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# W.E.B. Du Bois and the Rhetoric of Social Change, 1897-1907: Attitude as Incipient Action

Fendrich Clark

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W.E.B. DU BOIS AND THE RHETORIC OF SOCIAL CHANGE, 1897-1907:

ATTITUDE AS INCIPIENT ACTION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College  
and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Fendrich R. Clark

May 2009

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ATTITUDE AS INCIPIENT ACTION

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Fendrich R. Clark

Approved November 14, 2008

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## ABSTRACT

W.E.B. DU BOIS AND THE RHETORIC OF SOCIAL CHANGE, 1897-1907:

ATTITUDE AS INCIPIENT ACTION

By

Fendrich R. Clark

May 2009

Dissertation supervised by Richard H. Thames, Ph.D.

This study examines the social change rhetoric of scholar and civic activist W.E.B. Du Bois to understand the role, motivations, influences, and shortcomings of his message upon a shifting current of black thought during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. In this study, I focus upon Du Bois' rhetorical aptitude in the building of his character, the emotional appeals made to his immediate audience, and the logical arguments and counter arguments that he publicly advanced in developing his program of parallel development.

I contend that in providing an alternate narrative to the competing opinions of accommodation as a solution to the "Negro problem," Du Bois' social change rhetoric was more congruent to black's and liberal white's inclination of mutual social progress and provided a vision in which education and political resistance, in terms of both

attitude and action drove blacks to seek to improve themselves as an ethnic group not merely a race.

The study relies heavily on a strict neo-Aristotelian analysis with Burkeian undertones to explicate widely read and significant Du Boisian speeches, written publications, and rhetorical artifacts such as the 1897 speech and later converted pamphlet “The Conservation of the Races,” the American Negro Exhibit at the 1900 Paris Exposition, the published 1901 review of Washington’s autobiography *Up From Slavery* “On Booker T. Washington and Others,” and the *Souls of Black Folk* published in 1903.” Ultimately, the study argues that DuBois’ approach was rhetorically superior to others, namely Washington, insofar as Du Bois’ rhetoric exemplified a greater congruity between the message and his own life, the way in which the message was implemented, the degree to which he embodied it; and its appeal and deference to the opinions of a broader audience.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have labored intensely in an attempt to understand and present, here, the mission and motivation of W.E.B. Du Bois. In all my research and study, I still feel that there is so much still to be understood.

I would like to thank all of those who have labored with me during this journey, as confidant, partner, supporter, and critic especially to both the Clark and Munford family for being a rock of support. To my life partner, Cenell, and my children, Junior and Daniel, to whom I owe all that I am, I love you. To all other friends and family, your support and encouragement, I have sincerely appreciated. To my colleagues at MUC, your encouragement and inquiry was extremely helpful.

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# Chapter 1

Africa is of course my fatherland...On this vast continent were born and live a large portion of my direct ancestors going back a thousand years or more. The physical bond is least and the badge of color relatively unimportant save as a badge; the real essence of this kinship is its social heritage of slavery; the discrimination and insult; and this heritage binds together not simply the children of Africa, but extends through yellow Asia and into the South Seas. It is this unity that draws me to Africa.

W.E.B. Du Bois. *Dusk of Dawn: Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1940. 116.

## 1.1 Introduction

The intention of this study is to examine the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century social change rhetoric of scholar and civic activist W.E.B. Du Bois. Beginning in 1897 and through his involvement with the American Negro Academy, Du Bois began to publicly advance, as a viable solution to the then social friction between blacks and whites (the so-called Negro problem), a social philosophy counter to the popular accommodationalist opinion of Booker T. Washington, the then favored spokesman for blacks. This study seeks a deeper understanding of the role, motivations, influences, and shortcomings of Du Bois' social change rhetoric upon a shifting current of black thought by focusing upon Du Bois' rhetorical aptitude in building his character, the emotional appeals to his immediate audience, and the logical arguments and counter arguments that he advanced.

The focus of this chapter is to examine the characteristics of the situation in which Du Bois' created his rhetorical discourse. To this end, we will explore Du Bois' rhetorical choices in terms of their fitness for the time and his promotion of a distinct racial consciousness as a positive value norm for social and civic progress. This chapter seeks

to highlight those contexts which brought about the possibility for Du Bois (as a change agent) to create his rhetorical discourse. We will begin by looking into the constraints which influenced and shaped the situation in which Du Bois spoke to redefine the scientific conceptualization of race and to gain support for organizations such as the American Negro Academy.

These constraints provide both the boundaries for Du Bois' discourse and the ammunition used to effectively contextualize his arguments. We will explore Du Bois' rhetorical choices in terms of their fitness for the time and his promotion of a distinct racial consciousness as a positive value norm for social and civic progress. The chapter will attempt to describe them and delineate their characteristics and explain how they resulted in the creation of social change rhetoric. In doing so, the chapter will also investigate how Du Bois attempted to coordinate social action through an *attitude* of race to construct an understanding of ethnic solidarity that legitimized the necessity of ethnic-based organizations to fulfill the goal of social progress.

Du Bois, this chapter suggests, transformed or extended "race" into political and ethical terms rather than relying on the popularly held notion of race as a biological concept. By doing so Du Bois was able not only to advocate a social change strategy defined by an ontological understanding of "race" but also the social, political, and economic benefits that achieving a heightened African American identity would have on the black community, especially in terms of its ethical potential to promote greater self-determination, racial uplift, and, ultimately, social inclusion as an ethnic group rather than merely as a marginalized racial group.

Historians, anthropologists, and political scientists have found that other groups of people who have experienced ethnic suppression and domination, which is often considered to be unjust and illegitimate by the oppressed, have also come to value freedom, resistance, education, and most importantly, self-determination (Aguirre, Jr. and Turner 2001; Appiah 2001). These core values are not unique to African American culture but have a great deal in common with the common core values expressed by oppressed peoples around the world. Yet, it was a particular set of circumstances and particular agents involved that led to the creation of a core black culture in the United States.

The argument underpinning this essay is that one way social activists began to bring about a sense of cultural change during the early twentieth century was through the exercise of social change rhetoric on issues of self-determinism, issues that were increasingly important near the turn of the century. Messages reinforced cultural expectations on matters of national identity while at the same time legitimizing ethnic identity and bolstering the political and economic primacy of being an American with a new racial consciousness (one's African cultural heritage). To accomplish our goal in this analysis, we will be drawing from the work of Lloyd F. Bitzer and Kenneth Burke in analyzing the rhetorical context in which Du Bois' message was created.

Bitzer stated, "Rhetorical works belong to the class of things which obtain their character from the circumstances of the historic context in which they occur" (60). Following Burke, rhetoric operates as a function of the human situation. He indicated that people access the "human situation" and shape appropriate attitudes by constructing their conceptions of the world around them (Brock 184). Burke's concept of attitude as

incipient action is helpful in understanding a rhetor's response to a particular situation because it highlights the rhetorical effectiveness of such a strategy.

According to Bitzer, rhetorical discourse is a response to a particular situation. Thus, the arguments that are generated or the language that is used in response to this situation will be arguments of a certain kind or language of a certain kind with very specific objectives. We will use Bitzer's general understanding of the rhetorical situation to analyze the context in which Du Bois' discourse was created.

The chapter is organized into four parts. First, we will discuss the American Negro Academy and its influence on the thinking of Du Bois concerning ethnic solidarity and social activism. Second, the essay details the history of scientific based definitions of race and scientific racial theory leading up to 1897. That is followed by an analysis of Du Bois' argumentation regarding the scientific conceptualization of race. That argumentation reveals a great deal about the functioning and ideological power of consciousness raising rhetoric. The conclusion will discuss how Du Bois coordinated social action through an *attitude* of race to construct an understanding of ethnic solidarity and nationalism which sought to legitimize ethnic-based colleges, newspapers, business organizations, schools of literature and art, and the American Negro Academy—an intellectual clearinghouse for all the products of black thought .

The objective of an effective orator is to create a situation for the change of an audience's opinion, yet, to be successful an orator must be knowledgeable, willing, and in genuine accord to the audience's opinions for the identification of him or herself with her or his audience. The scholarly framework we will use to examine the rhetorical situation comes from Burke in attempting to discover the various opinions, which, 1) the rhetor

sought to change, 2) are commonly shared by the audience, the rhetor and are used by the rhetor for identification, and 3) appear as *functional* rhetorical devices.

## **1.2 Context and the Influence of the American Negro Academy**

On December 18, 1896, Alexander Crummell met in Washington, D.C., with four other prominent African American men—John Wesley Cromwell and Walter B. Hayson, both of whom were public school teachers; Paul Laurence Dunbar, nationally critically acclaimed poet of *Oak and Ivy* and *Majors and Minors*; and Kelly Miller, professor of sociology and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Howard University—to ask their support in founding a learned society of “Colored authors, scholars, and artists.” Crummell, who in 1877 had helped to form the Negro American Society (which lasted only one year), was specific about the goals of the new society, which included promoting the publication of literary and scholarly works by black people and aiding “youths of genius in the attainment of the higher culture, at home and abroad.” He was also precise about the society’s membership—forty elected men, all of whom must have distinguished themselves as graduates, college professors, artists, or writers. Crummell’s ideas seemed practical and by the end of the meeting, the five men had endorsed Crummell’s proposal, adopted and signed a constitution, and named the society the American Negro Academy—the first national scholarly organization dedicated to the advancement of African American culture.

Like many of the men gathered before him, Crummell defined culture in terms of a group’s highest achievements in the arts, literature, and scholarship. This emphasis on “high” culture was intended to contradict nearly two centuries of claims by white and

particularly European scholars and intellectuals that black people were inherently incapable of producing anything of substance in the realm of artistic and intellectual activity (save for anomalies such as Phyllis Wheatley and Benjamin Banneker). The careful selection of the academy's membership, which at the inaugural meeting had been raised to fifty, was to ensure that only the most thoughtful men were charged with the task of representing to the black masses and to the white world the highest achievements of a growing black intelligentsia.

The Academy held its first general meeting on Friday, March 5, 1897, at Washington, D.C.'s Lincoln Memorial Church. Eighteen of the most prominent intellectual and artistic African American men in the United States like Dr. William E. Burghardt Du Bois and the Presbyterian minister and author Francis J. Grimké were in attendance (Moss 1). Crummell opened the meeting with his speech "Civilization, the Primal Need of the Race" (which by the way would become the first of twenty-two *Occasional Papers* that were published during the nearly thirty-one years of the academy's existence). In the speech he explained what he saw as the Academy's "special undertaking:" the cultural work of uplifting black people onto the "grand plane of civilization" (American Negro Academy Occasional Papers 1-22). He concluded in that speech that this goal was to be achieved "by the scientific processes of literature, art, and philosophy, through the agency of the cultured men of this same Negro race" (Moss, Jr. 40). The keynote address of the general meeting was given by upstart scholar and aspiring activist, Du Bois. Little did Crummell know that Du Bois (acting under the precepts established by Crummell himself) would become that engine of scientific process and achievement, a program that Du Bois earnestly believed was the most

practical and expedient means to solve “the Negro problem,” the problem of how to most successfully integrate blacks into the social fabric of American society.

Du Bois’ speech is an extension of his mentor’s ideas of race pride, solidarity, and chosenness. Crummell’s vision for black America greatly influenced Du Bois’ social philosophy. Although this study is intended to highlight the discourse of Du Bois and his rhetorical approach, we do so ever conscious of the social philosophies of Crummell, particularly ideas that spoke to the uplift of black people.

Du Bois genuinely respected Crummell and through many conversations the two had they become very close (Lewis 161). They had met some two years earlier as Crummell had given the commencement sermon at Wilberforce University in the spring of 1895 where Du Bois had accepted the position as classics chair. Du Bois said of meeting Crummell in *Souls of Black Folk*, “Instinctively I bowed before this man, as one bows before the prophets of the world” (133-134). Crummell, a retired pastor of Washington’s St. Luke’s Episcopal, a black tabernacle in New Haven, significantly influenced Du Bois’ perspective and understanding of race’s attitudinal significance. Crummell, as with others such as West Indian Edward Wilmont Blyden, Presbyterian minister Henry Highland Garnet, Episcopal bishop James Holly, AME bishop Henry McNeal Turner, and Martin Robinson Delany, were important forerunners to the Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalism movements that would greatly expand under the precepts of Du Bois during the twentieth century (Lewis 161-162).

The American Negro Academy’s general meeting was an attempt to assemble visionary and influential blacks to create and implement a workable agenda by which the Academy could best promote and sustain black intellectual and civic development (Moss

1). A few chief objectives were outlined for the organization to its quest: “the promotion of literature, science, and art...the fostering of higher education, the publication of scholarly work and the defense of the Negro against vicious assault.” These objectives fit right in line with Crummell’s idea of progress which called for “educated, high principled elites among all people—but especially among African American—to promote the work of Providence” (Lewis 164). In terms of education, he insisted on “suiting instruction to aptitudes, building on work and learning without any presumption of limitations, and teaching courses in husbandry as well as hermeneutics, Latin as well as landscaping—rather than, as [Booker T.] Washington was doing at Tuskegee, bending aptitudes to instruction” (Lewis 169). This was true not only for men but also for women. In addition, Crummell staunchly supported racial solidarity and the forming of race organizations “to build the moral fiber and institutions of race in America” (Lewis 164).

But even more importantly, Crummell believed the Negro was a chosen people and the more tested the Negro the more the Negro emerged as chosen. The catechism of liberal arts education, the need for a critical mass to propel racial solidarity, and Negro chosenness was a common theme developed by Crummell in such writings as *The Relations and Duties of Free Colored Men in America to Africa* (1861), *The Future of Africa* (1862), and “The Destined Superiority of the Negro” (1877). These themes served as the fundamental essence of the existence of the Negro Academy as well.

As with Crummell’s, Du Bois’ key note address “The Conservation of the Races” would later be released as one of the Academy’s *Occasional Papers*, its second. His speech set the tone of the meetings and their aftermath. Du Bois realized and his speech demonstrated that the stakes were high for the men assembled at the Lincoln Memorial

Church in Washington, D.C., that day. Like their female counterparts—who were not encouraged to join the all-male Academy—these black men had long labored under a legacy and attitude of racism and inferiority that sought to confine them, despite their accomplishments, to an irremediable position at the very bottom of what was considered civilized society. They were also confronted with the many negative stereotypes that permeated American popular culture, creating a “fiction” about the lives of African Americans that had little to do with their everyday existence.

Impressing on his audience the “earnest” of believing in their own destiny and their own abilities and self-worth to socially advance, Du Bois implored those present to set aside all rivalries and dissensions and to come together in a spirit of honesty in order to be “united in serious organizations, to determine by careful conference and thoughtful interchange of opinion the broad lines of policy and action for the American Negro” (*The Conservation of the Races* 246). On an even wider scale given the public debate, Du Bois’ speech was his response to the prevailing opinion of an age that had also produced intense scientific and quasi-scientific vilification of blacks as a race.

Du Bois writings sought to debunk a hundred and fifty years of scientific study hostile to blacks. His speech was written in an attempt to strip away the biological overtures that may have prevented those in attendance from striving to seek ethnic solidarity, the promotion of black intellectualism and spiritual ideals, and the motivation to join ethnic based institutions such as the Academy. For Du Bois, the “Negro problem” was a matter of systematic investigation and intelligent understanding. “The world was thinking wrong about race,” he remarked, “because it did not know. The ultimate evil was stupidity. The cure for it was knowledge based on scientific investigation” (58).

Entangling himself deliberately in the Linnaean web, Du Bois involved himself, as a man of learning, in the complexity of racial science (Handlin 57-73).

The American Negro Academy marked one of the great watershed moments in African American social activism, rendering a position that had always been rhetorical into one that had as one of its foundations “ethnic institutional power.” That is, while African American intellectualism had always mattered, with Du Bois it began to assume a partisan primacy that it had lacked previously. This additional power added rhetorical force to his message. As scholar and historian Alfred Moss, Jr. suggested, learned societies provided additional power because they reflected recognizable leadership. It provided a unified approach incorporating some of the most intelligent and well trained minds convicted to overcoming the present day obstacles of segregation and disenfranchisement.

Educated blacks, a small percentage of the racial community, took the lead in efforts to establish new institutions that would meet the needs of their people. We cannot presume that this was inevitable; it did not occur overnight; nor was it without controversy. Du Bois did not create it alone. Nor was he the first to suggest the primacy of cultural “nationalism” as a means of defeating inequality and providing opportunity and self-determination. However, Du Bois argued for black leadership to develop a distinct “core black culture” in the United States (246). This core cultural value system would be developed around intellectually based institutions that in many ways were a direct expression of their identities and need for affirmation. The formation of this group and similar ones like it (i.e. Bethel Literary and Historical Association, Society for the Collection of Negro Folklore, National Medical Association, National Federation of

Afro-American Women, the National League of Colored Women's Clubs, and the American Negro Historical Society of Philadelphia) reflected a viable explanation to the meaning and significance of self-determination, freedom, resistance (to forced segregation), and education in the lives and experiences of the masses of African Americans in this society. These groups would add additional rhetorical force to the movement.

Until its demise in 1928, the American Negro Academy managed to sustain itself with membership fees and to produce a few papers that are now considered classic examples of late-nineteenth-and early-twentieth-century African American scholarship, among them Kelly Miller's "A Review of Hoffman's Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro (1897), W.E.B. Du Bois's "The Conservation of the Race" (1897), Archibald H. Grimké's "Right on the Scaffold, or the Martyrs of 1822" (1901), William S. Scarborough's "The Educated Negro and His Mission" (1903), and William H. Ferris's "Alexander Crummell, an Apostle of Negro Culture" (1920). The American Negro Academy, the first major black American learned society, was an organization based on strengthening the intellectual life of the black community, improving the quality of black leadership, and insuring "that henceforth arguments advanced by 'cultured despisers' of their race were refuted or at least challenged" (Moss, Jr. 1).

Little known and barely remembered, the inaugural meeting of the American Negro Academy nonetheless constitutes a significant moment in Du Bois' empirical sociology on black culture and the beginnings of his social activist career, particularly as an agent to fulfilling the last of the Academy's concerns. The formulation of the Academy reveals some of the complexity of our national civil rights history, for it

contains many of the elements of that history. The Academy reflects the oppression and segregation under which African Americans, particularly intellectual, artistic, and accomplished blacks labored. It reveals some of the systematic racist attitudes which haunted African Americans and the opinions of inferiority which summarized not only the general public's opinion of African Americans but those argued by natural science as well. The arguments that preceded and those that ensued were part of the process that instantiated Du Bois as a meaningful and legitimate spokesperson and social agent for African American civil rights, cultural identity, and social uplift.

### **1.3 A Historical Look at the Biological Conception of Race**

No other natural science has had as substantial an impact on human culture as that of biology, particularly in terms of developing our understanding of human diversity. Human beings, particularly in America, have always been fascinated by the topics of equality and its connection to race. This dedication and concern was never greater than in the 1840s and 50s. As a result, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century became a time period of Herculean proportion for the biological sciences—evolution, population genetics, and biochemistry (Lowance, Jr. 249-266).

In the sixteenth and up through the eighteenth centuries, most Europeans were satisfied that differences between living things (humans, animals, and plants) were explained by showing their place in God's creation, and that one of the motivations for studying natural history was to come closer to an understanding of God's design for the universe. Michael Banton's *Racial Theories* remarked, "At this time the word 'race' was mostly used to designate a set of persons, animals, or plants connected by common

descent or origin” (4). This idea was based on a conceptual scheme of genealogy influenced by God’s creation. However, when it came to humans, the main dispute was whether it was or was not the case that humans originated from Adam and Eve. Given the public debate, some believed that only science could effectively answer the question and solve the problem of the “origin of species” and whether man “sprang from the one creation or many” (Stanton vii). Biology would proceed to meet this challenge.

Prior to 1859 and the introduction of Darwin’s theory of evolution, most of biological science was loosely related empirical observations. To a large degree, scientific theory was primarily attached to Christian religious principles which maintained that God created human races based upon a divine hierarchy. However, the ability of science to answer the mysteries of the world began to rapidly grow. Many, in popular and influential circles, believed that biological science and its methods of empiricism could resolve the origin or species dilemma (Lowance, Jr. 249).

As it would be, Darwinian Theory constituted the grounds of scientific ideology’s divorce from Christian theology. New taxonomic principles (methods used to classify living things into meaningful groups), evolutionary theory, and genetics (ethnology) exacted new found ideas on such criteria which would become profoundly useful to classification schemes and to making assertions about the origin of human life. Systematic doubt, empirical and sensory verification, the abstraction of human knowledge into separate sciences, and the view that the world functions like a machine were modes of thought that greatly challenged and changed the human experience of every aspect of life, from individual life to the life of the group. Empiricism, as a theory of knowledge, privileged the role of experience in the formation of ideas over that of *a*

*priori* reasoning, intuition, or revelation. Empiricism emphasized aspect of scientific knowledge (such as racial classification schemes) that were closely related to experience, especially as formed through deliberate experimental arrangements (See discussion of evolution of scientific method Morrison 1987).

The word “experiment” which comes from the Latin root *experiri* for which we derive the word “experience” means “of (or from) trying.” An experiment, then, is an *experience*, but it is a “controlled” experience; a set of actions performed in the context of solving a particular problem or answering a particular question. It is a fundamental requirement of scientific method that all hypotheses and theories be tested against observations of the natural world. Experimentation is a cornerstone in the empirical approach to acquiring deeper knowledge about the physical world. During the late 1700s up through the early 1800s, otherwise known as the Enlightenment period, empirical methodology became the most acceptable means of generating knowledge or justifying commonly held attitudes about “what was the nature of something” in not only the scientific community but the general public as well, particularly in determining the existence of various hierarchically stratified races or subspecies of races (See Lowance, Jr. discussion of the development of race theory ch. 7 “Science in Antebellum America” 250).

During the Enlightenment period, experimental biology resulted in scientists popularizing scientific classification schemes to provide scientific aspects to “attitudes” toward race. Experimental science required that all factors that go into the experience of a natural phenomenon be cataloged in some way. Joseph Graves, Jr., professor of evolutionary biology and author of *The Emperor’s New Clothes: Biological Theories of*

*Race at the Millennium* stated, “Taxonomy may have been one of the earliest biological sciences...all taxonomy is directly related to one’s central theory of how (and why) to classify organisms into groups. Household objects are relatively easy to classify, but prior to the advent of evolutionary theory, creating a conscious system that revealed the relatedness of living things was difficult” (37). The Western concept of race has always been affixed to biological principles used to characterize and classify individuals into races. As Graves, Jr. suggested, “Race theory” is a consequence of relatively modern historical developments (See *The Emperor’s New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium* 2001).

During the seventeenth century as Europeans came into contact with humans in the New World, people who looked different than themselves, race and racial differences challenged then existing conceptions of the origin of human species. As long as people presumed that there had formerly been pure races of men, racial history was a description of the way in which these pure strains had developed to produce variable but homogenized populations. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, “Enlightenment” scholars attempted to reconcile seventeenth century religious notions of human existence by explaining racial difference through experimental science. What would ensue, particularly in the antebellum United States, would be hotly debated concerning the political institutions of the emerging republic and transatlantic discourse on the nature and origin of man (See discussion of the race concept in chapter 2 “Pre-Darwinian Theories of Race” Graves, Jr. 2001).

Biological arguments were widely incorporated to explain not only the genetic differences of human beings but the cultural capacities of human beings as well.

Scientists made assertions and debated standards and criteria which were used to catalogue human beings by property of species and scientifically determine any significance of “racial” difference. Their work was an attempt to answer the question: Is there any human genetic variability between the populations of the world? If so, does biological differences account for our cultural differences? And lastly, do these differences justify the superiority and inferiority of some groups to others? Thus, the word ‘race’ came to signify a permanent category of humans of a kind equivalent to the species. These first racial theories focused on explaining relations *between* groups versus appealing to principles which explained relations *within* groups (see discussion of the race concept in chapter 2 “Pre-Darwinian Theories of Race” Graves, Jr. 2001).

Determined, now, as a primarily biological concept, race and the interpretation of racial differences between groups was a central factor in competing world views during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. William Stanton wrote in *The Leopard’s Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America 1815-1859*, “The eighteenth-century concept of equality was a scientific concept; it rested upon biology, the descent of all men from the Creation; it rested upon morphology, the similarity of men’s bodies; and it emphasized the importance of environment in shaping men’s biological and mental structure” (11). Spurred on by the “binominal nomenclature” classification system of living organisms and plants devised in 1735 by Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus in *Systema Nature*, many scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries dedicated themselves to the identification and ranking of variations in humankind (Omi and Winant 19). The first European to try to do so formally was Francois Bernier in 1684. Bernier, a French physician, attempted to classify all humans by race. Bernier added additional

criteria, besides that of skin color, to group populations into distinct racial groups.

“However,” pointed out Graves, Jr., “Bernier had not developed a biological theory that could accurately classify races. His views were consistent with the idea that there was only one human species and that the different races were thus varieties within the species form” (38).

Linnaeus’ classification system over the next century, on the other hand, would set a universal precedent. Scientists would expand on the work of Linnaeus as he had given naturalists a distinctive tool for observation and experiment. In the intervening period before Darwin, naturalist sought to explain why certain biological types were particular to their own geographical areas and give evidence that each maintained a distinct culture. This observation substantiated the fact that humans were of different “races.”

Scholars such as Germany’s Johann Friedrich Blumenbach—founder of the five-race theory of anthropology—became the first in 1775 to systematically divide humanity according to skin color and cranial measurements. Joseph A. GoBineau and Houston S. Chamberlain dedicated themselves to the identification and ranking of variations in humankind. Georges Buffon, a French naturalist in 1789, asserted that the white race was the norm and all variations required explanation. According to this thinking, the European stood at the pinnacle of human perfection, and all other races were to be measured against him (Graves, Jr. 3). Scholars’ arguments during this period seemed to never doubt that “races” existed and that there should be rank and stratification among them. Eighteenth century naturalists insisted that there was hierarchy among the human race (the more elaborate the classification, the greater the emphasis placed on

differences) yet eighteenth century naturalists, still believed, that all races were members of the same human species.

Nineteenth century naturalists' views, however, were quite different from their eighteenth century counterparts' concerning race and the Negro race, in particular, in terms of its innate inferiority. "'Race theory' was not uniquely American...; however, the American variant emphasized polygenesis, or the multiple origins of mankind, rather than monogenesis, the development of man from a single pair of parents, which was a common argument used by the abolitionists to show the common brotherhood of all mankind," noted Mason Lowance in his book *A House Divided: The Antebellum Slavery Debates in America 1776-1865* (310). For example, nineteenth century polygenist such as Louis Agassiz, Samuel Morton, and Josiah Clark Nott and George Robins Gliddon considered the Negro to be part of a separate distinct species from other human races.

The variations in racial "science" served generally to reinforce the concept of white supremacy over other races. Most blacks in the United States were "enslaved workers" during the eighteenth and nineteenth century of American history, and they represented a particular "class" in Antebellum American society. Enslavement came to be a social and economic condition reserved to blacks living in America. The "racial" or "biological" basis of slavery meant that for blacks and whites, competing with the development of "class consciousness" was some sense of "racial consciousness" (Franklin 6). According to Philadelphia physician Samuel Morton's studies of cranial capacity, racial classification ought to be based on shared gene pools. Morton's *Crania American* published in 1839 correlated skull shape and size to intelligence and moral character. Morton compiled for the sample of his study a collection of 800 crania from all

parts of the world. Dr. Morton presumed that the larger the crania the greater the capacity for intelligence.

In his findings, he concluded that a relationship between race and skull capacity existed. The English skulls in the study proved to be the largest with the average cranial capacity of 96 cubic inches. Americans and Germans were a distant second both with cranial capacities of 90 cubic inches and rounding out the bottom of the list were Negroes with 83 cubic inches, the Chinese with 82 cubic inches and Indians with 79 cubic inches (Gossett 74). These studies and others from the American school of polygenists such as Richard Colfax's *Evidence against the Views of the Abolitionists, Consisting of Physical and Moral Proofs, of the Natural Inferiority of the Negroes* in 1833 were popular in academic circles and widely disseminated within the general public. They sought to legitimize ethnological science's ability to explain human existence and the relatively significant differences between human beings.

These scientific studies greatly affected the growing knowledge of human genetics and empirically verified publicly held notions, attitudes, and opinions of the various differences between human beings and the significance of basic biological and cultural differences, particularly the inferiority, vulgarity, and barbarity of blacks.

The immediate effects of these studies and scientific claims can be felt in the passing of the Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 which provided for the capture and return of escaped black slaves to their owners from any territory, North or South. The Fugitive Slave Act mandated that "all good citizens" were "commanded to aid and assist federal marshals and their deputies in the prompt and efficient execution of this law," and heavy penalties were imposed upon anyone who

assisted black slaves to escape from bondage (Lowance, Jr. 26). When apprehended, an alleged fugitive was taken before a federal court or commissioner. The escaped slave was denied a jury trial and their testimony was not admitted, while the statement of the master claiming ownership, even though absent, was taken as the main evidence.

Nott and Gliddon's studies illustrated the inferiority of the African and the superiority of the Caucasian. *Types of Mankind* (1854) and *Indigenous Races* (1871) "took the battle far beyond the bounds of narrow academic debate" aiding in the general belief that the Negro was of a distinct race" and justified the lingering question of slavery (Graves, Jr. 48). These biologists defined *race* as an "essence," a fixed, immutable, innate characteristic which was concrete and objective. Their books quickly caught the attention of anthropologists throughout the world. Nott and Gliddon recognized that the races of the contemporary world were historical creations assembling people of mixed origin, but they maintained that appearances were deceptive. They argued that though men could migrate and mate with "strange women," humans could not overcome the anthropological laws of permanence of type, the infertility of hybrids, and the limits of acclimatization. Thus, Nott and Gliddon assumed that a permanent difference existed between racial types. This racial thought carried far beyond the halls of science and was widely incorporated and used politically to justify the Southern based institution of slavery, the Northern based indifference to it, Native Indian extermination, and other vulgar and atrocious practices (Lowance, Jr. 257; Graves, Jr. 41-45; Stanton 97-99).

These early race theories were echoed throughout the nineteenth century by proslavery advocates, social and anthropological scientists as well as politicians. For example, for most of his life, Abraham Lincoln shared the popular attitude of many of his

contemporaries that the “Negroes” were inherently inferior, meaning biologically inferior. As much as Lincoln despised the institution of slavery, Lincoln doubted whether the Negro was capable for citizenship and, in any case, thought it would be impossible for the Negro to attain equality in a society which was shared with whites. On September 18, 1858 in Charleston, Illinois in one of his debates with Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln expressed the popular racial attitude substantiated by the scientific findings of Morton, Agassiz, and Nott and Gliddon; an attitude which was often quoted by Southern apologists after the Civil War:

I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races,...that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will for ever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race. (145)

For Lincoln and many others, the truth of race lay within innate characteristics, such as visible morphological characteristics of skin color and other physical attributes such as bone structure, hair color and texture, and body stature which included some and excluded others in terms of their ability to equally (or naturally) participate in American society.

Familiar with the arguments of scientists concerning race, Dr. John Van Evrie’s *White Supremacy and Negro Subordination* (1868) developed the same inferior theme of intelligence and ability. Van Evrie, a physician in New York City, frequently contributed to the *Old Guard*, a Democratic monthly journal which defended the South and slavery during the Civil War and attacked the Reconstruction policies of the Republicans

afterwards. Van Evrie argued that education for the “Negro,” if at all possible, would do irrevocable harm to the brain. It would develop the forward portion of the brain causing the “broad forehead and small cerebellum” to be too similar to whites and thus, seriously alter the Negro center of gravity and make it impossible to walk or stand erect. Hence, Van Evrie warned that nothing could change the (biologically) inferior Negro.

The attribution of cultural and psychological values to race and the continuum of “high” and “lower” cultural groups excluded blacks from full participation (socially, economically, politically) within American society and secluded blacks to their position of institutionally licensed property and second-class citizenship. The essentialist “Nature” argument against the environmental “Nurture” argument dominated race theory discourse for nearly two centuries (Lowance, Jr. 253). The biological or essentialist argument was often the grounds for the existence of the pervasive attitudes which legitimized slavery; blacks as loyal, devoted, willing to be led, childlike and helpless (in need of benevolent guidance by the whites); a pathetic victim of a cruel system yet-still inherently unequal in meaningful ways and innately inferior to whites. According to Donald W. Klopf, author of the book *Intercultural Encounters*, these distinctions between “high” and “low” cultures become the basis for forming a culture’s social structure, particularly its status in American culture (179-180). Although the formal institution of slavery would be defeated and abandoned in 1865 primarily due to the Civil War, the attitudes which legitimized chattel slavery and bondage continued into the twentieth century and directly related to black/white education in the South during Reconstruction, public segregation, Jim Crow laws, Black Codes, labor practices, and lynching.

As previously stated, the biological racial view suggested that the truth of race lay within the domain of innate characteristics, of which skin color and other physical attributes such as hair color and texture, bone structure, etc. provided obvious indicators of exclusion and inclusion. Overtime these superficial indicators which were loosely defined and presented in a condensed manner to characterize the Negro were also used (as seen in the arguments of Van Evrie and Hinton R. Helper's *Nojoque*—an important anti-Negro book published in 1867) to justify disparate social policies such as segregation; the denial of voting rights; and educational, psychological and cultural repression.

Political debates about equality and inequality were joined to scientific theory about race to produce a definition of citizenship that excluded Africans (Lowance, Jr. 256). The expropriation of property, the denial of political rights, the introduction and proliferation of slavery and other forms of coercive labor, lynching, as well as outright extermination (supported by Helper's *Nojoque*) were supported by the polygenist worldview of race which distinguished Europeans from all others. Such a worldview was needed to maintain why some "should be free" while others enslaved, why some had rights to property and land, education, civic engagement, social services, and protection by the law and others did not.

To illustrate this point, the South after the Civil War was strongly opposed to the enfranchisement of the so-called Negro. Several states in the South passed laws, the so-called "Black Codes," which were designed to limit drastically the rights of the newly liberated slaves. The Black Codes varied in their provisions, but generally they forbade blacks the rights of holding office or of voting. Blacks were not eligible for military

service; they could not serve on juries nor could blacks testify in court except against other blacks. Blacks were required to have passes in moving from place to place and were forbidden to assemble without proper permit by representatives of law. If one was to refuse to work, he or she could be hired out to work by labor contractors. The rights of blacks were generally restricted to ownership and inheritance of property, suing and being sued in court and marriage (See Theodore Wilson's discussion of the way black codes 1865-1866 came into being and their nature and effect in *The Black Codes of the South* 61—80; 96-115).

