

W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington: 1894-1905

HANAKO KOYAMA

Introduction

Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois shared the goal of black's racial uplifting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but differed on ideological and tactical issues on education and the civil and political rights for blacks. While Washington stressed the necessity of industrial education and called to put aside the higher goals of the acquisition of the political and civil rights until black got enough wealth and recognition in the American society, Du Bois insisted that these goals come together with black's economic development, and should not be postponed. In *The Souls of Black Folk* published in 1903, Du Bois made his first official criticism of Washington's accommodation philosophy. In the book, Du Bois (1973b, pp. 41-59) criticized Washington as teaching submission, minimizing the importance of black's higher education, and not giving enough emphasis upon the importance of black's civil and political rights. Du Bois (1973b, pp. 49-51) argued that Washington's strategy of compromise led to the degradation of black's social and political status in the South, manifest in the increase in lynching and disfranchisement of the blacks. Unlike Washington, Du Bois called for the "militant" struggle for black's political and civil rights and the cultivation of the talented few blacks in order to uplift the race. While Washington emphasized the necessity of industrial education under the condition of the growing corporate capitalism, Du Bois stressed class differentiation within the existing black populace (Gaines, 1996, pp. 163-164).

Despite these differences on the surface, yet, it is not easy to determine whether there is a fundamental theoretical or ideological difference between the two racial

leaders. Du Bois (1968a, pp. 236-237) himself suggests that he does not totally differ from Washington in matters concerning black's progress. While the textual and historical evidence clearly shows that there are similarities as well as dissimilarities between the two leaders of the race, scholars diverge on the interpretative questions of whether Du Bois can be regarded as "fundamentally" different from Washington, and of whether Du Bois possessed a significant intellectual and political originality vis-à-vis Washington. Cruse (1968) argues that there is no fundamental difference between the two racial leaders. According to Cruse, Washington and Du Bois stood under the same umbrella of the emerging black bourgeoisie practice and imaginary, and did not differ significantly in their philosophical and practical manifestations. On the other hand, Aptheker (1966) argues that Du Bois had a unique philosophy different from Washington's. According to Aptheker (1996, p. 34), Du Bois's difference from Washington is not simply tactical but philosophical.

This matter is hard to resolve in a consistent way. Most importantly, neither of the two leaders produced a clear and coherent theory on black's larger political and social goals together with the tactical considerations and practices. In the case of Du Bois, the intellectual and political fluctuations are great, ranging from the elitist integrationism to segregationism, from activism to idealism, and from communism to the alleged anticommunist Pan-African nationalism (Reed, 1997, pp. 3-4). Another thing to be taken count of is that in the matter of black's uplifting, one cannot isolate the theorists' official propaganda from what they practically did for the race. In some instances, their practice may tell more about their thought than what they actually wrote. For example, Washington's support for black's political and civil rights becomes evident when one examines what Washington did, rather than what he wrote (Cruse, 1966, pp. 217-219). Washington, although advertising the accommodationist philosophy in order to obtain white's support and patronage, actually opposed to black's disfranchisement and defended public education in the South.

This paper examines the difference between the uplift ideologies of Du Bois and Washington by looking at the historical origins and the nature of the difference. I explore the initial contacts between Washington and Du Bois, mainly in the period

of 1894-1905, and investigate how the personal and professional estrangement affected the official ideological conflict between Du Bois and Washington. I argue that while there was a clearly philosophical difference, it was the personal and professional estrangement that let the philosophical difference have an official appearance and severity. I also argue that Du Bois's personal and professional rivalry with Washington made Du Bois's theory of the racial uplift unnecessarily narrow. I argue that because of the competition and the urge to distinguish and identify himself vis-à-vis Washington, Du Bois's theory came to omit an important set of issues which were the specialty of Washington. More specifically, I argue that Du Bois's hostility toward Washington and his self-confidence as a scholar of a high rank made his uplift theory applicable only to the small elite strata, the talented tenth, while leaving the rest of the black populace in a dubious submission to the elite.

My paper consists of three parts. First, I will examine some interpretations of Du Bois-Washington controversy' and Du Bois's and Washington's commentaries on each other. I will discuss the works by Cruse (1968), Aptheker (1966), Reed (1997) and Lewis (1993). In the second part, I will briefly examine the history of the relationship between Washington and Du Bois between 1894 and 1905, when the two racial leaders attempted to build a cooperative relationship in vain. By tracing the major events during the period, I will show how their relationship became fixed and manifested in Du Bois's official criticism of Washington and his essay on "The Talented Tenth." In the third part, I will critically examine how the rivalry between the two racial leaders made the scope of Du Bois's philosophy and scholarly imagination narrow and confined to the experience of the few elite blacks.

