TWO STRIVINGS:

UPLIFT AND IDENTITY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN RHETORICAL CULTURE, 1900-1943

by

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ABSTRACT

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During the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century, the notion of "uplift" functioned as a major thematic within African American rhetorical culture. In this milieu, "uplift" generally connoted a sense of collective self-help. However, in contrast to more generalized reform efforts, uplift was expressed as a distinctly intraracial endeavor. That is, rather than overtly leveraging the dominant white society to enact legal or political reforms, uplift typically centered on the ways in which African Americans could enhance the quality of black life independent from white involvement.

Understood as public proposals for how African Americans could employ forms of self-help to improve some dimension of black life, uplift appeals marked a rich site of rhetorical activity. The rhetorical substance of those appeals represents the general focus of this dissertation. More specifically, this study investigates how uplift was expressed in the public discourse of four prominent early twentieth-century black spokespersons: Mary Church Terrell, Marcus Garvey, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Ralph Ellison. Through rhetorical analysis of these four figures' public appeals for uplift, this dissertation argues that, during the early twentieth century, uplift functioned as a dynamic symbolic source of black identity. In other words, public expressions of uplift did more than just promote ways of pursuing self-help; they also made available opportunities for understanding and performing black public identity.

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One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps is from being torn asunder.

— W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

INTRODUCTION

March 5, 1897, marked the inaugural meeting of the American Negro Academy. Convened in Lincoln Memorial Church of Washington, D.C., the attendees elected Alexander Crummell as the organization's first president. Though Crummell demurred at first, eventually, he would graciously accept the nomination.[1] However, on this day, Crummell's nomination would be overshadowed by the rhetorical genius of his young pupil, W. E. B. Du Bois. Upon the solicitation of the attendees,[2] that day Du Bois delivered what would become one of his most famous public addresses: "The Conservation of Races." In the address, Du Bois passionately called out to black America:

> We are the first fruits of this new nation, the harbinger of that black tomorrow which is yet destined to soften the whiteness of the Teutonic today…. 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 for development.[3]

To some of the attendees, Du Bois's message fell flat, resembling "a plea for parochial racial chauvinism."[4] Yet, in approaching race-conscious organization and activity as a vehicle for pursuing a more egalitarian society, Du Bois's sentiment resonated with a prominent current in late nineteenth-century African American rhetorical culture known as "uplift."[5]

Within the context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century African American public life, the term "uplift" generally connoted a notion of collective "self-help." As Audrey Thomas McCluskey explains, appeals for uplift generally operated from the assumption that generations of slavery and systemic discrimination had posed blacks with "debilitating

circumstances," which, in turn, complicated their ability to exercise the full range of their civic opportunities.[6] Uplift, then, was positioned as a means for remedying that situation and, more specifically, marked a proposal for *how* to "improve[e] the conditions and plight" of African American life.[7] Importantly, in contrast to more generalized reform efforts, uplift was expressed as a distinctly intraracial endeavor. That is, rather than overtly leveraging the dominant white society to enact legal or political reforms, uplift typically centered on the ways in which African Americans could enhance the quality of black life independent from white involvement.

Understood as public proposals for how African Americans could employ forms of self-help to improve some dimension of black life, uplift appeals mark a rich site of rhetorical activity. The rhetorical substance of those appeals represents the general focus of this dissertation. More specifically, this study investigates how uplift was expressed in the public discourse of four prominent early twentieth-century black spokespersons: Mary Church Terrell, Marcus Garvey, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Ralph Ellison. Through rhetorical analysis of these four figures' public appeals for uplift, this dissertation argues that, during the early twentieth century, uplift functioned as a dynamic symbolic source of black identity. In other words, public expressions of uplift did more than just promote ways of pursuing self-help; they also made available opportunities for understanding and performing black public identity.

Interpreting Uplift as a Constitutive Rhetoric

Before proceeding, it is important to clarify the conceptual understanding of "rhetoric" from which this study operates. This study takes what is known as a *constitutive* view of rhetorical practice.[8] Along those lines, legal scholar James Boyd White offers a particularly useful characterization of rhetoric's constitutive functions. White proposes understanding

"rhetoric" as the "art by which culture and community and character are constituted and transformed."[9] Understood in this way, rhetorical practice offers the symbolic materials by which human beings form their sense of Self and relationship with Others. That constitutive function is what creates the possibility for individuals to create collective bonds in the form of groups, communities, and societies. Simultaneously, that constitutive function creates the possibility for individuals to build symbolic boundaries that separate themselves from others. Significantly, not only does White's conception of constitutive rhetoric propose that rhetoric is generative, it also suggests that rhetoric is transformative. Whereas the generative component of constitutive rhetoric rejects the assumption that identities exist *a priori*, the transformative component of constitutive rhetoric rejects the assumption that identities are static. In appreciating these generative and transformative capacities, a constitutive view of rhetoric enables one to investigate how identities and communities are dynamically created and recreated in tandem with the ever-shifting terrain of public affairs.

In approaching early twentieth-century black spokespersons' uplift appeals as a constitutive rhetoric, this study does not deny the existence of instrumental, or persuasive, rhetorical purposes. Indeed, by its very nature of being *addressed* to an audience (whether real or imagined), rhetorical practice generally corresponds to some form of persuasive or instrumental intent.[10] Toward that end, James Jasinski and Jennifer R. Mercieca suggest taking a somewhat "fluid" view of "instrumental" and "constitutive" rhetoric, noting that "constitutive effects" are oftentimes "epiphenomenal" to rhetorical efforts to resolve "exigencies."[11] In other words, the discursive creation or transformation of an identity can occur *alongside* an instrumental appeal to resolve some perceived rhetorical problem. As it pertains to the general thrust of early twentieth-century uplift appeals, this dynamic makes a good amount of sense. Indeed, as proposals for how

to improve the conditions of black life, in general, uplift appeals responded to the various issues that were fostered by the twin forces of white supremacy and institutional racism; simultaneously, though, in addressing those exigencies, uplift appeals also made available and encouraged the enactment of particular modes of black identity. In attending to that rhetorical dynamic, this dissertation does not propose to offer *causal* insights regarding black spokespersons' uplift appeals and the subsequent emergence of material forms of action.[12] Rather, in focusing on constitutive possibilities, this study contemplates how black spokespersons' proposals for improving black life functioned as discursive resources for the creation and transformation of black identity.

Although this study focuses on constitutive possibilities, recognition of instrumental purposes is beneficial in that it orients attention to the terms by which expressions of black identity were constrained in accordance with the era's distinct set of power relations. That is, due to the joint logics of white supremacy and racialization, African Americans were constrained both materially and symbolically. African Americans were constrained materially in the sense that white supremacy fostered a discriminatory power structure, which denied blacks equal access to social, political, and economic opportunities. Likewise, African Americans were constrained symbolically in the sense that the biological and hereditarian assumptions of "race" generally denied black individuals the opportunity to escape the racialized label of blackness (this, of course, excludes individuals who possessed physical characteristics that were conducive to "passing" as white).[13] In regards to this study, that dynamic poses two important implications. First, early twentieth-century uplift appeals inherently engaged—even if just indirectly—the joint problems of white supremacy and institutional racism. Second, by virtue of engaging white supremacy and institutional racism, uplift appeals also addressed African Americans *as* African

Americans—by which I mean to suggest that early twentieth-century uplift appeals recognized the prevailing conceptions of racial identity. In acknowledging these points, this study recognizes the practical limitations of constitutive rhetoric. In other words, while constitutive rhetoric may possess generative and transformative potentialities, those potentialities are necessarily constrained by the historical context in which a given discourse is articulated.[14]

Contributing to the Study of Black American Rhetorical History

In general, this study tacks between two of the major subsets of rhetorical history that David Zarefsky identifies, namely, *the rhetorical study of historical events* and *the historical study of rhetorical practice*.[15] The project engages in *the rhetorical study of historical events* in the sense that it examines how black American uplift appeals functioned as responses to historically-situated "rhetorical problems."[16] Indeed, the subsequent chapters explicate the rhetorical dynamics of specific discursive moments and, moreover, explore the ways in which black uplift advocates negotiated the idea of uplift in accordance with distinct exigencies and particular venues of activity. As Zarefsky points out, this brand of rhetorical history is beneficial in that it not only sharpens our understanding of specific historical artifacts but also enhances our conceptual understanding of how people use rhetoric "to influence and relate to one another."[17]

Concurrently, this project engages in *the historical study of rhetorical practice* insofar as it documents understudied evolutions that have occurred within black American rhetorical practice.[18] At the most basic level, the study traces the diachronic evolution of uplift within black American rhetorical culture between the dawn of the twentieth century and World War II. In a sense, such critical investigation of uplift possesses merit on its own terms. Indeed, scholars in diverse fields have identified uplift as a significant aspect of early twentieth-century African

American culture. Many of these studies interrogate the ways in which the idea of uplift was used to constitute and then perpetuate disparate power relations within black America. Such studies expose the manner in which uplift fostered a class prejudice that normalized the lifestyles of elite and middle-class blacks and, conversely, denigrated the lifestyles of poor and working-class blacks. In exposing this dynamic, these studies illuminate the ways in which the rhetoric of uplift, at times, functioned as a kind of disciplinary mechanism that goaded poor and working-class blacks into adjusting their behaviors and lifestyles in conformity with those displayed by elite and middle-class blacks. Such scholarship signifies important work in that it orients attention to issues of intersectionality (particularly the intersections of race and class), which continue to persist in contemporary U.S. society. While there is certainly validity to these critiques, this study illuminates that uplift rhetoric was far more diverse, often deviating from the class-based uplift ideology. One of the underlying assumptions of this study is that the inordinate focus on exemplars of the class-based uplift ideology has fostered the false impression that all expressions of uplift inherently suffered from such class bias. Toward that end, this study resists operating deductively from the assumption of a discrete uplift ideology and, instead, employs a rhetorical lens to inductively examine uplift appeals as they materialized within dialectical interactions of text and context.[19] In so doing, I do not wish to suggest that the respective case studies considered herein are free of the class biases associated with the aforementioned uplift ideology. Rather, in resisting the assumption of the uplift ideology, I hope to foster greater appreciation for the diversity of cultural functions that were performed by early twentieth-century African American uplift appeals.

In addition to accenting the established literature on early twentieth-century African American uplift culture, this dissertation also directs attention to more fundamental rhetorical

patterns and evolutions within black American rhetorical history writ large. In particular, the study expands historical understanding of black American rhetorical practice in the twentieth century. While a great number of studies have been published on black American rhetoric from the mid-twentieth century,[20] considerably less attention has been paid to the first few decades of the twentieth century, which was both a complex and critical time to the development of African American civic identity.[21]

The early twentieth century offers an ideal context for exploring the historical intersections of rhetoric and race. As scholars have noted, the early twentieth century gave way to newfound race consciousness within U.S. society. African Americans were especially affected by this new fascination with all things related to race and racial difference.[22] From a rhetorical perspective, the era's racial politics foreclosed many opportunities to African Americans; however, this atmosphere of heightened racial awareness also created new possibilities for building black communities and focusing black civic energy. As Eric King Watts illustrates, the imposition of racial categories enabled early twentieth-century African Americans to establish a vibrant circuit of aesthetic and political activity around the rhetorical trope of the "New Negro."[23] Similarly, Aric Putnam demonstrates that during the 1930s a distinct sense of "black ethos" united black Americans in opposition to the colonial occupations of Haiti, Liberia, and Ethiopia.[24] These studies show that during the early twentieth century race was a dynamic rhetorical resource that could be used for various political purposes. In other words, race was not only a means through which the dominant white majority exercised control, but also a source of identification around which so-called racial minorities such as black Americans could collectively challenge systems of oppression. By exploring the relationship between rhetoric and

race within this historical context, this project underscores that race is both culturally fluid and rhetorically multi-functional.

Organization of the Study

This study operates from the perspective that history and discourse are interwoven. Toward that end, the study proceeds from the assumption that, in order to contemplate the ways in which rhetorical acts may have possessed significance for particular discourse communities, one must situate rhetorical acts within historical fields of action. Accordingly, in the subsequent chapters, I draw upon a wide array of primary and secondary sources as a way of contextualizing the respective rhetorical artifacts that I investigate.

As it pertains to investigating the rhetorical artifacts under consideration, I enact a critical posture that aims to sustain a "dialectical relationship" between texts and contexts.[25] In other words, I draw upon material and symbolic contexts to help illuminate the significant rhetorical features of cohesive texts and textual fragments. Through taking such a critical stance, I aim to capture the distinctive qualities of particular rhetorical artifacts, while remaining aware of the constellation of situational, material, and symbolic conditions to which the respective artifacts responded. Given the study's emphasis on the interrelationship between "uplift" and "identity," my close readings of rhetorical artifacts are guided by questions such as: How do black spokespersons' appeals for progress/advancement reflect the character of the particular historical (e.g., political, material, symbolic) exigencies of the moment? Do black spokespersons' proposals for progress/advancement express or imply symbolic boundaries between or within discursive communities? Do black spokespersons' appeals for progress/advancement invite or suggest particular modes of thinking, doing, or being?[26]

The dissertation consists of five substantive chapters, opening with a chapter that establishes historical background and then proceeding with four critical case studies. Chapter 1 provides a historical survey of major material and symbolic events that shaped the scope and tenor of early twentieth-century black uplift discourse. Investigating the historical period between Reconstruction and the beginning of the twentieth century, the chapter details: (1) major developments that impinged African Americans' pursuit of civil rights and full citizenship and (2) significant practices through which African Americans pursued collective uplift. In providing this historical foundation, the chapter situates the critical case studies within overlapping contexts of marginalization and protest.

The critical case studies, which comprise Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5, are arranged both chronologically and according to a specific figure. In Chapter 2 I examine Mary Church Terrell's 1900 *AME Church Review* article "The Duty of the National Association of Colored Women to the Race." Terrell, then president of the National Association of Colored Women, was a leading voice within the black clubwomen's movement. As Terrell characterized it, uplift essentially consisted of gaining acceptance within mainstream society, which, of course, implied appeasing white sensibilities. Reflecting contemporaneous assumptions about race and gender, Terrell posited that black women possessed a unique role in the pursuit of gaining such acceptance. Through articulating that sense of uplift, I contend, Terrell urged black women to enact a subjectivity of "respectable black womanhood."

Chapter 3 investigates how uplift was expressed within the post-World War I discourse of Marcus Garvey. A Jamaican émigré, Garvey immigrated to the United States in 1916 and, eventually, organized the Universal Negro Improvement Association. At the zenith of his influence in the United States, Garvey's UNIA boasted upwards of 300,000 members. Through

examining various rhetorical fragments from the heyday of Garvey's U.S. activity (1919-1923), I illustrate that Garvey's discourse generally characterized uplift as the development of self-respect. One primary way in which he foregrounded the concern for self-respect was through the dialectical articulation of "Old Negro" and "New Negro" subject-positions. The interplay of those subject-positions gave shape to an idealized black subjectivity that was endowed with a sense of hyper-masculine manliness.

Chapter 4 analyzes how W. E. B. Du Bois articulated uplift during the Great Depression. One of black America's leading intellectual voices, at the outset of the Depression Du Bois began to develop an economically-oriented notion of uplift. That vision would eventually culminate in Du Bois's call for black self-segregation. By way of examining a number of Du Bois's public addresses from the era, my analysis demonstrates that Du Bois's Depression era uplift vision evolved in two distinct stages. In the first stage, from 1930-33, Du Bois positioned uplift as the achievement of black economic self-determination; in the second stage, from 1934-35, Du Bois re-positioned uplift as the achievement of racial equality. Across both stages, however, Du Bois's discourse urged black Americans to enact a shared commitment to race-conscious economics.

In chapter 5, I explore how Ralph Ellison expressed uplift during World War II.[27] The nationalistic culture of World War II America posed black uplift advocates with rhetorical complications. Any disruption of wartime unity was deemed detrimental to the war effort, making it difficult for black Americans to protest for full citizenship without appearing un-patriotic to the dominant white culture. Ellison engaged that tension in his 1943 "Editorial Comment" in the *Negro Quarterly*. In the text, Ellison proposed the attitude of "critical participation" as a mode for pursuing uplift within the wartime context. Through a close reading

of the editorial, I demonstrate that Ellison's expression of uplift called for a black community that was grounded in the enactment of self-conscious doubleness.

By investigating the constitutive dimensions of early twentieth-century uplift discourse, this dissertation illuminates how black spokespersons negotiated the terms of black identity in accordance with shifting material and symbolic demands. In so doing, the study contributes to U.S. rhetorical history by fostering greater critical appreciation for the rhetorical dynamics of identity construction within the discourses of the black freedom struggle. Also, by more closely considering the rhetorical dynamics of identity in historical contexts such as the black freedom struggle, we better equip ourselves to understand how identities are both constituted and contested within contemporary quests for social justice.

Notes

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2. Wilson J. Moses, "W. E. B. Du Bois's 'The Conservation of Races' and Its Context: Idealism, Conservatism and Hero Worship," *Massachusetts Review* 34 (1993): 277.

3. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," in *W. E. B. Du Bois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1890-1919*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), 81.

4. Marable, *W. E. B. Du Bois*, 36.

5. Moses, "W. E. B. Du Bois's 'The Conservation of Races,'" 280.

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8. For general commentary on constitutive rhetoric, see James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984); James Boyd White, *Heracles' Bow: Essays on the Rhetoric and Poetics of the Law* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 133-50; James Jasinski, "A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography: Toward an Understanding of the Discursive (Re)construction of 'Constitution' in *The Federalist Papers*," in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Kathleen J. Turner (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 74-92; James Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), 106-08; and James Jasinski and Jennifer R. Merceica, "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the 'Principles of '98,'" in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, eds. Shawn J. Parry-Giles and Michael J. Hogan (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 313-41.

9. White, *Heracles' Bow*, xi.

10. Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 44.

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12. On the precariousness of claiming causality in rhetorical research, see David Zarefsky, "Knowledge Claims in Rhetorical Criticism," *Journal of Communication* 58 (2008): 629-40.

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14. See Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Agency: Promiscuous and Protean," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 2 (2005): 1-19; Erin J. Rand, "An Inflammatory Fag and a Queer Form: Larry Kramer, Polemics, and Rhetorical Agency," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94 (2008): 297-319; Josue David Cisneors, "Reclaiming the Rhetoric of Reies Lopez Tijerina: Border Identity and Agency in 'The Land Grant Question,'" *Communication Quarterly* 60 (2012): 561-587.

15. David Zarefsky, "Four Senses of Rhetorical History," in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Kathleen J. Turner (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 26.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Cultivation of Early Twentieth-Century Black Uplift Culture

This chapter investigates the rhetorical, political, and material antecedents from which early twentieth-century black uplift rhetoric gained shape. In particular, I explore how early twentieth-century black uplift rhetoric was shaped by three overlapping contexts. First, I analyze the immediate Reconstruction context, focusing on both the efforts that were made to elevate black Americans' citizenship and the inadequacies of those efforts. Second, I examine how, in the two decades that followed Reconstruction, black Americans' citizenship status was radically diminished. Finally, I trace some of the primary means by which black Americans pursued the myth of uplift between Reconstruction and the dawn of the twentieth century.

The Attempts (and Failures) to Elevate Black Citizenship During Reconstruction

On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and effectively freed the slaves in the southern states. Though Lincoln is fondly remembered as the Great Emancipator, his public discourse prior to, and immediately after, the Emancipation Proclamation suggests that his decision to free the slaves was based less in moral conviction than it was in political strategy.[1] Lincoln's motives aside, the emancipation of the slaves marked perhaps the most revolutionary political act in U.S. history and, furthermore, radically altered the landscape of American public life.

While the Emancipation Proclamation technically freed the slaves, there was good reason to question the extent to which it would translate into tangible changes in the lived experiences of the former slaves. Would freedom come with full citizenship rights? And, if such rights were granted, would those rights be upheld in practice? As Kirt H. Wilson points out, emancipations

do not necessarily equate to freedom; rather, emancipations constitute "a point of disruption, a moment that opens the door to the possibility of freedom *and* the likelihood of massive resistance."[2] The era of Reconstruction, the roughly twelve-year period that followed the Civil War, was suffused with the dialectical sense of disruption that Wilson describes. Indeed, while Reconstruction featured many advances in the pursuit of freedom for black Americans, those advances were also met with tremendous opposition at various levels.

As it pertained to the advancement of black Americans' freedom, some of the most noteworthy strides of the Reconstruction era occurred at the legal level. In fact, Reconstruction featured the addition of three amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The first of those amendments, the Thirteenth Amendment, was ratified on December 18, 1865, and guaranteed the abolition of slavery. Yet, even with this addition to the Constitution, there remained doubts about the extent to which it changed the arrangement of the southern labor dynamic. According to W. E. B. Du Bois, the Thirteenth Amendment had not actually abolished slavery insofar as the majority of the "freedmen" found themselves "on the same plantation, doing the same work that they did before emancipation."[3] The persistence of that labor arrangement prompted many abolitionists to critique the practical efficacy of the Thirteenth Amendment. In general, these criticisms insisted that black Americans would not possess freedom until they were given the right of the franchise. To this point, former slave and noted abolitionist Frederick Douglass proclaimed, "Slavery is not abolished until the black man has the ballot."[4] Some extended the critique even further. Wendell Phillips, for example, insisted that, alongside the franchise, the successful implementation of Reconstruction would also require improving black Americans' access to education and land.[5]

The subsequent Reconstruction Amendments would only partially satisfy Phillips's demands. The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified on July 9, 1868, gave African Americans "citizenship and promised them equal protection of the laws."[6] And, finally, on February 3, 1870, the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment gave African Americans "the right to vote."[7]

Although the trio of Reconstruction amendments enhanced African Americans' legal standing, they did little to disrupt the practice of white supremacy—especially in the South.[8] For example, while the Fifteenth Amendment protected black Americans' right to vote, southern blacks often had to take extra precautions just to exercise that right; accordingly, it became common practice for black voters to arrive at polling sites in large groups so as to minimize the potential of violent backlash or other forms of interference.[9] Increased legal standing had not minimized the threat of material harm.

In addition to legal reforms, Reconstruction also entailed social reforms that sought to advance black Americans' rights. Perhaps the most noteworthy of those reform efforts was the creation and implementation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands—often referred to as simply "The Freedmen's Bureau." Created during the final phases of the Civil War, the Freedmen's Bureau was staffed primarily by northern whites who were guided by the paternalistic, yet philanthropic, impulse that the former slaves could only be uplifted through white intervention.[10] In Du Bois's judgment, "The Freedmen's Bureau was the most extraordinary and far-reaching institution of social uplift that America has ever attempted."[11] By and large, the Freedmen's Bureau was intended as a mechanism for proliferating the free labor ideology. In this sense, the Freedmen's Bureau was supposed to promote conditions in which black Americans could labor voluntarily and benefit materially from the free market. This aim encompassed services ranging from land acquisition to education to healthcare. Overall, the

agency's long-term goal was to furnish a class of independent black farmers and black industrialists and thereby provide black America with an economic foothold.[12]

For myriad reasons, the Freedmen's Bureau was largely unsuccessful. The agency generally failed at providing black Americans with land and, by 1866, the Bureau was left with little choice "but to encourage virtually all freemen to sign annual contracts to work on the plantations."[13] In spite of these failings, the Freedmen's Bureau did make substantial contributions within the domain of education.[14] Indeed, it played a significant role in establishing and supervising black colleges and universities such as Howard, Hampton, Atlanta, and Fisk.[15] To gauge its material impact, from June 1865 through August 1871, more than $5 million in Bureau funds were spent on black schools, contributing to educational opportunities for more than 149,000 students.[16] These educational advancements notwithstanding, the failings of the Freedmen's Bureau reflected a general sense of unwillingness among northern whites to support federal intervention into the economic and social well-being of former slaves.[17] During the Reconstruction era, it was not uncommon for legal and political concerns to be grouped under the heading of "rights," while social and economic matters were placed under the heading of "privileges."[18] From this standpoint, "rights" were a public concern; "privileges," on the other hand, were a private matter. Speaking to these distinctions, William Gillette notes that, after black Americans were "granted citizenship and legal equality," many northern whites maintained that black Americans needed to take care of themselves.[19] This aversion to federal intervention rendered black Americans vulnerable to the prejudices of state governments, which, unsurprisingly, proved to be problematic in many southern localities.

Perhaps the clearest manifestation, during the Reconstruction era, of black Americans' vulnerability to state exploitation was the institution of the Black Codes. The Black Codes were a

series of laws passed in southern states that sharply restricted black Americans' freedoms and, generally, coerced them into re-assuming the labor roles that they inhabited prior to emancipation. In general, the Black Codes functioned as a form of peonage in that they established audaciously low parameters for black criminal behavior and, when blacks were found guilty of such "crimes," the Black Codes dictated that they be placed into involuntary labor as punishment for their "criminal" offense. Within this system, it was possible to even regulate black Americans' "personal demeanor" so that if a white person judged a black person to be acting in poor character, the black person could be found guilty of "criminal" offense.[20] The Black Codes also played a significant role in "establishing a legally enforced system of racial segregation," which imposed "barriers between the races that had not existed under slavery."[21] In this regard, the Black Codes were a forerunner for the Jim Crow segregation that would become ubiquitous within the South during the early twentieth century.

The very existence of the Black Codes highlighted that Reconstruction reforms, however well intentioned, were often lacking in practice. Indeed, as John Hope Franklin notes, "counter Reconstruction" efforts were widely successful—so much so that, by the early 1870s, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were rendered essentially meaningless within southern contexts.[22] Against the backdrop of those practical failings, Congress eventually passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875. Signed on March 1, 1875, by President Ulysses S. Grant, the bill called for greater enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and, in theory, guaranteed "national racial desegregation."[23] However, the events of the post-Reconstruction era would, as Gillette puts it, transform "the most progressive federal law enacted during" Reconstruction into "the most meaningless piece of postwar legislation."[24]

Ultimately, Reconstruction reform efforts floundered for numerous reasons. From the outset, southern whites had been overwhelmingly resistant to the idea of granting the former slaves legal and political equality. According to Eric Foner, "Virtually from the moment the Civil War ended, the search began for a legal means of subordinating" a newly emboldened black populace that increasingly sought economic independence and self-determination.[25] In addition to the problem of southern intransigence, the federal government miscalculated the efficacy of legal reforms and wrongfully applied legal solutions to problems that were social and political in nature.[26] As Reconstruction drew to an uninspiring close, a disquieting specter surrounded the status of African American citizenship.

The Rapid Decline toward the Politics of Jim Crow

The tail end of Reconstruction was marked by increasing support—even among white reformers—for the notion that black Americans' "political rights ought to follow, *not precede*, moral, educational, and economic advancement."[27] Despite the positive strides that had been made toward the pursuit of black freedom, by and large, white Americans still subscribed to the tenets of white supremacy.[28] That commitment to white supremacy did not always materialize in overt forms of discrimination. However, as Wilson points out, the Reconstruction era's contentious desegregation debates generally reified the assumption that the races were separate and, furthermore, advanced the logic that race corresponded to distinct social roles and codes of conduct.[29] Within such a milieu, black Americans were placed at a significant disadvantage. Indeed, generations of economic deprivation placed the freedpeople in a situation where they technically possessed political and civil rights, but lacked the economic basis to protect those rights. Faced with lagging support from the federal government and northern whites, black

Americans—especially those in the South—were made exceedingly vulnerable to social, political, and legal discrimination. It was in this context that the systematic subordination of black Americans took shape, culminating in the 1896 *Plessy v Ferguson* case in which the Supreme Court legally affirmed segregation.

Reconstruction reached its official end in 1877, when freshly elected President Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew the federal troops that had been stationed in South Carolina and Louisiana since the early stages of Reconstruction. Known as the Compromise of 1877, Hayes's decision to withdraw the troops effectively removed the protections that were intended to prevent southern society from reverting to its antebellum social order. As he toured the South during fall of 1877, Hayes proclaimed to a biracial audience in Atlanta: "I believe that your rights and interests would be safer if this great mass of intelligent white men were let alone by the general government."[30]

While the Compromise of 1877 significantly undermined the likelihood that African Americans' civil rights would be protected in the South, in October 1883, the Supreme Court rendered a decision that made the pursuit of civil rights all but futile.[31] In a 7-1 decision, the Supreme Court struck down the Civil Rights Act of 1875, deeming it unconstitutional.
In essence, the court maintained that "the Fourteenth Amendment gave Congress power to restrain states but not individuals from acts of racial discrimination and segregation."[32] In effect, the court made it possible for individuals to discriminate against African Americans without fear of any legal consequence. This political landscape, coupled with black Americans' existing economic deficits, more or less coerced black Americans into giving up their quest for political power. As Du Bois explains: "Negroes who wanted work must not dabble in politics. Negroes

who wanted to increase their income must not agitate the Negro problem. Positions of influence were only open to those Negroes who were certified as being 'safe and sane.'"[33]

The post-Reconstruction era was also notable for the manner in which it gave rise to the trope of "civilization." Gaining prominence within U.S. public culture during the late nineteenth century, the concept of "civilization" emerged as a potent rhetorical and ideological trope—especially as it pertained to understandings of race. As Matthew Pratt Guterl points out, starting in the late nineteenth century, many white Americans began to believe "that an outward-turned gaze would reveal new opportunities for the regeneration of manliness, civilization, and racial dominance."[34] Accordingly, "civilization" represented both an ideal to which one aspired as well as a standard by which one was disciplined.

The trope of civilization was soon used to establish a sense of racial hierarchy. Through the rhetoric of civilization, early "race scientists" and eugenicists positioned Anglo-Saxonism as the pinnacle of civilization and, conversely, positioned blackness as the lowest form of civilization. For example, noted race scientist Nathaniel Southgate Shaler posited that, in contrast to Anglo-Saxons, "black brains stopped developing sooner, leaving 'the negroes' with an animal nature unaltered by the 'fruits of *civilization*.'"[35] Noting this tendency, Khalil Gibran Muhammad underscores that color was coded into these pseudo-scientific metrics of "civilization" in such a way so that whiteness and blackness were bifurcated:

> According to the dictates of Anglo-Saxonism, all lower races were not to be handled in exactly the same way. Although each race had its unique weaknesses, 'colored' races in general were to be treated very differently from European races because the latter were within the pale of civilization.[36]

In other words, although not all forms of whiteness were regarded the same prestige as Anglo-Saxonism, the perceived gap within variants of whiteness was considerably smaller than the gulf that was placed between whiteness and blackness.

The civilizationist trope was propelled through scientific discourse. Following the developments of the Enlightenment, science emerged as a significant source of cultural authority beginning in the mid-eighteenth century. "Between the middle of the eighteenth century and the dawn of the twentieth century," notes Lee D. Baker, "science played an important role in establishing the 'fact' that savages were racially inferior to members of civilized society.'"[37] As such, the rhetoric of science infused Anglo-Saxon ideology with the appearance of objectivity and rationality. Put otherwise, white supremacy was viewed not as a baseless prejudice, but, rather, a scientifically grounded truth.

The primary purveyors of scientific racism were scholars in the fledgling fields of "Race Science" and Anthropology. One of the forerunners in this line of inquiry was Herbert Spencer. Spencer popularized three major ideas about race that would significantly shape U.S. race relations. First, Spencer "ordered" the races according to language, religion, or continent.[38] In so doing, Spencer created the appearance that racial hierarchy was predicated on more than just race, insisting that other cultural factors were involved as well. Second, Spencer employed the credibility of scientific law to assert that "racial-cultural inferiority and superiority" did exist.[39] In essence, Spencer rejected the idea of cultural relativism and, instead, advocated an essentialized paradigm. Finally, Spencer scientifically affirmed "the association of *black* with evil, savagery, and brutishness."[40] These interrelated maneuvers reified many of the assumptions that already prevailed within Anglo-Saxon ideology.

Following Spencer's association of blackness with "evil, savagery, and brutishness," Frederick L. Hoffman, a German-born, American ethnologist, would further advance the idea that blacks were inherently uncivilized and immoral. Hoffman "was convinced that the seemingly high incidence of tuberculosis, syphilis, gonorrhea, illegitimacy, and criminal activity among inner-city Negro populations was caused by abject morality, which, he asserted, was a heritable race trait."[41] Hoffman elaborated that theory in his 1896 book *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*, which garnered considerable attention. Hoffman's theory precipitated what Muhammad terms the "black criminality" thesis.[42] Muhammad notes that, from Hoffman's perspective, "every statistic or expert testimony was scientific proof of inferiority and degeneration."[43] Indeed, in *Race Traits*, Hoffman completely ignored institutional racism and socioeconomic factors when he sought to explain the higher rates of crime and illness among African Americans, concluding "that the colored race is showing every sign of an undermined constitution, a diseased manhood and womanhood; in short, all the indications of a race on the road to extinction."[44] Influenced by the tenets of Social Darwinism, Hoffman was not alone in citing African Americans' ostensible inferiority as an indication of their impending extinction; indeed, some race scientists gleefully forecasted the extinction of "the Negro" as a future moment when U.S. society would no longer be burdened by inferior stock. The "scientific" frameworks that scholars like Spencer and Hoffman established would later be adapted by those who advocated the philosophy of eugenics such as Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard.[45]

Not all forms of the civilizationist trope were overtly hostile toward blackness. Some instantiations carried more of a subtle patriarchy. However, even these 'less hostile' positions reinforced the logics of racial determinism.[46] Perhaps the most prominent variant of this position was the "white man's burden" discourse. Advocates of the "white man's burden" espoused the

pernicious stance that it was their obligation to shoulder the "burden of uplift[ing] and civilizing" the darker races.[47] U.S. anthropologist W. J. McGee, for example, maintained that "the White man … had a special responsibility to [the] lesser races of the world because [whites] were the only people to experience 'full-blown enlightenment.'"[48] In this way, the civilizationist trope emboldened whites with not only a sense of racial superiority but also a redemptive collective purpose. As deleterious as the civilizationist trope was to black Americans, the discourse was so potent that even prominent black spokespersons chose to voice their calls for racial uplift through a civilizationist register. Indeed, even visionary black intellectuals such as Du Bois expressed a commitment to civilization.[49] Thus, while the civilizationist trope was deeply embedded within the dominant white culture, it was equally entangled with black Americans' frameworks of collective uplift.