When the Black Codes of South Carolina were published in 1866, H. Melville Myers, the editor, explained in the preface why such laws were necessary. "The Negro race," he declared, at all times had "been excluded, as a separate class, from all civilized governments and the family of nations since it was doomed by a mysterious and Divine ordination...The war had settled the matter of the abolition of slavery, but this did not mean that blacks were to be considered as citizens. To institute...between the Anglo-Saxon, the high-minded, virtuous, intelligent, patriotic Southerner and the *freedman* a social or political existence of the two classes more closely," said Myers, "would surely be one of the highest exhibitions of treason to the race." Both whites and blacks were "distinctly marked by the impress of nature. They are races separate and distinct, the one the highest and noblest type of humanity, the other the lowest and most degraded" (Magubane 77).

Nevertheless, by the late 1850s Darwin's theory of evolution began to challenge the "American School" of ethnology research. Darwinian theory and its fundamental principles showing how all species of humans were evolved from lower forms of animal

life gave credible scientific evidence to debunk the advancement of the polygenic origins of mankind. Building off of Darwin's theory of evolution social science scholars, as well, began to reject the notions promulgated by the polygenist conceptualization of race and by the end of the nineteenth century these social science scholars would begin to rival the grandiose theories of racial difference by polygenists. Social scientists working in the fields of sociology, history, economics, and psychology incorporated a new method of historical science to attaining objective knowledge versus the acceptable scientific-based methods of generalizing. Generalizing seeks casual explanations of more limited aspects of events, accounting for them in general principles whereas historical explanations set out to account for events in terms of previous events, highlighting their unique character (Banton 11).

Modernized social science stressed the primacy of observed phenomena over theory or ideal constructs as opposed to system-building, according to Michael Omni and Howard Winant. Some social science scholars began to reject the scientific notions of race in favor of an approach which regarded "race" as a sociological or sociohistorical concept (Omni and Winant 20). Most notably, German sociologist Max Weber discounted biological explanations for racial conflict (that certain races were naturally inferior, therefore must be managed by superior races) and instead highlighted social and political factors (that certain races and cultures were historically disadvantaged) which engendered such conflict (Bendix 26). Weber, who had received a temporary lectureship during Du Bois' second year at the University of Berlin before leaving for a professorship at Freiburg reinforced the notion of systematic observation and generalization. Weberian

sociology promoted an objective rationality as a unique attempt to combine empirical sociological research with universals revealed through history (Sheehan 568).

The most dramatic effect that race theory had was in the problem it created in providing public education for blacks. As Lewis noted, “The creed of the nineties held that it was a dangerous conceit to expose black people to literature, history, philosophy, and ‘dead’ languages, thereby ‘spoiling’ them for the natural order of southern society...” (215). While the white South attempted to gut higher education for blacks, Du Bois sought to initiate a specific plan of higher education which would include those subjects thought to be prohibited to blacks.

Acting on the premise that attitudes toward race could be properly addressed through scientific study, Dr. Du Bois as an assistant research professor at Pennsylvania University would be the first to apply an empirical sociological method to the study of the Negro. In researching for and writing *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois intended to paint a detailed picture of an urban Afro-American community which had already existed for over a century prior to 1896, yet was still in the process of formation. The study was carried out between August 1896 and December 1897 with Du Bois, himself and Mary White Ovington as his assistant, going house-to-house investigating the conditions of the Seventh Ward district of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which housed a fifth of the city’s black citizens. Du Bois methodology used careful observation, sifting and evaluating evidence, statistical analysis, and comparative analysis with known information of similar social formations.

Du Bois’ discussion of race may be seen as a motive force in history. As Aguirre, Jr. and Turner pointed out in their article on ethnicity and ethnic relations “race connotes

biological differences among peoples” and if “biological distinctiveness can become a part of the label for denoting populations then biology becomes an aspect of the social dynamics producing and sustaining ethnicity” (2-3). Du Bois emphasis on race as a historical phenomenon paved the way for what contemporary readers today commonly refer to as ethnicity, but in the nineteenth century such talk would be less common and at times even sound strange. The labeling of black or Negro meant more than simply skin color; it was a whole cluster of assumptions and historical experiences, behavior, organization, and culture. For Du Bois, blacks as an ethnic group, meant something bigger, broader, and more inclusive. In “Conservation of the Races” Du Bois stressed the importance of surveying “the whole question of race in human philosophy” and of layering “on a basis of broad knowledge and careful insight, those large lines of policy and higher ideals which may form our guiding lines and boundaries in the practical difficulties of everyday...The question, then, which we must seriously consider is this: what is the real meaning of race; what has, in the past, been the law of race development, and what lessons has the past history of race development to teach the rising Negro people?” (238-239).

What excited Du Bois most about the study of the African American communities of the Seventh Ward in Philadelphia was that these communities were virtual living laboratories that could provide a unique opportunity for social scientists to observe the process by which an illiterate, poor, peasant community made the leap from a rural folk society to a modern urban people capable of surviving and advancing in an industrial milieu. But most of all, Du Bois wanted to dispel the racist myths about African Americans that served as rationales for discriminatory policies and divisive ethnological

scientific research. These attitudes of intellectual and moral inferiority had been built over the last three centuries on the basis of a biological understanding of race. Guided by the precepts of Weber and other sociohistorians, Du Bois would begin to build a social scientific body of work which rivaled these contemporary attitudes and detailed a more true to life picture of people as a collective group with an identifiable history, value system, and common cultural background.

Divided into 18 chapters, with maps, statistical tables, and graphs supporting the elegantly written text, *The Philadelphia Negro* presented the kind of full and accurate picture of black life in the big city—from marital practices, family formations, and church life, to secular organizations and institutions, business ventures, work and living arrangements, race relations, recreations and amusements, to vice and violent crime—that can serve as a yardstick to measure how far Afro-Americans have progressed in the last century. Hence there was reason to believe that with training and expanded opportunity, African Americans would find their place in the evolving socio/economic order and with time racist attitudes could subside. This belief proved to be true according to Du Bois, for the best-educated African Americans reflected a process of class differentiation. Du Bois felt that there was a strong tendency in America to consider blacks as a part of one homogeneous mass. Yet, although most African Americans shared a common history contributed to one general set of problems (the institution of slavery), *The Philadelphia Negro* showed that wide variation of antecedents, wealth, intelligence, and general efficiency was apparent within those living in the Seventh Ward of Philadelphia.

When Du Bois was collecting the data and putting together the ideas of *The Philadelphia Negro*, African Americans were less than forty years removed from slavery.

For the most part, blacks were poor and illiterate, and they were being deprived of their political power. It was this experience of the achievements of this able and striving class in Philadelphia, the emerging black colleges of Fisk and Atlanta, and the changing current in scientific understanding of the concept of race that confirmed for Du Bois the role uplifting the “untutored” masses. His social scientific work and professional accomplishments also validated his call for African Americans to seek a liberal academic education and strengthened his zeal for those of “high” culture to remain committed to the cause of *all* African Americans, particularly those of the uneducated masses, as he addressed the audience of the first American Negro Academy to clarify his views on the importance and function of race.

This understanding of high culture had an understood meaning for Du Bois and to the audience of the first meeting of the American Negro Academy. This particular group of individuals had produced major accomplishments in the arts, literature, social justice, music, and education. This group, Du Bois thought, was prepared to lead the masses of African Americans into traditions and customs commonly perceived by the majority as representing equality and civil refinement. Although physical features like skin color and facial features presented visible markers of organizational, behavioral, and cultural differences, these visible differences did not diminish the intellectual ability and right for equal opportunity. The American Negro Academy was part of a larger belief in social progress, in the ultimate perfectibility of a social order that could be inclusive and self-determining.

#### **1.4 Du Bois’ Argument over the Scientific Conceptualization of Race**

Two important public arguments took place following the 1895 Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition in which Booker T. Washington as a representative of the Negro race delivered his dramatic five minute speech “The Atlanta Exposition Address” Washington argued that civil liberty was an unimportant subtext to African American’s fight for equal and just participation in American society while Du Bois argued that it was the only important text or subtext. Washington advocated for industrial training and called for blacks to postpone their struggle for their innate civil liberties as citizens of the United States of America. Accordingly, Washington’s plan of economic and social advancement discouraged, consciously or unconsciously, the unification of African Americans as a powerful political and cultural *ethnic* force.

Du Bois, contrary to Washington, argued that African Americans as a nation—a nation with an identity linked by its ancestry, history, values, and cultural gifts—would best fight the attitudinal and physical injustice being suffered in America by joining together and building a distinct core black culture as a symbol of African Americans’ collective economic and political power, a unified voice capable of bringing about social change. Du Bois’ transformative vision greatly encouraged social and political advancement through collective organization. As a result, both Du Bois’ talent for analysis and his commitment to balanced judgment are on display in his 1897 American Negro Academy key note address “The Conservation of the Races” in which he examines the word “race” as a symbol of ethnic solidarity and cooperation, nationalistic identity, and political organization. For Du Bois, the question still lingered as to what is the essential difference of races, what is race’s real meaning, and what lessons has the past history of race development to teach blacks, particularly, in the United States of America

and “Conversations” would become the most intellectually expansive argument on cultural nationalism yet made by a black American (Rampersad 61).

Du Bois believed in political organization and participation, the wage-labor system, and higher education. By arguing that the history of race was the “real” issue—an issue intricately linked to that of civil liberty—Du Bois reinforced his position as a more realistic definer of ethnic identity while also supporting his legitimizing of the American Negro Academy as a valuable political organization. By arguing that “race” is a sociohistorical and not a biological concept, Du Bois sought to extend and authenticate the multifaceted nature of black culture as a symbol of national identity and a domain for political participation within American society. In addition, able political participation would best serve the interest of the race by developing well-educated and proficient high-cultured wage earners.

There are three immediate goals which may be discerned from Du Bois’ message. First, Du Bois intended to redefine “race” as a concept in the minds of his immediate audience by describing what it meant to have a “pro racial identity” and differentiate between voluntary/involuntary racial memberships. Secondly, he wanted to promote the idea of ethnic nationalism—an important undertone to “state” nationalism. The Academy’s existence should be viewed as an act to enjoin people to struggle for the national interest of the race by explicating the civic responsibilities of a person of color living as a citizen of the United States of America. Third, Du Bois wanted to persuade the audience that a like-minded group with a political identity cares about and supports race-based organizations such as the Academy because of its symbolic power. The Academy

served as an example to the supreme irony of American democratic life (segregation primarily), African slavery, and myth of scientific race ideology.

The “American Negro,” Du Bois began in his address, has “been led to . . . minimize race distinctions” because “back of most of the discussions of race with which he is familiar, have lurked certain assumptions as to his natural abilities, as to his political, intellectual and moral status, which he felt were wrong” (238). Yet, he continued: “Nevertheless, in our calmer moments we must acknowledge that human beings are divided into races,” although we have “come to inquire into the essential differences of races we find it hard to come at once to any definite conclusion” (238). What, then, can we make of this analysis and conclusion?

First, we can discern that Du Bois had come to understand the pervasive nature of racist ideology, influenced in part by the prevailing scientific propositions of the nineteenth century, in part by the general public’s thinking on the inferiority of the Negro and the superiority of Europeans, and in part by the fact that “the rise of racial ideology coincided with the development of social institutions that exploited human biological difference for profit” (Graves 3). Du Bois explained, “The final word of science, so far, is that we have at least two, perhaps, three, great families of human beings—the whites and Negroes, possibly the yellow race” (239). Polygenesists concluded and Du Bois concurred, “That other races have arisen from the intermingling of the blood of these two.” Yet, he suggested, “This broad division of the world’s races . . . is nothing more nearly true than an acknowledgement that, so far as purely physical characteristics are concerned, the differences between men do not explain all the differences of their history” (239). Du Bois, as the speech unfolds, develops the argument that historically the

race idea is one that has been used to advance the interests of some but retard human existence for others (i.e. learned societies such as the Academy) building off the pervasive issues of inclusion and exclusion, issues that were becoming increasingly more important to those in attendance as the Nation approached the turn of the twentieth century, Du Bois suggested that the mere physical differences which had been highlighted by biological science were also used to separate people into groups as a means of social Darwinism.

Du Bois remarked, what matter are not the “grosser physical differences of color, hair and bone” but the “differences—subtle, delicate and elusive, though they may be—which have silently but definitely separated men into groups” (240). He continued:

While these subtle forces have generally followed the natural cleavage of common blood, descent and physical peculiarities, they have at other times swept across and ignored these. At all times, however, they have divided human beings into races, which, while they perhaps transcend scientific definition, nevertheless, are clearly defined to the eye of the Historian and Sociologist. If this be true, then the history of the world is the history, not of individuals, but of groups, not of nations, but of races... What, then, is a race? It is a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals for life. (240)

As this passage indicates, Du Bois was not satisfied with the definitions of race advanced by nineteenth century physical scientists and saw the inherent danger by allowing them to be the bases by which human beings were characterized. He countered them by conceptualizing race based not on scientifically derived conclusions but political and cultural proofs and argument. Scientifically derived racial distinctions negatively impacted human interaction, concluded Du Bois, and were a means of legitimizing the modern economic foundation of the modern world (*Dusk to Dawn* 103). Du Bois argued that scientifically based definitions of race naturally forced blacks (and the so-called

lower races) to a position of inferiority, attitudinally and culturally, to that of, particularly, white Americans and, in general, Europeans. Scientific “race dogma,” according to Du Bois, stressed evolution and the “Survival of the Fittest” and that there was a “vast difference in the development of the whites and the ‘lower’ races; that this could be seen in the physical development of the Negro” (*Dusk to Dawn* 98). Yet, as Du Bois spoke at the inaugural speaker, the Academy was an example of the absurdity of that belief.

Second, Du Bois sought to establish a newly conceptualized understanding of race, one based on the socio-scientific methodology of systematic observation and generalizing. At a time when discourse on race was dominated by pseudo-scientific studies as those aforementioned, Du Bois offered a definition of race based on motivations of race found outside of biological definitions. “Du Bois’ argument...is that ‘race’ is not a scientific—that is, biological—concept. It is a sociohistorical concept. Sociohistorical races each” stated Du Bois, “have a ‘message’ for humanity—a message which derives, in some way, from God’s purpose in creating races. The Negro race has still to deliver its full message,” continued Du Bois, “and so it is the duty of Negroes to work together—through race organizations—so that this message can be delivered” (Appiah 91). Du Bois continued by stating that history suggested that more than eight distinctly different races could be traced in the world. After describing these different races Du Bois asked a prominent question: “The question now is: What is the real distinction between these nations?” (241). Whereas Du Bois had previously referred to “race” or “races” as the general term which referred to the people upon which his discussion rested, he substituted or exchanged the term “race” for the term “nation” to

further elaborate on what he felt was the real advantage in distinguishing people by their skin color. Thus, Du Bois began to develop a different attitude to which he would like his audience to identify with, the meaning of race not as merely a biological concept but a more powerful meaning of race, one which is connected to national ideals, values, and principles.

Du Bois usage of the “idea” of race is based off the historical design of nationalism. In its general form, the issue of nationalism concerns the intersubjectivity between the ethno-cultural domain and the domain of political organization. Of extreme importance is the attitude that the members of a nation or racial group have when they care about their national identity. Du Bois attempts to address those attitudes by arguing that blacks, indeed, were a chosen people—a unique people with a unique past, present, and yet to be determined future and that African America’s most pressing task was to build up and to more adequately develop the moral fiber of the race within the United States of America through the development of race-based organizations and institutions. Du Bois’ argument is centered upon cultural membership and used both for the identity of the group and for the socially based identity of its members. He argued that the task of building a racial identity was aptly the duty of African Americans and not one which could be accomplished if African American’s were to be assimilated or uselessly absorbed into an unforgiving and demeaning white American culture. His message served to set a clear cut objective, a value ethic and national creed, if you will, not only for the American Negro Academy but for African Americans as an ethnic group. Du Bois’ rhetoric meant both to justify the Academy’s existence and to give African Americans a “common mouthpiece” as an ethnic group—a nation within a nation—not just as a race—

what scientists and the general public saw as discussions of the existence of mere biological differences among people.

Du Bois' message seems to speak to the duality of the existence of those in attendance. In one regard, many of the men that were in attendance were accomplished individuals. They were leading scholars, poets, clergy, musicians, writers, and college institutional administrators. Yet, they had been excluded from joining societies which recognized their accomplishments and receiving the apt praise and recognition that their accomplishments might have garnered if they and their accomplishments were not affixed to a certain racial attitude in American society.

The difference in Du Bois' conception is not that his definition is at odds with the scientific one. It is, rather, that he has assigned to race a moral and attitudinal significance different than that of biological science. The present phenomenon, theorized Du Bois, produced feelings of shame or self-questioning and hesitation when one considered their obligation to the race, their race responsibility, and race action when the best talent and energy of the best of African Americans couldn't be galvanized to help in the uplift of the race. The moral debate on nationalism reflected a deep moral tension between solidarity within the oppressed national group on the one hand and repulsion in the face of injustice, crimes, and inequality perpetrated in the name of Nationalism on the other.

Thirdly, the definition of race offered by Du Bois' rhetoric was much broader and more inclusive of the black Diaspora. That is the significance of the sociohistorical dimension of race. It set the precepts and building blocks upon which African Americans as an ethnic group—a cultural group with a sense of pride, shared historical experiences, as well as, unique organizational, behavioral, and cultural characteristics—could be

prudently based and maintained within the scope of American society and nationalistic values. Du Bois' conclusions about race were not drawn on the prevailing nineteenth century idea that race lines were fixed and fast, stern and exclusive. Such observations were closed and insular. Du Bois' conclusions were based on the "cultural aspects of race," the strivings of races, and their historicity.

This message, or story (which gives the term a richer horizon of significance) is imbued with characters, a record, and a direction—a message which Du Bois intended to become a corporately agreed upon story (Arnett and Arneson 6). A national awakening and struggle for racial identity focuses not on the ideals of the individual but the development of the race as an ethnic or cultural community—a cultural community of rich heritage, history, and common ideals. Du Bois wrote later in his autobiography *Dusk to Dawn*:

Just as I was born a member of a colored family, so too I was born a member of the colored race. That was obvious and no definition was needed. Later I adopted the designation 'Negro' for the race to which I belong. It seemed more definite and logical. At the same time I was of course aware that all members of the Negro race were not black and that the pictures of my race which were current were not authentic nor fair portraits. But all that was incidental. The world was divided into great primary groups of folk who belonged naturally together through heredity of physical traits and cultural affinity. (100)

Thus, Du Bois took advantage of an opportunity to promote an attitude of nationalism and racial identity by examining current race ideology and to ultimately persuade his target audience that a deep tension existed between the solidarity of the oppressed national group and the Nation as a whole. By making race the issue; Du Bois challenged his audience to make what had been implicit, African American political and organizational inequality—explicit, and contended that that inequality was inconsistent with American core values, and hence National identity.

As a solution, Du Bois' rhetoric pressed for the rethinking of race as a scientifically derived concept to a concept of a social scientifically derived nature. This conceptualization set blacks as a nation of people who have been grouped based on their skin color by the dominant society but who share much more than biological genetics. Du Bois hoped to mobilizing blacks based on their ethnicity, something bigger, broader, and more inclusive. He attempted through his social change rhetoric to argue for a more contextualized, more historically situated meaning of race and at the same time, with a high degree of eloquence advocate for an ethnic-based identity to unite other forces and to preserve African American intellectual accomplishments, champion the best educated of the race, and promote nationalism, all with an end result of bringing about social change.

“Here then is the dilemma,” Du Bois suggested “and it is a puzzling one,” he admits (244). Hence, Du Bois is forced to publicly confront the vexing question:

No Negro who has given earnest thought to the situation of his people in America has failed, at some time in life, to find himself at these cross-roads; has failed to ask himself at some time: What, after all, am I? Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease being a Negro as soon as possible and be an American? If I strive as a Negro, am I not perpetuating the very cleft that threatens and separates Black and White America? Is not my only possible practical aim the subduction of all that is Negro in me to the American? Does my black blood place upon me any more obligation to assert my nationality than German, or Irish or Italian blood would? (244)

Just some 50 years earlier, anthropologists suggested that philanthropists (emancipators of slavery) must listen to science if he/she wished to improve the condition of the Negro. Du Bois argued that it was ultimately necessary for blacks to maintain their racial identity, unity and solidarity rather than to be ethnically absorbed and assimilated into the dominant white cultural group. Current twentieth century anthropological and

biological research which had, in the past, been used to further racist ideology was at the foreground of his speech and Du Bois eloquently employed his understanding of this knowledge as a basis to rally the attendants of the American Negro Academy to put into place “a practical path of advance” and as a plan of action “having direct bearing upon the situation of the Negro” to achieve immediate results which trumped (in his estimation, at the time) more subsidiary issues such as wage discrimination, separate schools and cars, and lynch law (Du Bois *Conservation of the Races* 247).

There are important ethical implications here, for Du Bois was not only more liberal on race than Washington, he was also unwilling to place the burgeoning power of ethnic based institutions such as the Academy on the side of explicit exclusion due to an attitude of inferiority. In Du Bois’ speech, he proposed a racial creed for the American Negro Academy, it stated, “We believe that the Negro people as a race have a contribution to make to civilization and humanity which no other race can make” (248). This bold assertion set Du Bois concept of race in stark contrast to popular conceptualizations of the period and set up a strategic battle in contradicting commonly held opinions of race and black identity.

Du Bois was not the first to challenge the biological view of race. Some 43 years earlier, abolitionist Frederick Douglass (and a host of other abolitionists) argued against polygenists’ claims in an address delivered before the literary society commencement at Western Reserve College on July 12, 1854. Attacking viewpoints which he and others believed were the underlying attitudes which promoted atrocities and disenfranchisement in America, Douglass in his address *The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered* argued that the polygenist’s scientific methods and political motivations supported the

fundamental idea of slavery by reporting that the Negro was not part of “the family of man.” Abolitionists were familiar with these antebellum arguments of the new American science that alleged physical difference (i.e. brain size, skin color, etc.) as a means of classifying differences between black and white capacities. He clearly articulated the shared characteristics of all races and humans not exhibited by animals i.e. the use of the hands, speech, higher education, emotions, the ability to obtain and retain knowledge, and adaptability to different environments. Douglass proclaimed:

Away, therefore, with all the scientific moonshine that would connect men with monkeys; that would have the world believe that humanity, instead of resting on its own characteristic pedestal—gloriously independent—is a sort of sliding scale, making one extreme brother to the ourang-ou-tang, and the other to angels, and all the rest to intermediates! Tried by all the usual, and all the *unusual* tests, whether mental, moral, physical, or psychological, the Negro in a MAN—considering him as possessing knowledge, or needing knowledge, his elevation or his degradation, his virtues, or his vices—whichever road you take, you reach the same conclusion, the Negro is a MAN. His good and his bad, his innocence and his guilt, his joys and his sorrows, proclaim his manhood in speech that all mankind practically and readily understand. (291)

Douglas challenged the validity of other polygenist claims advanced by Morton, particularly the racial identity of the ancient Egyptians. According to Morton, Negroes were not responsible for any of the accomplishments of ancient Egypt. Douglass argued that Egypt was a multiracial society lacking the modern skin color prejudice that existed in the United States and Europe. He went on to explain how the intellectual achievements of different races were interpreted to suit polygenist theories. He contradicted the logic of hypo-decent (one drop of Negro blood made you a Negro) noting that although Europeans, such as the Irish, might raise their status through education, an educated person of color was supposed to have derived his or her intelligence from her or his connection from the white race. “To be intelligent” Douglass remarked, “is to have one’s

Negro blood ignored” (298). Douglass also explained the true fallacy of polygenist thinking: exaggeration of the differences between the Negro and the European. He stated, “It is the province of prejudice to blind; and scientific writers, not less than others, write to please, as well as to instruct, and even unconsciously to themselves, (sometimes,) sacrifice what is true to what is popular” (298).

Finally, Douglass described how it was impossible to legitimately compare the innate abilities of different races that have developed in such disparate physical conditions and uneven social surroundings. Yet, Douglass’ aims were much different than that of Du Bois. Douglass was attempting to dislodge a system that was predicated on attitudes substantiated by biological understandings of races, their inferiority and superiority. Du Bois, on the other hand, wanted to create an attitude, one fashioned, on a historical understanding of race, primarily based upon the rich and impressive cultural history which blacks had provided for the United States of America and to bring about new national ideals for blacks as a politically powerful ethnic group and not merely as a race of individuals.

“Here, it seems to me,” Du Bois remarked, “is the reading of the riddle that puzzles so many of us. We are Americans, not by birth and by citizenship, but by our political ideals, our language, our religion.” Du Bois, speaking directly to his predominately black audience continued, “Farther than that, our Americanism does not go. At that point, we are Negroes, members of a vast historic race that from the very dawn of creation has slept, but half awakening in the dark forests of its African fatherland...” Voluntarily, Du Bois suggested, “As such, it is our duty to conserve our physical powers, our intellectual endowments, our spiritual ideals; as a race we must

strive by race organization, by race solidarity, by race unity to the realization of that broader humanity which freely recognizes differences in men, but sternly deprecates inequality in their opportunities of development” (245). Du Bois’ racial nationalism sought to apply a sense of political, intellectual, and economic power by infusing a sense of community and group feeling among those in attendance. The future of African Americans in the United States was predicated upon the ambitions of maintaining a distinct racial identity, according to Du Bois, as people with a storied history and the creators of an honorable culture. To accomplish these goals, Du Bois proclaimed, it would be necessary to create institutions, including churches, newspapers, and schools that would develop an African American self-pride within the race and help to uplift the group as a nation within a Nation.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, at the core of the racial consciousness that developed among African Americans in the United States was the cultural objective of black self-determination, which conversely operated in a dialectical relationship with white supremacy. Resistance and education, particularly a liberal arts education, was valued by Du Bois as a means of obtaining the larger goals of self-determination. Collective self-determination or black control over black life and destiny was, for Du Bois, a major goal just as freedom was to abolitionists and the enslaved during the antebellum period in America.

As this chapter suggests, Du Bois was successful in persuading his audience (perhaps not in the sustaining of the Academy although it did last for almost three

decades) because Du Bois' message had a formative effect upon the "attitude" of his audience and his rhetoric: 1) exhibited his understanding and knowledge of the opinions held by the audience toward "race theory," 2) conveyed deference to the opinions of his audience on race and the perceived "inferiority of the Negro," and 3) expressed congruency between the message and his own life as an intellectual and social conscious individual.

Many assertions and assumptions about race and racial relations that were taken for granted during the Enlightenment period have subsequently been biologically proven false (such as the incorrect assertion by Morton that Negroes' brains are smaller than those of white Europeans). Yet, this change in thinking did not happen without tremendous struggle; the ideological battle against this type of racism was fought by Du Bois through his social change rhetoric across two centuries but never more prominently than in his paper "The Conservation of the Races."

Du Bois' speech sought to answer the conceptual mess of race as a concept. In offering environmental rather than racial explanations, Du Bois made a remarkable distinction and choice. He ignored for the occasion the current "biological" approach to racial theory, which he was very much aware of and refused to declare that unattractive aspects of black culture were ingrained by race. He also refrained from ascribing attractive aspects or "gifts" of black culture to race. Du Bois sought to redefine the designation of Negro (black) not as a racial classification but as a designation of ethnicity which might disassemble the negative conception which accompanied the term. In doing so, Du Bois attempted to establish a distinct cultural pride not only for the audience in attendance but also for the thousands who would read his speech as a published

*Occasional Paper*. His description of race is in fact a description of a nation, which he was free to praise or criticize without inferring its innate inferiority. Thus, “Conservation of the Races” as is *The Philadelphia Negro* a historic document in the symbolization of black American cultural nationalism.

To understand Du Bois’ rhetorical impact on African American experience, culture, and advancement is to understand his speech’s significance by examining the particular context within which it was written. Social change rhetoric has a variety of functions; however, its primary function is that of agency. Kenneth Burke discussed the concept of agency in illustrating his dramatisic pentad, an analytical approach used in determining human motivation. He defined *agency* as the means or instruments used by an agent which enables an action (xv). According to scholar Leland Griffin, rhetoric is the primary *agency* through which social change agents perform the necessary *functions* that enable emerging social-institutions to meet the opposition and succeed in bringing about changes in perceived undesirable conditions. Thus, as has been posited, agency is a key component of rhetoric’s role in bringing about social change and moving supporters to adopt new attitudes and opinions about their self-worth and ability to bring about necessary change.

Du Bois’ message performed a “naming” or “defining” of *situations* for not only himself but also for his audience. His speech became “a strategy for encompassing a situation,” a strategic answer to the question by which the situation had predisposed it or made it available or necessary. As David Zarefsky has argued, “the power to persuade is, in large measure, the power to define” (1). Yet, Du Bois’ rhetoric, as the primary agency through which change would occur or his opposing ideas would come into existence, did

not simply provide only names and terminology for social advancement; it also represented strategic planning, creative thinking, and/or purposeful thought and analysis for dealing with social advancement or for solving the problems inherent to it.

As a result, Du Bois' rhetoric became his strategic solution to the problems African Americans faced in the search for self determination or for a better understanding of one's identity; it was an alternate model, formula, and/or navigational system that the audience could consult to ascertain whether one course of action was expedient or more prudent than another. Du Bois' rhetoric as persuasion, then, was not simply a means to motivate an audience to act, but rather the creation of "situations" for the altering of opinions by the audience.

Consequently, the Academy's broader goal of establishing itself as a major intellectual presence was never realized. Efforts to "promote publication of scholarly work" had only minor success. The *Occasional Papers* failed as an effective means of publicizing their author's ideas within the black community. The chief reason was simple: the black masses neither purchased nor read these thought-provoking, well written articles. White Americans, secure in their convictions that nothing of merit could come from the minds of black people, barely took notice of the American Negro Academy. The burgeoning black masses, on whose behalf the Academy claimed to be working, were much too engaged with merely surviving to be impressed with the lofty ideals of a few highly educated black men.

Particularly after World War I, when black men returning from European battlegrounds expecting to reap the reward of full citizenship found instead that America's racial barriers had been made even more impenetrable, the idea that a learned

society would open the way for black cultural redemption was unfathomable. For most ordinary blacks seeking to make a living, to preserving their families, and to minimizing contact with whites, the means of pursuing the goals espoused in many of the articles seemed difficult, hazardous, and in some cases, irrelevant. “This helps to explain,” suggested Alfred A Moss, Jr. “the stronger appeal in this era of the conservative race building and economic strategies propagated by Booker T. Washington and other prominent blacks” (291).

Yet, parallel development, the Du Boisian philosophy underlying his argument in “Conservations” would gain an important following over the next decade during Du Bois’ tenure at Atlanta University. Du Bois’ philosophy contained fresh insight and offered imaginable and practical alternatives. Parallel development broadened the ideals of human brotherhood and solidified the idea of a unified America, which fostered and developed the traits and talents of blacks through a more inclusive and less limited educational precedent.

In the U.S. over the next decade exponential growth of black teachers and college graduates from Negro colleges working throughout the South and the North erupted. Segregation forced many of these teachers to work in the South at predominately black institutions. It is usually assumed that this growing educated body did not form to any extent a problem in the North, yet, this is not true. This new critical mass of learned individuals of high culture presented a unifying ideal of black racial solidarity and began to systematically build a powerful base for African American political progress, particularly in the fight against southern lynching, separate public accommodations, and wage labor in urban areas.

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# Chapter 2

Especially do I believe in the Negro Race; in the beauty of its genius, the sweetness of its soul, and its strength in that meekness which shall inherit this turbulent earth. I believe in pride of race and lineage itself; in pride of self so deep as to scorn injustice to other selves; in pride of lineage so great as to despise no man's father; in pride of race so chivalrous as neither to offer bastardy to the weak nor beg wedlock of the strong, knowing that men may be brothers in Christ, even though they be no brothers-in-law.

Du Bois, W.E.B. "Credo," *The Independent*, New York, October 6, 1904.

## 2.1 Introduction

In W.E.B. Du Bois' scholarly work, moral inference is an integral part of his argument; the evaluation of a national conscious is critical to the success or failure of his persuasive appeal to the audience's sympathies and imagination (Rampersad 50). DuBois who spent the majority of life trying to have a "dialogue on race that spanned across races, ethnicities, and real and imagined national and international boundaries" was fully aware during the turn of the twentieth century that he must refute the growing charge against the progression of blacks based on a European middle-class value system (Adell 702). As this chapter looks at Du Bois' work with the Atlanta University Studies and his subsequent involvement in the 1900 Paris Exposition, this chapter hopes to illustrate the power of Du Bois' rhetoric to create a strong identity between himself and his audience, so powerful in fact that at times Du Bois almost seems to be the audience addressing itself as Jeanne Fahnestock suggested regarding the potential power of *pathos* (See Fahnestock's discussion of Aristotle's proofs in rhetorical discourse "The Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos").

The persuasive appeal of *pathos* (Greek for 'suffering' or 'experience') is an appeal “to an audience’s sense of identity, their self-interest, and their emotions” (Fahnestock “The Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos”). *Pathetic* appeals are those “designed to sway a listener’s feelings” (Golden, Berquist, Coleman 30). *Pathos* as an artistic means of persuasion is the emotions awakened by a speaker in an audience. Aristotle wrote, “[There is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [*pathos*] by the speech; for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile” (1356a). As suggested by Fahnestock, “Many rhetoricians over the centuries have considered *pathos* the strongest of the appeals, though this view of persuasion is rarely mentioned without lament about the power, of emotion, to sway the mind” (“The Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos”). Perhaps the most common way of conveying a *pathetic* appeal is through narrative, which can clarify an ambiguous idea such as “justice” into something more digestible and contemporary (See Ramage and Bean discussion of *pathos* in *Writing Arguments* 81-82). The values, beliefs, and understandings of the writer are implicit in the story and conveyed symbolically (imaginatively) to the reader. *Pathos* refers to both the emotional and the imaginative impact of the message on an audience, the power with which the rhetor’s message moves the audience to decision or action (Ramage and Bean 82). Critical to our assessment of Du Bois’ use of *pathos* is our understanding of the ways in which he was able to convey emotion and build excitement in his audience by corresponding to their beliefs.

Appeals to our sense of identity and self interest exploit common biases; we naturally bend in the direction of what is advantageous to us, what serves our interests or the interests of any group we believe ourselves a part of (Fahnestock “The Appeals:

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos”). Even when advantage is not an issue, rhetors who belong to groups we identify with, or create groups we can belong to, often seem more compelling. According to Fahnestock, we also naturally find more persuasive the rhetor who flatters us (especially indirectly) instead of insulting us. Thus, skillful rhetors often attempt to create positive and heroic images to stir the emotions of their audiences (See a discussion of the appeals in Henning’s essay “Friendly Persuasion: Classical Rhetoric”). There are two advantages in doing so. First, the audience will be delighted in hearing an expression or a story of oft repeated generalization which corresponds to their own beliefs. Second, by employing *pathetic* appeals the speaker may enhance his own character in the eyes of the audience (Fahnestock “The Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos”).