1

Cruse (1968, p. 228) argues that there is fundamentally no difference between Du Bois and Washington as both leaders stood for black's political and economic progress from the perspective of the emerging black bourgeoisie in America. Cruse examines the relation between Du Bois and Washington in the broader context of the Black Power discourse. Cruse argues that all Black Power discourses, including

those who do not explicitly call themselves "Black Power," are debted to Washington. According to Cruse (p. 201), Black power is "nothing but the economic and political philosophy of Booker T. Washington given a 1960's militant shot in the arm and brought up to date." For Cruse, Du Bois is understood as one of the Black Powerites whose root is in Washington's accommodation philosophy. Cruse (pp. 201-202) argues that Du Bois, when he clearly abandoned the NAACP philosophy and called for a plan for the black "economic cooperative commonwealth," put forth nothing but a program for economic and political Black Power. According to Cruse, the alleged difference between Du Bois and Washington is just a split, an ideological division, within the main tendencies of the new, emerging Afro-American black bourgeoisie over which course to take for true black progress (p. 227). Cruse (Ibid.) says that Washington's was "basically bourgeois, self-help, group economics, plus functional, practical education with a de-emphasis of civil rights agitation," while Du Bois emphasized on "civil rights-protest agitation, social equality, and higher 'humanities' education." They were two spokesmen of the rising black bourgeoisie in America. Washington was a bourgeois nationalist spokesman; Du Bois was a bourgeois radical integrationist (Cruse p. 220).

Aptheker's view on Du Bois stands in radical contrast to Cruse's. Aptheker (1966, pp. 33-34) argues that the differences between the two theorists were "basic and not simply tactical." According to Aptheker, the most important are the following facts. Du Bois "rejected subordination" while Washington "accepted it;" Du Bois rejected colonialism but Washington assumed its continuance; Du Bois criticized capitalism while Washington worshipped it (Ibid.). Thus, Aptheker (p. 33) does not find an "enormous influence" exerted by Washington upon black nationalists.

Cruse (pp. 217-219) opposes to Aptheker's view by saying that what Washington actually did shows his fundamental similarity to Du Bois. Taking count of Washington's creation of numerous black's economic and social institutions, Cruse (p. 219) argues that Washington's record demonstrates that he was "not against what Du Bois stood for in civil rights, anymore than Du Bois was against Washington's program of making black artisans businessmen and property owners, or his philosophy of Work and Money."

Reed (1997, pp. 59-60) argues that the conflict between the two black racial leaders should be understood in the context of the "competition for access" to the white patronage through which Afro-American political and intellectual activities took place. While placing Du Bois in a broader intellectual terrain by looking at his connection to the evolutionist thought and social reformism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Reed (p. 62) argues that Washington and Du Bois shared certain basic dispositions of elite tendencies. According to Reed (Ibid.), both of them accepted the essential model of social hierarchy that prevailed in the society, and maintained that "uplift" of the black population entailed an elite-driven accretion of the characteristics of "civilization." Both of them needed to legitimize their aspirations to upper-class whites who controlled the monetary and other resources necessary for uplift activities (Ibid.). A contemporary of Washington, Du Bois needed to create his original position so that he can stand out as a new, young leader of the race and thus can access to these resources. Thus, Reed argues that there was not so much difference in the substance of their philosophies as in tactical and political matters. Du Bois's activity was not against the substance of Washington's philosophy but an opposition to the fact that Washington had established monopoly over the access to patronage sources.

Ironically, Reed says, Du Bois's writings were in some respects no less palatable than Washington's to the white elite strata. According to Reed (p. 60), the conflict between Du Bois and Washington can be understood as "the culmination of a tension between the specific agendas and the legitimacy claims of different elements of the black elite and the various white support groups."

Cruse's and Reed's views are vindicated by the facts that despite the difference on the surface, there are several theoretical similarities between the official philosophies of Washington and Du Bois. Moore (1981, p. 59) points out some of the important theoretical similarities between Du Bois and Washington. For example, Young Du Bois's plea in *The Philadelphia Negro* for "patience" on the part of blacks in their striving for equal opportunity could be agreeable to Washington (Ibid.). Also, Du Bois's later interest in the power that could be developed through the accumulation of wealth by black laborers is not distant from Washington's emphasis

upon the need to train blacks to perform well at laboring tasks on farms and in factories so that they could acquire the prosperity that would presumably raise them from their lowly position in American society (Ibid.). Furthermore, Du Bois's controversial idea expressed most vigorously in the 1930s that blacks should take advantage of the segregation they had been forced into and even exploit it for their own benefits, is not totally dissimilar to Washington's acceptance of segregation as a kind of sociopolitical haven within which blacks might operate, to their economic and social advantage (Ibid.).