As the civilizationist trope and scientific racism rose to public prominence, black Americans' position within U.S. society grew increasingly precarious. Rayford W. Logan characterizes the final decade of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century as "the nadir," or low-point, "of the Negro's status in American society."[50] Among the most egregious measures taken to diminish African Americans' citizenship was the enactment in select southern states of poll taxes. Mississippi was the first state to adopt such a measure, adding the poll tax to its state constitution on November 1, 1890.[51] Alongside poll taxes, which exploited blacks' economic deprivation, southern states also discouraged black voting by adding provisions for literacy and property qualifications. The literacy qualifications were especially pernicious because, even if blacks were literate, it was up to the judgment of a white registrar whether they possessed *sufficient* literacy to vote; accordingly, in such situations, blacks were almost never granted the right to vote.[52]

While such denials to the right of suffrage were egregious, the 1890s also gave rise to increases in acts of racial violence committed against blacks. As Horace Mann Bonds notes, 1893 marked a record high for "lynchings," with 155 documented cases on the year.[53] It was against such a vile backdrop that Ida B. Wells published her strident critique of lynching, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*. Summing up the constellation of factors that had conspired to make such a violent scene possible, Du Bois writes, "From war, turmoil, poverty, forced labor and economic rivalry of labor groups, there came again in the South the domination of the secret order, which systematized the effort to subordinate the Negro."[54]

In a sense, that systematic subordination was punctuated by the landmark 1896 *Plessy v Ferguson* Supreme Court case. The case centered on the legal merits of racial segregation in interstate transportation. The case had materialized after Homer Plessy, a Creole man of racially ambiguous appearance, passed as white so that he could be seated in a "whites only" train car; then, after being seated in the "whites only" car, he revealed that he was not "actually white" and, therefore, was arrested for violating the Separate Car Act. The strategy was intended to expose the triviality of racial categorization as a part of a larger strategy to destabilize the legal basis for segregation. However, the strategy backfired and actually resulted in the legalization of the "separate but equal" doctrine, colloquially referred to as "Jim Crow."[55] In sum, the *Plessy* ruling gave legal legitimacy of the highest order to the social structure that had existed informally in the South since the advent of the Black Codes. The once glorious words of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation reduced to little more than a service agreement, and by the turn-of-the-century, black Americans were all but stripped of the status they had gradually gained during Reconstruction.

Black Americans and the Pursuit of Uplift, 1865-1900

Between emancipation and the dawn of the twentieth century, African Americans used a variety of channels to pursue uplift. During the early stages of Reconstruction, one of the most noteworthy means through which black Americans sought uplift was traditional political activity such as voting and even political service. However, as I have demonstrated in the foregoing pages, the relative failings of Reconstruction and the ensuing resurgence of institutional racism rendered traditional modes of political activity largely unviable for black Americans. Ultimately, this meant that blacks would need to pursue uplift from outside of conventional political venues and processes.

In the aftermath of emancipation, religion immediately emerged as a significant source of black social, political, and cultural activity. Almost instantaneously, southern blacks began withdrawing from biracial churches and by the end of Reconstruction the majority of southern blacks had withdrawn from churches with predominantly white congregations.[56] As Foner explains, there were two chief reasons for this withdrawal: (1) whites generally refused to offer an equal place to blacks in their congregations and (2) blacks saw religion as a means for pursuing their self-determination.[57] The formation of separate black congregations initiated a vibrant circuit of activity and laid the groundwork for a robust sense of black community.[58]

Overwhelmingly, in the postemancipation epoch, black Americans—both those who were free before the war and the recently emancipated—practiced Christianity. However, black Christianity was not a monolithic enterprise; indeed, there were distinct cultural differences across denominations. The majority of black Americans belonged to one of two denominations: African Methodist Episcopal (AME) or Baptist. In the main, those who possessed their freedom before the Civil War tended toward the AME, while the recently emancipated flocked to the

Baptist Church.[59] While there were evident differences between denominations, especially as it pertained to education and social class, across denominations, the general institution of black Christianity played a profound role in structuring black civic life—from economic activity to sexual norms to political practices.[60]

Alongside religion, education was another key venue through which black Americans pursued uplift. In Foner's assessment, "Perhaps the most striking illustration of the freedmen's quest for self-improvement was their seemingly unquenchable thirst for education."[61] Indeed, evidence of that "thirst" can be observed in the dramatic increases that occurred in black literacy rates, rising from just 18.6% in 1870 to 42.9% in 1890.[62] As scholars have noted, ex-slaves were exceedingly aware of the opportunities that education could afford.[63] In particular, freedpeople drew a strong association between literacy and the attainment of "full participation in the public, political sphere."[64]

One of the central struggles in black Americans' pursuit of education was the basic matter of opportunity. In the antebellum South, black slaves were forbidden from pursuing education, which proved problematic for Reconstruction reform efforts because there was no pre-existing structure for black education. Moreover, the majority of southern whites were unequivocally opposed to the prospect of educational integration. Indeed, opposition to provisions for "mixed schools" had been one of the culprits for why it took so long to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1875 and, ultimately, the bill only passed after radical Republicans agreed to remove the provision.[65] While the matter of school integration would not be settled until the 1954 *Brown v Board* decision, Reconstruction black Americans went to great lengths to win their right to education—even if circumstances dictated that such education would need to occur in segregated spaces. And this was no small feat. According to James D. Anderson, ex-slaves

"played a central role in etching the idea of universal public education into southern state constitutional law."[66] He adds, "Even though the long-term gains in public education for ex-slaves proved to be small and slow, their organized efforts and ideological imperatives laid the foundation for universal education in the South."[67] During Reconstruction, African Americans took an active role in advocating for their right to education. Heather Andrea Williams illustrates that, during the early stages of Reconstruction, African Americans gathered together, in conventions across the south, to deliberate about education. From these conventions, there generally emerged three common points: first, that African Americans should "pursue education for themselves and their children"; second, that it was unacceptable for southern whites "to use illiteracy as an excuse to exclude African Americans from civil government"; and, third, perhaps seeking the approval of the white majority, the conventions emphasized "that black education was not only inevitable, but would ultimately inure to the benefits of whites."[68]

As Reconstruction came and went, public attitudes toward black education underwent some important transformations. Initially conceived in accordance with "the New England-style classical liberal curriculum,"[69] the curricula of black schools ultimately shifted toward an emphasis on industrial and practical training. This shift in curriculum emphasis stemmed, in large measure, from the establishment of the Hampton Institute in 1868. Founded by General Samuel C. Armstrong, Hampton encouraged African Americans "to eschew political involvement and concentrate on character development."[70] By the late 1870s, those principles would be wedded to a program that centered on "economic self-help."[71] Hampton's curriculum, often referred to as the "Hampton Idea," was touted as the future of black education and, furthermore, a catalyst for black economic advancement.

Though some black educators and spokespersons vocally opposed the tenets of the "Hampton Idea," it continued to gain influence, reaching perhaps its most noteworthy form in the Tuskegee Institute. Founded in 1881 by Hampton Institute's prized pupil Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee pushed the "Hampton Idea" to its extreme. Under Washington's guidance, Tuskegee's curriculum suppressed the postemancipation ideal that African Americans should approach education as a vehicle for gaining "equal citizenship."[72] Instead, Tuskegee advocated a philosophy of moral and economic development, insisting that blacks stood to gain from appeasing the social and material interests of white supremacy.

Among the most contentious issues raised by emancipation was the matter of black Americans' economic future. Historians generally agree that, in the immediate aftermath of emancipation, black Americans were largely motivated by the general desire to gain independence from white control.[73] Indeed, economic independence was, in many ways, the linchpin of black Americans' efforts to attain "individual and collective autonomy."[74] According to Foner, "[T]he fulfillment of blacks' 'noneconomic' aspirations, from family autonomy to the creation of schools and churches, all depended in considerable measure on success in wining control of their working lives."[75] That issue was, of course, especially pronounced in the South, where the majority of black Americans had been suddenly transformed from slaves into independent agents of the free market. That newfound economic agency was a crucial dimension of black Americans' overall quest "to define the terms of their freedom."[76] Yet, in practical terms, that agency was constrained by both the material conditions of the southern economic landscape and the occupational limitations that most black Americans had inherited from bondage. That is, while many black Americans had developed significant agricultural skills through their experience with slavery, most lacked the necessary resources to acquire their own

land. So, in order to benefit from those skills, they would need to find employment with a landowner—the majority of which were former slave owners. And, for obvious reasons, the prospect of working on plantations that previously ran on slave labor was not exactly a palatable option.[77]

In light of these conditions, it is unsurprising that postemancipation African Americans generally positioned the ideas of land ownership and independent farming as symbols of uplift. As Painter explains, "Farming one's own land on one's own account meant being one's own master."[78] Though their economic situation made it exceedingly difficult, black Americans went to great lengths to acquire their own land and, by the close of Reconstruction, blacks had accumulated significant acreage in parts of Florida, Georgia, and Virginia.[79]

For some, the discriminatory conditions of the South were so daunting that emigration to parts unknown seemed a more attractive option than remaining in the South. Black emigration had occurred in U.S. society since the early nineteenth century, when the American Colonization Society was created with the purpose of settling black Americans in Africa.[80] However, by the time of Reconstruction, less than 25,000 black Americans had left the United States for Africa, Haiti, or other territories.[81] Yet, through the course of the Civil War, the idea of emigration had once again emerged as a popular option for resolving the so-called "Negro problem." Indeed, even Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, had voiced support for relocating black Americans to a foreign territory such as Liberia.

Following the rise of scientific racism in the 1870s, the general ideology of "self-help" was increasingly positioned as the locus of African Americans' collective uplift. While "self-help" was often the centerpiece of uplift discourse, as Kevin K. Gaines points out, it was not the sole principle: "For many black elites, uplift came to mean an emphasis on self-help, racial

solidarity, temperance, thrift, chastity, social purity, patriarchal authority, and the accumulation of wealth."[82] This cluster of values formed the foundation for what Evelyn Brooks Higginbottham characterizes as "the politics of respectability." Elaborating the "politics of respectability," Michele Mitchell notes that "the politics of respectability" was a bit of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, "the politics of respectability" could function subversively where blacks "consciously decided not to allow stereotypes to affect their own measure of self-worth."[83] In this sense, "the politics of respectability" provided black Americans with a positive image of black identity. On the other hand, "attempts to enforce 'respectable' behavior could be oppressive for those black women, men, and children who opted to live by different standards."[84] Indeed, in a certain sense, "the politics of respectability" was merely a rhetorical mechanism by which black elites disciplined the "undesirable" behaviors of the black masses.

In essence, the brand of uplift embodied by "the politics of respectability" hinged on concerns for black public identity. According to Gaines, "uplift … represented the struggle for a positive black identity in a deeply racist society, turning the pejorative designation of race into a source of dignity and self-affirmation through an ideology of class differentiation, self-help, and interdependence."[85] In many ways, the heavy emphasis on the "self-help component of uplift" reflected "the stamp of evolutionary racial theories."[86] Toward that end, black elites often appropriated the tenets of Social Darwinism to posit "the civilization of elites against the moral degradation of the masses."[87] Addressing this tension, Gaines contends, "However well-intentioned, those black elites in the 1890s who called for self-help and Negro improvement tacitly confirmed the commonplace view that the impoverished status of blacks was a matter of moral and cultural deficiency, not coercion and economic exploitation."[88] Such discourse was problematic in that it drew a disjuncture between black elites and the black masses, undermining

the political power that could be actualized through the mobilization of black communal activities.

At the center of the identity politics that drove "the politics of respectability" was the venerable architect of Tuskegee, Booker T. Washington. Indeed, during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century, Washington's influence extended well beyond the realm of education; his influence over black public life—from politics to economics to social policy—bordered on hegemonic. Following Frederick Douglass's death in 1895, Washington emerged as the preeminent voice of black America; by the turn of the twentieth century, Washington's influence had grown to the point that he possessed a veritable stronghold over black America's "political leadership."[89] This stemmed, in large part, from the high esteem that Washington garnered from whites—even white supremacists. As it pertained to race relations, Washington urged black Americans to remain patient and to accommodate white Americans' social and political sensibilities.[90] In his famous "Atlanta Exposition" address, Washington declared,

> 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 neighbor, 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.[91]

Although Washington espoused some objectionable sentiments as it pertained to matters of race relations, as Eric King Watts illustrates, Washington's program of uplift was materially progressive insofar as "it provided for the agencies of black collective economic development."[92] Nevertheless, Washington's approach to uplift earned him significant criticism from more militant black spokespersons. For example, the short-lived Niagara Movement coined the

pejorative term "Tuskegee Machine" to criticize the extent to which Washington's "accomodationist ideology saturated the public sphere."[93]

Washington's "politics of respectability" would remain a fixture within black uplift culture throughout the early twentieth century. However, the dawn of the twentieth century ushered in a new wave of black activists and intellectuals that would challenge Washington's philosophy in various ways. On a myriad of issues, ranging from segregation to economics to racial destiny, this new generation of black spokespersons formulated programs of uplift that envisioned newfound possibilities for black Americans. Although scholars have documented the social and political contributions of these early twentieth-century black uplift advocates, their rhetorical contributions have been generally obscured. This lack of critical engagement has fostered a gap within the published literature of black American rhetorical history—a gap that the subsequent chapters seek to fill.

Notes

1. See Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, Updated ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2014), 1-34; Kirt H. Wilson, "The Paradox of Lincoln's Rhetorical Leadership," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 3 (2000): 15-32; and Kirt H. Wilson, "Debating the Great Emancipator: Abraham Lincoln and our Public Memory," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13 (2010): 455-479.

2. Kirt H. Wilson, *The Reconstruction Desegregation Debate: The Politics of Equality and the Rhetoric of Place, 1870-1875* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002), 183.

3. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*, 3rd ed. (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 188.

4. Quoted in Foner, *Reconstruction*, 67.

5. Ibid., 60.

6. William Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction, 1869-1879* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 12.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 197.

9. Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 225.

10. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 145.

11. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 218.

12. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 143-144.

13. Ibid., 164.

14. Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901* (New York: The Dial Press, 1954), 122.

15. John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 38.

16. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 226.

17. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought*, 6.

18. Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, 198.

19. Ibid., 366.

20. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 198-207; and Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 79.

21. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 207.

22. Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, 168.

23. Wilson, *The Reconstruction Desegregation Debate*, xv.

24. Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, 273.

25. Ibid., 198.

26. Ibid., 364-365.

27. Ibid., 368, emphasis added.

28. Ibid., 191.

29. Wilson, *The Reconstruction Desegregation Debate*, 185.

30. Quoted in Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought*, 17; see also Wilson, *The Reconstruction Desegregation Debate*, 189-190.

31. Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, 278; Logan*, The Negro in American Life and Thought*, 37; August Meir and Elliott Rudwick, *From Plantation to Ghetto*, 3rd ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 206; and C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 71.

32. Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 71.

33. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 693.

34. Guterl, *The Color of Race in America,* 23.

35. Quoted in Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness,* 17.

36. Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, 25.

37. Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, 13.

38. Ibid., 30.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 79.

42. Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, 39.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. See Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 20-25.

46. Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 72-74; and Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, 191.

47. Ibid., 119.

48. Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, 69.

49. As Guterl notes, "Until the mid-to-late 1920s," Du Bois regularly suggested "that the world-historical 'Negro' had a unique destiny to fulfill, if only men and women of African descent might strive—and be allowed to strive—for *civilization*." Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 8.

50. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought*, 52.

51. Ibid., 66.

52. Meir and Rudwick, *From Plantation to Ghetto*, 195-203.

53. Horace Mann Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (1934; rpt., New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 122.

54. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 667.

55. See Dawkins, *Clearly Invisible*, 55-77.

56. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 91.

57. Ibid., 89.; see also Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Chruch, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 49-55.

58. Ibid., 77-123; E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), 29-46; and Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet*, 232.

59. See Foner, *Reconstruction*; and Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*.

60. Frazier, *The Negro Church in America*, 29-46.

61. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 96.

62. Logan, *The Negro in American Life*, 58.

63. See Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order;* James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); and Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

64. Williams, *Self-Taught*, 69.

65. See Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, 259-279; and Bond, *The Education of the Negro*, 56-57.

66. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 19.

67. Ibid., 25.

68. Williams, *Self-Taught*, 75.

69. William H. Watkins, "Blacks and the Curriculum: From Accommodation to Contestation and Beyond," in *Race and Education: The Roles of History and Society in Educating African American Students*, eds. William H. Watkins, James H. Lewis, and Victoria Chou (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001), 41.

70. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 146.

71. Ibid.; see also, Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*, 33-78.

72. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 147.

73. Ibid., 78; and Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, 12.

74. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 110.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., 102.

77. In *Black Reconstruction,* Du Bois writes, "The planters offered the ex-slave … a labor contract, and were surprised when he refused. He had to refuse. The plantation laborer, under the conditions offered, would still be a slave, with small chance to rise to the position of independent farmer, or even of free modern laborer." Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 673.

78. Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 6.

79. According to Logan, "In Florida [blacks] secured homesteads covering 160,000 acres within a year after emancipation. By 1874 Georgia Negroes owned more than 350,000 acres of land. It is not clear how many had been held by free Negroes prior to the war. Negroes in Virginia acquired perhaps some 80,000 acres of land in the late sixties and early seventies. In 1890, 120,738 Negroes owned farm homes, all of which except 12,253 were unencumbered. By 1900 the number had risen to 192,993 but the number of encumbered had risen from 12,253 to 54,017." Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought*, 123.

80. Painter, *Exodusters*, 82-95; Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*, 317-363; and Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 16-50.

81. Logan, *The Negro in American Life*, 124.

82. Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 2.

83. Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 81.

84. Ibid.

85. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 3.

86. Ibid., 21.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid., 31.

89. Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 104.

90. Ibid., 105.

91. Booker T. Washington, "Atlanta Exposition Address," in *The Voice of Black America: Major Speeches by Negroes in the United States, 1797-1971*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 579.

92. Watts, *Hearing the Hurt*, 11.

93. Angela Jones, *African American Civil Rights: Early Activism and the Niagara Movement* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), 29.

CHAPTER TWO

Mary Church Terrell and Respectable Black Womanhood

In the previous chapter, I examined some of the significant material and symbolic precursors from which early twentieth-century black uplift rhetoric gained shape. As I demonstrated, the final decade of the nineteenth century gave rise to a series of events that increasingly marginalized black Americans' status in U.S. society. With the late nineteenth-century popularization of scientific racism, U.S. public discourse became inundated with arguments that suggested black Americans suffered from a distinct pathology that rendered them physically, intellectually, and morally inferior. Such arguments infected U.S. public culture with insidious misrepresentations of black identity such as that of the black male "rapist" and the black female "jezebel."

Within that milieu, many black Americans equated uplift with gaining acceptance from the dominant white society. That perspective generally regarded uplift as a process by which black Americans worked towards achieving increased access in U.S. society—whether that access was social, political, economic, or otherwise. Those who subscribed to that brand of uplift generally insisted that, in order to gain white Americans' acceptance, African Americans would need to demonstrate that they were "civilized" and, therefore, "assimilable" into mainstream society.[1]

That representational concern gained significant attention in Progressive Era black clubwomen's discourse. Consider, for example, the following statement from Mary Church Terrell's 1897 presidential address to the National Association of Colored Women (NACW): "Believing that it is only through the home that a people can become really good and truly great, the N.A.C.W. shall enter the sacred domain to inculcate right principles of living and correct

false views of life."[2] In general, Terrell's statement accorded with contemporaneous expressions of uplift in that it suggested that black Americans' could improve their status by disproving "false views" and thereby demonstrating their worthiness to white America. More specifically, though, Terrell aligned with other Progressive Era black clubwomen in assigning black women with a dual responsibility: (1) the material responsibility of developing the race's moral character and (2) the symbolic responsibility of repairing the race's public image.

Discourses such as Terrell's signified what Leslie J. Harris characterizes as the rhetorical construction of "symbolic womanhood." According to Harris, "symbolic womanhood" refers to discourses that rhetorically "constitute women as containers of the culture, values, and morals of the nation."[3] During the Progressive Era, U.S. citizens of diverse positionalities participated in the construction of "symbolic womanhood." Among black clubwomen, however, there emerged a distinct pattern in which articulations of "symbolic womanhood" were linked explicitly to concerns for black America's racial "uplift."[4] Such discourse often entailed a rhetorical dynamic similar to the one outlined in the above passage from Terrell's 1897 address to the NACW; that is, by linking expressions of "symbolic womanhood" to "uplift," black clubwomen insisted that black women possessed a unique set of material and symbolic responsibilities.

That tandem of "material" and "symbolic" responsibilities often manifested in what Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham refers to as the "politics of respectability."[5] In accordance with the prevailing tenets of "respectable" womanhood, Progressive Era black clubwomen generally advocated that black women adhere strictly to Victorian ideals of purity, piety, and domesticity.[6] Deborah Gray White notes that this sense of "respectability" was deemed so significant that Progressive Era black clubwomen often conveyed the belief that "all the shortcomings of the race were being traced to the black woman's" perceived inability "to be pure, pious, … and

domestic."[7] In essence, that attitude posited a triangulated relationship between "symbolic womanhood," "respectability," and "uplift." Put otherwise, such an attitude suggested that not only were black women the "symbolic" representatives of black America, but also that black women's performance of "respectability" had the potential to reform the dominant society's negative judgments about blackness.

This rhetorical triangulation of "symbolic womanhood," "respectability," and "uplift" gained coherent expression in Mary Church Terrell's 1900 *AME Church Review* article, "The Duty of the National Association of Colored Women to the Race." Published during Terrell's second term as president of the NACW, the article featured Terrell's propositions for how black women could best promote "the welfare and progress of the race."[8] By and large, those propositions included reform activities through which black women would have the opportunity to showcase their capacity for "respectability" and thereby refute stereotypical views of black womanhood. In rendering that appeal, Terrell's text interacted with a rich stockpile of symbolic resources; indeed, as my analysis will illustrate, Terrell's article rearticulated a variety of discourses that had been circulating in Progressive Era black American rhetorical culture.

This chapter argues that Terrell's *AME Church Review* article marked an appeal for black women to enact a subjectivity of "respectable black womanhood." I will demonstrate that Terrell's exhortation for the performance of "respectable black womanhood" took shape through three discursive moves: Terrell (1) rearticulated the assumption of black pathology and grounded its presence in underprivileged black women's material disadvantages; (2) assigned black women with the dual responsibility of treating and preventing the material ramifications associated with black pathology; and (3) designated black women with the task of recuperating the negative views of blackness that were presumed to stem from black pathology.

The remainder of this chapter develops in three parts. I begin by surveying some of the noteworthy ways in which Progressive Era black clubwomen pursued the image of "respectability." Then, I trace the emergence of the NACW and its connection to black female leadership. Finally, I read Terrell's *AME Church Review* article alongside contemporaneous black American discourses, focusing on the ways in which Terrell's orchestration of those discourses encouraged the performance of "respectable black womanhood."

Progressive Era Black Clubwomen and the Pursuit of "Respectability"

Progressive Era black clubwomen promoted the notion of "respectability" in a number of ways. One prominent way in which black clubwomen attempted to infuse blackness with "respectability" was by publicizing the achievements of noteworthy black individuals. It became common practice for black clubwomen to adorn their public spaces with photographs of reputable black men and women.[9] In this context, an individual's worthiness for such publicity was measured largely according to his or her intellectual, cultural, or industrial achievements. Unsurprisingly, the individuals who were deemed worthy of such publicity tended to embody Anglo-Saxon tenets of "civilization." By publicizing reputable black Americans in this fashion, Progressive Era black clubwomen fostered an idealized image of blackness—one that conspicuously aligned with the sensibilities of the dominant white society. Furthermore, by symbolically elevating the status of such individuals, black clubwomen anticipated the "Talented Tenth" philosophy that would later be popularized by W. E. B. Du Bois.[10] In so doing, black clubwomen implicitly promoted the attitude that the poor and uneducated black masses should look to black elites for guidance as it pertained to the pursuit of individual and collective advancement.

While Progressive Era black clubwomen actively promoted a "Talented Tenth" philosophy, the prevailing gender ideology—within both the dominant white society and black America—generally discouraged black women from becoming the actual agents of that philosophy. Though black Americans generally did not share the prevailing assumption within U.S. public culture that high intelligence ran counter to "womanhood,"[11] they did express a basic sense of agreement with the idea that a woman's proper place was the domestic sphere.[12] As White notes, many black Americans expressed the view that black women exercised their "greatest influence on behalf of the race" in their domestic roles as wives and mothers.[13] Accordingly, black women were encouraged to seek education only insofar as such education would enhance their ability to "become good wives and good mothers."[14] Significantly, this alignment of black womanhood with domestic roles did not necessarily mark a devaluation of the contributions that black women could make to the race. To the contrary, many black Americans voiced the belief that the home was the most crucial site for the inculcation of good values and, therefore, women played a pivotal role in cultivating good character—especially within black children. So, while the assumption of domesticity posed black women with constraints, it also offered a distinct source of agency. For example, prominent black clubwoman Fannie Barrier Williams implicitly positioned black women at the center of uplift efforts when she insisted that black Americans' "greatest need was a better and purer home life."[15]

In spite of the significance that was ascribed to black women's domestic roles, many Progressive Era black clubwomen sought to expand their inclusion in public life. For many black clubwomen, it seemed only a logical extension to engage reform activities by negotiating the domestic roles they had developed within the home. Progressive Era black clubwomen frequently justified their entry into the public sphere by refashioning themselves as "mothers of

the world," enacting that newfound role by positioning domestic virtues as remedies for public problems.[16] These reform-minded black clubwomen focused a great deal of energy in the realm of education.[17] Within the general area of education, many black clubwomen specifically focused their reform efforts on establishing schools—ranging from kindergartens to colleges. Noteworthy examples of such institutions included Nannie Burroughs's National Training School for Women and Girls, Lucy Laney's Haines Institute, and Arenia Mallory's Saint Industrial and Literary Training School.[18] Alongside education, black clubwomen also placed significant emphasis on healthcare, senior care, and temperance.[19] Through such reform efforts, black clubwomen provided vital services to their local communities. Yet, this reform work also offered benefits to the clubwomen. As Beverly W. Jones notes, reform work doubled as a form of leadership training in a society where leadership roles were traditionally reserved for males.[20] In other words, the experience of reform work provided black clubwomen with a newfound vantage point from which they could reimagine themselves as not only public actors, but also public leaders.

The NACW and Black Female Race Leadership

The advent of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) was a watershed moment in the history of black women's organized reform efforts. From its inception, the NACW was regarded as black women's "primary vehicle for race leadership."[21] Black women's organizations, such as the NACW, first started appearing in the aftermath of Reconstruction. Following that initial post-Reconstruction wave, the quantity of black women's organizations began to grow exponentially during the 1890s. Historian Paula Giddings traces that upsurge to the publicity that black activist Ida B. Wells garnered in her campaign against lynching.[22] Indeed, following the publication of Wells's 1892 pamphlet *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its*

Phases, black women's organizations proliferated and materialized in various localities from Nebraska to Pennsylvania to Louisiana.[23]

Although the early 1890s entailed a marked increase in black women's organizations, until the mid 1890s, those organizations were largely diffuse and disconnected from one other. By and large, the organizations' activities were not explicitly united by any coherent platform or objective. That would all change in 1895, when the courageous Wells—as she so often did—provoked the public scorn of white supremacists. Apparently angered by Wells's recently successful anti-lynching campaign in England, James W. Jacks, president of the Missouri Press Association, published a scathing public letter about Wells.[24] Not only did Jacks's letter disparage Wells personally, it also denigrated black women generally, characterizing them as "prostitutes," "thieves," and "liars."[25] In response to Jacks's slanderous letter, journalist and black clubwoman Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin penned a statement in the journal *Woman's Era* urging black clubwomen to gather together in collective deliberation in Boston. Ruffin's call was well heeded, and from July 29-31 of 1895, black clubwomen from across the United States convened at what was dubbed the "First National Conference of Colored Women."[26]

The Boston conference laid the groundwork for the development of a national organization that would represent black women's unique concerns and interests. In fact, by the end of 1895, two such organizations had been created: (1) The National Federation of Afro-American Women (NFAAW), headed by Margaret Murray Washington; and (2) The Colored Women's League (CWL), headed by Mary Church Terrell.[27] It did not take long for leaders from the respective organizations to recognize that their interests would be better served if the two entities were merged into a single national organization. And, so, on July 21, 1896, the National Association of Colored Women was formed.[28] In addition to uniting the constituencies of the

NFAAW and CWL, the formation of the NACW also marked the consolidation of more than a hundred local black women's clubs.[29] After deliberations, the NACW ultimately elected Terrell as its first president.

Under Terrell's leadership, the NACW pursued a "conservative, though pragmatic, social welfare program."[30] As V. P. Franklin and Bettye Collier-Thomas note, Terrell's program focused largely on the ways in which black women could use the already accepted roles associated with black womanhood (i.e., "mother," "wife," "teacher") as avenues for pursuing black America's racial "betterment."[31] Working within prevailing gender norms, Terrell and NACW members emphasized the presumed moral superiority of black women and, on those terms, insisted that "only black women could save the black race."[32] Indeed, such an understanding of black women's significance emerged strikingly in the NACW's first official platform statement, which pledged:

> To secure and enforce civil and political rights for ourselves and our group.
>
> To obtain for our colored women the opportunity of reaching the highest standards in all fields of human endeavor.
>
> To promote interracial understanding so that justice and goodwill may prevail among all people.[33]

The pursuit of those lofty aims, however, often promoted socioeconomic standards that rendered underprivileged black women as cultural Others. As Farah Jasmine Griffin explains, out of concern for dispelling negative stereotypes about black women, such as the aforementioned prejudices spewed by Jacks, NACW leaders self-consciously sought to exude an image of black womanhood that would appeal to the sensibilities of the dominant white society.[34] In accordance with the values of "middle-class white America," NACW leaders rhetorically positioned the

most "educated," "moral," and "affluent" black women as the ideal representation of black womanhood and thereby exhorted underprivileged black women to refashion themselves in that image.[35]

Rearticulating Black Pathology

Terrell published her 1900 *AME Church Review* article, "The Duty of the National Association of Colored Women to the Race," shortly after the NACW's second convention.[36] The article marked an opportunity for Terrell, as NACW president, to elaborate significant issues that were raised at the convention and, furthermore, offered a chance to address those issues to a wider public audience. At the time of Terrell's article, the *AME Church Review* was a major outlet for African American intellectual and protest discourse. Though sponsored by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the journal's content was by no means limited to denominational concerns; rather, the *AME Church Review* sought to foster informed dialogue on "human rights and other pressing issues."[37] Toward that end, the journal routinely drew contributions from noteworthy black spokespersons, such as Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Ida B. Wells, and W. E. B. Du Bois.[38]

Given the relatively elite thrust of the *AME Church Review*'s content and contributors, it was not altogether surprising that Terrell's article embodied some of the class biases that predominated within the rhetorical culture of Progressive Era black elites. Along these lines, Terrell's article notably rearticulated assumptions of black pathology—an idea that possessed currency within both the dominant public culture and black American rhetorical culture. To put it simply, "black pathology" signified a cultural myth that advanced the notion that blackness was an inherently inferior condition.[39] Influenced by the contemporaneous rise of Social Darwinist

thought, Progressive Era expressions of black pathology operated from the assumption that an individual's capacity for "civilization" and "morality" were linked to her race.[40] More specifically, Progressive Era expressions of black pathology suggested that black Americans were inherently prone to immorality and criminality.[41] In rearticulating assumptions of black pathology in her *AME Church Review* article, Terrell participated in an almost paradoxical rhetorical pattern that was prevalent within the discourse of Progressive Era black elites. At its core, this pattern consisted of a rhetorical balancing act in which black elites elevated their own status by reifying certain assumptions about black pathology, while, simultaneously, refuting the belief that blackness was a naturally inferior condition.