The emotions strongly assist and perhaps sometimes determine persuasion. If, for example, a writer wants a reader to evaluate something negatively, she or he may try to arouse the reader's anger. Or to produce action to someone's benefit (i.e. to persuade us to make a charitable donation), an arguer may work on our pity. Direct appeals to the audience to feel an emotion (i.e. “You should be crying now”) are rarely effective. Instead, creating an emotion with words usually requires recreating the scene or event that would in “real” circumstances arouse the emotion. To Aristotle, the nature of an emotion arises from images as a place or source from which an argument is furnished. Thus, descriptions of painful or pleasant things often work on the emotions. This chapter argues that Du Bois’ rhetoric worked on the natural “trigger” of the emotions of audiences (Fahnestock “The Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos”). Du Bois’ rhetoric, which heavily emphasized narrative, combined the premises of ethics and social class (civility). Du Bois’ narratives or his “triggers” are characterized by his unique ability to

develop arguments which, as its end result or moral, is for the audience to feel generally delighted in hearing commonly held notions which corresponded to their own beliefs.

Thus, it was the intention of Du Bois to awaken the emotions of people.

Du Bois lectured on the shortcomings and injustices within the status quo, yet, his research was able to show that blacks, in spite of, were still able (in a relatively short period of time) begin to show significant progress in obtaining commonly shared middle-class values and ways of life. This is significant in that at the turn of the century there existed a culturally shared belief system of idealistic values and myths as identified in the popularity of international expositions such as the Paris Exposition of 1900. As a result, Du Bois was skillfully able to translate “idealistic intellectual goals” into vivid symbols. Kenneth Burke defined persuasion as “the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols” (43). This active cooperation is induced by what he termed “identification” (*Rhetoric of Motives* 55).

Social movement scholarship stresses that emotional expressions through symbols and actions contribute to social change by creating cohesiveness or division among those who are attempting to bring about the change. According to Burke, to unite with one group or cause is to separate from some other group or cause. Thus, the development of identification occurs through the linguistic sharing of the words, images, and metaphors that rhetors choose. Within this perspective, identification involves at least three types of processes or states: 1) the process of naming something (or someone) according to specific properties; 2) the process of associating with and disassociating from others-- suggesting that persons (and ideas or things) share, or do not share, important qualities in common; and 3) the product or end result of identifying—the state of being

consubstantial with others. Consequently, it is this associating process, whereby individuals persuade others, or themselves, in that they share important qualities in common, and that associating process or the process of identification that is the focus of the present discussion.

As this chapter attempts to demonstrate, Du Bois' interests are clear. He had no reservation in his role as both researcher and archetype. Through his craftsmanship, Du Bois was able to successfully name, or associate blacks with European middle-class values and as evidence he would offer himself as an example of the progress taking place in America. Using Burke's perspective on identification, we will examine the ways Du Bois sought to establish such common ground by awakening the emotions of his audience. We will look at two significant events as rhetorical artifacts in Du Bois' political activism, the Atlanta Research Studies which naturally led Du Bois into developing the American Negro Exhibit at the 1900 Paris Exposition.

This chapter is presented in three sections. The first section offers details about Du Bois' work as a professor and researcher at Atlanta University. I discuss the affects of Du Bois' 1898 to 1914 Atlanta University Publications series and the impact of these monographs on shaping public opinion. The next section follows with an investigation of the 1900 Paris Exposition and the United States' commissioned Exhibit of American Negroes. We will discuss how the exhibit itself constructs a compelling emotional argument by looking at the rhetorical devices of identification and imagination. The 1900 Paris Exposition or what is commonly referred to as the World's Fair is a significant event for Du Bois' documentation and promotion campaign in fighting against racism and social injustice. Du Bois scientific studies at Atlanta documented the evolution of

blacks as an ethnic group within America and his rhetorical works displayed at the 1900 Paris Exposition propelled him to become an ideological forerunner on “the concept of race and its implications for the emancipatory projects of black people throughout the world” (Adell 703). Only by recognizing the relationship of Du Bois’ moral argument and the moral character which also developed can we fully comprehend the integral part which modes of persuasion play in Du Bois’ rhetoric.

## **2.2 Creating Symbols of Self-Determinism and Shaping Public Opinion**

In works such as *The Philadelphia Negro* there is no special pleading, apart from the final appeal, no disposition of the findings to create undue bias. His respect for doing pure research and to report the truth was still of the more “fundamentalist” nature. For nearly fifteen years as editor of the *Atlanta University Studies*, Du Bois’ social activism amongst the scientific and intellectual elite introduced new and compelling arguments into the discussion of socialization and race (For an in depth discussion of Du Bois’ thinking on race and racism see Lucius Outlaw’s article “‘Conserve’ Races?: In Defense of W.E.B. Du Bois” in *W.E.B. Du Bois on Race and Culture* 15-38). When Du Bois had been president of the American Negro Academy, he committed himself to documenting the progress of blacks as an ethnic group. Du Bois’ research told a very different story from the prevailing narrative. In a unique fashion, he attempted to carry out his mission not only as an academic but as a gifted shaper of public opinion.

Like most, Du Bois was conflicted by 1900. On one hand, Du Bois career as an intellectual and scholar had caught hold and he was steadily making a name for himself. Yet, conditions, especially for black Americans in the U.S. were steadily declining.

Although he was generating an impressive research resume, he also saw the moment as a time for unprecedented political action. Du Bois stepped into the national public's discussion of ideological arguments of race and social progress, grounded in science. Du Bois often referred to himself as a "master of propaganda" (*The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois* 260, 263; *Darkwater* 23; for a discussion of Du Bois as an artful propagandist see Rampersad's chapter "The Crisis and Politics" in *The Art & Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois* 141-169). But Arnold Rampersad's highly acclaimed *The Art & Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois* (1990) reminds us that we should not take his use of the term "propaganda" with negative connotation. Instead, Rampersad suggested viewing Du Bois' use of propaganda in the "neutral" sense of the word, meaning that as lecturer and editor he marshaled ideological arguments and symbols to persuade audiences to take action in opposition to racism.

Time and effect has permitted us to see a revolutionary turn in social contact and expectancy amongst blacks and whites. I'm not suggesting that Du Bois was singularly responsible for this change; however, Du Bois as a public intellectual working from a social and historical paradigm used an international platform to maneuver, in his thinking, a more "just" movement for social change. As a result, Du Bois waged a public information campaign which extended his message to a wide variety of people and ultimately reached over three continents. As skillful as Du Bois had been as a researcher, he was just as rhetorically creative and skillful in developing psychological premised arguments. Du Bois produced messages, in a variety of venues, which ultimately sought to develop positive assertions of the special beauty and humanity of blacks—appeals which relied specifically on the sympathies and imagination of his listeners and to serve

as real-life examples to proceed by induction from one or more parallel cases until a general rule was established.

At the beginning of his tenure at Atlanta University, Du Bois had not begun to advance broad ideas on how best to move a nation. As Arnold Rampersad in *The Art & Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois* stated, “His ideas...were still politically and psychologically naïve” (50). Still, Du Bois efforts would make him an ideological forerunner for black collective enterprise and his social change discourse essential in fashioning a more realistic worldview of blacks as proud, productive, and cultured. His time at Atlanta University proved to be pivotal as he began to move ahead as the leading spokesman on the achievements and progress of African Americans. In offering his studies as arguments without grandiose assertions, Du Bois’ discourse challenged the political and social worldview of the growing number of educated northern and southern blacks and liberal minded whites, positioning him in direct opposition to the accommodationalist theories of the popular Booker T. Washington, who Du Bois believed, personally had helped to restore the caste status of blacks (see Du Bois’ argument in “Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others” in *Souls of Black Folk* 25-35). This along with the custom of separatism and the prevailing attitude of black inferiority, which also dominated places outside of the South, motivated Du Bois to seek solutions to the race problem and implement various plans for “salvation.”

Atlanta University was unique in the sense that it operated contrary to many of the Southern conventions, probably a factor that attracted Du Bois to the institution. Blacks and white faculty shared the same dining hall and residence halls and white students who sought admission were not turned away. Elliott Rudwick wrote, “Over the years, local

newspapers published a spate of criticisms and the institution was accused of teaching racial egalitarianism; many Atlanta citizens viewed Northerners on the faculty as meddlers seeking to incite Negroes against whites” (39). At least in part because of these social deviations, the school received no money from the Georgia state legislature and the General Education Board was unsympathetic in the way the school was run and the social mores which it advocated.

Du Bois’ hiring at Atlanta University was not without controversy. Atlanta University Board members were skeptical of Du Bois due to his noncommittance to any particular religious principle. However, his accomplishments and credentials were impeccable and after much jostling on the part of President Dr. Horace Bumstead, Du Bois was invited to teach and direct the newly created Atlanta University forums. Du Bois taught history, economics, and sociology. Although sociology was still in its infancy as a discipline (primarily taught and researched in the U.S. at Harvard and the University of Chicago), he developed an undergraduate sociology program that trained students in empirical study, using only basic texts and census reports until a post graduate course in more original research was eventually created.

Bumstead and George Bradford, who like Du Bois had studied under sociologist Edward Cummings at Harvard, started a program of annual conferences at Atlanta University on urban Negro problems in 1896. Du Bois began his editorship of the series of academic studies with the third study, *Some Efforts of American Negroes for Their Own Social Betterment* (1898). The Annual Conferences for the Study of Negro Problems under Du Bois’ direction, although abhorrently under funded, became a revolutionary series of scientifically rich annual research publications on college and

public school education, labor, religion (church), farming, morality, social and physical conditions of blacks, business, and artisans. Du Bois alone edited the series from 1898 until 1910, when the task was shared with Augustus G. Dill, his former student and his successor as teacher of sociology at Atlanta University. Du Bois would remain editor and chief organizer of the annual publications until 1914. During that period he supervised the preparation of sixteen monographs.

The Atlanta University studies came on the heels of the Hampton and Tuskegee Institute annual conferences for farmers and teachers which began during the early 1890's. The Atlanta University Publications, however, differed greatly from Hampton and Tuskegee's annual conferences on the "Negro Problem." Because so many of Atlanta students and graduates lived and worked in cities, the Atlanta series was organized by Bumstead and Bradford to focus on urban Negro problems. The Atlanta publication series stood as the first attempt to study scientifically the problems of black Americans whereas the Hampton and Tuskegee annual conferences concentrated more on informal discussion and analysis. Librarian Ernest Kaiser of the Schomburg Collection New York Library stated, "They were the first real studies of their subject and represented a great intellectual advance for the Negro as a sociologist and for the then developing field of sociology as a whole. They also led some able white scholars to give earnest, unbiased attention to the study of Negro problems" (*The Atlanta University Publications*).

Both scholars and public figures turned up for Du Bois' annual meetings at Atlanta University. From Atlanta he corresponded with a variety of intellectuals from former professors at Harvard such as James, Royce, Hart, Norton, and Cummings, to other distinguished figures, such as Max Weber, Edward A. Seligman, Bliss Perry,

Horace Traubel, Hull House official and University of Chicago teaching-staff member Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, and Columbia's Fraz Boas. Du Bois gained national and international acclaim for his organizing and editing of the *Publications* and the annual conferences. As a result of the Conferences, Du Bois demand as a commencement and learned-society speaker, national newspaper and magazine contributor, U.S. Department of Labor consultant, and author grew substantially. Du Bois left Atlanta often to lecture throughout the United States and abroad and serve as a contributor to historic international expositions and meetings, including the 1900 Paris Exposition and the first Pan African Congress. By 1903, estimated David Levering Lewis, Du Bois had become the second most sought-after spokesperson for his race after Booker T. Washington (224).

Du Bois gave the monographs a rigid intellectual backbone. He insisted on higher standards of statistical and empirical work and he would “push the Atlanta Studies to the frontier of American social science research” (Lewis 223). Du Bois intended that the Atlanta University research program would be spread over a hundred year period, comprised of ten-year cycles of volumes on the ten “great subjects” of black life: health, crime, the family, morals and manners, business, elementary and college education, industry, and the church as well as provide a comprehensive bibliography on the African American (Rampersad 55). He insisted that the *Publications* serve “to provide social science with a firmer grasp of what was invariable, contingent, and evolving in the racial group whose unmatched authority Du Bois had become” (Lewis 346). In exploring the ten areas of black life, Du Bois intended to have each draw a “logical connection” with monographs which followed so that a “comprehensive whole” would eventually evolve.

The Atlanta University Publications were in theory aimed at a broad audience; however, the Publications contained much material that was clearly intended for specialists only (Rampersad 55). Some publications ballooned to over two-hundred pages such as the 1903 series *The Negro Church*. Eventually a policy was adopted which lowered the scholarly standards to achieve a broader educational purpose. In addition, the Atlanta studies were of uneven quality in planning, structure, methods, and content. Most of the inquiries were made by unpaid individuals on a part-time basis and this limited the breadth and extensiveness of the projects (Rampersad 56). In the long run, the Publications did not achieve the overall results which Du Bois had so desperately hoped. The Publications filled a scientific void in studying the progress of a disenfranchised people; however, the studies did not move lawmakers and public sympathizers to call for drastic changes in the social institutions which kept the majority of blacks marginalized on the outskirts of the American dream.

It was not as though the studies were poorly conceived or terribly executed. As a matter of fact, the Atlanta monographs were accorded a generally favorable reception; a writer for the *Outlook* commented on *The Negro Artisan*: “No student of the race problem, no person who would either think or speak upon it intelligently, can afford to be ignorant of the facts brought out in Atlanta series of sociological studies of the conditions and the progress of the negro...The land of the skilled and thorough investigator is conspicuous throughout” (593). Yet and still, the annual conferences provided Du Bois with a viable platform from which to strategically use rigid empirical social science and a growing rhetorical element in his work as a pragmatic philosophy to appeal to the moral intelligence of his audience and to launch his social programs which had been legitimized

under the authority of his research on black life, achievement, and the brutal social conditions sustained through racial segregation.

The Publications were a testament to the progress of black Americans, an ethnic group less than sixty years removed from slavery. As a result, Du Bois took initiative to study and derive more plausible and less biased understandings of the lingering effects of racism and the impact of slave trading on not only the people but also the continent of Africa. Arnold Rampersad stated, “The mark of Du Bois’ growing cultural nationalism in his sociology was his increasing interest in Africa” (57). Atlanta Publications such as *The Negro Church* (1903) provided the first significant look at the African past and at Africans in the West Indies. Du Bois debunked the widely held misconception of Africa as a vast cultural cipher. In *The Negro Church* he presented a historical version of complex cultural development throughout many parts of Africa. Du Bois attempted to show that developmental processes became chaotic and stunted, not because of the inferiority of the people, but as a result of the harmful influences of slave traders, geographical isolation, and oppressive climatic conditions. He was especially interested in the intrusion of the slave traders and posited that, as tribes fell apart or were forcibly joined, the more “primitive” folkways and mores were adopted (3). Du Bois reasoning in *The Negro Church* characterized native Africans (many who would later become enslaved) as helpless victims, whose creative contributions were intentionally destroyed and whose potential for growth was ignored or subverted. Again stressing that black linearity was not inherent or genetic but a condition of slavery and its impact on a nation’s culture. As time passed and Du Bois became more and more involved in the black protest movement, he would stop separating the experiences of blacks in America

from those throughout the black Diaspora (Rampersad 58). Yet, in spite of these conditions, black Americans were making steady progress in earning their way into America's bosom.

*The College Bred Negro* (1900) which was the first study of black college graduates, their background, the colleges they were educated in, their occupations and activities; *The Negro Common School* (1901) which took up all aspects of black teachers and their training, the length of the school terms, the schools' needs, black students, the capacities and accommodations of black schools, and comparisons with whites in all areas; and *The Negro Artisan* (1902) which was a large, important monograph on black skilled workers containing a long list of black inventors (Particularly see Henry E. Baker's essay "The Negro as an Inventor") are all pioneering works in the field of black studies.

In spite of the shortcomings of the Atlanta studies, many of the Publications were of "scientific" significance to Du Bois because like his sociological study conducted in preparing *The Philadelphia Negro*, the monographs often demonstrated that blacks were not "one vast unorganized, homogeneous mass." However, race prejudice as opposed to blacks' own cultural shortcomings as a discerning factor in blacks' marginalization in terms of their economic, political, and educational progress was not factually substantiated.

So what then was Du Bois' impact on social change in developing the Atlanta studies? Du Bois contributions primarily exist in "understanding" race prejudice. His efforts represent the introduction of systematic investigation into the field of race relations when others simply speculated about blacks. His program was unique, even

though, no other large university stepped forward to help fund the program. We are only left to wonder what could really have been accomplished in measuring the race problem if Du Bois could have aroused real professional and financial support.

Although Du Bois had stated the purpose of these Atlanta Publications was “primarily scientific,” he also admitted his efforts were meant to “encourage and help social reform.” In effect, the Atlanta Publications served as a framework for the dissemination of his social change rhetoric on leadership and black nationalism. The Atlanta studies may not have improved social conditions for blacks, but they probably did improve its morale. As Rudwick noted, “At a time when political and social restrictions upon the American Negroes were increasing, the Atlanta monographs must have provided many members of the race with a sense of group pride and ego satisfaction. In recording Negro achievements Du Bois was verifying the fact that the race was advancing. Negroes could also examine these volumes and find suitable arguments to account for their low status in American society, and these observations possessed the certified sanctity of ‘social science’” (52). As Rudwick illustrates in this quote, in a sense, the Monographs worked as a vehicle for political and social thought, debate, and action.

Language is the instrument and tool for human action and expression and Du Bois’ Publications series became a means of sharing social, political, and cultural values. The studies, themselves, symbolized that black culture was worthy of serious scientific study. The factual data of the Monographs helped to transform perceptions of social reality, alter perceptions of blacks, legitimize their progress, and prescribe courses of action. As Charles Stewart, Craig Smith and Robert Denton, Jr. wrote, “Reality is a social

product arising from interaction, and communication extends or limits *realities*. To discover our own reality or that of someone else, we must first understand the symbol system and then meanings the symbols have for all concerned...The construction of reality is an active process involving recognition, definition, interpretation, action, and validation through interaction” (157). The Publications provided shared meanings, perceptions, and security for Du Bois’ philosophy of parallel development. The Monographs provided an emotional expression through its findings and Du Bois’ interpretations which worked to build cohesiveness in affecting the relational patterns of blacks.

Yet, Du Bois scientific studies, like all scientific findings even under the best circumstances, advanced slowly and their affect on the general population would take even more time. The new century ushered in increased hostility and violence towards southern blacks and a staggering number of recorded lynchings. Du Bois, by living in the South, was intimately aware of the seething and often erupting racist forces. His studies were intended to reach the moral conscious of the Nation and he believed that these inquiries would provide answers to the extent of white aid which the race required. However, he was confronted with “situations that called for,” demanded action such as the much publicized lynching of Samuel Hose.

Samuel Hose’s lynching in Newman, Georgia occurred on April 23, 1899. Hose’s lynching like so many other lynchings during a six week stretch between March and April 1899 publicly took place in front of a large all-white crowd (in Hose’s case a crowd of 2,000 white people), many of whom had travelled to Newman from Atlanta for the occasion. Hose, a farmer from Palmetto, a few miles outside Atlanta, was accused of

murdering his employer, Albert Cranford, over wages owed to him. The dispatch which announced the killing of Cranford stated that Cranford's wife had also accused Hose of assaulting (raping) her as her husband laid dying. This is a claim that Mrs. Cranford would later admit to fabricating. Hose's lynching was well advertised ahead of time in newspapers, including the *Atlanta Constitution-Journal*, which implied Hose would be tortured prior to his lynching. The next day the *Atlanta Constitution*, in glaring double headlines, predicted a lynching and suggested burning at the stake.

For nearly a week, the newspaper predicted that Hose would be burned alive at the stake. Clark Howell, editor, and W. A. Hemphill, business manager, of the *Atlanta Constitution*, offered through their paper a reward of five hundred dollars for the arrest of Hose. This reward, together with the persistent suggestion that Hose be burned as soon as caught, made it very clear that the purpose to burn Hose at the stake was formed by the leading citizens of Georgia. Hose was captured Saturday night, April 23. Hose's corpse was mutilated and dismembered (his ears, genitals, and fingers were cut off, and his face skinned). As told by the *Atlanta Constitution*, his body was then tied to a tree and set on fire, and parts of him were taken as souvenirs by onlookers. For Du Bois, Hose's lynching was not only atrocious cruelty and unspeakable barbarism but also symbolized the refusal of Southern America to realize the humanity of blacks in being accorded the liberty of elemental justice.

The Hose lynching, the death of his youngest son due to inadequate health care, and increasing race isolation and separatism (separate facilities on train cars, in particular), Du Bois began to write pieces for national magazines to spread his message of black nationalism, parallel development, and to boldly speak in contrast to

Washington's acquiescence to racial prejudice and the egregious conditions in which blacks were forced to accept, and to advocate black civil rights. Du Bois published articles in response to the prevailing opinions that produced racially charged quasi-scientific works like Charles Carroll's *The Negro a Beast, or In the Image of God* (1900), William B. Smith's *The Color Line: A Brief in Behalf of the Unborn* (1905), and Robert W. Shufeldt's *The Negro: A Menace to American Civilization* (1907). Fictional novels also weighed in on the scientific assault upon black culture in poems like Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" published in the popular McClure's magazine (1899) and in such books as Thomas Dixon's *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden* (1902) and his most best-known and best-selling work, *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (1905) which would be adapted by Dixon's long term friend D.W. Griffin and used as the basis for the epic film *Birth of a Nation* (1915).

Du Bois would travel abroad and begin to promote more realistic images of black culture and claim the middle class values representative of the Victorian era. Du Bois' articles "The Negro as He Really Is" (1901) and the "A Negro Schoolmaster in the New South" appeared in leading journals like the *Atlantic Monthly* and moved Du Bois further from science to a more pragmatic philosophy as witnessed in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) which served science, art, and the need for political action.

Although the Atlanta Publications never became a vehicle for partisan propaganda even during the height of the Du Bois—Washington controversy, the Publications did emphasize the remarkable progress achieved by blacks since emancipation, a principle theme which grew from Du Bois' work and is exemplified in the aforementioned

writings. This theme is often echoed in Du Bois' later works, but has its origins in the 1900 Paris Exposition Exhibit of American Negroes and the subsequent Atlanta Publication series. His confidence in the quality of the race was one of those "general truths," noted Rampersad, on which Du Bois worked and of which the Atlanta Publication series documented (56).

Du Bois' confidence and understanding of "new anthropology" and the worth of his people is what led Du Bois into the political world (58). Du Bois' movement toward developing more politically motivated appeals based on the black race as a nation and the existence of a Black Diaspora consciousness marked a strategic shift within Du Bois oratory than exhibited in the Atlanta Publications. Du Bois possessed a certain life-long respect for the moral intelligence of human beings and he had strategically used social science as opposed to a more pragmatic, rhetorical approach to racial problems as a means of social change discourse. However, Du Bois' does show signs of bending, but not fully altering his tactics by 1900, as he began to lean toward a new commitment; a commitment to cultural nationalism and a philosophical pragmatism of which the catalyst was an increasing interest in the continent and people of Africa.

One event, in particular, precede Du Bois' accomplishments of the Atlanta University Studies and begin to mark a developing shift in Du Bois' strategy—his participation in the 1900 Paris Exposition, the World's Fair celebrating the close of the nineteenth century. This event and the message produced for it clearly exemplify Du Bois' use of the artistic proof of *pathos* —an appeal to the passion and will of his audience, a psychological appeal as a means of persuasion to the emotion of his audience.

### **2.3 *Pathos* and Influencing Sympathies and Imagination**

Exposition Universelle, Paris de 1900—The 1900 Paris Exposition—was heralded as a celebration of the nineteenth century’s commitment to progress, scientific accomplishments, and commercial and economic success. The 1900 Paris Exposition was part of a remarkable tradition of International Expositions that were held in Europe and America from the middle of the Nineteenth Century to the time of the First World War. United States’ plans for participation in the Exposition called for a “Negro Section” under Thomas Junius Calloway’s direction, who had been one of the state commissioners for the Atlanta and Cotton States Exposition of 1895.

Calloway, who was now an employee for the War Department, enlisted his Fisk undergraduate classmate and friend, Du Bois, to participate in the Exposition des Nègres d’Amérique—the Exhibit of American Negroes. Calloway would also seek the assistance of Daniel Alexander Murray, Assistant Librarian of Congress since 1881 to focus on blacks as participants in southern industry, and Andrew F. Hilyer of the National Negro Business League to drum up support, both financial and in spirit of the exhibit. Du Bois, however, was put in charge of the creation of the exhibit and the particular cultural artifacts and how the presentation of the exhibit would match the theme of “progress” for the World Fair. Du Bois enthusiastically accepted the challenge and begun to craft an award winning cultural exhibit, the likes which had never been seen before. Du Bois’ exhibit would have a profound impact on the World’s Fair, particularly for its European patrons who had grown accustomed to seeing non-European peoples exhibited at Expositions and World Fairs as a part of exotic peoples in zoological gardens.

The 1900 Exposition is most remembered for its influence on the Art Deco movement and architectural masterpieces like Eliel Saarinen's Finnish pavilion, the unveiling of talking films, the debut of the escalator, and the use of stereographic sets (stereographs or stereograms) documenting world events. Most scholars suggest that the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations to be the first World's Fair. This grand exhibition took place on May 1, 1851, in London, in a high-technology, glass-and-steel building constructed in Hyde Park designed by Joseph Paxton specifically for the event. Britain displayed new technologies and manufactured goods made possible by the Industrial Revolution, while other nations showcased items from their own craftspeople and manufactures. The 1851 Great Exhibition was a huge success and soon there after World Fairs began taking place all over the world. France had held international expositions since 1855, but the 1900 Paris Exposition, which lasted April 14 to November 12, was the largest and most ambitious of the World Fairs (see a discussion of the 1900 Paris Exposition in *A Small Nation of People* 13-20).

The Fair was primarily constructed around twenty-seven national pavilions which were conceived as architectural marvels, grand spaces representing the best of their national cultures and displaying some spectacular modern technical and artistic centerpiece. Large scale exhibits and those which required careful study, according to David Levering Lewis, were housed apart in designated buildings at the Trocadéro or even in a more remote area such as the Parc de Vincennes. The Exposition included more than 76,000 exhibitors and covered 1.12 square kilometers of Paris. Librarian of Congress James H. Billington described the grandeur of the Exposition in this way, "Country after country lined up to showcase its cultural and industrial achievements on

some three hundred fifty acres bordered by Parisian landmarks: the Champs-Élysées, Hôtel des Invalides, Champ de Mars, and Trocadéro” (*Small Nation of People* 13).

The Victorian Era had marked the emergence of conditions and social classes. The newest to emerge of the social class Zeitgeist was the idea of the bourgeoisie middle class. The Victorian Era introduced the idea of class as an outward display of wealth through clothing and possessions which showed to those who were still climbing the ladder that the former had reached the top. The Paris Exposition fell on the heels of the Victorian Era and Du Bois was well aware of this cultural phenomenon as he had been greatly affected by it during his travels through Europe and as a student at the University of Berlin.

Du Bois’ photograph, model, industrial work, and picture exhibit reflected the spiritual, social, and economic diversity of the “New Negro” and displayed black educational institutions and black-owned businesses and homes in Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, and Washington to signify the ethnicities rise to middle class values and admiration. Cultural historian Shawn Michelle Smith wrote:

Unlike the exoticized displays of African villages that reinforced white European estimations of their own “civilized” superiority in relation to “Negro savages,” the American Negro exhibit of the Paris Exposition represented African Americans as thoroughly modern members of the Western world....The exhibit was considered one of the most impressive in the Palace of Social Economy and was honored with an exposition grand prize. (161)

His images dramatized a sense of accomplishment and progress and the beginnings of what co-contributor to *A Small Nation of People* and New York professor Deborah Willis called a new “New Negro” aesthetic. Photographs of interior well-furnished living rooms and music rooms, with art, flowers, and family photographs prominently placed, were intended to change perceptions about the home life of black

people. These and other photos unveil a desire to achieve middle class status, a desire that ran in direct opposition to the “human zoo” (displays) found in World Fairs and Expositions.

For more than half a century, from the beginning of the 1870s to the end of the 1930s with the last recorded human zoo exhibit taking place in 1958, the human zoo exhibit or sometimes referred to as “ethnological expositions” presented non-European native human beings, usually in a "natural" or "primitive" state. A natural or primitive state meant that the native peoples were seen in their native villages, wearing traditional clothing, and engaging in their customary ways of eating, dancing, and living. These zoos attracted a huge public eager and fascinated by the unfamiliar and the unknown. Such exhibits became a standard part of World Fairs where they were often sponsored by participating countries. According to Kurt Jonassohn, “Throughout Western Europe traveling exhibits of non-European natives were recurring features of zoological gardens where they eclipsed the drawing power of the more usual animal exhibits. Both exhibits were isolated by fences that variously protected sometimes the animals and more often the public; but in the cases of the human exhibits the main purpose of the fences seems to have been to stress the distinction between them and us” (*On a Neglected Aspect of Western Racism*). These displays primarily were used, suggested Jonassohn, to emphasize the cultural differences between indigenous peoples and people of the “civilized” Western world.

For over three centuries, there existed a widespread European interest in foreign cultures and peoples (See Kathleen Glenister Roberts’ *Alterity and Narrative: Stories and the Negotiation of Western Identity*). Early explorers often carried physical scientists

aboard their vessels and many times these scientists would bring back samples, not only from cultural artifacts but also tropical plants, exotic animals, and native peoples. By the early 1900s, in some royal and aristocratic households native people were already present as domestic servants. These “exotic” specimens of unfamiliar people served to demonstrate the wealth of their owners and to impress peers. To this small, prestigious group and their inner circle this type of acquiring of exotic specimens seemed second nature. These specimens were not shown to a wider public. Yet, by the late 1900s, according to Jonassohn, the movement toward democratization, universal public education, and greater equality in the distribution of wealth expanded the participation of people in all aspects of the life of the community. And visits to zoological gardens, regional exhibits, and World Fairs were a significant part of both entertainment and education for middle class Europeans. The inclusion of human zoos at the World’s Fair psychologically and socially did a great deal more, however, than simply provide family entertainment and fun.

The late 19<sup>th</sup> century also witnessed the colonization of Africa by European powers during exploration and discovery missions. The British and French became the foremost exemplars of colonial settlement in Africa and the East. The emigration of European settlers to the Western Hemisphere and Africa was marked by the same attitude of presumed superiority on the part of the newcomers toward the native populations as in the human zoos as part of the World Fairs. Du Bois was fully aware of this history as he had spent a year traveling and studying in Europe. Based on his previous experience and knowledge of the social current of Europe, Du Bois objective is two-fold: 1) on a world stage, to begin to build a sense of commonality of attitudes, beliefs, and values in his

audience as a means of breaking down the lingering attitudes toward race and 2) build appreciation for the struggle that American blacks have endured in attempting to emancipate themselves from bondage and move up the social class ladder as “full” participants in a free society.

Du Bois’ Exhibit of American Negroes unexpectedly identified with its mostly white audience. By making “progress” the issue and not the travails of “race,” Du Bois challenged the mostly European audience to make what had been implicit explicit and to refute their unconscious racism with a more true representation of black’s cultural values and customs consistent with Victorian European values. Du Bois’ exhibit attempted to debunk white European judgments of their own “civilized” supremacy in relation to the American Negro. His exhibit was intentionally crafted to evoke an emotional response from the curious but unsuspecting viewer. Particularly, Du Bois set about to evoke an appreciation for the beauty within black culture, particularly as blacks aspired to achieve middle-class status within the U.S. Conjuring up this image represented a significant step towards the fight against racist representations. Du Bois, stated Lewis, “designed his exhibit to subvert conventional perceptions of the American Negro by presenting to the patronizing curiosity of white spectators a racial universe that was the mirror image of their own uncomprehending, oppressive white world” (*A Small Nation* 28-29). The images of representative blacks—of the educated, the prosperous, the handsome and phenotypically advantaged—display all the characteristics and virtues of which most whites, either in ignorance or from bigotry, believed most blacks to be devoid. Pictures of dark-skinned African Americans more reminiscent of pure African natives stare at the camera in high-collared or stylishly woven suits and dresses posted in offices, pews, and

parlors. These photographs recast the New Negro as a collector of fine clothing, preserver of ancestral mementoes, and enthusiastic participant in the in the new economy of the south. As Willis wrote:

Countless photographers maintained props (drapery, classical columns, and parlor furniture) in their studios—symbols of social status, wealth, and intellect. Often those props were used as a source of empowerment: a lectern to suggest an orator; a pillar for respectability; books for intellect; a framed photograph for connected lineage; and drapery for a sense of class and gentility. Props and clothing allowed black photographers like [Thomas] Askew to counter stereotyped depictions of black people, which often have been governed by prevailing attitudes toward race and sexuality. Ultimately they provided African Americans the opportunity for reinvention. (*A Small Nation* 66-67)

“He copied by hand,” explained Lewis “the ‘black codes’ or laws affecting the lives of Georgia’s Negro citizens from Reconstruction to the present. Nevertheless, the significant advances of Georgia’s 860,000 men, women, and children of color was incontrovertibly presented through text, chart, and illustration.” (29). The detail and care that Du Bois exhibited in his presentation had an persuasive power. “The Leitmotif of their show,” described Lewis, “is resolutely upbeat, racially triumphalist, and progressive in the best tradition of American progressivism” (30). Du Bois chose not to show images of lynching to jar the spectator into sympathy for blacks; instead he chose to show scenes from everyday life. Although the Negro Exhibit displayed photographs of the homes of the “poorer classes” in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a typical reality of the United States, the exhibit in both number and arrangement are atypical. Du Bois primarily displayed photographs of factory work which serve to mark the new industry of the New South. For example, one particular photograph featured in *A Small Nation of People* entitled “Lumpers” at the T.B. Williams Tobacco Company, Richmond, Virginia show blacks sitting in serried rows, self-consciously attentive as though attending a college lecture

with their white supervisor's arms crossed standing pose. Much different than a picture taken when the workers are engaged in hot, sweaty, intense labor exposing the facial expressions and body language which may convey a more problematic message.

Du Bois' photographs of community life, homes, and domestic environments offer spectators clues to the cultural spirit of blacks. Photographs, for example, of the First Congregational Church as one of the most progressive churches of the period with a brick structure and stained glass windows indicate how this church serves the religious, educational, and recreational needs of its community. Other photographs of the minister Dr. Henry Hugh Proctor and his church membership show the diversity in members' genders and ages. While other images of men and women posing outside their homes on upper and lower porches, on high steps, and near corner stores reflect the vitality of this community. The photographic albums of Georgia reflect the Du Bois' understanding that the importance of photography and its impact on the historical memory of future generations.

It also reveals a strategic initiative in creating a narrative imaging the progress and industrial accomplishments of a nation of people less than thirty-five years emancipated from chattel bondage. Du Bois desired to evoke an emotional response from his audience. He wanted people to see that blacks were in many social ways just like whites, particularly in their attitudes toward progress and how they were able to embody the values of the European Victorian era. This identification was unexpected for observers and points to Du Bois himself and his achievements.