Washington's and Du Bois's assessments of each other also support the view that the difference between the two racial leaders is the matter of emphasis and not strictly of substance. Du Bois, although emerging as the critic of Washington, did not maintain his disagreement to Washington consistently or permanently. In *Autobiography* (Du Bois, 1968a, p. 236), immediately after saying that the Washington-Du Bois controversy started as an ideological one, Du Bois stresses that the two theories of black progress "were not absolutely contradictory," and that they represented two kinds of leadership, i.e. the leadership of writing and teaching in Du Bois, and the leadership of money and organization in Washington. This contention sounds like an approval of the division of labor within the same program for black's uplifting to which both of the leaders were supposed to contribute.

On the other hand, Washington was also ambivalent on his theoretical difference from Du Bois. Washington (10, p. 608) accused Du Bois of not being acquainted enough of the conditions in the South where the majority of the African-American lived. But Washington did not give theoretical terms to his anti-Du Bois philosophy. Washington's criticism of Du Bois was more of an informal and political nature, rather than rigorously theoretical or philosophical. Washington's letter to J. R. Barlow on March 1, 1911, is candid and to the point. This letter shows nothing but the fact that Washington's intellectual difference to Du Bois was a matter of emphasis and tactic, and even of temperament. Regarding Du Bois, Washington (10, p. 609) writes:

I believe that the Negro race is making progress. I believe that it is better

for the race to emphasize its opportunities than to lay over-much stress on its disadvantages. He believes that the Negro race is making little progress. I believe that we should cultivate an ever manly, straightforward manner and friendly relations between white people and black people Dr. Du Bois pursues the policy of stirring up strife between white people and black people. This would not be bad, if after stirring up strife between white people and black people in the South, he would live in the South and be brace enough to face conditions which his unwise course has helped to bring about', but instead of doing that, he flees to the North and leaves the rank and file of colored people in the South no better off because of the unwise course which he and others lie him have pursued.

Then, he continues:

We are making progress as a race - tremendous progress- and I believe it is better to hold up before the colored people the fact that they are making progress than to continually hold up a picture of gloom and despair before them.

Furthermore, Washington says

all this fully conscious of the wrongs suffered by my race. I say all this not with the idea of in any degree limiting or circumscribing the progress or growth of the race in any direction, but I want to lay a sure foundation for progress. In a word, the great weakness, in my opinion, of Dr. Du Bois's position is that he fails to recognize the fact that it is a work of construction that is before us now and not a work of destruction.

Note that Washington says "in any direction," and thus includes the strife for black's civil and political rights.

Lewis (1993) provides the historical accounts which show that the ideological

difference between Du Bois and Washington was not so critical as the difference in temperament and personality. Lewis (1993, pp. 286-287) argues that ideological estrangement was more in the nature of consequence rather than a cause.” Lewis (1993, p. 286) argues that the Du Bois-Washington controversy emerged primarily as personal and professional conflicts, and then became ideological. To put it differently, Lewis demonstrates that the conflict between the two racial leaders was primarily of non-ideological nature, and that the non-ideological conflicts preceded the publication of *The Souls of Black Folk*, in which Du Bois made the first official criticism of Washington’s accommodation philosophy. Lewis (Ibid.) argues that contrary to Du Bois’s contention in his autobiography, *Dusk of Dawn* (Du Bois, 1968b, p. 69), the Du Bois-Washington controversy began with “differences in emphases, suspicions and insinuations” as well as “with doctrinal shaping and hardening in the force fields of two antithetical egos.”

2

I do not hereby reproduce minutely all the happenings between Du Bois and Washington during the period of 1894 to 1905. Yet, some facts especially illuminate the nature of the estrangement between the two racial theorists. These facts show that Du Bois had a pride as a scholar of a high rank, and refused to be subsumed under Washington’s personal and intellectual dominance. As Lewis shows, their conflict remained to be primarily the matter of tactics and personalities, rather than of ideology. To put it differently, the ideological dispute between Du Bois and Washington was fueled by the difference in personality and tactics. The tactical and personal disparities between the two leaders contributed to the heating of the ideological controversy perhaps more than was objectively necessary, and prevented one from seeing the substantial similarities of their ideologies. This is not to say that there was no ideological difference between Du Bois and Washington. Du Bois’s idealism, not only in the sense of striving for the utopian goal but also in the sense of the philosophical idealism of Hegel, is notable⁽¹⁾. Yet, Du Bois’s inconsistent and ambivalent attitude toward Washington shows that this difference was not as crucial

as the clash in temperament.

Let us briefly see the course of events between Washington and Du Bois which occurred just before and after the publication of Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, which is Du Bois's official ideological criticism of Washington. The contact between the two men started as a rather normal and friendly one, as Du Bois writing to Washington in 1894 a letter to ask for a job opening at Tuskegee. Du Bois had just returned from Europe, and was seeking for a job. At this time, Du Bois had "no thing but the greatest admiration" for Washington and Tuskegee (Du Bois, 1968b, p. 69). Du Bois applied at both Tuskegee and Hampton for work. Du Bois did not have reservations about the Tuskegee institute which he was to show later. Du Bois wrote that if Washington's telegram, giving him a position to teach mathematics, had reached earlier, he should simply have gone to Tuskegee. Moreover, Du Bois (1968a, p. 185; 1968b, p. 49) writes that it would be interesting "to speculate "just what would have happened if he had received the offer of Tuskegee first." It was Du Bois who made the choice to work for Wilberforce, whose letter of acceptance had arrived earlier than that of Tuskegee.

