis therefore played a crucial role in exerting influence over, in addition to being influenced by, a major foundation in the United States. The same is true for his collaborations with Warner and Dollard. He was not just influenced by the caste-and-class school, he both pioneered its foundational assumptions and challenged the more conservative articulation of its principles that Warner and other white social scientists espoused. This strategy, however, could only push the boundaries so far. Even as the Rosenwald Fund convinced higher education administrators to hire Black faculty, they reified, perhaps even more than they challenged, racial assumptions that pervaded the academy.

While the episodes included in this work supplement our knowledge of Davis’s biography, they also demonstrate many of the pervasive and enduring assumptions about Black scholars’ intellectual potential that defy claims regarding the supposedly race-neutral standards of higher education. For Davis and other Black scholars who navigated elite, mostly white institutions, they had to make compromises about what, where, and how they would study. Such compromises stemmed from the patronage dilemma: that while patronage facilitated professional legitimacy, it also required accepting certain limitations. Evidence of these negotiations exists in the archival records of both the fellows and the Rosenwald Fund, but those fragments are easily drowned out by the copious records reflecting the boosterism that defined foundation work. Yet recovering these episodes, and thereby bringing to light the paternalistic ideologies from which they materialized, alters how we understand the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion of African Americans in the academy, the lived experiences of this generation of Black scholars, and the significance of their academic work.