Terrell gave tangibility to the notion of black pathology through her commentary on black children's health problems. More specifically, in discussing black children's health problems, Terrell oriented attention to the failings of black mothers. In this regard, Terrell's discourse suggested that black pathology was grounded in bad mothering. Discussing the situational dynamics of working mothers, Terrell insisted that, in some cases, "infants" were "locked alone in a room from the time the mother leaves in the morning until she returns at night."[42] She told of one such case in which a mother left her "infant" unattended while she "went out to wash" and, while the mother was away, the infant purportedly "cried itself to death."[43] The anecdote conveyed a clear message: The child had died because of the mother's negligence. Terrell advanced a similar sentiment when she recounted the observations she had recently made while overseeing a "day nursery … for infants of working women."[44] She wrote,

> I have been shocked at some of the miserable little specimens of humanity brought in by others, who had been obliged to board them out with either careless or heartless people. In one instance the hands and legs of a poor little mite of only fourteen months had been

> terribly drawn and twisted with rheumatism contracted by sleeping in a cold room with no fire during the severe winter, while the family with whom it boarded enjoyed comfortable quarters overhead.[45]

This account portrayed the child's physical deformities as the result of negligent caretaking; however, it is important to note that the stand-in caretakers in Terrell's anecdote would not have been necessary had the mother been present. Thus, in a roundabout way, Terrell once again linked black children's physical harm to negligent mothering. While such examples of negligence could have easily been interpreted as isolated incidents, Terrell insisted that the problem was widespread. She was adamant that an increased emphasis on day nurseries was vitally needed in order to curb "the slaughter of the innocents which is occurring with pitiless persistency every day."[46] With graphic imagery, Terrell suggested that black children were suffering physical harm at an everyday rate due to the negligence of their mothers. In so doing, Terrell positioned bad mothering as a form of pathology that threatened the future of black America.

Terrell similarly located black women at the center of black pathology when she spoke about the hardships that faced errant and dispossessed black women and girls. Addressing the ubiquitous presence of "unfortunate women and tempted girls," Terrell proclaimed that it would take great collective effort to "woo" these wayward black females "back to the path of rectitude and virtue."[47] This framing implied that, if these errant black women and girls were to find a righteous path, it would require benevolent guidance; if left to their own devices, they would continue to stray from goodness. She maintained that, had it not been for the reform efforts of the NACW, the "poor benighted sisters" from "the black belt of Alabama" would never have discovered "everything that makes life sweet or worth living."[48] Portraying these women as

deficient homemakers, Terrell wrote, "We have taught them the A, B, C, of living, by showing them how to make their huts more habitable and decent with the small means at their command, and how to care for themselves and their families more in accordance with the laws of health."[49] According to Terrell's account, prior to the NACW's intervention, these underprivileged black women had lacked the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain adequate homes. In light of the gender norms of the era, and the emphasis placed on women's domestic responsibilities, Terrell's assessment bordered on condemnatory. That is, to question a woman's domestic capacities was akin to questioning her very womanhood. Indeed, many believed that if a woman did not foster a proper home, she failed to fulfill her presumed duty as a moral guardian of the race.

In a sense, discourses such as Terrell's above commentary on underprivileged black women carried the potential to reinforce the idea that black pathology was innate; however, Progressive Era black elites, such as Terrell, often attenuated that risk by rhetorically framing manifestations of black pathology as the result of environmental factors. For example, in his 1899 study *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois characterized "the Negro group" as "a symptom, not a cause."[50] From this perspective, the disproportionate rate of illicit behavior among black Philadelphians owed not to some innate immorality, but, rather, to a "social atmosphere" that was fundamentally different "from that surrounding most whites."[51] Such an emphasis on environmental factors was especially prevalent in black clubwomen's statements in defense of black womanhood. For example, in an 1893 address, Fannie Barrier Williams declared, "The moral aptitudes of our women are just as strong and just as weak as that of any other American women with like advantages of intelligence and *environment*."[52] Advancing a similar sentiment, in an 1895 address to the National Conference of Colored Women, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin

insisted that "colored women" who were "not leading full, useful lives, [were] only waiting for the *opportunity* to do so, many of them warped and cramped for lack of *opportunity*, not only to do more, but be more."[53]

In her *AME Church Review* article, Terrell echoed these appeals by linking manifestations of black pathology to environmental factors. At the most basic level, Terrell drew attention to the situational factors that had fostered the material gap separating black elites and the black masses. "[T]he more favored among us," Terrell wrote, "have been blessed with advantages of education and moral training superior to those enjoyed by the majority."[54] In Terrell's assessment, it was not that black elites were inherently superior to the black masses; they had simply benefitted from a different range of opportunities. As it pertained to the underprivileged black mothers, whose presumed negligence was traced to the physical harm of their own children, Terrell clarified that such situations were often influenced by economic circumstances. She explained, "Thousands of our wage-earning mothers with large families dependent upon them for support are obliged to leave their infants all day to be cared for either by young brothers and sisters, who know nothing about it, or by some good-natured neighbor, who promises much, but who does little."[55] Such discourse painted these presumably negligent black mothers in a somewhat different light. As Terrell saw it, many black mothers were victims of circumstance—caught between overlapping but competing exigencies. On the one hand, there was an immediate need for these mothers to supervise and care for their children; on the other hand, these mothers also needed to work in order to earn the economic resources needed to satisfy their children's basic needs.

Though it was common for Progressive Era black elites to express compassion for the black masses, it was also common for them to express frustration with the manner in which the

masses represented the race.[56] Du Bois exuded such class bias in *The Philadelphia Negro* when he stated, "[A]s 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."[57] "[N]othing more exasperates the better class of Negroes," Du Bois added, "than this tendency to utterly ignore their existence."[58] Black clubwomen often voiced comparable class biases in their discussions of underprivileged black women. For example, on one occasion, Fannie Barrier Williams opined, "[C]olored women have begun to learn that if they would give their clubs prestige and influence with the great associations of white women, they must bring to the front and encourage their best women; that their representatives must be representative of the best they have."[59] Through the use of terms like "better" and "best," Du Bois and Williams each advanced concerns about the quality of the individuals who stood as synecdochal representatives of black America. Furthermore, both Du Bois and Williams seemed to intimate that it was more desirable to have black elites represent the race because they more closely aligned with the norms of the dominant white society.

Such class tensions and concerns for the public representation of black identity also materialized in Terrell's *AME Church Review* article, particularly when Terrell discussed the NACW's relationship to underprivileged black women. Addressing that relationship, Terrell declared,

> Even though we wish to shun them, and hold ourselves entirely aloof from them, we cannot escape the consequences of their acts. So, that, if the call of duty were disregarded altogether, policy and self-preservation would demand that we go down among the lowly, the illiterate, and even the vicious to whom we are bound by the ties of race and sex, and put forth every possible effort to uplift and reclaim them.[60]

Terrell's pronoun usage in the passage was significant in that it rhetorically dissociated the NACW from the "lowly," "illiterate," "vicious" masses. Yet, while Terrell articulated this sense of symbolic separation, she simultaneously insisted that "the ties of race and sex" dictated that the NACW was inextricably "bound" to the actions of these underprivileged black women. Confronted by the burden of this "duty," Terrell identified "uplift" and "reclamation" as the only viable avenues by which the women of the NACW could promote their own "self-preservation." In essence, Terrell characterized underprivileged black women as an exigency that actively hampered black elites' pursuit of upward mobility. Therefore, if black elite clubwomen wished to further advance in society, it was incumbent upon them to "correct" the unseemly behaviors of underprivileged black women, in the hopes of refashioning them with a disposition that better appealed to the sensibilities of the dominant white society.

Reconstructing Black Womanhood

Terrell's vision of uplift centered on correcting manifestations of black pathology—particularly those that were thought to directly involve black women. Unsurprisingly, she represented the black clubwomen of the NACW as the counteragents to such forms of black pathology and, in so doing, rhetorically constituted black clubwomen as the principal agents of uplift. Terrell's vision of uplift, I argue, exhorted black women to enact a subjectivity of "respectable black womanhood," and she did this in primarily two ways. First, Terrell promoted the performance of "respectable black womanhood" by designating black women with the dual responsibility of treating and preventing the material ramifications associated with black pathology. Second, Terrell encouraged the performance of "respectable black womanhood" by

employing black women with the task of recuperating the negative views of blackness that presumably resulted from manifestations of black pathology.

Overall, Terrell's appeals for "respectable black womanhood" implicitly advocated a rhetorical practice akin to the classical conception of *imitatio.* As Michael Leff explains, counter to the somewhat pejorative connotations that are now ascribed to imitation, in its classical origins, *imitatio* did not entail "mere repetition or mechanistic reproduction," but, rather, a complex inventional process.[61] That is, while the imitator is invariably marked by the impression of that which he or she imitates, through the productive act of imitation, the imitator composes a new product that is textured by his or her distinct needs, values, and motives.[62] For Terrell and her contemporaries, this equated to a subjectivity (i.e., "respectable black womanhood") that largely cohered with the norms and values of the dominant white society but that simultaneously possessed qualities that reflected the black Americans' unique concerns.

Treating and Preventing Material Ramifications

The conception of uplift that Terrell proposed was consistent with notions of uplift that had been previously voiced by Progressive Era black clubwomen. Indeed, Terrell's brand of uplift carried a similar spirit as the program of uplift that Anna Julia Cooper had articulated in her 1892 book *A Voice from the South.* Therein, Cooper called for black clubwomen to eschew "aristocratic distinctions" and, instead, commit themselves to "lifting up and leading" the black masses.[63] In many ways, the notion of uplift that Cooper and other black clubwomen had advocated was well captured by the NACW's official motto: "*Lifting as we climb.*"[64] In her *AME Church Review* article, Terrell reinforced such a spirit of uplift, stating, "[I]t must be patent to the most careless observer that the more intelligent and influential among us do not exert

themselves as much as they should to uplift those beneath them, as it is plainly their duty to do."[65] Prefiguring Du Bois's conception of the "Talented Tenth," Terrell framed uplift as a top-down process in which the educated and refined members of the race had a responsibility to elevate the uneducated, underprivileged masses. Yet, as Terrell would illustrate in a subsequent passage, in her view, black women represented the key to "uplift." Terrell proclaimed, "It is useless to talk about elevating the race if we do not come into closer touch with the masses of our women, through whom we may correct many of the evils which militate so seriously against us, and inaugurate the reforms without which, as a race, we cannot hope to succeed."[66] This statement drew a reciprocal relationship between the character of black women and the future status of the race. That rhetorical alignment, in conjunction with Terrell's previous call for black elites to "uplift those beneath them," advocated a sense of "respectable black womanhood" in that it positioned the reform of underprivileged black women as the channel through which black clubwomen could "correct" many of the so-called "evils" (i.e., black pathologies) that presumably afflicted the "race." This move, then, marked an appeal for "respectable black womanhood" in that it allusively characterized the influence and instruction of elite black clubwomen as the agency that could—and must—rehabilitate underprivileged black women's supposedly flawed character.

Terrell gave shape to the character of "respectable black womanhood" by discussing the roles that she believed black women most urgently needed to fulfill. Directing her comments explicitly to "the women of the race," Terrell wrote, "As parents, teachers and guardians, we teach our children to be honest and industrious, to cultivate their minds, to become skilled workmen, to be energetic and then to be hopeful."[67] This passage marked a normative statement on the nature of black womanhood. That is, based on this rendering, the ideal, or "respectable,"

black woman ought to function, in some capacity, as "mother" and/or "teacher" and/or "guardian." I will address Terrell's appeals to "motherhood" later in this section, but aside from her allusions to "motherhood," this passage was key because, in assigning black women the roles of "mother," "teacher," and "guardian," Terrell enthymematically positioned those roles as fundamental attributes of the idealized black female subjectivity (i.e., "respectable black womanhood"). In other words, in order for a black woman to perform "respectable black womanhood," she must fulfill one—or, potentially, all—of the above roles that Terrell identified.

In calling for black women to function as "mothers," "teachers," and "guardians," Terrell indirectly conjured an image of black female domesticity. During the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century, the "home" was generally considered the most readily available location in which a black woman could function as "mother," "teacher," and "guardian." In light of the gender norms of the era, it was common for Progressive Era black clubwomen to propagate assumptions of domesticity—namely, the presumed relationship between "woman" and the "home." For example, Margaret Murray Washington—the wife of Booker T. Washington—cited black women's unique role in the "development of home and family" as the key reason why it was up to black women to solve "the so-called race problem."[68] Given the familial dynamics and norms of U.S. society, it was not surprising to see the "home" depicted as the crucible in which individual character was shaped; yet, an interesting feature of Progressive Era black clubwomen's rhetoric were discourses that portrayed the "home" as the constitutive ground of not just individual character, but *collective* and *national* character. Cooper, for example, offered the following rendering in *A Voice from the South*: "The atmosphere of homes is no rarer and purer and sweeter than are the mothers in those homes. A race is but a total of families. The nation is the aggregate of its homes."[69] And, in strikingly similar terms, the inaugural issue of the

black clubwomen's publication, *Woman's Era*, proclaimed, "As the homes are so will the nation be, for the nation is nothing more than a collection of what is produced in the homes."[70]

In her *AME Church Review* article, Terrell reinforced such discourse by configuring the "home" as an essential component of "respectable black womanhood." "If I were called upon to state in a word where I thought the Association [NACW] should do its most effective work," Terrell wrote, "I should say unhesitatingly, 'in the home.'"[71] She added, "The purification of the home must be our first consideration and care. It is in the home where woman is really queen, that she wields her influence with the most telling effect. It is through the home, therefore, that the principles which we wish to promulgate can be most widely circulated and most deeply impressed."[72] Characterizing the "home" as a site for inculcating "principles" that could then be "widely circulated," Terrell echoed the sentiments of contemporaneous black clubwomen in that she articulated the "home" as a space in which women enjoyed the distinct opportunity of being able to cultivate the values that they wished to see manifest in public life. This notion of "home" ascribed women with a potent sense of agency and thereby implicitly encouraged the performance of "respectable black womanhood." That linkage between "respectable black womanhood" and the "home" emerged more directly in the comment that immediately followed the above passage; there, Terrell offered the following admonition: "In the mind and heart of every *good* and *conscientious* woman, the first place is occupied by home."[73] Voiced through a moralistic register, this statement suggested that, if a black woman wished to be considered "good" and "conscientious" (i.e., "respectable"), then, she needed to make the "home" her first priority—and, of course, furnish her "home" with the utmost moral standards.

Though Terrell contended that the "home" was the most important place in which black women could contribute to the task of "uplift," her discourse suggested that the performance of

"respectable black womanhood" required one to also contribute in meaningful ways beyond the confines of the "home." Speaking to this point, Terrell wrote,

> We must always remember … that observation has shown and experience has proved that it is not the narrow-minded, selfish woman who think of naught save their families and themselves, who have no time to work for neglected children, the helpless sick and the needy poor—it is not such women, I say, who exert in their homes the most powerful influence for good.[74]

While the "home" was the top priority, according to Terrell, it was both "narrow-minded" and "selfish" for a black woman to focus exclusively on her "home." Not only that, in Terrell's calculus, a black woman could not maximize her "influence" within the "home," unless she attended to remedying the issues that affected black Americans on a large scale outside of her "home." Notably, the specific issues that Terrell identified—"neglected children," "helpless sick," and "needy poor"—accorded largely with both the assumption of black pathology and the particular roles that Terrell assigned to black women (i.e., "mother," "teacher," and "guardian"). In a basic sense, Terrell's appeal reaffirmed the notion that black women must inhabit the central role in the uplift process. More specifically, it encouraged the performance of "respectable black womanhood" in that it exhorted black women to alleviate the presumed effects of black pathology by administering aid to the "less fortunate" members of their communities. In essence, Terrell called upon black women to "mother" all black children—not just their own.

Of the various tasks that Terrell assigned to the NACW in particular and black women in general, she placed perhaps the greatest emphasis on black women's responsibility to black children. Since children were presumed to be especially susceptible to the ravages of black pathology, it seemed only logical that black women must attend closely to children's various

needs—whether material, intellectual, psychological, or otherwise. "The more closely I study the relation of this Association to the race," Terrell wrote, "the more clearly defined becomes its duty to the children."[75] Among Progressive Era black clubwomen, Terrell was certainly not alone in identifying black women's "duty to the children" as a vital dimension of "uplift." As Michele Mitchell notes, it was common for Progressive Era black clubwomen to rhetorically frame children as the symbolic containers of the race's destiny.[76] Advancing such a sentiment, Terrell implored,

> I plead to you, for the children, for those who will soon represent us, for those by whom as a race we shall soon stand or fall in the estimation of the world, for those upon whom the hope of every people must necessarily be built. As an Association, let us devote ourselves enthusiastically, conscientiously, to the children, with their warm little hearts, their susceptible little minds, their malleable, pliable characters. Through the children of to-day, we must build the foundation of the next generation upon such a rock of integrity, morality, and strength, both of body and mind, that the floods of proscription, prejudice, and persecution may descend upon it in torrents, and yet it will not be moved. We hear a great deal about the race problem, and how to solve it. This theory, that and the other, may be advanced, but the real solution to the race problem, both so far as we, who are oppressed and those who oppress us are concerned, lies in the children.[77]

Though such an appeal ostensibly rendered "children" as the key to black America's collective "uplift," in a roundabout way, the emphasis on "children" actually employed black women with the most instrumental role in the uplift process. That is, during this era, women were generally designated with the unique "responsibility" of "making environments for children."[78] So, even though Terrell portrayed the "children" as the key to black America's collective "uplift," in light

of black women's presumed responsibility to the children, Terrell's position implicitly elevated the significance of black women. In that regard, Terrell's framing also marked an appeal for "respectable black womanhood." Indeed, since Terrell assigned black women with the task of developing black children's "integrity "morality," and "strength of mind," one could have safely assumed that she also called upon black women to embody those same characteristics.

In the *AME Church Review* article, Terrell advanced numerous calls for black women to commit themselves to sheltering black children from the presumed risks of black pathology. Significantly, Terrell's "children"-oriented appeals largely positioned black women in the three roles—"mother," "teacher," and "guardian"—that she explicitly associated with "respectable black womanhood." First, Terrell positioned black women in the role of "mother." As I illustrated previously in the chapter, Terrell generally grounded black pathology in the inadequacies of black mothers. Accordingly, it was unsurprising that Terrell identified "mother's [sic] meetings" as a tangible means by which black clubwomen could enlighten underprivileged black women on the practice of "mothering" and thereby help to improve the material situation of black children.[79] In addition to "mothers' meetings," Terrell also proposed day nurseries, what Katrina Bell McDonald might refer to as a form of "othermothering,"[80] as another means by which black women could use "mothering" to counteract the risk of black children succumbing to the ravages of black pathology. To this point, Terrell stated,

> What a vast amount of good would be accomplished, if by every branch of the Association, a home were provided for the infants of working women, who no matter how tender may be their affection for their little ones, are forced by stern necessity to neglect them all day themselves, and at best, can only entrust them to others, from whom, in the majority of cases, they do not receive the proper care.[81]

Instead of placing black clubwomen as instructors of "mothering," this proposition placed them as "stand-in mothers," the administrators of material care for the infants of working black women—children who might otherwise be left to the devices of unfit caretakers. In each of these examples, Terrell positioned a woman's capacity for "mothering"—whether instructional or practical—as a vital corrective to black pathology.

Second, Terrell's "children"-oriented appeals positioned black women in the role of "teacher." This dynamic was most prevalent in Terrell's call for the NACW to "consider the establishment of kindergartens as the special mission it is called upon to fulfill."[82] Showcasing the material benefits that such a mission could offer, Terrell contended, "Through the kindergarten alone, which teaches its lessons in the most impressionable years of childhood, shall we be able to save countless thousands' of our little ones who are going to destruction before our very eyes."[83]

Finally, Terrell's "children"-oriented appeals positioned black women in the role of "guardian." More specifically, Terrell urged black women to actively seek out opportunities through which they could enrich black children's lives. Underscoring the need for such engagement, Terrell posed the following rhetorical question: "Shall we sit supinely by, with folded hands, drooping heads, and weeping eyes, or shall we be up and doing, determined to smooth out the rough roads of labor over which tiny feet that now patter in play, will soon stumble and fall?"[84] Further goading black women to take every measure to engage the black children in their communities, Terrell wrote, "For no organization is so poor both in mental resources and in money that it cannot form a children's club, through which we can do a vast amount of good. Lessons may be taught and rules of conduct impressed, while the children of a neighborhood are gathered together for amusement and play, as in no other way."[85]

Recuperating Negative Views of Blackness

Significantly, Terrell's *AME Church Review* article portrayed black pathology as not only a *material* threat to black Americans, but also a *symbolic* threat to the public image of blackness. That is, Terrell suggested that manifestations of black pathology fostered a negative representation of blackness, which, in turn, shaped others' judgments about black Americans. Accordingly, Terrell encouraged the performance of "respectable black womanhood" by depicting black women as counteragents to the symbolic damages associated with black pathology. More specifically, Terrell emphasized the ways in which black women could reform public perceptions of blackness. Such discourse articulated a link between black women and public perceptions of blackness and thereby urged black women to counter black pathology by infusing blackness with a renewed aura of "respectability." In this way, by emphasizing these symbolic dimensions, Terrell participated within the coterminous discursive construction of Symbolic Womanhood.

The broad strokes of Terrell's appeals largely resembled the Progressive Era viewpoint that all meaningful "reform" and "progress" would stem from woman's supposedly ultra-moral disposition;[86] however, the rhetorical texture of Terrell's discourse evinced conspicuously racialized concerns that black clubwomen had expressed elsewhere. In particular, Terrell followed other black clubwomen in foregrounding the distinct representational challenges that confronted black women. As Fannie Barrier Williams explained in her 1893 address at the Chicago World's Fair, because black women's "morality" had "been commented upon so disparagingly and meanly," it placed them "in the unfortunate position of being defenders of [their] name."[87] Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin advanced a similar sentiment at the 1895 National

Conference of Colored Women when she stated, "Too long have we been silent under unjust and unholy charges; we cannot expect to have them removed until we disprove them through … a dignified showing of what we are and hope to become."[88] In her *AME Church Review* article, Terrell also expressed concerns for modeling a positive image of black womanhood:

> The duty of setting a high moral standard and living up to it devolves upon us as colored women in a peculiar way. Slanders are circulated against us every day, both in the press and by the direct descendants of those who in years past were responsible for the moral degradation of their female slaves. While these calumnies are not founded in fact, they can nevertheless do us a great deal of harm, if those who represent the intelligence and virtue among us do not, both in our public and private life, avoid even the appearance of evil.[89]

Terrell's invocation of the word "appearance" in the final sentence was particularly significant in that it stipulated that black women must always take account of not only what their actions were, but also how those actions might be perceived. By insisting that factual basis was more or less irrelevant when it came to the matter of misrepresentations of black womanhood, Terrell urged black woman to take a proactive role in dispelling those misrepresentations. In other words, it was not enough for black women to simply *be* moral; if they wished to overturn negative stereotypes about black women, they would need to publicly *display* their morality. This framing placed a premium on the matter of representation. In effect, Terrell stipulated that, in order to be a "respectable" black woman, one must constantly think about how to display "respectability."

Terrell further encouraged the performance of "respectable black womanhood" by projecting scenarios in which black women were subjected to public judgment. Such appeals admonished black women to remain perpetually aware of how their conduct might be interpreted

by others—particularly the dominant white society. For example, Terrell wrote, "It has been suggested, and very appropriately, I think, that this Association should take as its motto—*Lifting as we climb*. In no way could we live up to such a sentiment better than by coming into closer touch with the masses of our women, by whom whether we will or not, the world will always judge the womanhood of the race."[90] In a sense, the statement advocated a collective view of uplift—namely, that uplift efforts would be unsuccessful if they benefitted certain demographics while overlooking others. More fundamentally, though, the very thrust of Terrell's statement implied that the relative success of any uplift effort would ultimately be determined by the extent to which it furnished black subjectivities that appealed to an Other's sensibilities. The passage was not altogether clear about the identity of this judgmental "Other"; however, in light of the prevailing racial politics of the era, Terrell's position intimated strongly that white Americans' judgments were the ones that carried the most weight.

Elsewhere in the article, Terrell brought white judgment to the foreground, calling explicitly for black women to seek approval from white women. For example, she proposed, "Let us … appeal directly to the large-hearted, broad-minded women of the dominant race, and lay our case clearly before them."[91] Not only did the statement encourage black women to seek the approval of white women, Terrell's framing—particularly her characterization of white women as "large-hearted" and "broad-minded"—depicted the approach as an especially attractive option. Terrell further advocated the pursuit of white women's approval by envisioning the potential benefits of winning white women's approval. Terrell wrote,

> Let us ask these women both to follow, themselves, and their children, the lofty principles of humanity, charity and justice which they profess to observe. Let us ask that

they train their children to be just and broad enough to judge men and women by their intrinsic merit, rather than by the adventitious circumstances of race or color or creed.[92]

This appeal was particularly compelling. Here, Terrell suggested that the proper representation of black womanhood could appeal to not only the current generation of white women, but also their children. In a sense, this passage encapsulated the underlying logic that animated Terrell's appeal for "respectable black womanhood." That is, the passage positioned "respectable black womanhood" as a mode for mediating between the material and the symbolic in a way that could provide the entire race—and even future generations—with newfound opportunities for betterment.

Conclusion

Terrell's articulation of respectable black womanhood essentially merged the underlying assumptions of symbolic womanhood and the civilizationist trope. Indeed, in constituting the image of respectable black womanhood, Terrell conveyed the sense that black women must not only function as synecdochal representatives of black America, but also represent themselves in a manner that exuded a capacity for being civilized. The rhetorical merger of those two sets of assumptions implicitly promoted the notion that, in the end, uplift would hinge upon representing blackness in a way that appealed to white judgment.

At its core, Terrell's vision of uplift placed a premium on the politics of representation. More specifically, Terrell's articulation of respectable black womanhood compelled blacks, particularly black women, to imitate the norms of the dominant white society. While such an appeal for imitation may have struck some—especially those who subscribed to a belief in racial authenticity—as inherently regressive, imitation offered at least some progressive potential. As

Kirt H. Wilson notes, during the nineteenth century, whites routinely expressed concerns about the prospect of blacks imitating white societal norms, fearing that such imitation would facilitate black assimilation, which, in turn, might foster situations in which the roles were reversed and whites would be the ones imitating blacks.[93] Not only did whites fear the potential ramifications of black imitation, prominent nineteenth-century black spokespersons such as Frederick Douglass celebrated imitation as a pragmatic approach through which blacks could contest the confluence of material and symbolic forces that pushed blacks to the margins of U.S. society.[94] In these respects, the imitative thrust of Terrell's call for respectable black womanhood could be employed to challenge white supremacy.

Yet, that progressive potential was undercut by the manner in which Terrell's *AME Church Review* article operated from a dialectic of sameness and difference that simultaneously contested and perpetuated aspects of racial essentialism.[95] On the one hand, Terrell's article contested racial essentialism in that it suggested that not only did some black women already possess the capacity for civilization, but also that underprivileged black women could attain such standards of civilization if they were only provided the right set of circumstances. On the other hand, Terrell gave rhetorical presence to a pathological black subject whose rehabilitation hinged upon the intervention of others.

In the end, for Terrell, uplift demanded an outward demonstration of respectability. The logic followed that the demonstration of respectability could be used to garner respect from others. As the next chapter will demonstrate, early twentieth-century uplift advocates drew upon the underlying concept of "respect" for various rhetorical ends. For a fiery Jamaican émigré by the name of Marcus Garvey, "respect" was often configured as more of an internal enterprise.

That is, rather than exuding one's respectability to an Other, the more pressing task, Garvey insisted, was to cultivate a sense of *self*-respect.

Notes

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2. Mary Church Terrell, "First Presidential Address to the National Association of Colored Women," in *Quest for Equality: The Life and Writings of Mary Eliza Church Terrell, 1863-1954*, ed. Beverly Washington Jones (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1990), 135.

3. Leslie J. Harris, *State of the Marital Union: Rhetoric, Identity, and Nineteenth-Century Marriage Controversies* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 2.

4. See Linda Gordon, "Black and White Visions of Welfare: Women's Welfare Activism, 1890-1945," *Journal of American History* 78 (1991): 578. See also Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow, 1984), 81; and Beverly W. Jones, "Mary Church Terrell and the National Association of Colored Women, 1896-1901," *Journal of Negro History* 67 (1982): 21.

5. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17 (1992): 266.

6. Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History," 266.

7. Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 52-53. See also Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History," 263; Levine, "A Single Standard," 56; and Scott, "Most Invisible of All," 12.

8. Mary Church Terrell, "The Duty of the National Association of Colored Women to the Race," *AME Church Review* (1900): 345.

9. Jacqueline Anne Rouse, "Out of the Shadow of Tuskegee: Margaret Murray Washington, Social Activism, and Race Vindication," *Journal of Negro History* 81 (1996): 39.

10. See W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative American Negroes of To-Day*, ed. August Meier (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), 33-75.

11. Shirley J. Carlson, "Black Ideals of Womanhood in the Late Victorian Era," *Journal of Negro History* 77 (1992): 69.

12. Ibid.; Paula Giddings, *When and Where*, 77; and Sharon Harley, "For the Good of Family and Race: Gender, Work, and Domestic Roles in the Black Community, 1880-1930," *Signs* 15 (1990): 337.

13. White, *Too Heavy a Load,* 44.

14. Carlson, "Black Ideals of Womanhood," 63.

15. Quoted in Gordon, "Black and White Visions of Welfare," 579.

16. Harley, "Beyond the Classroom," 256.

17. Carlson, "Black Ideals of Womanhood," 70; and Gordon, "Black and White Visions of Welfare," 565.

18. Ibid., 566.

19. Ibid.; Carlson, "Black Ideals of Womanhood," 70; and Stephanie J. Shaw, "Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Colored Women," *Journal of Women's History* 3 (1991): 18.

20. Jones, "Mary Church Terrell," 21.

21. White, *Too Heavy*, 24.

22. Giddings, *When and Where*, 83.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 92-93; White, *Too Heavy*, 23-24; and Anne Ruggles Gere and Sarah R. Robbins, "Gendered Literacy in Black and White: Turn-of-the-Century African-American Club Women's Printed Texts," *Signs* 21 (1996): 644.

25. Quoted in White, *Too Heavy*, 23.

26. Darlene Clark Hine, "African American Women and Their Communities in the Twentieth Century: The Foundation and Future of Black Women's Studies," *Black Women, Gender, and Families* 1 (2007): 6.

27. See White, *Too Heavy*, 27; and Jones, "Mary Church Terrell," 21-22.

28. Jones, "Mary Church Terrell," 23.

29. Gerda Lerner, "Early Community Work of Black Club Women," *Journal of Negro History* 59 (1974): 158.

30. V. P. Franklin and Bettye Collier-Thomas, "Biography, Race Vindication, and African American Intellectuals," *Journal of African American History* 87 (2002): 166.

31. Ibid.

32. White, *Too Heavy*, 36.

33. Quoted in Scott, "Most Invisible of All," 12-13.

34. Farah Jasmine Griffin, "Black Feminists and Du Bois: Respectability, Protection, and Beyond," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 568 (2000): 35.

35. Angela Davis, "Black Women and the Academy," *Callaloo* 17 (1994): 424.

36. "The Duty of the National Association of Colored Women to the Race." *AME Church Review* (1900): 340-54.

37. Stephen W. Angell and Anthony B. Pinn (eds.), *Social Protest Thought in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1862-1939* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000), xxii.

38. Ibid.

39. See Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, 58; Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 10, 152-178; and Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, 1-14.

40. Baker, *From Savage*, 58.

41. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 10, 152-178; and Muhammad, *The Condemnation*, 1-14.

42. Terrell, "The Duty," 343.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 344.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., 346.

48. Ibid., 341.

49. Ibid.

50. Quoted in Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 153.

51. Ibid., 161.

52. Fannie Barrier Williams, "The Intellectual Progress of the Colored Women of the United States since the Emancipation Proclamation," in *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women*, ed. Shirley Wilson Logan (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), 113. (emphasis added).

53. Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, "Address to the First National Conference of Colored Women," *BlackPast.org*, http://www.blackpast.org/1895-josephine-st-pierre-ruffin-address-first-national-conference-colored-women (accessed January 10, 2016).

54. Terrell, "The Duty," 346.

55. Ibid., 343.

56. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 158.

57. Quoted in Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 162.

58. Ibid.

59. Quoted in Harley, "Beyond the Classroom," 259.

60. Terrell, "The Duty," 347.

61. Michael Leff, "The Idea of Rhetoric as Interpretive Practice: A Humanist's Response to Gaonkar," in *Rhetorical Hermeneutics: Invention and Interpretation in the Age of Science*, ed. Alan G. Gross and William M. Keith (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 97.

62. Ibid., 98; and Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 127.

63. Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South* (1892; rpt., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 32-33. According to Shirley Wilson Logan, this passage originally appeared in Cooper's 1886 speech "Womanhood a Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress of a Race," delivered to the Convocation of Clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church." Shirley Wilson Logan, ed., *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), 49.

64. Terrell, "The Duty," 347.

65. Ibid., 346-347.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid., 349.

68. Quoted in White, *Too Heavy*, 45.

69. Cooper, *A Voice*, 29.

70. Quoted in Gere and Robbins, "Gendered Literacy," 648.

71. Terrell, "The Duty," 352.

72. Ibid., 352-353.

73. Ibid., 353.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid., 342.

76. Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 96. See also Shirley Wilson Logan, *"We Are Coming": The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 169-170.

77. Terrell, "The Duty," 345-346.

78. Lucy C. Laney, "Address Before the Women's Meeting," in *"We Are Coming": The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women*, ed. Shirley Wilson Logan (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 209.

79. Terrell, "The Duty," 341.

80. See Katrina Bell McDonald, "Black Activist Mothering: A Historical Intersection of Race, Gender, and Class," *Gender and Society* 11 (1997): 773-795.

81. Ibid., 344.

82. Ibid., 342.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid., 350.

85. Ibid., 345.

86. Giddings, *When and Where*, 81.

87. Williams, "The Intellectual Progress," 112.

88. Ruffin, "Address to the First" (emphasis added).

89. Terrell, "The Duty," 352.

90. Ibid., 347.

91. Ibid., 350.

92. Ibid.

93. Kirt H. Wilson, "The Racial Politics of Imitation in the Nineteenth Century," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 (2003): 100.