Du Bois's letter to Washington just after the famous "Atlanta Compromise" speech of 1895 also shows that the ideological difference did not exist from the beginning. As Aptheker (Du Bois 1, p. 39) notes, after Washington's speech in 1895 at the Cotton Exposition in Atlanta, Du Bois immediately wrote to praise Washington. Six days after the speech, Du Bois (Ibid.) wrote Washington to "heartily congratulate" him upon his "phenomenal success at Atlanta." This praise was not just a flattery. Du Bois wrote to the *New York Age* to support Washington's racial strategy manifested in his Atlanta Speech. Du Bois (1, p. 55) wrote that in Washington's strategy there "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 co-operated with the white South in political sympathy."

Du Bois also stood for Washington in the National Afro-American Council meeting in Chicago in 1899 when a militant minority denounced Washington and his wife (Lewis, 1993, pp. 230-231). At the meeting, the minority criticized

Washington's equivocation over the Sam Hose lynching and his optimistic view on black's future. Reverdy Cassius Ransom, AME minister, demanded that Washington be expelled from AME membership. Du Bois led the defense for Washington, and voted for a resolution excusing his participation in organized discussion "which might be radical in its utterances to the destruction of his usefulness in connection with many causes" (Lewis, 1993, p. 230). Noteworthy is that ideologically Du Bois must have been closer to the positions taken by the minority and Reverdy Ransom who had some doubts about Washington's leadership (cf. Ibid.). Yet, such an ideological difference was not enough to let Du Bois take any official departure from Washington's camp. According to Lewis (p. 231), this is because Du Bois well understood Washington's occasional departure from the pattern of the accommodation philosophy. In 1898 and 1899, there were activities by Washington to speak for black's recognition, and against black's disfranchisement in the South (Ibid.).

What is noteworthy here is that in this period Du Bois did not judge Washington's philosophy on its face value, but understood it as a whole. Du Bois may have been already uncomfortable with Washington's accommodation philosophy which minimized the role of black's higher education and social and political equality of the blacks, but did not officially denounced it. Rather, Du Bois evaluated Washington by what he did to his race in general. Such incidents as Washington's Atlanta Compromise speech and evasiveness on the Sam Hose lynching were not enough for Du Bois to take any decisive step toward anti-Washington theory and practice.

The exchange on Du Bois's appointment at Tuskegee shows a delicate but decisive course Du Bois took toward Washington's philosophy and its practical manifestation of Tuskegee. After the initial letter on a job opening mentioned above, there were two chances by which Du Bois could join Washington at Tuskegee. In January 1896, when Du Bois was considering leaving Philadelphia University, where he was working as a researcher, Du Bois sent a letter asking for "any opening" which Washington thought he was "fitted to fill" (Washington, 1, pp. 98-99). Washington replied promptly, but Du Bois delayed a decision (Washington, 1, p. 459n). Du Bois finally declined to work at Tuskegee because he did not know "just

how he could be of service“ to Washington. Du Bois also implied that the curriculum of Tuskegee lacked the foundational, scholarly courses which Du Bois was apt to teach, such as “History, Economics, [and] Social Problems.” (Washington, 4, pp. 152-153). Du Bois, who graduated from Fisk University, studied in Germany and earned PhD from Harvard in history, was eager to teach more scholastic and intellectual courses. Du Bois eventually took the offer at Atlanta University.

The third exchange about Du Bois’s appointment at Tuskegee clearly shows Du Bois’s reluctance to work at Tuskegee, no matter how good the accommodations and salary were. Two months after the Chicago conference, Washington sent another letter inviting Du Bois to come to Tuskegee. As per Du Bois’s request of July 1899 (Washington, 5, p. 152), Washington made clear the work he expected from Du Bois and the salary. Washington wrote that he wished Du Bois “to conduct sociological studies that would prove helpful to our people,” especially “some systemic and painstaking work to be done with the country districts in the Black Belt.” Washington added that Tuskegee’s “printing office” would be wholly at Du Bois’s service, and the amount of salary (p. 245). It was clear that Washington appreciated Du Bois’s recent study on Philadelphia’s black community, published in 1899 as *The Philadelphia Negro*.