These images also serve to contradict the prevailing attitudes embellished through scientific studies and fictitious works propagating that of white supremacy. Du Bois had

brought the idea of focusing on the state of Georgia, the state with the largest non-white population. Mainstream American newspapers largely ignored the Exhibit of the American Negroes. The majority of American newspaper coverage of the exhibit came from black American media. Blacks learned of their special contribution in Paris from news weeklies such as the Minneapolis *Appeal*, the Washington *Bee*, the Boston *Guardian*, Cleveland *Gazette*, and New York's *Negro World*. Du Bois' photographs of African Americans from Georgia and other areas of the South reveal an emotional appeal to that of the idea of progress and industrial achievement—feats that his audience could identify and encouraged to “see” the cultural spirit of an emerging black middle class. Du Bois' exhibit framed black's accomplishments since emancipation as a rise of a once subordinated group (a serf class) to that of high culture. In framing his subject as the Georgia Negro, Du Bois asked his audience to reexamine their notions of the southern black. The photographs in the exhibit reflected the ideals of the Victorian Era and those of an emerging black middle class, notions which could be easily admired by whites.

There is a very close relationship between *identification* and *persuasion* wrote Stewart, Smith, and Denton, Jr. (160). Kenneth Burke referred to “identification,” a concept tied closely to Aristotle's “common ground” as a process in which people attempt to symbolically share degrees of themselves to persuade listeners in one way or another. In Burke's approach, when true identification occurs, the rhetors attempt to act, believe, and speak like the audience and he explains it as fundamental to being human and to communicating. According to Burke, human beings continually seek to be associated with certain individuals or groups (and not others) and attain some position in the hierarchy of social relations. Du Bois sought in showing the similarity or

commonality of blacks with the progressive Paris Exposition audience as a means of symbolically identifying with them. Identification is an instrument of transformation and Du Bois used symbols (photographic images) to enhance identification of his audience to African Americans. Du Bois, while at the Exposition, could be found daily walking the fair grounds in top hat, white gloves, suit, and with cane. Du Bois idea of focusing on the state of Georgia worked to subvert conventional perceptions of the American Negro by presenting an aspiring black middle-class, one which would be the mirror image of white Europeans. From its inception, Du Bois used the opportunity of the Exposition to employ his camera as a collector of evidence to support his sociological findings to show not the travails of the American Negro, but, in accord with the Exposition's theme which focused on progress in all areas, technological, agricultural, educational, and other areas, the progress of blacks.

Du Bois' exhibit had been impressive enough that by the time the judges had passed, the "Collaborator as Compiler of Georgia Negro Exhibit" was awarded a gold medal. Du Bois proudly reported in *American Monthly Review*, there was "no more encouraging answer than that given by the American Negroes, who are here shown to be studying, examining, and thinking of their own progress and prospects" (Lewis 248-249). The message conveyed by the exhibit exemplified a more pragmatic, a rhetorical approach in his fight for social justice. The Atlanta University studies were the first attempt to study scientifically the problems of black Americans and represented a great intellectual advance for Du Bois as a sociologist. The Atlanta University studies also led some able white scholars to give earnest attention to the study of Negro problems. Du Bois exhibit is meant to work in much the same way, yet they audience is much different

and the approach is also different than the more systematic and researched based approach of the Atlanta University studies. But Du Bois goal is clear. Du Bois exhibit is used as another means of evidence in building his case for the progress of blacks in America in spite of the barbarism and dehumanization of white supremacy.

The photo exhibit is used to appeal to the emotion of the mostly white European audience. Attitudes of progress and achievement mark the turn of the century, particularly in Europe and Du Bois's exhibit appeals to even more than the moral consciousness of the audience. Du Bois' exhibit appeals to the passions of the audience as they too could admire and appreciate the struggle and accomplishment of a subordinated group moving up the social class ladder. These images were utilized to challenge preconceived perceptions and notions of American blacks, not only to the audiences of Europe but also to blacks back home in America. Du Bois' images contrasted with those currently being promulgated in popularly read text which exaggerated the inherent superiority of white over that of blacks.

Du Bois' Exhibit was a symbolic act. The Exhibit of American Negroes illustrates the importance, power, and effectiveness of nonverbal symbolic acts. Such acts provide the essence of the message or enhance the persuasiveness of the message. Symbols unite people. Du Bois focused on the state of Georgia, the state with the largest non-white population to subvert conventional perceptions of the American Negro by presenting an aspiring black middle-class, one which would be the mirror image of white Europeans. Clothes and appearance just like other identification tactics helped him to reflect the audience's values, beliefs, and attitudes by identifying with the moral symbols (in this

case, progress) and revered documents of society rather than attacking or disparaging them.

Du Bois' Exhibit reveals his attitude about black's development, and he attempted to induce cooperation, or at least insure a more adequate hearing under the circumstances of the Paris Exposition, by demonstrating the progressive similarities of American blacks and his audience.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter we examined Du Bois' appeal to the emotional state and virtue of his audience. *Pathos* was a significant rhetorical factor in his social criticism and his ascension to the top of African American leadership during his fifteen years at Atlanta University and, as a precursor to becoming a founding member of, both, The Niagara Movement and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This chapter attempted to illustrate the role of the rhetorical proof *pathos* in Du Bois' social change rhetoric as he sought 1) to create images and symbols of self-determinism, progress, and middle-class values and 2) to convey emotion and build excitement in his audience by corresponding to their beliefs.

Any discussion of emotional appeals (*pathos*) is one which provides for us a better insight into human motivation. When we use the term motivation we refer to the reasons that move a person or group of persons to do something. Aristotle in *On Rhetoric* discussed the primary function of rhetoric as that of making a judgment (1358b). In inducing audiences to judge in a certain way, Aristotle lectured on the need for understanding the role of motivation in disposing audiences to those judgments (1368b-

1377b). The artistic mode of persuasion, *pathos*, provides an orator with an ability to arouse *pathē* (i.e. anger, fear, confidence, shame, etc.) in an audience as a means to facilitate an inference or to arouse these emotions as a means to refuting an opponent's claims.

In any case, a discussion of emotions is an introduction into the psychology of individuals and particularly the state of mind when he or she is experiencing a particular emotion. It may also be considered a delving into whom people commonly associated or divulge certain emotions toward, and what sort of reasons people are made to experience those certain emotions (See Golden, Berquist, and Coleman's *The Rhetoric of Western Thought* for a discussion of what they refer to as "motivational arguments" 244. In this case the motive for accepting the claim is produced by associating it with some inner drive, value, desire, emotion, or aspiration or with a combination of these forces). By developing high achievement goals, Du Bois wanted his audience to actively seek success and take necessary risks. A group that is succeeding helps a person to feel personal pride and gain esteem in the eyes of others.

In viewing language usage as action, we must always keep in mind that there is a strategic dimension attached to communication. When people are speaking to an audience, they are attempting to accomplish particular goals with that audience. The ultimate goal of the social change orator is to promote the issues at hand not him or herself. Both attitudes and opinions are in question, but the treatment and appeals to one's self is subsidiary to the purpose of creating a general identification between the speaker's message and the audience.

When we refer to a rhetorical transaction we have in mind a situation wherein a speaker produces a message for the *specific* purpose of affecting the opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of a listener or a group of listeners. This transaction often requires strategic choices and social change rhetoric is a considerable element in constructing the social framework upon which decisions are made and the linguistic processes which mediate underlying political and economic forces. As history reveals to us, it was W.E.B. Du Bois who garnered wider and broader public attention and raised himself to a public level to rival Washington as a legitimate voice on issues concerning black's economic, social, and political station within the United States. But history does not so clearly tell us how it was accomplished. There are particular characteristics of Du Bois rhetoric which remain consistent with the *Zeitgeist* and important formalistic characteristics of his message. Later, we will investigate Du Bois' *ethos* as he continued his mission as an active voice of the black liberation movement. His *ethos* or character/credibility worked hand in hand in producing an effective message. It was not as if Du Bois conceived of a single approach to persuasion. He was able by skill and necessity to examine *all* means available to him. From these, he was able to choose the best or most likely course of action for success than one which first came to mind.

Du Bois' keynote address "The Conservation of the Races" at the first inaugural meeting of the American Negro Academy in 1897 argued not for black Americans to completely reject the dominant Anglo-Saxon Protestant core. He admitted in his remarks that some assimilation into the dominant Anglo culture was necessary and of mutual benefit. His position in this regard would not change throughout his life. African Americans were both American—by citizenship, political ideals, language, and

religion—and African, as a member of a “vast historic race” of separate origin from the rest of America. In spite of their citizenship, Du Bois stressed that the destiny of blacks was not absorption into or “a servile imitation of Anglo-Saxon culture, but a stalwart originality which shall unswervingly follow Negro ideals.” Du Bois is speaking of the fate of blacks everywhere, of a Pan-Africanism in which black Americans were to be the advance guard. The stress was on the separate identity of blacks; the difficulty was in trying to describe the gift of the folk in “the black tomorrow which is yet destined to soften the whiteness of the Teutonic today” (Du Bois *Conversations* 249).

Du Bois ardently sought for black Americans to retain their ethnic identity and proudly maintained that African ethnicity remained a powerful force in combating the destructive forces of discrimination and prejudice. Citizenship ideals exemplified by men and women like Archibald Grimke, Mary Terrell, and William Monroe Trotter began with them thinking of themselves first as Americans, who merely happened to be dark-skinned. However, Du Bois strategically appealed to these and other leading black leaders to embrace the dichotomy of their racial identity and think of themselves as black first; as representative Americans proud, productive, and of a cultured Black Diaspora.

This confidence in the worth of his people is what led Du Bois into the political world Rampersad 91). The excellent sociological investigation *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), his groundbreaking book *Souls of Black Folk* (1903), the award winning Paris Exposition—the Exhibit of American Negroes (1900), his address on during the closing session of the first Pan African Congress in Westminster Town Hall (July 25, 1900), and several other articles published in nationally read periodicals such as the *Dial* and the *Atlantic Monthly* develop a principal theme to his work: that in spite of the limitations of

black people due to segregation, the hardships of their life had demanded of them and produced high standards of moral heroism. In stressing moral heroism, Du Bois built solid public arguments around the special beauty and humanity of blacks. Du Bois was defiantly proud of being black and he agonized over the significance of certain unflattering aspects of black life (i.e. *Philadelphia Negro* 163, 257, 201, 285, 322). This pride is the basis for his work with the Atlanta Studies and his exhibit at the 1900 Paris exposition.

The Exhibit of American Negroes is both a testament to the accomplishments of blacks in climbing the ladder of social success and as a means of identifying with a larger audience in debunking common myths and stereotypes about black Americans civility and humanity. Du Bois' photograph, model, industrial work, and picture exhibit reflected the spiritual, social, and economic diversity of the "New Negro." Based on his previous experience and knowledge of the social current of Europe, Du Bois objective is two-fold: 1) on a world stage, to begin to build a sense of commonality of attitudes, beliefs, and values in his audience as a means of breaking down the lingering attitudes toward race and 2) build appreciation for the struggle that American blacks have endured in attempting to emancipate themselves from bondage and move up the social class ladder as "full" participants in a free society.

Du Bois' Exhibit of American Negroes unexpectedly identified with its mostly white audience. By making "progress" the issue and not the difficulties of "race," Du Bois challenged the mostly European audience to make what had been embedded overt and to refute their unconscious racism with a more true representation of black's cultural values and customs consistent with Victorian European values. Du Bois' exhibit

attempted to debunk white European judgments of their own “civilized” supremacy in relation to the American Negro. His exhibit was intentionally crafted to evoke an emotional response from the curious but unsuspecting viewer. Particularly, Du Bois set about to evoke an appreciation for the beauty within black culture, particularly as blacks aspired to achieve middle-class status within the U.S. Conjuring up this image represented a significant step towards the fight against racist representations.

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# Chapter 3

A social problem is the failure of an organized social group to realize its group ideals, through the inability to adapt a certain desired line of action to given conditions of life. If, for instance, a government founded on universal manhood suffrage has a portion of its population so ignorant as to be unable to vote intelligently, such ignorance becomes a menacing social problem. The impossibility of economic and social development in a community where a large percent of the population refuse to abide by the social rules of order makes a problem of crime and lawlessness. Prostitution becomes a social problem when the demands of luxurious homelife conflict with marriage customs.

Thus a social problem is ever a relation between conditions and action, and as conditions and actions vary and change from group to group from time to time and from place to place, so social problems change, develop and grow. Consequently, though we ordinarily speak of the Negro problem as though it were one unchanged question, students must recognize the obvious facts that this problem, like others, has had a long historical development, has changed with the growth and evolution of the nation; moreover, that it is not *one* problem, but rather a plexus of social problems, some new, some old, some simple, some complex; and these problems have their one bond of unity in the fact that they group themselves about those Africans whom two centuries of slave-trading brought into the land.

Du Bois, W.E.B. "The Study of the Negro Problems," *W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses 1890-1919*. 103-104.

## 3.1 Introduction

In the early 1900s, during what we have referred to as the post-Reconstruction period in the United States, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois engaged in a historic clash over the most practical and beneficial means to deal with the "Negro problem" and to increase social, economic, and political opportunities for black Americans. The rhetoric of Washington and Du Bois attacked the problem from differing standpoints and advanced polemical strategies for resolving the problems of black Americans as America attempted to adapt to the increased social contact between whites and blacks. Between these two parties, James Weldon Johnson wrote:

There were incessant attacks and counter-attacks; the former [Washington party] declaring that the latter were visionaries, doctrinaires, and incendiaries; the latter charging the former with minifying political and civil rights, with encouraging

opposition to higher training and higher opportunities for Negro youth, with giving sanction to certain prejudiced practices and attitudes toward the Negro, thus yielding up in fundamental principles more than could be balanced by any immediate gains. One not familiar with this phase of Negro life in the twelve-or-fourteen-year period following 1903...cannot imagine the bitterness of the antagonism between the two wings. (332)

The discourse of the two men clashed over practically every aspect of social advancement, i.e. suffrage, housing, civil rights, jobs, training, politics, etc. The biggest difference between the two men's philosophies was in connection with education (Rudwick 64). Hence, the training of black youth was a never-ending concern for Du Bois and Washington. In their long careers both were cast in many important roles—leader, editor, author, lecturer. But always and essentially they were teachers. Education they considered a key to the vexatious race problem—for Du Bois more and better education at all levels and for each according to his individual capacity (Moon 119).

Washington's plan emphasized the importance of the industrial curriculum of which he was a product. Washington saw that a course of study that trained Southern blacks to become farmers, carpenters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, brick masons, engineers, cooks, laundresses, sewing women, house keepers, and, later, tailors was more practical and beneficial to blacks than a liberal arts education to integrating into American society. He emphasized vocational training and repudiated abstract knowledge. Washington also emphasized decreased agitation and political meandering, such as advocating for civil rights legislation by blacks. According to Washington, if equal civil rights and opportunities were to be had by black Americans, they were to be earned through their commitment to hard work and economic advancement in industry.

Du Bois emphasized an alternate plan, a plan which promoted liberal education (of which he was a direct product) and increased social activism. Du Bois focused on

developing an educated class of people (in particular, leaders who would provide leadership and) who would commit themselves to the upward progress of black Americans. His plan centered on black colleges with a cultured critical mass urging the race forward. Noted historian Lerone Bennett, Jr. remarked, “W.E.B. Du Bois said, with only slight exaggeration, that had it not been for black colleges black people would have been driven back into slavery. Du Bois, a graduate of Fisk, was persuasive evidence in favor of his thesis” (290). Du Bois believed that culture filtered downward, not upward. Du Bois’ “Talented Tenth” as it was called emphasized aspiration and lofty ideals rather than merely breadwinning (See Du Bois discussion of the Talented Tenth in ch. 6 “Of the Training of Black Men,” *Souls of Black Folk*). This type of higher education fulfilled the necessary development of young people with a larger vision and deeper sensibility as stalwart leaders. Du Bois remarked in the June 1912 *Crisis* article:

Consider this argument: Education is the training of men for life. The best training is experience, but if we depended entirely upon this each generation would begin where the last began and civilization could not advance... Hence, colored people in educating their children should be careful: First: To conserve and select ability, giving to their best minds higher college training. Second: They should endeavor to give all their children the largest possible amount of general training and intelligence before teaching them the technique of a particular trade, remembering that the object of all true education is not to make men carpenters, but to make carpenters men. Is not this reasoning sound? Could you imagine an educator of any experience who would take material exception to it? Would you call it revolutionary or in the nature of a “personal” attack? Certainly not. (*The Emerging Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois* 120)

Du Bois and Washington’s verbal sparring appeared mostly in published commentaries in popular magazines and through speeches and written reviews such as the *Crisis* article quoted above. As historian Elliot Rudwick mused, “It is questionable that there would have been a conflict between these ideologies if the Washingtonians had not insisted their program was so valuable it warranted universality, and if they had not

anointed their chieftain as ‘the accepted representative man among ten million of our fellow citizens’” (64). This chapter offers a prominent discussion of the rhetorical strategies employed by either orator to bolster his public position or to transcend the publicly held perception of the other.

Seeing the argument as a rhetorical strategy is central to the Aristotelian legacy of rhetorical analysis and helpful in our analysis of the social change discourse of Du Bois. Thus, this chapter continues in our assessment of Du Bois’ rhetorical pragmatism in reconstructing his audience’s attitudinal views on race, by turning its focus to the types of arguments he advanced to challenge those attitudes, particularly those being propagated by the Washington-led accommodationalist wing. Du Bois used his talent as an essayist to publish numerous articles in popular magazines such as the *Atlantic Monthly*, *World’s Work*, and the *Independent*, and his reputation increased as a leading interpreter of the Negro problem. According to Rudwick, the pieces were often impressionistic propaganda that argued that whites did not know much about blacks and that careful study would confirm the damage which racism had done to blacks (See Rudwick *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership* 55).

Aristotelian rhetoric is primarily characterized by the choice of major premises on which enthymemes forming the body of the proof are based and the means by which listeners are made to feel favorably about these premises and the conclusions that proceed from them (See a discussion of the scientific approach of Aristotle in Golden, Berquist and Coleman *The Rhetoric of Western Thought* 29-41). Our last chapter focused on the psychological persuasive factors prevalent in Du Bois’ social change rhetoric. This chapter focuses on those “attitudes” and “opinions” which were necessary for Du Bois to

build-upon to gain identification with his audience. To understand his success in doing so, it is necessary for us to understand the premises from which those attitudes were acquired (Burke *A Rhetoric of Motives* 50). Thus, we will focus on the rhetorical proof—*logos*, by investigating the major premises or arguments offered by Du Bois and the “attitudes” upon which those arguments were based.

It was a vital role that Du Bois reluctantly assumed which has distinguished his career as a clever and able social change agent. In his autobiographical sketch in the February 1918 *Crisis* he recounted the reluctance with which he assumed the role: “Against all my natural reticence and hatred of forwardness, contrary to my dream of racial unity and deep desire to serve and follow and think, rather than to lead and inspire and decide, I found myself suddenly the leader of a great wing of my people fighting against another and greater wing” (*The Emerging Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois* 13). But it was in the inevitable confrontation with Washington and the accommodationalists, which he handled so skillfully, that propelled him as a considerable leader in this struggle.

Du Bois’ logic in countering the Washington-led accommodationalist philosophies positioned him as a legitimate rival to the generally recognized leader of black America, Booker T. Washington. Until the emergence of Du Bois, the black American protest movement was primarily stifled, disjointed, and bereft of creativity, despite the brilliance of some of its leaders. Du Bois, who himself was attempting to reconcile and come to some agreement and understanding among major contending forces within the black community, decided to publicly denounce the goals that Washington and the accommodationalists were advocating. To the complete opposite, Du Bois contended that political power, civil rights, and higher education for the youth were

the essence of manhood and one's citizenship in America was held up by one's fight for what he considered inalienable rights. This struggle, the "spiritual" strivings of the race, transcended the complexities of the social problems attached to racial attitudes.

Charles Stewart, Craig Smith, and Robert Denton, Jr. have noted that social change agents often employ "a rhetoric of *transcendence* to challenge institutions and to counter the persuasive efforts that threaten norms, values, and hierarchical relationships" (225). An argument of transcendence attempts to persuade listeners that "a person, group, goal, thing, right, action, or proposal *surpasses*, is *superior* to, or was *prior* to its opposite" (225). Du Bois' examples are revealing as they illustrate how arguments of transcendence reason through an inherently comparative process. This comparative strategy was not only necessary but vital for Du Bois, as he attempted to bolster his position as a worthy spokesman for black social progress and at the same time specifically address particular arguments central to Washington's accommodationalist position.

Du Bois was not only critical of the social caste system existent in the U.S. (*Color Caste in the United States* March 1933) but also critical of Washington as a pawn within that system. Washington was the prime benefactor of leading American capitalists-philanthropists and important political figures, as well as the generally recognized leader of black America. Yet, Du Bois intelligently maintained that Washington's doctrine of getting along with the white South "at almost any cost to black America" was impracticable and not a path to the respect that he suggested it would reap. To illustrate his point, Du Bois argued the comparison points of quantity, quality, value, and hierarchy to define fundamental issues and present an alternate message which was grounded in strategic social action.

This chapter is presented in three main sections. The first section discusses the rise of Booker T. Washington, the “Wizard of Tuskegee,” and briefly outlines his social philosophy. In this light, we begin to develop a clearer understanding of the context surrounding the conflict of more liberally minded change agents, particularly in light of Du Bois’ emergence. In the second section, I briefly review argument from transcendence and focus on how Du Bois’ movement used arguments from transcendence in clashing with the accommodationist over political power, civil rights, and liberal education for youths. The majority of my focus is on Du Bois’ published review of Washington’s autobiography *Up from Slavery*. In establishing transcendence, the four points of comparison: quantity, quality, value, and hierarchy will be analyzed. The final section concludes with a discussion of the persuasive impact of this type of argument, particularly in terms of the situational factors that dictate the use of certain persuasive strategies and tactics.

Rhetoric of transcendence contests institutions and counters persuasive elements that threaten embedded cultural values (Stewart, Smith & Denton 225). On the other hand, this tactic may well backfire because of its confrontational nature (226). However, for Du Bois, the inherent comparison and contrasting nature of his argument were effective in accomplishing his persuasive goal.

### **3.2 Rhetorical Contexts**

Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute was founded on July 4, 1881, near Butler Chapel AME Zion Church in southern Alabama. Introduced in the House of Representatives by W. F. Foster as a Negro Normal School in Tuskegee, the Institute was

authorized through legislation by House Bill 165. The school was appropriated only \$2000 for teacher salaries and its campus only one dilapidated shanty and an enrollment of 30 adult students (*Chronology of African American History* 50).

Recruited to Tuskegee by Institute board commissioner George W. Campbell, Booker T. Washington was inaugurated as the school's first president at the age of twenty-five. According to historian and biographer Louis R. Harlan, the state appointed board of commissioners wrote to Hampton asking for the school's recommendation for someone to head the new teacher's college. Former Union officer General Samuel C. Armstrong, who was principal then of Hampton Institute in Virginia, recommended Washington who was teaching at Hampton.

As president and principal developer of Tuskegee, Washington oversaw the development of the new teacher's college. At Tuskegee students focused on the virtues of self-reliance, hard work, and thrift in mastering industrial education in carpentry, agriculture, textiles, and masonry. He proved to be a highly skilled organizer and fundraiser and in 1892, the Normal and Industrial Institute gained its sovereignty and began to operate independently from the state of Alabama. Tuskegee over the next twenty-three years would grow to become a symbol of progress, leadership, and self-determinism. As for Washington, Tuskegee offered the only possible solution to the "Negro Problem"—an industrial education, "working with the hands" as he often stated. The Institute stood as a grand accomplishment, particularly considering the time and the circumstances surrounding its creation. Above all the Institute gave its president a prominent stage and base of operations to disseminate his social philosophy of self-reliance, economic sustainability, civility, and social accommodation.

By the time Washington died in 1915 at the age of fifty-nine, Tuskegee Institute, occupied 2,000 acres of land, enrolled 1,500 students, and boasted a faculty of 200 instructors. Today, more than 128 years after its founding, Tuskegee Institute remains a leader in applied research and practical education.

Washington was, by all accounts at the turn of the twentieth century, the most powerful black man in America. Bennett, Jr. illustrated:

When Washington arrived at his office, every important event in Black America in the preceding twenty-four hours was at his fingertips. Confidential reports from agents had been sorted and analyzed. Important letters—from the president and influential whites and blacks—were ready for his perusal; letters and memorandums were ready for his signature. Deferential aides and assistants stood with pencils poised, awaiting his pleasure...From this office, for some twenty years, Washington practically ruled Black America. (327)

He was a self-made industrial man and a firm believer in the Protestant work ethic; a former slave who had not only survived the malignity of chattel bondage but had lifted himself out of poverty to become the president of a financially independent and nationally recognized industrial institute and an iconic symbol of strength and deliverance (Harlan 3-6). Moreover, Washington was not only in control over his own destiny but the destiny's of many others. His influence was far reaching and his recommendations well-respected (See a brief discussion of Washington's legacy in Tindal's *The Emergence of the New South 1914-1945* 157).

His rags to riches story, particularly in the Black Belt of Alabama, served as a beacon of hope for those African Americans who by the natural order of southern society were placed as voteless, industrious farmhands, primary schoolteachers, and occasional merchants. In fact, on April 7, 1940, some 25 years after his death, the United States

Postal Service honored Washington's legacy by making him the first African American featured on a U.S. postage stamp.

Washington's 1895 Compromise Address had invited powerful men, both white and black, such as Presidents Taft and Roosevelt to hold his company. In the era of *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the doctrine of separate but equal racial status, Washington enjoyed unprecedented national recognition as an African American educator, businessman, and political advisor. As an interpreter of the Negro problem, Washington argued that black Americans needed to learn to dignify and glorify common labor to achieve progress and prosperity. Similarly, he urged for Southern whites to help black Americans achieve economic prosperity in return for compromising their civil liberties because the economic well-being of both groups was inexorably tied together. He became the spokesman for those who wanted members of his race to be a labor force and not a political force. Washington's recommendations, which in large part were based on an implicitly held criterion of black inferiority, urged blacks to compromise their civil rights and privileges to meet his goal of economic prosperity, arguing that it was necessary for blacks to do so for "the mutual benefit of the country" (See Washington's "Atlanta Exposition Address" 217-237).

If we define self-determination, simply, as the ability to control one's destiny, then Washington, as developer and first president of Tuskegee and founder and first president of the National Negro Business League, was the epitome of self-determinism.

Harlan wrote:

Washington built a regional constituency of farmers, artisans, country teachers, and small businessmen; he expanded the Tuskegee Machine nationwide after the Atlanta Compromise seemed acceptable to blacks all over the country, even by many who later denounced it. His northern black ally was T. Thomas Fortune,

editor of the militant and influential *New York Age* and founder of the Afro-American Council, the leading forum of black thought at the time. Washington was not a member, but he usually spoke at its annual meetings, and his lieutenants so tightly controlled the council that it never passed an action or resolution not in Washington's interest. (4)

Of Washington's many accomplishments and crafty manipulation, it is the development of Tuskegee Institute, not his social philosophy, for which he is most notably remembered and which most serves as a testament to his philosophy of self-determinism. Yet, it is his position as president of Tuskegee which provided for him an avenue to propagate his message.

Much of Tuskegee's success can be directly traced to Washington's appeal as a philanthropist and spokesman for black education and economic competency that attempted to win the respect of whites and the recognition of black's own constitutional rights. Tuskegee Institute was the largest and best-supported black educational institution of his day. It was an all-black school with an all-black faculty when all other black colleges in the South were run by white missionaries.

Washington's talent as a public speaker, fund-raiser, and educator was unique in his uncanny ability to influence whites and lead blacks. All told, Washington delivered some four thousand public speeches during his thirty-year career as an orator. In his speeches, Washington strove to bridge the social divide between blacks and whites advocating for political withdrawal, agrarian capitalism, and industrial education by downplaying the implications and power play of racist ideologies and separatist behavior of whites towards black communities. Consequently Washington had a remarkable capacity to convince whites as well as blacks that he not only understood them but agreed with them. This agreement of whites, however, was more so in his manner than in his

program and goals of human rights and material advancement for blacks. Harlan, in

*Black Diamonds*, a collection of the Washington's most prominent speeches, remarked:

Washington saw the solution of the South's race problem as salvation through hard work and rights after unfettered obedience. Reflecting on the mission of blacks, Washington stated in a speech titled "Our Day," "I think a part of his [the Negro's] mission is going to be to teach white men a lesson of patience, forbearance, and forgiveness. I think he is going to show the people of this country what it is possible for a race to achieve when starting under adverse conditions. Again, I believe he is destined to preach a lesson of supreme trust in God and loyalty to his country, even when his country has not been at all times loyal to him... (*Black Diamonds* 3-4)

Washington's educational philosophies were guided by his philosophy of life which squarely centered on Christian love, sympathy, and the native ability of persons to lift themselves up (just as he had from his bootstraps) and become meaningful participants in the economy of the Republic. Yet, he brought to his role of black leadership the talents and outlook of a machine boss and the school as an operational base came to be known as the Tuskegee Machine.

During the late 1890s and the early 1900s, of the some-odd ten million blacks living in America, the vast majority lived and worked in the rural areas of the South. Washington's message resonated with the people of the South. The greatest elements of his strength and influence came from the respect and confidence of the whole Southern people, that when added to the growing respect of the people of the North, made Washington a man of unprecedented prominence. Washington, as Harlan has indicated in his article "Booker T. Washington and the Politics of Accommodation," was in effect chosen by white elites (Carnegie, Rockefeller, Jacob Schiff, the Peabody and Slater Fund board of directors and the Southern Education Board's board of directors) to represent blacks, yet because of his prominence and his achievements as president of Tuskegee, he

also had a loyal following in the black community, both among ordinary people and the small black entrepreneurial elite. As a result, Washington was able to build and sustain his influence which he based on a spiritual philosophy of hard work, reverence for the Creator, and a consecration towards service. Yet, many distrusted Washington because of his close identification with Southern whites. Bennett wrote, “Andrew Carnegie gave Tuskegee \$600,000 in U.S. Steel bonds but on ‘one condition only—the revenue of one hundred and fifty thousand of these bonds is to be subject to Booker Washington’s order to be used by him first for his wants and those of his family during his life or the life of his widow—if any surplus he can use it for Tuskegee’” (329).

Washington was a conservative by just about any measure (Harlan 11). Although he flourished in this Progressive era it was not he but his philanthropic allies who were men of good hope. His opponents were full of reform proposals and an unyielding faith in the common man. Washington’s vision of the common man included the Southern poor white full of rancor against blacks, the foreign-born anarchist ready to pull down the temple of American business, and the black sharecropper unqualified by education or economic freedom for the ballot (Harlan 11). He did not believe in universal suffrage. Washington believed in literacy tests and property tests if they were fairly enforced and he did not believe in suffrage for women. In an attempt to identify with white audiences, he often anecdotally in public speeches told chicken-thief, mule, and other dialect stories intended to appeal to white stereotypes of blacks and on more than one occasion referred to African Americans as “a child race.”

Washington’s most prominent years as a speaker and educator, were paralleled by the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case and the impact of its ruling. Just one month after

Washington was honored with an Honorary Master of Arts degree from Harvard, the United States Supreme Court codified the “separate but equal” doctrine. The court’s ruling in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case upheld the widely popular segregationist doctrine sanctioning separate black and white public facilities. As the “separate but equal” ruling became fully ingrained in America, Washington’s benign ideologies began to draw staunch competition and criticism from his supporters.

In the context of worsening conditions for African Americans there developed a tendency by many African American leaders, especially in the South, to adopt an accommodating stance that tolerated, for the present, segregation and discrimination, believing it best “not to rock the boat” and not to protest against the obvious oppression. Instead, these leaders appealed for aid from prosperous whites and Northern philanthropists, while insisting that blacks could, through a program of self-help and self-determinism, propel themselves into a reputable place within the American marketplace.

To Washington, this meant securing an industrial education and achieving an economic intelligence that would eventually win the respect of whites and equal treatment afforded through the U. S. Constitution. The Tuskegee and Hampton Conferences drew men of letters, white wealthy philanthropists, and board members of the General and Southern Educational Boards. Washington was invited to speak across the country reemphasizing his compromise and black acquiescence. In addition, to disseminate his message and in an attempt to influence public opinion, Washington relied heavily on the press and the public platform provided by his presidency. Although a lively and able speaker, Washington’s speeches lacked creativity or real responses to events and accounted for what Harlan called only a “steady flow of platitudes” (12). As

the new century was ushered in, one of the most notable absences in Washington public addresses was an outright denouncing of lynching.

African-Americans suffered grievously under lynch law. With the close of Reconstruction in the late 1870s, southern whites were determined to end northern and black participation in the region's affairs, and northerners exhibited a growing indifference toward the civil rights of black Americans. Taking its cue from this intersectional white harmony, the federal government abandoned its oversight of constitutional protections. Southern and Border States responded with the "Jim Crow" laws of the 1890s, and white mobs flourished. With blacks barred from voting, public office, and jury service, officials felt no obligation to respect minority interests or safeguard minority lives (See Ida B. Wells-Barnett's *Red Book: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States* the first statistical record of lynchings in America). In addition to lynchings of individuals, dozens of race riots—with blacks as victims—scarred the national landscape from Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1898 to Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921. J. Timothy Cole in *The Forest City Lynching of 1900* recounted the rhetoric of white supremacy and oppression of the lynch culture of the new South:

It would be understatement to say that *words* themselves were a potent weapon used against the Negro. For the typical white Southerner of 1900, utterly convinced of Anglo-Saxon supremacy—and faced with a "New Negro," less willing to deny himself the political and social equality denied his slave forebears—the rhetorical dehumanization of blacks became virtually ubiquitous. Leon Litwack's recent *Trouble in Mind* is replete with examples of metaphors used by whites of the period to equate blacks to lower forms of life: "noxious insects," dogs, disease, a "black poison in the body of the South," "half-civilized gorillas," fleas, mules, and "a lazy, lying, lustful animal whose nature resembles the hog's." One white, cited by Litwack, likened the lynching of a Negro to "killing a chicken or killing a snake." For many whites, the Negro was indeed barely more than vermin—to be white and think otherwise was to be "regarded as

a traitor and an outcast.” The extent to which this “biophobic” degradation of “newfangled niggers” could have given rise to racial lynchings is unclear. But emotionally, it is simply easier to kill an animal than a human being. (15).

Between 1882 (when reliable statistics were first collected by Tuskegee Institute) and 1968 (when the classic forms of lynching had disappeared), 4,743 persons died of lynching, 3,446 of them black men and women. Mississippi (539 black victims, 42 white) led this grim parade of death, followed by Georgia (492, 39), Texas (352, 141), Louisiana (335, 56), and Alabama (299, 48). From 1882 to 1901, the annual number nationally usually exceeded 100; 1892 had a record 230 deaths (161 black, 69 white). Although lynchings declined somewhat in the twentieth century, there were still 97 in 1908 (89 black, 8 white), 83 in the racially troubled postwar year of 1919 (76, 7, plus some 25 race riots), 30 in 1926 (23, 7), and 28 in 1933 (24, 4) (See these statistics and more indepth analysis of lynching in NAACP *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918*).