94. Ibid., 100-02

95. On the rhetorical functionality of dialectics of sameness and difference, see Leslie J. Harris, "Motherhood, Race, and Gender: The Rhetoric of Women's Antislavery Activism in the *Liberty Bell* Giftbooks," *Women's Studies in Communication* 32 (2009): 293-319.

CHAPTER THREE

Marcus Garvey's Crusade for Self-Respect

"There is no doubt," Marcus Garvey wrote in 1923, "that a race that doesn't respect itself forfeits the respect of others."[1] Such a concern for self-respect suffused the prolific body of public advocacy that Garvey produced during his activism in the United States. Born in Jamaica on August 17, 1887, Garvey immigrated to the United States in 1916. Shortly thereafter he began laying the groundwork for the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), a racial uplift organization, which, at its peak, boasted more than 900 U.S. divisions and an estimated U.S. membership of more than 300,000.[2]

Reflecting on Garvey's apparent knack for attracting massive public support, NAACP founding member Mary White Ovington described Garvey as "the first Negro in the United States to capture the imagination of the masses."[3] To be sure, there was undeniably something unique about Garvey's message. However, a significant part of Garvey's rhetorical genius owed to his seeming obsession with organizational structure. One notable manifestation of that concern was Garvey's development of the weekly newspaper *Negro World*. Started on August 17, 1918, *Negro World* was the UNIA's organizational mouthpiece and functioned as a space for circulating many of Garvey's public addresses (speeches, editorials, public letters, etc.). "By 1919," Raymond L. Hall notes, "*Negro World*" was "the most widely read black newspaper in America." And, by 1921, its circulation swelled to more than 75,000.[4]

Propelled by a substantial base of UNIA members, and a massively successful weekly publication, by the early 1920s Garvey stood as one of black America's most influential spokespersons—rivaling perhaps even the revered W. E. B. Du Bois. However, Garvey's mercurial rise would be stymied by legal complications. Convicted of mail fraud in 1923, and

lacking U.S. citizenship, Garvey was ultimately deported from the United States in 1925.[5] Despite this early exit, during his relatively brief stint in the United States, Garvey produced a massive rhetorical corpus. Not only that, his discourse posed a striking challenge to contemporaneous visions of racial uplift.

While Garvey consistently trumpeted a call for racial uplift, the particular character and scope of that uplift vision took myriad forms.[6] Across the various permutations, though, Garvey's uplift discourse generally emphasized the cultivation of black self-respect. By way of assembling various discursive fragments from the heyday of Garvey's U.S. activity, this chapter investigates the rhetorical dynamics by which Garvey articulated his appeal for self-respect. In so doing, I advance a two-part argument. First, I contend that one way in which Garvey foregrounded the value of self-respect was through his dialectical constructions of "Old Negro" and "New Negro" subject-positions. Second, I argue that the dialectical interplay of those subject-positions gave shape to an idealized black subjectivity that was endowed with a spirit of hyper-masculinity.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds in five parts. First, I explore how a series of events that transpired during and after World War I fostered a heightened sense of race consciousness within U.S. society. Second, I examine the emergence of the post-war "New Negro" trope as one such manifestation of that heightened race consciousness. In the third and fourth sections, I investigate Garvey's respective discourses on "race leadership" and "racial separatism" to demonstrate the manner in which Garvey foregrounded the value of "self-respect" through dialectical constructions of "Old Negro" and "New Negro." Finally, I illustrate how, by counterposing the "Old Negro" and "New Negro" subject-positions, Garvey constituted a hyper-masculine black identity.

The Great Migration(s), the Great War, and the Intensification of Race Consciousness

The racial landscape of the United States was virtually transformed during the second decade of the twentieth century. By the thousands African Americans abruptly left the rural South in the hopes of finding enhanced social, political, and economic opportunities in the urban North; indeed, during the years of World War I, approximately 500,000 southern blacks relocated to the urban North and Midwest.[7] Concurrently, those same northern cities experienced a sudden influx of Afro-Caribbean immigrants, with tens of thousands coming to the U.S. from countries such as Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago.[8] These twin migrations—and, more specifically, the convergence and exchange of diverse black cultural practices that they facilitated—cultivated a newfound sense of black consciousness that would come bursting out in novel forms of black self-expression and protest. That burgeoning spirit of black consciousness was further energized by the various racial controversies that emerged during and after World War I.

With World War I intensifying abroad and the Great Migration gathering momentum in the United States, a familiar symbol of U.S. white supremacy made a dramatic reappearance. The Ku Klux Klan, defunct since the early 1870s, once again reared its ugly head in 1915. The Klan's sudden and dramatic reappearance occurred on two fronts. In the realm of popular culture, D. W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation* premiered on February 2, 1915. Adapted from Thomas Dixon's 1905 novel *The Clansman*, *The Birth of a Nation* depicted a fictional Reconstruction era landscape in which black men ran amok, sexually assaulting white women and, then, Klan members chivalrously came to the defense of white womanhood. On account of those racist representations, the NAACP and other civil rights organizations publicly protested the film. Later that year, white southerner William Joseph Simmons, purportedly inspired by the heroic

depiction of the Klan in *The Birth of a Nation*,[9] began the process of tangibly re-organizing the Klan. Organizational growth was sluggish during the first few years, but by the mid 1920s the Klan 2.0 would boast more than 100,000 members, with branches scattered all throughout the country.[10]

At roughly the same time that the second instantiation of the Klan began gathering momentum, the United States officially entered the ongoing conflict of World War I. Shortly after entering the war, in an address to Congress, President Woodrow Wilson famously declared, "The world must be made safe for democracy."[11] To many black activists, like A. Philip Randolph, such lofty rhetoric rang hollow. Responding to Wilson's call to make the world "safe for democracy," Randolph sardonically quipped, "We would rather make Georgia safe for the Negro."[12]

However, Randolph's critique of the war effort was not indicative of the position that most black leaders and intellectuals expressed at the outset of U.S. involvement in the war. Immediately following the United States' entry into the conflict, many prominent black spokespersons voiced unequivocal support for the war effort.[13] Exemplifying the pervasiveness of these wartime overtures, even longstanding advocates of civil rights agitation, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, seemingly submitted to the pressures of the war effort and called for a temporary abridgement of civil rights protest. And if black spokespersons' public pronouncements of allegiance proved unconvincing, the nearly 400,000 black soldiers who served in the war effort certainly dispelled most lingering questions about African Americans' commitment to the war effort in particular and the country in general.[14]

And, yet, despite the patriotism and courage that black soldiers displayed through their service to their country, some white Americans were deeply troubled by the sheer thought of

black soldiers. Indeed, according to white supremacists, black soldiers symbolized something to be feared. Perhaps the most influential and outspoken individual to voice that position was the U.S. Senator from Mississippi James K. Vardaman. A notoriously unabashed white supremacist, on one occasion, Vardaman offered the following statement about the prospect of black soldiers: "Impress the negro with the fact that he is defending the flag, inflate his untutored soul with military airs, teach him that it is his duty to keep the emblem of the Nation flying triumphantly in the air—it is but a short step to the conclusion that his political rights must be respected."[15] And, so, for Vardaman, the key issue with black soldiers was that the act of service might instill within them a sense of entitlement to equal citizenship rights.

While few individuals matched the level of vitriol that Vardaman achieved in his public discourse, patterns that emerged during the war seemed to indicate that many white Americans shared Vardaman's concerns regarding how the war might affect the shape of U.S. racial politics, particularly African Americans' "place" in society. For example, World War I was marked by the development of a racialized phenomenon that Guterl refers to as "absolute whiteness."[16] An outgrowth of the nationalistic rhetoric of "100 percent Americanism," during World War I, longstanding antagonisms over ethnic distinctions among European immigrants were gradually reconciled by way of a renewed fascination with skin color.[17] This newfound politics of skin color made it possible for groups of European immigrants that were previously widely discriminated against—for example, Irish immigrants—to be accepted into the fraternity of "whiteness." The pernicious corollary to the expanded parameters of "whiteness" was that "blackness" became increasingly configured as a "sign of negative American identity."[18] Alongside this shift, the war years also featured increases in lynching. After roughly two decades of mostly declining numbers, the number of reported lynchings increased each year during the

three-year period from 1917-1919—with 44 in 1917, 64 in 1918, and 76 in 1919.[19] In addition to specific cases of lynching, the war also gave way to a series of devastating race riots in which black communities were overrun by the violent aggression of white mobs.

As it pertained to black self-expression and protest, these overlapping symbolic and material assaults on black life functioned as something of a crucible. From that crucible there emerged a renewed sense of black consciousness. And that renewed consciousness gained perhaps its fullest expression in the rhetorical figure of the "New Negro."

The Post-War New Negro

Discussing the general symbolic functions of the "New Negro" trope, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Gene Andrew Jarrett maintain that "African American discourses of the New Negro … emerged to contest degrading black stereotypes."[20] Particularly within the post-Reconstruction landscape, where sinister stereotypes such as the "Uncle Tom" and the "Mammy" had become all but ubiquitous within U.S. public culture, African Americans were confronted continuously by caricatures of black identity. Along those lines, as Gates explains, the "New Negro" trope functioned by contesting stereotypical representations of the "Old Negro," which, in turn, provided blacks with an identification through which they could exercise a sense of "dignity."[21] Alongside providing that sense of dignity, the "New Negro" trope participated within the contemporaneous civilizationist rhetoric in that it countered the image of the antiquated and uncivilized "Old Negro" and replaced it with a black subjectivity—the "New Negro"—that was both modern and civilized.[22]

Insofar as articulations of the "New Negro" always implied the image of the "Old Negro," the "New Negro" and "Old Negro" coexisted within a dialectical tension.[23] According to

Martha Jane Nadell, in recognizing the dialectical relationship between articulations of "New Negro" and "Old Negro," scholars are better positioned to account for the rhetorical fluidity of both subject-positions.[24] That is, articulations of "New Negro" and "Old Negro" are not static, but, rather, evolve in dynamic tension in relation to the conditions and exigencies of the moment. That rhetorical dynamic made it possible for Booker T. Washington to be regarded as a "New Negro" at the turn of the century and, less than two decades later, the quintessential symbol of the "Old Negro."[25]

The term "New Negro" is perhaps most closely associated with the 1920s Harlem Renaissance movement. Within that context, the term generally connoted some semblance of an aesthetic and philosophical awakening. However, immediately preceding that era of significant artistic production, the term "New Negro" carried a somewhat different connotation. Indeed, in the immediate wake of World War I, the term "New Negro" was predominantly used to signify a radical agenda.[26] Consider, for example, the following passage from the October 1919 issue of the *Harlem Crusader*: "The Old Negro and his futile methods must go. After fifty years of him and his methods the Race still suffers from lynching, disfranchisement, Jim Crowism, segregation and a hundred other ills. His abject crawling and pleading have availed the Cause nothing…. The New Negro now takes the helm."[27] Capturing a similar sentiment, the *Kansas City Call* proclaimed: "The NEW NEGRO, unlike the old time Negro, 'does not fear the face of day,' and the white man will learn in time that he has in this new type of Negro a foeman worthy of his steel."[28] In these post-war discourses, the "Old Negro" was generally associated with the shortcomings that mainstream black leaders had displayed during the war years. Conversely, the "New Negro" was configured as a radical, militant figure; this "New Negro" would both contest longstanding racial injustices and proactively confront white aggression.

At times, Marcus Garvey's expressions of the "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic were strikingly similar to the above examples. Consider the following statement from a 1921 speech: "The world ought to understand that the Negro has come to life, possessed with a new conscience and a new soul. The old Negro is buried, and it is well the world knew it."[29] While Garvey often borrowed from contemporaneous articulations of the "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic, as the next section will demonstrate, his discourse was also unique for the way in which it so vigorously foregrounded the value of self-respect.

Race Leadership

The topic of race leadership was one of the primary rhetorical avenues through which Garvey articulated his overarching call for the development of black self-respect. Simultaneously, the topic of race leadership provided Garvey with an ideal discursive field for enacting the "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic. When addressed to the topic of race leadership, Garvey's articulations of "Old Negro" and "New Negro" fostered a dichotomous notion of race leadership. In this discursive construction, the "Old Negro" mode of leadership was presented as inimical to black self-respect, whereas the "New Negro" mode of leadership was depicted as propitious to black self-respect. That alignment paralleled the terms by which Garvey criticized past and contemporaneous black leaders and, by extension, promoted his own vision of black leadership.

Garvey's race leadership discourse came in essentially two varieties: (1) generalized commentary about the principles of race leadership and (2) criticisms of past and/or contemporaneous black leaders. Exemplifying the former of those variants, at a 1921 UNIA convention, Garvey proclaimed, "The New Negro demands a leadership that refuses to beg but

demands a chance. The New Negro presents a leadership that will not go down in supplication but will stand up and demand the things that are belonging to the race."[30] The statement marked a clear distinction between "New Negro" and "Old Negro" leadership styles. And although Garvey did not invoke the term "Old Negro," the statement implicitly gave shape to an "Old Negro" subject. Whereas the implicit image of the "Old Negro" leader was projected as passively begging from a downward position, the "New Negro" leader was portrayed as aggressively demanding from an upright position. Those dispositional differences were matched by radically different concerns for reciprocity; indeed, in Garvey's rendering, a key feature that differentiated the "New Negro" leader from the "Old Negro" leader was the "New Negro" leader's concern for "the things that are belonging to the race." To this point, in a 1921 speech, Garvey contended that "[t]he old leadership of Negroes" had failed to properly document "injustice," "mob violence," "segregation," and other manifestations of institutional racism.[31] That ostensible failure to properly document, in Garvey's calculus, had rendered blacks vulnerable to exploitation. "[T]he New Negro," Garvey countered, "has a record of everything that is done to him."[32] Accentuating the contrast between "Old" and "New," Garvey proceeded to explain that, unlike the "old leadership," the "New Negro" would cite the tally of injustice and demand reasonable recompense before ever "lend[ing] his hand" to white society.[33] In this sense, Garvey positioned this heightened concern for reciprocity as a necessary safeguard against exploitation and thus a means by which blacks could exercise their self-respect.

Chief among the past leaders that Garvey associated with the "Old Negro" was Booker T. Washington. During the early stages of his public advocacy, Garvey had expressed great admiration for Washington's emphasis on self-help and black industry;[34] nevertheless, following Washington's death in 1915, Garvey consistently criticized Washington's brand of leadership.

Consider the following statement from a 1919 speech at Carnegie Hall: "The white man of the world has been accustomed to deal with the Uncle Tom cringing negro. Up to 1918, he knew no other negro than the negro represented through Booker Washington. Today he will find that a new negro is on the stage representing the spirit of the [negro]."[35] Not only did Garvey implicitly characterize Washington as an "Old Negro," he also positioned Washington as an exemplar of the "Uncle Tom" stereotype. Also significant was Garvey's assertion that Washington's brand of leadership had caused white people to expect deference from black leaders. In contrast to that "Uncle Tom" figure, which eschewed self-respect in favor of appeasing white sensibilities, Garvey proudly declared that a "New Negro" now existed.

Garvey was equally, if not more, critical of contemporaneous black leaders, often characterizing their leadership as both antiquated and detrimental to self-respect. For Garvey, a particular point of emphasis in these critiques was the issue of deference to white judgment. In this way, Garvey often identified such deference to white interests as the quality that differentiated "Old Negro" and "New Negro" leadership. Advancing such a sentiment in a 1921 speech, Garvey stated,

> We are now organizing the 400,000,000 Negroes so that they can go the way they desire to go. Now we cannot travel that way without leadership. Where is the leadership? I call upon Du Bois, who for years represented himself as a leader, and I ask him, "In what direction are you traveling?" and his answer is, "Wheresoever the white man bids me go there shall I travel." I call upon Moton and ask him, "Whither leadest thou?" and he says, "Wheresoever my master leads I will follow." I call upon Kelly Miller and ask him, "Whither leadest thou?" and he says, "By the bidding of my master shall I follow."[36]

Importantly, each of the black leaders that Garvey mentioned was affiliated with organizations that promoted integration: Du Bois and Miller were both prominent voices within the NAACP and Robert Russa Moton had succeeded Washington as the headmaster of Tuskegee Institute. Notably, based on Garvey's impersonation of their respective voices, Du Bois, Moton, and Miller were essentially indistinguishable as it pertained to leadership. Each of them, according to Garvey's rhetorical impersonation, depended on and deferred to white judgment. Linking this critique to the "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic, Garvey followed his impersonation of Du Bois, Moton, and Miller's voices with the following:

> And I come back to the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world and I ask, "Are you prepared to be led that way?" and a universal answer comes to me, "No! We shall not be led in that direction." And by that answer I realize that you demand a *new leadership*—a leadership that will not compromise, a leadership that will not falter, a leadership that will not give up when the hour seems dark; a leader that will start and continue the journey until victory perches upon the banner of the Red, the Black and the Green.[37]

Enacting the voice of the so-called "400,000,000 Negroes of the world," Garvey expressed mass dissatisfaction with the mode of leadership that he associated with Du Bois, Moton, and Miller. Furthermore, by invoking the term "new leadership," Garvey enthymematically coordinated Du Bois, Moton, and Miller's leadership with the "Old Negro" and his own leadership with the "New Negro." That "New Negro" mode of leadership, which Garvey portrayed as resilient and uncompromising, appeared almost unsusceptible to the political pressure of white interests.

Of the contemporary black leaders that Garvey criticized, he was particularly fond of singling out Du Bois. Indeed, from 1918 onward, it became almost customary for Garvey to criticize Du Bois in his public discourse. Those criticisms generally centered on Garvey's

perception that Du Bois was too reliant upon "the patronage of … white people."[38] In Garvey's view, that dynamic had led Du Bois to often imitate white norms and appease white interests—both of which Garvey saw as antithetical to the pursuit of black self-respect. Garvey engaged that issue in a 1923 *Negro World* editorial; in a sub-section of that editorial, notably labeled "Comparison Between Two Men," Garvey drew an explicit comparison between his and Du Bois's leadership styles. Having established the comparative frame, Garvey wrote,

> Now which of the two is poorer in character and in manhood? The older man, who had all these opportunities and still elects to be a parasite, living off the good will of another race, or the younger man, who had sufficient self-respect to make an effort to do for himself, even though in his effort he constructs a "dirty brick building" from which he can send out his propaganda on race self-reliance and self-respect.[39]

Garvey's rhetorical choices in the passage accomplished a number of things. His use of the labels "older man" and "younger man," while accurate in a literal sense (Du Bois was, in fact, 19 years Garvey's senior), also gestured to the "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic. The framing positioned Du Bois as part of the "old" crowd of black leadership and, conversely, positioned Garvey as a "new" voice. More directly related to the issue of uplift, Garvey's use of juxtaposition marked a vigorous appeal for self-respect. Posing the "dirty brick building" that he associated with his own program against the parasitism that he associated with Du Bois's program, Garvey implicitly argued that, even if his program was comparatively crude, it was nevertheless preferable to Du Bois's in that it offered one the ability to maintain his "manhood" and "self-respect." Through this comparison, Garvey urged blacks to place a premium on self-respect and, furthermore, to prioritize self-respect over alternative values such as expediency or comfort.

Beyond simply differentiating his and Du Bois's leadership styles, Garvey's criticism of Du Bois gave presence to another major aspect of Garvey's uplift program: separatism. Unlike the majority of his contemporaries, for Garvey, uplift did not entail gaining acceptance within mainstream U.S. society. Capturing that sentiment, in a 1923 speech, Garvey argued, "The highest type of Negro is not the Negro who seeks or hankers after social equality with other people," but, rather, "the one who is satisfied with himself."[40] In a similar fashion to his discourse on race leadership, through appeals for racial separatism, Garvey both enacted an "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic and, simultaneously, underscored the significance of developing black self-respect.

Racial Separatism

At perhaps the most general level, Garvey's articulations of the "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic positioned a separatist orientation as a corrective to the ramifications of white supremacy. One of the consequences of white supremacy, insisted Garvey, was that blacks had been systematically deceived into believing that "white" people were the sole source of all things "pure," "good," and "noble."[41] Contesting that ostensible reality, Garvey said, "[W]e new negroes … can see nothing perfect except it comes out of our own race. We have no confidence in anything except it comes out of our own race."[42] The statement undeniably smacked of racial chauvinism; indeed, in proposing racialized standards for measuring "perfection" and "confidence," Garvey's position could have easily been construed as a call for "black supremacy." Regardless, the stance was notable in that it discursively coordinated the ideas of the "New Negro," racial separatism, and self-respect.

Beyond such broad critiques of white supremacy, Garvey often employed the figure of the "New Negro" to express skepticism about white leadership. "The New Negro," Garvey declared at a 1919 UNIA meeting, "has given up the idea of white leadership."[43] He continued, "The white man cannot lead the Negro any longer any more. He was able through our ignorance to lead us for over three hundred years since he took us from Africa, but the New Negro has learned enough now."[44] Approaching tolerance of white leadership as a thing of the past, and as a byproduct of previous "ignorance," Garvey decisively positioned dependence on "white leadership" as an "Old Negro" trait. In contrast, Garvey maintained that the advantages of education had endowed the "New Negro" with the capacity to discern that white leadership did not promote black interests. Based on this depiction, to separate oneself from white influence was a sign of "New Negro" enlightenment. Viewed as a means for evading white influence, racial separatism signified an intelligent choice. Insofar as the desire for intelligence corresponded to a sense of self-respect, Garvey's discourse portrayed separatism as the self-respecting choice.

Similar to casting the preference for racial separatism as a sign of intelligence, Garvey's employment of the "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic also depicted separatism as a sign of wisdom. Rather than differentiating the "Old Negro" and "New Negro" according to differences in educational enlightenment, this appeal focused more on differences in quality of judgment. Along these lines, Garvey's arguments for racial separatism often suggested that separatism was necessary because fraternizing with whites—particularly white leaders—was dangerous. Advancing that sentiment in a 1920 speech in Washington, D.C., Garvey openly ridiculed blacks who remained allegiant to white leadership: "I understand that the majority of my people in Washington are composed of that cowardly, sycophantic, cringing lot who refuse to support

anything except [if] it[']s led by the white man."[45] Though the statement did not include the term "Old Negro," in Garvey's discourse, adjectives such as "cowardly," "sycophantic," and "cringing" had become all but synonymous with the "Old Negro" and thus the description indirectly gave presence to the "Old Negro." Having implicitly established that only "Old Negroes" were naïve enough and meek enough to entrust their well-being to white leadership, Garvey went on to say,

> Now let me tell you this: The white man has been leading us for 300 years, and he has led us into darkness. If we continue to follow him, follow what he says that we should do, he will not only lead us into darkness but he will lead us into hell. And we are next door to hell now. We are just next door to hell. Just below the Mason and Dixon's line is hell, and we are next door to it now, and he is going to enlarge that hell because he has carried it already to East St. Louis, he brought the hell to Washington a few months ago, he took it to Chicago—not longer than last week he had it there.[46]

The statement constituted a provocative appeal to both space and time. In terms of space, Garvey identified the "Mason-Dixon" line as a geographic barrier that presumably separated northern blacks from the "hell" of the Jim Crow South. Yet, in referencing East St. Louis, Washington, D.C., and Chicago, cities that were generally understood as "northern,"[47] but cities that had also recently erupted in harrowing displays of white-on-black violence, Garvey fostered the sense that the range of Jim Crow racism was spreading northward. The culprit for that spread, according to Garvey, was the "white man" writ large. In this regard, Garvey did not differentiate between individual white men; indeed, based on his usage of the pronoun "he," the "white man" who had "led" blacks "into darkness" during the preceding "300 years" was indistinguishable from the implicitly white "he"-subject who had exacted violence against blacks in the aforementioned

cities. Garvey's sketch, then, conveyed the notion that any association with whites was vulnerable to the hazards of racialized violence. If such were true, the choice to willingly maintain such associations would be a marker of decidedly poor judgment. To the extent that poor judgment is at odds with self-respect, Garvey's discursive arrangement indirectly configured the preference for separatism as an expression of self-respect.

Interestingly, such appeals to personal safety relied largely upon the negative; that is, Garvey presented the "New Negro's" aversion to associating with whites as a sign of wisdom on the basis that it *removed*—or, at least diminished—the threat of violence. But Garvey's articulations of the "New Negro" also advocated racial separatism through a positive register—or, by envisioning tangible benefits that separatism could yield. In this respect, Garvey promoted separatism not only as a means for avoiding negative conditions, but also as a vehicle for adding positive conditions. Such appeals to separatism frequently addressed the matter of civic opportunities. According to Garvey, one of the "Old Negro's" most detestable qualities was that the "Old Negro" accepted constrained civic opportunities. In contrast to that, Garvey portrayed the "New Negro" as dissatisfied with anything short of full citizenship. Speaking to that point, in a 1921 speech, Garvey stated, "[T]he new Negro is not satisfied with the kind of freedom he has now." The "New Negro," he explained, desired a "larger freedom," a kind of "freedom" that would enable him to be a "great general" or "president."[48] At the time, the prospect of a black person in the United States being a "great general" or "president" was all but unfathomable. But in a different arrangement, a separatist arrangement, perhaps such things could be a reality. Months later, Garvey sounded much the same call but with a more overt appeal to separatism:

> [T]he new Negro is dissatisfied to be a citizen without the rights and privileges of the citizen. If it is right for the Negro to be a citizen, then he must have a chance to be a

> President also. This is the feeling of the new Negro. And since we are outnumbered by whites, and they will not give us a chance, we are going to establish a government of our own. That is the object of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.[49]

Speaking from the position of the "New Negro," Garvey portrayed separatism as a means for attaining full citizenship. Moreover, by emphasizing that "whites" both greatly "outnumbered" blacks and refused to give blacks a fair "chance," Garvey depicted the "New Negro's" preference for separatism as simply a pragmatic choice. In that regard, Garvey fostered the sense that a preference for separatism was a sign of good judgment. And, insofar as a desire to exercise good judgment coincides with a sense of self-respect, Garvey advanced yet another way to interpret separatism as a means of exercising one's self-respect.

Constituting the Hyper-Masculine "New Negro"

In different ways, Garvey's respective discourses on race leadership and racial separatism each accentuated the importance of developing black self-respect. At the same time, those discursive appeals also enacted an "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic, which gave form to an "Old Negro" subject that was ill-disposed to pursuing self-respect and a corresponding "New Negro" subject that was well-suited to pursuing self-respect. The interplay of those subject-positions, particularly discourses that focused on the character differences between the subject-positions, gave rhetorical presence to the form of black identity that Garvey most associated with the pursuit of self-respect. That form of black identity, represented by the figure of the "New Negro," possessed an overt sense of hyper-masculinity.

As Gail Bederman notes, in the context of postwar U.S. society, notions of manhood and racial supremacy were closely interwoven.[50] Elaborating on Bederman's insights, Guterl

contends that the New Negro radicals, such as Garvey, who participated in the "remasculinized" culture of postwar America advanced the argument that "race and manhood were all that mattered."[51] Countering the gendered vision of uplift that was advanced by turn-of-the century black clubwomen such as Mary Church Terrell, Garvey and other New Negro radicals insisted that it was actually black men—and, more directly, black *manhood*—that was essential to black Americans' advancement.[52] However, according to Garvey and his contemporaries, advancement could not be attained through just any instantiation of "manhood"; what was required was for black men to reinvigorate themselves with a spirit of hyper-masculinity that emphasized "[i]ndependence, strong character, aggressiveness, and intelligence."[53] Endowing the "New Negro" with such qualities, Garvey's discourse posited a hyper-masculine black subject as the pathway to the attainment of self-respect.

By counterposing the "Old Negro" and "New Negro" subject-positions in a dialectical manner, Garvey constituted the "Old Negro" and "New Negro" with opposing but complementary senses of character. In so doing, he oriented attention to the differences in character that divided the two subject-positions. Reflecting that rhetorical dynamic, in a 1920 *Negro World* editorial, he wrote, "Looking back upon the days *past* we see the Negro, a despised, lowly slave; we see him environed by ignorance and superstition after his emancipation."[54] In contrast to this rendering of the "Old Negro," he described the "New Negro" thusly: "[T]oday we behold [the Negro] a new man with a new soul, with a new view of the things of life. He has caught a new inspiration, the inspiration that teaches him to go forward, upward and onward, and stopping not, but climbing and climbing until he reaches the pinnacle of human achievement and human glory."[55] Alongside Garvey's copious use of the term "new," the respective descriptions evinced a rather stark contrast. Whereas the "Old Negro" was portrayed

as a "lowly slave," the "New Negro" was depicted as a "man" who was "climbing" and striving to reach the "pinnacle" of human affairs. Thus, Garvey differentiated the character of "Old Negro" and "New Negro" both through appeals to subject (i.e., "slave" vs. "man") and metaphorical spatial orientation (i.e., down/low vs. climbing/upright). That combination of subject and metaphorical spatial orientation was a common facet of Garvey's articulations of the "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic. In general, the "Old Negro" was both stripped of his "manhood" and depicted as being "low" or "downward," while the "New Negro" was configured as a "man" or "manly" and as being "upright" or moving "upward."

Similar to this emphasis on "manliness," Garvey frequently differentiated "Old Negro" and "New Negro" on the basis of bravery. Typically, he depicted the "Old Negro" as cowardly and the "New Negro" as brave. For example, in a 1919 address, Garvey stated, "The message I have to deliver to the world for the new negro is that there is no longer any cowardice in the negro. We have eliminated cowardice. And if the white man or the yellow man expects to find cowardice in the negro, he is only making a mistake."[56] Because of the manner in which he framed the statement—as a matter of fact—the differentiation between "Old Negro" and "New Negro" was somewhat subtle.[57] However, his use of the qualifier "no longer" in the first sentence implicitly marked a temporal break between the "Old Negro" and "New Negro." In other instances, the contrast was much more pronounced. In one 1921 speech, Garvey contended that blacks had "changed from the old, cringing weakling" into "full grown men."[58] In a subsequent passage of the same speech, he both vividly described the so-called "old, cringing weakling" and derisively impersonated the voice of that subject:

> White people hitherto have been accustomed to hear the Negro address them in that old-time, subservient manner, with hat in hand, a bending of the body, a shrinking look, and

bowing, as he says: "Yes, boss; yes, master," to every remark that comes from the "master." But today we know no masters; we are masters of ourselves.[59]

In essence, the statement associated the "Old Negro" with a generalized sketch of the "Uncle Tom" stereotype—a toady individual who actively sought to appease white people. Furthermore, by performatively depicting the "slave-master" relationship, Garvey characterized the "Old Negro" as being pious to antebellum race relations. In contrast, the "New Negro," who was configured as a "full grown man," refused to accept such subservience.

Alongside discourse that rhetorically defined the "New Negro" as "manly" and "brave," Garvey also promoted that notion of the "New Negro" through hortatory appeals. That is, in some instances, he actively *urged* blacks to adopt the qualities of "manliness" and "bravery." In a 1921 speech in which he lamented the enduring presence of "old-time Negroes," Garvey declared, "[W]e want men of nerve force; we want men who will not tremble; we want men who will not go down on their knees like weak sycophants; we want men who will strike out straight from the shoulder and demand for the Negro what is belonging to the Negro."[60] Through this series of prescriptive statements, Garvey positioned "manliness" and "bravery" as imperatives that blacks must pursue. Using even more stark language, in a 1921 convention address, Garvey proclaimed, "Now there are some Negroes who are very nervous, while other Negroes get up and talk boldly for their rights. Let me say to you nervous Negroes that you are barnacles hanging around the neck of this race of ours. We are determined to bury you even as we buried our enemies."[61] To be sure, given the negative connotations generally attached to "nervousness," one would have been unlikely, in any case, to favor "nervousness" over "boldness." Garvey further intensified that disparity, metaphorically characterizing "nervous Negroes" as "barnacles" that imposed such a great "burden" on the "race" that it was justifiable to not only eliminate them but

even "bury" them alongside previously slain "enemies." In metaphorically subjecting "nervous Negroes" to such symbolic violence, Garvey encouraged blacks to view "nervousness" and "boldness" as mutually exclusive qualities. Not only that, in bifurcating "nervousness" and "boldness," Garvey seemingly suggested that each quality corresponded to a distinct type of individual; when read within this discursive context, "nervousness" clearly harmonized with Garvey's articulation of the "Old Negro" and "boldness" with his articulation of the "New Negro." Thus, while this appeal was undeniably a false dichotomy, it nevertheless marked a robust exhortation for blacks to identify with "boldness" and, by extension, "New Negrohood."