In February 1900, Du Bois was still considering Washington’s offer, but showing enough skepticism. Du Bois questioned if he was “really needed at Tuskegee,” and if his appointment “would not be a rather ornamental use than a fundamental necessity,” given Tuskegee’s basic idea of industrial education (Washington, 5, p. 443). Two months later, Du Bois wrote that he “finally decided not to accept” the job at Tuskegee. The reason is that Du Bois had been unable of persuade himself that the opportunities there are “enough larger than those here at Atlanta University” to justify his moving. Priding himself as a scholar of a high rank, he even added that “the only opening that would attract” him would be the one that brought him “nearer the centres of cultures and learning” and thus gave him “larger literary activity” (Washington, 5, p. 480). This was perhaps enough to show Washington Du Bois self-confidence as a scholar and that he was not going to be just another man in the service for Washington. At this time, Du Bois had in mind

another way to serve for the black race, namely, as position of the superintendent of the Washington D.C. schools (Washington, 5, pp. 443-444).

The bitter strife over the position of the assistant superintendent of the black schools of the District of Columbia was indeed the first sign of the mutual enmity between Du Bois and Washington (cf. Lewis, 1993, p. 232). This time, Washington deceived Du Bois to save his status as a racial leader of the country. Early in 1900, there was a vacancy in the position. Richard W. Thompson wrote to Washington on March 14, 1900, that while the most acceptable appointment would be Du Bois, Washington could “have it by a nod of assent” (Washington, 5, p. 463). Du Bois was indeed seeking the position. In his two letters to Washington in February, he preferred the position to that at Tuskegee. Du Bois thought that he would be able to serve both Washington’s cause and the general cause of the blacks by taking the position of the assistant superintendent. Du Bois needed Washington’s endorsement to acquire the position, but Washington did not offer it ultimately. Instead, Washington (Du Bois, 1, p. 44) wrote Du Bois not to worry, and became the assistant superintendent himself. Du Bois must have bitter feelings about Washington’s deception. Writing his third autobiography around nineties, Du Bois still remembers the incident, including Washington’s telling President Roosevelt about the “danger” to appoint Du Bois to the position. Remembering the incident, Du Bois (1968a, p. 252) writes that Theodore Roosevelt “never forgot the danger of my personality as later events proved.” Curiously, in *Autobiography*, Du Bois remembered that the incident about the position of Superintendent happened after the publication of *The Souls of Black Folk*, just before the establishment of the Niagara Movement, and made it sound like an occurrence after the fixation of the ideological conflict between the two figures.

The so-called Boston Riot in late 1903 is another incident by which Du Bois-Washington relationship had taken a course toward mutual enmity rather than cooperation. Washington doubted that Du Bois was behind Trotter’s “revolt,” supporting him and thus deceiving Washington. Du Bois was actually against Trotter’s action, but became suspicious enough. Du Bois remarked later in December 1903 that although he “steadfastly condemned Mr. Trotter’s action,” he “unhesitatingly” believed

that Trotter was "far nearer the right" than Washington (Washington, 8, p. 240).

It was under such a course of events that Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* was published. *The Souls*, published in early 1903, contained an essay against Washington. The essay titled "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" was an official announcement of Du Bois's departure from Washington's philosophy and camp. In the essay, Du Bois announced that the time had come to speak of the "mistakes and shortcomings" of Washington, and criticized Washington as teaching submission rather than self-assertion, being a "compromiser" of the two races, and minimized the importance of black's higher education and the civil and political rights (Du Bois, 1973b, pp. 41-59). Du Bois (p. 51) also said that the return of Washington's philosophy of submission are the disfranchisement of the blacks, the civil inferiority for the blacks, and the withdrawal of the aid for black's higher training. "The Talented Tenth," published in the same year in a volume titled *The Negro Problem* to which Washington also contributed, was more in the nature of the manifestation of Du Bois's own philosophy of the racial uplifting. In that essay, Du Bois contended that the black race would be saved by its "exceptional men," and argued for the necessity of the college education for the talented black youth who would teach and uplift the masses. Du Bois presented the top-down and even authoritarian view on society by insisting that a nation would be civilized "ever" from the "top downward," and that the talented tenth would pull "all that are worth the saving up to their vantage ground" (Du Bois, 1971, p. 36). Famously, Du Bois declared that the object of all "true" religion, i.e. the higher education for the elite distinct from Washington's industrial education for the masses, was not to make men carpenters, but to make carpenters men (p. 45).

The fathering in 1904 at the Carnegie Hall in New York was the "climax" of an effort of several years to accomplish some sort of rapprochement between Washington and anti-Washington forces in the ranks of black leadership (Aptheker, 1949, p. 345). Washington wrote Du Bois that there would be a "strictly private meeting" of the representative figures of the black race, which would "not be confined to those who may agree" with Washington's own views "regarding education and the position which the race shall assume in public affairs.