Statistics do not tell the entire story, however. These were recorded lynchings; others were never reported beyond the community involved. Furthermore, mobs used especially sadistic tactics when blacks were the prime targets. By the 1890s lynchers increasingly employed burning, torture, and dismemberment to prolong suffering and excite a "festive atmosphere" among the killers and onlookers (See Wells-Barnett *Red Book* for several narratives detailing lynchings and their reporting in local newspapers). White families brought small children to watch, newspapers sometimes carried advance notices, railroad agents sold excursion tickets to announced lynching sites, and mobs cut off black victims' fingers, toes, ears, or genitalia as souvenirs. Nor was it necessarily the handiwork of a local rabble; not infrequently, the mob was encouraged or led by people

prominent in the area's political and business circles. Lynching had become a ritual of interracial social control and recreation rather than simply a punishment for crime.

Questioning of Washington's accommodationalist perspective came from a notable and distinguished group. American Negro Academy founder Alexander Crummell, Boston *Guardian* editor William Monroe Trotter; and Women's Era Club founder and anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells attacked the "Wizard of Tuskegee" and the Jim Crow manifesto of the South. Although Washington was vastly popular with whites as well as with blacks, these notable few and some others became more and more dissatisfied with his unwillingness to address pressing issues of the time, most importantly lynching, segregationist policy, and labor disenfranchisement.

Du Bois portrayed Washington's emphasis on industrial education as an essential link with the expansion of the Southern economy. According to Du Bois, the Washington's program attracted much-needed Northern and Southern aid. In an article published in *Dial* in 1901, Du Bois presented Washington as the product of history and as the reflection of the industrial emergence of a nation "a little shamed of having bestowed so much sentiment on Negroes and was [now] concentrating its energies on Dollars." The "successful" Tuskegeean was a man of "evident sincerity of purpose," although the demands of the new system caused him to be "a little narrow" ("The Evolution of Negro Leadership" 53-55).

Prominent black leaders began to publicly speak out against Washington's class consciousness ideology of accommodation because it did not attempt to address the racial separatism and hostility—lynching and mob violence—that was taking place and defining the social and economic condition of blacks post *Plessy vs. Ferguson*.

Washington did not condone racial disfranchisement, although most whites believed he did (Rudwick 61). Yet, Washington continually minimized politics as a road to racial advancement. For example, in 1892 Tuskegee Institute began to make a systematic collection and tabulation of lynching statistics, but Washington was relatively silent on the issue except in making obscure comments. Although Washington spoke on several occasions across the country at learned society meetings, political banquets and university commencement addresses, he did not take up the charge and denounce the hostility and lynching that had swept the country.

Washington's accommodation ideology according to Du Bois, whose reputation was steadily increasing, seemed to fuel the legalization of caste and the attitudes necessary to be appropriately carried out. The *Plessy vs. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision not only legally provided the basis for reinstating the separation of the races, as was the custom during the antebellum period, but also fit the accommodationalist principles of Washington in politically maintaining white racial supremacy, discrimination, and hostility, claimed Du Bois. "Use it or lose it," is in essence what Du Bois countered. Blacks were responsible for using their constitutional rights and fighting for the social justice that was afforded to them through those rights. An inability or, even worse an unwillingness to do so, would inevitably lead to not gaining the cultural respect that blacks had earned through their influence in Art, Music, War, Science, etc. but presenting themselves as unworthy for it.

### **3.3 Logos: Confrontation and Rhetoric of Transcendence**

The ideological conflict, which was primarily waged between Washington and Du Bois, illustrates a quest for self-determination in this country among African Americans and provides excellent examples of arguments from transcendence. “Called to confrontation,” because of Washington’s pervasive popularity and the increasing process of capitalist development inside the United States, Du Bois began to candidly verbalize his objection and disagreement. In his effort to influence public opinion, Du Bois via large-circulation newspapers, magazines, periodicals, and addresses, argued squarely in opposition to the accommodationist philosophy of Washington by attacking his public silence on the escalating violence and the black social segregation stirring in America as evidence of Washington’s incredulous philosophies. Henry Moon wrote:

He was a leader, a distinctive new type of leader of black folk—an intellectual whose ideas may well endure long after his passing and sway generations yet unborn. But he was much more: a many-faceted person, in truth a Renaissance man—one of the few his country has produced, and practically unique in black America. He was seer and poet, teacher and historian, man of letters, reformer and radical. He was not always right, judged either by his own standards and later evaluations or by objective criteria. On occasion, he confessed error. But he was always convinced of the validity of the specifics of his ideas at the time he advocated them, notwithstanding later contradictions. (14)

Both Washington’s and Du Bois’ bids for leadership went beyond education and institution-building. As they both saw it, blacks were toiling upward from slavery by their own efforts into the American middle class and chiefly needed social peace to continue in this steady social evolution. Washington advocated his position to disarm the white South in the “Atlanta Compromise Address” and his 1901 autobiography *Up from Slavery*, by declaring agitation of the social equality question “the merest folly” and proclaiming that in “purely social” matters “we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress” (221-222). Du Bois, on the other hand took a radical

approach, if you will, by declaring in his published review of Washington's 1901 autobiography *Up From Slavery* that the problem of the color line was not one which would be simply alleviated through accommodation (as extolled in the Atlanta Compromise Address) but if blacks were to be central actors in making a new racial perspective, the problem of racism and disenfranchisement must therefore be analyzed first and foremost from a different perspective.

The danger of Washington's ideas, according to Du Bois, was not simply racial accommodation—a practice, which Du Bois pointed out, was instituted some time before Washington's anointing as the Great Accommodator—but the narrow definition afforded self-determination and ambition by Washington and, most importantly, the existence within black America of a loyal opposition to Washington. For Du Bois, social change was not only possible through the transformation of attitudes, but the most prudent in combating the irrational rhetoric of accommodation and Washington's limited perspective of self-determinism. Du Bois used his skills as a masterful writer to challenge the ideologies of Washington by publishing essays in well-read and circulated magazines, in both the black and white community, such as the *Atlantic Monthly*, *World's Work*, and the *Independent*. Soon Du Bois gained a favorable reputation, particularly as an astute voice of the "Negro problem." In essence, Du Bois' rhetoric sought to mostly identify with whites. He suggested to whites that they did not know very much about his race and that it was a practical undertaking to conduct scientific sociological studies to confirm the long-term harmful effects that racism and segregation had done to blacks. Above all, blacks were American citizens and their membership with this larger group transcended their color as a status marker.

Du Bois transformed the black American protest movement from a reactionary movement into a resistance movement to counter the efforts of the Washington-led accommodationists. The status of African Americans had declined substantially, especially in the South. Most blacks were rural tenant farmers, exploited by a sharecropping system “that at its worst descended into peonage” (Franklin and Meier 1). Blacks in the cities were ordinarily relegated to unskilled and menial jobs, and by the late 1890s were incurring the rising hostility of organized white labor through intimidation and legal subterfuge and constitutional amendment. African Americans in the southern states were systematically deprived of the franchise. Segregation in schools and public accommodations, first developed on a *de facto* basis, was the law throughout the South due to the court ruling of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*. Undergirding this racial system was a pattern of mob violence—lynchings and race riots—that effectively kept blacks in a subordinate place. In the North blacks were permitted to vote, but they faced economic discrimination and increasing segregation. Under this context, Du Bois sought to affect the public opinion of liberal whites and aspiring blacks.

Du Bois often attacked disparaging positions with comparative arguments. For example, Du Bois argued that slavery had essentially made large numbers of blacks careless and dependent; poorer blacks were taught during the Reconstruction period that crooked politics represented a small but necessary source of income. To the charge that blacks were simply a criminalistic race, Du Bois replied that “the first and greatest cause of Negro crime in the South is the convict-lease system.” Crime was a “symptom of wrong social conditions,” and black people could hardly place their faith in a law which permitted lynchings to go unpunished (Du Bois “The Spawn of Slavery” 745). Du Bois

arguments rested on rhetoric of transcendence in that the notion of hierarchy, value, quality, and quantity exist as a versatile argumentative tactic.

Washington's speeches often demeaned blacks and their abilities in the industrial service economies and reinforced the lingering stereotypes which dominated the slavery and post-Reconstruction era. Washington often pointed the blame directly at blacks and the economic inferiority in industrial services without any hint the present conditions which most blacks lived in the post *Plessy* world. David Levering Lewis, historian and Du Bois biographer, cited one specific example from a letter received by Washington from Miss Martha Calhoun of Cambridge, Massachusetts, after a speech in which he chastised blacks for "bumbling themselves out of the service –industry monopolies." Lewis wrote, "She saw nothing in the story 'to make an audience laugh' . . . ." Miss Calhoun reacted, "It is not really because of improved methods that the white man has wrested this honorable and lucrative occupation [barbering] from his colored brother. It is because he is the *stronger* popular one, and in the majority'" (239).

Washington saw self-determinism as a trait necessary to those who would be successful. With all that Washington had accomplished, still Du Bois believed that Washington had begun to lose sight of what it meant to be a person who epitomized self-determination. Washington's methods had effectively helped people obtain their own sense of self-determinism. Du Bois recognized "self-determination" as a distinct black cultural value. In *Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois talked about the perseverance factor observable in groups climbing the status ladder in pockets of America. This is the thinking guiding Du Bois as he begins to earnestly campaign against the lynchings taking place throughout the South. Washington, too, was fully aware of the fear that lynching

had disposed most blacks to. Washington's point of view also made him more sensitive to how racism was affecting the economic and industrial services that blacks had maintained a strong grip on in the South as well as in the North but, still, he refused to chastise and speak out against the men who were eroding black's ability to provide these services. This is the sense of inferiority which Du Bois seems to suggest that dominates Washington's character.

Du Bois' work provides an excellent case study of how rhetors use arguments of transcendence. The following focuses on how Du Bois' has used arguments of transcendence and the four points of comparison to define fundamental issues of the black social protest movements and refute charges made against other ideologies and tactics in his clash with Washington over political power, civil rights, and education.

Most theorists agree that confrontation is essential for social change and the agent or agents which work to bring about that change. Robert S. Cathcart suggested that confrontation is "the necessary ingredient" for a social agent's cause to materialize (271). The confrontational discourse between the social change agent and the status quo institution or designated representative contains a myriad of rhetorical transactions. The same might also be said when the confrontation is between two independent entities who clearly are working on opposite sides of the spectrum and are both advocating separate interests.

Scholars such as Scott and Smith, Burgess, Andrews, and Bailey, who have studied confrontation extensively, have pointed out that confrontation is not anti-communication but rather an extension of communication in particular situations. Confrontational rhetoric occurs only in special occasions such as periods of societal

breakdowns, when moral underpinnings are called into question. “Confrontation” has been loosely applied to a variety of situations and used to explain, unfortunately” a number of acts or enactments such as “confronting a co-worker,” “confronting the police,” or “confronting your spouse.” Despite such common usage or mis-usage, most rhetorical theorists find the concept of “confrontation” to have symbolic significance (See Scott and Smith “The Rhetoric of Confrontation” 1-8, Burgess “The Rhetoric of Moral Conflict: Two Critical Dimensions” 120-130, Andrews “Confrontation at Columbia: A Case Study in Coercive Rhetoric” 9-16, and Bailey “Confrontation as an Extension of Communication” 11-16).

In this discussion, confrontation is applied as a symbolic display acted out to challenge an existing social order or set of values or norms being held in place. Moreover, it is a symbolic display designed to elicit a symbolic response which changes attitudes and values without major and unlimited conflict. Robert Cathcart wrote, “Confrontation as an agonistic ritual is not a prelude to revolution or warfare but is a ritual enactment that dramatizes the symbolic separation of the individual from the existing social order” (*Movements* 235-236). Thus confrontation may be used as a rhetorical strategy by the social change agent to argue “quantity” and contend that one group is larger, more inclusive than a competing group. Rhetors may also employ the comparative point of “quality” to argue that one goal, proposal, or strategy is good while the competing one is evil. Stewart, Smith, Denton, Jr. noted that orators are utilizing the comparative point of “value” when they claim that something is more or less important or significant in society and social interactions. Lastly, the comparative point of “hierarchy”

attempts to establish that one person, group, thing, act, right, or ideal exceeds another because it is of a higher order on a continuum (227-228).

To carry out this symbolic display, social agents may employ a rhetoric of transcendence to challenge institutions or to counter the persuasive efforts of public opinion leaders. An orator's argument of transcendence seeks a symbolic result in which one's cause allows him or her to "rise above" the elements of their being and to shift the audience's attention to a larger and more noble purpose. Kenneth Burke in *Language as Symbolic Action* stated, "Viewed as a sheerly terministic, or symbolic function, that's what transcendence is: the building of a *terministic bridge* whereby one realm is *transcended* by being viewed *in terms of* a realm 'beyond' it" (187). Thus, transcendence is best accomplished through persuasive arguments whereby ideas may be compared in specific ways to bring about a transformation and go beyond or to "build a bridge" between two disparate realms. Stewart, Smith and Denton, Jr. concur, "In a *rhetoric of transcendence*, persuaders argue that a person, group, goal, thing, right, action, or proposal *surpasses*, is *superior* to, or was *prior* to its opposite...a rhetoric of transcendence is an inherently comparative process" (225-226).

The historic conflict between Washington and Du Bois over black's social progress in the United States provides an excellent case study of how social change agents and counteragents use arguments from transcendence. Although the conflict was punctuated with disruptions, coercive tactics, and eventually Washington's public demise in 1915, both leaders relied primarily on symbols and symbolic actions to attain and maintain public support and to win victories in small shanty home living rooms, symposiums, meetings, voting booths, legislative chambers, and courtrooms. An analysis

of writings, letters, books, and published speeches reveals that, for nearly twenty years, Washington and Du Bois relied heavily on arguments of transcendence. Particularly interesting is Du Bois' argument which appears in the form of a book review of Washington's highly popular 1901 autobiography *Up From Slavery*. The remainder of this chapter focuses on how Du Bois used arguments from transcendence in their clashes over self-determinism (political power), civil rights, and higher education of youth.

Du Bois' views of social change were, in many ways, similar to Washington's. Both had a dogged preoccupation within the black community with the need for "progress," "uplift," "improvement," and "social advancement." Both believed in self-education as the primary means of social advancement for African Americans. Both used elegant speech in local and national publications along with intellectual public speeches to further their beliefs on social advancement. Both worked tirelessly to eradicate segregated accommodations on interstate rail road cars, although Washington's support for the issue was much more anonymous and clandestine. (See Harlan's discussion of Washington's politics "Booker T. Washington and the Politics of Accommodation" 5-14). Both projected the philosophy that blacks could improve their situation through self-help programs and skilled labor. Both aggressively advocated a "progress-through-prosperity agenda" which ultimately led to the 1901 founding of the National Negro Business League. And both believed that financial success was one means of the black masses earning their way into full citizenship.

However, the deciding difference between the two and their approach to the problem of the color line was over the question of how to bring about social advancement. Whereas Washington advocated political benignity, agrarianism, and

industrial education, Du Bois believed in political organization and participation, the wage-labor system, and higher education through book learning. In addition, Du Bois took strong exception to Washington's praise of the materialistic *ethos*. Washington believed that only through the black masses' succeeding financially and becoming economically indispensable could they buy their way into full citizenship. Du Bois decried the rise of commercialism in the reconstructed South in general and in the city of Atlanta, in particular. Du Bois warned of the consequences of African Americans becoming infected by the American virus of "greed and avarice." He wrote in the chapter "Of the Wings of Atlanta:"

Atlanta must not lead the South to dream of material prosperity as the touchstone of all success; already the fatal might of this idea is beginning to spread; it is replacing the finer type of Southerner with vulgar money-getters; it is burying the sweeter beauties of Southern life beneath pretence and ostentation. For every social ill the panacea of Wealth has been urged,—wealth to overthrow the remains of the slave feudalism; wealth to raise the "cracker" Third Estate; wealth to employ the black serfs, and the prospect of wealth to keep them working; wealth as the end and aim of politics, and as the legal tender for law and order; and, finally, instead of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, wealth as the ideal of the Public School. (49)

He persisted in seeing black's ability as limitless in potential, given a free leadership class and the proper training of that class. Guided by his experience and sociological research, he had come to the conclusion that social advancement could come in sufficient quantity and quality only through higher education in the arts and sciences. Du Bois believed that a liberal education was the pathway (allowing them to transcend their current social condition) to African American progress, and he fervently fought to preserve black culture through educational institutions and by a focus on socio-historical research which codified black experience within the United States.

A key premise on which Du Bois' arguments from transcendence rested was in the debate over self-determinism or the idea of black people as an ethnic nation with a collective political and economic power. Inherent within the debate is "how should blacks build up their collective political and economic power?" Both Du Bois and Washington expended a great deal of energy to establish principles which characterized the foundation of economic and political power. Washington pressed for economic veracity in lieu of civil liberties as a good faith measure to acquire a seat at the commercial table of America and thus legitimate blacks' worthiness of recognition. He specifically argued for blacks to attend industrial schools such as his Tuskegee Institute to learn the types of skills and trades which would allow them fruitful access into the marketplace. Acquiring an industrial education not only provided an individual with a sense of purpose and divinity but also served as a practical means, a means of establishing a successful livelihood. Washington wrote in his second autobiography

*Working with the Hands:*

The worth of work with the hands as an uplifting power in real education was first brought home to me with striking emphasis when I was student at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, which was at the time under the direction of the late General S.C. Armstrong. But I recall with interest an experience, earlier than my Hampton training, along similar lines of enlightenment, which came to me when I was a child. Soon after I was made free by the proclamation of Abraham Lincoln, there came the new opportunity to attend a public school at my home town in West Virginia. When the teacher said that the chief purpose of education was to enable one to speak and write the English language correctly, the statement found lodgment in my mind and stayed there. While at the time I could not put my thoughts into words clearly enough to express instinctive disagreement with my teacher, this definition did not seem adequate, it grated harshly upon my young ears, and I had reason for feeling that education ought to do more for a boy than merely to teach him to read and write. While this scheme of education was being held up before me, my mother was living in abject poverty, lacking the commonest necessities of life, and working day and night to give me a chance to go to school for two or three months a year. (3-4)

Washington argued that industrial training bred self-determinism in that it was a practical message to blacks of self-improvement and progress along the lines of least resistance.

Du Bois claimed that Washington's argument illustrated the paradox of his career. To Du Bois the question was simple: Was it possible and probable that blacks could make effective economic progress if they were deprived of their political rights? His answer—an emphatic No! Du Bois argued that as Washington was “striving nobly to make Negro artisans business men and property owners,” at the same time, “it is utterly impossible, under modern competitive methods, for workingmen and property-owners to defend their rights and exist without the right of suffrage” (31).

In a 1901 review of Washington's recently published autobiography, Du Bois criticized Washington's leadership as a “throwback” to the colonial era, the period between 1750 and the invention of the cotton gin when “liberalizing tendencies...brought...thought of ultimate adjustment and assimilation. Such aspiration was especially voiced in the earnest songs of Phillis [Wheatley], in the martyrdom of [Crispus] Attucks, the fighting of [Peter] Salem and the poor, the intellectual accomplishments of [Benjamin] Banneker and [William] Derham, and the political demands of the Cuffes (*Souls of Black Folk* 28). Du Bois also warned of the error in being so dogmatic towards capitalism. But even more tragic in Du Bois' eyes, were the facts surrounding Washington's accommodationalist perspective and the results which they had currently yielded in terms of helping build up blacks' collective political power. He wrote, “In the history of nearly all other races and peoples the doctrine preached has been that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses, and that a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing,” yet

he immediately replied, "In answer to this, it has been claimed that the Negro can survive only through submission. Mr. Washington asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things" (30). Du Bois listed these as political power, insistence on civil rights, and the higher education of youth. However, Du Bois noted that in concentrating the black American protest movement's energy on industrial education, wealth accumulation, and Washington's philosophies that the movement has only been able to reap, "1. The disfranchisement of the Negro. 2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority. 3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of Negroes" (31). He continued, "These movements are not, to be sure, direct results of Mr. Washington's teachings; but his propaganda has, without a shadow of a doubt, helped their speedier accomplishment" (31).

Du Bois argument suggested that Washington's ideologies limited the effective progress of the larger group as a whole. By Washington's methods blacks as a collective whole were being made a servile caste and most importantly were depriving themselves of chances at developing exceptional men and women of the race. His argument based on quantity and quality contended that the rights of black American people transcended Washington's special interest group, particularly the business elite. He stated, "This is an age of unusual economic development, and Mr. Washington's programme naturally takes an economic cast, becoming a gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to overshadow the higher aims of life" (30). By inherently accepting the alleged inferiority of blacks, Washington's accommodationalist perspective exacerbated the white race prejudice growing in the South and has given an increased impetus to actualize race prejudice against blacks. Washington's policy called for a

policy of submission yet throughout history in such crises “that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses...” (30). His doctrine tended to absolve Southern and Northern whites from the “Negro problem” and shift the burden of the problem on the shoulders of blacks. Du Bois argued that this burden, however, belongs to the nation and all must act to righting the past wrongs.

In essence, Du Bois’ argument employs the comparative point of quality. Du Bois argued that Washington’s proposal was, in effect, worse or that his strategy was overall a bad strategy. Most would agree that Washington’s program was useful and Du Bois’ research on Atlanta University graduates would confirm the usefulness of a liberal arts education. These graduates, from higher educational institutions were the exact graduates that were being hired to teach at schools such as Tuskegee and Hampton. Du Bois’s appeal was based on seeing his program as seeking a greater good than that of Washington’s accommodationalist philosophy. Thus, Du Bois’ arguments rested on the comparative advantages of supporting his ideals over those of Washington’s. Du Bois stated:

In failing to state plainly and unequivocally the legitimate demands of their people, even at the cost of opposing an honored leader, the thinking classes of American Negroes would shirk a heavy responsibility,--a responsibility to themselves, a responsibility to the struggling masses, a responsibility to the darker races of men whose future depends so largely on this nation, ---this common Fatherland. It is wrong to encourage a man or a people in evil-doing; it is wrong to aid and abet a national crime simply because it is unpopular not to do so. (“Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others” 33).

Furthermore, the establishment of the fundamental issues concerning self-determination allows Du Bois to develop a case for the importance of civil rights. Du Bois primarily used the comparative points of value and hierarchy in his clash with Washington over civil rights.

Du Bois argued that civil rights are the “soul of democracy,” “safeguard of modern society,” “necessary of modern manhood,” and “great words which the sons of the Fathers would fain forget” (*Souls of Black Folk* 28, 34, 35). This premise allows Du Bois to argue from the highest level of transcendence and to claim that “By every civilized and peaceful method we must strive for the rights which the world accords to men, clinging unwaveringly to those great words which the sons of the Fathers would fain forget...” (35).

Washington did not argue against civil liberties for blacks, but he placed these values lower on the rights hierarchy and fundamentally dependent on the responsibility of blacks’ economic and educational process. Washington asked whites to place no barriers to black economic advancement and to even become partners of their black neighbors “in all things essential to mutual progress” (221-222). Washington saw his own role as the axis between races, the only leader who could effectively negotiate and keep the peace by holding extremists on both sides in check. Washington downgraded politics as a solution of black problems and did not recommend politics to the ambitious young black man and never held office himself. Washington stated in the “Atlanta Exposition Address”:

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing...It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercises of these privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera house. (223)

Washington’s approach was practical; since ballots were not as essential as jobs, he dedicated himself to training blacks for vocational opportunities. He believed that Southerners, with their long history of racism, would not support black education unless

they were convinced a docile, efficient labor force would result (Harlan 3). Therefore, industrial training evolved from an environment of expediency, but under Washington it became the absolute principle embracing nearly every virtue.

Du Bois used a combination of value and hierarchy argument when he pointed to the status and condition of blacks in the United States. Du Bois argued that the immediate program of black Americans meant nothing unless it was mediate to his great ideal and the ultimate ends of his development. Du Bois demanded equality—political equality, industrial equality, and social equality; according to his message, blacks were not going to rest until this ideal was realized. His demands were intractably tied to self-respect and self-determinism. He claimed that only in a demand and a persistent demand for essential equality in the modern realm of human culture could any people (black or white) show a real pride of race and decent self-respect. For any group, nation or race to admit for a moment an unwillingness to improve is for the race to write itself down immediately as indisputably inferior in judgment, knowledge, and common sense.

Du Bois sought to lift the struggle for an identity from that of respect merely as an American citizen to that of respect as a member of the human community. This shift would also tend to broaden the immediate audience of Du Bois. Although seen as a radical by some, Du Bois' message does not pronounce complete withdrawal or to revolt or seek revenge “typified in the terrible Maroons, the Danish blacks, and Cato of Stono, and veiling all the Americas in fear of insurrection” (28). However, Du Bois would argue that in fighting for immediate repeal of laws such as *Plessy vs. Ferguson* and one's civil rights was a “just cause” and that those who believed in this fight are fighting a “just fight.” Du Bois wrote:

But, nevertheless, they insist that the way to truth and right lies in straightforward honesty, not in indiscriminate flattery; in praising those of the South who do well and criticizing uncompromisingly those who do ill; in taking advantage of the opportunities at hand and urging their fellows to do the same, but at the same time in remembering that only a firm adherence to their higher ideals and aspirations will ever keep those ideals within the realm of possibility. They do not expect that the free right to vote, to enjoy civic rights, and to be educated, will come in a moment; they do not expect to see the bias and prejudice of years disappear at the blast of a trumpet; but they are absolutely certain that the way for a people to gain their reasonable rights is not by voluntarily throwing them away and insisting that they do not want them; that the way for a people to gain respect is not by continually belittling themselves... (32-33).

### 3.4 Conclusion

Bennett, Jr. said of Du Bois and Washington's historic confrontation:

The antagonism between the two wings is generally and inaccurately described as a struggle over industrial education vs. higher education. But the core of the problem lay deeper than this. The whole controversy turned on leadership, not trades; on power, not education. To Washington's program of accommodation, Du Bois opposed a strategy of "ceaseless agitation and insistent demand for equality [involving] the use of force of every sort: moral suasion, propaganda and where possible even physical resistance." He favored immediate social and political integration and the higher education of a Talented Tenth of the black population. His main interest was in the education of "the group leader, the man who sets the ideals of the community where he lives, directs its thoughts and heads its social movements." He therefore opposed Washington's exclusive stress on education of the hand and heart because without a "knowledge of modern culture" black Americans would have "to accept white leadership, and... such leadership could not always be trusted to guide the Negro group into self-realization and to its highest cultural possibilities. (332-333, qtd. In *The College Bred Negro* 62)

Social change agents and social movements argue from transcendence when they claim that an organization, group, goal, thing, right, act, or proposal surpasses, is superior to, or is prior to that of the opposition. An argument of transcendence is a comparative argument based on quantity, quality, value, or hierarchy. These points of comparison allow a rhetor to establish, attack, and defend positions on identity, rights, visions of reality, and organization.

Du Bois' public confrontation with Washington (taken here mostly from his 1901 book review of Washington's autobiography *Up from Slavery*) best exemplifies Du Bois' rhetorical aptitude in influencing public opinion by the use of a rhetoric of transcendence. This is representative of his larger argument and not simply his differences with Washington. Du Bois' critique of Washington's social philosophy was necessary to firmly position him as a viable spokesman for blacks on fundamental issues of education, civil responsibility, self-determinism, and the deteriorating social conditions produced by racism. Du Bois was able to use his growing public platform to challenge Washington as the representative spokesman for black issues, particularly those concerning social and economic progress. Yet, it was also important for Du Bois to not seem as though he was personally attacking Washington.

For Du Bois to be perceived as something other than the emerging status quo or the legitimate action of system change it was necessary for him to create a drama or confrontation which forced a response from the establishment, in this case from Washington. The confrontation enacted by Du Bois was done so using a rhetoric of transcendence to juxtapose the two human forces or two agents, with one standing for the erroneous evil system and the other upholding the new or more practical order. Washington and Du Bois were brought into conflict through confrontation in order for both to recognize that this is no ordinary reform or realignment of the established order.

The enactment of confrontation gave Du Bois his identity, his substance, his form. Du Bois as a viable spokesman could be taken seriously without an act of confrontation. And he chose what at the time (until the publishing of his own book *Souls of Black Folk*)

was the most popular book in print or to be printed by a black person to thoroughly argue its moral fortitude and contextual ambivalence.

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# Chapter 4

I am by birth and law a free black American citizen. As such I have both rights and duties. If I neglect my duties my rights are always in danger. If I do not maintain my rights I cannot perform my duties.... Whenever I meet personal discrimination on account of my race and color I shall protest. If the discrimination is old and deep seated, and sanctioned by law, I shall deem it my duty to make my grievance known, to bring it before the organs of public opinion and to the attention of men of influence, and to urge relief in courts and legislatures. I will not, because of inertia or even sensitiveness, allow new discriminations to become usual and habitual. To this end I will make it my duty without ostentation, but with firmness, to assert my right to vote, to frequent places of public entertainment and to appear as a man among men. I will religiously do this from time to time, even when personally I prefer the refuge of friends and family.

Du Bois, W.E.B. "A Philosophy for 1913," *Crisis* 5 (January 1913): 127.

## 4.1 Introduction

W.E.B. Du Bois' choice of value premises as outlined in chapter two is, of course, closely related to his *ethos*. Du Bois was a well educated individual with a formal education second to none, which is astonishing recalling, the political and social environment between 1895 and 1909 and the extent of Jim Crow segregation. After finishing his Ph.D. in history at Harvard College in 1896 (in fact there was only one other African American Ph.D. graduate in 1896—Lewis B. Moor, University of Pennsylvania—both had attended Fisk University), Du Bois moved directly into teaching (turning down a position from Tuskegee principle Booker T. Washington to teach at Tuskegee Institute—Du Bois had been actively recruited by Washington for the faculty at Tuskegee several years—these efforts ceased as the two became more estranged), first at Wilberforce University and next accepting an appointment at the University of Pennsylvania (See Washington's "A Letter to W.E.B. Du Bois, October 26, 1899" in

*African American Political Thought* Edited by Cary D. Wintz; Bond 26)). It was at Wilberforce that Du Bois began to engage constructively what was then commonly known as “the Negro problem,” the obstacles faced by African Americans to full participation in American society.

At the turn of the century, African Americans looked forward with mixed feelings of pride and discouragement. Blacks had made tremendous progress since the ending of slavery under the dynamic leadership of Booker T. Washington, yet the majority of white Americans showed little willingness to accept blacks as equals. It was during these uncertain times, that Du Bois and Washington, along with others, began to publish a compelling collection of articles to address “the Negro problem.” Over the course of his career Washington would express his views on a number of race-related issues in letters to the editor of a number of Southern newspapers such as the *Montgomery Advertiser*, the *Atlanta Constitution*, and others. Washington’s discourse emphasized the value and purpose of industrial education for black Americans (See Washington’s “Letter to the Editor, *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 30, 1885” and the “Atlanta Exposition Address” *African American Political Thought* Edited by Cary D. Wintz). On the other hand, Du Bois called for the cultivation of an elite corps of black intellectuals who would work to uplift the African American masses.

At one point, Du Bois had come to the conclusion that “the Negro problem” could be constructively engaged through “systematic investigation and intelligent understanding” (Du Bois *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois* 205-206). According to Du Bois, the “ultimate evil was stupidity”; the cure for it was knowledge based on scientific investigation” (206). He wrote, “I tried to isolate myself in the ivory tower of

race. I wanted to explain the difficulties of race and the ways in which these difficulties caused political and economic troubles. It was this concentration of thought and action and effort that really, in the end, saved my scientific accuracy and search for truth” (208). Du Bois reasoned that a rigorous social science approach could help explain how racial hierarchies and social inequality functioned within U.S. society. At the University of Pennsylvania, he would begin to put his social thought into action. Du Bois would conduct, over an eighteen month period, a massive research study on black life in a major city. *The Philadelphia Negro* (1897) analyzed the condition of more than 40,000 blacks living in the central district of the seventh ward of Philadelphia. It was an unprecedented study and one that would distinctively set the course of Du Bois’ socially relevant and responsible scholarship.

Du Bois’ success with the Philadelphia studies largely preoccupied him with critical sociological study of the African American community. From Philadelphia, he went to Atlanta University for the opportunity to organize an unprecedented research project opportunity. He explained, “I was approached by President Horace Bumstead of Atlanta University in 1896 and asked to come to Atlanta University and take charge of the work in sociology, and of the new conferences which they were inaugurating on the Negro problem” (*The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois* 209). From 1898 to 1913, Du Bois would spearhead the Atlanta University Publication series. This conference series stood as the first attempt to study scientifically the problems of black Americans. To Du Bois, these conferences were never designed to be openly political. The goals of racial equality and political representation for minorities within liberal democracy were not the primary focus. Nevertheless, the social science data generated by the conference

participants provided rationale for specific reforms. “As time passed,” Du Bois noted, “many uplift efforts were in fact based on our studies: the kindergarten system of the city of Atlanta, white as well as black; the Negro Business League [headed by Booker T. Washington]; and various projects to better health and combat crime” (214).

Du Bois’ social research allowed him to gain a unique perspective on the fundamental challenges and social problems facing black Americans. In addition, his research developed practical strategies and initiatives for facing the fundamental challenges and social problems confronting blacks—equality, rights, and economic opportunity. As a result, Du Bois’ academic accomplishments catapulted him into elite academic status and grew his popularity in the United States and abroad; but it was his commitment to the individual lives of blacks in America and the African Diaspora and the high degree of congruity between these ideals and his own character that vaulted his civic leadership over the likes of Washington and others.

Du Bois’—*ethos*—as a social organizer was central to his ascendancy as the newest leader in the black protest movement and to our understanding of his social philosophy of parallel development. As Du Bois turned away from sociological research, he applied his sociological imagination to new sets of issues of political and cultural significance. This chapter focuses on the congruity between Du Bois’ own character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued. Du Bois as a major black American thinker exhibited a “basic coherence and unity” in not only his social thought but a multifaceted career that stressed social scientific explanations for racial hierarchies and social inequality, cultural pluralism, and socially relevant and responsible scholarship. He was keenly aware and unafraid to apply his knowledge to issues of

significance that preoccupied African American themselves and to address and resolve those issues on their own terms.

By using Aristotle's perspective on *ethos*, we will investigate Du Bois' appeal—the ways in which he maintained a high degree of congruity between his own character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued versus the same degree of congruity between Washington's own character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued. To do so we will first investigate Aristotle's concept of *ethos* and discuss how Du Bois' *ethos* was a major factor in determining the congruity between his own character and accomplishments and his social discourse. Next, we will discuss Du Bois' *ethos* and the congruity between his own character and accomplishments and his social philosophy. In addition, we will look closer at Washington's *ethos* for contrast given Du Bois' approach does not emerge in a vacuum but in competition with Washington's.