Further intensifying the character that he ascribed to the "New Negro," Garvey often depicted the "New Negro" as willing to sacrifice his own life in defense of liberty and self-respect. Such appeals infused the "New Negro" with a radical militancy. Emblematic of such discourse, in a 1920 *Negro World* editorial, Garvey proclaimed, "Today the nations of the world are aware that the Negro of yesterday has disappeared from the scene of human activities and his place taken by a New Negro who stands erect, conscious of his manhood rights and fully determined to preserve them at all costs."[62] Buttressing the general image of masculine confidence, Garvey's reference to preserving rights "at all costs" gestured to the possibility that the "New Negro" was willing to die in defense of his "manhood." That sentiment emerged more overtly in a 1921 speech in which Garvey described what he saw as a key difference between the "Old and the New Negro" in the following terms: "The New Negro … demands a chance; we are not praying for a chance; we are going to demand a chance or we are going to take a chance, and if needs be we are going to die taking a chance."[63] Importantly, Garvey framed that willingness to die as an attendant quality of the "New Negro's" increased aggressiveness. The "New Negro" aggressively *demanded* and *took* his "chance," whereas the "Old Negro" relied upon the

comparatively passive act of "praying." The "New Negro," in other words, exercised a much greater sense of agency. And, as Garvey saw it, for black folks in a white-dominated society, that sense of aggressive, manly agency was what differentiated manhood from subjugation. Indeed, in the same speech in which he expressed that notion of agency, Garvey also said, "Somebody is crazy if you think the new Negro is going to allow himself to be a slave perpetually. No sir; the new Negro is a man; if he cannot live a man he prefers to die a man."[64]

Garvey complemented that notion of aggressive, manly agency by portraying the "New Negro" as keenly concerned about reciprocity. In Garvey's assessment, part of the reason why the "Old Negro" had endured exploitation for so long was because the "Old Negro" had cooperated too willingly with asymmetrical power relations. In contrast to that ostensible disposition, Garvey linked "the new attitude of the Negro" to the following position: "We are not giving to you more than you give to us."[65] At times, that sense of reciprocity gained even more radical instantiations within Garvey's rhetoric, materializing sometimes in appeals of the "eye-for-an-eye" variety. In a 1921 convention speech, for example, Garvey asserted,

> Negroes have never hated, and that is why [people] seem to miscalculate and misunderstand the Negro. The Negro in all history has never hated; he has always returned a smile for a kick; he has always returned a smile for abuse. Let me say to the world that was the characteristic of the old Negro. We are dealing with the new Negro today, the Negro who intends to return a blow for a blow.[66]

While the statement undeniably alluded to the use of violence, that allusion to violence was secondary to the overall sense of character to which it corresponded. Indeed, for Garvey, the issue had less to do with the question of using violence as a mode of resistance than it did with countering the impression that blacks were docile victims. Toward that end, the "New Negro's"

willingness to "return a blow for a blow" was positioned as but a manifestation of a more fundamental concern for reciprocity.

In concert, then, Garvey's constructions of "Old Negro" and "New Negro" promoted a sense of public character that cohered with his coterminous appeal for self-respect. The shortcomings Garvey attributed to the "Old Negro" signaled the perils of failing to cultivate self-respect. Conversely, the characteristics he associated with the "new Negro" suggested that self-respect possessed immanent, emancipatory potential. In characterizing the "New Negro" as manly, bold, aggressive, and concerned about reciprocity, Garvey crafted a sense of character that was ideally suited to the task of pursuing self-respect.

Conclusion

By linking uplift to the cultivation of self-respect, Garvey urged black Americans to turn inward. Insofar as that approach discouraged blacks from focusing too heavily on appeasing white interests, that inward turn was potentially liberating. Indeed, if self-respect represented the pathway to progress, then one need not be preoccupied with shaping his or her identity in accordance with the norms of the dominant society. But, at the same time, such an inward turn posed a serious threat to one's overall capacity for civic engagement. A singular focus on building self-respect could cause one to overlook other ways in which he or she might be able to participate meaningfully in public affairs. And while it can be reasonably argued that, in some ways, a firm sense of self-respect is a necessary precondition to meaningful civic participation, Garvey's uplift vision gave little consideration to the actions that would need to be taken *after* one had developed that necessary sense of self-respect.

Of course, a crucial factor within that overall dynamic was the reality that Garvey so frequently expressed doubts about whether blacks could ever receive fair treatment within the context of the United States.[67] In light of that position, it was unsurprising that Garvey's discourse tended to "cast black collective identity as occurring on a world stage."[68] Along those lines, while Garvey's emphasis on self-respect may have discouraged certain modes of civic activity, it also fostered some alternative opportunities. As Michelle Anne Stephens explains, by rejecting conventional concerns for "nationality," Garvey was able to imagine "a different sense of political community, a race united not by territory but by its own history making."[69] The development of self-respect, particularly if it coincided with a turn away from a conventional national identification, could function as a "history making" practice by which one symbolically participated within that more expansive sense of "political community."

Although Garvey's emphasis on self-respect offered a potentially transformative vision for performing black community, his enactment of the "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic relied heavily upon dichotomous understandings of "race" and "gender." By portraying the "New Negro" as an advocate of racial separatism and, furthermore, linking separatism to the achievement of self-respect, Garvey's discourse perpetuated the logics of racial difference. Indeed, if separatism was a necessary condition to the development of self-respect, there was little hope for reconciling the social traumas that had resulted from white supremacy and institutional racism. At the same time, by endowing the "New Negro" with a spirit of hyper-masculine manliness, Garvey constituted a rhetorical situation in which uplift demanded fidelity to both a patriarchal structure and prevailing gender norms. Thus, while Garvey's articulations afforded an ideal mode of agency for black men, it largely excluded black women from the pursuit of uplift.

Notes

1. Marcus Garvey, "An Expose of the Caste System Among Negroes," in *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, 2 vols., ed. Amy Jacques-Garvey (New York: Atheneum, 1977), vol. 2., 56.

2. Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 164; and Mary G. Rolinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 1, 4.

3. Quoted in David Levering Lewis, "Introduction," in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, ed. David Levering Lewis (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), xxiii.

4. Raymond L. Hall, *Black Separatism in the United States* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 1978), 60; and Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 107.

5. See Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1986).

6. See Putnam, *The Insistent Call*, 44-52.

7. Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, 39; Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge: MA, Harvard University Press, 2009), 34; and Chad L. Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 4.

8. Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *African Americans: A Concise History* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2010), 397.

9. David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), 29; and Nancy K. MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 4.

10. See Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*.

11. Quoted in Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, 56.

12. Quoted in Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 98.

13. Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, 55; and Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 26.

14. Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles*, 4.

15. Quoted in Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, 60.

16. Guterl, *The Color Race in America*, 55.

17. Ibid.; Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, 59; and Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 25.

18. Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 80.

19. Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, 63; and Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles*, 9.

20. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Gene Andrew Jarrett, "Introduction," in *The New Negro: Readings on Race, Representation, and African American Culture, 1892-1938* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1.

21. Henry Louis Gates Jr., "Of Negroes Old and New," *Transition* 46 (1974): 49.

22. Henry Louis Gates Jr., "The Trope of a New Negro and the Reconstruction of the Image of the Black," *Representations* 24 (1988): 130-31.

23. Martha Jane Nadell, *Enter the New Negroes: Images of Race in American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 10-11.

24. Ibid., 11.

25. Gates, "The Trope," 147; and Nadell, *Enter the New Negroes*, 11.

26. David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 23-24; Lewis, "Introduction," xxiii; *Nadell*, *Enter the New Negroes*, 11; Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, 60; and Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 247.

27. Quoted in *The Voice of the Negro 1919*, ed. Robert T. Kerlin (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1920), 25.

28. Quoted in Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, 128.

29. Marcus Garvey, "Speech by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 736.

30. Marcus Garvey, "Opening Speech of the Convention by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 581.

31. Marcus Garvey, "Speech by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 552.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. See Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Creative Conflict in African American Thought: Frederick Douglass, Alexander Crummell, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 239; Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 49, 69; and Putnam, *The Insistent Call*, 45.

35. "UNIA Meeting at Carnegie Hall," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 502.

36. Garvey, "Speech by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Papers*, vol. 3, 549.

37. Ibid (emphasis added).

38. Marcus Garvey, "Editorial Letter by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 5, 237.

39. Ibid.

40. Marcus Garvey, "Speech by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, 10 vols., Robert A. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1983, vol. 5, 251.

41. Marcus Garvey, "Speech by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 24.

42. Ibid.

43. "Report of UNIA Meeting," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 2, 118.

44. Ibid.

45. Garvey, "Speech by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 24.

46. Ibid.

47. To an extent, Garvey's statement was plagued by inconsistency. In particular, Garvey was wrong to suggest that Washington, D.C. was north of the Mason-Dixon line. In truth, Washington, D.C. was both south of the Mason-Dixon line and adhered to some forms of segregation. In general, however, Washington, D.C. experienced a qualitatively different set of race relations than the so-called Deep South.

48. Marcus Garvey, "Speech by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 154.

49. Marcus Garvey, "Speech by Marcus Garvey at the Opening of the Women's Industrial Exhibit," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 630.

50. Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 4.

51. Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 92-93.

52. Martin Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents: The Black Middle Class and the Transformation of Masculinity, 1900-1930* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 78.

53. Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents*, 76.

54. Marcus Garvey, "Editorial Letter by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 2, 298 (emphasis added).

55. Ibid.

56. "Report by John F. Daly, Certified Shorthand Reporter," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 2, 128.

57. Such a form of discourse closely resembles what David Zarefsky refers to as "arguments by definition." David Zarefsky, "Definitions," in *Argument in a Time of Change: Definitions, Theories, and Critiques*, ed. James F. Klumpp (Annandale, VA: National Communication Association, 1998), 5.

58. "Speeches by Marcus Garvey and Charles H. Duvall," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 599.

59. Ibid.

60. Marcus Garvey, "Speech by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 210.

61. Marcus Garvey, "Opening Speech of the Convention by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 578.

62. Marcus Garvey, "Editorial Letter by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 2, 600.

63. Garvey, "Opening Speech of the Convention by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 581.

64. Ibid., 579.

65. Garvey, "Speech by Marcus Garvey," in *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 3, 552.

66. Garvey, "Opening Speech of the Convention," vol. 3, 577-78.

67. Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, 117-18.

68. Putnam, *The Insistent Call*, 51.

69. Michelle Anne Stephens, *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914-1962* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 83.

CHAPTER FOUR

W. E. B. Du Bois and Race-Conscious Economics during the Great Depression

On the eve of the Great Depression, W. E. B. Du Bois, widely considered black America's preeminent intellectual, busied himself with a recent controversy that had emerged on the topic of black education. Educational expert Dr. L. A. Pechstein had recently published a report that claimed "black students benefited more from segregated schools than from racially mixed ones."[1] Du Bois flatly rejected Pechstein's conclusion. However, in a notable passage from his rejoinder to Pechstein, Du Bois considered the possibility and implications of a segregated arrangement. He wrote, "If Negroes must have separate schools, they should have separate officials, a separate school budget, and a separate system of text books. They should push on to more separation and more self-government in every line of life."[2] Though portrayed as nothing more than a hypothetical musing, as the Depression took hold, Du Bois would increasingly give serious consideration to the merits of separation.

Shortly after Du Bois published his critique of Pechstein, the Stock Market crashed. In nearly no time at all, U.S. society found itself free-falling in the seemingly endless abyss of the Great Depression. The Depression decimated U.S. society. Among racial and ethnic groups, African Americans were hit especially hard.[3] As the famed Harlem Renaissance writer Langston Hughes put it: "[T]he depression brought everybody down a peg or two. And the Negroes had but few pegs to fall."[4] In the South, where the majority of African Americans still resided, the sudden and steep downturn in cotton prices ravaged black farmers and sharecroppers—many of whom had already been living a borderline subsistence lifestyle.[5] Skilled black workers in the South also suffered mightily. Losing what little foothold they had gained during the 1920s, by

1930, less than 100,000 black men, or approximately 4 percent of southern black male workers, were employed in skilled occupations.[6] For northern blacks, conditions were similarly disastrous. In Harlem, which now functioned as the cultural hub of black American life, black workers suffered widespread unemployment. Such conditions prevailed throughout northern cities with sizable black populations; for example, by 1930, black unemployment rates eclipsed 50 percent in Cleveland, Detroit, and St. Louis.[7] Exacerbating these already dire circumstances, widespread racial discrimination meant that blacks were typically "last hired, first fired."[8]

These circumstances posed a unique set of constraints to the pursuit of racial uplift. This chapter investigates how Du Bois rhetorically navigated those constraints. As I will demonstrate in the sections that follow, during the early stages of the Depression (1930-1935), Du Bois developed an economically-oriented vision of uplift. That vision, I argue, evolved in two stages. In the first stage, from 1930-33, Du Bois characterized uplift as the development of black economic self-determination; in the second stage, from 1934-35, Du Bois re-characterized uplift as the development of racial equality. In tandem, Du Bois's uplift discourse in these stages exhorted black Americans to enact a shared commitment to race-conscious economics.

The rest of this chapter unfolds in four parts. First, I illustrate that prior to the Depression Du Bois had established somewhat of a pattern of rhetorically reinventing black American identity. Second, I outline major developments that occurred within black American public life during the early stages of the Depression. Third, I examine several of Du Bois's public addresses from 1930-33; in so doing, I demonstrate that, by calling for economic self-determination, Du Bois promoted race-conscious economic cooperation. Then, in the second section of my analysis, I engage two sets of discourses – (1) Du Bois's 1934 "pro-segregation" *Crisis* pieces and (2) Du Bois's 1935 address "A Negro Nation Within the Nation." My analysis illuminates that, during

this era, Du Bois's uplift discourse functioned by envisioning a "place" in which race-conscious economics could cultivate the conditions of racial equality.

Du Bois's Reinventions of Black Identity: Character, Place, and Uplift

W. E. B. Du Bois's vast rhetorical corpus, which spans an excess of six decades, is marked by a penchant for the rhetorical reinvention of black American identity. Across those various acts of reinvention, Du Bois consistently expressed concerns for "character," "place," and "uplift."[9] Moreover, he generally held those aspects in dynamic tension—negotiating "character" and "place" in accordance with his evolving public expression of "uplift." While the analysis portion of this chapter will illustrate that rhetorical dynamic, it is important to note that Du Bois had established this discursive trend prior to 1930. Indeed, three distinct episodes from Du Bois's pre-1930 rhetorical corpus particularly well illustrate the manner in which Du Bois performed joint rearticulations of black American identity and uplift.

The first episode that illustrates this discursive trend is Du Bois's early twentieth century "Talented Tenth" rhetoric. During this era, Du Bois generally associated uplift with the "Talented Tenth." In this configuration, uplift essentially consisted of a process in which a liberally educated class of black elites (i.e., "Talented Tenth") provided the black masses with sufficient intellectual and cultural guidance so as to gain increased access into U.S. society for the entire race. Outlining the concept in his 1900 essay "The Talented Tenth," Du Bois wrote,

> Education and work are the levers to uplift a people. Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work—it must teach Life. The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. No others can do this work and

> Negro colleges must train men for it. The Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men.[10]

Du Bois's characterization of uplift was rather obvious: the development of a "Talented Tenth" that could function as intellectual and cultural guides for the rest of the race. Yet, this also called forth a distinctive black American *ethos*. In particular, if the future of the race depended on the development of this "Talented Tenth," and if that "Talented Tenth" could only gain form through operating in the realms of "education" and "work," then, black Americans needed to act in ways that would support that arrangement. This also meant that individuals needed to assess whether they were a member of the "Talented Tenth" or the mass. The implications of that arrangement emerged somewhat more directly in Du Bois's 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*, where he wrote: "Progress in human affairs is more often a pull than a push, surging forward of the exceptional man, and the lifting of his duller brethren slowly and painfully to his vantage-ground."[11] This notion of uplift conveyed the sense that black American identity was both dichotomous and hierarchical; the "Talented Tenth" was both distinctive and superior. As it pertained to black American identity, that dichotomous and hierarchical configuration suggested a mode for organizing black American life.

The second episode that exhibits Du Bois's coordination of black American identity and uplift is his 1910s-1920s Pan-African discourse. As Aric Putnam illustrates, during this epoch, Du Bois grounded his vision of uplift in the philosophy of Pan-Africanism.[12] This expression of uplift posited that all members of the African Diaspora were symbolically linked. Articulated within a global context, this instantiation of uplift exhorted black Americans to look beyond their immediate domestic concerns and to view public affairs through the international lens of "human rights."[13] For example, in his 1921 *Nation* article "Pan-African Ideals," Du Bois insisted that it

was "the duty of the world to assist in every way the advance of the backward and suppressed groups of mankind," adding that such an initiative was "the one road to world salvation."[14] This Pan-African conception of uplift discouraged black Americans from being content with modest social, political, or economic gains and, instead, linked uplift to the loftier aims of dismantling white supremacy and colonial exploitation. In the 1915 *Atlantic Monthly* article "The African Roots of the War," Du Bois lamented that the majority of "yellow, brown and black peoples" of the world were subjugated and exploited.[15] "Our duty is clear," he began, "Racial slander must go. Racial prejudice will follow. Steadfast faith in humanity must come. The domination of one people by another without the other's consent, be the subject people black or white, must stop. The doctrine of forcible economic expansion over subject peoples must go."[16] In demonstrating that people of color throughout the world endured similar oppressive experiences, Du Bois situated uplift within the global arena of international affairs. In so doing, Du Bois urged African Americans to interpret their identities as being symbolically linked to these other oppressed and colonized individuals.

The third episode that showcases Du Bois's coordination of black American *ethos* and uplift is his intervention into aesthetic politics during the "New Negro" movement. During the mid-1920s, at the height of the "New Negro" movement, Du Bois rejected contemporaneous arguments that African American artists should strive only for the ideals of "pure art." In response to that aesthetic ideal of "pure art," Du Bois countered that "all Art is propaganda and ever must be."[17] On this point, he explained that it was especially imperative for African Americans to view "art" as "propaganda" because "art" and aesthetic practices were constitutive of the pillars of civilization—"Beauty," "Truth," "Right," and "Justice."[18] As Eric King Watts explains, Du Bois especially stressed the emphasis between "art" and "beauty" because, as Du

Bois saw it, "injustice" and "ugliness" were reciprocal; therefore, the oppressed, having been "made ugly" by their oppressors, could combat their oppression by giving "beauty" to their existence.[19] In light of that perspective, the follow passage poignantly evinced the sense that "beauty," "uplift," and black American *ethos* were triangulated: "[I]t is the bounden duty of black America to begin this great work of the creation of Beauty, of the preservation of Beauty, of the realization of Beauty, and we must use in this work all the methods that men have used before."[20]

These respective episodes demonstrate that, within Du Bois's discourse, black identity was a dynamic rhetorical construction. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that each of these episodes emerged out of distinct rhetorical cultures, and those respective rhetorical cultures reflected an historically situated interplay of material conditions and discursive contexts. Thus, in order to appreciate the constitutive implications of Du Bois's Depression era discourse, we must first consider how the Great Depression contained its own unique set of material conditions and discursive contexts.

The Great Depression and Black Marxism

Amid the Great Depression's climate of economic scarcity, an increasing number of African Americans gravitated toward different forms of Marxism.[21] Facets of Marxism had previously garnered approval within black political culture via organizations such as Cyril Brigg's African Blood Brotherhood and Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. Alongside engagement with these hybridized forms of Marxism, the mid 1920s also featured renewed interest among black Americans in doctrinaire versions of Marxism. Inspired by the recent political successes of the Marxist Bolsheviks during the Russian Revolution, many black

Americans began to express identification with the Bolsheviks' professed commitment to racial and ethnic equality—with some black Americans portraying the newly formed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) "as the one place in the world free from racial prejudice."[22] Even Du Bois, who had long maintained a measured skepticism about the effectuality of Marxist politics, found himself smitten with the emerging Bolshevik vogue. Recounting his recent trip to Moscow in a November 1926 *Crisis* piece, he wrote, "I stand in astonishment and wonder at the revelation of Russia that has come to me. I may be partially deceived and half-informed. But if what I have seen with my eyes and heard with my ears in Russia is Bolshevism, I am a Bolshevik."[23]

Beyond this fascination with the racial politics of Soviet Bolshevism, many of the black Americans who expressed support for Marxism during the 1920s located within the philosophy a potential corrective to the presumed collusion between capitalism and white supremacy.[24] And while that position may have possessed merit, African Americans' attempts to forge alliances with multiracial Marxist organizations proved largely dissatisfying as it pertained to the pursuit of racial justice. By and large, these white-dominated Marxist organizations viewed racial discrimination as merely one of myriad undesirable effects of capitalism and, therefore, prioritized the class struggle ahead of institutional racism.[25]

Seemingly cognizant of both that disconnect, as well as the political value signified by African American support, the Communist Party USA (CPUSA)—then the most predominant Marxist entity in the United States—made efforts to placate African Americans' concerns. As an initial effort, in 1925, the CPUSA created the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC).[26] Founded by Lovett Fort-Whiteman, an African American communist who had received political training in the Soviet Union, the ANLC was intended to attract black support for the CPUSA's general platform. At the first national ANLC conference, Fort-Whiteman urged black Americans

to see the benefits of marrying race-consciousness with class-consciousness: "The aim of the American Negro Labor Congress is to gather, to mobilize, and to co-ordinate into a fighting machine the most enlightened and militant and class conscious workers of the race."[27] In spite of those ambitious aims, the ANLC failed to gather significant momentum, undercut by the perception that the CPUSA in particular, and communism in general, failed to appreciate the particularity of U.S. white supremacy.[28]

Underlying black Americans' lack of enthusiasm for the ANLC was a widespread concern for black autonomy.[29] That is, while many black Americans were willing enough to view their struggle as coordinate to white labor, they expressed concerns that their political energy would be harnessed to forward the aims of white labor without receiving reciprocal support for the cause of black liberation. Emblematic of that concern was the emergence of the Black Belt nation thesis, which maintained "that a swath of black majority areas of the South"—the so-called "Black Belt"—"constituted a nation unto itself."[30] Following the vigorous advocacy of leading black communists, in 1928 The Communist International (COMINTERN)—the foremost international communist organization—passed a resolution that recognized the African Americans who lived in the Black Belt "as an oppressed nation."[31] However, the COMINTERN's endorsement equated to little more than lip service; indeed, the resolution was met with considerable opposition from white and black communists alike.[32]

The relative failings of these early twentieth-century efforts to align the Marxist class struggle with the black freedom struggle bespoke the hegemonic presence of white supremacy in U.S. society. As Robin D. G. Kelley and Michael C. Dawson separately argue, the inability to reconcile those overlapping campaigns ultimately encouraged black activists to regard the black freedom struggle as a distinct revolutionary effort.[33] Even so, in light of the economic

dimensions of U.S. white supremacy, vestiges of Marxism would continue to gain expression in black Americans' appeals for civil rights and collective racial "uplift." Indeed, at the outset of the Great Depression, Du Bois began formulating a framework that would ultimately position a nuanced vision of black socialism as a vital element of "uplift." In so doing, Du Bois did as he had so often done, calling once again for the reinvention of black American identity.

Promoting Race-Conscious Economic Cooperation, 1930-1933

Across his vast body of work, Du Bois consistently advocated the idea of black unity. As Kirt H. Wilson demonstrates, from the beginning of the twentieth century onward, those appeals for black unity conspicuously rejected the racist assumptions of "biological determinism" and "eugenics."[34] Instead, Du Bois grounded "race"—and, more specifically, the idea of "racial difference"—in the material conditions of experience. Capturing that logic, in his 1933 address "The Field and Function of the Negro College," Du Bois offered the following meditation on the question of African Americans' "racial" unity: "It is beside the point to ask whether we form a real race. Biologically we are mingled of all conceivable elements, but race is psychology, not biology; and psychologically we are a unified race with one history, one red memory, and one revolt."[35] Marxist undertones aside, the statement advanced a theory of race in which black Americans could express a racialized unity without being complicit in the same logics that sanctioned their oppression.[36] That is, however specious were the claims to biological similarity, black Americans could claim unity on the basis of a mutual experience of racial prejudice.

Du Bois promoted that general logic throughout the early 1930s; indeed, he repeatedly gestured to the particularity of black American experience as a symbolic source of black unity. In so doing, he oriented African Americans to interpret themselves as members of a black

collective. For example, in his 1930 address "Education and Work," delivered at Howard University, Du Bois frankly stated, "American Negroes are not a happy people." To the contrary, he insisted that black Americans represented "embodied Dissatisfaction." The source of that "embodied Dissatisfaction," he argued, was black Americans' shared experience of being subjected to "semi-slavery" and "social caste."[37] Notably, Du Bois's argument altogether circumnavigated the various factors—gender, class, geography, etc.—that contributed to widely different forms of African American experience. In eliding such factors, Du Bois positioned race as the most significant aspect of identity in the United States and, furthermore, appraised race as the primary basis by which African Americans should identify with others.

By discursively accentuating the particularity of black American experience, Du Bois encouraged black American cooperation in multiple venues of activity. But such appeals were especially pronounced in his discourse about education and economics. For example, in the 1933 "The Field and Function of the Negro College," Du Bois addressed the growing opinion that the "Negro University" should not be any different from other U.S. universities.[38] Countering that position, Du Bois contended, "[T]here can be no college for Negroes which is not a Negro college." Conceding that it was understandable and even noble to aspire for "a universal culture," Du Bois nonetheless insisted that the "limitations of race and culture" dictated that the "American Negro University" needed to "start on the earth where we sit and not in the skies where we aspire."[39] Prioritizing "earth" ahead of "sky," Du Bois allusively urged for black higher education to be grounded in the conditions of lived experience. Toward that end, given the ubiquitous presence of white supremacy, African Americans had little choice but to place the distinct characteristics of the so-called "race problem" at "the center of the Negro University."[40]

Du Bois voiced similar concerns as it pertained to African Americans' economic situation. Engaging the growing sentiment that black Americans would be well served by combining forces with white labor,[41] in his May 1933 *Crisis* editorial "Marxism and the Negro Problem," Du Bois acknowledged that black Americans shared a common antagonist in the "capitalistic system." However, he was adamant that black Americans' "most fatal degree" of "suffering" came "not from the capitalists but from fellow white laborers."[42] Diverging from the tenets of pure Marxism, this position discouraged the prospect of forging an interracial labor alliance on the basis of social class. Instead, Du Bois advised black Americans to interpret their economic woes through the lens of race consciousness and to remain ever vigilant against the threat of white exploitation.

Supplementing his claim that black experience was distinct, Du Bois also encouraged black cooperation by depicting black Americans as incompatible with the arrangement of white society. In "Education and Work," Du Bois argued that the respective "duties" of white higher education and black higher education were basically the same—except for "an essential and important difference."[43] And that difference was the inherent racial discrimination that pervaded mainstream industry. He explained that, unlike white Americans, black Americans were confronted with the "double and dynamic" task "of tuning in with a machine in action so as neither to wreck the machine nor be crushed or maimed by it."[44] Projecting this sense of incompatibility more directly, Du Bois identified "the great maelstrom of … white civilization" as the primary culprit for black America's inability to attain "economic stability and independence."[45] Through invoking the ominous figures of the "machine" and the "maelstrom," Du Bois portrayed white society as an unfriendly and potentially destructive force. Such framing conveyed the sense that mainstream industry was innately inhospitable to black Americans,

which, reciprocally, signaled the need for black Americans to enhance cooperation within the race.

Du Bois employed such appeals not only as a way of critiquing white society, but also as an invitation for African Americans to reconsider whatever assumptions they might have about the sources of their plight. In his October 1930 *Crisis* editorial "Employment," Du Bois lamented, "we are continually leaping to the conclusion that Negroes are the ones who are wrong and not the system; that our paupers and criminals and unsuccessful men are the victims of their own faithlessness and lack of foresight."[46] Countering that ostensible attitude, Du Bois contended that African Americans "must realize" that their "poverty and unemployment today" stemmed chiefly from systemic discrimination and not their own abilities. Elaborating this dynamic in a December 1931 *Crisis* editorial, Du Bois demonstrated that black Americans' exclusion from emerging developments in mainstream industry was shaped by a constellation of factors: "lack of political power, poor educational facilities, liability to mob law, [and] absence of capital and organization."[47] Beyond reassuring black Americans that their economic woes were not their fault, such discourse conveyed that, if black Americans wished to improve their economic situation, they may need to work outside the conventional channels of mainstream industry.

By suggesting that African Americans experienced a distinct form of economic marginalization, Du Bois opened up avenues for positioning economics as a constitutive source of black collective action. Indeed, if black Americans experienced a distinct form of economic discrimination, it stood to reason that those same conditions—as a common problem—could be used to mobilize blacks in pursuit of newfound economic opportunities. Employing such a rhetorical move, in the 1933 "Marxism and the Negro Problem," Du Bois wrote,

> The Negro is exploited to a degree that means poverty, crime, delinquency and indigence. And that exploitation comes not from a black capitalistic class but from the white capitalists and equally from the white proletariat. His only defense is such internal organization as will protect him from both parties, and such practical economic insight as will prevent inside the race group any large development of capitalistic exploitation.[48]

Depicting both "white capitalists" and "the white proletariat" as threats to African Americans' livelihood, Du Bois posed collective economic cooperation as black America's best route for preventing white exploitation. Given that position, it was unsurprising when, two months later, Du Bois interpreted black Americans as a distinct class. In the July 1933 *Crisis* editorial "Our Class Struggle," he argued that "the real class struggle [is] not between colored classes, but rather between colored and white folk."[49] As Du Bois saw it, if black Americans wished to improve their economic situation, they must "prepare for a new organization and a new status, new modes of making a living, and a new organization of industry."[50] In tandem, these assertions—that black Americans were a distinct "class," and that they needed to prepare for "a new organization of industry"—signaled strongly to an underlying need for African Americans to establish an increased sense of economic cooperation.

Significantly, Du Bois positioned such a renewed economic framework as more than just a solution to black America's economic situation; rather, he regarded economic realignment as a vehicle for challenging the very structure of white supremacy. In the 1930 "Education and Work," Du Bois queried, "How are we going to place the black American on a sure foundation in the modern state?" Responding to his own question, he declared, "The modern state is primarily business and industry. Its industrial problems must be settled before its cultural problem can really and successfully be attacked."[51] This configuration suggested that the

establishment of an economic foundation was a necessary precondition to redressing black America's social and political marginalization. Du Bois advanced a similar sentiment in his 1933 *Crisis* editorial "The Right to Work." Emphasizing the need for black Americans to develop "solutions" to their distinct "problem," Du Bois endowed economic realignment with an almost alchemic capacity; indeed, he posited that, through "economic organization," the "race" could be transformed "into an industrial phalanx" that would command the respect of not just "America" but the entire "world."[52] Whether economic realignment was understood as a precondition to enhanced civil rights, or a transformative process that would garner newfound respect, Du Bois's appeals suggested that coordinated economic action offered African Americans a viable channel for radically improving their quality of life.

Alongside these explicit calls for economic realignment, during the early 1930s, Du Bois further underscored the significance of economic issues through his discourse on black higher education. More specifically, during this era, Du Bois frequently framed the purpose of black higher education with a pronounced emphasis on its relationship to black America's distinct economic needs. For example, in "Education and Work," Du Bois recounted the longstanding dispute among African Americans over the proper approach to black higher education. In short, that dispute generally centered on the question of whether black Americans were better served by following the principles of the "Industrial Education" approach, which insisted that black Americans should become "skilled in agriculture and trades,"[53] or the "Talented Tenth" approach, which advocated the liberal education of a black intelligentsia.[54] As the principal architect of the "Talented Tenth" philosophy, Du Bois had long been a proponent of liberal education. By 1930, however, Du Bois called for a pragmatic negotiation of the liberal and industrial approaches: "Just as the Negro college course with vision, knowledge and ideal must

move toward vocational training, so the industrial courses must ascent from mere hand technique to engineering and industrial planning and the application of scientific and technical knowledge to problems of work and wage."[55] In other words, the liberal approach would need to become more industrial, and the industrial approach would need to become more liberal. More importantly, each approach would need to adjust its focus so that it better prepared African Americans to "not only do … the work of the world today," but also "provide for the future of the world."[56] In this way, Du Bois presented a more cooperative arrangement of black higher education as the sub-structure upon which black Americans could begin to establish a new economic foundation.

Three years later, in "The Field and Function of the Negro College," Du Bois would echo many of those points; however, he augmented his argument with an even greater emphasis on the relationship between higher education and black America's economic needs. He proclaimed, "The university must become not simply a center of knowledge but a center of applied knowledge and guide of action. And this is all the more necessary now since we easily see that planned action especially in economic life is going to be the watchword of civilization."[57] This statement enthymematically urged black Americans to use higher education as a venue for cultivating a sense of economic cooperation. That is, if higher education was to be a "guide of action," and if "planned action" in "economic life" was to function as black America's path to "civilization," then, it would be crucial for African Americans to foster a unified economic focus in the curriculum and structure of higher education.

Of the respective ways in which Du Bois rhetorically encouraged shared commitment to black economic cooperation, the appeal materialized perhaps most forcefully in discourses in which he discussed the prospect of building a separate black economic circuit. Enacting such an

appeal in his 1933 *Crisis* editorial "The Right to Work," Du Bois proclaimed, "There is no way of keeping us in continued industrial slavery, unless we continue to enslave ourselves, and remain content to work as servants for white folk and dumb driven laborers for nothing."[58] The statement exhorted black Americans to claim a greater sense of agency in shaping their economic destiny. Yet, what exactly would that look like? According to Du Bois, it would entail establishing a "progressively self-supporting economy."[59] Infusing that concept with greater specificity, he wrote, "What can we do? We can work for ourselves. We can consume mainly what we ourselves produce, and produce as large a proportion as possible of that which we consume."[60] Importantly, that grouping of propositions signified decidedly collective efforts—the achievement of which would require a staggering level of cooperation.