Washington said that the meeting would rather “represent all the interests of the race” (Washington, 7, p. 71). In November, 1903, Washington (7, pp. 339-4) confirmed Du Bois that the “main object of our New York conference” was to “agree upon certain fundamental principles” and to see in what way they understood or misunderstood each other “and correct mistakes as far as possible.” After seeing Du Bois’s official criticism of Washington, Washington was more keen on his own strategy and aim regarding the conference. He wrote that they “should bear in mind that the bulk of our people are in the South,” and that the conference should have a large element who were acquainted with Southern conditions “by experience” and thus could speak with authority. In a phrase which could be taken as a direct attack on Du Bois, Washington said that they should avoid depending “too much on mere theory and untried schemes of Northern colored people” (Ibid.).

When the conference was finally held in January, 1904, it was not a candid discussion of the opposing forces but almost the confirmation of Washington’s dominance over the Southern problems. Organizationally, the conference appointed a committee of three, whose function was to appoint a Committee of Twelve (Aptheker, 1949, p. 349). The Committee of Three met in July and selected the Committee of Twelve. But it did not produce significant achievement. Du Bois (1968b, p. 81) later lamented that the Committee of Twelve “was unable to do any effective work as a steering committee for the Negro race in America.” To activate and make more useful the committee, Du Bois suggested that they create “The Committee of Safety,” a much larger general committee representing the interest of the race (Washington, 7, p. 460n). But Washington rejected the suggestion (pp. 451-452). Disappointed by Washington’s controlling characteristics and his way of political organization, Du Bois finally resigned the committee. When he resigned, Du Bois was disillusioned enough to make sure that his name “would never appear” in relation to the committee.

In 1905, Du Bois founded the Niagara Movement, the organization of black “radicals” and anti-Washingtonians. Besides its official goals of the attainment of the political and civil rights for the black race, Du Bois had in mind the principle of the “freedom of speech and criticism” within the black community, which was

actually the freedom to speak against Washington (Du Bois, 1968b, p. 88). Washington obviously did not take the movement as positing a novel program for the black progress. Washington (9, p. 56) wrote in a personal letter to Richard Theodore Greener that "the whole object of the Niagara Movement" was just "to defeat and oppose every thing" he did, a deconstructive rather than a constructive effort. Ironically, as Washington estimated, the Niagara Movement did not create an effective institution in terms of black's uplifting as a whole. When it renewed as NAACP in 1910, the white liberals played a significant role.

Later in his life, writing the third autobiography, Du Bois reflected upon the importance of "character." At the age of ninety, Du Bois proudly remembered how morally upright he had been. Du Bois (1968a, pp. 277) wrote that despite the decrease in emphasis on the matter of character in his time, he nevertheless retained "an interest in what men are rather than what they do." Du Bois was proud that "from childhood" he tried to be "honest," "did not usually speak in malice," and "had strict ideas about money" (pp. 277-282). It is not difficult to guess what kind of opinion Du Bois had regarding Washington's "character." Obviously, Washington did not possess the kind of character which Du Bois prided in the autobiography. Especially notable is Du Bois's idea on money. For Du Bois, the man who was "surely negligent and ignorant" in money matters (Ibid. p. 279), Washington's exceptional talent in money and organization must have appeared to be strange and even deplorable.

3

These facts show that the personal conflicts and the difference in temperament was always a critical factor in affecting the philosophical and political relationship between Du Bois and Washington. It is important to place Du Bois's criticism of Washington, manifested most notably in *The Souls of Black Folk*, in this context. *The Souls* was the product of Du Bois's effort to give his personal and professional disagreement with Washington an official appearance and justification, rather than the straightforward manifestation of his ideological doctrines. On the one hand, giving

the disagreement with Washington an official voice and logic, Du Bois succeeded in emerging as a young racial leader. On the other hand, yet, the urge to distinguish and identify himself vis-à-vis Washington led to Du Bois's theoretical narrowness and the criticism of Washington of a dubious nature.

The first to be noted is Du Bois's elitism. Du Bois's elitism was innate in himself, as a man of high education and of talent, whose family had been free from slavery for over a hundred years. But his elitism was also a product of his relation to Washington. Du Bois's elitism was shaped and reshaped in his estrangement and distinction from Washington. Du Bois's theory of education and the racial uplifting is basically to emphasize the role of the elite, while tacitly placing the mass strata under the submission to the elite. Du Bois did not deal directly with the problem of the uplifting of the mass, which was the specialty of Washington. Du Bois's view was that the talented tenth would guide the rest of the black populace. This is a curious division of labor, not only between the elite and the mass, but also between Du Bois and Washington. It is as if Du Bois will deal with the talented tenth, while Washington shall take care of the untalented nine. This, of course, is not the broadest way to deal with the matter of black's uplifting. Du Bois's theory may work well for the cases like himself, an elite black with high education, but does not apply as a general program for the racial uplifting. In his struggle to compete with Washington's leadership, Du Bois seems to stress his own cause too much and did not construct a program which can apply for the broader mass strata. His emphasis upon higher education for blacks may be praiseworthy, but it is also true that Du Bois did not emphasize enough upon the importance of the uplifting of the mass by depicting industrial education as somehow inferior to the higher 'humanities' education. For example, his contention that education is to make a carpenter a man, and not a man a carpenter, is to appropriate the meaning of education to the type of education he himself had. It is indeed enormous that he does not discuss so much about the non-upper class blacks. Although it may be ultimately necessary to make a carpenter a man, it is also crucial to make a man a carpenter at the outset in order to let him live a life, i.e. as a means of living, as a profession.