Du Bois' rhetorical approach added a visionary and an intellectual voice to a campaign which became pivotal to the progress of the black protest movement, particularly in helping its supporters to perceive and recommend solutions to solve the prevailing problems of black identity, on their own terms and as a force to bring about social change.

#### **4.2 *Ethos* as Rhetorical Proof and Coactive Strategy**

To understand the congruity between Du Bois' character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued, it is necessary to discuss briefly Aristotle's concept of *ethos*. The term *ethos* as explicated by Aristotle in *On Rhetoric* predominately means

“moral character” as reflected in the deliberate choice of actions and as developed in a habit of mind—especially how this character is established by means of the speech or discourse.

Aristotle remarked, “[There is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others] on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt” (*Rhetoric* 1356a). In this statement, Aristotle highlights the fact that the speech act must engender worthwhile consideration from the audience or, in other words, the speaker must establish common ground with the audience. For this to occur, the disposition of the audience must be changed in some degree not by the qualities or reputation the speaker holds at the beginning of a message but in terms of how the rhetor’s character is perceived over the course of the message (Golden, Berquist, and Coleman 35).

For Aristotle, *ethos* is a significant component of the orator’s argument and a testament to artistic achievement. In social movements, the ultimate goal of the social change orator is to promote the issues at hand, not him- or herself. The treatment and directing of appeals to one’s self is subsidiary to the purpose of creating general identification between the orator’s message and the audience. This is particularly important when that message is delivered over a significant length of time and to a broad audience. *Ethos* is critical to Aristotle because it links one’s words to their actions, and the more congruous the speaker’s actions are to his or her words the higher degree of *ethos* they will be able to achieve.

Aristotle identified three different deployments of *ethos*: “There are three things which inspire confidence in the orator’s own character—the three, namely, that induce us to believe a thing apart from any proof of it: good sense, good moral character, and goodwill. ... any one who is thought to have all three of these good qualities will inspire trust in his audience” (*Rhetoric* 1380b). Thus, for a speaker to establish common ground based on an appeal to *ethos*, Aristotle explained that a speaker must convey good intentions (*eunoia*), good moral character (*arête*), and good sense (*phronesis*).

Du Bois, as this study has suggested, artistically used the rhetorical proofs of *pathos* and *logos* to argue for his philosophy of parallel development over that of the accommodationalist philosophy of Booker T. Washington. Yet, it is his appeal to *ethos* which most distinguishes Du Bois as a viable leader and visionary in the black protest movement. The good intentions, moral character, and common sense echoed by Du Bois in his message and visible in his own character and accomplishments appealed to various audiences in ways which Washington could not and led audiences to identify with Du Bois in ways that with Washington they could not. Thus, these deployments of *ethos* allowed supporters of the black protest movement to see the high degree of congruity between Du Bois’ own character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued over that of other leaders like Washington.

Yet, *ethos* does not belong to the rhetor but is coproduced or “coactivated” with the audience and for an audience to accept someone as a viable leader or his ideas as legitimate it is necessary for the rhetor to seek to establish common ground, specifically through his own character and accomplishments (See a discussion of coactive persuasion in Stewart, Smith and Denton, Jr. *Persuasion and Social Movements* 63-67). As a result,

persuasion permeates movement organizers' efforts as they attempt to promote change. Stewart, Smith and Denton stated, "Persuasion is the primary *agency* through which social movements perform *functions* that enable them to come into existence, to satisfy requirements, to meet oppositions, and, perhaps, to succeed in bringing about or resisting change" (48). It is the primary agency for satisfying essential requirements and overcoming obstacles. The practice of rhetoric constitutes an active construction of character; *ethos* takes form as a result of the orator's abilities to argue and to deliberate and thereby to inspire trust in an audience (Hyde xvi).

To Aristotle, the role of character in a message dealt with the ability of the speaker to make him or herself seem trustworthy and for the audience to accept the speaker's appeal. Fundamental to our understanding of an appeal to *ethos* is the notion of *ethos* as a coactive strategy. As a coactive strategy, *ethos* is contingent on both the speaker and the audience for its success; the audience in terms of their reception of the message and the overall trust and goodwill exhibited toward the speaker and his or her message. The speaker is also important in establishing *ethos*, in that he or she is responsible for creating, through language and action, a sense of identification between him-or herself and the audience. Thus, *ethos*, one's good moral character, is a concept which is granted to the speaker by the audience but is the responsibility of the speaker to create and maintain through discursive means. Aristotle's treatment of *ethos* is not necessarily talking about one's standing or position within society; he is referring to what is actually contained in one's discourse and the character which it reveals. As a result, appeals by a speaker to *ethos* reveal a message which deliberately builds elements which move audiences to trust and respect the speaker. Golden, Berquist, and Coleman wrote:

The Greeks conceived of the perfect speaker as one who possessed character, intelligence, and good will. A speaker's integrity was judged on the basis of the apparent truthfulness of the statements he made (character). Listeners judged the soundness of his ideas in terms of their own experience and the evidence presented in support of a proposal (intelligence). The speaker's attitude toward his listeners was judged in terms of the listeners' best interests (good will)...Aristotle developed the important notion that the persuasive power of ethos is to be demonstrated within the speech not only by the choice of arguments but by the speaker's frame of mind and relationship to the audience. (35)

Aristotle posited that *ethos*, or the persona that a speaker projects to an audience, can be the most potent means of persuasion, often being more effective than either logical or emotional appeals (Cooper 8-9). While numerous perspectives on *ethos* have arisen since Aristotle's teaching, the reason for drawing upon an appeal to *ethos* has largely remained the same. *Ethos* is essential to the credibility and character of speakers as potential leaders and as a means to creating a sense of what linguistic philosopher Kenneth Burke referred to as "identification" (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 21). Burke's concept is tied closely to Aristotle's "common ground" and will be important to our understanding of *ethos*.

Burke's system of identification, suggests that the degree to which specific audiences feel that they are being spoken to in their "own language" is critical to creating a sense of common ground or goodwill. The sharing of this feeling, attitude, and judgment or "identification" is equivalent to persuasion. In Burke's approach, when true identification occurs, the rhetors attempt to act, believe, and speak like the audience. Burke explains identification as a process that is fundamental to being human and to communicating. He contends that the need to identify arises out of division; humans are born and exist as biologically separate beings and therefore seek to identify, through communication, in order to overcome separateness. We are aware of this biological

separation, and we recognize additional types of separation based on social class or position. We experience the ambiguity of being separate yet being identified with others at the same time: we are “both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another” (21). Our separation but need for identification with others provides the basis of entwined discourse and action.

Burke suggested we not only experience separateness but are motivated by the spirit of order and hierarchy and feel guilty about the differences between ourselves and others (who occupy different positions in the social hierarchy) and about our inevitable failure to always support order, authority and hierarchy. As Burke asserted, “Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division” (22). How do we overcome our division and rid ourselves of guilt? To overcome our division and our guilt, we look for ways in which our interests, attitudes, values, experiences, perceptions, and material properties are shared with others, or could appear to be shared. These instances of "overlap" make us "consubstantial" with others. In other words, our division and guilt is purged symbolically. We continually seek to be associated with certain individuals or groups (and not others), attain some position in the hierarchy of social relations, and relieve ourselves of the guilt we bear. *Ethos* is significant because it offers a dwelling or an abode from which our communicative practices arise.

The development of identification occurs through the linguistic sharing of what Burke called substances, or the raw material of our self-concepts (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 21). These substances or places that undergird our most fundamental beliefs and values also emerge in the words we use to define things, persons, and issues. Identification with

others develops to the degree that we symbolically share possible physical, experiential, and philosophical possessions. In other words, audiences identify with rhetors that have the same view of life as they do, who enjoy the same kinds of activities, who have similar lifestyles, etc. If audiences identify with rhetors, they naturally, according to Burke, tend to believe what they say and are more inclined to act in ways suggested by the rhetor. So rhetors, must call attention to those substances that they share with audiences by demonstrating their good intentions, good moral character, and good common sense.

Legitimacy and identity construction are primary focuses when discussing *ethos* and require some additional discussion because of the layers of meaning that *ethos* has held historically. Nan Johnson pointed out that *ethos*, “has been defined in two ways: as a mode of persuasion that draws upon the prerequisite virtue of the speaker; or as a mode of persuasion that relies on the speaker creating a credible character for particular rhetorical occasions” (243). My use of the term largely reflects Johnson’s second definition, seeing *ethos* as identity construction (creating good moral character) in response to a specific rhetorical situation. This is an important sense of the concept of *ethos* in that it privileges its role vis-à-vis place, community, identity, and moral action. Robert Wade Kenny wrote of *ethos* as “the quality of personhood that calls for humanity to care for its self, its world, and its others in such a manner that...our Being is made possible” (36).

Inventing an effective *ethos* often requires constructing one’s self-image. It is necessary to transform space and time into places that are easily comprehended by one’s audience, what Michael Hyde refers to as “to know together” (xiii). *Ethos* in this way creates the grounds where a person’s ethics and moral character take form and develop.

Focus on identity reconstruction does not, however, presume that identities can be stabilized or fixed but recognizes the impact of context on self-perceptions and the ways in which one chooses how best to present him-or herself. Susan Jarratt and Nedra Reynolds explained, “The concept of *ethos* ...theorizes the positionality inherent in rhetoric—the speaker having been created at a particular site within the contingencies of history and geography” (47). Perhaps the most important aspect of inventing *ethos* is understanding the rhetorical situation: what arguments are available, which of these arguments appeal to the audience, and how one’s personal history (his or her character, expertise, reputation, credibility, experience, etc.) relates to the audience and these arguments.

The *ethos* of rhetoric takes advantage of an orator’s ability to create symbolic constructs; to invent *ethos* is to establish one’s good character by casting oneself in a good light, maximizing one’s positives and minimizing one’s negatives. (One might also maximize one’s opponent’s negatives and minimize one’s opponent’s positives.) As Hyde stated, “We *are* creatures who are destined to be caught up in the process of providing the openings of these places wherein good (and bad) things can happen” (xiii). To speak of casting oneself in a good light is to speak of establishing a dwelling place for people to deliberate on one’s good intentions. For orators, *ethos* is both a legitimating source for and a praiseworthy effect of the ethical practice of the orator’s art. As a result, legitimacy and the creation of positive relational patterns form places, which are made possible by past social, psychological, and rhetorical transactions, which develop a communal existence between the speaker and the audience (Stewart, Smith and Denton, Jr. 63).

The act of retaining legitimacy becomes imperative once it has been conferred. Charles U. Larson stated, “Legitimacy can be thought of as a power base” (244). When people or a social order confers legitimacy on a person or institution, it confers power of control, reward, identification, terministic control, and moral suasion. Legitimacy, then, is a vehicle for getting people to perform. Thus, *ethos* represents a coercive strategy in that although it is sought by the rhetor, it is achieved by establishing common ground with the audience in ways which both affirm and confirm (legitimize) their beliefs vis-à-vis the beliefs and values of the rhetor.

Du Bois’ social change rhetoric illustrates several dimensions in which Du Bois was able to establish common ground with audiences and to reconcile images of pre-and post-Reconstruction black Americans. This focus served to legitimize in the eyes of his target audience, potential supporters, institutions, government, and the public the demands and methods of a growing social force. Drawing heavily upon earlier ideas of Alexander Crummell, Du Bois began to argue that the tiny black middle class possessed the necessary resources and potential to constitute a leadership group for the entire race. Du Bois’ “Talented Tenth” central assertion was clearly outlined during 1903, at the beginning of the ideological and political disagreements with conservative black educator Booker T. Washington. Du Bois wrote:

One happening in America linked in my mind the race problem with the general economic development, and that was the speech of Booker T. Washington in Atlanta in 1895. When many colored papers condemned the proposition of compromise with the white South, which Washington proposed, I wrote to the *New York Age* suggesting that here might be the basis of a real settlement between whites and blacks in the South, if the South opened to the Negroes the doors of economic opportunity and the Negroes cooperated with the white South in political sympathy. But this offer was frustrated by the fact that between 1895 and 1909 the whole South disfranchised its Negro voters by unfair and illegal

restrictions and passed a series of “jim crow” laws which made the Negro citizen a subordinate caste. (*The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois* 209)

To overcome apparent division, Du Bois sought out ways in which his interests, attitudes, values, and perception might be shared or appear to be shared with others. This process of reconciliation is crucial to the audience’s identification with Du Bois and illustrates Du Bois active construction of character, in other words, his *ethos*—his ability to argue, to deliberate, and to inspire trust in his audience. Du Bois dedicated himself to the construction of viable institutions and mediums of African American agency and capacity building. He suggested that the unique historical experiences and cultural heritage of black people in America had nurtured a common consciousness.

Herbert W. Simons once remarked that persuasion is a learning, perceptual, and adaptive process and the restructuring of people’s perceptions is itself a form of persuasion. He stated:

In the study of persuasion there is no question more central than that of how to induce changes in attitudes...Influencing behavior by changing attitudes, rather than relying exclusively on bribes or threats, also has obvious practical value in that it generally is less expensive and longer lasting, and is by most accounts more ethical. But changing attitudes is also apt to be difficult—far more difficult in most cases than strengthening existing attitudes. (47)

Simon’s consideration of the psychological effects of persuasion reminds us that, at its core, persuasion is a symbolic act for both persuaders and receivers.

Persuasion does not attempt to coerce others into taking action but rather to move them toward considering taking that action by giving them good logical, emotional, and cultural reasons. According to Burke, building identification is in itself a key element of the process of persuasion (*Rhetoric of Motives* 21). We are drawn to this analysis (the construction of *ethos*) because of the high degree of congruity between Du Bois’ own

character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued versus the same degree of congruity between Washington's own character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued. Du Bois is himself testament to the fact that what he advocated could be done—as was also the case with Washington.

### **4.3 The *Ethos* of Social Activism and Leadership**

Following the death of abolitionist and civil rights leader Frederick Douglass, Washington became the voice of black America. Washington's program of industrial education was progressive and helped transition blacks "up from slavery." Washington's views on education were representative of the fact that he was not an intellectual, but a man of action. Washington wanted blacks in the South to respect and value the need for industrial education both from a vantage of American and African experience. He was against the notion of education as a tool used merely to enable one to speak and write the English language correctly; he wanted school to be a place where one might learn to make life more endurable, and if possible, attractive; he wanted an education that would relieve him of the hard times at home, immediately. Moreover, education of the head would bring even more sweeping emancipation from work with the hands. He did not want his black people to be ashamed of using their hands, but to have respect for creating something and a sense of satisfaction upon completion of that task (see Washington's 220) "Atlanta Exposition Address" in *Up From Slavery*. Washington rose to prominence out of a specific situation or context to which he spoke. And in some ways Washington made possible the emergence of a situation to which Du Bois might speak more effectively.

The rhetoric of Washington and Du Bois attacked the problem from differing standpoints and advanced polemical strategies for resolving America's current dilemma. Washington emphasized the importance of the industrial curriculum in his development of Tuskegee's curriculum. The endowment of the General Education Board (GEB) in 1902 supplemented the growth and expansion of black industrial schools. The GEB influenced policy in all matters pertaining to African Americans substituting for a nonexistent federal department of education. David Levering Lewis wrote, "Its cautious decisions at 61 Broadway (an easy stroll to Rockefeller headquarters at 26 Broadway) were paramount in matters of endowment, capital construction, professional schools, fields of specialization, and fellowships for scholars. Twenty-eight years after its founding, the GEB would have distributed \$176,984,000 to historically white colleges and universities and \$21,999,349 to those serving African Americans (although less than \$1 million would be allocated to the latter until after World War I.)" (267).

Something of a visionary, a course of study that Washington saw fit was a course of study that trained Southern blacks to become farmers, carpenters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, brick masons, engineers, cooks, laundresses, sewing women, house keepers, and later tailors—as Washington noticed "that it was almost impossible to find in the whole country an educated colored man who could teach the making of clothing" (*Up from Slavery* 92-93). As support for the Tuskegee Institute increased, over the years, so did the enrollment and selection of trade skill classes offered. The students received "hands-on" instruction in the trade of their choice, and more than half of the students were actually employed and receiving pay in their trade, while learning at the same time. However, blacks still faced many problems. American liberal ideals rested on the belief

that people are created equal and have human rights; on the other hand, blacks, as one tenth of the population, were treated as an inferior race and were denied numerous civil and political rights (See Gunnar Myrdal's discussion of the Negro Problem as a Moral Issue in *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*).

Washington could be critical of the unjust and often harsh treatment of blacks, yet he did not challenge the prevailing status quo in doing so. In his writing, Washington established his technique of criticizing the treatment of blacks without directly challenging the core beliefs of Southern segregationists and white supremacists or directly criticizing the South. This technique and its overriding perspective gained Washington a legion of devoted white benefactors (See Loius R. Harlan's "Introduction" in Washington's *Up from Slavery* xvi). And after the success of the Atlanta Exposition address, Washington would receive countless invitations to speak at a variety of occasions throughout the North and the South (See "Address at the Unveiling of the Monument to Robert Gould Shaw" *African American Political Thought* Edited by Cary D. Wintz). As Washington's popularity grew among wealthy and philanthropic whites, his respect and leadership power slowly decreased among emerging middle class blacks and liberal minded whites (Washington xvi). Although Washington led the way in raising money for his Tuskegee Institute and as a symbol of black accomplishments, he left a void in his unwillingness to tackle head on the growing problems of social separatism, disfranchisement and, most importantly, lynching. This is the void and the audience that Du Bois sought to influence.

Although Du Bois had made great strides academically, he decided to leave the confines of academia's social laboratory isolated from the daily struggles of his people

and insert himself into the black protest movement. He took up guard and began to organize and generate collective efforts to stem disfranchisement and halt racial exclusion in public accommodations. Du Bois declared “One could not be calm, cool, and detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered and starved” (*The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois* 22).

Du Bois began to publish material that specified the complex character of black life—how it is far more flexible, durable, intricate, and contradictory than at the time was widely acknowledged, particularly among blacks like Washington. As in the case of the *The Philadelphia Negro*, this study presented black Americans for the first time “as a striving, palpitating group, and not an inert, sick body of crime; as a long historic development and not a transient occurrence” (*Autobiography* 197-199). In other words, the African American people were prime actors in the making of their own history and their unique cultural and social experience. As Manning Marable stated, “This was a remarkably radical approach for interpreting the social reality of black America in 1899” (ix).

As Du Bois was specifically effective in his social scientific approach, he was equally effective in framing how complex, flexible, and contradictory black life could really be. According to Du Bois, the time was now to actively participate and to stand fast for the rights and privileges afforded to American citizens. Du Bois, in his own words, was painfully aware that merely being born in a group does not necessarily make one possessed of complete knowledge concerning it. As a result, Du Bois’ socially relevant and responsible scholarship was highly congruent with his character, accomplishments and the course for which he argued. His active participation in civic matters, his

acquisition of an education grounded in the liberal arts, his public and vocal denunciation of racial atrocities and his willingness to call into question the moral conscious of America all grew from his socially relevant and responsible scholarship. All of these things helped to build and secure Du Bois' *ethos* and provided solid proof of his commitment and belief in the possibility for social change. The degree of congruity between character and accomplishments, particularly in terms of civic engagement, human rights, and the pursuit of equal rights, is not as prevalent with Washington's *ethos* who at this time was considered the divinely appointed leader of the black community. In fact, there was no congruity between Washington and those higher aspirations of a new generation as there was with Du Bois.

Racial segregation challenged not only racial identities but also social views, status, and privilege during the American post-Reconstruction time period. Federal statutes such as *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, the social attitudes and mores which cemented them as norms within society, and *de facto laws* (or in this era what is commonly known as "Jim Crow" laws; that held segregation as a practice) required good reasons for social action and challenged both Washington and Du Bois to move audiences to either adapt to current social conditions or to actively protest against them. According to Du Bois' widely read essay published in *Outlook* magazine, blacks must be "trained for Social Power" (409). In the article, Du Bois reasoned that if blacks were to be central actors in making a new racial history, the problem of racism must first and foremost be analyzed from a black perspective that employs a language and cultural style that resonated with African Americans. Most striking and radical was Du Bois proclamation that whites could be observers and occasional participants in this new conversation about race, but

they could not dictate the terms of the discourse. On the other hand, Washington was very willing to allow whites to dictate the course of this new conversation and obliged blacks to sit idle by and allow them to do so.

In Du Bois' April 1904 essay "The Negro Problem from the Negro Point of View: The Parting of Ways," he specified the central tenets of his disagreement in leadership with Washington and set a new course to build viable consortiums and institutions to remedy the fundamental challenges and social problems confronting black Americans. In the article "The Evolution of Negro Leadership" published in *The Dial* July 16, 1901, Du Bois reviewed Washington's autobiography, *Up from Slavery*. In this article (which would be republished in *Souls of Black Folk's* "Of Booker T. Washington and Others"), Du Bois placed Washington within the context of earlier black leadership as well as within the context of late-nineteenth-century economic, social, and political realities. However, in this particular review, Du Bois is not overtly critical but he does begin to raise questions about Washington's racial philosophy and political tactics. In the republished version in *Souls of Black Folk* of the review of Washington's autobiography, Du Bois examined very critically Washington's philosophy and leadership and laid out his strategy for civil rights. Du Bois does not attack Washington's motives or ethics, but he does strongly oppose the policies championed Washington and cites how these policies have failed to resolve the problems that African Americans confronted. The impracticable conditions of Jim Crow segregation brought before Du Bois a choice to either fully commit himself to the black protest movement occupying his time with organizing and pulling interested parties together, or to acquiesce to the prevailing social conditions and continue researching and publishing within the confines of academia. In

his essay “The Parting of the Ways” published in *World Today* April 6, 1904, Du Bois intensified his criticism of Washington, and began to outline in more detail his specific differences with the more conservative faction of African American leadership (See the speech printed in its entirety *African American Political Thought* Edited by Cary D. Wintz).

The origins of Du Bois’ social evolution began with his desire to produce a socially relevant and responsible scholarship. Yet, it is the construction of viable institutions and mediums of African American agency that defined his praxis as a scholar-activist throughout the rest of his public career. Du Bois may seem an unlikely leader to the gathering social force of the black protest movement, due to the fact that he was a well-known sociological and historical researcher, author, scholar, and teacher at Atlanta University. His academic life and professional lifestyle did not necessarily mandate his involvement in any active controversial social cause. Du Bois was trained as a historian, but he soon realized that his discipline could not fully address the fundamental challenges and social problems then confronting black Americans. Lerone Bennett, Jr. surmised, “He believed then that truth, dispassionately presented, would set black people free. But he soon changed his mind. There were, he recalled later, seventeen hundred lynchings between 1885-1894—‘each death a scar on my soul’” (331).

Du Bois recognized early in his professional career the need to speak and write simultaneously to very different publics, occasionally employing different arguments but always with the overall goal of empowering the African American people. This is extremely important to Du Bois’ *ethos* and particularly important as we investigate the good sense and goodwill that his messages often contain. Both black and white

supporters perceived Du Bois as an accenting device, one who was skillfully able to illuminate the seriousness of racial injustice but at the same time symbolically redefine the present social conditions for minorities as unjust, immoral, and impractical. This linguistic turn from a *zeitgeist* which previously had been seen as unfortunate but perhaps tolerable by others such as Washington significantly boosted Du Bois' *ethos*.

Philosopher Lucius T. Outlaw, Jr. observed that within the relatively short span of nine months in 1897, Du Bois wrote, presented, and/or published many pivotal essays: Du Bois presented "The Conservation of the Races" on March 5, 1897, at the founding meeting of the American Negro Academy in Washington, D.C.; he conducted survey research in rural Virginia during the summer of 1897 that was subsequently published as "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia" by the U.S. Department of Labor Bulletin; he published "Strivings of the Negro People" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, which would later appear with several important revisions as the opening chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903; and he delivered "The Study of the Negro Problems" on November 19, 1897, at a meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science in Philadelphia.

According to Outlaw:

Du Bois was endeavoring to fashion a program and strategies for resolving problems of Negro life and thereby enhance the progressive development of a Negro racial group plagued by the complexly interrelated effects on them of racial prejudices and economic exploitation by white folks, and of problematic orientations, and practices that had become characteristic of Negro social and cultural life in the United States that Du Bois (among a number of Negroes) was convinced were inimical to the resolution of social problems affecting their lives and impairing their progressive social evolution. (281-297)

The whole body of Du Bois' intellectual work challenged structural racism. What Du Bois sought through scientific investigation was the possibility of formulating more liberal, enlightened social policies affecting blacks. His scholarship was joined to his

group advocacy; a scientific, logical argument would give greater weight to black American claims for greater opportunity while also laying the foundation for substantive and institutional reforms. This valuable combination was remarkably delightful for individuals seeking to be more proactive in the fight for social equality.

Washington's approach had been very different. This approach did not appeal to a new generation of upwardly mobile blacks and liberal minded sympathetic whites. In Washington's most famous speech, which would become known as "The Atlanta Compromise Address," he urged blacks to strive for economic advancement rather than agitate for immediate social equality. Washington's 1895 address at the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition espoused segregation and attempted to maneuver within its confines. His basic purpose in giving this speech was to impress upon Southern whites the earnest intentions of blacks in cementing a friendship between themselves and whites and to create a dwelling place that would allow an honest and hearty accord of cooperation between the two races. Washington stated, "To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next-door neighbour, I would say: 'Cast down your bucket where you are'—cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded" (*Up From Slavery* 219). To white audiences, this compromise, this "casting down of your bucket" was essential to keeping order and the status quo in the South. He continued but now directed his message specifically towards whites in the audience:

Cast down your bucket among these people who have, without strikes and labour wars, tilled your fields, cleared your forests, builded your railroads and cities, and brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth, and helped make possible this magnificent representation of the progress of the South. Casting down your

bucket among my people, helping and encouraging them as you are doing on these grounds, and to education of head, hand, and heart, you will find that they will buy your surplus land, make blossom the waste places in your fields, and run your factories. While doing this, you can be sure in the future, as in the past, that you and your families will be surrounded by the most patient, faithful, law-abiding, and unresentful people that the world has seen. (221)

For blacks in attendance, Washington's words represented the most common of attitudes.

This compromise reflected the same pre-Civil War mentality that most would be accustomed to. Washington's message glorifies labor and a certain dignity and pride which could be salvaged only from labor. He professed, "No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem" (220). In his message there is an inherent agreement to the separation and segregation that would come to dominate the time period and an acknowledgment of the "true" place that blacks should occupy in a separated but cooperative society.

To blacks in attendance, Washington's mere presence and allowance to address a mixed audience of such magnitude in the South, in particular, was a triumph of its own. Yet, the full impact of his words and the ramification of their meaning would not be understood fully until one year later with the judgment of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*. Many would argue and charge Washington for creating the social conditions and attitude that could lead to the enactment of such a federal statute as was the case with *Plessy vs. Ferguson*. Yet, to a generation of blacks in attendance that day, older blacks who were born pre-Civil War, this generation had not only been born but grew up under a system of *de facto* segregation and Washington's rationale, in addition to his persona (he was a remarkable person who had accomplished much in a short period of time) articulated a perspective that rural southern blacks could identify with. Washington, in essence, spoke

his audience's language and reflected a solution which appeared most appealing and, most importantly, most comfortable to those in attendance.

#### **4.4 A Congruity between Character and Accomplishments**

The state of affairs in the United States of America during the first decade of the twentieth century is well known. In 1896, the United States Supreme Court upheld racial segregation *de jure* in the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* decision. This *de jure* segregation or segregation by law was based on the right of U.S. states and localities to mandate racial segregation. *Plessy vs. Ferguson* upheld the constitutionality of separate railroad cars for blacks and whites. Speaking for the court, Justice Henry Billings Brown argued that as long as the separate facilities for each race were "equal," they were permitted under the Constitution. In dissent, Justice John Marshall Harlan, the only Southerner on the court and a former slave owner, argued that the "Constitution is colorblind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens." In addition, Justice Harlan pointed out that this segregation would create a psychological sense of superiority among whites while harming the psyche of blacks. Harlan's dissention would prove to be correct, almost prophetic. In fact, by 1900 most Southern states had established voting requirements that either prevented or severely hindered blacks in their suffrage attempts.

For example, in 1898, the *Williams vs. Mississippi* Supreme Court decision approved a scheme that prevented almost all blacks in the state from either voting or serving on juries. Before 1890 about 190,000 blacks voted in Mississippi, but in the 1890s the state established a system of poll taxes and literacy tests. By 1898 this system had reduced the number of black voters and potential jurors to a few thousand.

Mississippi was not the only state to pass such laws; others such as Georgia, Louisiana, Alabama, Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Virginia also passed *de jure* segregation laws which in effect stripped blacks of their constitutional right to vote. Poll taxes and literacy requirements for suffrage were effectively disfranchising blacks, and hundreds of blacks were annually being lynched. As Ronald Takaki stated, “This era was brutally repressive—what historian Rayford Logan described as ‘the nadir’” (138).

This type of court sanctioned segregation taught racism as official government policy—the separation of people on the basis of their race or ethnicity. *De jure* segregation or segregation with the sanction of law also developed a *zeitgeist* of unequal protection under the law for blacks and a general feeling of inferiority concerning one’s status in society. Yet, segregation by law was only one type of segregation which began to dominate the American South. *De facto* laws were also enforced in the United States further disfranchising blacks. *De facto* segregation or “segregation in fact” occurred as social practices, political acts, economic circumstances, and public policy resulted in the separation of people by their skin color and ethnicity even though no further laws required racial separation. *De facto* laws were often used to reinforce the psychological construction of white supremacy and black inferiority (See Lerone Bennett, Jr. discussion of Jim Crow laws in *Before the Mayflower* 257-258).

The cost of racial segregation was enormous, particularly, in the South. The practice of restricting people to certain circumscribed areas of residence or to separate institutions (e.g., schools, churches, hospitals) and facilities (parks, restaurants, theatres, restrooms, etc.) on the basis of skin color provided a means of maintaining the economic advantage and superior social status of the politically dominant group. Throughout the

South, segregation had the support of the legal system and law enforcement. Beyond the law, there was the looming psychological threat of vigilante violence against blacks who attempted to challenge or even question the established social order. Violence and the power of state governments made resistance to segregation difficult. This position of “separate but equal” in all things of “mutual concern” was the message advocated by Washington (*Up from Slavery* 221-222).

But in the decade following Washington’s speech, as southern urban centers, like Atlanta (where Du Bois was living at the time) experienced overwhelming growth, the growth of a literate and able bodied working class also increased job competition among black and white workers. By the 1880s Atlanta had become the hub of the regional economy and the city’s overall population soared from 89,000 in 1900 to 150,000 in 1910, the black population was approximately 9,000 in 1880 and 35,000 by 1900 (Census of Population and Housing Decennials Census *U.S. Census Bureau*). Such conditions caused concern among white elites who feared the social intermingling of the blacks and whites and led to the expansion of *Jim Crow* segregation, particularly in the separation of black and white neighborhoods and separate seating areas for public transportation. Washington’s message did not provide comfort or practical strategies for dealing with these new conditions that stifled black progress.

Segregation also heightened class distinctions among blacks. The emergence during this time of a black elite class in Atlanta also contributed to racial tensions in the city. The early 1900’s caused the black elite to distance themselves from the black working class by justifying segregation and backing those who supported it. As the black elite acquired wealth, education, and prestige, its members attempted to distance

themselves from an affiliation with the black working class, and especially from the black unemployed. In one such article, “Not Pity But Respect: A Negro’s View of the Color Line” by Reverend T. Nelson Baker, the author attacked young black people for opposing segregated seating arrangements at a Student Volunteer Convention in Nashville. In the article, Baker asserted that Jim Crow resulted from the defects of black people and that “a chronic state of whining and pouting” was harmful and that “the degradation of Negro women” displayed itself in their “perverted aesthetical taste” for white men (See Du Bois’ letter to T.N. Baker in *The Correspondence of W.E. B Du Bois* 117).

Washington was also harsh in his condemnation. Always careful not to offend Southern public opinion, he blamed a revolting Mississippi lynching on the lack of education of the blacks who were lynched. Lerone Bennett, Jr. recounted, “His [Washington’s] classic condemnation, however, ran in this vein: ‘It is unreasonable for any community to expect that it can permit Negroes to be lynched or burned in the winter, and then have reliable Negro labor to raise cotton in the summer’ (328). This utterance was not what you would consider a resounding condemnation of the act and the perpetrators of the act, but for Washington it reflected the dwelling place he consistently attempted to create and a message which he personified to the acquiescence of segregation and many of the hostile and heinous acts which was an ancillary hazard of it.

Segregation and the laws which were put into place to uphold segregation as a societal policy had a tremendous psychological effect on not only whites but it also tended to bifurcate black society as well. Some of the most prominent and elite blacks of the time period tended to accommodate the social conditions of the moment and advocated that all blacks do the same. Many conservative leaders essayed a program of

conciliation and racial submission. Washington and his admirers accepted segregation and concentrated their efforts elsewhere. Washington on very few occasions spoke out against the atrocities of lynchings and the unequal treatment of blacks in light of segregation. Washington's power came from the company he was able to keep, the wealthy business owners and politicians. As time passed, Washington's apathy toward the diminishing of opportunities for blacks weakened his position and authority with black Americans. In this time of uncertainty, his message further alienated whites from blacks but more importantly created wider divisions within the black community.

To working class black Americans and a growing group of blacks who were leaving the South and traveling to the North in search of better paying jobs and to escape the ever threatening presence of racial hostility, Washington's message could not reflect the everyday life and struggles by those most being affected by the unstable conditions of segregated living. His message presented to a new generation of blacks and liberal whites that he was unaffected and unsympathetic to the segregated conditions of the South. In essence, Washington's message reinforced feelings of genetic inferiority and cultural weakness. The content of Washington's original message—economic survival following slavery's end had lost its power. Blacks were now not only surviving; some were thriving. Du Bois would present a different message, in a different time, and to a different audience. Washington's message was a message that ignored causality of fault, a message outside history, without a script or a plot that might insist on progression. For a people already stripped of their history, a people often ill equipped to retrieve that history in any form other than what fluttered in inadequate schools across the nation, the testimony of Washington seemed only to confirm black's worst suspicions about themselves. In fact,

Washington's message resonated less and less with the very people he felt should strive to be more like him.