Seemingly aware of the possibility that African Americans could be overwhelmed by the collective sacrifice implied by this newfound economic program, Du Bois took pains to demonstrate that such an undertaking was worthwhile. For example, in his September 1933 *Crisis* editorial "On Being Ashamed of Oneself: An Essay on Race Pride," Du Bois envisioned the ways in which a separate black economic circuit would provide relief from the oppressive conditions of white supremacy: "A new organized group action along economic lines, guided by intelligence and with the express object of making it possible for Negroes to earn a better living and, therefore, more effectively to support agencies for social uplift, is without the slightest doubt the next step."[61] Here, Du Bois provided a two-pronged rationale for black Americans to commit to race-conscious economic cooperation. For those compelled primarily by self-interest, Du Bois maintained that economic realignment could offer the opportunity "to earn a better living." Meanwhile, for those more concerned with black America's collective well-being, Du Bois insisted that the individual, economic gains could translate into a vehicle for pursuing the

collective object of "social uplift." And, if neither of those appeals was compelling enough to induce commitment to economic cooperation, Du Bois charged the matter with even greater urgency by positing that the proposed economic realignment was about much more than just propelling black Americans' financial and/or social "advancement"; more fundamentally, he characterized it as an issue of "preservation," a matter of "sheer necessity."[62]

By and large, Du Bois's calls for constituting a separate black economic circuit were premised on attaining black America's economic self-determination; furthermore, Du Bois characterized the achievement of economic self-determination as black America's most realistic pathway to "uplift." Toward that end, Du Bois insisted that the first step to pursuing uplift was a collective disavowal of the "outworn ideals of wealth and servants and luxuries" that African Americans had ostensibly acquired from their "twisted white American environment."[63] Alluding to white America's materialism, Du Bois implicitly exposed the failings of capitalistic greed and, simultaneously, urged black Americans to adopt an alternative set of values.

Du Bois had begun sketching that alternative set of values as early as 1930. Indeed, in a poignant passage from his 1930 *Crisis* editorial "Jobs for Negroes," he wrote, "The real emancipation of the black race in America has not yet been accomplished. Emancipation means: first, a chance to earn a living under modern conditions; and afterwards, a consequent freedom of spirit and effort for life itself."[64] Rejecting the practical existence of black America's "emancipation," Du Bois essentially reinterpreted "emancipation" as economic self-determination. That is, given the hegemony of white supremacy in U.S. society, only if African Americans possessed the agency to dictate their economic affairs could they expect to "earn a living under modern conditions" and simultaneously enjoy a "freedom of spirit and effort for life itself." Elaborating this point in the editorial's subsequent passage, Du Bois wrote,

> [Emancipation] meant that in 1863. It means it even more today when the economic snarls of civilization are far greater than ever before. Whether we think of politics or art, of religion or education, we have got to think of income, of wages and salary, and rents. And until Negroes in America have an assured and permanent place in American industry, they will still be serfs; they will still be disfranchised; they will still be inefficient with only limited powers of spiritual expression.[65]

Linking the present to the historic moment of emancipation, Du Bois suggested that economic dependency had been the primary reason for the widespread hardships that black Americans had suffered since Lincoln's revolutionary proclamation. And while that appeal in and of itself underscored the need for African Americans to achieve economic self-determination, Du Bois gave even greater presence to that idea with his language choices. That is, by invoking decidedly economic terms like "income," "wages," and "salary," Du Bois implicitly positioned economics as the agency for overcoming black America's ongoing serfdom and disfranchisement. Alongside these moves, Du Bois's use of direct address (i.e., "*we* have got to think") fostered the sense that black Americans—not some external source such as the federal government or white philanthropy—must function as the agents that brought about such economic self-determination.

Significantly, although Du Bois tagged economic self-determination as the specific channel to "uplift," in the most fundamental sense, his discourse conveyed that uplift hinged upon the enactment of race-conscious economic cooperation. He expressed such a sentiment with striking clarity in his 1933 "The Field and Function of the Negro College," stating, "Our problem is: How far and in what way can we consciously and scientifically guide our future so as to insure our physical survival, our spiritual freedom and our social growth? Either we do this or we die."[66] The rhetorical texture of the statement resembled the reinterpretation of

"emancipation" that he had rendered in his 1930 "Jobs for Negroes." More importantly, however, it raised the stakes on achieving race-conscious economic cooperation. Simply put: either black Americans would commit to race-conscious economics or they would perish.

Envisioning the "Place" of Racial Equality, 1934-1935

1934 marked a pivotal year in Du Bois's Depression era rhetoric. Beginning with the January 1934 issue of the *Crisis*, Du Bois proceeded to publish a series of editorials that explicitly advocated for African Americans to pursue voluntary segregation. In these "pro-segregation" editorials, Du Bois took pains to dissociate "segregation" from "discrimination." In this way, Du Bois insisted that African Americans' overwhelming rejection of segregation was misplaced—that what they ought to reject was not necessarily "segregation," but, rather, "discrimination."[67] In spite of Du Bois's skillful nuancing of "segregation," the NAACP Board of Directors nevertheless took great issue with the connotations attached to "segregation." Irreconcilably divided over the issue, on June 26, 1934, Du Bois ultimately resigned from his post as editor of the *Crisis*—the journal that he himself had founded 24 years earlier.[68]

In the end, the rhetorical stigma of "segregation" had overshadowed the more fundamental critique that Du Bois had rendered, namely, that the achievement of integration would not necessarily equate to racial equality. Emblematic of that critique, in the March 1934 *Crisis* editorial "Subsistence Homestead Colonies," Du Bois discouraged African Americans from affronting their "own self-respect by accepting a proffered equality which is not equality, or submitting to discrimination simply because it does not involve actual and open segregation."[69] When read in concert, Du Bois's 1934 *Crisis* editorials issued forth a plaint warning, urging black Americans to resist being satisfied by anything short of racial equality. In forwarding this

critique, Du Bois rejected the notion that "equality" was something that could be established through legal or political decree. Rather, "equality," as articulated in Du Bois's 1934 *Crisis* editorials, was a tangible condition that was experienced through social interactions with others. As such, even if "equality" was politically mandated, unless it translated into tangible experience, then, it was for naught.

Following his resignation from the *Crisis*, Du Bois continued to promote his "pro-segregation" critique in other venues. A particularly compelling articulation of that message was the 1935 essay "A Negro Nation Within the Nation," published in the journal *Current History*. In terms of its rhetorical substance, "A Negro Nation Within the Nation" signifies a "representative anecdote"[70] of the various critiques that Du Bois had articulated in his 1934 "pro-segregation" discourse. That is, the essay essentially wove together the major discursive threads that he had spun in the 1934 *Crisis* editorials. As I will demonstrate, in weaving together those threads, "A Negro Nation Within the Nation" enthymematically encouraged a commitment to race-conscious economics. More specifically, it encouraged such a commitment by envisioning a "place" in which race-conscious economics employed black Americans with the agency to produce racial equality. In this regard, "A Negro Nation Within the Nation" marked an amplification of Du Bois's early Depression rhetoric in that it promoted essentially the same sense of character but coordinated that character to a more coherent and vibrant destination.

Continuing the rhetorical pattern that he had established in the 1934 *Crisis* editorials, in "A Negro Nation Within the Nation," Du Bois discursively linked uplift to the process of cultivating a more egalitarian society. For example, the essay imagined a day that would bring about "the ultimate uniting of mankind and … a unified American nation, economic classes and racial barriers leveled."[71] Yet, in order to attain that egalitarian "ideal," Du Bois posited, African

Americans must first commit to an "intensified class and race consciousness."[72] In accordance with his early Depression discourse, by placing "class" alongside "race," Du Bois did not propose the forging of interracial alliances on the basis of class. To the contrary, as he had previously done, Du Bois urged African Americans to interpret class as a correlate of race, with race as the overriding factor. To this point, Du Bois maintained that the "survival of colored folk" demanded that African Americans plan their "economic future" in a manner that would promote "the building of a full humanity instead of a petty white tyranny."[73] This alignment strongly promoted the notion that "race" and "class" were interrelated. Indeed, if African Americans' economic commitments could be the difference between the continued reign of "petty white tyranny" and "the building of a full humanity," then "race" and "class" were surely inextricable.

In positing that economics would play a vital role in the pursuit of black America's collective "uplift," Du Bois reinforced thematics that he had promoted since the beginning of the Depression. However, in "A Negro Nation Within the Nation," Du Bois infused those thematics with a more radical potentiality. That is, while he had previously proposed that race-conscious economic cooperation might earn black Americans newfound respect,[74] or provide them with the opportunity to earn a better living,[75] he now endowed it with the potential of altering the very power relations of U.S. society. For example, Du Bois proclaimed, "[T]hrough voluntary and increased segregation, by careful autonomy and planned economic organization, [African Americans] may build so strong and efficient a unit that twelve million men can no longer be refused fellowship and equality in the United States."[76] As he had done during the early stages of the Depression, Du Bois positioned coordinated economic action as the pathway to black America's collective "uplift." Yet, this instantiation of uplift possessed a decidedly greater

scope. Here, Du Bois portrayed coordinated economic action as a source of leverage that was capable of establishing racial equality and, by extension, dismantling institutional racism.

In a basic sense, in order to symbolically create space for a distinct "place" in which African Americans would employ race-conscious economics to promote racial equality, Du Bois first needed to demonstrate that the status quo was ill-suited to the stated aim of producing racial equality. Toward that end, Du Bois recommenced his early Depression maneuver of portraying mainstream U.S. society as fundamentally antagonistic to African Americans' distinct needs and aims. At the center of that appeal was Du Bois's contention that African Americans had grossly overestimated the baseline significance of racial integration. For example, Du Bois outright rejected the assumption that African Americans could "survive only by being integrated into the nation." Such a position, he argued, failed "to recognize the fundamental economic bases of social growth."[77] This economically inflected counterargument indirectly reinforced Du Bois's overarching call for race-conscious economic cooperation. Indeed, if "economic bases" signified the origin of "social growth," then, African Americans ought to place greater stock in intraracial economic cooperation than in integration.[78]

Closely related to this critique of integration, Du Bois also portrayed mainstream society as antithetical to African Americans by arguing that it was futile for black Americans to seek white America's acceptance. Appealing to the authority of historical precedent, Du Bois recounted African Americans' long, precarious history of seeking white approval:

> For many years it was the theory of most Negro leaders that [racial prejudice] was the insensibility of ignorance and inexperience, that white America did not know of or realize the continuing plight of the Negro. Accordingly, for the last two decades, we have striven by book and periodical, by speech and appeal, by various dramatic methods of agitation,

> to put the essential facts before the American people. Today there can be no doubt that Americans know the facts; and yet they remain for the most part indifferent and unmoved.[79]

In delineating the numerous modes of activity through which African Americans had sought to dash racial stereotypes, the passage gave presence to the immense lengths that blacks had taken in order to gain white approval. That even such thoroughgoing and meticulous efforts had proven unsuccessful signaled that it was exceedingly unlikely that black Americans could *demonstrate* anything that was capable of overturning the anti-black prejudices that many whites harbored. This suggested that, even if black Americans gained access into mainstream society, they would still be plagued by the racial discrimination of the white majority.

Du Bois further accentuated that point by discussing the ways in which anti-black prejudice constrained the potentialities of black identity. He had employed a similar rhetorical move in the 1934 *Crisis* editorial "Segregation in the North," in which he wrote, "No black man whatever his culture or ability is today in America regarded as a man by any considerable number of white Americans."[80] Reflecting the era's masculine norms, which essentially viewed public life as a manly enterprise, the statement more or less insisted that, so long as an individual was black, regardless of "his" individual characteristics (i.e., "culture or ability"), he would not be regarded as an equal in the eyes of many white Americans. Du Bois amplified that sentiment in "The Negro Nation Within the Nation," declaring, "The colored people of America are coming to face the fact quite calmly that most white Americans do not like them, and are planning neither for their survival, nor for their definite future if it involves free, self-assertive modern manhood."[81] Positioned as a matter of "fact," the statement urged black Americans to recognize that "most white Americans" did not care about their well-being. As it pertained to

highlighting the antagonism of mainstream society, the second half of the statement was particularly significant. Indeed, Du Bois suggested that, what little sense of investment white Americans did have in the future "survival" of African Americans, that investment was dependent upon African Americans being submissive and subservient. In that regard, Du Bois's reference to "free, self-assertive modern manhood" signaled an alternative, and more desirable, mode of black American identity.

Complementing this notion that white America was fundamentally opposed to black American self-assertion, Du Bois insisted that black Americans urgently needed to reinvigorate themselves with a renewed sense of race pride. Thus, while Du Bois conceded that the establishment of "[s]eparate Negro sections" would undeniably "increase race antagonism," he maintained that the threat of increased race antagonism was outweighed by the parallel benefit of instilling African Americans with a "necessary" sense of "self-confidence."[82] In his final *Crisis* editorial "Counsels of Despair," Du Bois had advanced a similar argument but with a greater sense of gusto:

> Instead of sitting, sapped of all initiative and independence; instead of drowning our originality in imitation of mediocre white folks; instead of being afraid of ourselves and cultivating the art of skulking to escape the Color Line; we have got to renounce a program that always involves humiliating self-stultifying scrambling to crawl somewhere we are not wanted; where we crouch panting like a whipped dog. We have got to stop this and learn that on such a program [we] cannot build manhood. No, by God, stand erect in a mud-puddle and tell the white world to go to hell, rather than lick boots in a parlor.[83]

Du Bois's usage of the phrase "white world" in the final sentence was especially telling in that it discursively marked a separation between the "white world" and the "black world." And while

the "white world" offered the comfort of the "parlor," as opposed to the "mud-puddle" of the "black world," the "mud-puddle" signified a promise to maintain one's dignity. And, as the passage conveyed, until black Americans stopped trying to mold themselves to meet the demands of the "white world," they would be left seeking comfort at the expense of dignity. Though Du Bois did not reach quite the same pitch in "A Negro Nation Within the Nation," the passage is significant in that it demonstrates how, during this era, Du Bois positioned "race pride"—and, more fundamentally, "race-consciousness"—as the intervening factor that located black Americans in one of two fundamentally different "places."

While a philosophical commitment to "race-consciousness" may have been enough to preserve individual dignity, in "A Negro Nation Within the Nation," Du Bois sized up the collective—and decidedly more ambitious—aim of producing racial equality. Toward that end, Du Bois did as he had so frequently done since the beginning of the Depression and advocated race-conscious economic cooperation. "The main weakness of the Negro's position," Du Bois wrote, "is that since emancipation he has never had an adequate economic foundation."[84] This was, of course, virtually identical to arguments that he had made from 1930-33; however, over the course of his 1934 "pro-segregation" campaign, Du Bois had augmented his general call for race-conscious economic cooperation with an overt appeal for black separatism.

Whereas Garvey and other proponents of black separatism had treated separatism as a kind of utopian end unto itself, Du Bois approached black separatism as a transitional "place." Indeed, discursively linked to the ideal of a U.S. society that was free of "economic" and "racial" barriers, Du Bois positioned black separatism as a temporary "place" from which African Americans would be better equipped to advance the overall goal of establishing racial equality in U.S. society. Across his 1934 *Crisis* editorials, Du Bois had consistently demonstrated that his

proposal for race-conscious economic cooperation was chiefly aimed at cultivating conditions that could yield racial equality. For example, in the April 1934 editorial "Segregation in the North," Du Bois argued that, if the "Negro" was unable to "enter American industry at a living wage, or find work suited to his education and talent, or receive promotion and advancement according to his desserts, he must organize his own economic life so that just as far as possible these discriminations will not reduce him to abject exploitations."[85] Articulated through an economic register, the passage underscored the different ways in which black Americans' opportunities were delimited by the fundamental inequalities of mainstream society. On the basis of such inequality, and the attendant threat of "exploitation," Du Bois somewhat indirectly proposed that African Americans would be better served by seeking out an alternative economic arrangement. Two months later, in "Counsels of Despair," Du Bois more explicitly advocated the virtues of such an alternative economic arrangement. There, he clarified that although the ultimate aim should be "to keep open the avenues of human contact," the reality of institutional racism dictated that African Americans must take "every advantage of what opportunities of contact [were] already open to" them. The most "splendid and inspiring" of the remaining "opportunities," Du Bois added, was "the opportunity of Negroes to work together in the twentieth century for uplift and development of the Negro race."[86] When read in tandem, these passages present starkly different "places." The former is overrun by inequality and precludes African Americans from achieving equitable employment, compensation, or advancement. The latter, in contrast, is a "splendid" and "inspiring" "opportunity" for African Americans to collectively strive towards the "uplift" and "development" of the "race."

In "A Negro Nation Within the Nation," Du Bois linked race-conscious economics to a more coherent and symbolically potent sense of place: "the nation." In the essay, Du Bois

declared, "Negroes can develop in the United Stats an economic nation within a nation, able to work through inner cooperation, to found its own institutions, [and] to educate its genius."[87] By projecting nationhood as a possible outcome, Du Bois endowed the achievement of race-conscious economics with transformative potential. The rhetorical figure of "the nation" implied a profound increase in black America's agency. That is, "the nation," as a symbol of sovereignty, oriented attention to the prospect of self-determination—even if Du Bois depicted such self-determination as only economic in nature.

That sense of "place," of course, diverged radically from the actual conditions of black Americans' Depression era experience. Seemingly cognizant of that disjuncture, Du Bois gave tangibility to the prospect of such economic nationhood through the use of direct comparison. Drawing on the economic characteristics of literal nation-states, Du Bois illustrated that, on the basis of economics, it could be argued that black America did constitute a "nation" of sorts. He wrote, "The consuming power of 2,800,000 Negro families has recently been estimated at $166,000,00 a month—a tremendous power when intelligently directed. Their man power [sic] as laborers probably equals that of Mexico or Yugoslavia…. Their estimated per capita wealth about equals that of Japan."[88] Through these economic comparisons to literal nation-states, including a developed nation such as Japan, Du Bois encouraged black Americans to interpret themselves as members of a distinct nation. More fundamentally, by appealing to the idea of nationhood, Du Bois urged black Americans to recognize the power that they could possess if they collectively committed to his proposed vision of race-conscious economic cooperation.

Du Bois further infused black America with a sense of "nationhood" by arguing that the widespread development of distinctly black institutions had already provided black America with the basic framework of a nation. In essence, this position was just a slight reframing of one of the

major arguments that Du Bois had advanced in his 1934 *Crisis* editorials. For example, responding to the NAACP Board of Directors principled stand against voluntary segregation, Du Bois cited the successes of numerous black institutions and organizations (e.g., black churches, black colleges, and black business)—all of which were more or less informally segregated—as evidence that segregation was not an inherently detrimental condition.[89] Voicing a strikingly similar appeal, in "A Negro Nation Within the Nation," he wrote, "[I]t may be said that this matter of a nation within a nation has already been partially accomplished in the organization of the Negro church, the Negro school and the Negro retail business, and, despite all the justly due criticism, the result has been astonishing."[90] Though roughly the same argument as that in his rejoinder to the NAACP Board of Directors, the rhetorical figure of "the nation" enabled Du Bois to project "voluntary segregation" with a more compelling sense of "place." Indeed, the successes of black churches, schools, and businesses took on newfound significance when positioned as the pillars of "nationhood."

Ultimately, then, "A Negro Nation Within the Nation" rhetorically located African Americans in a "place" where they already possessed both the economic resources and the organizational framework of a "nation." The activation of that potential, then, hinged merely upon harnessing it. Furthermore, confronted by the image of a white society that neither liked them nor cared about their well-being, the essay had given black Americans every reason to energize that latent potential. In effect, Du Bois had cultivated a discursive landscape in which all that separated black Americans from viably pursuing racial equality was the simple act of deciding to commit to race-conscious economics.

Conclusion

In a somewhat ironic twist, by the mid 1930s, Du Bois found himself proposing a variation of the separatism that he had so sharply criticized Garvey for advocating. Of course, Du Bois's separatism was distinct in that it was presented as primarily economic, rather than wholesale, and it was positioned as a provisional stage in a larger journey towards the achievement of unqualified desegregation and racial equality. The position demanded a creative interpretation of pragmatism. Indeed, while many were liable/likely to view continued opposition to segregation as the most pragmatic course, Du Bois was adamant that unqualified commitment to desegregation was tantamount to lofty idealism. What was needed, Du Bois maintained, was for African Americans to assault white supremacy and institutional racism with the best resources that they had at their disposal. Thus, Du Bois reasoned, since blacks were already mostly segregated (even if just informally), then the most pragmatic option would be to use that arrangement to their advantage and band together to form something of a black economic battering ram. With black economic power consolidated, Du Bois posited, black Americans could level the barriers imposed by the color line and cultivate the conditions to create a more egalitarian society.

In many ways, Du Bois's call for race-conscious economics was innovative in that it advanced a structural critique of white supremacy. Rather than fixating on correcting the overt manifestations of racism, Du Bois shifted attention to the material foundations that nurtured white supremacy. If African Americans could even slightly weaken those material foundations, Du Bois argued, then they would be better equipped to demand the terms of racial equality.

The brand of material action that Du Bois proposed was undergirded by a keen sense of commitment to black community. Indeed, Du Bois's vision of uplift essentially called upon blacks to resign immediate self-interest in favor of long-term, collective advancement. In that

regard, Du Bois's Depression discourse suggested that the constitution of a race-conscious economic community would function as the vehicle for black Americans' collective uplift. Toward that end, Du Bois implicitly encouraged blacks to enact the kind of pragmatic attitudes that would be essential to constructing and sustaining such a community.

As I illustrate in the next chapter, Du Bois would not be the only early twentieth-century uplift advocate to suggest that black progress necessitated a careful pairing of attitude and community. Indeed, nearly a decade after Du Bois's pro-segregation campaign, a joint view of attitude and community would reemerge in the discourse of a budding literary talent by the name of Ralph Ellison.

Notes

1. Derrick P. Alridge, *The Educational Thought of W. E. B. Du Bois: An Intellectual History* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 2008), 81.

2. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Pechstein and Pecksniff," in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois: Selections from the Crisis*, 2 vols., ed. Herbert Aptheker (Millwood, NY: Kraus-Thomson, 1983), vol. 2, 560.

3. See Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 26-29; Cheryl Greenberg, *To Ask for an Equal Chance: African Americans in the Great Depression* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 25; and Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 146.

4. Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea* (1940; rpt., New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 247.

5. Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 27.

6. Greenberg, *To Ask for an Equal Chance*, 25.

7. Lewis, *When Harlem was in Vogue*, 241.

8. Greenberg, *To Ask for an Equal Chance*, 21-41.

9. In considering the roles of "character" and "place" in the rhetoric of identity, I am orbiting around conceptual conversations about the rhetorical functions of "ethos." Though neo-Aristotelian theories of rhetoric often reduce "*ethos*" to a rhetor's capacity to display credibility within instrumental rhetorical settings, a number of scholars have resituated *ethos* within a constitutive paradigm. That is, rather than attending to *ethos* as an avenue for "persuasion," these scholars investigate *ethos* as the expression of a potential mode of "being" in the world. In Michael J. Hyde's vernacular, *ethos* signifies a symbolic "dwelling place" that constitutes opportunities for individuals to participate in a discursive process of "knowing together." This perspective of *ethos* allows for an expansive appreciation of rhetoric's symbolic capacities in that it orients attention to the ways in which rhetorical practice both invents and encourages particular forms of "knowing" and "being." See Michael J. Hyde, "Introduction: Rhetorically, We Dwell," in *The Ethos of Rhetoric*, ed. Michael J. Hyde (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), xiii-xxviii; Eric King Watts, "The Ethos of a Black Aesthetic: An Exploration of Larry Neal's Visions of a Liberated Future," in *The Ethos of Rhetoric*, 98-113; Putnam, *The Insistent Call*, 33-52; Thomas Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2013), 220-269; and Dale L. Sullivan, "Rhetorical Invention and Lutheran Doctrine?," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7 (2004): 603-614.

10. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," in *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative American Negroes of To-Day*, eds. Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Charles W. Chesnutt, Wilford H. Smith, H. T. Kealing, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and T. Thomas Fortune (1903; rpt., New York: Arno Press, 1969), 75. Du Bois advanced a comparable sentiment in his 1903 essay "The Training of Negroes for Social Power." There, he wrote, "The history of civilization seems to prove that no group or nation which seeks advancement and true development can despise or neglect the power of well-trained minds; and this power of intellectual leadership must be given to the talented tenth among American Negroes before this race can seriously be asked to assume the responsibility of dispelling its own ignorance." W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Training of Negroes for Social Power," in *Writings by W. E. B. Du Bois in Periodicals Edited by Others*, 2 vols., ed. Herbert Aptheker (Millwood, NY: Kraus-Thomson, 1982), vol. 1, 180.
11. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 72.

12. Putnam, *The Insistent Call*, *40*.

13. Ibid.

14. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Pan-African Ideals," in *Writings by W. E. B. Du Bois in Periodicals Edited by Others*, 2 vols., ed. Herbert Aptheker (Milwood, NY: Kraus-Thompson, 1982), vol. 2, 153.

15. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The African Roots of the War," in *Writings by W. E. B. Du Bois in Periodicals Edited by Others*, 102.

16. Ibid., 103.

17. As a stylistic choice, Du Bois capitalizes "Art" in the text. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art," in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 448.

18. Ibid.

19. Eric King Watts, "Cultivating a Black Public Voice: W. E. B. Du Bois and the 'Criteria of Negro Art,'" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4 (2001): 189; and Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art," 445.

20. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art," 448.

21. See Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 103-121; Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 10; and Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 147.

22. Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 32.

23. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Russia, 1926," in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 452.

24. See Michael C. Dawson, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 174.

25. Ibid., 173; and Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 41.

26. Gilmore, *Defying Dixie*, 51; Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, 49; and Dawson, *Black Visions*, 190.

27. Quoted in Gilmore, *Defying Dixie*, 53.

28. Dawson, *Black Visions*, 191.

29. Michael C. Dawson, *Blacks In and Out of the Left* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 30.

30. Gilmore, *Defying Dixie*, 61.

31. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, 49.

32. Ibid.

33. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, 49; and Dawson, *Black In and Out of the Left*, 48-52.

34. Kirt H. Wilson, "Towards a Discursive Theory of Racial Identity: *The Souls of Black Folk* as a Response to Nineteenth-Century Biological Determinism," *Western Journal of Communication* 63 (1999): 193-215.

35. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Field and Function of the Negro College," in *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 100.

36. For commentary on the intersections of rhetoric, race, and complicity, see Mark Lawrence McPhail, "Complicity: The Theory of Negative Difference," *Howard Journal of Communications* 3 (1991): 1-13; Mark Lawrence McPhail, "The Politics of Complicity: Second Thoughts about the Social Construction of Racial Equality," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994): 343-357; and Mark Lawrence McPhail, "From Complicity to Coherence: Rereading the Rhetoric of Afrocentricity," *Western Journal of Communication* 62 (1998): 114-140.

37. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Education and Work," *Journal of Negro Education* 1 (1932): 73.

38. Du Bois, “The Field and Function,” 91.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., 92.

41. See Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*.

42. W. E. B. Du Bois, “Marxism and the Negro Problem,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 697.

43. Du Bois, “Education and Work,” 71.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., 69.

46. W. E. B. Du Bois, “Employment,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 602.

47. W. E. B. Du Bois, “Jobs for Negroes,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 646.

48. Du Bois, “Marxism and the Negro Problem,” 699.

49. W. E. B. Du Bois, “Our Class Struggle,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 711-12.

50. W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Right to Work,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 692.

51. Du Bois, “Education and Work,” 68.

52. Du Bois, “The Right to Work,” 693.

53. Ellen Swartz, “Stepping Outside the Master Script: Re-Connecting the History of American Education,” *Journal of Negro Education* 76 (2007): 176. For Booker T. Washington’s firsthand account of “Industrial Education,” see Booker T. Washington, “Industrial Education for the Negro,” in *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative American Negroes of To-Day*, ed. August Meier (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), 9-29.

54. See W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Talented Tenth,” in *The Negro Problem*, 33-75.

55. Du Bois, “Education and Work,” 70.

56. Ibid.

57. Du Bois, “The Field and Function,” 96.

58. Du Bois, “The Right to Work,” 693.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. W. E. B. Du Bois, “On Being Ashamed of Oneself: An Essay on Race Pride” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 717.

62. Ibid.

63. Du Bois, “The Field and Function,” 98.

64. Du Bois, “Jobs for Negroes,” 645.

65. Ibid.

66. Du Bois, “The Field and Function,” 100.

67. See W. E. B. Du Bois, “Segregation,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 727-728; W. E. B. Du Bois, “A Free Forum,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 731-734; W. E. B. Du Bois, “Subsistence Homestead Colonies,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 735-739; W. E. B. Du Bois, “Segregation in the North,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 745-750; W. E. B. Du Bois, “Segregation,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 755; W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Board of Directors on Segregation,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 761-762; and W. E. B. Du Bois, “Counsels of Despair,” in *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois*, 765-769.

68. See Du Bois, “The Board of Directors on Segregation,” 761-762; and Raymond Wolters, *Du Bois and His Rivals* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 224-239.

69. Du Bois, “Subsistence Homestead Colonies,” 736.

70. In using the term “representative anecdote,” I follow an interpretive approach similar to that modeled by Michael Leff. See Leff, “Things Made by Words,” 223-231.

71. W. E. B. Du Bois, “A Negro Nation Within the Nation,” in *W. E. B. Du Bois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1920-1963*, 3rd ed., ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977), 83.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., 85.

74. Du Bois, “The Right to Work,” 693.

75. Du Bois, “On Being Ashamed of Oneself,” 717.

76. Du Bois, “A Negro Nation Within the Nation,” 86.

77. Ibid., 82.

78. Du Bois advanced a similar sentiment in his January 1934 *Crisis* editorial “Segregation” in which he contented, “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.” Du Bois, “Segregation,” 727.

79. Du Bois, “A Negro Nation Within the Nation,” 80.

80. Du Bois, “Segregation in the North,” 745.

81. Du Bois, “A Negro Nation Within the Nation,” 79.

82. Du Bois, “A Negro Nation Within the Nation,” 85.

83. Du Bois, “Counsels of Despair,” 766.

84. Du Bois, “A Negro Nation Within the Nation,” 80.

85. Du Bois, “Segregation in the North,” 748.

86. Du Bois, “Counsels of Despair,” 765.

87. Du Bois, “A Negro Nation Within the Nation,” 84.

88. Ibid., 83.

89. Du Bois, “The Board of Directors on Segregation,” 762.

90. Du Bois, “A Negro Nation Within the Nation,” 86.

CHAPTER FIVE

Ralph Ellison and "Critical Participation" during World War II

In a 1943 "Editorial Comment" in the *Negro Quarterly*, Ralph Ellison[1]—then one of black America's rising literary stars—proposed that "it might be profitable" to examine "the general attitudes held by Negroes toward their war-time experiences."[2] His proposition was well warranted. Indeed, the nationalistic culture of World War II America confronted African Americans with a rhetorical crisis. The war imbued the country with a fervent patriotism, placing a premium on national unity. In a nation divided by the color line, rhetorical appeals for national unity hindered black America's ongoing pursuit of civil rights and full citizenship. Despite the discriminatory conditions fostered by white supremacy and Jim Crow, nationalistic appeals, such as Franklin Delano Roosevelt's (FDR) "Four Freedoms," urged African Americans to close ranks with whites in the name of "freedom" and "democracy" and to pledge their unequivocal support to the U.S. and Allied war effort.[3]

To the dominant white culture, black civil rights activism signaled a disruption of wartime unity, and any disruption of wartime unity was deemed detrimental to the fight against fascism. This situation ostensibly posed black activists with the following dilemma: Support the race at the expense of the country, or support the country at the expense of the race. Even Leftist groups that espoused explicitly antiracist platforms saw the exigency of the war as reason for African Americans to suppress their civil rights activism. For instance, the CPUSA actively deemphasized the *domestic* cause of black civil rights in favor of unconditional support for the *international* campaign against fascism.[4] For many black activists and intellectuals, the CPUSA's backpedalling on issues of race became a source of considerable resentment, a sign

that even the so-called white radicals were not genuinely committed to the cause of black civil rights.[5]

From his post as managing editor at the *Negro Quarterly*, Ellison sought to make sense of the wartime contradiction that faced black America. He rejected both the dominant culture's bifurcation of "race" and "country" as well as Du Bois's thesis that African Americans represented a "nation within a nation."[6] Refusing to accept the notion that African American identity was "separable from the larger American republic," according to Lawrence Jackson, Ellison considered African Americans "a minority group who had to develop a self-conscious identity out of their American experience."[7] Put differently, Ellison believed that it was impossible to abstract black American identity from the particularity of its American context.

Such a stance accords with Houston A. Baker Jr.'s contention that African American culture is constituted within a discursive field known as a "blues matrix." Premised on the notion that "[t]he blues … are unthinkable for those happy with their lot," Baker suggests that the "blues matrix" represents a discursive reflection of African Americans' everyday experience with racism.[8] At the dawn of the twentieth century, W. E. B. Du Bois proposed that such everyday experience of racism had cultivated a distinctly African American condition known as "double consciousness." For Du Bois, double consciousness signified the spiritual mark of African American disempowerment, the effect of inhabiting "a world which yields [African Americans] no true self-consciousness." Yet, in spite of this burden, double consciousness was also empowering in the sense that it yielded the gift of "second-sight."[9]

Fundamentally, Du Bois's double consciousness captured the warring ideals of African American identity, the feeling of being both "an American" and "a Negro," but the inability to achieve coherence as either. Citing this inherent tension in Du Bois's notion of double

consciousness, particularly his evaluation of the condition as both a "gift" and a "curse," Robert E. Terrill and Eric Kings Watts note that double consciousness "is itself doubled." They point out that Du Bois's characterization of double consciousness "entails a motive to preserve some sense of doubleness, while at the same time it decries the inability to achieve a coherent identity." Terrill and Watts draw attention to the ways in which Du Bois's conception of double consciousness, though elaborated as a *communal* feature of African American public life, responded primarily to the problem of *individual* identity.[10] While the preservation of doubleness would seemingly preclude African Americans from achieving a coherent individual identity in a predominantly white society, it could serve as the rhetorical ground for the formation of a coherent black community.