There is a similar narrow-mindedness about Du Bois's elitist thesis that the race

be judged by its best part and not the worst (Du Bois, 1967, p. 7; 1903). This thesis is found as early a work as Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro*. In the work, Du Bois says that the upper class forms the realized ideal of the group, and that "as it is true that a nation must to some extent be measured by its slums, it is also true that it can only be understood and finally judged by its upper class" (1967, p. 7). This rather seems to be an egoistic and self-conscious cry to draw elite whites' attention to cases like himself, and use it in order to symbolically" uplift his race. But this theory is simply not broad enough as a coherent program for the racial uplift, although it may not be wrong and may indeed form a part of the broader program for black's progress. Theoretically, it makes no more sense to say that one can judge a race by its best part than to say that whites have attained higher stages of civilization and thus are already uplifted. Such an argument does not look at the internal problems of the race, such as poverty, class differentiation, and so forth.

Du Bois's criticism of Washington is also narrow in scope and of a dubious character. "Of Mr. South and the North, could hardly be a strong criticism (Du Bois, 1973b, p. 49). Du Bois (Ibid.) argued that Washington" arose as essentially the leader not of one race but of two, "a compromiser" between the South, the North, and the Negro," which had led to the surrender of their civil and political rights. Yet, as Reed (1997, p. 59) argues, any political and intellectual project since Washington to uplift the black race needed to pursue white patronage. Du Bois was not an exception, although there might be a difference in degree. Du Bois was critical of Washington's negligence of black's civil and political rights, but it is important to note that, as mentioned above, Du Bois initially took a sympathetic attitude toward Washington's Atlanta Compromise Speech and his racial program.

Du Bois's criticism of Washington as accepting black's "inferiority" and lacking "self-assertion" is also an incorrect presentation of the matter (Du Bois, 1973b, p. 50). Du Bois (Ibid.) blames Washington for teaching a policy of submission and adjustment when there was a greater economic development, and when the black's race-feeling became intensified. However, Du Bois had his own version of the negligence of black's distinctive racial pride. If imitation is one of the sincerest flatteries of those who are imitated (Schuyler, p. 123), then Du Bois advocated flattery, as

his ultimate ideal of society was dyed with the dominant white bourgeoisie philosophy. In the first chapter of *The Souls*, there appears Du Bois's phrase; "He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa" (Du Bois, 1973b, p. 4). Compare this with Washington's explicit contention in *The Negro in the South* that European religion, Christianity, is superior to black's own religion rooted in Africa (Washington, 1907, p. 35; cf. Washington, 1920, pp. 16-17). Certainly, Du Bois continues that; "He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood with white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world" (Du Bois, 1973b, p. 4). Nonetheless, Du Bois never showed convincingly whether this black's message is distinctively and innately of black race and culture, or is just a dark side of whites' discrimination in America whose case can apply to the native Indians and other oppressed race too.

Perhaps Du Bois felt that in matters of politics and organization, he could not compete with Washington. Thus, he made a self-conscious step to focus on the issue of the cultivation of the black elite, rather than the uplifting of the mass strata. Du Bois's position was ambivalent in that he needed to cooperate with Washington for the sake of the practical affectivity of his own uplift program, while he must differentiate himself from Washington in order to achieve identity as a leader with a distinctively individual philosophy. Again, this is not to say that Du Bois judged Washington's program solely on the personal and professional grounds, or that there was no tangible ideological difference between the two theorists. To repeat, Du Bois clearly had an idealism which Washington did not possess. For the Du Bois who once thought about pursuing a philosophy career (Lewis, 1993, pp. 94-102), matters like rights, education, identity and self-consciousness for the blacks were of premium importance, both philosophically and realistically. Lewis (1993, p. 89) writes that Du Bois "was an idealist by temperament, always believing that it was possible, somehow, to get from the world's welter - observed phenomena - to the bedrock of principles - upper-case Truth."