Du Bois' approach was categorically different and in many ways rhetorically superior to that of Washington's. There existed a high degree of congruity between Du Bois' own character and his social philosophy. To Washington's program of accommodation, Du Bois proposed a strategy of "ceaseless agitation and insistent demand for equality [involving] the use of force of every sort: moral suasion, propaganda and where possible even physical resistance." Du Bois on several occasions passionately spoke out against lynching and especially segregation. "One could not be a calm, cool and detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered, and starved," Du Bois observed in his *Autobiography* (22). In addition, Du Bois enlisted the help of others who were well known civil rights activists like William Monroe Trotter and Ida. B. Wells to fight segregation and lynching at the ballot box, in the courtrooms, and through activist organizations. Speaking to the impractical nature of segregation in a journal article published in the May 1908 *American Journal of Sociology*, Du Bois remarked, "...any dream of separating the races in America or of separating the races of the world is at present not only impracticable but is against the whole trend of the age, and that what we ought to do in America is to seek to bind the races together rather than to accentuate the differences" (185-186).

Du Bois' message was not divisive but sought to unify both blacks and white Americans. Du Bois also has *ethos* with whites as did Washington. Unlike Washington, however, Du Bois articulates a position which he believes is best for *all* people, not just for an elite class of people who are beginning to emerge in spite of segregationist

conditions. His rhetoric, although confrontational at times, suggested good intentions in regards to both blacks and whites good intentions, in the sense that in his attempt to occupy the moral high ground, he advances a position which is merely what he believed to be the right thing to do based on the common American principles—of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These are the same founding principles that most Americans could identify with, particularly white Americans. Du Bois' argument not only confronts the immorality and foolishness of racism but also the attitudinal basis by which *de jure* and *de facto* segregation is premised. The bigger problem for Du Bois was not solely the immorality of racism but the economical and political exigencies that a racially bifurcated society presented to the American character. This philosophy would dominate Du Bois' rhetoric during this time period, eventually materializing into the confrontational social movement organization—The Niagara Movement.

The Niagara Movement is essentially a social movement of political significance. The movement was organized as a means to actively acquire significant advancements for blacks in economic, civil, and educational areas (Bennett, Jr. 333). The Niagara Movement developed in response to the continuing oppression faced by blacks in the United States at the start of the twentieth century. Despite the progress made since emancipation during the American Civil War, the majority of Southern blacks still did not have the right to vote and also lacked many other civil rights. In addition, many continued to face racial violence; in fact, in Georgia alone, 260 blacks were lynched between 1885 and 1906 (See the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918*). In opposition to the idea that blacks could improve their condition through conciliatory policies and

accommodation—as advocated by Booker T. Washington—the Niagara Movement sought to end discrimination through direct action. Du Bois articulated a position that aligned him with black activists and a new generation of young northern blacks who also opposed accommodationist writing, “We have no right to sit silently by while the inevitable seeds are sown for a harvest of disaster to our children, black and white.” The black men and women of America had a duty to perform he said, “A duty stern and delicate,—a forward movement to oppose a part of the work of their greatest leader” (*Souls of Black Folk* 35). This group particularly identified with Du Bois’ approach because they were inherently more willing and in more of an economic position to be more forceful and active in their willingness to fight for what they believed they appropriately deserved.

To understand this organization and Du Bois’ role within, let us take a moment to discuss it historically. The Niagara Movement began in February 1905, acting upon the letter and spirit of his activist’s words, Du Bois along with John Hope, William Monroe Trotter, (editor of the Boston *Guardian*), Frederick McGhee, C. E. Bentley, and twenty-seven others met secretly in the home of Mary B. Talbert (a prominent member of Buffalo’s Michigan Street Baptist Church) to adopt the resolutions which would eventually lead to the founding of the Niagara Movement. The Niagara Movement along with other organizations such as the National Afro-American League and the Afro-American Council, whose followers were among the first African Americans to organize against racial discrimination in the United States, raised demands on burning issues in the Republic calling for “full manhood suffrage,” “improvement in educational facilities,” “the integration of public facilities,” and “the right of freemen to walk, talk, and be with

them that wish to be with us.” Their rhetoric was bold, unapologetic, and polarizing, quite a different message purported by more docile and conciliatory supporters of Washington (Lewis 367-369).

Some months later, July 11—14, 1905, on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, twenty-nine men met and held the first official meeting of the Niagara Movement. The name Niagara Movement was adopted because of the location and to embody the “mighty current” of protest they wished to unleash. At this meeting, they drew up a manifesto calling for full civil liberties, abolition of racial discrimination, and recognition of human brotherhood. The first two messages released to the nation from the movement were written by Du Bois. In both the “Declaration” and the “Address” Du Bois principally appeals to advocates of social justice and those most interested in civic engagement. For Du Bois, social equality is acquired not by the sideline but by actively participating in contest and competition. In the words of Du Bois, “We want full manhood suffrage and we want it now.... We are men! We want to be treated as men. And we shall win.” This stance stood in notable contrast to the accommodation philosophy advanced by Washington in the Atlanta Compromise of 1895. Where Washington acquiesced to Southern racial hostility, calling not for an end to a morally unjust system of segregation and unequal civil rights as progressive undertakings of America but instead suggesting, particularly to blacks that progress came only in terms of economic advancement (See the “Atlanta Exposition Address” in Washington’s *Up from Slavery* 223-224).

Du Bois’ articulation of progress hinged, however, on the idea of social justice and civic engagement. Not since the abolitionist movement had the country heard such

agitational and bold rhetoric from a group as visionary and well-educated as members of the Niagara Movement. Their demands prompted young and highly skilled blacks who were streaming to the North to organize local chapters and file petitions and suits against segregationist statutes and referendums in the North as well as in the South (Bennett, Jr. 344-345).

The founding of the Niagara Movement coincided with the mass exodus of blacks from the South to the North, like the Mexican exodus to *El Norte*—a land across the river, in which the United States represented a land of boundless dreams and aspirations for Mexican migrants. The North was for southern blacks—the *Promised Land*. And blacks began to migrate northward by the tens of thousands during the early twentieth century. Blacks went to cities of the Midwest and the Northeast where they joined European immigrants, including the Irish and the Jews. Between 1910 and 1920, the black population jumped from 5,000 to 40,800 in Detroit, 8,400 to 34,400 in Cleveland, 44,000 to 109,400 in Chicago, and 91,700 to 152,400 in New York. “There can be no doubt of the drift of the black South northward,” Du Bois noted (Osofsky 21). They were making a crossing, pulled by a powerful liminality called the North (341). All over the South blacks found themselves swept up in the migration northward. And when they arrived they found jobs and a new sense of power and identity.

As Takaki has noted in his book *A Different Mirror* “World War I had virtually cut off the flow of European immigrants, reducing their numbers from 1,200,000 in 1914 to only 110,000 in 1918. Facing tremendous factory shortages, factory managers dispatched labor recruiters to the South (342). Factories, mills, and workshops through necessity were opened up to this workforce. Quoting a Chicago newspaper, Takaki wrote,

“We are to be given a chance, not through choice but because it is expedient. Prejudice vanishes when the almighty dollar is on the wrong side of the balance sheet” (342). In some cases, workers doubled and tripled their daily and weekly wages for the same skilled oriented jobs they previously held in the South. To Du Bois, this also meant the vanishing of a particular type of black person, in-and of-itself. It signified a coming of age, so to speak, of black people who had progressed from the isolated and coddling nature of the typical black slave with the typical slave mentality. In the place of older blacks who were born before or during the Civil War, were younger blacks who were born after the Civil War and the aftermath of Reconstruction. This was the post-Reconstruction age, an age where individuals had not experienced slavery, it was not something they could remember or be terrified of. They did not feel, as did the older generation, the lingering vividness and sedimentary power of the institution of chattel bondage. It was a withering attitude.

Most of the blacks who were moving to the North belonged to this post-Reconstruction generation, restless, dissatisfied, unwilling to mask their true selves and accommodate to traditional subservient roles (Bennett, Jr. 339). In a statement to a Labor Department investigator in 1916, a black man explained this generational difference:

My father was born and brought up as a slave. He never knew anything else until after I was born. He was taught his place and was content on keeping it. But when he brought me up he let some of the old customs slip by. But I know there are certain things that I must do and I do them, and it doesn't worry me; yet in bringing up my own son, I let more of the old customs slip by. For a year I have been keeping him from going to Chicago; but he tells me this is his last crop; that in the fall he is going. He says, “When a young white man talks rough to me, I can't talk rough to him. You can stand that; I can't. I have some education, and inside I has the feelings of a white man. I'm going.” (137)

Tired of the South, these young black men and women wanted to make a change. “The South,” Du Bois stated, “laments today the slow, steady disappearance of a certain type of Negro—the faithful, courteous slave of other days, with his dignified...humility” (Osaofsky 24-25).

But this black explosion in the North did not come without resistance. As blacks migrated to the North, they sparked an explosion of white resistance. The conflict over housing intensified during this period as blacks responded to the labor needs of Chicago’s war-related industries. Meanwhile, the schools had become racial battlegrounds. Similarly the workplace became a terrain of competition and conflict. Du Bois and the Niagara Movement offered blacks, migrants to the North and traditionalists who had remained in the South, a way to fight back through black solidarity, ethnic enterprise, and collective action (civic engagement). The Niagara militants stated:

We want the laws enforced against rich as well as poor; against capitalists as well as laborers; against white as well as black. We are not more lawless than the white race, we are more often arrested, convicted and mobbed. We want justice even for criminals and outlaws. We want the Constitution of the country enforced. We want Congress to take charge of the Congressional elections. We want the Fourteenth Amendment carried out to the letter and every state disfranchised in Congress which attempts to disfranchise its rightful voters. We want the Fifteenth Amendment enforced and no state allowed to base its franchise simply on color....These are some of the chief things we want. How shall we get them? By voting where we may vote; by persistent, unceasing agitation; by hammering at the truth; by sacrifice and work. (Bennett, Jr. 333-336)

The second annual meeting of the Niagara Movement which was held in Harper’s Ferry, West Virginia on August 16, 1906, was in homage to John Brown—a Du Boisian hero. The delegates in attendance on the 16<sup>th</sup> made a pilgrimage at dawn barefooted to the scene of Brown’s execution and Du Bois would give the keynote address “Niagara Address to the Nation” which has been called by Phillip S. Foner “one of the most

important statements in the history of the Negro liberation movement” (170). According to Stewart, Smith, and Denton, Jr., “Social movements expend great persuasive effort trying to educate audiences about the cause and to convince them of the urgency to *join together* to bring about or to resist change” (74). The Niagara Address served just that purpose. The Niagara Address was printed in papers such as the *Cleveland Gazette*, *Chicago Law Register*, and the *Guardian*. The Du Boisian campaign illustrated an approach which appealed to the new laborers of the North and rattled the cages of the more traditional status quo. Du Bois’ message appealed to those who were ready for action, they were the same individuals who had previously acted in a very proactive way by leaving the familiar ways of the South and seeking for themselves and their families a better way of life—a way of life promised in the American dream.

Du Bois’ message not only appealed to younger blacks in the North but isolated pockets of liberal whites and educated blacks. These types of appeals are often made more effective due to particular events that act as a catalyst for potential supporters. A violent act often jars people into action, many of whom seem unlikely social movement activists or social movement supporters. A triggering incident is often necessary to move the generally unorganized, ideologically uncertain, and barely visible contingent from motion to action. The triggering events in this case were the Atlanta and Springfield Massacres in September 1906 and August 1908, respectively. Not to mention the growing cases of lynchings in the South and the Midwest.

For example, on September 22, 10,000 white people (most of them under twenty) ravaged and pillaged the city of Atlanta, particularly in the Five Points area beating and killing every black person they found on the street in the city. “In some portions of the

streets,” reported the *Atlanta Constitution*, “the sidewalks ran red with the blood of dead and dying negroes.”

Historian Lerone Bennet, Jr. wrote describing the August 1908 event, “For six days in August, 1908, a white mob, made up, the press said, of many of the town’s “best citizens,” surged through the streets of Springfield, Illinois, killing and wounding scores of blacks and driving hundreds from the city. Shouting, “Lincoln freed you, we’ll show you your place,” the mob flogged and lynched blacks within sight of Abraham Lincoln’s grave” (337). That this should happen in a city intimately identified with Lincoln—*the emancipator* horrified white liberals. William English Walling, a radical white Kentuckian, expressed the growing sense of outrage in a newspaper article, “Race War in the North.” It was time, he insisted, for national action. “Either the spirit of Lincoln and Lovejoy must be revived and we must come to treat the Negro on a plane of absolute political and social equality, or Vardman and Tillman will soon have transferred the race war to the North... Yet who realizes the seriousness of the situation, and what large and powerful body of citizens is ready to come to their aid.”

Du Bois met these events with harsh criticism, strong and choice words. The militant tone of the “Niagara Address to the Nation” in which Du Bois demanded black suffrage, equal rights, and hinted towards militant action, if necessary, alarmed and annoyed large sections of the press accustomed to the accommodating language of Washington. Yet, the violent acts of the Atlanta and Springfield Massacre was accompanied by reactionary rhetoric of the Niagara Movement to galvanize pockets of white liberals such as Mary White Ovington, William Walling, and other liberals, both

black and white, to call for a national discussion and action concerning the race problem (Bennett, Jr. 336-337).

For Du Bois, these riots marked the bitter end to the Atlanta Compromise of 1895. Du Bois favored immediate social and political integration and the higher education of a Talented Tenth of the black population. Du Bois had been characterized as an “agitator.” The *Outlook* magazine which denied race prejudice was increasing repudiated the anti-segregation stand of the Niagara men. The editor of the popular weekly maintained that certain “distinctions” were required to preserve “race integrity,” and those Negroes who refused to accept a separate status automatically admitted the inferiority of their race (796). Du Bois embraced this characterization with which he had been labeled by mainstream media. Du Bois would write a reply a year later to these and other allegations, particularly to his labeling as an “agitator” and it would be published in the NAACP literary magazine *The Crisis* of which he was now editor. The reply was titled “The Value of Agitation” and as Foner suggested “is as valid today as when it first appeared” (174).

DuBois’ work is inherently dependent on character in its various forms. Du Bois is representative of a heroic figure to his audience and the growing black middle class. “The Value of Agitation” begins by drawing a definite distinction of the types of character of those willing to agitate for progress and those who are strictly opposed to it. Du Bois implies to his audience that he is not only aware of the choices and the consequences of those choices in advocating agitation but also expresses to his audience an understanding of how his perspective may be viewed to a reluctant audience. He stated, “There are those people in the world who object to agitation and one cannot

wholly blame them. Agitation after all is unpleasant. It means that while you are going on peaceably and joyfully on your way some half-mad person insists upon saying things that you do not like to hear. They may be true but you do not like them...It would be much better if we did not have to have agitation” (174). Du Bois admits, “if we had a world where everything was going so well and it was unnecessary often to protest strongly, even wildly, of the evil and the wrong of the universe” (174). But the reality of the situation Du Bois insisted is that “...no matter how unpleasant the agitator is, and no matter how inconvenient and unreasonable his talk, yet we must ever have him with us. And why?” Du Bois asked, “Because,” he answered, “this is a world where things are not all right. We are gifted with human nature which does not do the right or even desire the right always. So long as these things are true, then we are faced by this dilemma: either we must let the evil alone and refuse to hear of it or listen to it or we must try and right it” (175).

Du Bois admits that all agitators do not tell the truth or may be mistaken in how they have summed up a particular situation. He also admits these things to his audience, but he humbly offers his interpretation of the situation as “some one who thinks that he has discovered some dangerous evil and wants to call attention of good men of the world to it” (175). Du Bois suggested that his role in this whole matter was simply that of an information broker. He was simply letting the audience in on what was truly happening in the world. His intentions are then for the audience to only to hear him out and if they find worth and merit in what he says he asked only for them to begin to work to right the wrongs that are apparent. The underlying principle of Du Bois’ message is tied in to the

moral conscious of the audience and for that morally conscious audience to listen to Du Bois as a voice of reason, as suggested in Aristotle's discussion of *ethos*.

Du Bois ties his message into historical events and movements which his intended audience could identify, such as the suppression of the slave trade and abolitionist movements. He stated, "If we remember the history of all great reform movements, we remember that they have been preceded by agitation" (175). The abolitionist movement could easily be identified by the audience not only in terms of its being so recent but because both blacks and whites fought side-by-side in the cause. Indirectly Du Bois likens himself to other historic movement prophets and ideologues. He talks of the heroism and persistence of Thomas Clarkson, a British abolitionist who was active for over six decades with the likes of William Wilberforce and Granville Sharp in the battle against slavery. Clarkson's interest in abolition was aroused in his student days at St. John College, Cambridge. In 1785, he entered into an essay contest held by Cambridge University. His essay was entitled "Is it right to make men slaves against their will?" Clarkson won first place and was asked to read his essay to the University Senate. Afterwards on his way to London, as the story goes, Clarkson had an epiphany—a spiritual experience which he often described as a direct revelation from God ordering him to devote his life to the abolition of slavery. Clarkson along with Grandville Sharp formed the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787. Most of the members were Quakers with other influential members such as John Wesley, Josiah Wedgwood and later William Wilberforce. Clarkson's main duty in the movement was to gather information to support the abolition of the slave trade. In 1787, Clarkson published in pamphlet form *A Summary View of the Slave Trade and the Probable Consequences of*

*Its Abolition*. In 1807 the House of Commons passed a bill making it unlawful for any British subject to capture and transport slaves. Although Du Bois' comparison of himself and Clarkson is subtle rather than overt, it is made subtly yet still reinforces to the audience a sense of Du Bois' character and goodwill.

By calling attention to individuals such as Clarkson, Du Bois grounds not only his viewpoint in something historical but in approaching the problems of the present situation a method that is proven to be successful. Du Bois' broad academic training in history bodes him well in situations such as this and we often see infused in his rhetoric historical references which reinforce his character and competence. This technique often worked to enhance Du Bois' credibility with his audience.

For example, to distinguish himself and the Niagara Movement from Washington and the accommodationists, Du Bois often relies on ideas and meaningful quotes from former activists in social reform movements, man or woman, domestic or foreign. Again, by drawing upon the words of these historic figures Du Bois reinforced his knowledge of the techniques and strategies of successful movements of the past but also grounds his rationale in making comparisons from the past to the present. Towards the middle of the article, he uses a quote from influential American woman suffragist, economist, writer and reformer Charlotte Anna Perkins Gilman to further his argument as to the value of agitation. Gilman was a prolific theorist and writer in the early 1900s. She wrote over two hundred short stories and some ten novels. Gilman referred to herself as a humanist, not a feminist, and believed her goal was to campaign for the cause of women's suffrage. Gilman's writings expressed that the woman's domestic environment had become an institution which oppressed women. She authored theoretical books such as *Women and*

*Economics* (1898), in which she attacked the old division of social roles; *Concerning Children* (1900), in which she advocated professional child-care; and *The Man-Made World: Or, Our Androcentric Culture* (1911).

Du Bois point is that all great movements are preceded by agitation and that it is imperative that the present situation for blacks calls for not “ornamental rights” but for blacks to make the world realize that “the rights we want are the rights that are necessary, inevitable before we can rightly do our duties” (“The Value of Agitation” 176). To solidify his point, Du Bois infuses quotes of Gilman that “Unless a man works, he may not eat,” and “The cart is before the horse..unless a man eats he cannot work” which run counter to the Washington philosophy which Du Bois quotes as, “Do your duties first and then clamor for rights.” Du Bois uses the Gilman quotes to signify a proactive attitude to solving one’s social problems. He reasons, “...that the rights we are clamoring for are those that will enable us to do our duties. That we cannot possibly be asked to do any partial measure of our duty even, unless we can have those rights and have them now. We realize this. The great mass of people in the United States do not realize it” What then are we to do?” Du Bois asked and he answered, “...The man that has a grievance is supposed to speak for himself. No one can speak for him—no one knows the thing as well as he does” (176-177).

As Du Bois begins to conclude his argument, he pleaded one last time to the moral suasion of the audience. Keeping in line with his reasoning and further building his positive *ethos*, Du Bois claimed, “If a man does not express his needs, then it is because his needs are filled” (177). Yet, Du Bois suggested that such was not the case in the present situation and it was imperative that he (as an ideologue, as an agitator cast in the

mold of Clarkson and Gilman) make the people aware of what they have irresponsibly overlooked. “And it has been our great mistake in the last decade that we have been silent and still and have not complained when it was our duty not merely to ourselves but to our country and to humanity in general to complain and to complain loudly. It is then high time that the Negro agitator should be in the land” (177). Du Bois’ argument premised on social justice and responsible civic engagement is used to establish common ground with his audience. Based on the heinous acts which had been committed and were still yet to come, Du Bois crafted a remarkable message exemplifying his commitment, honesty, character and good will. These are all necessary, as Aristotle suggested and Burke confirmed, in establishing one’s *ethos* or credibility with the audience particularly when a speaker is intended on promoting some action within the audience. Du Bois fashioned himself as someone the audience should respect and went about gaining the audiences respect by building messages which attempted to do just that—present himself as likeable and worthy of their consideration and respect.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

In summary, a high degree of congruity existed between Du Bois’ own character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued versus the same degree of congruity between Washington’s own character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued. Du Bois’ congruity was established because of positive relational patterns with the larger society. Lerone Bennet, Jr. stated, “More than that, Du Bois was a man of genius who had that undefinable quality called presence” (330). Aristotle suggested in his treatise *On Rhetoric* that we tend to believe people whom we respect.

One of the central problems of persuasion is to project an impression to the audience that you are someone worth listening to, in other words making yourself as author into an authority on the subject of the moment, as well as someone who is likable and worthy of respect.

Although Washington was the undisputed leader of the more than ten million blacks living in America, the discrepancies and paradoxes of his leadership naturally raised increasing opposition among blacks and especially among the younger educated class of blacks who began to emerge throughout the country, particularly from Northern institutions. At the time when black civil rights called for organized and aggressive advocacy, Washington derailed that advocacy by advising acquiescence (as in his 1895 Atlanta Compromise Address) or at least no open agitation or public rebuke of the increasing horror of lynching. During the time when laws such as *Plessy vs. Ferguson* were being passed in all Southern states, between 1890 and 1909, and supplemented by “Jim Crow” laws making color caste legal, Washington’s public speeches, while not completely ignoring this development, tended continually to excuse it, to emphasize the shortcoming of blacks, and were interpreted as putting the chief onus for his condition on blacks themselves.

Moreover, that Washington’s Tuskegee Machine was largely encouraged and given financial support through certain white groups and individuals in the North. These individuals had no clear objective except to build a strong labor force. The “Negro Problem” could not remain a matter of philanthropy. It must be a matter of business. Voting was not encouraged or active participation in the democratic process. Yet, black were good laborers and they could be made of tremendous profit to institutions of the

North. They could become a strong force to offset the unbridled demands of white labor—Northern white labor unions now spreading to the South.

DuBois, as a social scientist was drawn “reluctantly” to politics, which he viewed as “inseparable in his mind from moral imperatives.” Du Bois’ rhetoric seemed to tell the truth, to be straight forward and apply a fundamental type of logic that appealed to the morally sympathetic, both black and white but particularly the young and educated emerging black class. His message was constructed in a manner that his young educated supporters would understand and identify with as he asked blacks and whites to support a policy which involved the overriding issues of agitation and acquiescence—a linguistic style that characterizes previous Du Boisian messages. He refrains from harsh criticism of previous leaders such as Washington and the accommodationists; he is more interested in the future of black Americans than in political or personal gains; such is a tactic reinforced for self-character building (Hill 147). Although his tone in the message has been described as militant, it is only done so in light of the accommodationists as the principle marker to which it is judged by. Yet, the tone that is embodied within his message reveals a passion and determination which is unyielding.

For Du Bois, the matter of leadership is a matter of teaching and writing. Yet, he is squarely in opposition to a system which refused to allow other blacks to have and express their ideas, especially if they ran counter to the ideas advocated by Washington. He chooses the right way and not the easy way. He openly defends social equality and publicly denounces (at every opportunity) the economic and social injustices prevalent in America. He is the champion of policy made by constitutional processes; while others either conduct unruly demonstrations in the streets or do not support constitutional

process at all. But he has healthy respect for the idealism and commitment of the young; he pledges himself in the tradition of Thomas Clarkson who as a British abolitionist battled against slavery and the slave trade to win social progress, civil rights, and liberal education for the youth. He has courage to make a tasteful appeal to patriotism even when it is unpopular. Such is the character portrait drawn for us by W.E.B. Du Bois: portentous not pretentious, sacrificing and active, flexible yet firm where he needs to be. He seems an American style leader, a moral but also practical and sensitive man. And his message is replete with these overt clues from which we infer the good *ethos* of social change agents in the United States in situations like that of the early 1900s.

At the turn of the century it is my contention that Du Bois was the most vital and compelling figure in the black world. His leadership had done more for the advancement of the black Americans than any other living man. Du Bois, himself, even claimed that “the policy of the NAACP from 1910 to 1934 was largely of his own making” (*The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois* 258). In fact, at the height of its publication the *Crisis* magazine had over 100,000 readers. Philip S. Foner surmised, “This meant that it went every month into one-tenth of the Negro homes of the entire nation. This vast readership breathlessly awaited the arrival of each number. The hallmark stamped on every page was Du Bois’ own message—it is a thing of pride to be a Negro” (5). All of these estimates should arouse the interest of the rhetorician, especially one who is keenly interested in *ethos* and how it along with other rhetorical proofs creates superior rhetorical messages.

Social movements and social movement organization rise and they fall. Yet, it is the moral compass that movements and movement organizations set that truly set them

apart. Despite the establishment of 30 branches and the achievement of a few scattered civil-rights victories at the local level, the Niagara Movement suffered from organizational weakness and lack of funds as well as a permanent headquarters or staff, and it never was able to attract mass support, meaning membership from liberal minded whites. After the Springfield (Ill.) Race Riot of 1908, Du Bois had invited Mary White Ovington, a settlement worker, and socialist to be the movement's first white member. Soon other white liberals joined with the nucleus of Niagara “militants” and with Du Bois, founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) the next year. The Niagara Movement disbanded in 1910, with the leadership of Du Bois forming the main continuity between the two organizations.

Although the goals of the Niagara Movement would never be wholly realized, the Movement “set the tone” of the successful and well-known civil rights organization—the NAACP. While the existence of the Niagara Movement would be short lived, subsequent annual meetings were held in such symbolic locations as Harpers Ferry, West Virginia., and Boston’s Faneuil Hall. As editor of the NAACP’s *Crisis*, Du Bois had sought to press educated blacks into service for the fledgling civil protest movement. Du Bois called upon this elite group to counter negative stereotypes fostered by white artists and propagandists who sought to maintain white supremacy and instigate contempt and hatred for blacks.

Du Bois proposed and popularized the theory that only college-educated leaders could save the race. Du Bois’ message was tremendously appealing to a growing legion of young men and women looking to enter and equally compete in America’s market economy. Some have noted that Du Bois was pompous and “not generally liked.”

Although Du Bois tactics were not clear to some, it was evident that his strategy to suggest that blacks should openly protest against their second-class status and that direct social action was the only method which would bring “true” freedom is the basis of all social reform movements today. Elliott M. Rudwick stated “He was recognized by many as the founder of ‘Negro Sociology,’ and Negro college graduates especially considered him the representative ‘of the race’s aspirations.’ For them he was an example, not of what a colored man might achieve, ‘but of what HE IS and HAS DONE’” (94). As a movement organizer, Du Bois understood the necessity to persuade significant numbers of people that only through collective action by uninstitutionalized groups using what at the time would be considered unconventional methods could change be brought about. Du Bois sought to create a collective identity, a people, so individuals could come to identify themselves as a group through shared views of the social environment, shared goals, and shared opinions about the possibilities and limits of collective action.

Jamesian pragmatics justifies the life of the mind in practical terms. (Lewis 96)

Du Bois, who was trained at Harvard, was greatly influenced by William James. For Du Bois pragmatism grounded intellectualism because of its utility in solving social problems. As Watts stated, “Pragmatism...warrants intellectuals as moral agents in the world” (73). Jamesian philosophy, however, tended to treat racial strife as the result of misinformation that focused on transmission rather than misunderstanding and meaning. Du Bois, however, would alter Jamesian pragmatics focusing on black culture and subjectivity. Du Bois had a dual perception of important issues. In his *Autobiography* he wrote, “Meantime, I was fighting segregation but simultaneously advocating such

segregation as would prepare my people for the struggle they were making” (297). Henry Lee Moon noted:

Segregation was to him at one and the same time a debilitating evil and a vital instrument for racial advancement. He praised the achievements of Communism in Russia while soundly condemning the antics of the American Communists. In World War I, although fully aware of the African roots of that conflict, he was one-hundred-percent American, all out for victory at whatever cost to civil rights—much to the dismay of many of his most ardent supporters both within the NAACP and in the Negro community generally. (15)

As a leading sociological researcher, civil rights activists, and lecturer, Du Bois came to signify the horizon of possibilities for an African American *ethos*. Du Bois dramatized a dynamic forum for deliberations about the appropriate norms, premises, and practices of a distinct black culture; thus, his discourse made available to blacks the symbolic and material resources for the rhetorical invention and the articulation of a black public voice. Du Bois was able to locate and develop the appropriate topics to shape public understanding. Rhetoric is oriented by one’s sense of the proper orchestration, characterization, and articulation of topical material in accordance with one’s lived experience. “If topics are best located and enacted through intimate contact with social life,” suggested Eric K. Watts, “then our sense of decorum is conditioned at the outset by a complex and contingent set of social relations” (71-72). For Du Bois, his rhetoric was a public activity that also developed into a form of civic training in that he was keenly able to usher the subject into the material world.

Du Bois is an example of the Talented Tenth. He was what he called for, and what many in his audience aspired to. He called for classical liberal arts education rather than a vocational one. He called for agitation and the pursuit of equal rights. Du Bois, to a high degree, exemplified what he called for. Du Bois sought and obtained a liberal arts

education from the finest colleges in the world and used his experience and expertise to lead a movement that denounced racial segregation and disfranchisement.

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# Chapter 5

It must be remembered that in the last quarter of a century, the advance of the colored people has been mainly in the lines where they themselves working by and for themselves, have accomplished the greatest advance...It is the class-conscious workingmen uniting together who will eventually emancipate labor throughout the world. It is the race-conscious Black [man] cooperating together in his own institutions and movements who will eventually emancipate the colored race.

W.E.B. Du Bois. *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat*. Manning Marable. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 1986. 121.

## 5.1 Summary

The social change philosophies of both Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois significantly defined the early twentieth century black protest movement. Both Washington and Du Bois were instrumental in leading successful reforms and changes in both attitude and policy concerning black education, social integration, and political rights. Overtime, however, Du Bois managed to replace Washington as the major thinker and political voice for black social and political advancement. As a result, Du Bois' philosophies gradually eroded the influence of Washington and ushered in a new attitude toward advocacy and attainment. This study sought to understand the role, motivations, influences, and shortcomings of Du Bois' social change rhetoric between 1897 and 1907 and to investigate how he managed to become a more viable figure head for the movement and its social and political philosophies.

It is generally agreed among African Americanists that W.E.B. Du Bois remains unsurpassed as this country's most formidable African American intellectual (Adell 702). However, to offer proof of this point was not the major aim of this study. My intention in

this study was to focus upon the rhetorical strategies employed in building Du Bois' character and credibility, the emotional appeals made to his immediate audience, and the arguments and counter arguments he advanced to influence his audience. In addition, the study analyzed the opinions shared by Du Bois and his audience that he was able to use to persuade his audience to adopt his social philosophy of parallel development as a viable solution to the racial and social problems facing the country at the time. These characteristics are ultra important in revisiting the rhetoric of social change agents and attempting to speculate on the reasons for their discourse's effectiveness.

It has been my contention throughout this study that Du Bois' rhetoric exemplified a greater congruity between the message and his own life, the degree which he embodied it, the way in which the message was implemented, and its appeal and deference to the opinions of a broader audience. This chapter reviews the extent to which the rhetoric of Du Bois demonstrated those aforementioned strategies. In addition, this chapter will examine the effectiveness of Du Bois' social change rhetoric in light of the choices available during the post-Reconstruction period and how, if at all, his rhetorical strategies changed after 1907. As a result, the Conclusion argues that the rhetorical discourse of Du Bois was more strategically viable, although, given the situation; it had some rhetorical disadvantages than other methods due to the fact that Du Bois was a superior literary technician. It suggests that given his target audience, the message should be successful in leading to a decision to support his strategies of social change and racial progress and continued to remain viable. Let us review and summarize our investigation to this point.

## 5.2 The Operation of Social Change Rhetoric

Chapter one examined the characteristics of the situation in which Du Bois created his rhetorical discourse. We explored Du Bois' rhetorical choices in terms of their fitness for the time and his promotion of a distinct racial consciousness as a positive value norm for social and civic progress. Du Bois coordinated social action through an *attitude* of race to construct an understanding of ethnic solidarity to legitimize the necessity of ethnic-based organizations to fulfill the goal of social progress, a strategy from which he would not deviate even later in his career. And eventually would lead him to renounce his U.S. citizenship and relocate to Ghana, West Africa where he would succumb at the age of 95 years old. Du Bois viewed himself as a “main factor in revolutionizing the attitude of the American Negro toward caste. My stinging hammer blows made Negroes aware of themselves, confident of their possibilities and determined in self-determination” (Du Bois *Autobiography* 295).

To situate our discussion of the rhetorical situation we highlighted the work of Kenneth Burke and his thoughts on the essence of persuasion, something I referred to as “persuasion to attitude.” Persuasion to attitude includes four central and interrelated concepts. First, rhetoric is grounded in opinion (Burke *A Rhetoric of Motives* 50). Second, “opinion” involves an ethical assumption in that it exists within the moral order of expedient action. Third, persuasion to attitude is a condition of identification, meaning deference to an audience's opinions. Finally, formal patterns of language “may awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy” in audiences (Burke 58). Burke has been instrumental in helping us to understand that a speaker, by inducing an audience to participate via the unfolding of formal linguistic structures, encourages identification or

the assent to an argument. Thus, literary and rhetorical forms operate as persuasive formal assent which inexorably lead to ethical assent (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 54). Du Bois cleverly used his mastery of linguistic forms to craft eloquent but well-reasoned messages to gain assent to his, otherwise uncommon, methods of bringing about changes in the social order.

Burke's discussion of opinion is crucial in our understanding the operation of social change rhetoric. Social change rhetoric by its very nature attempts through discursive means to bring about a change in the social order. It seeks to alter beliefs, induce particular behaviors and actions, and to shape attitudes that may imply actions. If a rhetor is to be successful in persuading an audience, then a rhetor's message requires a formative effect upon the "attitude" of the audience in that the rhetor's message will: 1) display the rhetor's understanding and knowledge of the opinions held by the audience toward the rhetor's subject, 2) convey deference to the opinions of the audience, and 3) express congruency between the message and the rhetor's life. Likewise, social change rhetoric involves symbolic action undertaken as a moral order of action. According to Burke, opinion is ever present in an attempt of a rhetor to persuade due to its relationship with perception. And this relationship is a reflection of various conditions and actions which change from time to time and from place to place.