Ellison's 1943 "Editorial Comment" in the *Negro Quarterly* should be understood as one such effort to mobilize black community around the mutual gift of second-sight that arises from double consciousness. In the editorial, Ellison argued that the solution to black America's wartime puzzle was an attitude shift; specifically, he advocated for the adoption of "critical participation," an attitude that entailed supporting U.S. and Allied principles while remaining vigilant against white supremacy. In this way, "critical participation" marked an appeal for uplift. Indeed, through the attitude of "critical participation," Ellison argued, African Americans would be able to simultaneously advance the demands of both U.S. democratic culture and the black freedom struggle. Of course, those two aims did not overlap perfectly; however, as Ellison saw it, the liminal position of "critical participation" offered African Americans the best opportunity to advance the underlying principles of democracy while still attending to their distinct social, political, and economic needs.

From a rhetorical perspective, Ellison's editorial signified more than just a wartime proposal for racial uplift; it also marked an articulation of black community. In the editorial, Ellison called for a reorientation of black leadership, exhorting contemporary black activists and intellectuals to close the symbolic disjuncture between themselves and the black masses. Such a move, Ellison contended, was a necessary step toward consolidating black political power; however, such a move would also require black leaders to attune themselves to the vernacular texture of black folk life. Ellison's configuration of black community implied that African Americans' myriad socioeconomic, political, and cultural differences were transcended by their common experience of racism. In this sense, Ellison grounded black community not in racial essentialism, but, rather, a common frame of experience. And, as Ellison saw it, that common frame of experience could be employed as a collective resource for pursuing racial uplift.

This chapter focuses on the ways in which Ellison's 1943 "Editorial Comment" promoted the spiritual condition of "second-sight" as a novel mode for pursuing racial uplift; indeed, the text embodied second-sight by charting a liminal space between assimilation and activism, nationality and culture, class and race. By expressing uplift through that rhetorical form, I argue, Ellison grounded black community in the enactment of self-conscious doubleness. Whereas Du Bois characterized double consciousness as an *effect* of white supremacy, Ellison positioned self-conscious doubleness as an inventional resource that could *effect* a self-aware, coherent black community. This articulation of black community politicized the meaning of blackness and, in so doing, projected black Americans—across socioeconomic, political, and cultural positionalities—as sharing a common mission against white supremacy. By linking black self-determination to a rhetorically negotiated African American solidarity, the text's configuration of black community contested the exploitative politics of white paternalism.[11]

The remainder of this chapter develops in four parts. First, I illustrate that rhetorics of doubleness resonated with black American wartime experience, citing the popular reception of the "Double V" campaign as a prime example. Second, I briefly outline how Ellison's editorship at the *Negro Quarterly* coincided with significant shifts in his intellectual and political development, including a divergence from communism. Third, I analyze Ellison's 1943 "Editorial Comment" to show how the text intervened in black America's wartime situation by grounding black community in the enactment of self-conscious doubleness. Finally, I conclude by considering how the text contributed to black America's ongoing political and intellectual efforts to reconcile its paradoxical relationship with America.

Wartime Nationalism and the Black Press

Alarmed by the militaristic expansion of the Axis Powers, U.S. government officials interpreted World War II as a global threat to "freedom" and "democracy." This was particularly evidenced by one of the era's most famous texts, FDR's 1941 State of The Union Address—better known as "The Four Freedoms." In the speech, FDR underscored the universal significance of freedom, declaring, "Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere."[12] However, the program that FDR proposed for fostering such freedom—a combination of patriotism and unwavering national unity—proved contradictory for African Americans because it created a symbolic environment that largely discouraged dissent, rendering black America's ongoing campaign for civil rights counter-productive to the war effort. These ideological constraints ostensibly made it impossible for black activists to protest for civil rights *and* support the country. In response to these symbolic and material exclusions, black spokespersons sought to engage the war rhetorically in ways that acknowledged their

marginalized experience. The black press emerged as a prominent space for such rhetorical expression.

Throughout the duration of World War II, the black press was a vibrant space of black social, political, and cultural activity.[13] However, the climate of wartime nationalism presented the black press with rhetorical challenges. On the one hand, the federal government had grown increasingly suspicious of "press activism"—so much so that, in early 1942, FDR himself initiated a meeting with "the editors of the five largest Black papers and asked them to tone down their criticism for the sake of the war effort."[14] On the other hand, in order to satisfy the demands of their readership, black press outlets "had to maintain [their] policy of exposing and condemning discrimination within the country."[15] The black press negotiated this thorny situation by devising a two-pronged approach, affirming the principles of dominant discourses, such as "The Four Freedoms" and the Atlantic Charter, but simultaneously drawing upon those principles to critique domestic racism. This maneuver gained perhaps its most salient form in the "Double V" campaign, which advocated a double victory over fascism—both foreign and domestic.

The "Double V" campaign was set in motion by a letter that appeared in the January 31, 1942 edition of the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Authored by James G. Thompson, the letter responded to wartime requests for African Americans to postpone their agitation for civil rights:

> Let we colored Americans adopt the Double VV for a double victory. The first V for victory over our enemies from without, and the second V for victory over our enemies from within. For surely those who perpetrate these ugly prejudices here are seeking to destroy our democratic form of government just as surely as the Axis forces. This should

> not and would not lessen our efforts to bring this conflict [from without] to a successful conclusion.[16]

Thompson's sentiments struck a chord with the *Courier*'s staff and readership. Inundated by positive responses to Thompson's letter, the editorial staff decided to develop the "Double V" into a public campaign.[17] On February 14, two weeks after the publication of Thompson's letter, the *Courier* featured an editorial that both explicated and advocated the "Double V":

> We, as colored Americans, are determined to protect our country, our form of government and the freedoms which we cherish for ourselves and the rest of the world, therefore we have adopted the Double "V" war cry—victory over our enemies at home and victory over our enemies on the battlefields abroad. Thus in our fight for freedom we wage a two-pronged attack against our enslavers at home and those abroad who would enslave us. WE HAVE A STAKE IN THIS FIGHT… WE ARE AMERICANS, TOO![18]

With a readership of more than 200,000, the *Pittsburgh Courier* was the most widely circulated black paper in the United States; accordingly, it is unsurprising that other black papers around the country were quick to join the campaign. From California to Texas to North Carolina black papers promoted the "Double V."[19] The campaign's rhetorical tenor and popular reception bespoke black America's ongoing effort to reconcile its abbreviated citizenship—a reality that had been accentuated by the war.

Insofar as it revitalized black America's commitment to the war effort, the "Double V" could be considered a successful campaign.[20] Indeed, the "Double V" offered African Americans a rhetoric with which they could support the war effort while simultaneously advocating for civil rights. Yet the "Double V" was also limited in that it fostered a narrow appreciation for the complexity of black America's wartime situation. For instance, though the "Double V" exposed

the hypocrisy of U.S. wartime nationalism, it did not address the underlying structure of institutional racism. Likewise, though the "Double V" encouraged African Americans to acknowledge that they had a stake in the war, it did not map out the specific aspects and implications of that stake. While the two-pronged approach of the "Double V" expanded the possibilities of black America's wartime agency, it nonetheless circumnavigated a longstanding concern of African American public life: "the dialectical relationship between civic identity and action." As James Jasinski notes, throughout the course of the black freedom struggle, the identity-action dialectic has been intricately linked to matters of self-understanding, communal ground, and collective action.[21] In 1943, from his post as managing editor at the *Negro Quarterly*, Ralph Ellison would extend the "Double V" by grappling with those very issues.

Ellison, the *Negro Quarterly*, and Wartime Communism

In the spring of 1942, Ellison was approached by noted black Communist Angelo Herndon about serving as the managing editor for the recently launched *Negro Quarterly*. Though Herndon would retain the title of editor, and would occasionally contribute pieces to the journal, he functioned more as spokesperson and fundraiser; Ellison was the "functioning editor … and did the actual writing of most, though not all, of the editorials."[22] According to Jackson, the *Negro Quarterly* was more intellectual than contemporary black journalism in that it featured sophisticated analyses of political and cultural issues.[23] Arnold Rampersad agrees, maintaining that the journal's content "was clearly aimed over the heads of the black masses."[24] Indeed, in its inaugural issue, the journal expressed that its aims were not merely propagandistic, but philosophical as well, declaring, "The rapid change of life introduced by the war makes apparent the need of reflecting upon the genuine attitudes, thoughts and opinions of Negroes, and of

giving direction and interpretation to certain new social and economic factors and their relation to the special problems of the Negro."[25]

The journal's close affiliation with the radical Left, particularly Herndon's established ties to the CPUSA, contributed to the perception that the *Negro Quarterly* was a Communist propaganda beacon. As for Ellison, scholars have long questioned his ties to communism—especially during the early stages of his career. For instance, Barbara Foley suggests that although Ellison was "probably not a card-carrying Party member" during this time period, at the very least, "he … vigorously endorsed and supported the program and outlook of the U.S. Communist left."[26] However, as Rampersad observes, the CPUSA likely would have considered the *Negro Quarterly*'s exclusive focus on black life "a diversion from its goal of uniting blacks and whites in the war effort."[27] Furthermore, in contrast to the CPUSA, the *Negro Quarterly* maintained a "Double V" stance for the entirety of its four-issue publication life.[28]

Regardless of the extent to which either Ellison or the *Negro Quarterly* were aligned with the CPUSA at the outset, by the journal's fourth and final issue in 1943, Ellison had deviated noticeably from the "radical ideology" of the predominantly white Left. By this time, Ellison had shifted his critical focus to matters that pertained directly to black American culture. According to Rampersad, this was more than just a shift in subject matter; he characterizes the 1943 "Editorial Comment" in the *Negro Quarterly* as the "beginning" of Ellison's "new intellectual life," pointing out that the text's critical thrust was indicative of Ellison's recent exposure to the work of Kenneth Burke. Inspired by Burke's critical perspective, Ellison was, at that moment, beginning to "embrace ideas that would supplant the influence of pure Communism."[29] Given the CPUSA's wartime tendency to obscure the particularity of black interests, it would not be surprising for Ellison to undergo such a philosophical shift.

As the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, Ellison's 1943 "Editorial Comment" was marked by a doubled perspective; indeed, it even performed a double intervention. First, by extending the principles of the "Double V," the text intervened in black America's response to wartime nationalism. Second, by calling for the consolidation of black political power, the text intervened in black America's tenuous relationship with wartime communism. Together, these dual interventions grounded black community in the enactment of self-conscious doubleness and, thereby, politicized the meaning of blackness.

Disqualifying Black America's "Unqualified" Attitudes

Part sociological inquiry and part cultural manifesto, Ellison synthesized analysis and advocacy in his 1943 "Editorial Comment." In the opening line of the editorial, Ellison wrote that his intention was to perform a "group self-examination" of black America's wartime attitudes.[30] However, as I shall demonstrate, it seems more accurate to say that Ellison critiqued *existing* attitudes as a means of rhetorically justifying the formulation of a *new* attitude. Before he could advance this new attitude, Ellison first needed to reveal the pitfalls of current attitudes. This rhetorical dynamic was reflected in the text's form;[31] it was organized into three main sections, each of which focused on a particular attitude. In each of the first two sections, Ellison critiqued an attitude that manifested within black America during World War II. Accordingly, these first two sections laid the groundwork for the final section by illustrating that existing attitudes were not equipped to address the various exigencies—political, social, and economic—that the war presented for black America. This critique of existing attitudes would serve as justification for Ellison's subsequent intervention in black America's response to wartime nationalism.

In the first section of the editorial, Ellison addressed the attitude of "unqualified acceptance." He stated that the attitude was marked by an

> unqualified acceptance of the limited opportunity for Negro participation in the conflict: whether in the war industries or in the armed forces. Along with this is found an acceptance of the violence and discrimination which so contradicts a war for the Four Freedoms. This attitude is justified by the theory that for Negroes to speak out in their own interest would be to follow a "narrow Negro approach" and to disrupt war unity.[32]

Ellison equated "unqualified acceptance" with passivity, but, importantly, pointed out that its passivity did not preclude it from being detrimental. On the contrary, Ellison claimed that "unqualified acceptance" perpetuated institutional racism and race-based violence *because of its passivity*. Expanding upon this assertion, he stated, "Men who hold this attitude are comfortable only when taking orders; they are happy only when being kicked."[33] Collectively, these critiques drew attention to the paradox that was created by the rhetorical (in)activity of "unqualified acceptance": In refusing to speak out against racial prejudice on the ground that it might undermine the war effort, the followers of "unqualified acceptance" actually did undermine the war effort, because in muting themselves they perpetuated the discriminatory systems that the "Four Freedoms" were intended to eradicate. In this sense, "unqualified acceptance" was detrimental to not only the well-being of African Americans, but the principles of the U.S. and Allied war effort as well.

Ellison illustrated that "unqualified acceptance" stemmed from at least two different sources. On the one hand, the attitude arose from "a lack of group self-consciousness which precludes any confidence in the Negro people's own judgment, or in its potentialities for realizing its own will."[34] Ellison asserted that this mentality was often part of a broad survival

strategy. For those lacking a sense of group self-consciousness, Ellison wrote, "the struggle has been too difficult: in order to survive they feel that Negroes must resort to the most vicious forms of uncletomism."[35] In other words, bereft of the hope that African Americans would gain self-determination, the followers of "unqualified acceptance" subordinated the pursuit of civil rights to the broader national war effort and its corresponding push for unity. As an exemplar of this attitude, Ellison pointed to those who insisted that the black press's critical coverage of the war effort signified a desire "to be 'Negro first and American second.'"[36] The text thus elucidated the ways in which "unqualified acceptance" reified the dominant assumption that supporting the national war effort and campaigning for black civil rights were mutually exclusive activities.

In contrast to those who suffered from a lack of group self-consciousness, Ellison claimed that some individuals who espoused "unqualified acceptance" did so out of personal motivation. Such persons, Ellison stated, were "simply expressing what they [were] paid to express."[37] Here, the text implicitly conveyed skepticism about the sincerity of black leadership. When espoused by the black masses, "unqualified acceptance" was considered an understandable effect of incoherent group identity; when voiced by black spokespersons, however, it was deemed a disingenuous, political act. This critique of black leadership was rendered explicit by the following statement: "It is this basic attitude that produces the spy, the stool pigeon, and the agent provacateur [sic]—all of which types are found today among those who call themselves Negro leaders."[38] Through the employment of espionage imagery, the text evinced uncertainty about the motives of black leadership, intimating that the black leaders who espoused "unqualified acceptance" did so not for the betterment of black America, but, rather, out of concern for their own self-interests. By interrogating the credibility of contemporary black leaders, Ellison called for a reconsideration of not only *who* represented black America, but also

how black America should be represented. Furthermore, the text's divergent interpretations of "unqualified acceptance" signaled a troubling disconnect between the black masses and black leadership; Ellison's critique suggested that black America needed to re-conceptualize the relationship between these groups.

In the second section of the text, Ellison examined the attitude of "unqualified rejection," which he described as the "*unqualified rejection*: of the war; of the Allies' statement of their war aims; and of the role which Negroes have been elected to play in any of its phases."[39] Ellison maintained that "unqualified rejection" was impractical for two interrelated reasons. First, "unqualified rejection" was ineffectual in the sense that it undercut collective action. According to Ellison, "unqualified rejection" fostered individualism: "[it] is the attitude of one who, driven into a corner, sees no way of asserting his manhood except to choose his own manner of dying."[40] He further elaborated that "when asserted blindly it results only in empty, individualistic action."[41] The text emphasized that "unqualified rejection" overlooked the political realities of everyday life and, therefore, was incapable of grappling with the "complex problems" inherent to such a "political world."[42]

Second, Ellison repudiated "unqualified rejection" on the grounds that its followers interpreted the presence of domestic racism as evidence that the war was merely the global proliferation of a white supremacist agenda. He wrote that "unqualified rejection"

> motivates those Negroes who go to jail rather than endure the Jim Crow conditions in the Armed forces. It is the basis of Negro cynicism and it views every situation which requires Negroes to struggle against fascist forces within our own country as evidence that the United States is fighting a "white man's" war.[43]

Demonstrating the intensity of such feelings, Ellison pointed out that some of the more radical advocates of "unqualified rejection" even opted to support enemy forces: "Feeling that so much experienced by Negroes in the US is tinged with fascism, some Negroes went so far as to join the pro-Japanese Pacific Movement."[44] Ellison did not dispute the reality that black Americans had been and continued to be systematically repressed by *domestic* fascism. Yet, in spite of the presence of domestic fascism, the text still approached the wholesale disavowal of the war effort as a recklessly myopic position. "Unqualified rejection," Ellison explained, "regards all acts of aggression against Negroes as inevitable, the forces behind these acts as invincible. Being blind it does not recognize that Negroes *have their own stake in the defeat of fascism*."[45] Significantly, this critique refuted the assumption that black America did not possess any agency in overcoming institutional racism; in Ellison's assessment, "unqualified rejection" devalued the political potential of a united African American collective. Furthermore, the text insisted that "unqualified rejection" failed to recognize that the defeat of fascism abroad could also destabilize domestic manifestations of fascism as well. In further elaborating this point, Ellison added an anticolonial dimension to his critique, stating that followers of "unqualified rejection"

> see no possibility of an Allied victory being a victory for Negroes as well as for others. Refusing to see the *peoples* aspect of the war, they conceive of victory as the triumph of "good white men" over "bad white men"; never as the triumph of the common peoples of the world over those who foster decayed political forms and systems.[46]

In the main, Ellison deemed "unqualified rejection" a regressive attitude on the grounds that it underestimated the political potential of African Americans, overlooked the progressive residual effects of the international defeat of fascism, and failed to capitalize on potential anticolonial alliances with the world's common peoples.

From the text's respective critiques of "unqualified acceptance" and "unqualified rejection" there emerge some common rhetorical threads. First, the text positioned the black American experience of institutional racism as a precursor to both attitudes. Ellison approached the "unqualified" attitudes as symptomatic of a black subjectivity that had been, and continued to be, systematically repressed by institutional racism. This textual recognition of institutional racism was emblematic of a larger rhetorical trend of the 1940s in which black activists delineated "an inclusive American culture … while making *forms of oppression visible* as one source of [that] culture."[47] While Ellison baldly critiqued the political efficacy of the "unqualified" attitudes, he was careful to remain empathic to the experiences and feelings upon which such attitudes were predicated. This rhetorical sensitivity enabled Ellison to discredit the political viability of the "unqualified" attitudes without negating the oppressive conditions in which such attitudes were cultivated.

Second, the critiques of "unqualified acceptance" and "unqualified rejection" were linked by an implicit call for black America to adopt an active posture toward the war effort. The text's critiques suggested that the "unqualified" attitudes fostered *reactive*, rather than active, engagement. For instance, adherents of "unqualified acceptance" were presented as habitually reacting—avoiding confrontation with the dominant white culture at all costs. Meanwhile, adherents of "unqualified rejection," Ellison insisted, "visualize themselves only as followers, never leaders."[48] Though seemingly a nuanced, perspectival difference, Robyn Lucy explains that such criticisms of "reaction" were a recurring theme across Ellison's discourse during the era; she contends that other texts Ellison produced during this epoch expressed a similar belief that "Black cultural creation cannot be reduced to a 'reaction' to the complex realities of a separate history but must be understood as that which African Americans themselves shape

within the American context."[49] Ellison's critiques of the "unqualified" attitudes advanced the argument that African Americans must take an active role in shaping, rather than being shaped by, the wartime milieu.

Finally, the text interpreted the "unqualified" attitudes as complicit in perpetuating the systems and structures of institutional racism. Both "unqualified" attitudes exemplified what Mark McPhail has dubbed the rhetoric of negative difference. McPhail argues that, within contexts of racial discrimination, rhetorics that express an essentialized view of race "engage in a complicitous acceptance of the underlying assumptions and practices of the existing order."[50] Ellison's critiques suggested that both "unqualified" attitudes were guilty of such complicity. The adherents of "unqualified acceptance," for instance, personified a sense of internalized racism, electing for black America to "accept the depths of degradation rather than risk offending white men by lifting a hand in its own defense."[51] Likewise, the adherents of "unqualified rejection" refused to support the U.S. and Allied war aims on the grounds that black America had no stake in the "'white man's' war."[52] Within this context, it was not simply the expression of essentialism that rendered these attitudes "complicit," but, rather, that the expression of essentialism constrained black America's voice in public affairs related to the war. Ultimately, Ellison's interrogation of the "unqualified" attitudes illuminated the need for black America to formulate a new attitude, a modality that would enable African Americans to simultaneously harness their marginalization as a constitutive resource, take an active role in the war effort, and campaign for civil rights.

"Critical Participation" and the Enactment of Self-Conscious Doubleness

In the third and longest section of the text, Ellison outlined his corrective to the "unqualified" attitudes: "critical participation." For Ellison, "critical participation" essentially signified a form of self-help in that it countered the pitfalls of the "unqualified" attitudes. In contrast to the monochromatism of the "unqualified" attitudes, which Ellison regarded as deleterious to black interests, "critical participation" entailed the deliberate adoption of a doubled perspective. This appeal to doubleness signaled a two-fold rhetorical corrective. First, it countered the complicity of the "unqualified" attitudes by offering black America a modality through which they could support U.S. and Allied principles while still opposing institutional racism. Second, the text advocated for the reorientation of black leadership, urging black activists and intellectuals to rediscover and renew their symbolic relationship to the black masses. Through these dual correctives, Ellison projected the enactment of self-conscious doubleness as the key to a revitalized sense of African American political solidarity and, furthermore, the performative ground of black community.

At the outset of this section, Ellison distinguished "critical participation" from the "unqualified" attitudes. The text established this distinction through direct comparison:

> [Critical participation] is broader and more human than the first two attitudes; and it is scientific enough to make use of both by transforming them into strategies of struggle. It is committed to life and it holds that the main task of the Negro people is to work unceasingly toward creating those democratic conditions in which it can live and recreate itself. It believes the historical role of Negroes to be that of integrating the larger American nation and compelling it untiringly toward true freedom.[53]

In the above passage, Ellison demonstrated that "critical participation" transcended the rigidities of the "unqualified" attitudes and replaced them with adaptable "strategies of struggle." This

explication of "critical participation" designated black Americans with two overlapping social commitments: (1) pursuing "democratic conditions" for black America and (2) instigating the full-scale racial integration of the United States. Unlike the passivity of "unqualified acceptance" and the withdrawal of "unqualified rejection," "critical participation" encouraged black Americans to engage the war effort actively. Directed toward the *telos* of U.S. racial integration, this emphasis on active engagement empowered black America with a sense of agency. Significantly, in Ellison's formulation, this sense of agency not only equipped black America with a vehicle for conducting social and political activity, but also signified a symbolic resource that would allow black America to "recreate itself."

Echoing the sentiments of the contemporaneous "Double V" campaign, the text described "critical participation" as a worldview in which the global campaign for freedom and the black civil rights struggle existed concurrently. For instance, Ellison asserted, "[W]hile affirming the justice of the Allies' cause, [critical participation] never loses sight of the Negro people's stake in the struggle."[54] Grounding "critical participation" in a self-conscious doubleness, Ellison argued that the war required black Americans to assume a doubled perspective: black America needed to see the war effort simultaneously through two distinct lenses, supporting the democratic principles of the Allies' cause but always remaining cognizant of how black Americans were affected by the way those principles materialized in practice.

The doubled perspective of "critical participation" exceeded the scope of the "Double V" in terms of its commitment to international justice. In accordance with the sentiments advanced in his earlier discussion of "unqualified rejection," Ellison once again assumed an anticolonial perspective. He warned that black America must remain mindful of how the world's colonial peoples were affected by the political activity of international agencies:

> This attitude holds that any action which is advantageous to the United Nations must also be advantageous for the Negro and colonial peoples. Programs which would sacrifice the Negro or any other people are considered dangerous for the United Nations; and the only honorable course for Negroes to take is first to protest and then to fight against them.[55]

Such a stance encouraged black Americans to forge symbolic bonds with other peoples that were marginalized by colonial rule. Aric Putnam contends that at the close of the 1930s, anticolonialism "provided common ground for diverse black organizations that were dedicated to international and domestic racial progress as well as to exploring connections between the two."[56] Ellison situated the experiences of black Americans within a global scene of colonial subjugation. By encouraging this kinship through colonial experience, the text created the possibility for African Americans of diverse social, political, and economic backgrounds to find unity in their mutual relationship with foreign colonial subjects. While such groups may have been divided significantly by competing domestic commitments, anticolonialism represented a political program that had the potential to transcend those differences and unite them in a common concern.

Ellison argued that "critical participation" necessitated coherence between theory and practice. This point was demonstrated most clearly by the text's consideration of the rhetorical complexities posed by U.S. wartime nationalism. Fundamentally, "critical participation" demanded the critique of prejudicial structures, regardless of circumstance. Ellison explained that while "critical participation" was willing to compromise "in the interest of national unity, it rejects that old pattern of American thought that regards any Negro demand for justice as treasonable, or any Negro act of self-defense as an assault against the state."[57] On the contrary, failing to protest injustice rendered one complicit in the perpetuation of injustice:

> [Critical participation] believes that to fail to protest the wrongs done Negroes as we fight this war is to participate in a crime, not only against Negroes, but against all true anti-Fascists. To fight against the defects in our prosecution of the war is regarded as a responsibility. To remain silent simply because friends commit these wrongs is no less dangerous than if Negroes should actively aid the enemy.[58]

Such sentiments countered the assumption that the war demanded unconditional national unity. Rather, the text inverted that logic, arguing that racial discrimination fundamentally violated the principles of the war effort and thus needed to be combated in every circumstance. Ellison reaffirmed this alignment of principle and practice by arguing that "critical participation" was rooted in a reflexive view of "theory and action."[59] In other words, lived experiences would not be subordinated to abstract principles: Racial discrimination would not be tolerated for the "greater good" of the U.S. and Allied war aims—regardless of how noble those aims might be.

Having outlined the general characteristics of "critical participation," Ellison shifted his gaze to the issue of contemporary black leadership. Unsatisfied with the actions of contemporary black leaders, Ellison called for a new program of leadership founded upon the attitude of "critical participation." In rendering this critique, Ellison signaled back to the remarks he made in the section on "unqualified acceptance"; specifically, Ellison asserted that black leaders' attempts to maintain the appearance of "unity" with the dominant white society were detrimental in that they had muted black America's genuine concerns.[60] Ellison proceeded to issue a "comic corrective" for this misstep in black leadership, seeking to bridge the gap between "actual and idealized leadership."[61]

Ellison lamented that, up to that point, only one black "public figure" had embodied the spirit of "critical participation"—and that was William H. Hastie.[62] Hastie, who worked as an

aide to the Secretary of War, resigned from his position due to the continued racial inequality of the armed forces.[63] Ellison regarded Hastie's act of protest as exemplary of the type of black leadership that was necessary during the war:

> For Hastie this might have been an act of courage which lost him prestige among Fascist-minded whites, but it has made his name meaningful among thousands of Negroes, bringing eligibility for that support which is the basis of true leadership. One wonders when the other members of the so-called "Black Cabinet" will learn this basic truth? As yet, however, this attitude is found implied in the sentiments of the Negro masses, rather than in the articulated programs of those who would lead them.[64]

In Ellison's assessment, it was Hastie's refusal to sacrifice principle for political gain that distinguished his act as emblematic of "true leadership." Such an act, though perhaps politically detrimental to Hastie's own career, was rhetorically valuable to black America's quest for full citizenship. That is, by critiquing white supremacy, Hastie exemplified to "the Negro masses" that wartime give-and-take need not involve the curtailment of civil rights activism. In citing Hastie as the exemplar of "true" black leadership, Ellison underscored the double-bind of wartime civil rights activism: Commitment to collective aims came at a personal cost. Moreover, in positioning Hastie as the epitome of black leadership, Ellison further emphasized the symbolic potential of self-conscious doubleness; specifically, this rhetorical move aligned black leadership with a mode of "consciousness" that recognized the necessity for black America to maintain symbolic mobility between self-definition and U.S. democratic inclusion.[65]

In associating black leadership with Hastie's example, Ellison recalibrated black leadership as a measure of the degree to which one inspires the black masses. Though black leaders were essential to navigating black America through the treacherous waters of the wartime

situation, in Ellison's calculus, the black masses would need to be the driving force. Hence, in order for black leaders to succeed, it would not be enough for them to simply *voice* black American interests; rather, Ellison charged them with the more ambitious task of consolidating black political power:

> [D]espite the very real class divisions within the Negro group itself[,] during periods of crisis—especially during periods of war—these divisions are partially suspended by outside pressures, making for a kind of group unity in which great potential political power becomes centralized—even though Negro leadership ignores its existence, or are too timid to seize and give it form and direction.[66]

This passage followed up on an issue that the text had addressed obliquely in the section on "unqualified acceptance": the disconnect between black leadership and the black masses. Indeed, Ellison beseeched black leaders to attend to the vernacular texture of the black folk consciousness: "A … major problem, and one that is indispensible [sic] to the centralization and direction of power, is that of learning the meaning of the myths and symbols which abound among the Negro masses."[67] This call for "[t]he blending … of class and mass" gestured to the inventional possibilities that could be yielded from a discursive form wherein "*poetic* mastery [was] discovered as a function of deformative *folk* sound."[68] If black leaders were to consolidate black political power, they would need to formulate rhetorics that registered with black Americans across class divisions. However, Ellison insisted that such a feat would require more than just the appropriation of folk symbols. Such a rhetorical puzzle could not be solved through the mere collection of ethnographic information. Indeed, premised on the argument that the war had exposed the need for "Negro self-evaluation," Ellison implored "Negro leaders [to] integrate themselves with the Negro masses."[69] It was not sufficient for black leaders to simply represent

the black masses, to just speak for them; the political exigency of the war demanded a (re)constituted black community that spanned socioeconomic positionalities. In Ellison's formulation, black political agency was contingent upon a dialectical negotiation between black leadership and the black masses.

Ellison approached such a (re)constituted black community as a necessary step toward black self-determination. In a poignant historical reference, Ellison conveyed forcefully the importance for black America to invent a distinct sense of black agency within the wartime milieu:

> To the extent that Negro leadership ignores the power potential of the group, to that extent will the Negro people be exploited by others: either for the good ends of democratic groups or for the bad ends of Fascist groups. And they have the Civil War to teach them that no revolutionary situation in the United States will be carried any farther toward fullfilling [sic] the needs of Negroes than Negroes themselves are able, through a strategic application of their own power to make it go. As long as Negroes fail to centralize their power they will always play the role of a sacrificial goat, they will always be "expendable". Freedom, after all, cannot be imported or acquired through an act of philanthropy, it must be won.[70]

Employed through an historical frame, this passage underscored the omnipresent danger of white exploitation. Significantly, it was not merely "Fascist groups" that Ellison warned against; in his view, "democratic groups" were just as liable to exploit black political capital. Ellison approached such reliance upon "democratic groups" as the antecedent for black America's current oppression. The reference to the Civil War, in particular, suggested that black America's present marginality could be traced back to the inability of black Americans to gain

independence from the white establishment during Reconstruction. Such framing both heightened interracial suspicion and discouraged feelings of contentment. In linking the Civil War to the present, Ellison collapsed spatial and temporal borders and located black Americans on a "redemptive quest for freedom."[71] This rhetorical gesture fostered doubleness in the sense that it exhorted black Americans to take a "constant two-way measurement" of themselves, to perpetually observe "themselves while acting."[72] Ellison's admonition urged black Americans to remain constantly in "motion," continuously improvising in the face of political contingency.[73]

In Ellison's judgment, contemporary Marxist groups such as the CPUSA signified the most pressing threat to black American solidarity and, by extension, black self-determination. Echoing the sentiments about white exploitation that he articulated in the Civil War example, Ellison stated, "[A]lthough logically and historically the Negro's interests are one with those of Labor," black political "power is an objective force which might be channelized for Fascist ends as well as for democratic ones."[74] Advancing this position even more forcefully, he wrote,

> [N]o matter how sincere their intentions, misunderstandings between Negroes and whites are inevitable at this period of our history. And unless [black] leaders are objective and aggressive they have absolutely no possibility of leading the black masses—who are thoroughly experienced with leaders who, in all crucial situations, capitulate to whites—in any direction. Thus instead of participating along with labor and other progressive groups as equals with adult responsibility of seeing to it that all policies are formulated and coordinated with full consideration of the complexities of the Negro situation, they will have in effect, chosen simply to be subsidized by Labor rather than by Capital.[75]

In both instances Ellison expressed considerable skepticism about the prospect of forging political alliances with Marxist groups. This mistrust sprang from Marxist groups'—particularly

the CPUSA—reductive treatment of black American identity. Noting this issue, Robin D. G. Kelley underscores "identity," particularly disparate frames of experience, as the factor most responsible for "[t]he white Left's [historic] inability to understand, let alone answer, the Negro Question."[76] As it pertained to the Communist Party of Ellison's era, Putnam explains that the party's "model of black agency" did not respect "the particularity of black American experience."[77] More than forty years removed from the war, Ellison would echo such sentiments as he reflected on the issue of wartime communism:

> [Communists] fostered the myth that communism was twentieth-century Americanism, but to be a twentieth-century American meant, in their thinking, that you had to be more Russian than American and less Negro than either. That's how they lost their Negroes. The communists recognized no plurality of interests and were really responding to the necessities of Soviet foreign policy, and when the war came, Negroes got caught and were made expedient in the shifting of policy.[78]

Yet, in spite of all this mistrust for Marxist groups and Communist dogma, Ellison's 1943 "Editorial Comment" more or less signified an effort to blend the conceptual tools of Marxist theory with a sense of black cultural nationalism.[79] As Jackson illustrates, much of Ellison's work during this era reflected Marxist structural analysis in that it attended to "the black community from its economic and political base up to its superstructure."[80] Indeed, such is an apt description of the 1943 "Editorial Comment." In this sense, even the text's treatment of Marxism evinced a sense of self-conscious doubleness: As Ellison discouraged black American political affinity with Marxist groups, he simultaneously employed Marxist principles to guide black America's political future.