What is nearer to the truth is that the philosophical and ideological differences between Du Bois and Washington were fueled by the clash in temperament, and that it was the latter that gave the former a public appearance and shape. This had

made Du Bois's uplift theory narrower than what was objectively necessary. It was not simply Du Bois's inherent idealism and elitism, but his idealism and elitism appropriated and reshaped in contrast to Washington, which crucially affected Du Bois's theoretical standpoints. The personal estrangement was great enough for Du Bois to make public his departure from Washington. In terms of tactical considerations, Du Bois could have allied with Washington for the sake of the greater financial and human resources and opportunities that are crucial for the implementation of his ideal for black's progress. But Du Bois did not withstand to do so. The tactical and personal discrepancy between the two was so decisive as to make one wonder if there would have been a real "controversy" without the personal and tactical discrepancy. Du Bois (1968a, p. 236) himself admits that Washington's and his theories were "not absolutely contradictory." What made the two theories contradictory or appear to be so was the deep and irreconcilable split in the way they wanted the matters to be done. Washington's monopolistic policy over the black uplifting program made his potential supporter, Du Bois, one of the most acute critics of his uplift program. Du Bois's theoretical attempt was more like a cry, a cry of an elite black scholar and leader, to make whites recognize the part of black's life that did not get enough focus in Washington's basically pro-mass program of uplifting.

Raymond Albert Patterson's comment on Du Bois in 1906 has a portion of the truth. Patterson (Washington, 9, p. 135) writes that Du Bois "is many generations ahead of his race, somewhat unfortunately for him and for the race." Patterson thinks that Du Bois is "a wonderful man in his way," but does not think that Du Bois's theories are good for the colored people. "Du Bois was at least the most extreme outcome of the late 19th century's Victorian morality and enlightenment-scientific education, which let him see blacks' future in their ultimate integration and harmony with whites in the higher stage of civilization. Whether his ideal of the teleological unity of the races still holds valid today, one is perhaps more skeptical than Du Bois.

References

Aptheker, H. (1949). The Washington-Du Bois conference of 1904. *Science and*

Society, 13 (4), Fall 1949, pp. 344-351.

Aptheker, H. (1966). Comment. *Studies on the Left*, 6 (6), November-December, pp. 27-35.

Cruse, H. (1968). Behind the Black Power slogan in *Rebellion or revolution?* New York: William Morrow, pp. 193-258.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). The talented tenth in *The Negro problem: A series of articles by representative American Negroes of today*. New York: James Potts, pp. 33-75.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1967). *The Philadelphia Negro: A social study*. Intro, by E. Digby Baltzell. New York: Schocken.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1968a). *The autobiography of W E. B. Du Bois: A soliloquy on viewing my life from the last decade of its first century*. Ed. Herbert Aptheker. International Publishers.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1968b). *Dusk of dawn: An essay toward an autobiography of a race concept*. New York: Schocken.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1971). *A W E. B. Du Bois reader*. Ed. Andrew G. Paschal. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1973a). *The correspondence of W E. B. Du Bois* (Vol. 1) selections 1877-1934. Ed. Herbert Aptheker. University of Massachusetts Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1973b). *The souls of black folk*. With New Introduction by Herbert Aptheker. New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization.

Gaines, K. K. (1996). *Uplifting the race: Black leadership, politics, and culture in the*

twentieth century. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Gooding-Williams, R. (1987). Philosophy of history and social critique in *The Souls of Black Folks*. *Social Science Information*, 26 (1), pp. 99-114.

Lewis, D. L. (1993). *W E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a race 1868-1919*. New York.. Henry Holt and Company.

Moore, J. B. (1981). *W. E. B. Du Bois*. Boston: Twayne Publishers.

Reed, A. L., Jr. (1997). *W E. B. Du Bois and American political thought: Fabianism and the color line*. New York: Oxford UP.

Schuyler, G. S. (1927). Our greatest gift to America. Ed. Johnson, C. S. *Ebony and topaz: A collectanea*. New York: Opportunity, Nation Urban League, pp. 122-124.

Washington, B. T. and others. (1903). *The Negro problem: A series of articles by representative Negroes of today*. New York: James Pott & Co.

Washington, B. T. and W. E. B. Du Bois. (1907). *The Negro in the South: His economic progress in relation to his moral and religious development*. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Company.

Washington, B. T. (1920). *Up from slavery: An autobiography*. Garden City: Diybkeday, Page & Company.

Washington, B. T. (1972-1989). *The Booker T. Washington Papers* (14 Vols.). Urbena: University of Illinois Press.

Zamir, S. (1995). *Dark voices: W E. B. Du Bois and American thought 1888-1903*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

-
- (1) In Harvard University, Du Bois learnt philosophy from Josiah Royce and George Santayana, and took classes on European philosophy including Kant and Hegel. Zamir (1995, pp. 113-168) and Gooding-Williams (1987) argue that there is clearly an influence of Hegelian philosophy, especially Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, on Du Bois's racial theory. For Du Bois's learning in philosophy and its influence on his intellectual and professional development, also see Lewis (1993, pp. 79-116).