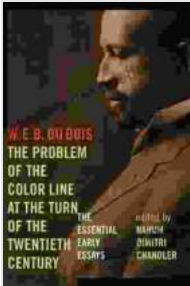


# The Essential Early Essays of American Philosophy



## The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Essential Early Essays (American Philosophy) by W. E. B. Du Bois

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1386 KB
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The development of American philosophy has been marked by a rich and diverse array of ideas and perspectives. From the earliest colonial settlements to the dawn of the 20th century, American thinkers have grappled with fundamental questions about the nature of reality, knowledge, and human experience. The essays collected in this volume represent some of the most important and influential contributions to this ongoing intellectual tradition.

The essays in this volume are divided into six thematic sections:

- Colonial Philosophy
- Transcendentalism

- Pragmatism
- Idealism
- Realism
- Neopragmatism

## **Colonial Philosophy**

The earliest American philosophers were influenced by the intellectual currents of Europe, particularly the Enlightenment and the Scottish Common Sense School. They sought to apply these ideas to the unique challenges and opportunities of the New World. One of the most important figures in this period was Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), a Puritan minister and theologian. Edwards's writings on metaphysics and ethics were highly influential in the development of American thought. Another important figure was Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), a scientist, inventor, and diplomat. Franklin's writings on politics and economics reflected the practical and pragmatic spirit of the American Enlightenment.

## **Transcendentalism**

In the early 19th century, a new philosophical movement emerged in America known as transcendentalism. Transcendentalists emphasized the importance of intuition and experience over reason and tradition. They believed that the individual had the capacity to transcend the limitations of ordinary experience and achieve a direct communion with the divine. The most important figures in the transcendentalist movement were Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). Emerson's writings on self-reliance, individualism, and the importance of

nature were widely influential. Thoreau's writings on the natural world and the search for a meaningful life continue to resonate with readers today.

## **Pragmatism**

Pragmatism is a philosophical movement that originated in the late 19th century. Pragmatists believe that the truth of a belief is determined by its practical consequences. They reject the idea that there is a single, objective truth and emphasize the importance of experimentation and experience. The most important figures in the pragmatist movement were Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910), and John Dewey (1859-1952). Peirce's writings on logic and semiotics were highly influential in the development of pragmatism. James's writings on psychology and religion explored the role of experience in shaping our beliefs. Dewey's writings on education and social philosophy emphasized the importance of democracy and the need for a more just and equitable society.

## **Idealism**

Idealism is a philosophical movement that emphasizes the primacy of mind over matter. Idealists believe that the world is ultimately mental in nature and that the physical world is a secondary manifestation of the mind. The most important figure in the American idealist movement was Josiah Royce (1855-1916). Royce's writings on metaphysics, ethics, and religion explored the nature of the self and the relationship between the individual and the world. His work helped to shape the development of American thought in the early 20th century.

## **Realism**

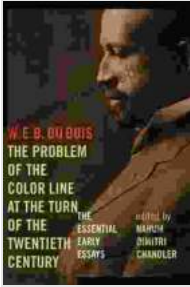
Realism is a philosophical movement that emphasizes the primacy of matter over mind. Realists believe that the world is ultimately physical in nature and that the mind is a product of the physical brain. The most important figure in the American realist movement was George Santayana (1863-1952). Santayana's writings on metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics explored the nature of reality and the search for meaning in a world without God. His work helped to shape the development of American thought in the early 20th century.

### **Neopragmatism**

Neopragmatism is a philosophical movement that emerged in the early 20th century. Neopragmatists sought to revive and reformulate the original pragmatism of Peirce, James, and Dewey. They emphasized the importance of experience and action in shaping our beliefs but also recognized the role of reason and objectivity. The most important figure in the neopragmatist movement was Richard Rorty (1931-2007). Rorty's writings on philosophy of mind, language, and culture explored the nature of truth and the limits of human knowledge. His work helped to shape the development of American thought in the late 20th century.

The essays collected in this volume represent a rich and diverse array of philosophical perspectives. They offer insights into the fundamental questions that have shaped American thought from the colonial era to the present day. By studying these essays, we can gain a deeper understanding of our own philosophical heritage and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

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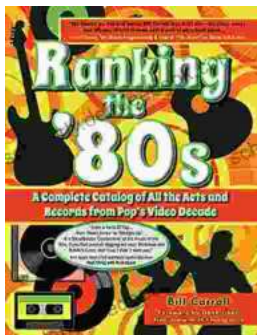
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