In sum, "critical participation" entailed a series of doubled commitments: the national war effort *and* the black civil rights struggle; the international defeat of fascism *and* the liberation of the world's colonial peoples; theory *and* practice; and the black bourgeoisie *and* the black folk. Accordingly, the text engendered the "second-sight" that accompanied the black American condition of "double consciousness." Significantly, by linking self-conscious doubleness to black political agency, Ellison modeled to black activists and intellectuals how black American oppression could be converted into symbolic "ground for renewed attack on injustice."[81] However, the consolidation of black political power came with the important stipulation that black leaders must first reconcile the symbolic disjuncture between themselves and the black masses. In this sense, "critical participation" marked not only a political corrective to black American responses to wartime nationalism, but also the articulation of a renewed sense of black community rooted in the enactment of self-conscious doubleness. The text's rhetorical form grounded black community not in essentialized identity, but, rather, in a common frame of experience that resulted from the situational performance of black identity in the face of daily encounters with racism. Furthermore, by underscoring the particularity of black American experience, Ellison positioned black self-determination as contingent upon black political solidarity. This rhetorical gesture intervened in the temptation for black America to align with contemporary Marxist groups and combatted the threat of exploitation that lay camouflaged in the rhetorics of white paternalism.

Conclusion

Shortly after the publication of the 1943 "Editorial Comment," in an interview with the *Amsterdam News*, Ellison made the following statement:

> Negroes have sprung up so fast in a complicated world that they have had no time to develop a critical attitude towards themselves and their relationship towards the rest of society. In other words the technique of critical self-analysis to affect greater unity among peoples is the adult way to see ourselves in relationship with others. Otherwise we constantly function on the other fellow's terms.[82]

This statement encapsulated the thrust of the vision he had articulated in the 1943 "Editorial Comment." Although the *Negro Quarterly* would disband shortly thereafter, Ellison had given prominence to the notion that freedom and self-knowledge were inextricably linked. That was why black freedom could never result from white philanthropy, why black self-determination hinged upon the consolidation of black political power.

In this way, Ellison's wartime articulation of uplift poignantly captured black America's paradoxical relationship to America. That paradox, which Du Bois referred to as "double consciousness," complicated the pursuit of uplift in that it confronted African Americans with the need to construct a sense of "home" within a political context that perpetually rendered them "outsiders." James Darsey offers one perspective for rethinking the troublesome dynamic between double consciousness and uplift. Darsey suggests that, instead of interpreting Du Bois's double consciousness as a pronouncement of African Americans' "homelessness," it is more productive to view it as a call for a "community" that is critically self-aware of its "outsider" status.[83]

Rather than focusing on the ways in which doubleness alienated African Americans from the dominant white culture at the individual level, Ellison highlighted the ways in which the experience of doubleness could function as a resource for achieving a coherent black community. This move not only countered the perceived drawbacks associated with double consciousness,

but also contested reductive and essentialized assumptions that had been applied to black identity. In effect, Ellison shifted the conversation from what blackness *was* to what it *meant*.[84] With black community grounded in the experience of doubleness, Ellison was able to subordinate physical traits to the experience that accompanied those physical traits. Although black Americans experienced racial oppression variously, the general experience of marginalization was nonetheless ubiquitous. For this reason, Ellison was able to posit the existence of a collective black American "self-knowledge" without reifying the essentialist assumption of a "fixed and unchanging" black identity.[85] Indeed, Ellison's treatment of the "Negro masses" reflected the evolving political character he ascribed to black identity. In a striking triangulation of attitude, black experience, and doubled vision, Ellison asserted that the "repressed social energy" of the "Negro masses" could be transformed into "positive action" insofar as they were "helped to see the bright star of their own hopes through the fog of their daily experiences."[86]

Ultimately, Ellison's 1943 "Editorial Comment" represented a novel expression of black community at a moment when the exigency of war had splintered black America according to competing domestic and foreign commitments. As I have argued, Ellison regarded self-conscious doubleness as a symbolic register that could close the gap between the black social elite and the black masses and thereby galvanize black political solidarity. Unlike other early twentieth-century black nationalisms, Ellison appealed to neither separatism nor divine heritage. Rather, Ellison coordinated black political agency with spearheading the march toward U.S. racial integration. Ellison's alignment of doubleness with black political agency marked an important innovation in African American uplift culture. Embracing the doubleness of black experience,

Ellison demonstrated that what was thought to be a static psychological condition was better understood as a dynamic source of rhetorical currency.

Notes

1. It should be noted that the editorial under critical consideration in this essay was unsigned in its original publication. Because Ellison and co-editor Angelo Herndon shared in the responsibility of writing the *Negro Quarterly*'s editorials, it cannot be proven indisputably that Ellison authored the editorial. However, scholars have demonstrated persuasively that the content and tenor of the 1943 "Editorial Comment" cohere with Ellison's style during this time period. See Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Jennifer Burton, eds., *Call and Response: Key Debates in African American Studies* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011), 432; Lawrence Jackson, *Ralph Ellison: Emergence of Genius* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 284-285; Larry Neal, "Ellison's Zoot Suit," in *Speaking for You: The Vision of Ralph Ellison*, ed. Kimberly W. Benson (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1987), 111; Arnold Rampersad, *Ralph Ellison: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 163; and John S. Wright, *Shadowing Ralph Ellison* Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), 95-96.

2. "Editorial Comment," *Negro Quarterly* 1 (1943): 295.

3. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Annual Message to Congress," *The Roosevelt Reader: Selected Speeches, Messages, Press Conferences, and Letters of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, ed. Basil Raugh (New York: Rinehart, 1957), 272-75.

4. As Aric Putnam notes, "While the ideas of the Communist Party enjoyed moderate success in black communities in the middle 1930s, black America was never smitten by the party itself." Putnam, "'Modern Slaves,'" 250.

5. Anthony Dawahare, *Nationalism, Marxism, and African American Literature between the Wars: A New Pandora's Box* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 73-110; Neal, "Ellison's Zoot Suit," in *Speaking for You*, 111; and Rampersad, *Ralph Ellison*, 92-94.

6. See Dawahare, *Nationalism*, 79-91; and Barbara Foley, "Ralph Ellison as Proletarian Journalist," *Science & Society* 62 (1998/1999): 550.

7. Jackson, *Ralph Ellison*, 266-268.

8. Houston A. Baker Jr., *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 197.

9. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903; rpt., New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2003), 9.

10. Robert E. Terrill and Eric King Watts, "W. E. B. Du Bois, Double-Consciousness, and Pan-Africanism in the Progressive Era," *Rhetoric and Reform in the Progressive Era*, ed. J. Michael Hogan (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2003), 275.

11. Here, I use the term "self-determination" not in the sense that it has been applied to notions of black separatism, for example, by Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association; rather, I intend to use it in the classic liberal sense as Carmen Heider does when she characterizes self-determination as "the pursuit of one's destiny and the creation of opportunities that allow for one's self-development." Carmen Heider, "Suffrage, Self-Determination, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Nebraska, 1879-1882," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8 (2005): 87.

12. Roosevelt, "Annual Message to Congress," 275.

13. See Lee Finkle, *Forum for Protest: The Black Press During World War II* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1975); Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1944), 924; and Patrick S. Washburn, *A Question of Sedition: The Federal Government's Investigation of the Black Press During World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

14. Catherine Squires, "The Black Press and the State: Attracting Unwanted (?) Attention," *Counterpublics and the State*, eds. Robert Asen and Daniel C. Brouwer (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 124.

15. Finkle, *Forum for Protest*, 108.

16. James G. Thompson, "Editorial," *Pittsburgh Courier*, January 31, 1942, 3.

17. Henry Louis Gates Jr., "What Was Black America's Double War?," *The Root*, May 24, 2013,http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2013/05/double_v_campaign_during_world_war_ii_what_was_it.html (accessed June 13, 2014).

18. "Double VV," *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 14, 1942, 1.

19. Scholars in diverse fields have explored how the Double V manifested in particular, local contexts. See Beth Bailey and David Farber, "The 'Double-V' in World War II Hawaii: African Americans, Racial Ideology, and Federal Power," *Journal of Social History* 26 (1993): 817-843; Jerry Gershenhorn, "Double V in North Carolina: The *Carolina Times* and the Struggle for Racial Equality during World War II," *Journalism History* 32 (2006): 156-167; and Guy C. Vanderpool, "*The Dallas Express* and the Double V Campaign," *Legacies* 20 (2008): 36-47.

20. See Lee Finkle, *Forum for Protest*, 62-114.

21. James Jasinski, "Constituting Antebellum African American Identity: Resistance, Violence, and Masculinity in Henry Highland Garnet's (1843) 'Address to the Slaves,'" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 93 (2007): 28.

22. Rampersad, *Ralph Ellison*, 152-153.

23. Jackson, *Ralph Ellison*, 264.

24. Rampersad, *Ralph Ellison*, 154.

25. "Statement of Policy," *Negro Quarterly* 1 (1942): 3.

26. Foley, "Ralph Ellison," 538-553.

27. Rampersad, *Ralph Ellison*, 152.

28. Jackson, *Ralph Ellison*, 264.

29. Rampersad, *Ralph Ellison*, 156-163. For a discussion of Ellison's relationship to Burke, see Bryan Crable, *Ralph Ellison and Kenneth Burke: At the Roots of the Racial Divide* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

30. "Editorial Comment," 295.

31. Kenneth Burke defines "form" as "the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite." Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement*, 3rd ed., (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968), 31.

32. "Editorial Comment," 295.

33. Ibid., 295.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 296.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., 297.

46. Ibid.

47. Robin Lucy, "'Flying Home': Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, and the Black Folk During World War II," *Journal of American Folklore* 120 (2007): 261 (emphasis added).

48. "Editorial Comment," 297.

49. Lucy, "'Flying Home,'" 266 (emphasis added).

50. Mark Lawrence McPhail, "Passionate Intensity: Louis Farrakhan and the Fallacies of Racial Reasoning," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84 (1998): 416.

51. "Editorial Comment," 295-296.

52. Ibid., 296.

53. Ibid., 298.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Putnam, "Ethiopia is Now," 435.

57. "Editorial Comment," 298.

58. Ibid., 298-299.

59. Ibid., 298.

60. Ibid., 299.

61. Wright, *Shadowing Ralph Ellison*, 98.

62. "Editorial Comment," 299.

63. John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation before the Civil Rights Movement in the South* (New York: Knopf, 1994).

64. "Editorial Comment," 299.

65. Neal, “Ellison’s Zoot Suit,” 112; and Wright, *Shadowing Ralph Ellison*, 95.

66. “Editorial Comment,” 299-300.

67. Ibid., 301.

68. Houston A. Baker Jr., *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 93.

69. “Editorial Comment,” 300.

70. Ibid.

71. Wright, *Shadowing Ralph Ellison*, 95.

72. Ibid., 98.

73. Baker Jr., *Blues*, 5.

74. “Editorial Comment,” 300.

75. Ibid., 302.

76. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, 39.

77. Putnam, “‘Modern Slaves,’” 250.

78. Ralph Ellison, *Going to the Territory* (New York: Random House, 1986), 296.

79. Jackson, *Ralph Ellison*, 268; and Neal, “Ellison’s Zoot Suit,” 113.

80. Jackson, *Ralph Ellison*, 268.

81. Ibid.

82. Marvel Cooke, “Herndon-Ellison Win Success as Negro Life Book Publishers,” *Amsterdam Star News*, April 10, 1943, 24.

83. James Darsey, “‘The Voice of Exile’: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Quest for Culture,” *Rhetoric and Community: Studies in Unity and Fragmentation*, ed. J. Michael Hogan (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 97.

84. Wilson, “Towards a Discursive Theory of Racial Identity,”194.

85. McPhail, “From Complicity to Coherence,”126.

86. “Editorial Comment,” 301-302.

CONCLUSION

1944 marked the conclusion of what was up to that point, arguably, the most comprehensive and systematic sociological inquiry into the nature of U.S. race relations. The Carnegie Corporation funded the project and, out of plausible concerns for objectivity, opted to commission a foreigner, the Swedish social scientist Gunnar Myrdal, to serve as the project's principal investigator. The project culminated in the production of a massive, two-volume, 1500-page study under the title *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*.

That same year, Ralph Ellison, fresh off his stint as editor of the *Negro Quarterly*, composed a review of *An American Dilemma*. The review, which Ellison originally prepared for publication at the literary journal *Antioch Review*, would ultimately go unpublished until 1964 when he published it in a collection of essays entitled *Shadow and Act*. Embodying much the same critical sensibility that he had exhibited as editor of the *Negro Quarterly*, Ellison's review was complex and layered. *An American Dilemma*, he assessed, advanced the general aims of U.S. democracy while simultaneously perpetuating some of the anti-democratic impulses that had always precluded the practical implementation of democracy—especially as it pertained to racial justice. In particular, Ellison took issue with Myrdal's judgment that "the Negro's entire life and, consequently, also his opinions on the Negro problem are, in the main, to be considered as secondary reactions to more primary pressures from the side of the dominant white majority."[1] Countering that position, Ellison queried, "But can a people … live and develop for over three hundred years simply by *reacting*? Are American Negroes simply the creation of white men, or have they at least helped to create themselves out of what they have found around them?"[2]

In so many ways, that pair of rhetorical questions aptly captures the interplay of "uplift" and "identity" that this dissertation has investigated. As Ellison's first question conveys, it is

problematic to suggest that white supremacy has been the principal architect of African American identity, that African American identity constitutes a mere reaction to oppressive forces. Indeed, such a position all but divests African Americans of agency. Yet, as the second question alludes, the presence of white supremacy has historically posed—and continues to pose—African Americans with constrained opportunities for self-creation and self-expression. To repeat Ellison's phrasing, African Americans have "helped to create themselves *out of what they have found around them*." And, as this study has demonstrated, what early twentieth-century African Americans invariably "found around them" were the material and symbolic ramifications of white supremacy. Correspondingly, the productive act of contesting white supremacy, in the form of uplift proposals, imposed a set of material and symbolic investments that simultaneously enabled and constrained the terms by which African Americans constituted and expressed their identities.[3]

Recognizing that dialectical element—that uplift appeals always both *enabled* and *constrained* possibilities—invites further consideration of some of the more pressing implications that are suggested by the discourses that this study has investigated. In particular, attention to this discursive interplay signals the ways in which uplift appeals confronted early twentieth-century African Americans with difficult choices as it pertained to their relationship to (1) other African Americans and (2) U.S. society.

Relationship to Other African Americans

Stuart Hall asserts that "identities are constructed through, not outside, difference."[4] Though this study generally harmonizes with that sentiment, I would modify it with more of a rhetorical inflection by saying: Identities are constructed through, not outside, *discursive expressions* of difference. And this reframing is not simply to rehearse the same tired lessons on

how all identities are socially constructed. Rather, in emphasizing the *discursive expression* of "difference," we are better able to consider some of the more subtle constitutive moves that materialized in early twentieth-century black uplift discourse. More specifically, it attunes us to recognizing the ways in which black Americans historical responses to white supremacy have tended to trade "the depth of variety for the breadth of unity."[5] Along these lines, perhaps one of the more compelling aspects illustrated by the dissertation's four cases is the manner in which the respective black spokespersons rhetorically constituted black identities *in opposition to* other ostensible black subjectivities. As it relates to the discourses considered herein, these differentiations manifested in generally two forms. Spokespersons constituted a preferred form of black identity by: (1) placing two or more discrete subjectivities in opposition; or (2) envisioning "blackness" as a spectrum consisting of more and less desirable forms.

Garvey and Ellison each constituted black identity through tandem acts of articulation and juxtaposition. Indeed, in different ways, they both articulated sets of black subjectivities and then employed discursive moves to appraise one of those subjectivities as superior. For Garvey, that process was thoroughly dichotomous in the sense that his discourse overtly pitted "Old Negro" and "New Negro" against each other. As I illustrated in Chapter 3, Garvey's uplift appeals portrayed the "Old Negro" and "New Negro" as virtual antitheses; for essentially every shortcoming that he attributed to the "Old Negro," he endowed the "New Negro" with roughly a counter-quality. Not quite as monochromatic, Ellison constituted his version of black identity through a tripartite. Focusing on black Americans' ostensible attitudes toward World War II, Ellison positioned "critical participation" as superior to "unqualified acceptance" and "unqualified rejection."

In contrast to constituting black identity according to discrete figures of black subjectivity, Terrell and Du Bois constituted black identity by constructing something comparable to a spectrum of blackness. Much in the way that a spectrum can be used to demarcate distinct differences in condition, Terrell and Du Bois's respective uplift appeals evinced the sense that black identity differed according to whether or not one possessed certain qualities. As I illustrated in Chapter 2, for Terrell, the spectrum essentially ranged from "pathology" to "respectability." As Terrell saw it, "respectability," particularly "respectable black womanhood," signified the corrective to the material and symbolic ravages that black pathology had ostensibly spawned. Du Bois, on the other hand, through his nuanced differentiation of "segregation" and "discrimination," gave shape to a spectrum that basically ranged from "idealism" to "pragmatism."

Relationship to U.S. Society

Uplift discourse, as a constitutive resource, negotiated issues of belonging. This dissertation has primarily attended to the ways in which such concerns for belonging manifested in expressions of collective racial identity. However, uplift appeals also addressed issues of belonging as it pertained to black Americans' relationship to U.S. society. And, as it related to that relationship, uplift discourse expressed varying degrees of *engagement* and *estrangement*.

Of the respective cases in this study, Terrell's uplift appeal expressed perhaps the most full-fledged sense of engagement between black Americans and U.S. society. Indeed, Terrell's 1900 *AME Church Review* article conveyed unequivocally that not only were black Americans part of U.S. society, but also that they should actively pursue increased acceptance within U.S. society. Terrell's emphasis on seeking acceptance—namely, the acceptance of whites—resonates

with what Gaines and others have referred to as the "uplift ideology." As mentioned previously, a number of scholars have suggested that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century uplift appeals fostered a kind of uplift ideology in which poor and working-class blacks were encouraged to emulate middle-class blacks and whites.[6] As Gaines argues, spokespersons that promoted this brand of uplift generally operated from the assumption that blacks could curb anti-black prejudice by demonstrating their capacity for civilization.[7] As it pertained to the issue of belonging, such an assumption was problematic in that it did little—if anything—to combat the hierarchical structure of white supremacy. So, even if blacks could win greater acceptance within U.S. society, that acceptance would not necessarily equate to empowerment or equality.

In nearly diametric opposition to Terrell, Garvey advocated something akin to unqualified estrangement. Now, this is not to suggest that Garvey's discourse should be interpreted as a call for mass migration "back to Africa"; indeed, I would contend that such assessments of Garvey's advocacy wildly underappreciate the symbolic and metaphorical dimensions of Garvey's recurring references to "Africa."[8] Nevertheless, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3, separatism was a major facet of Garvey's uplift discourse. Such appeals to separatism, regardless of whether interpreted as spatial-literal or symbolic, urged black Americans to enact a separatist orientation to U.S. society. Insofar as Garvey positioned black separatism as an expression of self-respect, estrangement from U.S. society potentially offered an emancipatory sense of identity. Yet, dogmatic adherence to such estrangement posed obvious constraints as it related to pursuing practical remedies for black Americans' social, political, and economic marginalization.

And while Garvey's brand of estrangement presented certain civic challenges, Du Bois's Depression era uplift discourse was a testament to the possibility that estrangement could

maintain some sense of civic engagement. Whereas Garvey positioned separatism as something of an end unto itself, Du Bois advocated temporary and qualified separatism as a vehicle for pursuing a healthier long-term relationship between African Americans and U.S. society. For Du Bois, provisional estrangement signified a strategy for consolidating black economic power, which, Du Bois argued, could then be used to leverage racial equality from the dominant white society. So, while Du Bois's call for race-conscious economics entailed momentary estrangement, that estrangement was aimed at a *telos* of engagement. And, yet, that notion of temporary estrangement, pragmatic as it may have been, suffered from somewhat of a civic schizophrenia. Indeed, the transition from estrangement to engagement promised to be anything but seamless.

Defying full-fledged commitment to engagement or estrangement, Ellison's call for "critical participation" during World War II promoted the adoption of a liminal position that was neither fully engaged with, nor estranged from, U.S. society. According to Ellison, insofar as white supremacy persisted, black Americans could not place unqualified trust in U.S. society; yet, so long as U.S. society remained even partially committed to the principles of democracy, black Americans could not outright reject U.S. society either. In this sense, Ellison's uplift discourse urged black Americans to stake their destiny not in U.S. society itself, but, rather, in the democratic principles out of which the United States had been conceived.

The different sets of issues that this dissertation engages—self-help and identity, unity and fragmentation, engagement and estrangement—constitute issues that have reverberated throughout black American rhetorical history. Uplift marks merely one among myriad rhetorical registers through which those sets of issues have been negotiated; indeed, at different moments,

similar configurations of these issues have gained voice through the registers of "emancipation," "civil rights," "Black Power," and most recently "#BlackLivesMatter."

Through engaging these enduring sets of issues, this study offers insight about black American rhetorical history on at least two levels. First, this study directs much needed attention to early twentieth-century black American rhetorical practice. As previously noted, in rhetorical studies, there is currently a dearth of scholarship that details the dynamics of African American rhetorical practice between the dawn of the twentieth century and World War II. Two of the primary figures engaged in this study, W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, were such prolific rhetors that one could easily justify entire book-length studies that centered solely on specific thematics, or even major periods of activity, from just Du Bois's or Garvey's respective rhetorical corpuses. In general, though, closer engagement with this historical period of African American rhetoric is important in that it textures the evolving development of what we might term "The Canon of African American Rhetoric." As Martin J. Medhurst suggests, it is crucial for rhetorical critics and rhetorical historians to recover the "texts and discourses" that are "central to the self-understanding and public expression of specific groups and movements."[9] This study contributes to those fields of knowledge by illuminating the ways in which early twentieth-century black spokespersons employed rhetoric to both address pressing public concerns and (re)constitute black identity. Furthermore, in focusing on an overlooked period of black American rhetorical history, this dissertation provides an opportunity to rethink how we conceptualize the major texts and contexts of black American rhetorical history.

Second, this dissertation refines our appreciation of the rhetorical antecedents that gave shape to major rhetorical figures, texts, and moments associated with the black freedom struggle. Indeed, though the tenor and scope of the discourse would evolve in concert with the shifting

terrain of public affairs, some of the major voices of the mid-century black freedom struggle mirrored their early twentieth-century predecessors by articulating discourses that rhetorically (re)constituted black identity alongside instrumental appeals for improving the conditions of black life. Consider, for example, the manner in which Malcolm X's 1963 address "Message to the Grassroots" promoted a radical agenda while simultaneously articulating the antithetical figures of the "house negro" and "field negro."[10] In terms of both form and content, such discourse closely resembled Garvey's early twentieth-century enactment of the "Old Negro"-"New Negro" dialectic. Likewise, in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1961 address "The American Dream," one can detect traces of the rhetorical logic that Ellison expressed in his 1943 "Editorial Comment." In the speech, King insisted that, through the use of "creative protest," black Americans could turn the United States "upside down and right side up" and thereby effect the ever elusive "American Dream."[11] The appeal closely resembled the spirit of "critical participation" that Ellison had advocated almost two decades earlier.

Ultimately, by tracking the rhetorical intersections of uplift and identity, this dissertation orients attention to the transformative potential of acknowledgement. Indeed, the uplift discourses considered in the foregoing pages were each marked by dialectical acts of acknowledgement: on the one hand, an acknowledgement of the forms of injustice that disrupt our capacity to coexist harmoniously with Others; and, on the other hand, an acknowledgement of the modalities through which we might pursue the conditions of social harmony. Of course, the imperfection of the human condition makes it unlikely that we'll ever be able to achieve such a state of social harmony. But, perhaps, through a renewed commitment to acknowledgement we may be able to level some of the enduring forms of injustice that continue to plague U.S. society.

Notes

1. Quoted in Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Random House, 1964), 315.

2. Ibid.

3. See Harris, *State of the Marital Union*, 2; and J. Martin Favor, *Authentic Blackness: The Folk in the New Negro Renaissance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 137.

4. Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs Identity?" in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay. (London: Sage, 1996), 4.

5. Michael Eric Dyson, introduction to *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness?: What It Means to Be Black Now*, by Touré (New York: Free Press, 2011), xiv.

6. In particular, see Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*; and Victoria W. Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

7. See Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*.

8. See Moses, *Creative Conflict in African American Thought*, 248.

9. Martin J. Medhurst, "The Contemporary Study of Public Address: Renewal, Recovery, and Reconfiguration," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4 (2001): 505.

10. Malcolm X, "Message to the Grass Roots," in *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*, ed. George Breitman (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 3-17.

11. Martin Luther King Jr., "The American Dream," in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.*, ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 208-16.

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———. "Knowledge Claims in Rhetorical Criticism." *Journal of Communication* 58 (2008): 629-40.

———. "Public Address Scholarship in the New Century: Achievements and Challenges," In *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, edited by Shawn J. Parry-Giles and Michael J. Hogan, 67-85. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Jansen B. Werner
Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Communication
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI, May 2016
Dissertation: "Two Strivings: Uplift and Identity in African American Rhetorical Culture, 1900-1943"
Advisor: Dr. Leslie J. Harris
Areas of Specialization: African American Rhetoric, U.S. Public Address, Rhetoric of/and Race, Rhetorics of Social Change

M. A., Communication Studies
Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN, May 2012
Thesis: Negotiating the Ideological Boundaries of "The Four Freedoms": An Analysis of African American Rhetoric from World War Two
Advisor: Dr. Daniel Cronn-Mills

B. A., Communication
Saint John's University, Collegeville, MN, May 2009

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Fall 2016 –	Incoming Visiting Assistant Professor of Communication Florida Gulf Coast University
2012 – 2016	Graduate Teaching Assistant Department of Communication, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
2010 – 2012	Graduate Teaching Assistant Department of Communication Studies, Minnesota State University, Mankato

RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

Articles

Jansen B. Werner, "Building a 'Dwelling Place' for Justice: Ethos Reinvention in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Where Do We Go from Here?,'" forthcoming at *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*.

Jansen B. Werner, "Black America's Double War: Ralph Ellison and 'Critical Participation' during World War II," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 18 (Fall 2015): 441-470.

Jansen B. Werner, "'A Land of Make Believe that Don't Believe in Me': Dissent by Incongruity in Green Day's 'Jesus of Suburbia,'" *CTAM Journal* 38 (2011): 55-72.

Book Chapters

Jansen B. Werner and Daniel Cronn-Mills, "Rhetorical Theory," in *Understanding Communication Theory: A Beginner's Guide,* ed. Stephen M. Croucher (New York: Routledge, 2015), 262-287.

James P. Dimock, Daniel Cronn-Mills, and **Jansen B. Werner**, "Not of the World: The Jehovah's Witnesses and 'Saluting a Flag,'" in *Religion and Communication: An Anthology of Extensions in Theory, Research, and Method*, eds. Stephen M. Croucher and Tina M. Harris (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2012), 225-241.

Presentations

Conference Presentations

"Epideictic Counterpublics: Huey P. Newton and the Formulation of the Radical Imagination," National Communication Association, Las Vegas, NV, November 22, 2015.

"Attitudes Toward Education: Constitutive Rhetoric in W. E. B. Du Bois's 'Education and Work,'" National Communication Association, Las Vegas, NV, November 21, 2015.

"Alain Locke and the Adult Education Movement," National Communication Association, Las Vegas, NV, November 19, 2015.

"'Jackie Robinson Says': Modeling Rhetorical Self-Discipline as African American Agency," Central States Communication Association, Madison, WI, April 17, 2015.

"Lynching, Public Voice, and Civil Rights: The Black Press's (Re)Construction of Emmett Till's Identity," National Communication Association, Chicago, IL, November 22, 2014.

"Post-Racial Authenticity: The Domestication of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Memory at the MLK Memorial in Washington, DC," National Communication Association, Chicago, IL, November 20, 2014.

"Rhetoric and the Legacies of Race in the United States," Preconference at National Communication Association, Chicago, IL, November 19, 2014.

"De-politicizing the Mental Health Advocacy of the Mentally Ill: Royce White's Appearance on *Dr. Phil*," Central States Communication Association, Minneapolis, MN, April 4, 2014.

"Chris Kluwe's Failed Rhetorical Leadership: Social Advocacy, Same-Sex Marriage, and Hegemonic Masculinity," National Communication Association, Washington, D.C., November 21, 2013.

"(Re)Presenting the Presidential Debates: Presidential Campaign Ads that Incorporate Debate Footage," National Communication Association, Washington, D.C., November 21, 2013.

"Chasing Connections: Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Rand Paul Filibuster" [Panel Presentation], National Communication Association, Washington, D.C., November 21, 2013.

"Prescribing Action or Complacency: A Model of Cyberchondria as Rhetorical Action," Info Social Conference of the Media, Technology, and Society Program at Northwestern University," Evanston, IL, October 26, 2013 [co-presented with Andrew W. Cole and Thomas A. Salek].

"'The Supremacy of Human Rights Everywhere': Ralph Ellison's Counterpublic Witnessing during World War Two," Central States Communication Association, Kansas City, MO, April, 6, 2013 [***Top Five Student Paper].

"(Re)Framing Civil Rights Discourse: The Rhetorical Foundations of the Harlem Renaissance" [Panel Presentation], Rhetoric Society of America, Philadelphia, PA, May 28, 2012.

"Rediscovering African American Critical Practice during World War II," Rhetoric Society of America, Philadelphia, PA, May, 26, 2012.

"Rhetoric of the Black Panther Party" [Panel Presentation], Central States Communication Association, Milwaukee, WI, April, 8, 2011.

Invited Lectures & Colloquia

"Prescribing Action or Complacency: A Rhetorical Model of Cyberchondria," UWM Department of Communication Professional Development Seminar, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, May 2, 2014 [co-presented with Andrew W. Cole and Thomas A. Salek].

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Critical Analysis of Communication – *Online* (COMMUN 335), Fall 2015 – Spring 2016
Critical Analysis of Communication (COMMUN 335), Fall 2014 – Spring 2015
Public Speaking (COMMUN 103 – Standalone), Fall 2012 – Summer 2015
Intro to Peace and Conflict (PEACEST 201), Fall 2013 – Spring 2014

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Introduction to Argumentation (CMST 150), Spring 2012
Public Speaking (CMST 111 – Standalone), Fall 2011
Fundamentals of Communication (CMST 100), Fall 2010 – Spring 2011

AWARDS/HONORS

UWM Student Success Award. Recognizes instructors who are nominated by UWM students as a person who has helped them the most in their college success during the MAP-Works Fall Transition Survey, Fall 2013.

Chancellor's Graduate Student Award. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Fall 2012.

SERVICE

Professional Service

Guest Reviewer, *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* (2014)

Reviewer for Paper/Panel Submissions, Public Address Division for the National Communication Association (2014, 2015); Rhetorical and Communication Theory Division for the National Communication Association (2015); Argumentation and Forensic Division for the National Communication Association (2011).

Chair, The Presence of History, Power, and Identity Politics: Interrogating Japan's Cultural Diversity and Internationalization, National Communication Association, Chicago, IL, November 20, 2014.

Associate Editor, *Communication & Theater Association of Minnesota* (*CTAM*) *Journal* (http://www.mnsu.edu/cmst/ctam/journal.html), 2012-13.

University Service

Communication Consultant, Call Center training for UWM Student Success Center, Spring 2014.

Committee for Coaches Speaking Up**,** assisted in the design and implementation of a 4-week training seminar to enhance UWM head coaches' communication competencies and public speaking skills, Fall 2013.

Department Service

Committee Member, UWM Committee for Summer/Winterim TA Policies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Fall 2014.

Volunteer Judge at Public Speaking Showcase, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Fall 2014.

Vice President, Student Chapter of Rhetoric Society of America, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Spring 2014.

Volunteer Judge at Public Speaking Showcase, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Fall 2013.

Ph.D. Faculty GAC Representative, Communication Graduate Student Council (CGSC), University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Fall 2013.

Peer Mentor for First-Year Ph.D. Student, Department of Communication, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Fall 2013-Spring 2014.

Volunteer Judge at Public Speaking Showcase, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Spring 2013.

Faculty Committee Representative, CGSC, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Spring 2013.

Volunteer Judge at Public Speaking Showcase, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Fall 2012.

Treasurer, Student Chapter of Rhetoric Society of America, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Fall 2012.

Committee Member, Graduate Advisory Council (GAC), Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN.

Fundraising Committee, GAC, Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN, Fall 2011.
Committee Member, Basic Course Activities Committee, Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN, Spring 2011.

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