Richard Weaver stated, "So rhetoric at its truest seeks to perfect men by showing them better versions of themselves, links in that chain extending up toward the ideal, which only the intellect can apprehend and only the soul have affection for" (25). As this quote implies, rhetoric is based upon an ethical assumption. Rhetoric involves symbolic action undertaken for a purpose, and that purpose is usually socio-political cooperation

and/or competition. Since persuasion comes about through this process of ethical inducement, it is apparent that the rhetor's grasp and understanding of the process, according to Aristotle, is the function of an orator who can form arguments and be observant about characters, and virtues, and emotions which Aristotle customarily refers to as the substance of the opinions of audiences.

The Burkeian theory of identification and its process of persuasion to attitude play a key role in helping us to understand the reshaping of the meanings of individuals' opinions and lived experiences. The notion of persuasion to attitude allows for the application of rhetorical devices to purely poetic forms such as a literary "trope," in that this device works in language to induce or communicate states of mind to listeners or readers, even though they seem to entertain us through the sheer exercising of symbols, unfolding or explicating implications available to that term. To further explore the idea of persuasion to attitude, we analyzed Du Bois' first major speech after his graduation from Harvard College. This speech was given before the likes of major figures in civil rights, literature, music, academics, and religion at the inaugural meeting of what would become one of America's first all black literary and cultural societies. This society's purpose was to collect and make available the great literary works and cultural contributions of black Americans in an attempt to debunk the prevailing attitude that blacks were incapable, except for a few anomalies, to produce anything of literary or academic significance.

Du Bois' speech, "The Conservation of the Races" sought to answer the conceptual mess of "race" as a concept. The cultural insignificance of blacks in literature, academics, science, medicine, etc. coincided with the prevailing inferiority status designated to blacks and primarily held in place by contemporary advances in naturalist

scientific study that often situated blacks into a lower classification of human species in the natural world. These scientific studies along with their promotion through print media molded social attitudes towards blacks and the worthiness of their cultural contributions. Du Bois, in offering environmental rather than racial explanations, in his speech, made a remarkable distinction and choice. He ignored for the occasion the current “biological” approach to racial theory, of which he was very much aware, and refused to declare that unattractive aspects of black culture were ingrained by race. He also refrained from ascribing attractive aspects or “gifts” of black culture to race. As a result, Du Bois sought to redefine the designation of Negro (black) not as a racial classification but as a designation of ethnicity which might disassemble the negative conception which accompanied the term. In doing so, Du Bois attempted to establish a distinct cultural pride not only for the audience in attendance but also for the thousands who would read his speech as a published *Occasional Paper*. Thus, we find that his description of race is in fact a description of a nation, which he was free to praise or criticize without implying its innate inferiority. “Conservation of the Races” is a historic document in the symbolization of black American cultural nationalism. Du Bois attempts to instill a sense of cultural pride not necessarily based with contemporary and biological understanding of racial classification but instead, Du Bois begins to more broadly define the black experience and tie it into a historical context that is more influenced by social factors rather than genetics.

In other words, Du Bois transformed or extended “race” into political and ethical terms. By doing this, Du Bois was able not only to advocate a strategy defined by a revised ontological understanding of “race” but also the social, political, and economic

benefits that achieving a heightened African American identity would have on the black community, especially its ethical potential to promote greater self-determination, racial uplift, and, ultimately, social reform for black America. Du Bois subsequent interactions with Booker T. Washington often times hinged on this very point. Washington often was inclined to accept the negative conception of blacks. Washington apologized for black's appearance as uncivilized and culturally unrefined. Washington did not attempt to debunk these negatively perceived qualities, in effect he would accept them and ask whites to either overlook them or simply accept them as being ingrained in black's physiological makeup. Du Bois dismissed these notions and attributed a different set of reasons to the overarching differences found between blacks and whites. As a group, blacks shared a different history and their present condition was the result of the social factors that they had been influenced by. For Du Bois, black or Negro (the term most popularly used at this time) was more than merely a color of one's skin or the foundation of one's genetic makeup. To Du Bois, being black meant being associated with a group with a historical identity and cultural pride and tradition. It provided political capital and economic strength, not a crutch to lament over. As an ethnic group blacks would share more in common than merely the color of their skin. Blacks would share a history that had a place of origin other than America and encompassed more than merely slavery and the depictions that had normally characterized the black experience in America. Ethnicity gave blacks group significance; it promoted political, social, and economic goals. Most importantly, ethnic nationalism provided a palpable answer to the scientific literature of the period which often dominated in terms of leading people's thoughts and opinions.

This strategy worked very well for Du Bois and became one that he would carry on, with his work as editor of the literary magazine of the NAACP, the *Crisis*. The *Crisis* was a forum of democratic opinion, and its editor consciously attempted to discuss problems of social inequality, poverty, and political rights that transcended the color line (Marable 123). Du Bois would also continue to campaign for women's rights throughout the 1920s and 1930s. He hailed the ratification of the women's suffrage amendment in 1920, observing that "a civilization that required nineteen centuries to recognize the Rights of Women can confidently be expected some day to abolish the Color Line" (Du Bois "Woman's Suffrage." *Crisis* 19, March 1920: 234). Du Bois despised every form of social injustice as a threat to democracy, and one way he attempted to bring about a sense of cultural change was through the advocacy of ethnic pride and self-determinism, ideas that became increasingly important near the turn of the century, not just for black Americans but Americans as a whole.

To understand Du Bois' rhetorical impact on African American experience, culture, and advancement is to understand his speech's significance by examining the particular context within which it was written. Du Bois' message performed a "naming" or "defining" of *situations* for not only himself but also for his audience. His speech became "a strategy for encompassing a situation, a strategic answer to the question by which the situation had predisposed it or made it available or necessary" (see Stewart, Smith and Denton, Jr.'s discussion of the Languaging Strategies of social movements in *Persuasion and Social Movements* 159-165). As a result, Du Bois' rhetoric became his strategic solution to the problems African Americans faced in the search for self-determination or for a better understanding of their identity; it was an alternate model,

formula, and/or navigational system that the audience could consult to ascertain whether one course of action was expedient or more prudent than another. Du Bois' rhetoric as persuasion, then, was not simply a means to motivate an audience to act, but rather the creation of "situations" for the altering of opinions by the audience.

Another key to understanding Du Bois' rhetoric is to acknowledge the influence of pragmatism on the development of Du Bois' thought in redefining race as a concept wherein to attack the problem of racial exclusion. Pragmatism is well documented as an effective strategy in social change movements. Pragmatism may be used to violate the normal linkage of commonly used terms or attitudes toward commonly understood states of being. From a pragmatist point of view, there is always room for improved belief, since new evidence, or new hypothesis, or a whole new vocabulary, may come along (Rorty 448). In redefining the concept of race, Du Bois attempted to establish as much intersubjective agreement as possible and to extend the references of the term as far as he could. The creation of a new form of objective reality expanded and, in this case, sought to completely debunk the naturalist based belief of black culture as something to be criticized instead of something to be praised.

Parallel development of the idea that 1) liberal arts educational opportunities for blacks were a general right and necessity, 2) that blacks should maintain their ethnic identity and not fully assimilate to white culture, and 3) all America needed to be more responsible in promoting personal liberty and self-worth, the Du Boisian philosophy underlying his argument in "Conservations," gained an important following over the next decade during Du Bois' tenure at Atlanta University.

Du Bois had an intense hatred for racism. But Du Bois' philosophy contained a new insight and offered workable alternatives for the conditions that he believed could be directly linked to racism's effects. As opposed to Washington, who often presented impracticable solutions in light of the historical moment and advocated limited opportunities for the education of blacks. DuBois' philosophy of parallel development broadened the ideals of human brotherhood and solidified the idea of a unified America, which fostered and developed the traits and talents of blacks through a more inclusive and less limited educational opportunities.

In the U.S. during the early 1900s, the pool of black teachers and college graduates from Negro colleges exploded. Segregation forced many of these teachers to work in the South at predominately black institutions. This new critical mass of learned individuals of high culture presented a unifying ideal of black racial solidarity and began systematically to build a powerful base for African American political progress, particularly in the fight against southern lynching, separate public accommodations, and wage labor in urban areas. Du Bois' message greatly appealed to this emerging class of people. The national image of Atlanta University and the writings of Du Bois were frequently merged in the public mind. Manning Marable observed, "Du Bois had been the most prominent intellectual of his generation. For young black scholars born after the Atlanta Compromise, however, Du Bois was literally an institution" (128). Thus, the situation was ideal for Du Bois' message to be received by an audience that was in the midst of the very social progress that he spoke of.

### **5.3 The Rhetorical Power of the Emotions**

Chapter two examined Du Bois' use of the persuasive appeal of *pathos* (Greek for 'suffering' or 'experience'). *Pathos* was a significant rhetorical factor in Du Bois' social criticism and his ascension to the top of African American leadership during his fifteen years at Atlanta University and as a precursor to becoming a founding member of both the Niagara Movement and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Du Bois' scholarly work stressed a moral inference; his arguments continually evaluated the national conscious. This strategy was critical to the success or failure of his persuasive appeal to the audience's sympathies and imagination. During his time in graduate school, Du Bois' travels abroad made him keenly sensitive of the challenges facing blacks in redefining the stereotypical notions of their humanity and civility—key values of the Victorian Era. Du Bois was fully aware that he must refute the growing charge against the progression of blacks based on a European middle-class value system, a value system pushing the social consciousness in America.

As a persuasive force, Aristotle strongly believed in the rhetorical power of the emotions. In fact, he considered *pathos* to be the most vexing of the persuasive appeals. The emotions strongly assist and perhaps sometimes determine persuasion. Du Bois' rhetoric worked on the natural "trigger" of the emotions of audiences (Fanhestock "The Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos"). In Chapter Two, we analyzed how Du Bois' rhetoric, which heavily emphasized narrative, combined the premises of ethics and social class (civility).

Du Bois' narratives are characterized by his unique ability to develop arguments which, as their end result or moral, is for the audience to feel generally delighted in hearing commonly held notions which correspond to their own beliefs. It was the

intention of Du Bois to awaken the emotions of people. Du Bois lectured on the shortcomings and injustices within the status quo, yet, his research was able to show that blacks, in spite of centuries of oppression, were still able (in a relatively short period of time) begin to show significant progress in obtaining commonly shared middle-class values and ways of life. Thus, Du Bois told a story through pictures, photographs, charts, graphs, and statistics that revealed a culturally shared belief system of idealistic values and myths between middle-class whites and blacks. Du Bois' exhibit at the Paris Exposition was skillfully able to narrate "idealistic intellectual goals" into vivid symbols of cultural refinement and upward mobility.

Any discussion of emotional appeals (*pathos*) is one which provides for us a unique insight into human motivation. When we use the term motivation we refer to the reasons that move a person or group of persons to do something. Aristotle in *On Rhetoric* discussed the primary function of rhetoric as that of making a judgment. In inducing audiences to judge in a certain way, Aristotle lectured on the need for understanding the role of motivation in disposing audiences to those judgments. The artistic mode of persuasion, *pathos*, provides an orator with an ability to arouse *pathē* (i.e. anger, fear, confidence, shame, etc.) in an audience as a means to facilitate an inference or to arouse these emotions as a means to refuting an opponent's claims.

A discussion of emotions is an introduction into the psychology of individuals and particularly, the state of mind defined by when he or she is experiencing a particular emotion. It may also be considered a delving into whom people commonly associate or divulge certain emotions toward, and what sort of reasons people are made to experience those certain emotions. By demonstrating the development of high achievement goals

through his pictorial exhibit, Du Bois wanted his audience to see the success that black Americans had experienced in such a short period of time. Why? Membership in a group that is succeeding helps a person to feel personal pride and gain esteem in the eyes of others (For a discussion of member satisfaction see Charles Pavitt and Ellen Curtis in *Small Group Discussion: A Theoretical Approach* 54). Du Bois' message sought to accomplish just that: to boost the esteem of blacks in America by actively participating in the Exposition in a way never seen before and at the same time to gain added favor in the minds of the Paris Exposition audience as the latest ethnic group to attempt to overcome the severest of odds and move itself up the social hierarchy.

The 1900 Paris Exposition was part of a remarkable tradition of international expositions that were held in Europe and America from the middle of the nineteenth century to the time of the First World War. Du Bois' the "Exhibit of American Negroes" was a collection of photographs, models, and industrial work that reflected the spiritual, social, and economic diversity of the "New Negro" and displayed black educational institutions and black-owned businesses and homes in Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, and Washington to signify the ethnicity's rise to middle class values and public admiration. Du Bois' interests are clear. He had no reservation in his role as both researcher and civil activist. As a result, Du Bois was able successfully to name, to associate blacks with European middle-class values, and to offer himself as an example of the progress taking place in America.

In viewing language usage as action, we must always keep in mind that there is a strategic dimension attached to communication. When people are speaking to an audience, they are attempting to accomplish particular goals with that audience. The

ultimate goal of the social change orator is to promote the issues at hand, not the self.

Both attitudes and opinions are in question, but the treatment and appeals to one self is subsidiary to the purpose of creating a general identification between the speaker's message and the audience.

Throughout Du Bois' career he ardently sought for black Americans to retain their ethnic identity and proudly maintained that African ethnicity remained a powerful force in combating the destructive forces of discrimination and prejudice. That is the goal of the "Exhibit of American Negroes." Citizenship ideals exemplified by men and women like Archibald Grimke, Mary Terrell, and William Monroe Trotter began with their thinking of themselves first as Americans, who merely happened to be dark-skinned. However, Du Bois strategically appealed to these and other leading black leaders to embrace the dichotomy of their racial identity and think of themselves as black first, as representative Americans proud, productive, and of a cultured Black Diaspora. Thus, the Exhibit of American Negroes is both a testament to the accomplishments of blacks in climbing the ladder of social success and a means of identifying with a larger audience in debunking common myths and stereotypes about black Americans' civility and humanity. Du Bois' photograph, model, industrial work, and picture exhibit reflected the spiritual, social, and economic diversity of the "New Negro." Based on his previous experience and knowledge of the social currents of Europe, Du Bois' objective is two-fold: 1) on a world stage, to begin to build a sense of commonality of attitudes, beliefs, and values in his audience as a means of breaking down the lingering negative attitudes toward race and 2) build appreciation for the struggle that American blacks have endured in

attempting to emancipate themselves from bondage and move up the social class ladder as “full” participants in a free society.

Du Bois’ Exhibit of American Negroes unexpectedly identified with its mostly white audience. By making “progress” the issue and not the difficulties of “race,” Du Bois challenged the mostly European audience to make overt what had been embedded and to refute their unconscious racism with a more true representation of black cultural values and customs consistent with Victorian European values. Du Bois’ exhibit attempted to debunk white European judgments of their own “civilized” supremacy in relation to the American Negro. His exhibit was intentionally crafted to evoke an emotional response from the curious but unsuspecting viewer. Particularly, Du Bois set about to evoke an appreciation for the beauty within black culture, particularly as blacks aspired to achieve middle-class status within the U.S. Conjuring up this image represented a significant step in the fight against racist representations.

Even later in his career Du Bois expressed an active interest in African American music, theatre, and the arts as a means of rhetorical strategy. Du Bois felt that artists were able vividly and gracefully to illustrate the oppressed social conditions of African American people. Du Bois felt that artists had an inherent obligation to the race to provide uplifting literature, music, art, and similar products of African American culture and society, and he provided a major outlet through the *Crisis* for its expression. As Marable noted:

The greatest intellectual achievements of Afro-Americans in these years were in the arts. In poetry, the twenties saw the emergence of Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes; in the novel, Jessie Fauset, Rudolph Fisher, and Jean Toomer ...As early as 1912, the *Crisis* noted with approval the development of “Ragtime” and congratulated popular black composer J. Rosamond Johnson for his contributions to “a new and distinct school of Negro music.” In 1925 Du Bois

praised the work of William Christopher Handy, the “father of the blues.” He also drew to public attention the musical “labors” of John Wesley Work and Alice Work at Fisk University, in “resurrecting” the classic “Negro Spiritual.” (131)

Du Bois would also declare moral war on any literature that degraded African American culture and society. He published reviews in June 1927 of Julia Peterkin’s novel *Black April* and October 1927 of H.L. Mencken’s critique of black authors that sharply criticized anyone who misrepresented or loosely interpreted the black experience.

#### **5.4 Argument as a Rhetorical Strategy**

Chapter three focused on the persuasive process of bolstering. In assessing the pragmatism of reconstructing attitudinal views on race, the chapter examined the types of arguments Du Bois advanced to attack the attitudes held by his immediate audience and the attitudes and opinions which were necessary for Du Bois to build upon to gain identification with his audience and the premises upon which those arguments are based, or what Aristotle termed *Logos*.. By dialectically juxtaposing his social, civic, and political plans to those of Washington, Du Bois strategically sought to situate himself firmly in public discussions of the “Negro problem” and acquire wider national support, which would eventually allow him validation as a “representative” spokesman for social progress for the African American community.

Seeing the argument as a rhetorical strategy is central to the Aristotelian legacy of rhetorical analysis and helpful in our analysis of the social change discourse of Du Bois. Aristotelian rhetoric is primarily characterized by the choice of major premises on which enthymemes forming the body of the proof are based and the means by which listeners are made to feel favorably about these premises and the conclusions that proceed from

them (See a discussion of the scientific approach of Aristotle in Golden, Berquist & Coleman *The Rhetoric of Western Thought* 29-41). In this chapter, we focused on those “attitudes” and “opinions” that were necessary for Du Bois to build-upon to gain identification with his audience.

It was a vital role that Du Bois reluctantly assumed that has distinguished his career as a clever and able social change agent. In his autobiographical sketch in the February 1918 *Crisis*, he recounted the reluctance with which he assumed the role: “Against all my natural reticence and hatred of forwardness, contrary to my dream of racial unity and deep desire to serve and follow and think, rather than to lead and inspire and decide, I found myself suddenly the leader of a great wing of my people fighting against another and greater wing” (*The Emerging Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois* 13). But it was the inevitable confrontation with Washington and the accommodationalists, which he handled so skillfully, that propelled him as a considerable leader in this struggle.

Du Bois’ logic in countering the Washington-led accommodationalist philosophies positioned him as a legitimate rival to the generally recognized leader of black America. Until the emergence of Du Bois, the black American protest movement was primarily stifled, disjointed, and bereft of creativity, despite the brilliance of some of its leaders. Du Bois, who himself was attempting to reconcile and come to some agreement and understanding among major contending forces within the black community, decided to publicly denounce the goals that Washington and the accommodationalists were advocating. To the complete opposite, Du Bois contended that political power, civil rights, and higher education for the youth were the essence of manhood and one’s citizenship in America was held up by one’s fight for what he

considered inalienable rights. This struggle, the “spiritual” strivings of the race, transcended the complexities of the social problems attached to racial attitudes.

Charles Stewart, Craig Smith, and Robert Denton, Jr. have noted that social change agents often employ “a rhetoric of *transcendence* to challenge institutions and to counter the persuasive efforts that threaten norms, values, and hierarchical relationships” (225). An argument of transcendence attempts to persuade listeners that “a person, group, goal, thing, right, action, or proposal *surpasses*, is *superior* to, or was *prior* to its opposite” (225). Du Bois’ examples are revealing as they illustrate how arguments of transcendence reason through an inherently comparative process. This comparative strategy was not only necessary but vital for Du Bois, as he attempted to bolster his position as a worthy spokesman for black social progress and at the same time specifically address particular arguments central to Washington’s accommodationalist position.

Du Bois was not only critical of the social caste system existent in the U.S. (*Color Caste in the United States* March 1933) but also critical of Washington as a pawn within that system. Du Bois argued that Washington was the prime beneficiary of leading American capitalists-philanthropists and important political figures, as well as the generally recognized leader of black America. Yet, Du Bois intelligently maintained that Washington’s doctrine of getting along with the white South “at almost any cost to black America” was impracticable and not a path to the respect that he suggested it would reap. To illustrate his point, Du Bois argued the comparison points to define fundamental issues and present an alternate message which was grounded in strategic social action.

An argument of transcendence is a comparative argument based on quantity, quality, value, or hierarchy. According to Stewart, Smith, and Denton, Jr., these points of comparison allow a rhetor to establish, attack, and defend positions on identity, rights, visions of reality, and organization (248). Du Bois' rhetoric was an attempt to stress what he felt was a more viable philosophy and solution to the Negro problem and to explain his ideas without having to alienate Washington as a potential ally. Social change agents and social movements argue from transcendence when they claim that an organization, group, goal, thing, right, act, or proposal surpasses, is superior to, or is prior to that of the opposition. For Du Bois, the inherent comparing and contrasting nature of his argument was effective in accomplishing his persuasive goal.

As Manning Marable reminded us, "Du Bois's criticisms of Washington were far more effective...precisely because of his profound respect for the Tuskegee principal" (49). Du Bois often portrayed Washington's "emphasis on industrial education as an essential link with the expansion of the Southern economy. He noted that the program attracted much needed Northern and Southern aid" (59). In stead of aggressively attacking Washington, Du Bois painted Washington as a "product of history" and his ideas as a "reflection of the industrial emergence of a nation" (59). These rhetorically astute attacks kept relations between the two apparently cordial and kept open the possibility of future cooperation.

Du Bois' public confrontation with Washington best exemplifies Du Bois' rhetorical aptitude in influencing public opinion by the use of a rhetoric of transcendence. This is representative of his larger argument and not simply his differences with Washington. Du Bois' critique of Washington's social philosophy was necessary to

position himself firmly as a viable spokesman for blacks on fundamental issues of education, civic responsibility, self-determinism, and the deteriorating social conditions produced by racism. Du Bois was able to use his growing public platform to challenge Washington as the representative spokesman for black issues, particularly those concerning social and economic progress. Yet, it was also important for Du Bois not to seem as though he was personally attacking Washington.

For Du Bois to be perceived as something other than the emerging status quo or the legitimate action of system change it was necessary for him to create a drama or confrontation which forced a response from the establishment. Du Bois enacted confrontation by using a rhetoric of transcendence to juxtapose the two human forces or two agents, with one standing for the erroneous evil system and the other upholding the new or more practical order. Washington and Du Bois were brought into conflict through confrontation in order for both to recognize that this was no ordinary reform or realignment of the established order.

The enactment of confrontation gave Du Bois his identity, his substance, his form. Du Bois as a viable spokesman couldn't be taken seriously without an act of confrontation. And he chose what at the time (until the publishing of his own book *Souls of Black Folk*) was the most popular book in print or to be printed by a black person to offer a thorough argument supporting its moral fortitude and contextual ambivalence, Washington's *Up from Slavery*.

## **5.5 Establishing Congruity through Positive Relational Patterns**

Chapter four examined the rhetorical strategies that allowed Du Bois to become such an influential and effective orator of social change during the American post-Reconstruction period by analyzing the congruity between Du Bois' message and his own life—Du Bois' *ethos*, as perceived by his various audiences. Du Bois, *ethos*, as a social organizer was central to his ascendancy as the newest leader in the black protest movement and to our understanding of his social philosophy of parallel development. As Du Bois turned away from sociological research, he applied his sociological imagination to new sets of issues of political and cultural significance.

Du Bois as a major black American thinker exhibited a "basic coherence and unity" in not only his social thought but a multifaceted career that stressed social scientific explanations for racial hierarchies and social inequality, cultural pluralism, and socially relevant and responsible scholarship. He was keenly aware and unafraid to apply his knowledge to issues of significance that preoccupied African American themselves and to do it on their own terms. Du Bois' rhetorical approach added a visionary and an intellectual voice to a campaign which became pivotal to the progress of the black protest movement, particularly in helping its supporters to perceive and recommend solutions to solve the prevailing problems of black identity on their own terms and as a force to bring about social change.

A high degree of congruity existed between Du Bois' own character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued versus the same degree of congruity between Washington's own character and accomplishments and the course for which he argued. Du Bois' congruity was established because of positive relational patterns with the larger society. Lerone Bennet, Jr. stated, "Du Bois was a man of genius who had that

undefinable quality called presence” (330). Aristotle suggested in his treatise *On Rhetoric* that we tend to believe people whom we respect. One of the central problems of persuasion is to project an impression to the audience that you are someone worth listening to, in other words making yourself as speaker into an authority on the subject of the moment, as well as someone who is likable and worthy of respect.

Du Bois, as a social scientist, was drawn "reluctantly" to politics, which he viewed as inseparable in his mind from moral imperatives (Rampersad 91-92). Du Bois rhetoric promised to tell the truth, to be straight-forward, and to apply a fundamental type of logic that appealed to the morally sympathetic, both black and white. His message was constructed in a manner that his supporters would understand and identify with as he asked blacks and whites to support a policy that involved the overriding issues of agitation and acquiescence—a linguistic style that characterizes previous Du Boisian messages. He refrains from harsh criticism of previous leaders such as Washington and the accommodationists; he is more interested in the future of black Americans than in political or personal gains; such is a tactic reinforced for self-character building (Hill 147). Although his tone in the message has been described as militant, it is only done so in light of the accommodationists as the principle marker to which it is compared. Yet, the tone that is embodied within his message reveals a passion and an unyielding determination.

Du Bois’ manner of leadership was a matter of teaching and writing. Yet, he is squarely in opposition to a system that refused to allow other blacks to have and express their ideas, especially if they ran counter to the ideas advocated by Washington. With vigor, Du Bois attempted to influence African American education. His philosophy of

parallel development caused considerable debate within the black middle class. Du Bois' promotion of a liberal arts education, acquainting students with African American history, the humanities, and natural sciences, defined his early battles with Washington and would continue for decades after. Du Bois firmly opposed the principle of racial segregation in schools and vocational programs. Du Bois continued to criticize the Hampton-Tuskegee model of industrial education. This modest means of education proposed to develop African Americans as a caste of efficient workers and not as co-workers in a modern cultured state.

Du Bois proposed and popularized the theory that only college-educated leaders could save the race, the idea of the Talented Tenth. Some have noted that Du Bois was pompous and "not generally liked" (Rudwick 69). Although Du Bois' tactics were not clear to some, it was evident that his strategy to suggest that blacks should protest against their second-class status and that direct social action was the only method which would bring "true" freedom is the basis of all social reform movements today. Marable remarked:

The Talented Tenth theory was a strategy to win democracy for all black Americans. The burden of struggle resided upon those of the race best prepared, educationally and economically, to lead that fight. Its purpose was not alienation of the black middle class from the masses. As his studies in Philadelphia and Atlanta had indicated, class stratification already existed within the black community. Du Bois sought to inspire the Negro middle class to transcend its parochial interests for the common good. (50-51)

Du Bois compellingly argued that as the ethnic composition of the United States continued to experience profound change and as new waves of immigrants continued to demographically shift the composition of the American population, the shift would force readjustments in previous patterns of ethnic relations. If America was to continue to

develop as a unified nation, it would greatly benefit by creating an atmosphere whereby all its citizens, including Americans of African descent, could freely take advantage of the American promise—the opportunity to fully develop socially, economically, and politically. Black American development, however, would not work by becoming fully assimilated into the Anglo-Saxon Protestant core culture system, because black American development rested upon the maintaining of its own pattern of ethnicity, its own distinctive cultural, organizational, and behavioral characteristics—a sustaining of a distinct cultural identity to provide a source of support and guidance in a hostile American society.

Parallel development, in a sense, becomes a “moral order of action” in that it attempts to transform the attitudes and opinions of its audience to provoke a change in the audience’s behavior. Du Bois forcefully advocated a position arguing that the forces of competition and selection created a struggle for scarce resources that had accelerated the level of competition in the United States for its land, housing, and jobs. He offered the process of maintaining a distinctive ethnicity as a means of adapting to discrimination, fully knowing that some degree of assimilation would eventually occur.

Du Bois’ philosophy became instrumental in the development of the contemporary discourse on black social, civic, and educational advancement. Du Bois was the first and most vocal to publicly speak out against the popular accommodationist strategy of Washington which according to Lewis alarmed and annoyed the national press and led to Du Bois’ denouncement as an agitator. Despite the public rebuke and sometimes national hostility waged against him, Du Bois rose to become a model for later social-change movement discourse (e.g. consciousness raising as a viable strategy

for understanding race as a socio-historical concept, attacking lynching, in the fight for post 1875 civil rights legislation, the gaining of access to liberal arts education, social and military desegregation, and institutions such as the NAACP, The National Urban League, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the RainbowPUSH Coalition, and the National Action Network). Examining the rhetorical strategies of Du Bois unearths a fertile field for studying the ideological and epistemological powers of rhetoric conceived of as a general theory of social change discourse.

As a movement organizer, Du Bois understood the necessity of persuading significant numbers of people that only through collective action by uninstitutionalized groups using what at the time would be considered unconventional methods could change be brought about. Du Bois sought to create a collective identity, a people, so individuals could come to identify themselves as a group through shared views of the social environment, shared goals, and shared opinions about the possibilities and limits of collective action.

As a leading sociological researcher, civil rights activists, and lecturer, Du Bois came to signify the horizon of possibilities for an African American *ethos*. Du Bois dramatized a dynamic forum for deliberations about the appropriate norms, premises, and practices of a distinct black culture; thus, his discourse made available to blacks the symbolic and material resources for rhetorical construction and articulation of a black public voice. Du Bois was able to locate and develop the appropriate topics through rhetorical invention to shape public understanding. Rhetoric is oriented by one's sense of the proper orchestration, characterization, and articulation of topical material in accordance with one's lived experience. For Du Bois, his rhetoric was a public activity

that also developed into a form of civic training in that he was keenly able to usher the subject into the material world of the public sphere.

Du Bois exemplifies the concept of the Talented Tenth. He was what he called for, and what many in his audience aspired to. He called for classical liberal arts education rather than a vocational one. He called for agitation and the pursuit of equal rights. Du Bois, to a high degree, personified the type of leadership that he spoke and wrote about. Du Bois sought and obtained a liberal arts education from the finest colleges in the world and used his experience and expertise to lead a movement that denounced racial segregation and disfranchisement.

## **5.6 Implications**

Neo-Aristotelian criticism unearths a great deal about Du Bois' social change rhetoric. It reveals him as a superior technician and it permits us to predict that given his target audience, the message should be successful in providing an alternate narrative to the competing framework of accommodation as a solution to the "Negro problem." It brings into view the social change agent's greatest technical successes: the choices of the right premises to make the argument plausible for the audience and the creation of identification in which the arguments are more likely to be accepted.

Du Bois' social change rhetoric was rhetorically superior to others, namely Washington, insofar as Du Bois' rhetoric exemplified a greater congruity between the message and his own life, the way in which the message was implemented, the degree to which he embodied it, and its appeal and deference to the opinions of a broader audience. Du Bois' message was greater in that it more closely identified with a changing audience,

a younger, post-slavery, and more broadly educated audience who were reaching for levels of equality not yet thought about by their forefathers and mothers. We must always remember that both Washington and Du Bois strongly believed in the power of education. Yet, each viewed the type and manner in which black people should be educated differently. It was this deep concern for black higher education that engaged Du Bois and Washington in their most bitter educational confrontations. According to Washington, an industrial education including such programs as animal husbandry, farming, and mechanical arts was most suitable for blacks as a means to earn a place within society as equal contributors.

Du Bois, on the other hand, felt that a vocational education, alone, was much too limiting and would eventually cause blacks to remain in second-class status. For him, a liberal arts educational curriculum, acquainting students with black history, the humanities, and natural sciences should be included in the future training of blacks and be given as a legitimate opportunity. A liberal arts curriculum prepared students to assume leadership roles in their communities and developed men and women who would be conscious of the inconsistencies within society in the moral treatment of racial minorities. According to Du Bois, education played a central role in giving young African Americans a positive identity. He hoped that teachers would use African American contributions to American society, so he published two pamphlets *The Gift of Black Folk* and “The Freedom of Womanhood” to instill a greater appreciation for black’s heritage. In his July 1935 essay “Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?” Du Bois urged African Americans to achieve academic excellence within separate institutions, while supporting the long-term effort to abolish racism. This would allow

blacks to ultimately become full partners within American society through the destruction of Jim Crow, but not at the expense of sacrificing their heritage and special spiritual gifts. But how are we to view Du Bois' success as an orator now? What influence do his words and perspective have on us today as we exist in a very different time than when he was most visible?

Du Bois' influence would begin to fade in the two decades after World War I. He would become extremely critical of the American economic system of capitalism and his social democracy showed favoritism to the Soviet Union. Du Bois would oppose the Marshall Plan, NATO, the Point Four program for the developing world, and the Korean War as "instruments of capitalist imperialism" (Lewis 555). In addition, he would begin to adopt Marxism and its ideas of dialectical materialism, calling Karl Marx the, "greatest figure in the science of modern industry" (Lewis 306). From 1927 until 1934, the *Crisis* published a number of favorable comments about the Soviet government. In January and May 1928, Du Bois noted with approval the Soviet Union's support for world disarmament; in February 1929, he congratulated Russia's "ten years of reform"; in August 1929, the *Crisis* commented that "the collapse of Russia has been indefinitely postponed"; and in June 1930, Du Bois asked, "Why is it that May 1<sup>st</sup> is a day when all the world except Russia gets scared to death, mobilizes the police and keeps its soldiers ready in barracks?" (Marable 137). Du Bois' political and economic philosophies were intractably tied as he moved more closely to a world socialist perspective; he was publically criticized as a political communist. This eventually would lead to his self-renunciation of his United States citizenship and his relocation to Ghana, Africa.

So, on October 1, 1961, at the age of ninety-three, Du Bois applied for membership in the Communist Party of the USA and then departed for Ghana. In Ghana, Du Bois received a warm welcome and the Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah officially designated Du Bois as the director of the *Encyclopedia Africana*.

Du Bois' commitment to education within his racial philosophy continued to be prominent to his life's work. In the course of his career, Du Bois attempted every possible solution to the problem of racism. First came culture and education for the elites, then suffrage for the masses. Du Bois' commitment to education must be viewed in relative terms, but there is a glimmer of transcendence that situates his message. Du Bois pressed for a liberal arts education for blacks in addition to a more practically based education. Du Bois' purpose here is plain and clear. He is pushing for choice. Du Bois strongly believed that a practical education or an industrially based education could not be the only option presented to blacks and therefore a vital segment of the workforce of the country--particularly if that workforce or the labor force in general could ever really consider itself free.

To Du Bois, a liberal arts education was not only purposefully for expanding the horizons and opportunities for blacks and for anyone for that matter, but it also would have a positive and tangible affect on the country's ability to sustain its competitive edge in the world in the future. The plights of both groups—blacks and whites were intrinsically tied together and if one segment of society was allowed to waiver and fall behind, it would inevitably bring the other segment of society down with it.

We currently see this tension in the frustration on college and university campuses to the balancing of both practical and liberal arts learning. As the business community

pushes for more and more graduates to enter into the market place equipped with the practical knowledge to immediately begin performing the task of a job (although research does suggest that a liberal arts background is a highly valued trait in college graduates) many societal issues have arisen. This push and unbalanced focus on providing a practical education in lieu of developing the whole person and expanding the well roundedness of graduates may be seen as a significant force in perpetuating contemporary problems in society. To Du Bois, education was not merely for the work of the hands but also for the nurturing of the soul.

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